

# Anne Feddema

## Cheetah's Tears

A sense of absurdity makes life bearable – more or less

**Life is disenchanting, that's the message of *Cheetah's Tears*. The stories in this collection touch upon the futility of human dealings. The vicissitudes of fate defeat the strivings and ambitions of the main characters, but imagination, humour and a sense of absurdity make existence easier to bear. It is these that turn *Cheetah's Tears* into a book that treads lightly and is often hilarious.**

Born in, and firmly attached to, the provincial city of Leeuwarden, Anne Feddema needs only his bookcase and his imagination to somersault through cultural history. In ever-changing settings, his main characters, who in their own lives barely rise above anonymity, meet icons of both high-brow and popular culture. A young painter from Leeuwarden travels to Murnau to visit Kandinsky, a would-be writer commits lewd acts in a public toilet with someone he takes to be Rilke, and two men from Leeuwarden, who bear a resemblance to Laurel and Hardy, stroll into a fairytale by the brothers Grimm.

Feddema sprinkles his stories with puns, stylistic capers, bits of fun that are sometimes feeble and sometimes clever, and absurdism with a touch of dada. With great storytelling talent he leads us into a world of nonsensical theatre, where we may, despite everything, find ourselves identifying with characters such as German teacher Hofman, who travels to Berlin to put flowers on the grave of romantic writer Hoffmann only to become caught up in filming of the German detective series *Tatort* and find himself playing a corpse, a role with which he then converges.

However entertaining the twenty-seven stories may be, they have a tragic undertone. Disappointment and failure are the lot of the main characters. The true human condition frequently seems to be laughed off in the collection, but ultimately even Cheetah, Tarzan's chimpanzee, surprises his keeper by being able to cry.



### Publishing details

*De triennen fan Cheetah* (2014)  
208 pp., 42,400 words

### Publisher

Afûk  
Ernst Bruinsma  
e.bruinsma@afuk.nl



The multitalented **Anne Feddema** (b. 1961) came to widespread attention as an artist, with expressive paintings that make frequent reference to European cultural history. As a writer he made his debut in 1997 with the poetry collection *Slapstickiepenbierings* (Slapstick Revelations). For his collection *Reidhintjse op'e Styx* (Moorhens on the Styx) he was awarded the most prestigious Frisian literary award, the Gysbert Japicx Prize, and for *De triennen fan Cheetah* (Cheetah's Tears) the Rink van der Velde Prize. As well as Frisian, Feddema also writes in the dialect of his home city, Leeuwarden.

'The author is both an award-winning painter and poet. The vivid details, poetic touches, and allusions in these stories attest to that: Kandinsky, Ensor, Munch, Hoffmann, Goethe, Grimm, Pushkin, *Doctor Zhivago*, and others.'  
– *World Literature Today*

'*Cheetah's Tears* is a balanced and intelligently written collection, in which Feddema proves himself to be one of Friesland's most original artists.'  
– *Friesch Dagblad*

'The reader can't help feeling jealous of so much imagination.'  
– *Friese-literatuursite*

Photo: Jacob van Essen