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MARK VALENTINE is the author of about twenty books, mostly of ghost stories or of essays on book collecting and obscure authors. He also edited *The Far Tower: Stories for W. B. Yeats* and *The Scarlet Soul: Stories for Dorian Gray* for Swan River Press. His fiction collections include *The Uncertainty of All Earthly Things* (Zagava) and, with John Howard, *Secret Europe* and *Inner Europe* (Tartarus). He also edits *Wormwood*, a journal of the literature of the fantastic and supernatural.

SELECTED STORIES

Mark Valentine

“Nothing lasts! The faun sleeps, Smiling, mute, remorseless.”

– Ludmilla Jevsejeva, *Aūtuna Melodio*

In St. Petersburg, amidst an uneasy truce with the revolution, there exists a secret trade in looted ikons. But who are the dark strangers seeking for the Gate of the Archangel? In the small town of Tzern, news arrives of the death of the Emperor; meanwhile a postmaster, a priest, a prophet and a war-wearied soldier watch the dawn for signs of the future. Constantinople: A quest for the lost faiths of the former Ottoman Empire leads a French scholar to believe that the strangest may also be the truest. On the edges of Europe, exiles and idealists meet in a café to talk of their hopes—while sinister forces begin to march. These stories, exquisitely told by Mark Valentine, are about individuals caught up in the endings of old empires—and of what comes next.

CONTENTS

“A Certain Power”
“The Dawn at Tzern”
“A Walled Garden on the Bosphoros”
“Carden in Capaea”
“The Bookshop in Nový Svět”
“The Autumn Keeper”
“The Amber Cigarette”
“The Ka of Astarakahn”
“The Original Light”
“The Unrest at Aachen”
“The Mascarons of the Late Empire”

REVIEWS

“Dense, allusive, and thoroughly satisfying.”

– Dead reckonings

“[These stories] are all imbued with a strangeness and beauty that takes them—and the reader—several removes from what is called realism.”

– Supernatural Tales

“Valentine is a master at capturing the ineffable in prose.”

– The Agony Column

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