

Long Litt Woon

The Way Through The Woods: Of Mushrooms and Mourning

Stien tilbake til livet. Om sopp og sorg

Genre: Non-Fiction
Category: Narrative Non-Fiction
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"It felt as if someone had slammed me with a huge sledgehammer....Just a few hours ago we were a married couple.....Now Eiolf was at the Emergency Ward at Ullevål Hospital. Dead and cold."

This is a story about a journey that started abruptly when the author's life collapsed. In the midst of paralyzing grief, she stumbles upon the wondrous world of mushrooms. In the process, she befriends the Mushroom Pickers, a tribe with their own unspoken rules and rites of passage. As she sets out on a voyage of discovery into the realm of fungi, she ventures along a parallel journey through an inner landscape of pain and sorrow.

As Long takes the reader through this simultaneously funny and heartbreaking story, her unusual, personal quest soon feels familiar; at its underlying core the story is one of common human experience. We are introduced to mushrooms not only as food or poison, but also their natural history and cultural significance. In the book, the author unveils how the combination of mushrooms and grief triggers fundamental changes in her life by creating new meaning and identity.

Told in a clear and strong narrative voice, the author's enthusiasm for mushrooms is particularly charming and is also likely to be contagious.

Nominated for the 2019 Jan Michalski Prize for Literature
Longlisted for the 2020 Warwick Prize for Women in Translation



Photo: Johs Bøe

Long Litt Woon (b. 1958 in Malaysia) is an Anthropologist and certified Mushroom Expert in Norway. She went to Norway in her youth as an exchange student. There she met and later married a Norwegian, Eiolf Olsen, and made Norway her home. She currently lives in Oslo, Norway.

The author's surname is Long in accordance to Chinese naming tradition.

Foreign sales

Catalan (Ara llibres), Czech (Barrister & Principal), Chinese (Commercial Press), Danish (Don Max), Dutch (AW Bruna), Finnish (Nemo Kustannus), French (Gaïa Éditions), German (btb, Randomhouse), Italian (Iperborea), Japanese (Misuzu Shobo), Latvian (Mansards Publishing), Polish (Wydawnictwo Literackie), Russian (Ad Marginem), Swedish (Polaris), Spanish (Maeva), US (Spiegel & Grau Penguin Randomhouse), World – English (Scribe Publishing House)

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Winje Agency
gina@winjeagency.com
+47 91841150
www.winjeagency.com



'This is one of the most surprising and original books I have read in a long time – so much to learn and reflect about the human condition and about a natural phenomenon.'

Knut Olav Åmås (Norwegian critic, commentator and writer)

'It is poetic, warm and moving, and steeped in life wisdom.'

Sissel Gran