



Surtsey

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English sample



Mette Karlsvik

Photo: Tove K. Breistein

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Surtsey is a cycle of lyrical, short prose that creates a condensed narrative about the night when everything is possible. It is about shifts in the natural world and in human beings, about continental drift and emotional trepidation.

It is Midsummer's Night on the Icelandic island of Heimaey, and the young people are celebrating at the old custom house. Soley falls into conversation with Vidar, and they find a boat in the harbour, which they sail out to sea. Being alone, just the two of them, in the same boat is new and strange. When powerful forces of nature are released beneath them, they can no longer hide from one another. They must take turns being strong and weak on a night that may be their last.

The gorgeous hybridity of her writing permeates the book, as Icelandic words and letters seep into the prose; out at sea, for example, a shudder trembles through the air, giving höfnina (the harbour), sjórinn (the sea), Sóley gæsahú (goosebumps)... - Elin Kittelsen, Klassekampen

a precise, attentive, and considerate means of connecting nature and human beings [...]
On the surface of her prose a new resonance emerges – the Icelandic-Norwegian: “She becomes fælinn (skittish), runs over to the skrentinn (cliff) and climbs down.” This creates an authentic geographic atmosphere, but is also a particular linguistic project, a particular Surtsey. - Ingvild Bræin, Dag og Tid

Mette Karlsvik

Mette Karlsvik's literary debut was in 2005 with the novel *The Window in the Dining Hall Overlooks the Fjord* (*Vindauga i matsalen vender mot fjorden*) for which she was awarded the prestigious Tarjei Vesaas debutant prize. In 2012 she received the Booksellers grant, Stig Sæterbakken's memorial award and Skien municipality's artist grant. The novel *Being Björk* (*Bli Björk*, 2011) was nominated for the Brage Prize. Karlsvik's writing is characterised by a unique world-view, with a perspective ranging in scope from microscopic sensations to global issues, often expressed through a single gesture or phrase.