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Nikolai Torgersen

Streets I Have Lived



A day like any other in Oslo around the year 2000: Washing in water from a bucket in winter. Stealing electricity from the neighbour with an extension cord threaded through a hole in the outer wall. Getting high with your parents. Being thrown out of your childhood home, trudging the streets in the cold, always dirty, constantly looking for a place to sleep.

Streets I Have Lived is a story about the shame of lacking the basics and at the same time sticking together out of fierce family loyalty. Nikolai Torgersen wisely reflects on hereditary poverty, exclusion and illness in a language that is as energetic and bouncy as it is eloquent. It's about what it's actually like to learn to swim on your own, and about a creative urge that makes it possible to break out of a hellish existence.

'Grabs the reader. An account of growing up that is unrivalled in Norwegian literature. [...] I will never forget the depiction of the protagonist's years as a homeless drug addict, and the humiliating experience of constantly having to beg for a place to sleep for the night. [...] Torgersen's prose is straightforward and concrete, while he constantly reflects on what he's writing about. The novel is a kind of depiction of popular life from a social stratum that very few of us ever come into contact with. [...] not a perfect or clever book. But it will grab you today, and you won't escape!'

- VG, 6/6 stars

'A white-hot memoir ... Nikolai Torgersen writes shockingly well about sex, drugs, psychiatry and an extremely traumatic childhood. [...] There is no cool distance, everything burns. [...] Despite all the suffering, Streets I Have Lived is strikingly devoid of self-pity.'

- DN

Nikolai Torgersen

Nikolai Torgersen (b. 1990, Oslo) is a visual artist who works with painting, drawing and sculpture. He made his debut at the prestigious annual National Art Exhibition in 2012. Since 2020 he has had several acclaimed solo exhibitions. *Streets I Have Lived* is his first book.



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