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Autumn



Synopsis

"This book is full of wonders...Loose teeth, chewing gum, it all becomes noble, almost holy, under Knausgaard's patient, admiring gaze. The world feels repainted." • "The New York Times

From the author of the monumental *My Struggle* series, Karl Ove Knausgaard, one of the masters of contemporary literature and a genius of observation and introspection, comes the first in a new autobiographical quartet based on the four seasons.

28 August. Now, as I write this, you know nothing about anything, about what awaits you, the kind of world you will be born into. And I know nothing about you...I want to show you our world as it is now: the door, the floor, the water tap and the sink, the garden chair close to the wall beneath the kitchen window, the sun, the water, the trees. You will come to see it in your own way, you will experience things for yourself and live a life of your own, so of course it is primarily for my own sake that I am doing this: showing you the world, little one, makes my life worth living.

Autumn begins with a letter Karl Ove Knausgaard writes to his unborn daughter, showing her what to expect of the world. He writes one short piece per day, describing the material and natural world with the precision and mesmerising intensity that have become his trademark. He describes with acute sensitivity daily life with his wife and children in rural Sweden, drawing upon memories of his own childhood to give an inimitably tender perspective on the precious and unique bond between parent and child. The sun, wasps, jellyfish, eyes, lice--the stuff of everyday life is the fodder for his art. Nothing is too small or too vast to escape his attention. This beautifully illustrated book is a personal encyclopaedia on everything from chewing gum to the stars. Through close observation of the objects and phenomena around him, Knausgaard shows us how vast, unknowable and wondrous the world is.

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Customer Reviews

“Simone Weil wrote that ‘attention, taken to its highest degree, is the same thing as prayer’ and so it is here. Loose teeth, chewing gum, it all becomes noble, almost holy, under Knausgaard’s patient, admiring gaze. The world feels repainted [This book is full of wonders.] “The New York Times” In these secular meditations, Knausgaard scratches away at the ordinary to reach the sublime – finding what’s in the picture, and what’s hidden. • “Washington Post” “Even more than in ‘My Struggle,’ he seems to inhabit every age simultaneously: He is boy, adolescent, and father at once. | If hard truths insist on hiding in the deep, these essays suggest, a hand-line will do as well as a drift net to haul them in.” • “The Boston Globe” “The joys of one of the world’s great living writers distilled.” • “GQ.com” “With a Nordic half-wink of self-parody. No one dotes on details like Knausgaard.” • “Vulture.com” “Knausgaard is an acute, sometimes squirmingly honest analyst of domesticity and his relationship to his family. . . . he figures it out with the sharp radiance that is his gift.” • “Newsweek” “Knausgaard can take the breath away, his compressed vignettes delivering the same emotional charge as longer sequences from his previous work. . . this first volume of the Seasons Quartet quietly illuminates Knausgaard’s profound gift for making the reader see the world in fresh and unpredictable ways.” • “The Guardian” “Summer ends with one of the sweetest reading surprises of the year – unexpected, tender, intense, and persuasive – | encourage you to spend your autumn reading it.” • “The Philadelphia Inquirer” “Yes, this guy writes a ton. His massive, multivolume autobiography My Struggle is regarded as variously notorious or brilliant. But what a sweet, surprising, short collection of essays this is! Lie on the beach, sun beating down, and read about the season to come.” • “Philadelphia Tribune” “The great pleasure of ‘Autumn’ is in watching how Knausgaard starts in commonplace observations – ‘of all the things we do, pissing is one of the most routine’ – but then moves unexpectedly toward surprising conclusions. . . I’ll look forward to ‘Winter,’ ‘Spring,’ and ‘Summer.’” • “San Francisco Chronicle” “For those seeking. . . a moment of contemplative peace, the Norwegian writer Karl Ove Knausgaard’s new book will help. | Knausgaard admires Madame Bovary above all other novels, saying Flaubert’s sentences ‘are like a rag rubbed across a windowpane encrusted with smoke and dirt which you have long since grown accustomed to seeing the world through.’ Autumn performs the same task.” • “Toronto Star” “What truly unites these pieces is Knausgaard’s sensibility, which is one part

Montaigne (an urge to address big issues), one part Nicholson Baker (an eye for picayune detail), and one part Annie Dillard (an admiration for nature and an elegant prose style) | A call to pay closer attention to the routine stuff in our lives and to allow ourselves to be thunderstruck by their beauty. • Kirkus Reviews (starred) • Novelist Knausgaard (My Struggle) eloquently expresses the delights, rewards, and insights of looking closely in this, the first of a projected quartet of autobiographical volumes based on the four seasons. | His writing encourages the reader to see the connections between quotidian things and the bigger picture and to appreciate both continuity and change. Autumn hums in the background as apple trees flourish and days get darker, and one looks forward to what associations he will uncover in the remaining seasons of the year. • Publishers Weekly • Knausgaard has a gift for making the quotidian seem compelling. . . Whether he's writing about a rainstorm (the sound of thunder always heightens the sense of being alive) or teeth (miniature white towers in the mouth), the scrutiny Knausgaard applies to everyday objects renews them for the reader. • Bookpage

Karl Ove Knausgaard's first novel, *Out of the World*, was the first ever debut novel to win the Norwegian Critics' Prize and his second, *A Time to Every Purpose Under Heaven*, was widely acclaimed. *A Death in the Family*, the first of the *My Struggle* cycle of novels, was awarded the prestigious Brage Award. The *My Struggle* cycle has been heralded as a masterpiece wherever it appears. Vanessa Baird was born in Oslo, where she now lives and works. She has an MA from the Royal College of Art, London, and in 2015 she won the Lorck Schive Art Prize, Norway's biggest contemporary art prize.

Like so many others, I am a huge fan of the "My Struggle" series, and recommend it to almost everyone I know who likes books. However, quite a few of my reading friends don't get what is so great about a middle-aged man writing about his life for thousands of pages in extraordinary detail. I guess either you feel the hypnotic pull of those thousands of pages, or you don't, but it is really difficult to explain why the pull is there. In "Autumn", you can feel what is so hypnotic about Knausgaard in just a few pages. This book, written to his unborn daughter, is a series of Knausgaard's thoughts on several dozen topics, ranging from badgers to pain to tin cans to toilet bowls (and many other things). Each one is only a few pages, and every single one of them will make you think "Ahhh, that's so true! I know exactly what he is saying, but I never thought about saying it that way!". It really is quite remarkable. This may be a good book for someone who is thinking about tackling the "My Struggle" series, but just wants to get a little taste of what makes Knausgaard's

writing so great. If you don't have a few "ahhh" moments, I will personally come to your house and prepare for you a cheese sandwich.

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