



We're Flying

By Peter Stamm

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Following the publication of the widely acclaimed novel *Seven Years* comes a trove of stories from the Swiss master Peter Stamm. They all possess the traits that have built Stamm's reputation: the directness of the prose, the deceptive surface simplicity of the narratives, and deep psychological insight into the existential dilemmas of contemporary life. Stamm does not waste a word, nor does he spare the reader's feelings. These stories are a superb introduction to his work and a gift for all those who have come to regard his fiction as a precise rendering of the contemporary human psyche.

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Editorial Review

Review

"While revealing the limits of our existence, knowledge, and language, the stories are simultaneously haunting and uplifting. A master storyteller, Stamm succeeds in stripping away layers of superficiality to uncover the complicated daily psychological struggle of the average person." –*World Literature Today*

"The situations depicted in Stamm's *We're Flying*...evoke the negative spaces of Raymond Carver or the quiet menace of Shirley Jackson, but with Walser's light touch." –*Seattle Times*

"Peter Stamm's stories are incisively pared down, as if he cuts through the surface of things: everything is peeled open, apparent, naked... Each story is intriguing like a complex piece of machinery where you can see everything even if you don't understand how it works." –Tessa Hadley, author of *Married Love* and *The London Train*

"Stamm finds variety in setting and with characters of differing ages and social classes, and by writing in first, second, and third person in both past and present tense. More significantly, he connects so closely to the psyches of these individuals that his style becomes mutable, variously suggesting the eerie claustrophobia of Shirley Jackson, the brittle edge of Raymond Carver, and even the warmth of Lorrie Moore." –*Publishers Weekly* (starred review)

"Many of Stamm's characters seem perplexed about what life is, yet what life might be about or how to live it are questions they would never think to ask. The slightest indispositions overwhelm them. Stamm builds these half-lives in declarative sentences, and Hofmann's translation has a terse exactness. A [character] offers this: 'A feeling has no nose, no cheeks, no mouth. You can't trust your feelings, they're too inexact.' Stamm's great gift is to let feelings remain unspoken." –*Booklist*

"The 22 stories in Swiss writer Peter Stamm's *We're Flying* intimately explore the peaks and valleys of his characters' often solitary passions and obsessions." –*Elle*

"Beneath the surface placidity of Swiss life, undercurrents of spiritual turmoil and existential despair charge this powerful collection of provocative stories...Renowned in European literary circles, Switzerland's Stamm didn't achieve his stateside critical breakthrough until his last novel (*Seven Years*, 2011, etc.). This story collection is even better, with pieces that read like the Zurich equivalent of Camus or Kafka, occasionally laced with a bit of Ibsen or Ingmar Bergman...For those who have an affinity for metaphysical fiction written with a surgeon's precision, this collection will spur readers to seek out everything else by its author." –*Kirkus* (starred review)

"These tautly constructed stories, with echoes of such disparate authors as Patricia Highsmith and Anton Chekhov, take root in the psyche and will not let you go" –*Library Journal*

"The achievement of this collection...is not a small one. The style evokes absurdity, but the stories themselves are saved from being absurd. It is not always courageous to simply tour through life's moments of futility and failure. Stamm examines these moments with the riskier project of exploring the messy humanity exposed therein. He invites us to recognize ourselves there—and to do so without shame." –*The Rumpus*

"So, so good. I heartily recommend this book, Stamm is a master at work and the collection will delight and startle in equal measure." –*Alex in Leeds*

"*We're Flying* is eerily readable—perhaps due to how much of ourselves we recognize in his characters. In a varied and colorful array of stories, Stamm manages to portray human life as the emotional mishmash that it really is, full of misery and beauty, full of falling *and* flying." –*Three Percent*

"I think [Stamm] is one of those rare writers whose words haunt his readers long after you put his books down." –Yiyun Li, *Wall Street Journal* (Asia)

"It is difficult not to find yourself in many of these stories...The result is an effortless accumulation of small gestures that furnish the spaces in which the understanding of ourselves and others becomes possible..."
–*Full Stop*

"Stamm is a true artist here, and his stories require the reader to really listen. He asks you to see and hear his characters deeply...He has a knack for effortless symbolism, but he dodges any sense of intentional drama or sentimentality. Walk through these places, and delight in Stamm's sure and unabated guidance." –*Propeller*

"While revealing the limits of our existence, knowledge, and language, the stories are simultaneously haunting and uplifting. A master storyteller, Stamm succeeds in stripping away layers of superficiality to uncover the complicated daily psychological struggle of the average person. Michael Hofmann, award-winning translator of Kafka, Joseph Roth, and many others, deserves credit for his emotionally taut translation of the volume from German into English." – *World Literature Today*

About the Author

PETER STAMM was born in 1963, in Scherzingen, Switzerland. He is the author of the novels *Agnes*, *On A Day Like This*, *Unformed Landscape*, *Seven Years* and the collection *In Strange Gardens and Other Stories*, as well as numerous short stories and radio plays. He lives in Winterthur. MICHAEL HOFMANN has translated the works of many writers, including Franz Kafka, Joseph Roth, and Hans Fallada. He teaches at the University of Florida in Gainesville.

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I've never met Mrs. De Groot, I only know her name from the doorbell. Even so, I have a feeling I know her better than anyone else in the world. I've heard her radio and her vacuum and the dinnerware, so loud it's as though someone were washing up in my kitchen. I've heard her get up at night and shuffle around, heard her run a bath, flush the toilet, open a window. Sometimes water dripped onto my balcony when she watered her flowers, but when I leaned out and looked up, I couldn't see anyone there. I don't think she's ever left her apartment. I liked the sounds. They gave me the sense of living with a sort of ghost, a benign presence watching over me. Then, a couple of weeks ago, everything went quiet. I heard nothing since. And now the creaking again.

My first thought was: it's a break-in. While I'm undressing and going to the bathroom, I wonder whether I should call the police or the super. I'm in my nightgown when I decide to go up there myself. I'm surprisingly fearless. But then I'm not really afraid of anything ever. You've got to learn that, as a single woman. I pull on my robe and slip into some shoes. It's eleven o'clock.

I have to ring twice, and then I can see the light come on through the peephole, and a young man, much younger than me, opens the door and says in a very friendly voice: Good evening. I'm thinking it was a mistake to go upstairs, and why do I always have to get involved in other people's affairs, instead of looking after my own. But then you keep reading about people dying, and their bodies left to rot in their apartments for weeks without anyone noticing. The boy is wearing black jeans and a black T-shirt, with "Iron Maiden" on it, which I think is the name of a rock band. He isn't wearing any shoes, and his socks are holey.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Angel Gardner:

What do you with regards to book? It is not important with you? Or just adding material if you want something to explain what the one you have problem? How about your extra time? Or are you busy man or woman? If you don't have spare time to accomplish others business, it is make you feel bored faster. And you have time? What did you do? Everyone has many questions above. They need to answer that question due to the fact just their can do that. It said that about book. Book is familiar on every person. Yes, it is correct. Because start from on kindergarten until university need this We're Flying to read.

Jeffrey Evans:

This We're Flying book is not really ordinary book, you have it then the world is in your hands. The benefit you receive by reading this book is actually information inside this guide incredible fresh, you will get information which is getting deeper you read a lot of information you will get. This particular We're Flying without we understand teach the one who reading it become critical in considering and analyzing. Don't end up being worry We're Flying can bring once you are and not make your tote space or bookshelves' come to be full because you can have it in your lovely laptop even phone. This We're Flying having great arrangement in word along with layout, so you will not sense uninterested in reading.

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William Wood:

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