



by **Martina Caluori**  
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Fiction

## **Shadows of the Pine** *Schatten der Pinus*

### **review**

In her stunning debut novel, 'Shadows of the Pine', Swiss poet and storyteller Martina Caluori crafts a meditative, fragmentary glimpse into the lives of four disparate souls residing at a desolate campground 'somewhere by the sea'. This near-abandoned setting, with a carousel stands in rusted tatters and weeds overtaking the sand, serves as a hauntingly beautiful stage for a story about the dissonance between truth and memory. Caluori proves herself to be an exceptionally gifted writer, painting a landscape that feels at once end-of-the-world and vibrantly alive.

The narrative rotates through the third-person perspectives of Jochen, Bo, Phine, and a mysterious 'alte Dame' (old lady). Jochen, whose wife and young children have recently left him, lives in the quiet aftermath of domestic loss, still hearing his children's voices in the stillness. Phine swims elegantly in a neglected pool while mourning her mother's death and her sister's mental health struggles. Bo grapples with his claustrophobic childhood with his father, while the 'alte Dame' weaves pine needles and recalls a traumatic journey through the mountains as a young girl. Their lives are intensely solitary yet deeply connected to the natural world; the trees, referred to by their scientific names, act as silent witnesses to their daily routines.

The novel's disjointed structure mirrors the fragility of its characters. Short, sensory scenes – some no longer than a single paragraph –

capture the ebb and flow of their memories. There is a fable-like quality to the prose, particularly as the backstory of the 'alte Dame' unfurls, moving between German, Italian, and English. The arrival of two men, Nayo and Irun, by boat provides a rare moment of communal purpose as the group unloads provisions. When a storm breaks overnight, the characters are forced to confront the literal and metaphorical shadows that define their lives.

Caluori strikes a masterful balance between abundance and desolation. Despite the small scope of this 128-page work, spanning just a couple of days, the emotional stakes are high. It is a lyrical character study reminiscent of Samantha Harvey's *Orbital* in its ability to capture the complexity of feeling both isolated and part of a collective human experience. 'Shadows of the Pine' is a profound, life-affirming meditation on loss and the power of community that will resonate deeply with readers of high-quality international fiction.

Find out more: <https://lectorbooks.com/products/schatten-der-pinus>

## press quotes

*'Caluori's descriptions of nature and its interplay with the quiet, semi-deserted campground at which her characters live are especially memorable: she strikes a balance between abundance and desolation, community and isolation.'*

Regan Mies

## about the author



**Martina Caluori** lives in Switzerland as a poet and author. After studying Journalism and Film Studies, she made her debut in 2019 with the poetry collection *Frag den Moment* ('Ask the Moment'). This was followed by dialect poetry for *Öpadia: A Novella us Graubünda* (Öpadia: A Novel from Graubünden', 2021) and her short prose debut *Weisswein zum Frühstück* ('White Wine for Breakfast') in 2022. In

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2023, her poetry and audio collection *Ich weine am liebsten in Klos* ('I Prefer to Cry in Toilets') was published (lectrobooks). Her poetry has taken her to festivals and events in Switzerland, Germany, France, Luxembourg, Romania and Italy. Her debut novel, *Schatten der Pinus* ('Shadows of the Pine', 2026, lectorbooks), was awarded the Literary Work Grant of the City of Chur and the Grand Work Grant of the Canton of Graubünden.

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Annette Wolf

Literarische Agentur Kossack GbR

Papenhuder Str. 49

22087 Hamburg

Tel. 040 – 271 63 828-2

[annette.wolf@mp-litagency.com](mailto:annette.wolf@mp-litagency.com)

[www.mp-litagency.com](http://www.mp-litagency.com)