



Holiday in Cambodia

Laura Jean McKay

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Shortlisted for the Glenda Adams Award for New Writing in the 2014 NSW Premier's Literary Awards

Beyond the killing fields and the temples of Angkor is Cambodia: a country with a genocidal past and a wide, open smile. A frontier land where anything is possible – at least for the tourists.

In *Holiday in Cambodia* Laura Jean McKay explores the electric zone where local and foreign lives meet. There are tender, funny moments of tentative understanding, as well as devastating re-imaginings of a troubled history.

Three backpackers board a train, ignoring the danger signs – and find themselves in the hands of the Khmer Rouge.

Elderly sisters are visited by their vampire niece from Australia and set out to cure her.

A singer creates a sensation in swinging 1969, on the eve of an American bombing campaign.

These are bold and haunting stories by a remarkable new talent.

‘Each of these stories is like catching a snippet of a conversation or looking into a lit window in a dark night, and loitering longer than you should to hear and see what characters inadvertently reveal about themselves. *Holiday in Cambodia* shows the ugly side of post-colonial tourism as well as moments of great pathos and dignity; in a compelling and empathetic voice.’ – Alice Pung

‘Polished, Hemingwayesque snapshots, vivid and atmospheric’ - Steven Carroll

‘a serious and impressive attempt to engage with Cambodia in all its pock-marked history.’ - *Sunday Age*

‘McKay’s artful balancing of strong themes with perceptive detail, even humour, allows *Holiday in Cambodia* to explore what many of its characters are only half-heartedly searching for: the real Cambodia, a country still trying to recover.’ - *Australian Book Review*

‘The range of perspectives offered across these stories works like word of mouth, building a picture of a country on trust.’ - the *Australian*

Laura Jean McKay’s writing has been published in *The Best Australian Stories*, *Sleepers*, the *Big Issue*, *Women of Letters* and *Going Down Swinging*. She has been shortlisted for national and international awards and in 2011 won the Alan Marshall Short Story Award. She lives in Melbourne.

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