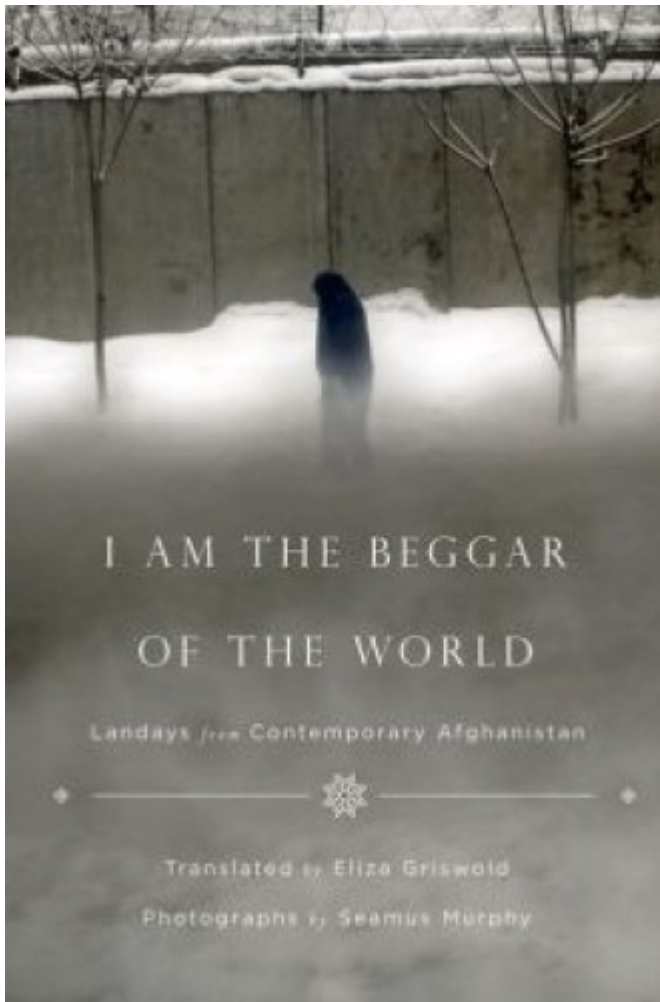


*I Am the Beggar of the World*, by Eliza Griswold, with photographs by Seamus Murphy

Books in the [May 28, 2014](#) issue

## In Review



## **I Am the Beggar of the World**

By Eliza Griswold with photographs by Seamus Murphy  
Farrar, Straus & Giroux

Journalist Eliza Griswold has been to Afghanistan (and Pakistan) numerous times since 9/11, where she discovered landays, a centuries-old form of poetry usually

composed anonymously by illiterate Pashtun women, passed along and adapted from one generation to the next. In Pashto these two-line poems have nine syllables in the first line and 13 in the second. Landays often deal with love, sex, and the relationship between the genders, sometimes with acerbic intent: "You sold me to an old man, father. / May God destroy your home; I was your daughter."