

Josefine Klougart



Danish-born Josefine Klougart (b. 1985) is after her four first novels considered one of Scandinavia's most important writers. She made her literary debut with the novel *Stigninger og fald* ("Rise and Fall", Rosinante 2010), 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", Rosinante 2011) was adapted for the stage at Aarhus Theatre in February 2012 by Swedish director Annika Silkeberg. In February 2012 Klougart published her third novel *Én af os sover* ("One of us is sleeping", Rosinante 2012), which was hailed by the critics: Denmark's major newspaper, *Politiken*, called it a "fascinating novel of love and loss", while *Berlingske Tidende* named it "one of the greatest novels of this year". In December 2012 it was nominated for the Nordic Council Literature Prize 2013 - it is the first time in history that a Danish writer has had her books nominated twice in such a short period - the first time for a writer to have had two out of three novels nominated for the most prestigious literary prize in Scandinavia. The novel is also nominated for *The Readers Book award 2013*.

In December 2013 her fourth novel came out, *On Darkness* it is called and it was nominated

for two major literary prizes in Denmark and is one of the best reviewed books in Denmark in 2013 - of one of the best selling writers of quality literature in Scandinavia.

Klougarts work has been published in the following American journals: *Salamander* (Winter 2012), *Conduit* (Spring 2012), *World Literature Today* (Summer 2012) and *Ugarte Magazine* (2012). She has been published in the literary journal *Fjords* and her work will be nominated for the Pushcart Prize. A "sparkling star in the literary skies", she has been called and despite her young age she is considered one of the most important writers of her time. She has received a scholarship from the Danish Art Council and her novels have all demonstrated that a work of high intellectual and artistic quality can also become a bestselling title. She has been compared to writers as Joan Didion, Anne Carson, Hanne Ørstavik and Virginia Woolf.

Her novels have all been bestsellers in Denmark and have been or are about to be translated into several European languages, including Norwegian, Swedish, French, and Serbian. In Norway award-winning author

Trude Marstein has been providing the translation. Klougart has also appeared at a number of literary festivals in Norway, Sweden, France, Finland, Turkey and the US and will be touring with her books, giving lectures and readings at universities, libraries and in concert houses 2013/14.

Klougart is also the editor of one of Denmark's most prestigious literary journals; *Den Blå Port* ("The Blue Gate"). She studied art history and literature at Aarhus University and graduated in 2010 from the Danish Writer's School in Copenhagen, the city where she currently resides. Klougart has worked as an art and theatre critic for magazines and newspapers and has published a number of essays for Danish radio and Danish newspapers. She gives lectures at art schools all over the country and at the University of Copenhagen and Aarhus. In addition to all this, she collaborates with the acknowledged Danish Composer Bent Sørensen, who won the prestigious Nordic Council Music Price in 1995.

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



On Darkness

Shortlisted for DR's Romanpris 2014

Shortlisted for Læsernes Bogpris (The Readers' Award)

Number one on the Critics list in Sweden

Om mørke (On 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.

At the same time, the book is a protest against these fundamental premises. The book insists that it is not all that simple. That there is not an "on the one hand" and then "on the other", but that death, decay, loss and sorrow are all part of the same life, that they all contain beauty. That the meaningless disintegration can be life affirming simply because it is life in another stage; it is all part of the same cycle. Death is a confirmation of the life, that is constant, the beauty that exists and the love that is.

Praise for On Darkness

♥♥♥♥♥♥♥♥ „The authors unique prose reaches new heights“ - Lilian Munk Rösing, Politiken

"Once again Klougart mooves the borders for what literature can be", Erik Skyum-Nielsen, Information

***** „A rare artistic talent“ - Per Krogh Hansen, Berlingske

***** - Christine Fur Fischer, Fyns Amtsavis

One Of Us is Sleeping

Shortlisted for the Nordic Council Literature Prize

Shortlisted for Læsernes Bogpris (The Readers' Award)

On the official Danish list of bestsellers

One Of Us is Sleeping is Klougarts most ambitious work to date, widely regarded by Danish critics as a Masterpiece. *Politiken*, a major Danish newspaper, called it “a fascinating novel of love and loss”, while *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.

Cover text:

“*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.”

Presentation of the book:

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.

While Klougart’s first novel *Stigninger og Fald* (Rise and Fall) (2010) depicted a Heimat, a geographical and psychological landscape formative of the human individual and her language, in *One of Us Is Sleeping* the notion of the homeland is constituted by the romantic relationship. A young woman is abandoned by a man with whom she has enjoyed a brief yet highly intense love affair. The loss she experiences compounds the recollection of a longer, likewise failed liaison. Stricken by grief and disillusion, the main character is thrust into a state of existential homelessness, the inevitable landscape into which we proceed on leaving childhood, broken only by the love affair, which briefly returns us home and makes us feel we belong, in the world, and in the gaze of the one we love.

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.

Praise for *One of us is Sleeping*:

“A masterpiece... one of this year’s great novels” —*Berlingske Tidende*

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

“I have never read any thing this beautyfull” – Svenska Dagbladet, Sweden

“*One of us is a stunning pearl of a book.*” – Helsingbors Dagblad, Sweden

“It is a narrative that leaves its mark in you the way only great literature does.” - Borås Tidning, Sweden

“Masterly.” – Dagens Nyheder, Sweden

“A shining book.” – Arbetarbladet, Sweden

“Shines and touches.” – Smålandsposten, Sweede

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

"A strong and fascinating third novel (...) Klougart writes beautifully and insightfully about loss" - *Politiken*

”A masterpiece. (...) Josefine Klougart is probably the best young writer in Denmark ... one of this year’s grand novels” —*Berlingske*

“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

“A sparkling lyrical novel about the disintegration of a love affair. Klougarts sensuous figurative language is brilliant with visual observations that leave a lasting imprint on the reader's mind....” —*Ekstrabladet*

“An incredibly beautiful novel, talently 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*

“I was completely blown away by the beauty and the level of reflexion in Josefine Klougarts language”

Ane Nydal, Morgenbladet, Norway

“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, Norway

In the Norwegian newspaper VG Josefine Klougarts *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 Nymoen Nilsen, VG, Norway*

"Strong candidate for the Nordic Councils 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*

Call them prose poems, call them flash fictions, call them lyric shorts — these pieces shine beyond categorization. - *Christopher McCormick, The ReviewReview, US (review of published extracts of One of Us is Sleeping*

The Halls

“**Hallerne**” (“**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.

Praise for *The Halls*:

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

“A sophisticated novel” - *Information*

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

“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*

Rise and Fall

Shortlisted for the Nordic Council Literature Prize

Shortlisted for Læsernes Bogpris (The Readers' Award)

On the official Danish list of bestsellers

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.

Praise for *Rise and Fall*:

“If this is what literature can be like, it must mean something” - Tomas Espedal, award winning author

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

“Josefine Klougarts 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 Snack, Nominations for the Nordic Council Literature Prize 2011 (<http://www.norden.org>)

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