



Knife Song Korea: A Novel

Richard Selzer

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A tumultuous year in the life of a young surgeon during the Korean War.

Knife Song Korea chronicles a tumultuous year in the life of Sloane, a young surgeon in the Korean War. Drafted into the army and assigned to an artillery unit in a remote rural area on the edges of the war, Sloane must cope with harsh living conditions, a brutal workload, and intense feelings of personal isolation. The only doctor for miles, he is called upon to treat not only U.S. military personnel but also the local Korean population, for whom he feels both revulsion and pity. As the strain mounts and the war moves closer, he comes face to face with questions of identity, nationality, and personal honor. Originally written during and shortly after Richard Selzer's own tour of duty in Korea, Knife Song Korea offers a poetic portrayal of a man stretched to his limits and beyond, and the tragic toll war takes on the human psyche.

"...Knife Song Korea is a perfect complement to [Selzer's] established body of work—tersely rendered, paced to perfection, seamless in its blending of love and knife; it is a tangled love song sung with clarity and conviction, a young man's story shaped and clarified by the wisdom of age." — Sewanee Review

"...Certainly this book joins such canon fixtures as For Whom the Bell Tolls and All Quiet on the Western Front in its discerning study of war ... Each word, each metaphor of this book revives a Korean War that is still pulsating, still bursting with shouts, grinding gears, and rampant illness. For a lasting time, a lasting work." — ForeWord Reviews

"...a lapidary work of exceptional artistry as well as a valuable addition to the body of notable works by physician-writers." — California Literary Review

Richard Selzer is a former surgeon and professor at the Yale School of Medicine. He is also the author of many books of short stories and essays, including Rituals of Surgery; Confessions of a Knife; The Exact Location of the Soul; and Letters to a Best Friend edited by Peter Josyph. He has been honored with a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Magazine Award, the Pushcart Prize, and the American Medical Writers Award. He lives in New Haven.

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