



The Swan Whisperer: An Inaugural Lecture (Cahiers)

Marlene van Niekerk

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This playful, genre-bending cahier tells the story of pale, anxious creative writing student Kasper Olwagen and his strange encounter with the phenomenon of translation in the person of the Swan Whisperer. Through brilliantly imagined letters and recordings, van Niekerk recounts Olwagen's discovery of a vagrant who, without uttering any even remotely intelligible words, summons swans from Amsterdam's canals. Through the story of Olwagen's experience, van Niekerk probes the relationship between language and experience, writing and translation, stories and truth.

A story of doubles, cadence, and, yes, swan whispering, *The Swan Whisperer* delves into the playfulness of sound in the Afrikaans language and the necessity for listening in all translation.

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