

NONFICTION

In search of world history in everyday stories

# The High Plains

LIEVE JORIS

Lieve Joris first travelled to Congo in 1985, in the footsteps of her great uncle who was a missionary. In *Back to the Congo* she wrote of a search for her colonial history in the heart of Africa. More than twenty years and two Congo books later, she turned her attention to the high plains in the east of the country, an inhospitable region without roads or electricity that was never fully colonized by the Belgians, where a combination of militarism, superstition and prophesy governs daily life. The colonel who controls the region assigns Joris a guide.

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They walk from market to market, sleeping in huts and schools, but gradually the power of the colonel starts to decline and the guide becomes increasingly insecure. The ancient landscape brings back powerful memories of Joris' childhood village. The trip comes to feel like a farewell, a final challenge to be faced.



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## AUTHOR



**Lieve Joris** (b. 1953) has built an international reputation as a writer of nonfiction, with books about the Middle East, Africa and Hungary. She emerges as an engaged observer, able to convey the atmosphere of postcolonial Africa with great authenticity. She has the astonishing gift of being able to unite the broad picture with its details, somehow managing to combine analysis and storytelling without ever losing the thread of either.

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