

Josefine Klougart: *New Forest*

A novel



New novel by author of *On Darkness* and *One of Us is Sleeping*

“Scandinavia now has its own Virginia Woolf. Few get as close to the human mind as Klougart.”– Mari Nymoén Nilsen, *VG*, Norway

“Josefine Klougart has established herself as one of the most powerful and compelling voices of her generation. Combining poetic precision with a wry wit, these broken, candid narratives interweave memory, loss and courageous passion, moving the reader with the acuity of their emotional truth.”

– Award-winning author, Jens Christian Grøndahl

Longlisted for the **International Dublin Literary Award 2018** for *One of Us is Sleeping*.

Published in **Denmark** by Forlaget Gladiator, 2017.

The author: Danish-born Josefine Klougart (b. 1985) made her literary debut with the novel *Stigninger og fald* (*Rise and Fall*) which was nominated for the **Nordic Council Literature Prize** in 2010. A year later, Klougart was awarded the **Danish Royal Prize for Culture**. The committee called her “one of the most important writers, not just of her generation, but of her time.” Her second novel, *Hallerne* (*The Halls*), was adapted for the stage at Aarhus Theatre in February 2012. That same year, Klougart published her third novel *Én af os sover* (*One of us is Sleeping*). The book was nominated for the **Nordic Council Literature Prize** 2013.

Klougart is the editor of the literary journal, *Den blå port* (*The Blue Gate*). She studied Art History and Literature at Århus University and in 2010 she graduated from the Danish Writer’s School.

Awards and nominations (selected): Longlisted for the **International Dublin Literary Award 2018**; Shortlisted for the **Danish Broadcasting Corporation’s Fiction Prize** 2014; Shortlisted for **The Readers’ Award**; She has twice been nominated for the **Nordic Council Literature Prize** 2013; Nominated for **The Readers’ Award**; **Best Indie Book of the Year** 2016 (Turkish Kitabi).

Josefine Klougart: *New Forest*

A Novel

Original title: *New Forest* (2017).

Publisher: Forlaget Gladiator, Denmark.

Pages: 700.

English sample translation by Martin Aitken available. Full-length English synopsis available.

Rights sold: **Germany:** Matthes & Seitz, **Sweden:** Albert Bonniers förlag, **Turkey:** Bence Kitap.

About the book: A young girl on a trip to the south of England rides a horse through *New Forest* and sees a blacksmith hammering on a red-hot horseshoe. A young woman, an author, is in a complicated relationship and contemplates having children. An older woman takes care of her dying husband and finally watches him lying dead in his open coffin in the living room. Three women at three different stages in life. Their storylines intertwine and become an ambitious novel about what it means to be a daughter, mother, sister and lover. What it is like to be loved, and what it is like to stand outside the light of love.

Excerpt from *New Forest*, p. 304

We woke up in the bed and crawled out of our mother’s arms and across our father’s sleep. Bleary-eyed, we padded through the corridor where the light of the summer’s night sky beamed into the room like a searchlight. We crept across the floors that creaked under our feet. We stood in the light from the open fridge and stared, drank low-fat milk from the carton and picked slices of cured pork from the packet, rolling the rose-pink meat into tubes and pressing them into our mouths. The night was ours. When you are seven you know everything. Realism has yet to ruin things. Our hands and cheeks were chubby, the nightingale was there too, and the apple tree growing so furiously that the bottom of the garden lay dark. Childhood is the most serious part of life. We went back to bed, crawling across our father’s sleep into our mother’s arms.

Selected reviews:

“Josefine Klougart’s novel ‘New Forest’ is a remarkable, sensuous and tangible study of the historical, social and ecological layers in our surroundings. (...) Inspired by, amongst others, Inger Christensen, whom the novel in parts directly and indirectly nods to, Klougart manages with *New Forest* to create a remarkable novel about what it means to be human in this world. It is not least a novel about how we in various ways are connected historically, socially and organically to our “natural” and “cultural” surroundings and worlds. The fact that the novel not only says it, but also demonstrates it, makes it sensuous and tangible for the reader and this is the novel’s greatest strength.” – ★★★★★ *Kristeligt Dagblad*

“**A piece of advice: please read the first ten pages aloud. Dwell on the rhythm.** Postponed departures, insistent jealousy and the longing for that which is lost is explored in Josefine Klougart’s new novel. The novel is about time; nature’s merciless grinding of time. (...) It is about horses: saddle horses, wild horses, *Runaway Horses* (...) because this is exactly what the main character of the novel is: a woman that escapes her own wedding, or at least a relationship, that could have ended in marriage and babies. (...) “New Forest” is not least about myths, the myth of the mother who sacrifices everything for her child, the mourning mother, the myth about the happy family, the myth of the lost land. (...) Klougart is brilliant at registering and amplifying details in imagery, an imagery that is just as meticulous as it is forceful.”

- ♥♥♥♥♥ *Politiken*

“Josefine Klougart’s new novel is rich, profound and uncompromising. (...) [Her prose] is sensuous, delicious and there is always plenty to like. (...) As you may sense, there is a clear connection between the three themes and Josefine Klougart dissolves the boundaries of their destinies and lets them intertwine in the same way as the narratives shifts between the third and first person, internal and external. It is rich, profound and uncompromising. This accomplishment deserves great respect.” - ★★★★★ *Berlingske*

Josefine Klougart: On Darkness

A Novel

Original title: Om mørke (2013).

Publisher: Forlaget Gladiator, Denmark.

Pages: 329.

Full-length English synopsis available.

Rights sold: **Bulgaria:** Perseus Publishing, **Norway:** Gyldendal Norsk forlag, **Sweden:** Albert Bonniers förlag, **World English:** Deep Vellum Publishing.

Shortlisted for DR’s Best Novel of the Year 2014.

Shortlisted for The Readers’ Award.

About the book: *Of Darkness* is both a story of destruction and creation. There are earthquakes, avalanches, explosions, cloudbursts, horse calamities, eye accidents, a young man who loses his father, a loved one who wants to have access to the grief and to him, there is possibly a murder,

at least lots of death. There's love, pearls, beautiful presents from a family, apple pillaging in Bogens, a trip to Italy, walks on the beach, all the silver you can carry and amber.

The destruction that the book describes is not only the extraordinary dramatic destruction, it is mainly the decay that we witness each day. The daily confrontation with death that comes in pain, sickness, the changes of the body, nails that need cutting again, fruit in the bowl rotting, the autumn that eats its way in on us. Quite simply that we witness an all-consuming unwinding every day.

Selected reviews:

Denmark:

“Living with the constant loss is the recurring theme in Josefine Klougart’s work. In her latest book, Klougart’s unique visual prose is scattered with a tinge of surrealism and reaches new heights.” - *Politiken*, starred review

“If you give in to the rhythm and images Josefine Klougart’s new novel, *On Darkness*, is an experience that resonates profoundly. (...) 330 pages of this can baffle even the most highbrow reader. But the burgeoning tiredness from reading, is soon overcome by Klougart’s rhythm and intense images both with metaphors of nature and longer descriptions. (...) Perhaps this is a book that must be sensed rather than understood and as a reader one must let oneself drift between the imagery exchange of contrasts.” - *Berlingske*, starred review

“One again the reader becomes dizzy with the countless beautiful words in Josefine Klougart’s new novel.” - *Kristeligt Dagblad*

“The beautifully structured sensations and comparisons contribute to the aesthetic enjoyment” - *Weekendavisen*

“As always, Klougart demands the reader’s full attention, but she rewards us with images that with careful sensation reinvents our language (...) An almost frighteningly talented voice in Danish literature.” - *Fyens Stiftstidende*, starred review

“Last year, Josefine Klougart was shortlisted for the Nordic Council Literature Prize for the second time. The prize went to Kim Leine for *Profeterne ved Evighedsfjorden* and he deserved it. But so did Klougart. *Stigninger og fald (Rise and Fall)* (2010) and *En af os sover (One of us is sleeping)* (2012) are both proof of her exceptional artistic talent. Klougart’s talent is confirmed in her new book *Om mørke (On Darkness)*.” - *Aarhus Stiftstidende*, starred review

“Klougart (...) proves that she, linguistically, is unparalleled.” - *Litteratursiden*

“Once again, Josefine Klougart shifts the boundaries for what a book can say.” - *Information*

Sweden:

“She has an unusual ability to create phrases, images and a language that you long to stay in and remember forever. She looks deep inside the human mind. With apparent ease she draws the fragility that the human being experiences when she seeks foothold in the twilight of life.” -

Dagens Nyheter

“Danish Klougart has become known for writing the most beautiful prose in Scandinavia. (...) There is something French about her style, my mind is drawn to the New Wave Films and not least to Marguerite Duras. (...) I believe that the author could even achieve the impossible, to describe light.” - *Sydsvenskan*

“Josefine Klougart writes dazzlingly beautiful. (...) Klougarts literature is ambitious and demanding, but truly rewarding.” - *Göteborgs-Posten*

“Linguistically innovative, introvert with a poetic clarity. (...) Her voice is worth listening to.” - *Vetlanda-Posten*

Josefine Klougart: *One of Us is Sleeping*

A Novel

Original title: *Én af os sover* (2012).

Publisher: Rosinante & Co., Denmark.

Pages: 260.

Complete French translation available.

Complete English translation available.

Rights sold: **Bulgaria:** Perseus Publishing, **Croatia:** VBZ, **France:** Actes Sud, **Germany:** Matthes & Seitz, **Holland:** Uitgeverij Oevers, **Italy:** Scritturapura Casa Editrice, **Norway:** Heinesen, **Portugal:** Cavalo de Ferro / Theoria, **Sweden:** Albert Bonniers förlag, **Turkey:** Bence Kitap, **English (world):** Open Letter Books.

Longlisted for the International Dublin Literary Award 2018.

Nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize 2013.

Nominated for The Readers' Award.

Best Indie Book of the Year 2016 (Turkish Kitabi).

About the book: “*One of Us is Sleeping* is a novel about leaving and being left behind; a story about the unfolding of a relationship that insists on the necessity of sorrow. It is a novel about loss, homelessness, and light,” says the author Josefine Klougart.

One of Us is Sleeping is widely regarded by Danish critics as a masterpiece. The major Danish newspaper Politiken called it “a fascinating novel of love and loss” and Berlingske Tidende referred to it as “one of this year’s great novels.”

The book is nominated for **the Nordic Council Literature Prize 2013** and **the Readers Book Award 2012/13** and it is sold to several countries.

One of Us is Sleeping is a novel of loss and sorrow, a novel that insists on the imperative of grief and the beauty of recollection. A novel about reconciliation (always ongoing) with the fleeting nature of possession, of what we believe will always be present in our lives: our parents, the home of our childhood, the people we love. It is a novel that is at once essay and poetry, brimming with keen observation and startling imagery.

In scenes of random chronology, *One of Us is Sleeping* portrays the young woman's time with her lover as well as with his "deceased" predecessor, at the same time pursuing a present-time narrative encompassing a journey back to the snow-covered landscape of childhood. Vivid depictions of nature interplay with dialogue and scenes from a life in love. And weaving its way throughout, the essayistic voice, a poetic deliberation on love, homelessness, death and solitude.

The mother in the childhood home is sick with cancer, past relinquishment thereby reflecting in future loss, the reader and the I of the narrator being confronted simultaneously with the unjust premise of existence: continuing loss. At the same time, the novel is a celebration of literature and beauty – in art, nature and love, the latter, while fleeting, nonetheless remaining eternal in recollection.

Selected reviews:

US:

"A brokenhearted writer returns home to her family farm in this elegiac and disorienting novel, the author's English-language debut. While staring out at the snow that has 'upholstered everything in frost' on Denmark's Jutland peninsula, separating the North and Baltic Seas, Klougart's unnamed narrator obsessively recalls 'pictures of the emotions' from the past eight years—foraging for False Chanterelles, a disappointing visit to Pompeii, the time her boyfriend slapped her hand to stop her from chewing her lip. Her mind also wanders to the events that followed the breakup with her boyfriend: a fling with an older man, a dreadfully uncomfortable meeting with her ex outside his used bookstore, an ill-fated attempt to start over; the timeline is muddled, but so is the writer's mind. 'She can't remember beginning to love him, and she can't remember stopping,' Klougart writes. 'The feeling doesn't move like that, forward or backward. It exists.' Mystifying, certainly, but Klougart's graceful and precise language propels the novel through a succession of images that justify the vagueness of that feeling, what is eventually described as something akin to 'separating an egg, passing the yolk from hand to hand, the fragile yolk that might break at any moment.' This is a beguiling conjuring of consciousness."

– *Publishers Weekly*

"Call them prose poems, call them flash fictions, call them lyric shorts — these pieces' shine beyond categorization." - Christopher McCormick, *The Review Review*

"The cryptic title—perhaps a metaphor signaling missed opportunities—is as pensive as the rest of this slim volume, a prizewinning best-seller in Denmark. [...] The nameless narrator paints her

grief into a poetic portrait. And therein lies Klougart’s genius. She renders the emotional landscape in impressionistic soft focus. The speaker’s voice arrests because it conveys more than setting, plot, or character development—it transmits powerful feelings. [...] *One of Us Is Sleeping* is brilliant.” – *World Literature Today*

“Klougart has been called Denmark’s Virginia Woolf, and it’s easy to see why. Her writing is poetic and sensitive...digging deep to the core of universal themes and human psychology.” – *Literary Hub*

“Klougart deftly transports us into another person’s mind while simultaneously showing us our own.” – *Bookishly Witty*

“Klougart has crafted a rich novel. Her evocative explorations of how words and life work in tandem to tease meaning from the seemingly inexplicable and random events of life combine to create a novel that is richly creative and boldly written.” – *Colorado Review*

“Denmark’s pre-eminent postmodernist writer.” – *Fjords Magazine*

“A dolorous, yet beautifully composed work of failed love, loss, and lament. The star of Klougart’s book is her gorgeous, evocative imagery and emotional acuity.” – *Three Percent*

“A consistently compelling read from beginning to end.” – *Midwest Book Review*

“In Klougart’s English-language debut, her narrator struggles with depression, loneliness, and existential angst while trying to make sense of her rocky relationships. Something of a wunderkind in her native Denmark, Klougart has published three other novels to wide acclaim, earning comparisons to Virginia Woolf and Anne Carson. Translated by Aitken, this discursive, deeply internal account of psychological pain has few English-language stylistic analogs, in part because its lyrical prose resists the idea of being a novel more often than it embraces it. As the narrator reflects on love lost, the point of view slips between first person and third person—sometimes even midparagraph—suggesting a psychological break, dissociation from a painful past, and the failure to write an accurate first-person account all rolled into one. Readers willing to take their time and allow Klougart to forcefully direct their attention will be treated to strange and surprising metaphors—an apartment smells like “bottled summer,” and love is “A desire for light, twenty-four hours a day.” [...] Klougart delivers a sustained meditation on love, loss, and alienation.” – *Kirkus Review*

Norway:

In the Norwegian newspaper VG Josefine Klougart’s *One of us is Sleeping* was chosen as one of the 5 best books of 2012: “Scandinavia now has its own Virginia Woolf. Few get as close to the human mind as Klougart” - Mari Nymoens Nilsen, *VG*, starred review

“During the reading of this novel you are experiencing reading in its most original and pure form – where you are getting your first shot of this psychedelic dope once again – feeling it all once

again as for the first time” - Susanne Christensen, *Klassekampen*

“I was completely blown away by the beauty and the level of reflexion in Josefine Klougart's language” - Ane Nydal, *Morgenbladet*

“Strong candidate for the Nordic Council's Prize for Literature... Klougart beats the air out of me and succeeds in writing about the transience of life in a new, intense and tangible way. This is what good literature is all about.” - Ida Vågseter, *Stavanger Aftenblad*

Sweden:

“I don't think I've ever read anything as beautiful about dying. (...) *One of us is Sleeping* is a novel to love, in the way that literature and reading can be loved.” - *Svenska Dagbladet*

“It is an odd feeling to suddenly understand the core of existence in the way that this young author presents it. Strange and masterly. And beautiful.” - *Dagens Nyheter*

“*One of us is Sleeping* is a brilliant book.” - *Arbetarbladet*

“It is not without reason that Josefine Klougart is one of Denmark's most celebrated young authors.” - *Sydsvenskan*

Denmark:

“A masterpiece. (...) Josefine Klougart is probably the best young writer in Denmark ... one of this year's grand novels” - *Berlingske Tidende*, starred review

“A fascinating novel of love and loss... Klougart is a master” - *Information*

“A thoughtful and sensitive novel” - *Kristeligt Dagblad*

“With only three novels to her name Josefine Klougart has established herself as one of the most powerful and compelling voices of her generation. Combining poetic precision with a wry wit, these broken, candid narratives interweave memory, loss and courageous passion, moving the reader with the acuity of their emotional truth.” -Award-winning author, Jens Christian Grøndahl

“A sparkling lyrical novel about the disintegration of a love affair. (...) Klougart's sensuous imagery is brilliant with visual observations that leave a lasting imprint on the reader's mind.” - *Ekstra Bladet*

“Fascinating novel about love and loss of love (...) A strong and fascinating third novel (...) Klougart writes beautifully and insightfully about loss.” - *Politiken*, starred review

“Josefine Klougart masters the art of describing in words the expressions and impacts of existence” - *MetroExpress*

“So incredibly well-written ... a perfect work of art” - *Fredericia Dagblad*

“An incredibly beautiful novel, talented written and filled with lyrical passages that weave their way in and out of the language. You rarely, or never, see a writer capable of using the Danish language this way. We might have to go all the way back to J.P. Jacobsen to see lyrical prose at a comparable level.” - Stefan Kjerkegaard, PhD at Aarhus Universitet, Assistant Professor at Aarhus University, Faculty of Arts

Bulgaria:

“Reflections and memories interweave to describe the different aspects of personal disappointments associated with the lost of a carefree childhood and the comfort of a time when the world seemed safe and orderly.” - Lyudmila Gabrovksa, *Monitor*

“Unusual, original and provocative in its style novel.” - Evgenia Gigova, *Actualno*

Turkey:

“Klougart style’s questions the existence of her subject matter in lyrical tones, she diverts the body, quietly listens to her mind and heart. (...) Josefine Klougart’s novel *İkimizden Biri* Uyuyor is like an enormous sea of clouds that you watch.” -Adalet Çavdar, *Sabitfikir*

“Josefine Klougart, the Virginia Woolf of Denmark, focuses on family issues, writes a poetic almost lyrical biographical novel that is inspired by the wet, dark, cold Nordic scene of the rainy hills and dark green forests.” - Seçil Epik, book critic, *K24 Magazine*

“The author displays everything in timeless prose. She touches on all details without fear, focusing on subjects that concern us all.” - Öznur Özkaya

Josefine Klougart: The Halls

A Novel

Original title: Hallerne (2011).

Publisher: Rosinante & Co., Denmark.

Pages: 175.

About the book: *The Halls* is a lyrical investigation of a masochistic relationship between a man and a woman. With Copenhagen as its backdrop, the apartment of the two protagonists becomes a stage to the audience in the bar across the street. These perspectives— of the audience, the man and the woman —create a space for the exploration of love and desire, power and humiliation; the act of seeing.

Selected reviews:

Denmark:

“Klougart is a brilliant writer (...) horribly beautiful and intense.” - *Politiken*

“A sophisticated novel” - *Information*

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“It takes courage and talent to write a novel without an actual plot or progression and a 150-page poem. Klougart does both in one movement and the result is on the whole both horrifically beautiful and intense.” - *Berlingske Tidende*

Norway:

“The man makes emotionless art from his lovemaking but Klougart writes back and makes emotional art out of him.” - Susanne Christensen, *Vagant*

Josefine Klougart: Stigninger og fald

A Novel

Original title: Rise and Fall (2010).

Publisher: Rosinante & Co., Denmark.

Pages: 171.

Rights sold: **Brazil:** Editora Moinhos, **Iceland:** Sagarana editora forlag, **Norway:** Heinesen.
Nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize 2011.

About the book: *Rise and Fall* is the evocation of a childhood on the island of Mols in the 1980s. It is a lyrical journey through the exterior and interior landscapes of nature and the soul. It is a portrait of a family, of a hometown, and of an encounter with language. The places and language of childhood—all the things that shape a human being.

Selected reviews:

Denmark:

“An evocation of childhood as engaging and precisely observed as any”
 - Carsten Jensen, author of *We, the Drowned*

“Josefine Klougart’s excellent novel Rise and Fall was one of the true gifts of the publishing season.” - *Information*

“It has been a long time since you’ve read a book by such a young writer, in which nature plays a leading part and is poetically intertwined with the description of a child’s consciousness... *Rise and Fall* is an exceptionally beautiful and confident debut.” - *Politiken*

“With this book she demonstrates a shining talent for expressing precise sensations and thoughtful/clever/well considered reflections in and through the language” - *Kristeligt Dagblad*

“A convincingly impressive debut novel from a great pose talent”
 - Erik Skyum Nielsen, *Information*

“In this novel there are passages in which the language sounds like language itself, as if deep inside itself it carries an insight that cannot be rewritten or retold but only experienced through

these very sentences. This is what characterizes the classical works as we know them from our greatest poets, in particular J. P. Jacobsen. (...) You can read Rise and Fall on several levels: If you are sensitive to linguistic articulation, it will take your breath away; if you are the cool intellect looking for internal structure, you will start to feel; and if you are the blind reader forging ahead, you will begin to see.” - Asger Schnack, Nordic Council Literature Prize 2011

Norway:

“If this is what literature can be like, it must mean something” - Tomas Espedal, author of *Against the Art: The Notebooks*