

An ode to lives both banal and extraordinary

# Hallelujah

ANNELIES VERBEKE

In fifteen wide-ranging stories, Annelies Verbeke examines beginnings and endings, wanting or having to start afresh and the longing for catharsis. Fitness addicts, the residents of an immigrant neighbourhood, adulterers – they're all hoping for a new beginning. At the same time, there's an awareness that everybody is mortal, a sense of the approaching Apocalypse, not to mention personal short-comings. 'Hallelujah' is a feverish, yet also humorous collection about inevitable loss and the temptation of the clean slate.

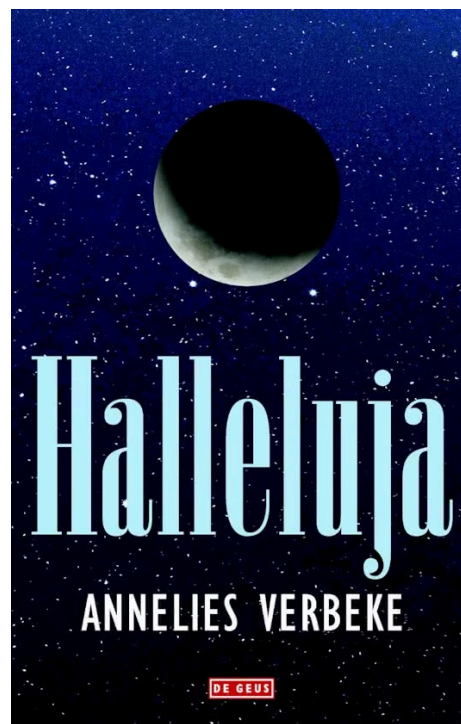
**The characters are incredibly real, even if the stories are often absurd. \*\*\*\*\***

DE VOLKSKRANT

In Verbeke's universe, everything is possible: a young Moroccan bride arrives in Brussels. A professor emeritus looks back on his life. A colicky baby won't stop wailing. A couple squabbles about cheating. A female author transforms into a bear. An old lady reminisces about her life. A star architect prepares for the Apocalypse. A woman wakes up to another life. A pensioner is galvanised by her care robot. A pair of celebrated classical musicians like to pretend they're Neanderthals. From the totally banal to the extravagantly extraordinary: Verbeke describes it all with plenty of humour as well as a melancholic undertone.

**Stylistically impressive: from understated to stirring, from poetic to experimental \*\*\*\*\***

HET PAROOL



## AUTHOR



**Annelies Verbeke** (b. 1976) is a leading figure in Flemish literature. Her novel 'Slaap' is the most widely translated Flemish debut. Her love of the short story form has made her an advocate of the genre. In addition, she has written columns, scripts, theatre texts, a graphic novel and a children's book. What makes her characters so powerful is their angular personality: they are familiar in their ordinariness, but also have a dark and unexpected side. Keywords: snappy, slightly absurdist, wistful nostalgia with keen observations. Photo © Alex Salinas

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