

A volcanic mountain range in the northeastern part of Somalia, Guban is also a name given to the surrounding habitat by Somali nomads. Literally translating to “burnt” in English, Abdi Latif Ega uses it as a metaphor for the entire nation and its people. In the world of Guban there is a parade of human characters wielding and being wielded by their societal circumstances and individual proclivities. Set against the backdrop of East Africa, the novel explores the clash of modernity, urban civilization and the traditional, more egalitarian life of pastoralists who still populate the region. A truly kaleidoscopic tale of the Somali revolution, the novel deftly interlocks stories of all strata of society—interlopers, interlocutors, diplomats, camel herders, revolutionaries, military personnel, and clan leaders, to name but a few. Documenting both the brutality of the national dictatorship and the international pressures of this cold war driven world. Guban brings together the immediacy of journalistic reportage with the imaginative expansiveness of the novel.

“Guban” is a book that should be read—not just for its stunning imagery and language—but also for what it says about the human condition. Though Lit Hum professors often discourage students from taking the macro route in examining a text, “Guban” is a complicated, probing work that must be examined as such. The novel establishes context for Somalia that readers might be familiar with, all the while challenging that very image.

SHAYNA ORENS, *Columbia Daily Spectator*.



Abdi Latif Ega is a long-time resident of Harlem, New York. He loves and plays jazz that he studied in the late eighties and early nineties. Abdi has had an abiding love affair for the history, literature and research of the new world African. He is heavily influenced by writers of African descent from all corners of the world, and follows in the their tradition of speaking truth to power. This is the first novel in a series of novels on the Horn and specifically Somalia, from the medieval times to the present.

The author self identifies as an African-American originally from Somalia. He studied Jazz theory and performance, and has an undergraduate degree in History and English. Abdi is currently a teaching fellow, and a PhD candidate at Columbia University in the City of New York.

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EGA

GUBBAN

# Guban

a novel by ABDI LATIF EGA

