

The comfort of imagination

What Only We Know

ELVIS PEETERS

Nour is seven and incurably ill. Her skin is growing paler, she's on a very strict diet and the pain is getting worse. But Nour keeps smiling and playing, whenever possible. While her parents are completely focused on her illness, the girl is growing closer to her older brother. He tells her stories to try and take her mind off the pain. Brother and sister imagine a universe of their own in which they are safe and forever connected. The stories make their imminent farewell more bearable. At the centre of them is a bird only they can see. With Nour deteriorating, it's becoming harder to think of a suitable story; language is running out. At one point, language is replaced altogether by a series of black-and-white drawings by Charlotte Peys in which a bird is put together from all kinds of scavenged materials.

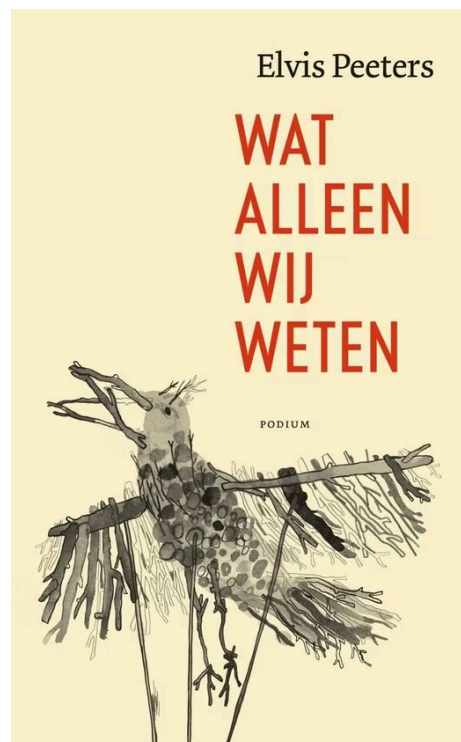
Beautiful! It's hard not to be moved by the tender bond between brother and sister.

HET PAROOL

'What Only We Know' is an ode to imagination, written in pared down language that lies somewhere between poetry and prose. Brief, fragmented chapters convincingly capture the sibling relationship, leaving lots of space for all things poetic, tender, evocative as well as bitter. Without ever sliding into sentimentality, this novella presents a powerful narrative about love and loss and the resilience of the young.

The book stays with you days after reading

KNACK



AUTHOR



Writing duo Elvis Peeters (b. 1957) writes fiction, poetry, scripts and children's books. They pour their social engagement and activism into beautifully crafted and unique narratives. In their novels, they succeed in addressing fascinating moral issues through what appears to be a simple story. In their picture books they're able to create maximum (poetic) effect with a minimum of words. *Photo © Siska Vandecasteele*

ORIGINAL TITLE Wat alleen wij weten (Podium, 2021, 80 pp.)

TRANSLATION RIGHTS Orli Naamani - orli.naamani@lannoomeulenhoff.nl

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