

On the knife edge between ideas
and real life

The Ghosts

YVES PETRY

Following the painful break-up with his girlfriend Kristien, humanitarian doctor Mark Oostermans travels to camp Bilonga, a refugee camp in the interior of West Africa, on behalf of Doctors Without Colour. The civil war seems a long way from the camp, until one day a group of soldiers rock up with less than friendly intentions. But that does not seem to fill Jeroen Ullings, an ex-Jesuit and the eccentric head of the medical team, with a lot of fear – on the contrary, not nearly enough fear.

A highly original and beautifully composed story peppered with gallows humour

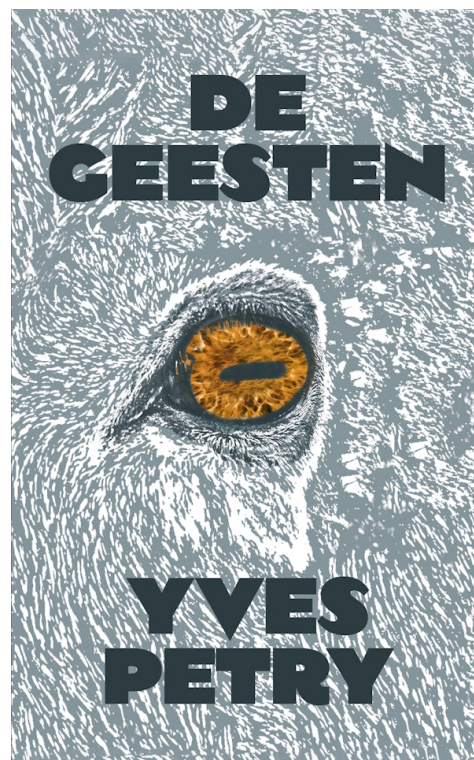
TROUW

Yves Petry's 'The Ghosts' is a philosophical book that challenges the motivations of western aid workers in Africa. At the same time it is an account of an idealistic, lonely western man who is incapable of exorcising the ghosts from his past. His obsessive love for his therapist is unrequited, yet his longing for her is greater than ever after a traumatic experience in Bilonga.

This novel once again underlines Petry's stylistic skills. 'The Ghosts' is a compelling novel of ideas, written in virtuoso prose. Besides, Petry does not shy away from provocation as he puts ideas about love, science, morality and the enlightened man into his characters' mouths.

An elegant stylist, Petry is a unique phenomenon in Flemish literature ****

DE MORGEN



AUTHOR



Yves Petry (b. 1967) is a writer and essayist. He studied mathematics and philosophy, and it shows through in his work, sometimes referred to as 'philosophiction'. Petry does not fight shy of the big moral issues, tackling subjects including artificial intelligence, cannibalism, love affairs, and grief caused by climate change. One of his central themes is the person who relates to those around him as an individual thinker. Petry has been called one of the most important stylists in Dutch-language literature. He has won awards including the Libris Literature Prize, the BNG New Literature Prize, the Inktaap, and the Tzum Prize for the year's best literary sentence. *Photo © Johan Jacobs*

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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Stella Rieck -
rieck@cossee.com

TRANSLATION GRANTS Marieke Roels -
marieke@flandersliterature.be, Elise
Vanoosthuyse - elise@flandersliterature.be,
Yannick Geens -
yannick@flandersliterature.be