



Climb to the Sky (CARAF Books: Caribbean and African Literature translated from the French)

Suzanne Dracius

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Climb to the Sky collects a novella and eight stories by one of the most celebrated and versatile French Caribbean writers, Suzanne Dracius. Set in the author's native Martinique and spanning the twentieth century, these narratives display a powerful grasp of the individual set against an often violent history. The multi-generational novella "Her Destiny on Climb to the Sky Street" opens with the gripping account of a runaway slave's survival of disease and abuse aboard a slave ship and concludes with his descendant, a young woman living in a post-abolition world whose life of abuse and torture by her employers nonetheless resembles that of a slave. In "Sweat, Sugar, and Blood," a woman held captive by her husband in their home must choose between safe ignorance and dangerous knowledge. Other stories, such as "Chlorophyllian Creation" and "Written in Lime Juice," convey the intimacy and directness of autobiographical essays.

Each of Dracius's heroines achieves a transcendental experience through her own imagination and will, whether she is escaping natural catastrophe (such as the eruption of Mount Pelée), enduring jail time under interrogation by the national police, or coping with the ennui of life in a bourgeois home. Although the results of these historical, natural, or existential circumstances are unpredictable, what unites these women is deliverance.

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