

Life in capital cities

# Great European Novel

KOEN PEETERS

In 'Great European Novel' – a tongue-in-cheek reference to 'The Great American Novel' – Koen Peeters has found the perfect form for a book about Europe and the European idea that lies behind it. The main character, Robin, young and ambitious, takes a tour of all the capital cities of Europe on behalf of his world-weary employer, looking for new marketing strategies for promotional gifts. During his trip, however, he spends more and more time compiling word lists, impressions and reports of conversations and meetings. Peeters' main characters reflect both the old continent's weariness and its determination to live. This uncommonly rich and subtle novel has the finesse of an allegory.

**A revelation. Reading a story like this makes you happy**

CORRIERE DELLA SERA

Peeters' style has secured his extraordinary reputation in the world of Dutch-language literature. He writes inventive, efficient, succinctly comic prose, characterized by a restrained yet sparkling style interlaced with mild sarcasm and sincere empathy. Peeters deals with themes such as identity, fame and mortality, and the attempts writers make to gain insight into nature and how it functions. With a typically Belgian absurdism, he brings together the most improbable subjects in his literary constructs.

**Humour, subtle thoughts, impressive language and a clever construction**

NRC HANDELSBLAD



## AUTHOR



**Koen Peeters** (b. 1959) is the author of a discreet but increasingly impressive oeuvre to which he has added more than 10 books since his debut in 1988 with 'Conversations with K'. Great European Novel was shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize and was translated in several languages. A Thousand Hills, about Rwanda and its genocide, won him the prestigious E. du Perron Prize. The people healer, about a professor of anthropology won both the ECI Literature Prize and the ECI Readers' Prize. A room in Ostend is a fascinating seaside resort seen through the eyes of writers and painters. *Photo © Koen Broos*

**ORIGINAL TITLE** Grote Europese roman (2009, De Bezige Bij, 294 pp.)

**PRIZES** shortlisted Libris Literature Prize

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