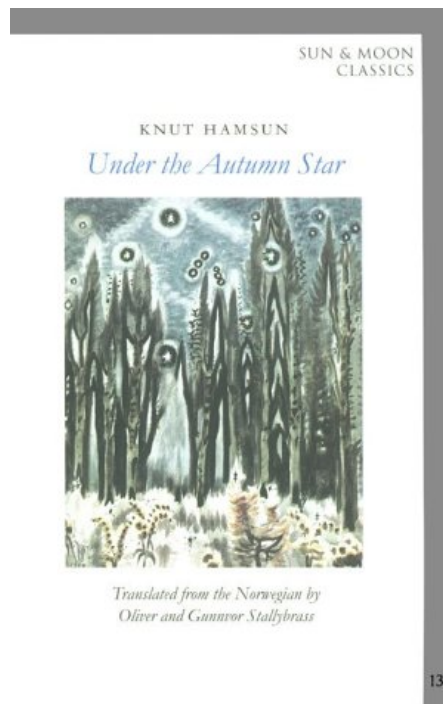




Under the Autumn Star

Knut Hamsun , Oliver Stallybrass , Gunnvor Stallybrass

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In Under the Autumn Star, Nobel prize-winning author Knut Hamsun writes a novel magically permeated with the air and light of fall. The narrator, Knut Pedersen (Hamsun's real name) first joins forces with Grindhusen, a man blessed with the faith that "something will turn up," and later with Lars Falkenberg, whose dubious talents include the tuning of pianos. Knut and Lars fetch up as workmen on the estate of Captain Falkenberg (no relation to Lars), with whose wife each falls or fancies himself in love - though this does not prevent either from doing "night duties" in other quarters. In time, Knut is laid off and, in futile pursuit of the woman with whom he is by now helplessly infatuated, finds himself sucked back into the city life he had fled.

Under the Autumn Star Details

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Author : Knut Hamsun , Oliver Stallybrass , Gunnvor Stallybrass

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Swarthout says

Episodic novel which is really just a series of (autobiographical?) vignettes about an itinerant laborer wandering from place to place. Each section ends in a "punch line" that I found dry and funny in an understated way (which also elevated it above a typical dull fin de siècle era novel. Like most of Hamsun's work, this one felt way more modern than 1907). The protagonist is also similar to his great work Hunger: this one is also pitiful and long suffering and broke and not so great with the ladies, but has a lot going for him even though it's not so obvious (to anyone else at least). In other words a highly relatable guy.

Andrés Cabrera says

No es de lo mejor que he leído de Knut Hamsun, pero ciertamente permite vislumbrar algunas de las características más loables de la prosa del escritor noruego. Tras el relato de Knut Pedersen (alterego del noruego en su vida de vagabundo errante y miserable), se esconde el genio de alguien que ha decidido esquivar la vida para enfrentarse de lleno a sí mismo: a lo que resta por hacer y pensar. ¿Cuánto puede vivir un hombre a la deriva? ¿En qué momento las olas dejan de ser esquivas y golpean la carne? ¿En qué momento la suerte se pierde en el camino, y los hombres se encuentran de frente con sus temores y esperanzas marchitas? Hamsun sabe que sólo es posible contestar a lo anterior si la pregunta se despliega sobre un plano, sobre un campo humano que permita dar cuenta de la misma. Antes que contestar con contundencia, las preguntas existenciales más fuertes adquieren su fuerza en la medida en que son asumidas con toda la seriedad, hasta el punto de sentir las roer la piel. Las metáforas, al menos en su obra, son indicativos de las afecciones del personaje: en cierto modo, no sorprende que suela recurrirse a figuras de la naturaleza (aves, bosques, árboles, etc) para reflejar un pensamiento, una manera de ser en medio de la gente. Antes que racionales, los humanos son tristes animales temerosos, confundidos, perdidos en la espesura de sus propias almas (rasgo primero del Romanticismo del noruego). Como Fausto, sabio pero temeroso, Pedersen confía en sus capacidades racionales; mas se sabe imperfecto, estúpido, arrogante a la par que derrotado. Entiende que sus sueños no serán más que ilusiones perdidas, y que sus pasos derivan en un camino en el que el sosiego no encuentra cobijo sino es en la soledad de la labor cotidiana.

Aspiro a leer algo más de Hamsun en estos días de vacaciones. Eso sí, me daré un pequeño respiro con algo un poco menos cargado en términos afectivos: leer a Hamsun implica comprenderse, cada vez, un poco más envilecido. Y eso, al menos para mí, me parece fundamental. La sinceridad implica comprenderse como sobrevivientes antes que como héroes. Y, en el caso de los humanos comunes y corrientes (como lo soy yo), lo anodino termina por quebrantar buena parte de los ánimos de rebelión y esperanza. Si algo comprende Hamsun, es que la cobardía es un valor tan importante como la entereza, y que sólo bajo ciertas circunstancias el segundo puede llegar a cultivarse más que el primero. No es que exista una tendencia ni una predisposición biológica a ser mejor o peor: cada hombre traza su rumbo. A pesar del camino y aferrado al último de los sueños. Lo importante es tener certeza de quién se es, y darlo todo por aquello que se espera ser.

A.P. Moraez says

"God's blessing on the old days, when something could be rare!"

Since I read *Hunger*, I fell in love with Hamsun's writing. Unfortunately, though, *Under the Autumn Star* wasn't my cup of tea.

First of all, for a book with a first person narrator I found it odd that we learn so little about Pedersen. He talks little about the past or even what's driven him out from the city. All he says is, "*I was really a man of good family, led astray by desperation over an unhappy love affair, and now taking to drink.*" It's clear throughout the story that he wants to be young again in order to find some peace of mind.

Unfortunately, Pedersen doesn't go far enough if he's looking for peace from a relationship. He ends up having a number of minor sexual encounters but his main problem arises when he falls in love with the mistress of the house he's worked the longest in, Mrs Falkenberg. To her credit, she offers him no encouragement. When he leaves the estate after his work's done he writes to her and she makes it very clear that he should not write to her. Sadly, though, he misinterprets the message and understands that he can't write to her, but he can surely visit her. The guy is just delusional, really. Let's just say that his inability to interpret situations and read people properly don't result in positive outcomes for his personal life.

All things considered, **I liked this book well enough, just didn't find it quite as much to the standards of depth and meaning that I always expect from Hamsun.** The characters were entertaining and, besides the fact that I absolutely hated the deluded nature of Pedersen, I liked him and the others. The pace was well-balanced, being that the story kept its serenity throughout, even if it risked becoming boring at some parts. Still, I would recommend this as a quick, nice read. One of those books that you read when you just want to chill and laugh about how human nature can be confusing and hilariously sad.

That's it, I think. Cya.

Steven says

"My dear sir, I said to myself, weren't you the one who was going to seek out the quiet life and healthy people, and regain your peace of mind?"

Knut Pedersen is a middle-aged man from the city who, after some misfortune, probably at the hand of a woman, retreats into the countryside. He wanders from place to place, accepts whatever job happens to be on offer at the local farms, meets a variety of people, sticks with some while leaving others behind, wandering, wandering, wandering, only to end up in the city again because of a woman. It might sound dull, but out of Hamsun's pen, it shines.

Axel Ainglish says

This is the first part of the three books forming the well known "Vagabond Trilogy". Is definitely one of the nicest novels biography ever read. There is such a wild beauty not only in the landscapes he and his pal are rambling through but in his "philosophy of life", his way of being and living, that it becomes difficult to understand the writer other's side. Almost before reading it, but then after, went into it much more years after. And believe me, still not understanding well why did Hamsun get seduced and somehow supported the Nazis. It is a fact too widespread nowadays and only recently, has a square, think, being given his name. It was a very passive support, actually he did went to meet Hitler and then found did not agree so much with a man he realize was somehow, mad. But it was too late for Norwegian people. His newspaper articles showing himself prone to Nazis political ideas were not pardoned after. Maybe he was not a much cultivated man. Inspite being the magnificent writer he was. Has been said that was influenced by Nietzsche's super human ideas, and it possibly is truth. But in these books nothing of that can be seen. Nor in others, to my knowledge. On the contrary, shows himself as the humble, modest and generous kind of man he must have been. Not at all parti pris, as was always considered after. This writer was not a Nazi and has just been recently that his disagreements with that dreadful regime had become finally more apparent and shown up. Did You ever dreamed of wandering free, dreamily, through the most beautiful nature with a friend or alone after, and passing years so, in permanent contact with nature, loving women when just met them -if You were required by them- and just keeping with only the necessary? Understanding by "necessary" the fewer, and in this sense it may be hard, for not even love is going to be taken with You, nor are You going to settle down. A wonderful Trilogy (followed by "A vagabond plays in sardine" and "Last Joy") about which thought might wrote for happen to be a bit forgotten writer. Being as he is, a Colossus in literature.

charta says

La vita come bolla

Sebbene vituperata dalla maggior parte dei lettori, questa è un'opera paradigmatica, che a latere rientra a pieno titolo nel genere consigliato dagli "psi" (psicologi e/o psichiatri, fate voi) ad amici delusi o pazienti in via di guarigione.

Voluta e autobiografica cattedrale del fascinoso mito del viandante, mostra con toni di grande poesia la fallacia del perenne itinerare. Paradossalmente più si mostra il sublime dell'incessante fantasticare del protagonista, il suo bambino stupirsi davanti alla bellezza di un frullo d'ali, di un suono sconosciuto, di un colore acceso o della forma di una mano, più questo, nella rapida capacità di passare oltre mostra l'essenza vampira di chi, per essere, ha bisogno di succhiare costantemente il nuovo e l'inatteso senza costruire, senza trasformar(si), ma solo collocandolo, una volta risolto scheletro, in un personale museo.

Non c'è una fantasia che rielabora immagini portando intuizioni e scoperte, ma un perenne fantasticare che cerca oggetti (animali, cose, persone, edifici, luoghi: tutto diviene res con Knut) con cui cibare le proprie aprioristiche e fameliche aspettative, con cui riempire le proprie idealizzazioni (Knut non vede *davvero* chi o cosa ha davanti a sé ma lo ridisegna secondo il proprio gusto).

Il libro gronda romanticismo che sa arrivare al volo pindarico, ma restando astratto e freddo. Amore che è solo personale idea dell'amore, in cui incastonare, letteralmente, l'umana di turno che - per sua sfortuna - ha colpito l'occhio e la fantas(ticher)ia del nostro.

Ossatura del tutto è la ribellione, purtroppo velleitaria e apparente perché solo mal mascherata in verità è fuga da sé stesso, occasionalmente travestita da nichilismo.

Si avverte la profonda castrazione di chi non si mette mai realmente in gioco, mai sposa una causa, mai si batte per qualcosa ma resta ai margini, terrorizzato dal timore che un suo autentico agito possa fallire e insieme beandosi dell'interesse iniziale che questa illusoria figura di outsider sa creare. Scorrono però incessanti le primavere: Knut cerca di fermare il tempo aggrappandosi a gioventù femminili che, consumata la vampirizzazione, collocherà nella sua galleria di ricordi, spolverata con cura maniacale, e ostentando un cinismo che maschera il timore di un corpo che inizia a perdere colpi. Una storia ben scritta, apparentemente sconclusionata e molto triste perché spesso vera. L'autore ha rappresentato magistralmente un campione diffuso di (maschile) umanità.

Asl? Can says

Nevrasteni. Nevrasteni. Nevrasteni.

Knut Hamsun edebiyat?na ve karakterlerine sinmi? hissin güzel bir tasviri; nevrasteni. Bunu kitapta da s?k s?k tekrarlı?yor kitab?n karakteri olan Knut kendisi için. Knut Hamsun'un bu nevrasteniye anlat?rken okuru da nevrasteniye kapt?racak derecede ba?arılı? oldu?u aç?k. Özellikle Açl?k'da çok belirgindi bu hal, Sonbahar Y?ldızlar Altında'n?n nevrastenisini daha yumu?ak, daha kontrollü ve daha az çöskülü. O yüzden Açl?k'? okurken oldu?u gibi yormad? beni.

Med Ghanfari says

le narrateur de *Sous l'étoile d'automne* est un "vagabond par essence", un héros romantique et solitaire, troublé par le doux passage d'une jeune fille et toujours en quête de sérénité. De ferme en ferme, nomade mélancolique, il sait tous des saisons, de l'arrivée lente de l'hiver, du vol bruissant des oies sauvages, du crissement de la gelée blanche sous les pas. La nature le rassure et le sauve.

Einar Sivertsen says

Interessant, men overraskende lite underholdende.

Jim says

I expect if someone has read anything by Hamsun it will've been *Hunger* and I did indeed read it back in my twenties. But what to tackle next? I'd always thought of *Hunger* as a bit of a one hit wonder. Whether that's doing the author an injustice or not I do not know but when I chanced upon a copy of *Under the Autumn Star* I picked it up without knowing anything about it other than it was written by Hamsun. Of course after thirty-odd years I can't remember much about *Hunger* other than I enjoyed it so really I'd nothing in my head to compare *Under the Autumn Star* to. In tone I was reminded of *The Sorrows of Young Werther* despite the fact the Hamsun's narrator is at least twice his age and this is perhaps because Pedersen acts like a callow youth when around women.

For a book with a first person narrator I found it odd that we learn so little about Pedersen. He talks little about the past or even what's driven him from the city. All he says is, "I was really a man of good family, led

astray by desperation over an unhappy love affair, and now taking to drink.” What he did in the city is unclear but he obviously has an engineering background—we can see that from how he provides tap water to the vicarage and also his design for a crosscut saw—but he’s not averse to manual labour and seems to be able to turn his hand to most things. I suppose the idea is much like that explored in *The Year of the Hare*; the note Vatanen leaves in his hotel room says simply, “Leave me in peace,” whereas Pedersen writes, “[T]his time I am resolved. Peace I will have, at any cost.” It’s a spiritual quest although not a religious one despite the fact he says at one point

If possible, too, I would see and arrive at some feeling of respect for the sacredness of the church and terror of the dead; I had still a memory of that rich mysticism from days now far, far behind, and wished I could have some share in it again.

He wants to be young again to return to a state of wide-eyed wonder so rather than a coming of age novel this is something of a counter-*Bildungsroman*. He’s like Gatsby in that respect. Maybe he doesn’t want to repeat the past but he does want to reclaim it—he’s responding to a “calling” (one translation says “summons”) from his youth—but we all know you can’t step into the same river twice; he’s not the same man and it’s not the same river.

Unfortunately Pedersen doesn’t go far enough if he’s looking for peace from women and ends up having a number of minor sexual encounters but his main problem arises when he falls in love with the mistress of the house he works in the longest, Mrs Falkenberg. To her credit she offers him no encouragement. When he leaves the estate after his work’s done he writes to her and she replies, “Do not *write* to me,” which he reads (as any besotted teenager might) as, “But you can *visit* me.” So he does only to learn that she’s fled to the city to avoid him. So what does he do? He sheds his itinerant labourer persona and pursues her as the gentleman he truly is only to be thwarted by her at every opportunity. Eventually when he realises all is hopeless he goes on a binge. He’s back to square one.

This is the first book in what turns out to be a trilogy of novels. That this is not the end of Pedersen’s adventures is suggested by the book’s last line:

One day I suppose I shall grow tired of this unconsciousness, and go out and live on an island once again.

By “this unconsciousness” he’s talking about his attempts to hide from reality through excessive drinking. It’s interesting that the book I read before this one was *Factotum* by Charles Bukowski. I would’ve never have imagined that Hamsun’s and Bukowski’s alter egos would’ve had much in common but there’s more there than you might expect. Another thing Hamsun has in common with Bukowski—at least as far as these novels go—is that he polarises opinion. I’ve seen one-star and five-star reviews for both authors and I can see why. Not much happens in either book. They wander from menial job to menial job without any clear goal in mind. They drink. They have casual sex. They avoid thinking as much as possible.

The big difference is Bukowski is funny. Boring can be funny—just look at *Waiting for Godot*—but Hamsun isn’t. He’s a little too earnest for my tastes and his narrator keeps going on about his damned neurasthenia. Having suffered from depression all my life you’d think I’d be more sympathetic than most but there were times when I wanted to give this bloke a slap and tell him to pull himself together.

Hamsun can write. Whether the Stallybrass translation does him a disservice is another matter. I suspect it might from what I’ve picked up from other translations whilst writing these notes. A part of me is tempted to look for the next book. Having read a bit about what happens—Pedersen returns to the Falkenberg’s estate years later—I’m curious to see how things develop but maybe not quite curious enough to actually read any

more if his style is going to be like this.

I didn't *hate* the book but three stars suggests I *liked* it. I really didn't but two stars would've been niggardly. I've rounded up from two and a half.

Mark says

Weer een roman gelezen van Knut Hamsun. In 'Onder de herfstster' ontvlucht de hoofdpersoon, Knut Pedersen, de stad, aan de verlokkingen van wiens etablissementen hij slecht weerstand kan bieden, en gaat naar het noorden van Noorwegen. Zo opent de roman:

'Gisteren lag de zee erbij als een spiegel zo glad en zo glad als een spiegel is zij vandaag. Het is nu Indian Summer en het is warm op het eiland - o, die heerlijke milde warmte! - en toch is er geen zon. Het is jaren geleden dat ik me zo vredig heb gevoeld, misschien wel twintig of dertig jaar, misschien wel in een voorgaand leven. Ik moet deze rust ooit eerder hebben meegemaakt, denk ik, want ik loop hier te neuriën en ben in verrukking en bekommer me om iedere steen en elk grassprietje en die schijnen zich ook om mij te bekommeren. We zijn bekenden van elkaar.'

En even later:

'Goed beschouwd brengt de dag van morgen wel raad, net zoals dat vandaag het geval was. Ik heb in twee weken geen krant ingezien en leef nog steeds, voel me goed, wat mijn innerlijke rust betreft gaat het elke dag beter.'

Pedersen verdient de kost met allerhande klusjes bij een dominee, een boer en een landdrost. Daarbij laat het vrouwelijk schoon hem niet onberoerd. En andersom, want in deze afgelegen streken blijft de komst van andere mannen niet onopgemerkt.

Hij doet zich dan wel voor als zwervende dagloner, hij heeft veel meer in zijn mars (Pedersen is - toevallig of niet - de echte naam van Hamsun). Zo zegt hij tegen de dochter van de dominee, Elisabeth, na een kort verblijf in hun salon: 'Duizendmaal dank voor uw bekoorlijkheid, schone dame!' Kom daar nog maar eens om, anno 2015.

Hamsun speelt dit spel, van de outsider, die juist omdat hij outsider is, en ook omdat hij een bepaalde wijsheid heeft, de vrouwen intrigeert, op een uitzonderlijke wijze in veel van zijn werk. Hoewel 'Onder de herfstster' zeker niet zijn beste werk is, blijft zijn stijl uniek en tilt hij daarmee iedere vertelling uit boven de middelmaat. Hij is de 'meester van de aanduiding', van de ambiguïteit. Neem deze scene, die volgt nadat de vrouw van de dominee hem heeft gevraagd haar met 'iets' te helpen, boven:

'Ik wil het het bed ergens anders hebben,' zei mevrouw. 'In de winter staat het te dicht bij de kachel, dat is zo warm.'

We zetten het bed bij de kachel.

'Vind je niet dat het hier beter staat? Koeler?' vroeg ze. Ik keek haar toevallig aan, ze had weer die schuinse blik van opzij. Jeminee! En opeens was ik een en al onbeheerst vlees en bloed, ik hoorde haar zeggen: 'Ben je gek! Nee maar, lieve God - de deur - '

Daarna hoorde ik dat mijn naam een aantal malen werd gefluisterd...

Er zijn prachtige natuurbeschrijvingen, een uitdagen van het geloof in een God (Pedersen meent 's nachts te worden bezocht door een lijk, nadat hij een nagel van een dode heeft gebruikt bij het maken van een pijp, maar op het laatst vertelt Elisabeth hem dat zij hem 's nachts, terwijl hij sliep heeft toegedekt - waren Pedersens visioenen nu wel of niet echt?), en dit zijn enkele regels aan het einde:

‘En dan wordt het meer wijn en dan wordt het whiskey. En dan worden het liters whiskey. En dan zuip ik er eenentwintig dagen op los waarin er een gordijn voor mijn aardse bewustzijn wordt neergelaten.’ ‘Mijne heren zenuwlijders, wij zijn slechte mensen en we deugen ook niet om de rol van welk dier dan ook te spelen. Op een goeie dag wordt het misschien wel te saai om nog langer bewusteloos te zijn en dan vertrek ik weer naar een eiland.’

Roman Helinski says

Hamsun schrijft onnavolgbaar goed, ook hier weer.

Suraj Alva says

His 'Mysteries' and 'Hunger' kept me up reading late into the night. This felt dull, starved. I've read somewhere that this may be considered as a warm-up exercise for his later works, it seems very much so.

One thing that his writing seems to do with me is instill a romance both for nature and woman. And I could feel myself getting there, but no cigar.

The good news is, it's incredibly short--and an easy read.

GiulsJups says

"Tutto non è che fastidio e follia e insensatezza, ovunque volgi lo sguardo".

Sotto una stella d'autunno è un libro ad "anello", e con questo termine voglio indicare che, in fondo, tutto torna da dov'era iniziato, o, in questo caso, nel luogo da cui si tenta di fuggire.

Lo scrittore, Knut Hamsun, crea un proprio alterego in questo romanzo: il protagonista cerca di scappare dalla città per ritrovare se stesso - e forse la pace - in campagna, provando a vivere con ritmi più tranquilli, a instaurare rapporti veri con le persone che incontra.

Inizia così una sorta di diario, un resoconto delle proprie giornate e dei piccoli dettagli che anche se all'apparenza non contano, fanno la differenza. Un dialogo con se stesso che lo cambierà.

Anche se ricco, l'uomo si cerca dei lavori da fare a servizio di persone abbienti, si innamora di più donne senza però poterle amare davvero: Elizabeth della canonica, della moglie del capitano che gli appare infelice, di Olga, una ragazzina che gli insegna come essere felici con niente. Possiamo dire che si innamora dell'amore.

Proprio per una di queste donne tornerà in città, il luogo che più lo opprimeva, per poi rimanere deluso e scoprire che non sempre si ottiene quello che si vuole.

"Signori nevrastenici, come esseri umani valiamo poco, e anche come specie animale non siamo granché."

Ho scoperto questo libro per puro caso, cercavo una lettura ambientata in Norvegia e scritta da un Norvegese

per leggerlo in vacanza. Solo cercando più info su internet ho scoperto che Hamsun vinse nel 1920 il premio Nobel per la letteratura, oscurato dalla sua adesione al nazismo. E, vi dirò, spero di poter leggere e scoprire altro di lui, perché la sua scrittura è molto scorrevole e semplice, più tesa all'introspezione che alla narrazione stessa.

(Forse di Hamsun conoscerete "la regina di Saba").

Consigliato.

Alejandro Orradre says

Reseña in progress...
