NONFICTION

Penetrating travel stories

Mali Blues and other stories

LIEVE JORIS

In 'Mali Blues' Lieve Joris travels from Senegal via Mauretania to Mali. She gives a portrait of the people she encounters. In their will to survive they have learned to adapt to constants such as poverty and rebellion.

‘At home they sometimes ask me if I am lonely when I travel, or afraid. How can you be lonely or frightened in a country where you are picked out of the crowd after just three days by someone who has taken the trouble to remember your name?’ she states in the story ‘Amadou’, named after a 34-year-old man from the rural hamlet of Podor, who is able to conjure up pictures on his TV with his aerial when the rest of the village can get nothing but snow on the screen. She becomes so close to him that he tells her about the death of his pregnant wife. He dreams of buying a decoder, so that he can receive Canal Plus.

> She has expanded the boundaries of travel writing.
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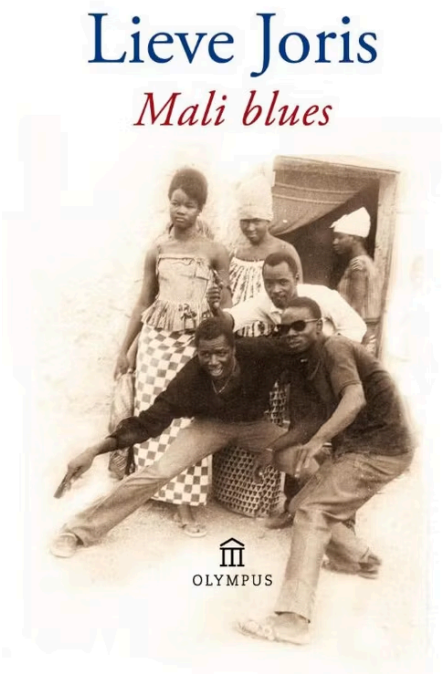
> TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT

The main character in the title story is the Malinese blues singer Boubacal Traoré (alias Kar Kar). At first the fifty-year-old singer is reticent about answering Joris’ questions about his life but 140 pages later he has revealed his innermost soul. Through her personal approach and style Joris is able to penetrate to the heart of a people.

> Lieve Joris reaches a delicate emotional level that travel literature rarely reaches.
>
> VRIJ NEDERLAND



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. Photo © Atlas Contact

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