

Death of a Poet

by N Quentin Woolf

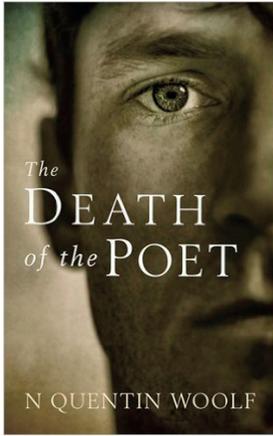
N Quentin Woolf's *The Death of the Poet* follows two stories: the first of a radio DJ who suffers domestic abuse at the hands of his partner; and the second is the life of a literary editor who survived World War One.

As in life, a lot of what happens in the book seems incidental. You follow the DJ, John Knox, on his journey and there are many side shows, but as in our own day-to-day not many of them stick around forever. His work, his ex, his family, and his friendships, are all at one time prominent, but then can disappear altogether. It's a fiction that is told so raw that it could be the recounting of a life on an early deathbed.

Throughout the course of the book you're thrown about in time. You are taken from the day to day, to year to year, and century to century, and Woolf makes this work brilliantly. A lesser writer would lose you around 1950, but Woolf helps you to keep up and makes this epic book a true page turner that will have you up until all hours as you try to fulfil your need for this book.

As the pages unravelled before me, they didn't reveal a twist or surprise too soon to shatter the all entrancing quality of the writing. Nothing shocked me because mostly life isn't shocking but rather devastatingly inevitable, but nothing that happened was expected.

The Death of the Poet is part old classic and part contemporary masterpiece. It is a book that your children will be able to talk to their grandchild about reading in the years to come.



Any Other Mouth

by Anneliese Mackintosh

There are few contemporary writers with the story telling ability of Anneliese Mackintosh. In *Any Other Mouth*, her collection of short stories, she crafts words in a not dissimilar fashion to how Michelangelo chiselled marble. She is relentless with her assault on your mind, like the Italian was relentless in the way he exposed your eyes to the beauty of his works.

From the off Mackintosh claws at you, asking for nothing except that you sit down and hear her. As you listen to her, you find yourself wanting to hug her, applaud her, laugh with her, cry with her, and at times, cry for her.

With such a varied collection it's hard to pigeonhole and say that she is a compassionate, vibrant, melancholy, excitable writer, or indeed any of the other adjectives that could be thrown her way. Instead, Anneliese comes across as I imagine she does in real life – passionate, knowledgeable, caring and unflinchingly honest.

Michelangelo said: "I saw the angel in the marble and carved until I set him free." I get the same feeling from this book.

Reading a book knowing that it is fact based fiction is a peculiar feeling because you're forced to be voyeuristic. The subject matter of this book can be brutal at times, and creates an awkward standoff between writer and reader – but you always see what she is doing and you read on to find out how she sets the story free.

Often people read for escapism, but *Any Other Mouth* makes you feel like you're sat naked reading in front of everyone you've ever known next to a giant mirror that shows off the lingering muffin top, despite your efforts at the gym. It makes you feel exposed to a world beyond your own and you end up the richer for it by the time you reach the final page.

