

[PDF] Written On The Body

Jeanette Winterson - pdf download free book

Books Details:

Title: Written on the Body

Author: Jeanette Winterson

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Description:

From Publishers Weekly This fourth effort from British writer Winterson (*Sexing the Cherry*) is a high-concept erotic novelette, a Vox for the postmarital crowd. The narrator, a lifelong philanderer ("I used to think marriage was a plate-glass window just begging for a brick"), has fallen in love with Louise, a pre-Raphaelite beauty. Louise is unhappily married to a workaholic cancer researcher, so the narrator leads her into a sexually combative affair. This scenario seems obvious enough, but Winterson never reveals whether the narrator is male or female. Rather, she teases readers out of their expectations about women and men and romance: Louise calls the narrator "the most beautiful creature male or female that I have ever seen," and the narrator observes, "I thought difference was rated to be the largest part of sexual attraction but there are so many things about us that are the same." When the narrator breaks off the affair after learning that Louise has cancer--only her husband can cure her--the work turns into a eulogy for lost love. Winterson manipulates gender expertly here, but her real achievement is her manipulation of genre : the capacious first-person

narration, now addressed to the reader, now to the lover, enfolds aphorisms, meditations on extracts from an anatomy textbook, and essayistic riffs on science, virtual reality and the art of fiction ("I don't want to reproduce, I want to create something entirely new"). "It's as if Louise never existed," the narrator observes, "like a character in a book. Did I invent her?" One wonders, as Winterson intends, and then wonders some more. For Louise--and the narrator's love for her--never seems quite real; in this cold-hearted novel love itself, however eloquently expressed, is finally nothing more than a product of the imagination.

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From Library Journal Like Andre Breton's dizzying poem, "Ma Femme a la chevelure de feu de bois" ("my woman with her belly like the unfolding fan of days/... My woman with her swan's back buttocks"), the narrator of Winterson's (Sexing the Cherry , LJ 2/15/90) new novel relentlessly celebrates the beauty of a beloved woman's body--but the trick here is that we do not know whether the narrator is a man or a woman. The story is minimal and not altogether original: a corrosive sensualist experiences many women but finally becomes obsessed with one, stealing her from her husband, only to discover that she has been guarding a terrible secret: she is threatened by a terminal illness. The fascination is the lush, plush language and the way two aspects of the physical--passion and bodily decay--are delicately interwoven. Not to everyone's taste, but serious readers and sensualists will enjoy. Previewed in Prepub Alert, LJ 10/1/92.

- *Barbara Hoffert, "Library Journal"*

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