



'Where is there such a thing in German literature? Adventure in high art? Here we have it, with Sherko Fatah.' (*Die Zeit*)

'With Fatah, a new quality enters German literature.'
(*Der Tagesspiegel*)



'An engrossing family history that you read hungrily from beginning to end.' (*Spiegel Online*)

'A great epic about the search for love and a self-determined life.'
(*Petra*)

Sherko Fatah Ein weißes Land (A White Land)

Luchterhand Literaturverlag, September 2011,
480 pp. ISBN: 978 3 630 87371 8

'Good at killing'

Following his successful 2008 novel, *Das dunkle Schiff*, which told the story of a young Iraqi during the first Gulf War, Fatah turns his considerable powers to an epic story exploring the relationship between Iraq and Germany during the Nazi period, and the history of the Jewish community in Iraq.

A White Land is packed with character and incident, opening in 1955 when Anwar, an Iraqi veteran of the Second World War, spots a German doctor in a local hospital. Can it be the same Dr Stein who treated Anwar during the war? The plot shifts back in time to Anwar's youth in Baghdad, when he betrayed the trust and affection of his Jewish friends and became involved with the Black Shirts, and progresses chronologically through his posting to Berlin as a bodyguard to the Grand Mufti of Jerusalem and into his years as an SS soldier on the Eastern Front, where he participates in the systematic massacre of Russian partisans and civilians. The final chapter returns to 1955 and solves the mystery of what has brought Dr Stein to Iraq.

A unique perspective on the Second World War, and a shocking picture of a young man who apparently commits atrocities without motivation.



© Jens Oellermann

Sherko Fatah was born in 1964 as the son of an Iraqi Kurd and a German mother. He grew up in East Germany and, in 1975, moved with his family to West Berlin, via Vienna. He studied philosophy and the history of art. He has received numerous awards and grants for his narrative work including the Hilde Domin Prize, the Alfred Döblin Grant, the honorary Award of the German Critics' Prize, and the Literarisches Colloquium Berlin Grant. *Ein weißes Land* is his fourth novel.

Previous works: *Das dunkle Schiff* (*The Dark Ship*, 2008; forthcoming in English with Seagull Books, 2012); *Onkelchen* (2004); *Donnie* (2002), *Im Grenzland* (2001)

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**Application for assistance
with translation costs:**
Germany (see page 48)

A sample translation of this title is available on the NBG website

Larissa Boehning Das Glück der Zikaden (The Song of the Cicadas)

Galiani Berlin, July 2011,
320 pp. ISBN: 978 3 86971 039 6

'... Since they all have silent wives'

Belief and betrayal, illusion and disillusion run through the heart of *The Song of the Cicadas*, as it traces the lives of three generations of women, from 1930s Moscow to a divided Berlin. These personal themes are echoed in the political settings, from communist repression to the emotional cost of comfortable living in a capitalist society.

The three main characters have been silenced by external forces or inner compulsion. Nadja is an actress forced to leave her native Russia because she married a German. Nadja's daughter must choose between following her true love, the father of her unborn child, to East Germany or settling for a safe existence with a man she does not love. Nadja's granddaughter suffers from an acute sense of isolation that leaves her prey to the lies of a compulsive gambler. In a twist on the title of the book, however, none of the men is happy either, bound up as they are with women who do not feel free to express themselves.

The narrative perspective of this arresting novel is reminiscent of Fallada's *Alone in Berlin*, swinging between different points of view and keeping the main characters at a tantalising distance from the reader.



© Julia Baier

Larissa Boehning, born in 1971, grew up in Hamburg and has lived in Spain and Berlin. She works as a graphic designer, lecturer and freelance writer. She was awarded the Literaturpreis Prenzlauer Berg (2002) for the story 'Schwalbensommer' from a previous collection. Her debut novel *Lichte Stoffe* was longlisted for the German Book Prize in 2007 and earned her the Kulturpreis der Stadt Pinneberg and Mara Cassens Prize for the best debut novel of the year.

Previous works: *Schwalbensommer* (*Swallow Summer*, forthcoming with Comma Press), *Lichte Stoffe* ('Light Materials', 2007)

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