



Stories on a String: The Brazilian Literatura De Cordel

Candace Slater

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The Brazilian stories-in-verse called folhetos or literarura de cordel are today's richest heirs to a centuries-old ballad tradition that once embraced most of Europe. For almost a century they have been the principal literature of the loser classes in the Brazilian Northeast, read or sung aloud in marketplaces and printed and illustrated by the poets themselves.

In today's Brazil, intellectuals, artists, and an ample middle-class public look to popular art forms such as the cordel as a precious national heritage and an indicator of this century's profound social and economic changes.

Stories on a String is a much-needed introduction to the cordel for literary specialists, folklorists, and social scientists as well as more general readers. Based on months of interviews with the popular poets and their audiences, it provides an overview of the tradition. This book devotes special attention to contemporary stories, examining both the texts and their immediate setting and using, whenever possible, the actual words-of popular poets.

Candace Slater teaches in the Department of Romance Languages at the University of Pennsylvania. She has written for the Journal of Latin American Lore, the Luso-Brazilian Review, and other journals.

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