FICTION

An uncompromising search for the meaning of fatherhood

Gloria

KOEN SELS

Koen Sels has been struggling with depression and feelings of worthlessness for many years. Can the arrival of 'leading lady', his baby daughter Gloria, break the negative spiral of his thoughts?

Now that they share a daughter, Sels and his girlfriend are forced to abandon their carefree artistic lifestyles and embark on a new life of responsibility in which a 'little dictator' is in charge. Gloria seems to connect him more strongly to the community around him, as well as to the bourgeois world he rebelled against when he was in his twenties. He also seems less judgemental about his own parents, whom he used to criticise for not being good enough.

> 'A slender, but major novel. *****
>
> DE STANDAARD

'Gloria' is the product of uncompromising self-analysis, with a generous dose of self-criticism thrown in. In an associative and compact style Koen Sels dissects parenthood as well as topics such as depression, politics and the climate. His long sentences balance playfully on the edge of correct grammar, as he establishes unique, experimental connections in his stream-of-consciousness writing. 'Gloria' is a personal, fragmented account about leading lady and her daddy — and about new life, happiness and redemption at a time of depression, insecurity and disintegration.

> Somebody who manages to remain proud and unsentimental in the face of a potentially saccharine subject is a writer of note. ****
>
> NRC

FLANDERS LITERATURE

AUTHOR

Koen Sels (b. 1982) lives and works in Antwerp as a writer, critic and managing editor of a literary journal. He has published articles on literature and contemporary art and, for many years, wrote the text accompanying the drawings of artist Rinus Van de Velde. His debut 'Generator' (2015) was published by het balanseer. A coming-of-age novel, it told the story of a young man growing up in the apparent normality of suburban Flanders. 'Generator' was nominated for the Bronzen Uil. Gloria is Sels' personal account of fatherhood while in the grip of depression. It has had very favourable reviews. *Photo* © Mieke Verbijlen

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PRIZES shortlisted for Boekenbon Literature Prize

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