

ENGLISH LITERATURE SERIES

The twenty-first century doesn't much care for subtlety. Now is the era of the gist, the elevator pitch, the big idea boiled down. This is precisely why Christopher Woodall's fiction gives such pleasure. His meticulous stories about love, death, fidelity, friendship, and human solitude do not wave their narrative arms wildly, demanding unwarranted attention. They speak in a calm voice, inviting the reader closer, inviting them not merely to react but to feel and think. *Sweets and Toxins* is the first collection of short fiction to be published by this talented novelist, and it marks him as a writer whose sharp eye for detail and feeling for people is a rare commodity indeed. He is one of the major English authors writing today.

Christopher Woodall grew up on the outer reaches of London. After time adrift with student friends in Northern Germany, Scandinavia, Southern Europe, and East Africa, he was part-educated at the universities of Cambridge and Bordeaux, before remaining for almost a decade in Italy, where he worked as a language teacher and translator.

Woodall's formative experience came in 1976 when, with little French and less direction, he joined a band of mostly migrant workers on the nightshift of a metals and plastics factory in Southeast France. This year-long encounter eventually provided the starting point for *November*, Woodall's debut novel, published by Dalkey in 2016. Writing in the journal *Race and Class*, Chris Searle has described *November* as 'startling and deeply empathetic.'

Christopher is currently working on a sequel to *November*.

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