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Posted on 06 May 2017 By Niviaq Korneliussen

28 year old Greenlandic writer Niviaq Korneliussen is beating the odds Hailing from a country with a population of around 56,000 which is still hugely influenced by the literary traditions of its former colonial power, Denmark, Korneliussen managed to cause quite a stir with her original writing that shows new paths for Greenlandic literature Originally published in 2014, her debut novel Last Night in Nuuk US Crimson UK then titled HOMO sapienne was nominated for a Politiken literary award and the Nordic Council Literature Prize, and Sj n just recently included Korneliussen s short story San Francisco , which features one of the book s protagonists, in his anthology of Nordic fiction, The Dark Blue Winter Overcoat Other Stories from the North Last Night in Nuuk tells the story of five young Greenlanders struggling with their sexual and gender identity in modern day Nuuk Korneliussen masterfully moves between different perspectives as well as between time frames The events of the title giving night assume different meanings as the author starts to extrapolate All of the protagonists have very distinct voices, and the text includes Greenlandic and Danish expressions that young people use no worries, they are explained in the text Turning away from traditional themes and tropes, the characters party, drink and have sex, they try to come to terms with their parents who have been even influenced by the Danish colonial rule , and they communicate with text messages and via postings on social media.This is a fascinating book, and Korneliussen clearly has the potential to produce some first class literary fiction in the future There is no doubt that she knows how to write relevant books full of

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sparkling language We need writers who find words like these It was an honour to hold your heart, but my hands are all bloody, so you'd better take it or I'm gonna have to drop this sticky heart of yours Watch out for this writer. N , Niviaq Korneliusen Imi Nuuk Mi Inunngorpoq, Maannalu Siullermeertumik Saqqummersitsinerani, Atuakkiortoq Isumalluarnartoq Saqqummerluni Taamaattumik Kikkut Tamat, Kalaallit Qallunaallu, Arnaqatiminnik Anguteqatiminnillu Atoqateqarneq Ajortut Aamma Arnaqatiminnik Anguteqatiminnilluunniit Atoqateqartartut, Inuusuttut Utoqqaallu, Uanngaanniit Aallartiinnarsinnaapput HOMO Sapienne Ip Quppernerani Siullermiit Mette Moestrup Oqaluttualiap Siulequtaani Fia, Inuk, Arnaq, Ivinnguaq Aamma Sara Inuusuttut Tallimat, Nuummi Pissutsit Allanngorneri, Kinaassuseq Asanninnerlu Pillugit Oqaluttuaat Tallimat Imminnut Ataatsimoortillugit I loved a lot of elements of this book, but I think the stuff with a trans character was not handled very well A lot of it comes from a very cis centric perspective and another character spends far too much time tying genitalia to sexuality Having said that, I am a cis reviewer myself so I don't want to speak over any trans reviewers who have a different perspective If you're a trans person who has read this book I would love to hear your thoughts and link to your review, if you have one. Originally published as Homo Sapienne and translated as Crimson UK and Last Night in Nuuk US , this novel has been a surprise breakthrough hit for debut author Niviaq Korneliusen In an interview, the author says the original text mixes Greenlandic with flecks of Danish and English the UK publisher's blurb states she also translated it into Danish herself Whether the English translation is from the Greenlandic or Danish version isn't stated in the review copy I read The story follows a number of characters in Nuuk, the capital of Greenland, as they explore their identities First we meet Fia, whose fierce and striking voice makes for a bracing opening chapter In a furious stream of thoughts sentences often running on for pages she gives an account of her boredom with boyfriend Peter dry kisses stiffening like desiccated fish , an unsatisfying one night stand with a stranger, and the explosive lust that ensues when she meets beautiful Sara at a party I loved Fia's chapter it's furiously alive even when she succumbs to morbid thoughts Death has begun to appear in my dreams, and I'm petrified

Flat-Out Love

Losing It

The Hook Up

My Favorite Mistake

Rule

Taking Chances

The Perfect Game

The Coincidence of
Callie & Kayden

The Friend Zone

Love Story

Because of Low

All The Wrong Reasons

We'll Always Have
Summer

Charade

Fangirl

Clash

Murder Death of the soul A shrivelled corpse Suicide Death has begun to visit me, and I m petrified Mass murder A failed suicide attempt Envious of the dead I ve begun to walk hand in hand with it, and I m petrified I make up my mind because death won t leave my mind There has always been something missing here Joan Jett and the Blackhearts cover of Crimson and Clover gives the book its title it s Fia s favourite song, and becomes emblematic of her desire to be with Sara. One of the most illuminating voices belongs to Inuk, Fia s brother, whose narrative serves to contextualise some of the others Inuk is caught up in his own crisis of identity he sees Greenland as a prison from which he must escape he wants to support his sister but struggles with the news of her new relationship at times hatefully parroting homophobic phrases he has, presumably, heard elsewhere and, unable to believe Fia knows what she s doing, he suspects Arnaq s corrupting influence is responsible Inuk s story mirrors Fia s in that he must endure a kind of death life has killed me before he is able to accept himself This theme of rebirth is woven through the novel. Arnaq threatens to become the villain of the piece a free spirited party animal who brings the others together and drives them apart, a whirlwind who seduces and spills secrets because she thinks it s funny and when we see another side to her, it s heartbreaking Embarrassment My thoughts fall to the ground, blown away by the wind Disappear Nothing left Autopilot My brain has switched off Autopilot is switched on The shame stops Autopilot takes over All feeling dies My body walks on Autopilot when I give Autopilot when it s over Autopilot when I ve sinned Autopilot when I m sober Autopilot forever The characters in Crimson are always partying and drinking because they re lost, or because there s nothing else to do I thought it was interesting that many of them drink to excess on an eye watering regular basis, but drugs are hardly ever mentioned Is this emblematic of these characters social scene or of Greenlandic culture as a whole Nuuk is big when there s actually someone you want to bump into , says Sara, but in reality Nuuk is stiflingly small a capital city with a smaller population than the suburban town I grew up in The island has run out of oxygen The island is swollen The island is rotten There s something magical about the texture of Crimson, the way it evokes its setting so effortlessly and without cliché, the

way it achieves depth of characterisation in short chapters, trimmed of all superfluous detail. It plumbs the darkest depths of its characters' despair but comes up sparkling, fresh, renewed. I thought this book was both electrifying and moving, and since I finished it, I've found myself thinking about it on a regular basis. I received an advance review copy of *Crimson* from the publisher through NetGalley. TinyLetter Twitter Instagram Tumblr This is definitely my first read by a native Greenlandic. *Last Night in Nuuk*, published as *Crimson* in the UK, chronicles the lives of a handful of connected late teens and early 20somethings living in Nuuk. Map it, there is not much there as they navigate relationships, substances, secrets, friendships and sexuality. I liked how the book flipped through different modes, from internal dialogues to letters to text conversations. I liked the diversity of the characters and also their fluidity at times. There is one major realization/confrontation late in the novel that made me feel a bit uncomfortable. I think it's better for individuals to let others know their gender if they feel so inclined, not have a romantic partner tell them who they are. I've had this on my radar for a few months so I was happy to see it in Hoopla so soon. *Crimson*, Niviaq Korneliussen's first novella to be translated into English from its original Greenlandic, follows five LGBT twentysomethings living in the city of Nuuk and their journey towards understanding their identity. The key themes the author explores are those of gender, sexuality and relationships. For a very short novel, it packs a powerful punch and is a refreshing take on coming of age. Each chapter is told from a different character's perspective, and as well as the normal narrative there are text messages and Facebook posts interspersed throughout. It perfectly captures the confusion and opportunity of youth and of trying to find yourself as a person. This is an emotive and heartfelt novella, but I would have liked the Greenlandic scenery to be prevalent as it was not really focused on that much. I feel if you are setting a book in somewhere remote, icy and beautiful, you need to make the most of that. This is not a comfortable read, but I think the author has achieved what she set out to. Some of what is explored is likely to have come from Korneliussen's own experiences of growing up as a gay woman. Honest, brave and authentic, this is a quirky work with many important messages.

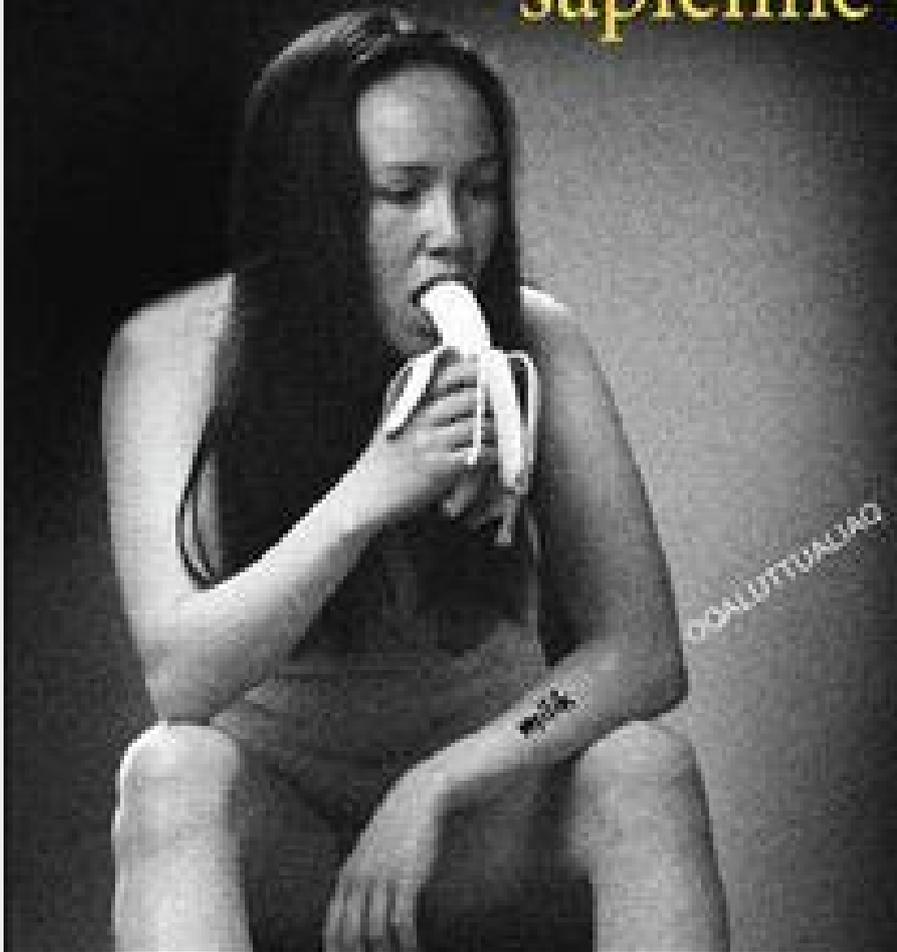
hidden throughout it. Many thanks to Virago for an ARC I was not required to post a review, and all thoughts and opinions expressed are my own. This is a very short the description says 200pp but it took less than 2 hours to read text messages and white space on the page quasi stream of consciousness novel that has a modern sensibility youth, drinking, restlessness, depression, love, most of all sexual identities Perhaps it feels fresher in Greenland than it does in London where this kind of urban angst with hook ups, gay and or trans characters has an established place does anyone turn their head at a young woman ditching her boring boyfriend and falling in love with a beautiful woman any At the risk of sounding annoying, this just isn't that edgy That said, it captures a sense of frenetic confused youth, of possibilities and excitement I'd have liked to have had a grounded sense of Greenland this could have been set in any university city with a pulsing student youth population Definitely worth reading for the buzz but I'm a bit on the shelf with this one. Thanks to Virago for an ARC via NetGalley The island has run out of oxygen The island is swollen The island is rotten The island has taken my beloved from me The island is a Greenlander It's the fault of the Greenlander When one thinks of Greenland, the mental image is likely to be of a remote Arctic landscape shaped by glaciers, or perhaps one of a lonely Inuit hunter dressed in caribou skin clothing driving a dog sledge through icy winds Indeed, this vast non continental island with mountainous icebergs has the world's sparsest population with only the occasional village of colourfully painted wooden cottages dotted along its west coast There are, however, a handful of large urban areas, including Nuuk, the capital city, with its apartment blocks, industrial buildings and avant garde architecture. It is here, author Niviaq Korneliusen has set her tale of love, lust, despondency and queer life At weekends her wild, narcissistic young Greenlanders hook up with friends, meet lovers and indulge in one night stands They become drunk in downtown bars, get stoned at house parties, and generally desensitize themselves from overwhelming emotional issues probably not so very different from young people the world over. Its edgy characters include Fia who splits with her long term boyfriend and becomes infatuated with Sara although, the latter is really in love with Ivik who struggles with

gender dysphoria There's Inuk, who almost loses his sanity questioning what it means to be a Greenlander and Arnaq, a manipulative, bisexual partygoer with a troubled past We experience the same events, in turn, from the perspective of each person Crimson may sound amusing, but it isn't Quite the reverse it is dispiriting and joyless, its protagonists resentful and discontented with their claustrophobic lives, but it is also a fearless work of modern literature A sort of Greenlandic Trainspotting for the 21st century, but without the humour The Guardian named it one of its top ten modern Nordic fiction books, and I can appreciate its reasons for doing so While it may be self absorbed, it is also original, inventive and touchingly courageous. Korneliussen was born in Nuuk, South Greenland in 1990 and studied Psychology at Aarhus University in Denmark before spending a year in California as an exchange student She started writing in 2013 and won many writing competitions in her homeland, where this novel was first published under the title of HOMO sapienne She translated it herself from Greenlandic to Danish Many thanks to Virago for providing an advance review copy of this title.

Original, cru, franc Une critique particulièrement qui ne s'oublie pas 4,5/5 It seems I'm an outlier on this one For me, Last Night in Nuuk was confusing the characters all had the same voice, quite superficial, had little character development and was just not all that compelling Thank you Netgalley and Grove Atlantic for the advance copy, which was provided in exchange for an honest review.

NIVIAO KORNELIUSSEN

HOMO sapienne



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