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Made for Each Other: The Short Story and Zakaria Tamer

“I am a lover of the short story,” says Zakaria Tamer in an interview with a journalist, adding: “The love of writing is deeply rooted in me . . . If anyone wants to know me and know my world, my world and I are both there in my collections of stories.” In a seminar devoted to him on the margins of the *Al-Arabi* magazine conference held in Kuwait in 2002, he was asked to speak about his life and his concept of literature and his experience of writing, but he replied that he had nothing to say. When he was asked about his recently published short story collection, he hesitated for a moment then said: “I forget what I write as soon as I have written it. Sometimes I remember a part of it, but don’t expect me to remember it all. I don’t remember any story after I have written it. Whenever I sit down to write a new story, I turn into a young man writing for the first time, with all his fears, his emotion, and his sense of surprise.”

Zakaria Tamer is a prolific author, with a talent for surprising the reader. One of the most prominent characteristics of his style is the way he can take a fleeting moment or event and give it a totally un-