



by Evan Tepest  
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Fiction

🏆 Evan Tepest was a finalist in the open mike competition for young literature and the Edit essay competition.

## Write Your Mother's Name

### *Schreib den Namen deiner Mutter*

#### review

An exploration of family relationships, memory, guilt, and trauma alongside a coming-of-gender story.

After two years in Berlin without visiting, emerging writer Alex returns to her provincial home town to attend her grandfather's funeral. Her relationship with her police-officer mother is strained; her younger sister refuses to come to the funeral and her half-brother has been estranged from the family for years. Alex and her younger sister grew up with their mother, but moved out to live with their father aged fourteen and twelve, and the novel revolves around the reasons for this drastic decision and their mother's behaviour before and after it. Alex attempts to confront her mother about her violence, and deal with her feelings of guilt about abandoning her stepbrother.

Alex meets up with people from her past: her grandmother, her dope-smoking teenage boyfriend Wassil, now a doctor, and her former art teacher Lena, with whom she had an intense but chaste relationship from the age of eighteen. After finally consummating the relationship with Lena, Alex tells Wassil, 'I don't think I'm a woman.' He answers, 'I know.' From here on, Alex's pronoun is the non-binary 'dey', a less-established German-language equivalent to the English singular they.

Alex's mother becomes the first woman ever to enter a local shooting competition. Alex is shot accidentally by their mother, who

accompanies them to the hospital. Alex achieves some resolution, reconciling themselves to their relationship with their mother. They go to Spain before their novel comes out, and in one final short essay, refuse to write about their mother and their trauma.

With strong and honest physicality and a straightforward, laconic style, this is a pleasingly messy novel with a gentle sense of humour. It rejects commercial literary standards just as the central character rejects the demand to monetize their troubled childhood. Evan Tepest has a strong standpoint on queer and gender-identity issues and an interest in breaking down clichés and hierarchies. 'Write Your Mother's Name' shares themes and approaches with Katharina Volckmer and Maggie Nelson, and will appeal to a wide range of readers.

Find out more here:

<https://www.piper.de/buecher/schreib-den-namen-deiner-mutter-isbn-978-3-492-07271-7>

## press quotes

*Boldly physical and gently funny, Evan Tepest's novel rejects clichés and refuses to peel back layers of family trauma for our amusement; instead, we meet a refreshing new character as they learn to fix themselves in the everyday struggle that is life.*

Katy Derbyshire

## about the author



**Evan Hugo Tepest** was born in the Rhineland and is an author and journalist. Together with Lynn Takeo Musiol, he curates the event series *DYKE DOGS*. He was a finalist in the open mike competition for young literature and the Edit essay competition. *Power Bottom*, his collection of essays was published in 2023. He lives in Berlin

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Previous works: Power Bottom : Essays  
über Sprache, Sex und Community, März  
(2023).

Find out more: [www.evatepest.net](http://www.evatepest.net)

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