



by Jenny Erpenbeck
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Fiction

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Visitation

Heimsuchung

review

If Daphne du Maurier's *Mandalay* is the setting of a single tragedy, this moving novel, telling the story of an architect's house on the shore of a large lake in Brandenburg, near Berlin, chronicles a whole succession of misfortunes. The tale starts in the years of the Weimar Republic, when the local mayor sells off a piece of land to provide a dowry for his mentally unstable daughter, who then tragically commits suicide. An architect, one of the three original buyers, builds by the lakeside the 'summerhouse' of his dreams, and when the Nazis arrive pays his Jewish neighbour – too late, alas – for his share too.

When war breaks out and the Russians storm in, house and garden are trashed and the architect's middle-aged wife is raped. In GDR times the 'dream house' passes to two writers who have suffered under both Nazi and Communist regimes, and then to a couple of pensioners. Finally, now badly dilapidated, it is demolished and the land sold off.

The house really existed and the author, Jenny Erpenbeck, actually lived in it. Could this be why, in a remarkably modest compass, she has succeeded in offering, with such insight and sensitivity, the most poetic account of recent German history one could possibly hope to read?

press quotes

'This novel is a masterpiece.' – *Der Spiegel*

'A work of virtuosity.' – *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

about the author

Jenny Erpenbeck was born in East Berlin in 1967. She studied to become an opera director and was taught by Ruth Berghaus, Werner Herzog and Heiner Müller among others. She is now a freelance author and director. 'Sibirien', one of the eleven stories in *Tand*, was awarded the 2001 Jury Prize at the Festival of German-language Literature in Klagenfurt. Other prizes include the 2008 Solothurn Literature Prize, the 2008 Heimito von Doderer Literature Prize and became the 2006 Writer of Residence on the Island of Sylt.

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Eichborn AG

Kaiserstr. 66

D – 60329 Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Tel: +49 69 25 60 03 767

Email: rights@eichborn.de

Contact: Jutta Willand

www.eichborn.de

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