

## BOOKS

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**Karl Ove Knausgård, *Lupta mea Cartea a Treia: Insula Copilăriei*,  
traducere din limba norvegiană de Roxana-Ema Dreve,  
Editura Litera, București, 2016, 510 p.**

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*My struggle: Book 3. Boyhood Island* is the third volume of the six-part novel *My struggle* (*Min Kamp* in original Norwegian), remarkably translated into Romanian directly from Norwegian by Roxana-Ema Dreve. The project *My Struggle* has generated intense and opposite reactions among Scandinavian scholars while its author, Karl Ove Knausgård, was considered both the best and the worst writer of our times. Now an international best-seller, the whole series is strongly autobiographical, summing up the life of its author, until the age of 45.

In the first two volumes, *A death in the family* (*Min Kamp 1*) and *A man in love* (*Min Kamp 2*), Knausgård juggles with the recollection of his past and the reality of the present while he is constantly exploring his inner thoughts and feelings and exposes them to the public, with no visible shame. Regardless of the dark tone that accompanies the first book or the more



positive one in the second, the one thing that remains unchanged is the dominant, painful and God-like presence of a father. After reading the first book, it becomes clear enough that the narrator's father was a very much hated person by his sons, without telling exactly why. The problematic relationship between them is explored even deeper in *A man in love*, but the father remains a mysterious character.

*Boyhood Island* is the most generous in details part from all six, meant to reveal the tyrant father and it is only now that the reader can actually understand the whole story. Much as it might seem a little lightweight in the beginning, Knausgård's third installment grows rapidly to a high degree of intensity. For those who read the first volumes, this one may come as a surprise. The typical knausgårdian digressions or the analepsis and prolepsis are almost completely gone. Likewise, there are nearly no intrusions

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from the writer, no meditative moments, no philosophical essays. Everything happens in a certain space (an island, like the title suggests) and time (almost seven years).

Starting with a short introduction of a period that the narrator, Karl Ove, doesn't actually remember and an explanation of how memory works (which is important, because all his books are based on that) the book tells the story of a young Karl Ove, from the age of six to his early teenage days. It is an exploration of the universe of childhood and all that comes with it. The dominant feeling is that of sadness and frustration that are generated by the presence of the father who is constantly trying to undermine his youngest son and make him feel miserable. The overall mood is soften and light-

en up by the superb depictions of Norwegian nature and landscapes, or when love relationships are revealed (between brothers, or grandmother and grandson). Except for these rare moments, the reader, who gets easily caught in the story, would probably feel the need to protect little Karl Ove and make his father suffer.

*Boyhood Island* can be read as an autonomous novel and a representative of the literature of childhood. At the same time, seen in the context of the whole *My Struggle* project, it is like the engine that starts everything.

ȘTEFANA-TEODORA POPA  
([popa\\_stefana\\_teodora@yahoo.com](mailto:popa_stefana_teodora@yahoo.com))