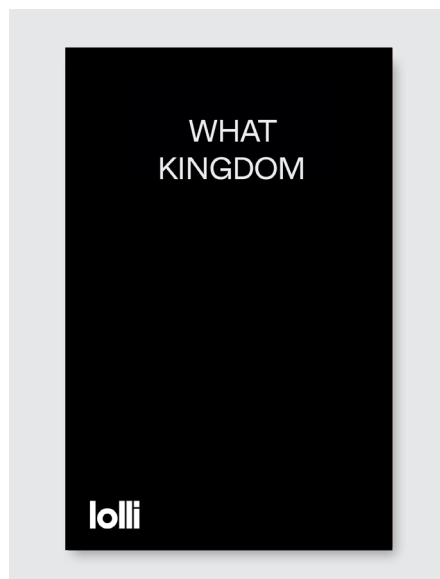


What Kingdom by Fine Gråbøl

Translated from Danish
by Martin Aitken

Winner of the Bogforum Debut Prize



Fine Gråbøl's narrator dreams of furniture flickering to life. A chair that greets you, shiny tiles that follow a peculiar grammar, or a bookshelf that can be thrown on like an apron

Obsessed with the way items rise up out of their thingness, assuming personalities and private motives, the nameless narrator lives in a temporary psychiatric care unit for young people in Copenhagen. This is a place where you 'wake up and realise that what's going to happen has no name', and days are spent practicing routines that take on the urgency of survival – peeling a carrot, drinking prune juice, listening through thin walls.

In prose that demands that you slow down, expertly translated by Martin Aitken, *What Kingdom* charts a wisdom of its own.

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152 pages, Softcover Original
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Price: £12.99

FINE GRÅBØL (b. 1992) has previously published a collection of poetry, *Knoglemarv lavendel* (Bone-marrow Lavender, 2018), together with the poetry collective BMS – consisting of Dorte Limkilde, Mette Kierstein, Ronja Johansen, and Gråbøl. Although *What Kingdom* is based on personal experience, Gråbøl does not consider it auto-fiction.

MARTIN AITKEN has translated numerous novels from Danish and Norwegian, including works by Karl Ove Knausgaard. For *The Employees* by Olga Ravn, he was shortlisted for the International Booker Prize 2021 and the inaugural Ursula K. Le Guin Prize for Fiction 2022, amongst other prestigious prizes. He was a finalist at the U.S. National Book Awards 2018 and received the PEN America Translation Prize 2019 for his translation of Hanne Ørstavik's *Love*.



Photo: Elijah Mesayer

Praise for *What Kingdom*

»Gråbøl's eye is unsparing and convincing, her prose vivid and alive... The narrator doesn't deny that she needs help... But at the same time, she has questions: Why doesn't anyone wonder about the line between trauma and treatment?... about the relationship between compulsion and compliance?... care and abuse?... between surrender and obliteration?«
– *Kirkus Reviews*

»An incredibly moving and gripping novel... so sure-footed, clear, vibrating, like chiffon or a cigarette.«
– *Olga Ravn*

»Somehow both warm and cool, Fine Gråbøl's keenly observant prose suggests the affinities between phantasm, phenomena, and what

lies between.... This book has gotten inside me, a guide for unexplored rooms and corridors.«
– *Anne de Marcken*

»An extraordinary work. The unnamed narrator's absolute vulnerability is transformed into compelling beauty by the authority and precision of her language. I love the pace of the writing. How, after a passage in which the raw pain and hurt break through into anger, a sentence of clear transcendent poetry can follow. The perfect emotional control is astonishing. It is a very exposing, brave book... There is an urgent need for the system to be changed, for an individual to be listened to, not just dealt with. This book makes us listen.«
– *Celia Paul*