



## Bending Time: Short Stories

*Stephen Minot*

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Manipulation of time is a recurring theme in Stephen Minot's second collection of stories. The first four stories, subheaded "Time and Memory," deal with characters whose perception of the world is skewed. Kraft, a social historian, becomes so drawn to a woman from a simpler era that he almost loses his hold on reality; Fern, at fifteen, struggles to cope with sophisticated, alcoholic adults who live in the past; Malvina, a mother of two, finds herself in the midst of a large family gathering without being entirely sure who these people are.

The second group, "Time in Exile," focuses on Americans living in Europe as political and social exiles. These stories offer a vivid glimpse into that world of American expatriates who have been forced to bend both time and place for reasons of conscience or necessity.

The stories in the concluding section, "Time in the American City," all deal with urban survival. Occasionally comic, but always serious in theme, these stories pay tribute to the variety and adaptability of American city dwellers. Mike-O returns to Boston for a visit with his trendy ex-wife and her new lover; Blair, a U.S. Senator in Washington, copes with a long-absent and highly independent son, Dennis, and struggles to make sense of his artistic success in Venice, California.

All 12 stories have appeared in major periodicals, one being included in both the *O. Henry Prize Stories* and *The Best American Short Stories* collections.

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