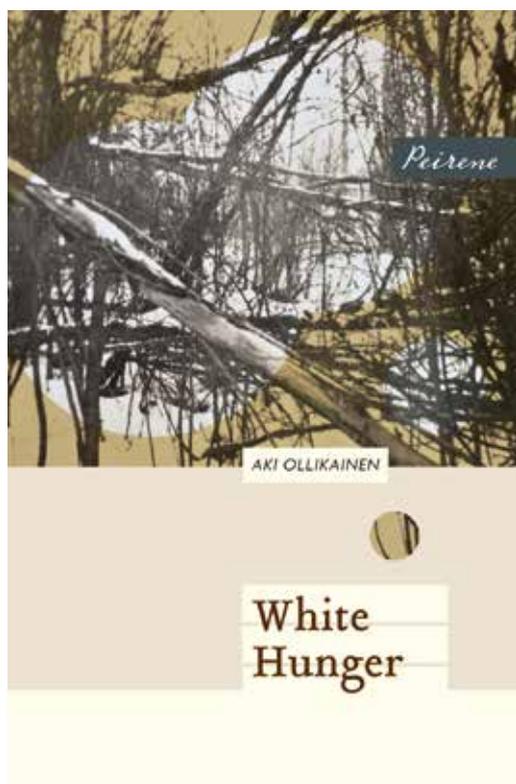


Reader's Guide



White Hunger
is Aki Ollikainen's first novel

White Hunger Aki Ollikainen

Translated by Emily Jeremiah and Fleur Jeremiah

Peirene Press

www.themanbookerprize.com

#FinestFiction #MBI2016

About the author

Aki Ollikainen, born in 1973, took the Finnish literary scene by storm with his extraordinarily accomplished debut novel *White Hunger*, which has won the most prestigious literary prizes in Finland. A professional photographer and reporter for a local newspaper, Ollikainen lives in Kolari in northern Finland.

About the translator

Emily Jeremiah and Fleur Jeremiah form a multilingual mother-and-daughter translation team. Emily has an MA in Creative Writing and a PhD in German Studies. Fleur, her mother, is Finnish and has translated both fiction and non-fiction for many years. Emily and Fleur have co-translated work by numerous Finnish poets and novelists. They are also the translators of two previous Peirene titles: *The Brothers* by Asko Sahlberg and *Mr Darwin's Gardener* by Kristina Carlson.

About the book

1867: a year of devastating famine in Finland. Marja, a farmer's wife from the north, sets off on foot through the snow with her two young children. Their goal: St Petersburg, where people say there is bread. Others are also heading south, just as desperate to survive. Ruuni, a boy she meets, seems trustworthy. But can anyone really help? This extraordinary Finnish novella questions what it takes to survive.

Discussion points

Does this novel make you feel more sympathetic to the plight of refugees?

Although this is a historical novel, what is it about the story that makes it feel contemporary? 'A novella that feels like a great, huge novel' (*Satakunnan Kansä*), how does the author achieve this?

Do you think this novel has a central character?

The Senator is a prominent yet mysterious figure in the book; does it matter that we are not fully informed of the story's politics or do you wish there was more explanation of the historical and political issues?

Do you think we are given more insight into the inner lives of the wealthier characters? If so, why might this be important to the story?

Themed reading

Cormac McCarthy *The Road*
Gohril Gabrielsen *The Looking Glass Sisters*
Raymond Jean *Reader for Hire*

Useful links

<http://www.theguardian.com/books/2015/mar/03/white-hunger-aki-ollikainen-review-finnish-famine>

<https://www.nudge-book.com/blog/2015/01/white-hunger-by-aki-ollikainen/>

http://www.peirenepress.com/books/chance_encounter/peirene_no_16

<http://themanbookerprize.com/interview/white-hunger-interview>