

FICTION

An intelligent, challenging and entertaining page-turner

The Straggler

YVES PETRY

Gram works on a robot which uses brain scans to load itself up with human intelligence, without the emotional ballast. The robot will ultimately far outstrip human intelligence, and will 'reduce mankind to a self-help group for stragglers'. On the plane to a colloquium in Texas, he's working on his speech about the future – unable to fully concentrate because his father has just died. To Gram's relief his father succumbed to a physical disease, syphilis, and not a mental one. Gram is a devotee of cool intelligence who likes to regard people as machines rather than as creatures with a unique personality and psychology. However, he cannot function as a machine himself. He is constantly preoccupied with his past and overcome by doubts and questions about his existence. Gram becomes a prey to the thing he had always repudiated: emotions.

Petry is a very good, occasionally brilliant narrator with a good eye for meaningful detail.

DE MORGEN

Petry's main character is a misanthrope who overestimates himself; someone who looks down disparagingly on what makes man human and on what he considers to be man's limited intelligence, as expressed in spirituality or psychology. 'The Straggler' is an intelligent, challenging and entertaining page-turner that addresses the reader in a very personal tone.

Flair, intelligence, and humour are abundantly present in his book.

HET PAROOL

YVES PETRY
ROMAN DE
ACHTERBLIJVER



AUTHOR



Yves Petry (b. 1967) is a writer and essayist. He studied mathematics and philosophy, and it shows through in his work, sometimes referred to as 'philosofiction'. Petry does not fight shy of the big moral issues, tackling subjects including artificial intelligence, cannibalism, love affairs, and grief caused by climate change. One of his central themes is the person who relates to those around him as an individual thinker. Petry has been called one of the most important stylists in Dutch-language literature. He has won awards including the Libris Literature Prize, the BNG New Literature Prize, the Inktaap, and the Tzum Prize for the year's best literary sentence. *Photo © Johan Jacobs*

ORIGINAL TITLE De achterblijver (2006, De Bezige Bij, 286 pp.)

TRANSLATION RIGHTS Stella Rieck -
rieck@cossee.com

TRANSLATION GRANTS Marieke Roels -
marieke@flandersliterature.be , Elise
Vanoosthuysen - elise@flandersliterature.be ,
Yannick Geens -
yannick@flandersliterature.be