



The Poor Man's Son (CARAF Books: Caribbean and African Literature translated from the French)

By Mouloud Feraoun, James D. Le Sueur

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Like the autobiographical hero of this, his classic first novel, Mouloud Feraoun grew up in the rugged Kabyle region of French-controlled Algeria, where the prospects for most Muslim Berber men were limited to shepherding or emigrating to France for factory work. While Feraoun escaped such a fate by excelling in the colonial school system?as a student and, later, as a teacher at the École Normale?he remained firmly rooted in Kabyle culture. This dual perspective only enhanced his view, often brutally, of the ravages on his country by poverty, colonial rule, and a world war that descended on Algeria like a great storm.

This embattled society, and Feraoun's unique position within it, became the raw material for *The Poor Man's Son*. Originally published in 1950, the novel was reissued in 1954, when its style was "fixed" to remove colloquial mannerisms and tenses. Perhaps more importantly, an entire section was omitted, significantly altering the conclusion and, indeed, the whole thrust of the book. Nonetheless, it is this version by which the book is known to this day in French. Based on the original 1950 text, this new translation is notable not only for bringing Feraoun's classic to an English-speaking audience but also for presenting the book in its entirety for the first time in fifty years.

A direct response to Albert Camus' call for Algerians to tell the world their story, *The Poor Man's Son* remains after half a century the definitive map of the Kabyle soul.

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Editorial Review

Review

[A] thoughtful and long overdue English translation....The last third of the book, discarded by a Paris editor fifty years ago and restored here, is a revelation.

(Book Forum)

"Feraoun's novel is more than just a testimony in which he recounts the daily life of his Berber mountain village, the emigration of his father to Paris, and especially his adolescent efforts to succeed in becoming a teacher rather than a simple shepherd. Through its austere authenticity and the modesty of its form, it became a classic for young Algerians, and marked, moreover, the birth of the post-colonial Francophone literature of the Maghreb.

*(Assia Djebar, author of *The Women of Algiers in their Apartment*)*

About the Author

A tireless author and educator, Mouloud Feraoun (1913-62) was assassinated by a French terrorist group only three days before the cease-fire that marked the beginning of Algerian independence. His *Journal, 1955-1962: Reflections on the French-Algerian War* was published posthumously to great acclaim. James D. Le Seur is Associate Professor of History at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln. Lucy R. McNair is a translator living in New York City.

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