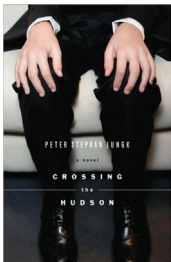


ing them with an absolute sensitivity and absolute humanity. (February) *Carol Haggas*

## LITERARY

**Crossing the Hudson**

**Peter Stephan Jungk**  
**David Dollenmayer,**  
**translator**  
Hansel Books  
Softcover \$14.95 (240pp)  
978-1-59051-275-3

It is the Mother from Hell who opens this novel as her son Gustav arrives at JFK Airport to spend his vacation with his family in upstate New York. As they set off across Manhattan, Mother has words for Gustav, his Sephardic wife, his Orthodox business partner, his dead father, and everything else in the world.

“There was no vaccination to protect you from Mother’s know-it-all attitude,” Jungk writes. “No travel route, no daily schedule, no personal or social conflict was safe from her determination to have a say in the matter.”

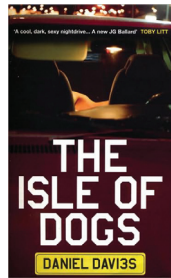
Mother is so distracting that Gustav makes several wrong turns and ends up on the wrong side of the river. Where to cross? They arrive at the Tappan Zee Bridge, but traffic comes to a halt. Construction. A wrecked truck. They’re stuck. It’s going to take them a long time to cross the Hudson.

Peter Stephan Jungk, a former screenwriting fellow of the American Film Institute, is the author of an acclaimed biography of Franz Werfel and *The Perfect American*, a fictional biography of Walt Disney’s last months. The details in *Crossing the Hudson* show his familiarity with New York, Los Angeles, and several European cities, giving this novel about the troubled generations of a post-War Jewish family a verisimilitude that draws readers in.

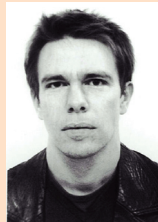
Desperate to escape Mother’s opinions, Gustav gets out of the car and stands at the railing, looking south. “Here, as on every large bridge, Gustav had the feeling of being transported into a floating, dreamlike state. Since his earliest childhood, he had experienced the crossing of mighty bridges as the form of locomotion closest to flying.” In his altered state, he looks down in the river. He and Mother have been discussing Father, a renowned intellectual and loving yet terrifying parent who supported Gustav late into adulthood. There, lying in repose in the Hudson and a mile long, there is Father’s body. “No doubt about it, it was the fatherbody, lying there like Gulliver stranded in Lilliput. The father he had idolized ... the fatheranimal that seemed to him immortal. ... [Gustav] stared for long minutes down at the giant body....”

Actually, as the family history is revealed, it turns out to be a complex, haunted family from Hell, and Gustav’s day on the bridge across the

Hudson is a day from Hell. But Jungk’s telling of the story is irresistible. (March) *Barbara Ardinger*

**The Isle of Dogs**

**Daniel Davies**  
Serpent’s Tail  
Softcover \$14.95 (186pp)  
978-1-85242-998-0

**Daniel Davies**

Author of *The Isle of Dogs* (Serpent’s Tail)

**Any particular story to tell concerning the writing of this book?**

Given the sexual content of *The Isle of Dogs*, I was quite nervous about the conclusions people might draw about me when they read it. I even toyed with the idea of publishing it under a pseudonym. But then I decided to risk it. I made it clear to people that it’s a work of fiction, not a memoir. Bar the odd bit of teasing from my friends, they seem to have believed me. But it has produced some awkward moments. My girlfriend’s father, a devout Catholic, didn’t really know what the book was about. Just before it was published, he asked my girlfriend if it would be a good book to do with his church reading group. She tactfully advised against it. The subject hasn’t come up since.

**What’s some good advice that you’ve received concerning writing? What’s some advice that you could offer young writers?**

Well I wouldn’t presume to offer any advice, but I can pass some on. An ex-girlfriend of mine, who has remained a good friend, became a fiction editor at Simon and Schuster in London. A few years ago, she gave me the best piece of advice I ever received. I used to send her chapters from novels I’d started for informal feedback. She told me I was trying too hard to write a book that I thought would appeal to agents and editors. She said (I’m paraphrasing), ‘Just forget about them. And forget about readers. Just write the book that you want to write, however weird or unmarketable or twisted. Be fearless. Because if you believe in the book, that belief will be manifest in the quality of the writing.’ And so I wrote *The Isle of Dogs*, which, after two unpublished novels, became my first published work.

**What has your experience as a publisher been like?**

It’s ironic that the richest publishers—that is, the conglomerates—who are best-placed financially to take risks seem least inclined to do so. So it’s up to the independents to remain in the vanguard. Becoming published is a great experience, though, especially if it comes after years of trying. You feel vindicated. You feel proud. Above all, you feel relieved that all the hard work has finally paid off. Believe me, you don’t worry about sales and prizes and fellowships and film rights—or I don’t, anyway. Just making it into print at all feels like a miracle. My overwhelming feelings are of gratitude and privilege.

**What are you working on at the moment?**

As well as poems and short stories, I’m working hard on my second novel. It’s about a man who’s robbed and badly beaten on a train in an unnamed city. It follows his emotional and psychological transformation from trauma, fear, anxiety and agoraphobia through to paranoia, anger, rage and fantasies of revenge. *The Isle of Dogs* features a character who’s been through a life-changing crisis, so when we meet Jeremy Shepherd he’s already been transformed. In that sense, the work is about the aftermath of a crisis. In my new novel, I wanted to chart the transformation of a character as it happens—to show him changing before our eyes.

*The rest of this interview is available at [www.forewordmagazine.com/authors](http://www.forewordmagazine.com/authors).*