



# The Alphabet of Birds

*SJ Naudé*

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## **The Alphabet of Birds** SJ Naudé

If death comes to a loved one, can we grieve alone? When all around is in ruins, can we confine our lives to one beautiful room constructed out of art, or love, or family ties? And when the words we know prove inadequate, can we turn to the language of birds?

In an arty mansion in Milan's industrial zone, two men are shown one of the last remaining Futurist noise machines – an Intonarumore – and a painful old truth surfaces. A musician travels to three continents to see her siblings before returning to Johannesburg; her home is plundered every night around her as she composes a requiem. A man follows his male lover from London to Berlin's clubbing scene and on to a ruined castle in which the lover's family lives. He is looking for an antidote.

The protagonists in SJ Naudé's South African Literary Award-winning short story collection are listening out for answers that cannot be expressed. Offering fresh perspectives on gay, expat and artistic subcultures and tackling the pain of loss head on, Naudé's stories go fearlessly and tenderly to the heart of our experiences of desire, love and death.

**SJ Naudé** grew up in South Africa, where he studied law. After practicing law in New York and London for many years, he returned to South Africa. The Afrikaans version of *The Alphabet of Birds* was awarded several prizes, including a South African Literary Award. Naudé currently lives in Cape Town, South Africa.

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