



by Hanns-Josef Ortheil
Luchterhand Literaturverlag
November 2015 / 384pp
Fiction

This book is outside of the five-year window for guaranteed assistance with English language translation. We suggest getting in touch with the relevant funding body for an informal conversation about the possibility of support. Please refer to our recommendations page for books that are currently covered by our funding guarantee.

The Pencil and the Paper

Der Stift und das Papier

review

The Pencil and the Paper is the autobiographical story of a young boy who finds his way from muteness to an understanding of language, and from there to an acute and prodigious observation of the world and the people he encounters – all achieved through an immersion in writing.

When a traumatic experience causes Ortheil's mother to stop speaking for several years, the young boy also turns mute and becomes so introverted that others perceive him to be learning disabled. His father decides to intervene and devises some writing exercises for him, starting with tasks such as describing cloud formations before moving on to short accounts of the day's activities or snatches of heard dialogue. Ortheil begins to chronicle his daily activities, and as he becomes aware of the possibilities of language and of writing, the whole world starts to open up to him, spurring him on to make tentative contact with others and to participate more fully in the world beyond the home. His father and later his mother continue to encourage him in his efforts, but take a back seat as their son becomes a published writer in adolescence. A fascinating tale of personal discovery and family relationships, *The Pencil and the Paper* is an engrossing and moving read.

about the author

Hanns-Josef Ortheil was born in 1951 and is one of the most important contemporary German authors. He has received many

awards for his work, among them the Brandenburg Literature Prize, the Thomas Mann Prize of the City of Lübeck and the Nicolas Born Prize. He teaches creative writing and cultural journalism as a professor at the University of Hildesheim.

Previous works include:

Die Berlinreise (2014); *Das Kind, das nicht fragte* (2012); *Liebesnähe* (2011); *Die Moselreise* (2010); *Die Erfindung des Lebens* (2009)

rights information

Translation rights sold to:

Turkey (Koton)

Translation rights available from:

Verlagsgruppe Random House

Neumarkter Str. 28

81673 Munich, Germany

Contact: Gesche Wendebourg

Email: gesche.wendebourg@randomhouse.de

www.randomhouse.de

Luchterhand Literaturverlag was founded by Hermann Luchterhand in 1924 and has been known for its literary list since 1954, with Günter Grass's novel *Die Blechtrommel* (The Tin Drum, 1959) being an early and triumphant success. The programme offers literary fiction and poetry as well as carefully edited complete editions of selected writers' works. Authors include Ernst Jandl, Pablo Neruda, António Lobo Antunes, Frank McCourt, Annie Proulx, George Saunders, Michael Cunningham, Hanns-Josef Ortheil, Terézia Mora, Saša Stanišić and Karl Ove Knausgård.