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## The Practice of Natural Movement

One of the 20th century's enduring works, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* is a widely beloved and acclaimed novel known throughout the world, and the ultimate achievement in a Nobel Prize-winning career. The novel tells the story of the rise and fall of the mythical town of Macondo through the history of the Buendía family. It is a rich and brilliant chronicle of life and death, and the tragicomedy of humankind. In the noble, ridiculous, beautiful, and tawdry story of the Buendía family, one sees all of humanity, just as in the history, myths, growth, and decay of Macondo, one sees all of Latin America. Love and lust, war and revolution, riches and poverty, youth and senility -- the variety of life, the endlessness of death, the search for peace and truth -- these universal themes dominate the novel. Whether he is describing an affair of passion or the voracity of capitalism and the corruption of government, Gabriel García Márquez always writes with the simplicity, ease, and purity that are the mark of a master. Alternately reverential and comical, *One Hundred Years of Solitude* weaves the political, personal, and spiritual to bring a new consciousness to storytelling. Translated into dozens of languages, this stunning work is no less than an accounting of the history of the human race.

## Out of Solitude

"The reader discovers new satisfactions with such a book. Far from the insipid savors generated by a passive fascination, the text stirs up the joys of an endless activity." *Le Monde*

## We Are the Weather

From the winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature, here is the universally acclaimed novel—winner of the Booker Prize and the basis for an award-winning film. This is Kazuo Ishiguro's profoundly compelling portrait of Stevens, the perfect butler, and of his fading, insular world in post-World War II England. Stevens, at the end of three decades of service at Darlington Hall, spending a day on a country drive, embarks as well on a journey through the past in an effort to reassure himself that he has served humanity by serving the "great gentleman," Lord Darlington. But lurking in his memory are doubts about the true nature of Lord Darlington's "greatness," and much graver doubts about the nature of his own life.

## **The Art of Solitude**

### **I Served the King of England**

In these letters written to April Gifford (Dubenka) between 1989 and 1991 but never sent, Bohumil Hrabal (1914-1997) chronicles the momentous events of those years as seen, more often than not, from the windows of his favorite pubs. In his palavering, stream-of-conscious style that has marked him as one of the major writers and innovators of postwar European literature, Hrabal gives a humorous and at times moving account of life in Prague under Nazi occupation, Communism, and the brief euphoria following the revolution of 1989 when anything seemed possible, even pink tanks. Interspersed are fragmented memories of trips taken to Britain ě as he attempted to track down every location mentioned in Eliot's ěThe Waste Landě ě and the United States, where he ends up in one of Dylan Thomas's haunts comparing the waitresses to ones he knew in Prague. The result is a masterful blend of personal history and fee association rendered in a prose as powerful as it is poetic.

### **The Death of Mr. Baltisberger**

Set in small-town Bohemia between the wars, Cutting It Short centres on the flamboyant and unpredictable Maryska, who loves food and prepares endless feasts. Until one day she scandalises the town when she cuts short her golden tresses, leading to a small revolution in gender roles.

### **The Slaves of Solitude**

From the author of the highly acclaimed, New York Times bestselling novel Pax comes a gorgeous and moving middle grade novel that is an ode to introverts, dreamers, and misfits everywhere. Ware can't wait to spend summer "off in his own world"—dreaming of knights in the Middle Ages and generally being left alone. But then his parents sign him up for dreaded

Rec camp, where he must endure Meaningful Social Interaction and whatever activities so-called “normal” kids do. On his first day Ware meets Jolene, a tough, secretive girl planting a garden in the rubble of an abandoned church next to the camp. Soon he starts skipping Rec, creating a castle-like space of his own in the church lot. Jolene scoffs, calling him a dreamer—he doesn’t live in the “real world” like she does. As different as Ware and Jolene are, though, they have one thing in common: for them, the lot is a refuge. But when their sanctuary is threatened, Ware looks to the knights’ Code of Chivalry: Thou shalt do battle against unfairness wherever faced with it. Thou shalt be always the champion of the Right and Good—and vows to save the lot. But what does a hero look like in real life? And what can two misfit kids do?

## **Too Loud a Solitude**

English translation originally published under the title *The death of Mr. Baltisberger*. Garden City, N.Y.: Doubleday, 1975.

## **Too Loud a Solitude**

Join nine-year-old Hubaldo Romero Paez in Venezuela as he introduces his friends, his family, and his favorite sport—baseball. Complemented by a map and an English-Spanish baseball glossary, Hubaldo's story is an inviting introduction to a foreign land viewed through the lens of a shared passion. "This dynamic sports photo-essay will be fun for sports fans and effective for social studies units."-Booklist

## **Closely Watched Trains**

'But no, she's abstract, is a bird Of sound in the air of air soaring, And her soul sings unencumbered Because the song's what makes her sing.' Dramatic, lyrical and ranging over four distinct personae, these poems by one of Portugal's greatest poets trace a mind shaken by intense suffering and a tireless search for meaning. Penguin Modern: fifty new books celebrating the pioneering spirit of the iconic Penguin Modern Classics series, with each one offering a concentrated hit of its contemporary, international flavour. Here are authors ranging from Kathy Acker to James Baldwin, Truman Capote to Stanislaw Lem and George Orwell to Shirley Jackson; essays radical and inspiring; poems moving and disturbing; stories surreal and fabulous; taking us from the deep South to modern Japan, New York's underground scene to the farthest reaches of outer space.

## **The War with the Newts**

From Captain George Vancouver to Muriel “Curve of Time” Blanchet to Jim “Spilsbury’s Coast” Spilsbury, visitors to

Desolation Sound have left behind a trail of books endowing the area with a romantic aura that helps to make it British Columbia's most popular marine park. In this hilarious and captivating book, CBC personality Grant Lawrence adds a whole new chapter to the saga of this storied piece of BC coastline. Young Grant's father bought a piece of land next to the park in the 1970s, just in time to encounter the gun-toting cougar lady, left-over hippies, outlaw bikers and an assortment of other characters. In those years Desolation Sound was a place where going to the neighbours' potluck meant being met with hugs from portly naked hippies and where Russell the Hermit's school of life (boating, fishing, and rock 'n' roll) was Grant's personal Enlightenment—an influence that would take him away from the coast to a life of music and journalism and eventually back again. With rock band buddies and a few cases of beer in tow, an older, cooler Grant returns to regale us with tales of “going bush,” the tempting dilemma of finding an unguarded grow-op, and his awkward struggle to convince a couple of visiting kayakers that he's a legit CBC radio host while sporting a wild beard and body wounds and gesticulating with a machete. With plenty of laugh-out-loud humour and inspired reverence, *Adventures in Solitude* delights us with the unique history of a place and the growth of a young man amidst the magic of Desolation Sound.

### **The Call Of Solitude**

Vivid, surprising, and utterly timely, Akiko Busch's *HOW TO DISAPPEAR* explores the idea of invisibility in nature, art, and science, in search of a more joyful and peaceful way of living in today's increasingly surveilled and publicity-obsessed world. In our increasingly networked and image-saturated lives, the notion of disappearing has never been both more enchanting and yet fanciful. Today, we are relentlessly encouraged, even conditioned, to reveal, share, and self-promote. The pressure to be public comes not just from our peers, but vast and pervasive technology companies, which want to profit from patterns in our behavior. A lifelong student and observer of the natural world, Busch sets out to explore her own uneasiness with this arrangement, and what she senses is a widespread desire for a less scrutinized way of life--for invisibility. Writing in rich painterly detail about her own life, her family, and some of the world's most exotic and remote places--from the Cayman Islands to Iceland--she savors the pleasures of being unseen. Discovering and dramatizing a wonderful range of ways of disappearing, from virtual reality goggles that trick the wearer into believing her body has disappeared and to the way Virginia Woolf's fictional Mrs. Dalloway feels a flickering of personhood as an older woman, Busch deliberates on subjects new and old with equal sensitivity and incisiveness. A unique and exhilarating accomplishment, *HOW TO DISAPPEAR* is a shimmering collage of poetry, cinema, memoir, myth, and much more, which overturns the dangerous modern assumption that somehow fame and visibility equate to success and happiness. Busch presents a field guide to invisibility, reacquainting us with the merits of the inconspicuousness, and finds genuine alternatives to the typical life of perpetual exposure. Accessing timeless truths in order to speak to our most urgent contemporary problems, she inspires us to develop a deeper appreciation for personal privacy in a vast and invasive world.

## **Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age**

This National Book Critics Circle Award is “an entrancing attempt to catch what falls between: the irreducibly personal, messy, even embarrassing ways reading and living bleed into each other, which neither literary criticism nor autobiography ever quite acknowledges.” —The New York Times “Stories, both my own and those I’ve taken to heart, make up whoever it is that I’ve become,” Peter Orner writes in this collection of essays about reading, writing, and living. Orner reads and writes everywhere he finds himself: a hospital cafeteria, a coffee shop in Albania, or a crowded bus in Haiti. The result is a book of unlearned meditations that stumbles into memoir. Among the many writers Orner addresses are Isaac Babel and Zora Neale Hurston, both of whom told their truths and were silenced; Franz Kafka, who professed loneliness but craved connection; Robert Walser, who spent the last twenty-three years of his life in a Swiss insane asylum, working at being crazy; and Juan Rulfo, who practiced the difficult art of silence. Virginia Woolf, Eudora Welty, Yasunari Kawabata, Saul Bellow, Mavis Gallant, John Edgar Wideman, William Trevor, and Václav Havel make appearances, as well as the poet Herbert Morris--about whom almost nothing is known. An elegy for an eccentric late father, and the end of a marriage, *Am I Alone Here?* is also a celebration of the possibility of renewal. At once personal and panoramic, this book will inspire readers to return to the essential stories of their own lives.

## **Here in the Real World**

Achieving inner calm while feeling centered is a human goal that is never easy to master. But why of late do serenity and peace of mind seem further from reach than ever before? The world appears very busy, and finding moments to catch up with ourselves looks to be almost impossible. Something has occurred to change life's circumstances, to make peaceful, restorative time terribly elusive. Alonetime is a great protector of the self and the human spirit. Many in society have railed against it. Some have overused its healing potential. Others have kept it as a special resource both knowingly and unknowingly. (Yet) the only way we shall achieve ideal love is if we are allowed to flower in the due course and pace of our inner life. Whether or not we were fortunate in our growing up to blossom this way, plenty of time -- alone-times -- awaits us now to make the necessary readjustments.

## **The Remains of the Day**

\*Winner of the European Union Prize for Literature. There is a liveliness and effervescence to Jana Benová’s prose that is magnetic. Whether addressing the loneliness of relationships or the effectiveness of rat poison, her voice and observations call to mind the verve and sophistication of Renata Adler or Jenny Offill, while remaining utterly singular. *Seeing People Off* follows Elza and Ian, a young couple living in a humongous apartment complex outside Bratislava where the walls play

music and talk, and time is immaterial. Drawing on her memories, everyday interactions, observations of post-socialist realities, and Elza's attraction to actor, Kalisto Tanzi, *Seeing People Off* is a kaleidoscopic, poetic, and deeply funny portrait of a relationship.

## **Seeing People Off**

## **Safekeeping**

In *We Are the Weather*, Jonathan Safran Foer explores the central global dilemma of our time in a surprising, deeply personal, and urgent new way. Some people reject the fact, overwhelmingly supported by scientists, that our planet is warming because of human activity. But do those of us who accept the reality of human-caused climate change truly believe it? If we did, surely we would be roused to act on what we know. Will future generations distinguish between those who didn't believe in the science of global warming and those who said they accepted the science but failed to change their lives in response? The task of saving the planet will involve a great reckoning with ourselves—with our all-too-human reluctance to sacrifice immediate comfort for the sake of the future. We have, he reveals, turned our planet into a farm for growing animal products, and the consequences are catastrophic. Only collective action will save our home and way of life. And it all starts with what we eat—and don't eat—for breakfast.

## **Adventures in Solitude**

Without Henry, wildflowers would go unwatered in dry weather and rivers would have no crossing stones. Without him, who would bring news of coming storms? Henry works, but no one seems to notice. "You're not doing anything today," his friend says. "Come fishing with me." "Not today," says Henry as he digs up a healing plant for a neighbor. Though he never gets paid, Henry works for more than money. In this fourth book about Henry David Thoreau, D. B. Johnson's quiet story flows through morning's mist to evening's glow, when, at last, Henry's most important work is revealed!

## **Baseball in the Barrios**

FINALIST FOR THE 2017 PEN TRANSLATION PRIZE From the author of *The Door*, selected as one of the New York Times "10 Best Books of 2015," this is a heartwrenching tale about a group of friends and lovers torn apart by the German occupation of Budapest during World War II. In prewar Budapest three families live side by side on gracious Katalin Street, their lives closely intertwined. A game is played by the four children in which Bálint, the promising son of the Major, invariably chooses

Irén Elekes, the headmaster's dutiful elder daughter, over her younger sister, the scatterbrained Blanka, and little Henriette Held, the daughter of the Jewish dentist. Their lives are torn apart in 1944 by the German occupation, which only the Elekes family survives intact. The postwar regime relocates them to a cramped Soviet-style apartment and they struggle to come to terms with social and political change, personal loss, and unstated feelings of guilt over the deportation of the Held parents and the death of little Henriette, who had been left in their protection. But the girl survives in a miasmal afterlife, and reappears at key moments as a mute witness to the inescapable power of past events. As in *The Door* and *Iza's Ballad*, Magda Szabó conducts a clear-eyed investigation into the ways in which we inflict suffering on those we love. *Katalin Street*, which won the 2007 Prix Cévennes for Best European novel, is a poignant, somber, at times harrowing book, but beautifully conceived and truly unforgettable.

## **Society and Solitude**

Erwan Le Corre, creator of the world-renowned fitness system MovNat, is on a mission to reintroduce natural movement to our modern lives with the most ancient movement skill set: walking, running, balancing, jumping, crawling, climbing, swimming, lifting, carrying, throwing, catching, and self-defense. Try to imagine an out-of-shape tiger stepping on an exercise machine to get a workout. It doesn't make any sense, does it? Wild animals simply move the way nature intended, and they become powerful, healthy, and free in the process. So why should it be any different for us? We have become "zoo-humans," separated from nature and living movement-impoverished, unnatural lifestyles. As a result, we are suffering physically, mentally, and spiritually. Exercise has become artificial and boring--a chore, if not a punishment. We are training parts of our bodies, not the whole, and we have lost our drive for movement. What we need is not a better understanding of exercise physiology or more variety in fitness programs and modalities. What we need is simplicity, meaning, purpose, inspiration, and enjoyment. We need to get back to natural movement. In *The Practice of Natural Movement*, Le Corre demonstrates our innate and versatile ability to perform practical and adaptable movements. With countless techniques and movement variations, as well as strategies for practicing anytime and anywhere, he will inspire you to build a naturally strong and flexible body and to form yourself anew into a mindful, skillful, and physically capable human being.

## **Notes from the Underground**

A New York Times Book Review EDITORS' CHOICE. From the National Book Critics Circle Award-winning author of *Motherless Brooklyn*, comes the vividly told story of Dylan Ebdus growing up white and motherless in downtown Brooklyn in the 1970s. In a neighborhood where the entertainments include muggings along with games of stoopball, Dylan has one friend, a black teenager, also motherless, named Mingus Rude. Through the knitting and unraveling of the boys' friendship, Lethem creates an overwhelmingly rich and emotionally gripping canvas of race and class, superheros, gentrification, funk, hip-hop,

graffiti tagging, loyalty, and memory. "A tour de force. Belongs to a venerable New York literary tradition that stretches back through *Go Tell It on the Mountain*, *A Walker in the City*, and *Call it Sleep*." --The New York Times Magazine "One of the richest, messiest, most ambitious, most interesting novels of the year. Lethem grabs and captures 1970s New York City, and he brings it to a story worth telling." --Time

## **In-House Weddings**

A classic of postwar literature, a small masterpiece of humour, humanity and heroism from one of the best Czech writers For twenty-two-year-old Milos, bumbling apprentice at a sleepy Czech railway station, life is full of worries: his burdensome virginity, his love for the pretty conductor Masha, the scandalous goings-on in the station master's office. Beside them, the part he will come to play against the occupying Germans seems a simple affair, in Bohumil Hrabal's touching, absurd masterpiece of humour, humanity and heroism. *Closely Watched Trains*, which became the award-winning Jiri Menzel film of the 'Prague Spring', is a masterpiece that fully justifies Hrabal's reputation as one of the best Czech writers of the twentieth century.

## **How to Disappear**

"Attention reveals a fresh, vital literary voice as it covers seemingly every imaginable topic relating to modern life."—Entertainment Weekly "Joshua Cohen may be America's greatest living writer."—The Washington Post NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY WIRED One of Granta's Best of Young American Novelists, Joshua Cohen arrives with his first collection of nonfiction, the culmination of two decades of writing and thought about life in the digital age. In essays, memoir, criticism, diary entries, and letters—many appearing here for the first time—Cohen covers the full depth and breadth of modern life: politics, literature, art, music, travel, the media, and psychology, and subjects as diverse as Google, Donald Trump, Bernie Sanders, fictional animals, Gustav Mahler, Aretha Franklin, John Zorn, landscape photography, fake Caravaggios, Wikipedia, Gertrude Stein, Edward Snowden, Jonathan Franzen, Olympic women's fencing, Atlantic City casinos, the closing of the Ringling Bros. circus, and Azerbaijan. Throughout ATTENTION, Cohen directs his sharp gaze at home and abroad, calling upon his extraordinary erudition and unrivaled ability to draw connections between seemingly unlike things to show us how to live without fear in a world overflowing with information. In each piece, he projects a quality of thought that is uniquely his, and a voice as witty, profound, and distinct as any in American letters. At this crucial juncture in history, ATTENTION is a guide for the perplexed—a handbook for anyone hoping to bring the wisdom of the past into the culture of the future. Praise for ATTENTION "Dazzling in its scope . . . If curiosity is a writer's greatest innate gift, Joshua Cohen may be America's greatest living writer."—The Washington Post "Cause for celebration and close study . . . [Cohen] will hunt after neglected shards of the past, minor histories, and charge them with an immediacy in the

present. . . . He is experimenting with the essay form much more, and more cleverly, than any major American writer today.”—The Wall Street Journal “In Attention, Joshua Cohen makes an eclectic argument for how to improve our lives. . . . [He] tackles a surprising range of subjects to underline distraction’s role in our fraught predicament and to argue that paying attention could help us get out of it. . . . When it comes to making sense of our times with verve and imagination, few authors are more rewarding.”—Financial Times

## **I Have More Souls Than One**

The capacity to be alone, properly alone, is one of life's subtlest skills. Real solitude is a powerful resource we can call upon--a crucial ingredient for a rich interior life. It inspires reflection, allows creativity to flourish, and improves our relationships with ourselves and, unexpectedly, with others. Idle hands can, in fact, produce the extraordinary. In living bigger and faster, we have forgotten the joys of silence, and undervalued how profoundly it can revolutionize our lives.

## **Am I Alone Here?**

The Little Town Where Time Stood Still contains two linked narratives by the incomparable Bohumil Hrabal, whom Milan Kundera has described as “Czechoslovakia’s greatest writer.” “Cutting It Short” is set before World War II in a small country town, and it relates the scandalizing escapades of Maryška, the flamboyant wife of Francin, who manages the local brewery. Maryška drinks. She rides a bicycle, letting her long hair fly. She butchers pigs, frolics in blood, and leads on the local butcher. She’s a Madame Bovary without apologies driven to keep up with the new fast-paced mechanized modern world that is obliterating whatever sleepy pieties are left over from the defunct Austro-Hungarian Empire. “The Little Town Where Time Stood Still” is told by Maryška and Francin’s son and concerns the exploits of his Uncle Pepin, who holds his own against the occupying Nazis but succumbs to silence as the new post-World War II Communist order cements its colorless control over daily life. Together, Hrabal’s rousing and outrageous yarns stand as a hilarious and heartbreaking tribute to the always imperiled sweetness of lust, love, and life.

## **Vain Art of the Fugue**

Darkly fascinating short novel depicts the struggles of a doubting, supremely alienated protagonist in a world of relative values. Embraces moral, religious, political, and social themes. Authoritative Constance Garnett translation. New introduction.

## **Too Noisy!**

A beautifully crafted and inviting account of one woman's life, *Safekeeping* offers a sublimely different kind of autobiography. Setting aside a straightforward narrative in favor of brief passages of vivid prose, Abigail Thomas revisits the pivotal moments and the tiny incidents that have shaped her life: pregnancy at 18; single motherhood (of three!) by the age of 26; the joys and frustrations of three marriages; and the death of her second husband, who was her best friend. The stories made of these incidents are startling in their clarity and reassuring in their wisdom. This is a book in which silence speaks as eloquently as what is revealed. Openhearted and effortlessly funny, these brilliantly selected glimpses of the arc of a life are, in an age of excessive confession and recrimination, a welcome tonic.

### **Cutting It Short**

A collection of eleven short stories focuses on the everyday adventures of Hispanic young people growing up in Fresno, California. Teacher's Guide available. Simultaneous.

### **Baseball in April and Other Stories**

Desperate to escape his booming, banging and clanging family, Sam Bungle wanders into the woods for some peace and quiet only to encounter climbing, flapping and crawling creatures that make him long for the familiar cacophony of home. By the author of *Getting Smaller*.

### **Henry Works**

A fable about the power of books and knowledge, "finely balanced between pathos and comedy," from one of Czechoslovakia's most popular authors (*Los Angeles Times*). A *New York Times* Notable Book Haňtá has been compacting trash for thirty-five years. Every evening, he rescues books from the jaws of his hydraulic press, carries them home, and fills his house with them. Haňtá may be an idiot, as his boss calls him, but he is an idiot with a difference—the ability to quote the Talmud, Hegel, and Lao-Tzu. In this "irresistibly eccentric romp," the author Milan Kundera has called "our very best writer today" celebrates the power and the indestructibility of the written word (*The New York Times Book Review*).

### **ATTENTION**

Chronicles the experiences of Ditie, who rises from busboy to hotel owner in World War II Prague, and whose life is shaped by the fate of his country before, during, and after the conflict.

## **One Hundred Years of Solitude**

Drawing on three moments in the life of Jesus, Henri Nouwen invites us to reflect on the tension between our desire for solitude and the demands of contemporary life. He reminds us that it was in solitude that Jesus found the courage to follow God's will. And he shows us that fruitful love and service must spring from a living relationship with God. Beautifully written, elegantly simple, *Out of Solitude* is as fresh today as it was thirty years ago.

## **Silence**

From the author of the “dazzling epic”\* Brilliant, a compelling history of silence as a powerful shaper of the human mind—in prisons, in places of contemplation, and in our own lives Through her evocative intertwined histories of the penitentiary and the monastery, Jane Brox illuminates the many ways silence is far more complex than any absolute; how it has influenced ideas of the self, soul, and society. Brox traces its place as a transformative power in the monastic world from Medieval Europe to the very public life of twentieth century monk Thomas Merton, whose love for silence deepened even as he faced his obligation to speak out against war. This fascinating history of ideas also explores the influence the monastic cell had on one of society's darkest experiments in silence: Eastern State Penitentiary. Conceived of by one of the Founding Fathers and built on the outskirts of Philadelphia, the penitentiary's early promulgators imagined redemption in imposed isolation, but they badly misapprehended silence's dangers. Finally, Brox's rich exploration of silence's complex and competing meanings leads us to imagine how we might navigate our own relationship with silence today, for the transformation it has always promised, in our own lives. \*Time

## **Mr. Kafka: And Other Tales from the Time of the Cult**

Rake, drunkard, aesthete, gossip, raconteur extraordinaire: the narrator of Bohumil Hrabal's rambling, rambunctious masterpiece *Dancing Lessons for the Advanced in Age* is all these and more. Speaking to a group of sunbathing women who remind him of lovers past, this elderly roué tells the story of his life—or at least unburdens himself of a lifetime's worth of stories. Thus we learn of amatory conquests (and humiliations), of scandals both private and public, of military adventures and domestic feuds, of what things were like “in the days of the monarchy” and how they've changed since. As the book tumbles restlessly forward, and the comic tone takes on darker shadings, we realize we are listening to a man talking as much out of desperation as from exuberance. Hrabal, one of the great Czech writers of the twentieth century, as well as an inveterate haunter of Prague's pubs and football stadiums, developed a unique method which he termed “palavering,” whereby characters gab and soliloquize with abandon. Part drunken boast, part soul-rending confession, part metaphysical poem on the nature of love and time, this astonishing novel (which unfolds in a single monumental sentence) shows why he

has earned the admiration of such writers as Milan Kundera, John Banville, and Louise Erdrich.

## **Katalin Street**

Wonderful stories of Communist Prague by “the masterly Bohumil Hrabal” (The New Yorker) Never before published in English, the stories in Mr. Kafka and Other Tales from the Time of the Cult were written mostly in the 1950s and present the Czech master Bohumil Hrabal at the height of his powers. The stories capture a time when Czech Stalinists were turning society upside down, inflicting their social and political experiments on mostly unwilling subjects. These stories are set variously in the gas-lit streets of post-war Prague; on the raucous and dangerous factory floor of the famous Poldi steelworks where Hrabal himself once worked; in a cacophonous open-air dance hall where classical and popular music come to blows; at the basement studio where a crazed artist attempts to fashion a national icon; on the scaffolding around a decommissioned church. Hrabal captures men and women trapped in an eerily beautiful nightmare, longing for a world where “humor and metaphysical escape can reign supreme.”

## **Total Fears**

A moving and wide-ranging meditation on being alone with others in this world When world renowned Buddhist writer Stephen Batchelor turned sixty, he took a sabbatical from his teaching and turned his attention to solitude, a practice integral to the meditative traditions he has long studied and taught. He aimed to venture more deeply into solitude, discovering its full extent and depth. This beautiful literary collage documents his multifaceted explorations. Spending time in remote places, appreciating and making art, practicing meditation and participating in retreats, drinking peyote and ayahuasca, and training himself to keep an open, questioning mind have all contributed to Batchelor's ability to be simultaneously alone and at ease. Mixed in with his personal narrative are inspiring stories from solitude's devoted practitioners, from the Buddha to Montaigne, and from Vermeer to Agnes Martin. In a hyperconnected world that is at the same time plagued by social isolation, this book shows how to enjoy the inescapable solitude that is at the heart of human life.

## **The Fortress of Solitude**

The task, taken up by such a rogue comic talent, could be nothing other than strangely delightful; and in In-House Weddings, the first of the trilogy that Hrabal produced, we meet the author through the eyes of his wife Eliska. She narrates his life from his upbringing in Nymburk through his work as a dispatcher in a train station and then in a scrap paper plant, his first publication, his trouble with the authorities, and his association with notable artists and authors such as Jiri Kolar,

Vladimir Boudnik, and Arnost Lustig.

## **All My Cats**

Karel Čapek was a Czech writer, playwright and critic. He has become best known for his science fiction, including his novel *War with the Newts* and play *R.U.R.*, which introduced the word robot. He also wrote many politically charged works dealing with the social turmoil of his time.

## **The Little Town Where Time Stood Still**

A literary master's story about the aggravations and great joys of cats, from "a most sophisticated novelist, with a gusting humor and a hushed tenderness of detail" (Julian Barnes) In the autumn of 1965, flush with the unexpected success of his first published books, the Czech author Bohumil Hrabal bought a cottage in Kersko, about an hour's drive east of Prague. From then until his death in 1997, he divided his time between Prague and Kersko, where he wrote and tended to a community of feral cats. Over the years, his relationship to cats grew deeper and more complex, becoming a measure of the pressures, both private and public, that impinged on his life as a writer. Despite the tender love he feels for the cats, especially his favorites who share his bed, there are moments of intense violence—as he controls the feline population explosion explosively. *All My Cats*, written in 1983 after a serious car accident, is best seen as a confessional memoir, the chronicle of an author who becomes overwhelmed by his cats and his life, and is driven to the brink of madness by the dilemmas his indulgent love for the animals have created. In the end, *All My Cats* becomes a book about Hrabal's relationship to nature, about the unlikely sources of redemption that come to him unbidden, like a gift from the cosmos—and about love.

## **Solitude**

*TOO LOUD A SOLITUDE* is a tender and funny story of Hant'a - a man who has lived in a Czech police state - for 35 years, working as compactor of wastepaper and books. In the process of compacting, he has acquired an education so unwitting he can't quite tell which of his thoughts are his own and which come from his books. He has rescued many from jaws of hydraulic press and now his house is filled to the rooftops. Destroyer of the written word, he is also its perpetuator. But when a new automatic press makes his job redundant there's only one thing he can do - go down with his ship. This is an eccentric romp celebrating the indestructability- against censorship, political oppression etc - of the written word.

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