

My life as a laboratory animal

Monkey Business

JAN LAUWEREYNS

This novel spans the last eight hours in the life of Haruki, a Japanese macaque who 'lives' in a neurophysiology laboratory. The story is told from the perspective of Haruki himself, as he reflects on virtually every aspect of being an experimental animal, while awaiting 'his last major experiment' – being put down.

We learn about Haruki's life of many empty days, of interminable uncertainty as to when yet another new test will be conducted in the special chair. Fortunately, there is his neighbour and comic partner in adversity Shin. But after the death of Haruki's personal scientist, the Westerner Rorensu, all he has to look forward to is the lethal injection...

A remarkable amalgam of science and poetry, one that ultimately serves the interest not only of truth but also of beauty and goodness

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'Monkey Business' is refreshingly and inventively written. Without once being didactic, it puts the finger on a crucial paradox: we use monkeys for scientific experiments because they are like us (their brains and cognitive processes are similar to ours), but at the same time we use monkeys because they are not like us (so we can do things with them that we wouldn't do to humans).

A work of great literary merit, which has its roots in books by authors including Nasume Soseki, George Orwell and Franz Kafka.

DIE FABELSCHMIEDE



JAN LAUWEREYNS

Monkey business

Roman



AUTHOR



Jan Lauwereyns (b. 1969) is a writer, poet and scientist. He works as a professor in cognitive neuroscience at Kyushu University in Fukuoka, Japan. He is also an accomplished multilingual poet, occasionally working in collaboration with such poets as Michael Palmer and Ulrike Draesner. Japanese culture and his academic research into the psychology of visual perception are major influences on his work. *Photo © Keke Keukelaar*

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