

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.

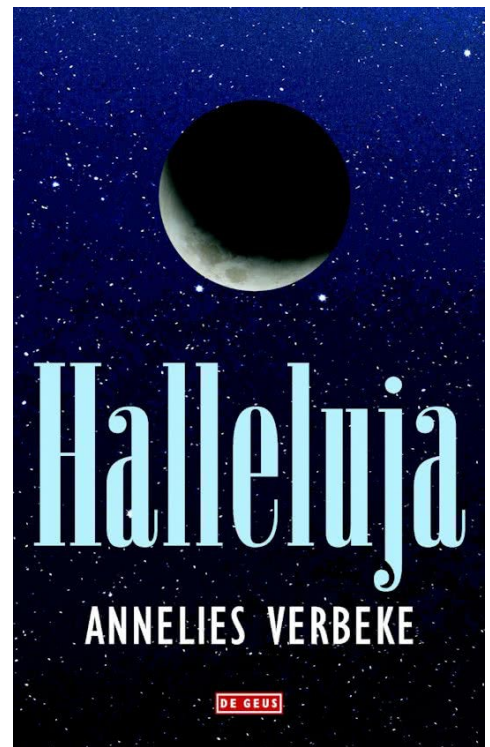
The characters are incredibly real, even if the stories are often absurd. *****

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, Verbeke is impressive too: her writing style ranges from understated to stirring, from poetic to experimental. *****

HET PAROOL



AUTHOR



Annelies Verbeke (b. 1976) made her fiction debut with the international bestseller *Sleep!* in 2003. Her work has been published in twenty countries and she has been awarded with several literary prizes. In addition to novels and stories, she has also written columns, scripts, theatre texts and a graphic novel. Keywords: snappy, slightly absurdist, weirdos and wistful nostalgia.

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RIGHTS SOLD Bulgarian (Izida)

TRANSLATION RIGHTS Jolijn Spooren - j.spooren@singeluitgeverijen.nl

TRANSLATION GRANTS Elise Vanoosthuysse - elise@flandersliterature.be, Marieke Roels - marieke@flandersliterature.be