



Sadness at Leaving: An Espionage Romance

Erje Ayden (Foreword)

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Pulp fiction writer Erje Ayden's coy novel is his most autobiographical work--if one accepts his claim that he worked as a spy for the Turkish government in the 1960s and 70s.

I wonder if it is lustful A tank in its dreams What do airplanes think When left alone? We did not seek happiness We invented sadness Were we not of this world? -- Orhan Veli, epigram to Sadness at Leaving

During the 1960s and 70s, Turkish-born Erje Ayden served as house pulp fiction writer to the New York School of painters and poets. Friend and sometime bodyguard to the artist Willem De Kooning, Ayden self-published 7 pop novels, written in rapid amphetamine bursts in borrowed apartments and rooming houses. Sadness at Leaving, re-published by Semiotext(e) in 1998, is Ayden's most autobiographical work -- if one accepts, as he claims, that he worked as a spy for the Turkish government throughout those years. East Berlin, 1959: Following the erection of the Berlin wall, special agent Carl Halman is assigned by East German intelligence to move to New York where he'll "sleep" as a writer until he is called. Using the code-name "April 23," Carl successfully infiltrates the uptown-downtown literary world in 1950s New York. He edits a magazine, follows the Knicks, and marries Melinda, the socialite wife of best-selling jock novelist Hubert Cleaver, Ayden's hilarious Norman Mailer pastiche. Through Carl's eyes, we see New York City change from an outpost of Europe to the new capital of an anarchistic, post-ideological world. But then, when Carl least expects it, he's called.

Sadness at Leaving: An Espionage Romance Details

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From Reader Review Sadness at Leaving: An Espionage Romance for online ebook

Lee Foust says

So, apparently Erje Ayden was once a spy and once a loose affiliate of Frank O'Hara and the "New York School" centered around the Cedar Tavern in the Village. The novel seems an attempt to bridge these two worlds as we have a Russian spy editing a literary magazine in NYC as a cover. Neither element of the story is all that interesting in and of itself, but together they held my interest as a tightrope double narrative pas-de-deux--and the swift, pseudo espionage pulp existentialism was welcome and what the hell is life, anyway, but one's political/ethical decisions and the day-to-day grind of work and love and the negotiating of one's desires through each of these conduits? So, yeah. Appropriately enough I read this mostly on an airplane returning from an American literary summer to my "Safe European Home." I, too, at times, feel like a literary secret agent. My politics, however, are all in the work, and the spying is only done on my fellow litterateurs. Ha!

Ludmilla says

ne i?e yarad???n? anlamad???m bir kitap daha. hay bu erje ayden'i öve öve bitiremeyen kimdi, bir bulsam dö?eyece?im laflar? isme ithafen.
