



by Esther Kinsky
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Fiction

🏆 Winner of the Leipzig
Book Fair Prize 2018

🏆 US Jury Pick



The Goethe-Institut
supported the English
translation of this book.

Grove *Hain*

review

In *Grove*, Esther Kinsky captures the essence of Italy and the contemplative pleasures of travel. The book celebrates the Italian people, culture, landscape and wildlife in a series of tender, eloquent descriptions. Kinsky's writing is reminiscent of works by British nature writers Robert Macfarlane and Helen Macdonald.

Grove is a powerful volume of memories chronicling the narrator's travels in Italy, taking readers on a meditative trip through the country during different periods of time. This is not stereotypical Italy with its many tourist attractions and permanent sunshine, but rather Italy off the beaten track. The reader encounters hillside villages in winter, vineyards, graveyards, fauna, flora, birds, people and weather. This is a very personal journey with a strong autobiographical focus.

The narrator journeys to parts of Italy that she had intended to travel through with her partner. In the first few pages of the novel, she describes the beginnings of that journey. She stops in Ferrara, a place that she and M. had wanted to visit together in winter. The next morning, she finds someone has smashed her car window. They had left all her documents, photographs and books, and just taken two suitcases full of clothes. Sadly, the suitcases contained several items of M.'s clothing – jumpers and cardigans that she had taken along to hang over the backs of chairs in her room during her travels. She goes to the police station to report the theft and the officer tells her to search the area near the city walls where stolen goods are usually dumped. All she finds is a broken bicycle. Her description of this

event is tender and vivid, conveying her sorrow as well as the idiosyncrasies of Italian life.

Kinsky's writing is steeped in the literary tradition of the nature novel, continuing her own work in this area and reflecting her experience of translating Henry Thoreau. The language is precise yet lyrical, utterly enthralling yet understated. Kinsky takes us on a journey of mourning and discovery, in an exquisite literary work that captures and holds the reader's attention.

press quotes

«'This book devotes itself to life while constantly exploring the limits of the underworld and the way we think about the dead.'» Tilman Spreckelsen, FAZ

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about the author

Esther Kinsky was born in Engelskirchen in 1956 and lives in Berlin. She has been awarded numerous prizes for her extensive oeuvre, which includes translations from Polish, Russian and English as well as poetry, essays and works of fiction.

Other works:

"Am Fluss" (2014)

rights information

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