

Herta Muller

Twenty-five essays by scholars from the UK, Ireland, Germany and Australia explore two aspects of new German-language literature. The first dozen studies focus on the variety and depth of the 'dialogue' - in the sense of reciprocal influences - between literature, photography, film, painting, architecture, and music. The remaining essays alight on 'Life-Writing' in most of its forms (diaries, memoirs, autobiographies, and autobiographical fiction) and examine its centrality in recent years in German literature, not least because of the shadow which World War Two continues to cast over national life.

The end of World War II led to one of the most significant forced population transfers in history: the expulsion of over 12 million ethnic Germans from Central and Eastern Europe between 1945 and 1950 and the subsequent emigration of another four million in the second half of the twentieth century. Although unprecedented in its magnitude, conventional wisdom has it that the integration of refugees, expellees, and Aussiedler was a largely successful process in postwar Germany. While the achievements of the integration process are acknowledged, the volume also examines the difficulties encountered by ethnic Germans in the Federal Republic and analyses the shortcomings of dealing with this particular phenomenon of mass migration and its consequences.

THE STORY: The nameless narrator of this blistering monologue lies ill and alone in a dreary hotel room in a poverty-stricken country. A political execution is about to take place beneath his window. Far from the glib comforts of his own life, he s

Detective Esa Khattack and his partner, Detective Rachel Getty, investigate the death of a local man who may have been a Bosnian war criminal with ties to the Srebrenica massacre of 1995, in a haunting debut novel of loss, redemption and the cost of justice.

In a crumbling neighbourhood in New Delhi, a child waits for a mother to return home from work. And, in parallel, in a snow-swept town in Germany on the Baltic Sea coast a woman, her memory fading, shows up at a deserted hotel. Worlds apart, both embark, in the course of that night, on harrowing journeys through the lost and the missing, the living and the dead, until they meet in an ending that breaks the heart - and holds the promise of putting it back together again. Called the novelist of the newsroom, Raj Kamal Jha cleaves open India's tragedy of violence against women with a powerful story about our complicity in the culture that supports it. This is a book about masculinity - damaging and toxic and yet enduring and entrenched - that begs the question: What kind of men are our boys growing up to be?

This "irresistible novel" of Chinese immigrants navigating the American dream is "startling [and] heartrending, without ever losing its comic touch" (Entertainment Weekly). Gish Jen reinvents the American immigrant story through the Chang family, who first come to the United States with no intention of staying. But when the Communists assume control of China in 1949, Ralph Chang, his sister Theresa, and his wife Helen find themselves in a crisis, struggling to cling to their old-world ideas of themselves. But soon they begin to dream the American dream of self-invention. They transform, poignantly and ironically, from people who disparage all that is "typical American" to people who aspire to the American ideal. With droll humor and a deep empathy for her characters, Gish Jen creates a superbly engrossing story that sparkles with wit while challenging the reader to reconsider what it means to be a typical American. "No paraphrase could capture the intelligence of Gish Jen's prose, its epigrammatic sweep and swiftness . . . The author just keeps coming at you line after stunning line." —The New York Times Book Review

"An over-the-top romp through 1870s America . . . compulsively readable." —Oprah.com Jean Zimmerman's spectacular follow-up to *The Orphanmaster* has it all: Gilded Age romance, robber baron excess, detective story suspense, and a compelling female protagonist whom readers will fall in love with. In 1875, the Delegates, an outlandishly wealthy Manhattan couple on a tour of the American West, seek out a sideshow attraction called "Savage Girl." Her handlers avow that the wild, seemingly mute Bronwyn has been raised by wolves. Presented with the perfect blank slate to explore the power of civilized nurture, the Delegates take her back east to be introduced into high society. Cleaned up, Bronwyn is blazingly smart and darkly beautiful; as she takes steps toward her grand debut, a series of suitors find her irresistible—and begin to turn up murdered.

Simon Schama, in defence of the essay in the age of Twitter, writes: 'The self-propulsion of a ranging intelligence is the dynamo that drives a powerful essay; the headlong gallop of thought to a destination the reader can't predict and which may not have occurred to the writer when he began.' That power, that propulsion, that surprise is evident in every one of this selection of the very finest of the essays produced over the past 20 years by the Romanian-German Nobel Laureate Herta Muller. She interrogates Communist society, especially in its bizarre Romanian Ceausescu variation, and matters of complicity, secrecy, betrayal, guilt, responsibility, resistance and the power of literature. Her writing is bewitching and convincing; her approach is unswerving, unsparing and undeluded. Her reader is grateful."

What is the difference between writing a novel about the Holocaust and fabricating a memoir? Do narratives about the Holocaust have a special obligation to be 'truthful'--that is, faithful to the facts of history? Or is it okay to lie in such works? In her provocative study *A Thousand Darkesses*, Ruth Franklin investigates these questions as they arise in the most significant works of Holocaust fiction, from Tadeusz Borowski's Auschwitz stories to Jonathan Safran Foer's postmodernist family history. Franklin argues that the memory-obsessed culture of the last few decades has led us to mistakenly focus on testimony as the only valid form of Holocaust writing. As even the most canonical texts have come under scrutiny for their fidelity to the facts, we have lost sight of the essential role that imagination plays in the creation of any literary work, including the memoir. Taking a fresh look at memoirs by Elie Wiesel and Primo Levi, and examining novels by writers such as Piotr Rawicz, Jerzy Kosinski, W.G. Sebald, and Wolfgang Koeppen, Franklin makes a persuasive case for literature as an equally vital vehicle for understanding the Holocaust (and for memoir as an equally ambiguous form). The result is a study of immense depth and range that offers a lucid view of an often cloudy field.

An early masterpiece from the winner of the Nobel Prize hailed as the laureate of life under totalitarianism Romania-the last months of the Ceausescu regime. Adina is a young schoolteacher. Paul is a musician. Clara works in a wire factory. Pavel is Clara's lover. But one of them works for the secret police and is reporting on all of the group. One day Adina returns home to discover that her fox fur rug has had its tail cut off. On another occasion it's the hindleg. Then a foreleg. The mutilated fur is a sign that she is being tracked by the secret police-the fox was ever the hunter. Images of photographic precision combine into a kaleidoscope of terror as Adina and her friends struggle to keep mind and body intact in a world pervaded by complicity and permeated with fear, where it's hard to tell victim from perpetrator. In *The Fox Was Always a Hunter*, Herta Müller once again uses language that displays the "concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose"-as the Swedish Academy noted upon awarding her the Nobel Prize-to create a hauntingly cinematic portrayal of the corruption of the soul under totalitarianism.

Dov Greenstein, a comedian a bit past his prime, is doing a night of stand-up in a dive in a small Israeli city. In the audience are some whom Dov knew as a boy, an awkward, scrawny kid who walked on his hands to confound the neighborhood bullies. Gradually Dov's patter becomes a kind of memoir: we meet his mother, a Holocaust survivor in need of constant monitoring, and his punishing father, a striver who had little understanding of his creative son; Dov recalls his week at a military camp for youth; and shares a story of loss and survival.

A splendid, violent spring suddenly grips Bucharest in the 1980s after a brutal winter. Tolea, an eccentric middle-aged intellectual who has been dismissed from his job as a high school teacher on "moral grounds," is investigating his father's death forty years after the fact, and is drawn into a web of suspicion and black humor."Reading 'The Black Envelope,' one might think of the poisonous 'black milk' of Celan's 'Death Fugue' or the claustrophobic air of mounting terror in Mr. Appelfeld's 'Badenheim 1939.' . . . Mr. Manea offers striking images and insights into the recent experience of Eastern Europe."--"New York Times Book Review"

For the first time available in English, a selection of some of Inger Christensen's most insightful essays and poetic prose pieces *The Condition of Secrecy* is a poignant collection of essays by Inger Christensen, widely regarded as one of the most influential Scandinavian writers of the twentieth century. As *The New York Times* proclaimed, "Despite the rigorous structure that undergirds her work—or more likely, because of it—Ms. Christensen's style is lyrical, even playful." The same could be said of Christensen's essays. Here, she formulates with increasing clarity the basis of her approach to writing, and provides insights into how she composed specific poetry volumes. Some essays are autobiographical (with memories of Christensen's school years during the Nazi occupation of Denmark), and others are political, touching on the Cold War and Chernobyl. *The Condition of Secrecy* also covers the *Ars Poetica* of Lu Chi (261-303 CE); William Blake and Isaac Newton; and such topics as randomness as a universal force and the role of the writer as an agent of social change. *The Condition of Secrecy* confirms that Inger Christensen is "a true singer of the syllables" (C. D. Wright), and "a formalist who makes her own rules, then turns the game around with another rule" (Eliot Weinberger).

A masterful new novel from the winner of the 2009 Nobel Prize, hailed for depicting the "landscape of the dispossessed" with "the concentration of poetry and the frankness of prose" (Nobel Prize Committee) It was an icy morning in January 1945 when the patrol came for seventeen-year-old Leo Auberg to deport him to a camp in the Soviet Union. Leo would spend the next five years in a coke processing plant, shoveling coal, lugging bricks, mixing mortar, and battling the relentless calculus of hunger that governed the labor colony: one shovel load of coal is worth one gram of bread. In her new novel, Nobel laureate Herta Müller calls upon her unique combination of poetic intensity and dispassionate precision to conjure the distorted world of the labor camp in all its physical and moral absurdity. She has given Leo the language to express the inexpressible, as hunger sharpens his senses into an acuity that is both hallucinatory and profound. In scene after disorienting scene, the most ordinary objects accrue tender poignancy as they acquire new purpose—a gramophone box serves as a suitcase, a handkerchief becomes a talisman, an enormous piece of casing pipe functions as a lovers' trysting place. The heart is reduced to a pump, the breath mechanized to the rhythm of a swinging shovel, and coal, sand, and snow have a will of their own. Hunger becomes an insatiable angel who haunts the camp, but also a bare-knuckled sparring partner, delivering blows that keep Leo feeling the rawest connection to life. Müller has distilled Leo's struggle into words of breathtaking intensity that take us on a journey far beyond the Gulag and into the depths of one man's soul.

An award-winning exiled poet remembers his years in prison following the Tiananmen Square protests, describing the brutality he endured for writing the incendiary poem, "Massacre," the humanity he discovered in his fellow cellmates, and the ways in which his incarceration reflected key changes in China.

Jonathan Franzen's *Freedom* was the runaway most-discussed novel of 2010, an ambitious and searching engagement with life in America in the twenty-first century. In *The New York Times Book Review*, Sam Tanenhaus proclaimed it "a masterpiece of American fiction" and lauded its illumination, "through the steady radiance of its author's profound moral intelligence, [of] the world we thought we knew." In *Farther Away*, which gathers together essays and speeches written mostly in the past five years, Franzen returns with renewed vigor to the themes, both human and literary, that have long preoccupied him. Whether recounting his violent encounter with bird poachers in Cyprus, examining his mixed feelings about the suicide of his friend and rival David Foster Wallace, or offering a moving and witty take on the ways that technology has changed how people express their love, these pieces deliver on Franzen's implicit promise to conceal nothing. On a trip to China to see first-hand the environmental devastation there, he doesn't omit mention of his excitement and awe at the pace of China's economic development; the trip becomes a journey out of his own prejudice and moral condemnation. Taken together, these essays trace the progress of unique and mature mind wrestling with itself, with literature, and with some of the most important issues of our day. *Farther Away* is remarkable, provocative, and necessary.

Diversity is one of the defining characteristics of contemporary German-language literature, not just in terms of the variety of authors writing in German today, but also in relation to theme, form, technique and style. However, common themes emerge: the Nazi past, transnationalism, globalisation, migration, religion and ethnicity, gender and sexuality, and identity. This book presents the novel in German since 1990 through a set of close readings both of international bestsellers (including Daniel Kehlmann's *Measuring the World* and W. G. Sebald's *Austerlitz*) and of less familiar, but important texts (such as Yadé Kara's *Selam Berlin*). Each novel discussed in the volume has been chosen on account of its aesthetic quality, its impact and its representativeness; the authors featured, among them Nobel Prize winners Günter Grass, Elfriede Jelinek and Herta Müller demonstrate the energy and quality of contemporary writing in German.

A poetic and empathetic vision of human perseverance, *East of Nowhere* captures, in stunning photographs, the reality of everyday life in central and Eastern Europe before and after the fall of the Berlin Wall. In 1987, Fabio Ponzio embarked on a photographic odyssey across Central and Eastern Europe and the Caucasus. Starting in Istanbul, and making his way to Poland, Ponzio found little food in the shops and long lines to buy bread. With supplies dwindling in the shops and immense crowds to buy necessities, the countries along his route were on the verge of collapse. And in the autumn of 1989, as the various regimes of communist countries from Budapest to Bucharest began to

crumble, everything changed. Equipped with a Leica, three Nikons and 100 rolls of film, Ponzio continued his travels across this immense territory, documenting lives marked by pain and sacrifice, now joined by a new energy, full of hope. For two decades, he returned to capture the traditions, faith, humility, courage, and strength of the people of the East. From a previously unpublished archive and an award-winning talent, *East of Nowhere* is an exquisite collection of photographs that illuminate the physical and ideological divisions between Western and Eastern Europe, while offering a sympathetic and hopeful vision of the human condition.

This book compares three contemporary women writing in German: Herta Muller (from Romania), Libuse Monikova (from Czechoslovakia), and Kerstin Hensel (from the GDR). It looks at images of the body and their relationship to the structures of their writing as well as analysing the social, cultural, and political contexts.

Romanian exile Norman Manea's internationally acclaimed memoir/novel, now available to English-language readers *At the Center of the Hooligan's Return* is the author himself, always an outcast, on a bleak lifelong journey through Nazism and communism to exile in America. But while Norman Manea's book is in many ways a memoir, it is also a deeply imaginative work, traversing time and place, life and literature, dream and reality, past and present. Autobiographical events merge with historic elements, always connecting the individual with the collective destiny. Manea speaks of the bloodiest time of the twentieth century and of the emergence afterward of a global, competitive, and sometimes cynical modern society. Both a harrowing memoir and an ambitious epic project, *The Hooligan's Return* achieves a subtle internal harmony as anxiety evolves into a delicate irony and a burlesque fantasy. Beautifully written and brilliantly conceived, this is the work of a writer with an acute understanding of the vast human potential for both evil and kindness, obedience and integrity.

In Romania at the height of Ceausescu's reign, several young people leave the impoverished provinces for the city in search of better prospects, but they must face betrayal, suicide, and the reality that even the strongest must bend to the oppressors or resist and die.

In an intense novel set against the backdrop of Ceausescu's totalitarian regime, a young Romanian factory worker--so desperate to escape the betrayal and hardships of her life that she sews notes offering marriage into the linings of suits bound for Italy--is summoned for interrogation by members of the regime. Reprint.

Herta Müller translates her visual impressions of the semblance of light, reflections in water, bleached boulders, and colorful shadows into sensitive poetic painting.

Katherine Verdery analyzes the 2,781 page surveillance file the Romanian secret police compiled on her during her research trips to Transylvania in the 1970s and 1980s.

Reading it led her to question her identity and also revealed how deeply the secret police was embedded in everyday life.

El Paso and Ciudad Jurez sit across the Texas / Mexico border from each other. They share streets, industry, crime. One gang claims territory in both: Los Aztecas. This single criminal organisation is responsible for most of the homicides committed in Jurez, and Felipe Morales is one of them. Recruited in prison, and now on the streets of El Paso, 'Flip' has no choice but to step further into that world, but he has a secret that threatens his life. A witness to murder and intimidation, he tries playing both the cops and the outlaws in a bid to escape. On the American side, El Paso detective Cristina Salas struggles to balance the needs of single motherhood with those of life in the city's anti-gang unit. When her path crosses with Flip, their relationship will spell the difference between a life behind bars for the young gang member, a grisly death or freedom. Meanwhile, Mexican federal agent Matas Segura must contend with the scourge of Los Aztecas while coordinating a long-term operation with the American authorities. The Aztecas, north and south, stand in the way of three lives. They have no qualms about crossing the line, about killing, about moving their deadly product, and it all comes together in a confrontation where the stakes are, truly, a matter of life and death.

To create the poems in this collection, Nobel Prize-winner Herta Müller cut up countless newspapers and magazines in search of striking phrases, words, or even fragments of words, which she then arranged in the form of a collage. *Father's on the Phone with the Flies* presents seventy-three of Müller's collage poems for the first time in English translation, alongside full-color reproductions of the originals. Müller takes full advantage of the collage form, generating poems rich in wordplay, ambiguity, and startling, surreal metaphors--the disruption and dislocation at their core rendered visible through stark contrasts in color, font, and type size. Liberating words from conformity and coercion, Müller renders them fresh and invests them forcefully with personal experience. Sure to thrill any fan of contemporary literature, *Father's on the Phone with the Flies* is an unexpected, exciting work from one of the most protean writers ever to win the Nobel.

This volume in the series *Mass Dictatorship in the Twentieth Century* series sees twelve Swedish, Korean and Japanese scholars, theorists, and historians of fiction and non-fiction probe the literary subject of life in 20th century mass dictatorships.

Two languages--German and Romanian--inform the novels, essays, and collage poetry of Nobel laureate Herta Müller. Describing her writing as "autofictional," Müller depicts the effects of violence, cruelty, and terror on her characters based on her own experiences in Communist Romania under the repressive Nicolae Ceau?escu regime. *Herta Müller: Politics and Aesthetics* explores Müller's writings from different literary, cultural, and historical perspectives. Part 1 features Müller's Nobel lecture, five new collage poems, and an interview with Ernest Wichner, a German-Romanian author who has traveled with her and sheds light on her writing. Parts 2 and 3, featuring essays by scholars from across Europe and the United States, address the political and poetical aspects of Müller's texts. Contributors discuss life under the Romanian Communist dictatorship while also stressing key elements of Müller's poetics, which promises both self-conscious formal experimentation and political intervention. One of the first books in English to thoroughly examine Müller's writing, this volume addresses audiences with an interest in dissident, exile, migration, experimental, and transnational literature.

Widely regarded as Muller's best novel, *The Land of Green Plums* is a beautifully written and unflinching portrayal of life under the totalitarian regime of Ceausescu's Romania.

New perspectives on the relationship - or the perceived relationship - between the German language and the causes, nature, and legacy of National Socialism and the Shoah.

Erstmals liegt mit *Schaltstelle* eine umfassende Studie zur zeitgenössischen deutschsprachigen Lyrik auf der Schwelle zum 21. Jahrhundert vor. In einem breiten Spektrum an Beiträgen

international renommierter Experten aus Deutschland, Großbritannien, den USA, Kanada, Italien und den Niederlanden präsentiert diese Untersuchung ausführliche Analysen zu bekannten Größen (wie Volker Braun, Ulrike Draesner, Durs Grünbein, Ernst Jandl, Barbara Köhler, Friederike Mayröcker, Brigitte Oleschinski und Raoul Schrott), eingehende Betrachtungen zur Lyrik des Körpers, zur Verwendung von Klischee-Bildern, zum Topos der Kindheit oder zur 'neuen Schlichtheit', sowie Beiträge zur jüngsten Generation von Dichterinnen und Dichtern, die im neuen Jahrhundert ihren Einstand gegeben haben. Untersuchungen zu individuellen Gedichtsammlungen ergänzen sich mit Abhandlungen, die Dialoge über die Jahrhundertgrenzen hinweg aufzeigen oder den Einfluß von Schlüsselfiguren wie Paul Celan und Gottfried Benn nachweisen. Zudem enthält der Band ein Interview mit Heinz Czechowski und neue Gedichte von acht führenden deutschsprachigen Lyrikerinnen und Lyrikern. Zu oft wird in Diskussionen zur Literatur in der Berliner Republik die Lyrik marginalisiert: dieser Band zeigt, daß sie im Gegenteil eine unerläßliche Rolle zu spielen hat. Für Wissenschaftler und Studierende der Germanistik, wie überhaupt für alle, die an den Entwicklungen auf dem Gebiet der modernen Lyrik interessiert sind, sollte diese Veröffentlichung zur Pflichtlektüre erhoben werden. Schaltstelle presents a pioneering examination of contemporary German poetry at the turn of the twenty-first century. Internationally recognised experts from Germany, UK, USA, Canada, Italy and the Netherlands offer a first assessment of the paths that German poetry has taken into the new millennium. Alongside in-depth analyses of established names are broader surveys of poetry of the body, the use of cliché, theories of metaphor, the topos of childhood, the 'new simplicity', and contributions dedicated to the youngest generation of poets making their debut in the new century. The volume also contains an interview with Heinz Czechowski, a substantial Bibliography and new poems by eight leading poets. Poetry is too often marginalised in discussions about literature in the Berlin Republic: this volume demonstrates that it has a vital role to play at their heart.

This book examines the ways in which fiction has addressed the continent since the Second World War. Drawing on novelists from Europe and elsewhere, the volume analyzes the literary response to seven dominant concerns (ideas of Europe, conflict, borders, empire, unification, migration, and marginalization), offering a ground-breaking study of how modern and contemporary writers have participated in the European debate. The sixteen essays view the chosen writers, not as representatives of national literatures, but as participants in transcontinental discussion that has occurred across borders, cultures, and languages. In doing so, the contributors raise questions about the forms of power operating across and radiating from Europe, challenging both the institutionalized divisions of the Cold War and the triumphalist narrative of continental unity currently being written in Brussels.

A critical companion to the works of Herta Müller, winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2009.

From the winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature 2009 'Just as the father in the house in which we live is our father, so Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu is the father of our country. And just as the mother in the house in which we live is our mother, so Comrade Elena Ceausescu is the mother of our country. Comrade Nicolae Ceausescu is the father of our children. All the children love comrade Nicolae and comrade Elena, because they are their parents.' The Passport is a beautiful, haunting novel whose subject is a German village in Romania caught between the stifling hopelessness of Ceausescu's dictatorship and the glittering temptations of the West. Stories from the past are woven together with the problems Windisch, the village miller, faces after he applies for permission to migrate to West Germany. Herta Müller describes with poetic attention the dreams and superstitions, conflicts and oppression of a forgotten region, the Banat, in the Danube Plain. In sparse, lyrical language, Herta Müller captures the forlorn plight of a trapped people. This edition is translated by Martin Chalmers, with a new foreword by Paul Bailey. Also by Herta Müller: Nadirs, The Land of Green Plums, The Appointment, and The Hunger Angel. Often called "the Kafka of Romania," Max Blecher died young but not before creating this incandescent novel. Adventures in Immediate Irreality, the masterwork of the Romanian writer Max Blecher, vividly paints the crises of "irreality" that plagued him in his youth: eerie and unsettling mirages wherein he would glimpse future events. In gliding chapters that move with a peculiar dream logic of their own, this memoiristic novel sketches the tremulous, frightening, and exhilarating awakenings of a young man.

Soon to be an FX Docuseries from Emmy® Award-Winning Producer Marc Smerling (The Jinx) featuring the author Errol Morris! Academy Award-winning filmmaker Errol Morris examines one of the most notorious and mysterious murder trials of the twentieth century In this profoundly original meditation on truth and the justice system, Errol Morris—a former private detective and director of The Thin Blue Line—delves deeply into the infamous Jeffrey MacDonald murder case. MacDonald, whose pregnant wife and two young daughters were brutally murdered in 1970, was convicted of the killings in 1979 and remains in prison today. The culmination of an investigation spanning over twenty years and a masterly reinvention of the true-crime thriller, A Wilderness of Error is a shocking book because it shows that everything we have been told about the case is deeply unreliable and that crucial elements of case against MacDonald are simply not true.

A haunting new novel that ratifies Martin Amis's standing as "a force unto himself," as the Washington Post has attested: "There is simply no one else like him." In the slave labour camps of the Soviet Union, conjugal visits were a common occurrence. Valiant women would travel vast distances, over weeks and months, in the hope of spending just one night with their lovers in the so-called House of Meetings. Unsurprisingly, the results of these visits were almost invariably tragic. Martin Amis's new novel, The House of Meetings, is about one such visit; it is a love story, gothic in timbre and triangular in shape. Two brothers fall in love with the same woman, a nineteen-year-old Jewish girl, in 1946 Moscow, a city poised for pogrom in the gap between war and the death of Stalin. The brothers are arrested, and their fraternal conflict then marinates over the course of a decade in a slave labour camp above the Arctic Circle. The destinies of all three lovers remain unresolved until 1982; but for the sole survivor, the reverberations continue into the next century. A short novel of great depth and richness, The House of Meetings finds Martin Amis at the height of his powers, in new and remarkably fertile fictional territory.

From the acclaimed author of Let the Northern Lights Erase Your Name and The Lovers comes a taut, spellbinding literary thriller that probes the essence and malleability of identity. In Vendela Vida's taut and mesmerizing novel of ideas, a woman travels to Casablanca, Morocco, on mysterious business. While checking into her hotel, the woman is robbed of her wallet and passport—all of her money and identification. Though the police investigate, the woman senses an undercurrent of complicity between the hotel staff and the authorities—she knows she'll never recover her possessions. Stripped of her identity, she feels burdened by the crime yet strangely liberated by her sudden freedom to be anyone she chooses. A chance encounter with a movie producer leads to a job posing as a stand-in for a well-known film star. The star reels her in deeper, though, and soon she's inhabiting the actress's skin off set, too—going deeper into the Casablancon night and further from herself. And so continues a strange and breathtaking journey full of unexpected turns, an adventure in which the woman finds herself moving further and further away from the person she once was. Told with vibrant, lush detail and a wicked sense of humor, The Diver's Clothes Lie Empty is part literary mystery, part psychological thriller—an unforgettable novel that explores free will, power, and a woman's right to choose not her past, perhaps not her present, but certainly her future. This is Vendela Vida's most assured and ambitious novel yet.

Winner, 2009 Nobel Prize in Literature Irene is a fragile woman born to a German family in Romania, who has recently emigrated from her native country to West Germany. Politically and socially isolated, Irene moves within the orbit of three troubled men, while simultaneously embarking on an inner exploration of exile, homeland, and identity.

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