



1944 Diary

Hans Keilson

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An account of the Nazi-occupied Netherlands from one of Europe's most powerful chroniclers of the Holocaust

In 2010, FSG published two novels set in World War II by the German Jewish psychoanalyst Hans Keilson: *The Death of the Adversary* (1959) and *Comedy in a Minor Key* (1944). With their Chekhovian sympathy for perpetrators and bystanders as much as for victims and resisters, they were, as Francine Prose raved on the front page of *The New York Times Book Review*, “masterpieces” by “a genius.”

After Keilson's death at age 101, a diary was found among his papers covering nine months in hiding with members of a Dutch resistance group. It tells the story not only of Keilson's survival but also of the moral and artistic life he was struggling to make for himself. Along with Keilsonian set pieces—such as an encounter with a pastor who is sick of having to help Jews, and a day locked upstairs during a Nazi roundup in the city—the diary is full of reading notes on Kafka, Rilke, Céline, Buber, and others. Forcibly separated from his wife and young child, Keilson was having a passionate love affair with a younger Jewish woman in hiding a few blocks away, and writing dozens of sonnets to her, struggling with claims of morality and of love.

1944 Diary is a revelatory new angle on an often-told history and the work of one of Europe's most important novelists at a key moment of the twentieth century.

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