

Why blood fascinates and repels us

Bloodrush

JAN VERPLAETSE

As a student of philosophy, Jan Verplaetse went down the cellar steps at his parents' house and saw a hare suspended from a meat hook, skinned and gutted. What struck him so forcefully at the time was not the hare itself but the blood dripping gently out of its mouth to be caught in a white dish.

Most surprising to him was that he felt no fear, horror or disgust at the sight of the blood, but instead had an urge to touch it. He felt an endless fascination for this red bodily fluid. This youthful experience was the start of the quest he undertakes in this book.

An original and refreshing study that does not shrink from taking the shine off some well-worn symbolism.

IFILOSOFIE

Blood has always sent people into raptures. It frightens, fascinates, even titillates. It intoxicates us, to the point that we lose ourselves in religion, in hunting and killing, violence, war, martial arts and horror films.

Does blood offer us a chance to escape the rational and efficient world in which we live? Does blood still have something mysterious about it? Where does the magic of blood come from?

In this well-documented narrative account, with reference to personal experiences, religious traditions, Western literature and philosophy, cultural, technological and scientific developments, Jan Verplaetse looks for answers to the question of why blood fascinates us, yet instils revulsion in us at the same time.



AUTHOR



Jan Verplaetse (b. 1969) is a moral philosopher attached to the law faculty of the University of Ghent. Nieuwezijds also published his earlier books, 'The Moral Instinct', which won him the NWO Eureka Book Prize and was translated into German by Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, and 'Without Free Will' (2011). *Photo © Philip Vanoutrive*

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TRANSLATION GRANTS Patrick Peeters - patrick@flandersliterature.be