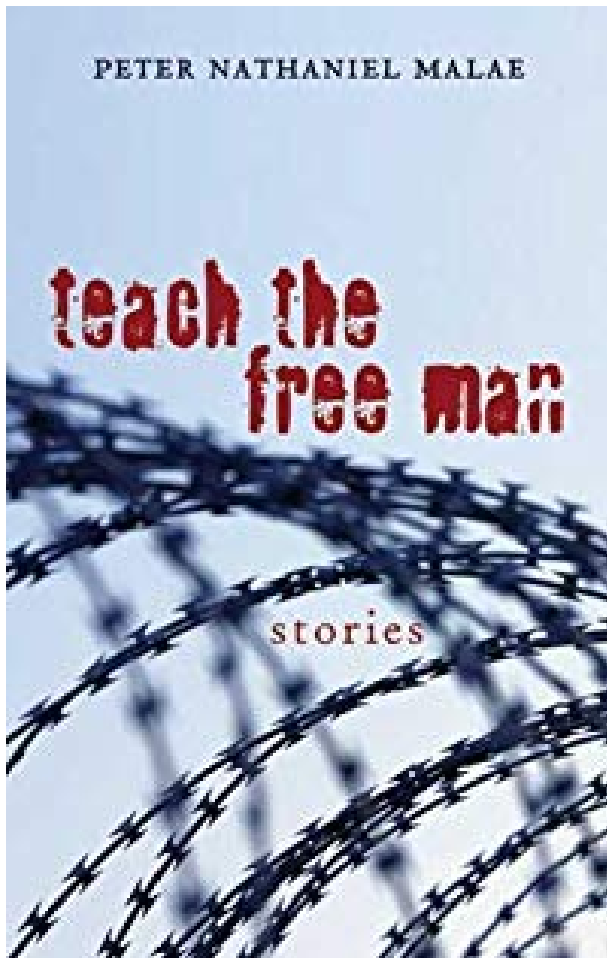


Teach the Free Man



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The twelve stories in *Teach the Free Man* mark the impressive debut of Peter Nathaniel Malae. The subject of incarceration thematically links the stories, yet their range extends beyond the prison's barbed wire and iron bars. Avoiding sensationalism, Malae exposes the heart and soul in those dark, seemingly inaccessible corridors of the human experience.

The stories, often raw and startlingly honest, are distinguished by the colloquial voices of California's prison inmates, who, despite their physical and cultural isolation, confront dilemmas with which we can all identify: the choice to show courage against peer pressure; the search for individual rights within a bureaucracy; and the desperate desire for honor in the face of great sacrifice. These stories present polished and poetic examples of finding something redemptive in the least among us. The book's epigraph by W. H. Auden, from which the book takes its title, exemplifies the spirit of these dynamic stories: In the deserts of the heart Let the healing fountain start. In the prison of his days Teach the free man how to praise.