

Scintillating novella echoing the Orpheus myth

# Memoirs of a Leopard

PETER VERHELST

As a young man the narrator attends art school for a while. He is fascinated by his mysterious neighbour, who draws and sculpts. His parents do not want him to associate with her, because they are afraid she will throw him off balance, while he only wants to capture other people's reality in drawing, and they are glad when one fine day they find she has moved.

When the narrator, later in his life, works in a museum, he rediscovers his love by accident in an estate agent's office. Then follows the account of his attempts to really see her, to become completely absorbed in her. In his attempts he oscillates between exuberance and asceticism - which in his view are related. As a painter the narrator wants to paint the ultimate portrait of his beloved in the most appropriate and striking way. He becomes so permeated by the beloved, so bewildered by fascination and jealousy, that their love can only end in tragedy.

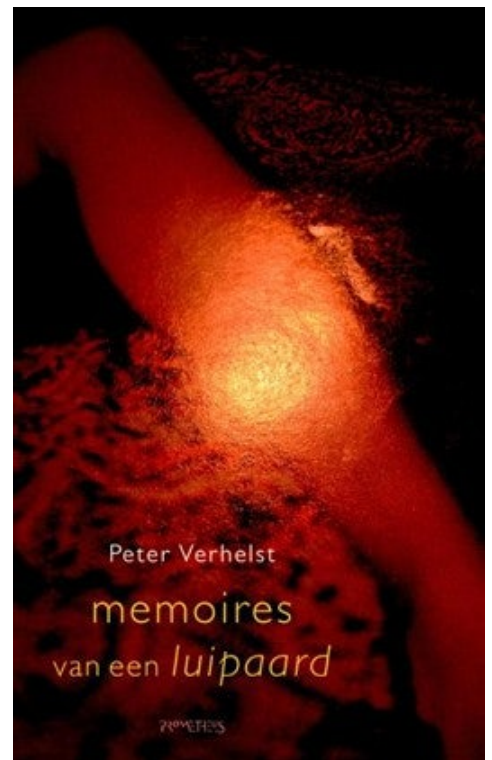
**Verhelst's language is physical, erotic, full of illusions and enchantment. As brutal as it is tender.**

DE STANDAARD

Verhelst writes this story of an inspired passion in highly poetic, but also glowing, compelling and incisive prose, with a strongly physical wealth of images, a super-sensitive and sensual explicitness. This creates a troubled, but fascinating blurring of the boundaries between reality and imagination, as well as reality and memory.

**An intoxicating, sensory gem of a novel**

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## AUTHOR



**Peter Verhelst** (b. 1962) is a novelist, scriptwriter, myth and theatre maker, poet and picture book author all in one. As a child he wanted to become a painter, but decided to write from a live model instead. His work has been praised for its powerful images, the sensuality and richness of its language and the author's unbridled imagination. In 2018 he won the Sybren Poet Prize for Literature, a prize for authors with an experimental literary oeuvre. In 2021 he was awarded the Constantijn Huygens Prize for his oeuvre which the jury described as 'breathtaking'.  
*Photo © Chris Ward*

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