

Title in Icelandic: **Ljósildran**
(literal translation in English: The Light Trap)
p. 800, Lesstofan, Iceland, 2021

The Light Trap is a highly entertaining epic novel where “every aspect of reality is under scrutiny” to quote the committee for the 2021 Icelandic Literature Prize. It is a carefully thought-out and masterfully executed social narrative that follows its four main protagonists in their struggle for power and quest for love while taking on the biggest political battles of our time as its theme: such as the fight for gender equality, political extremism in the age of Trump, life during the covid shut-downs, increased market thinking and neo-liberalism, and its consequence, the growing climate crisis.

Included are selections from chapters 1, 4–5, 8, 9, and 16, with the same kind of footers that can be seen in the Icelandic original, indicating percentages, parts, chapters, and page numbers.

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The Light Trap opens with a telling quote from Stendhal's *On Love*: “People of great fortunes and gross pleasures, who have made a hundred thousand francs in the year preceding the moment they open this book, had better quickly shut it, especially if they are bankers, manufacturers, respectable industrial folk—that's to say, people with eminently positive ideas.”

The novel is divided into four parts (1. “Light bearer”; 2. “Orpheus and Eurydice in the Thingholt district”; 3. “Days of tranquility”; 4. “Times of wonder”), all in all sixteen chapters. Its main storyline is related to fantastic tales such as Bulgakov's *Master and Margarita* where strange events take hold of the lives of the inhabitants of Reykjavík in the darkest weeks of the year, the ten weeks during the middle of winter in Iceland, from December 1st 2020, to February 5th 2021, at the height of the covid pandemic.

In the opening pages of the novel, a mysterious stranger arrives at the five-star country hotel Þingvellir in the middle of the night during a snowstorm and disappears later that night from the hotel escorting a small child through the blizzard into a nearby lava field (see parts of chapter 1 in the translation selections – ts. from now on). The hotel's reception manager, the poet H.M.S. Hermann, traces the footsteps of the two strangers through the snow to the edge of a ravine where they disappear:

Then, suddenly, they had arrived. Nikulásargjá Pit was a black gap in the landscape before them and they stared as if petrified at the sight that met their eyes. The tracks of the guest and child led straight over the edge of the ravine and there were no signs that they'd slowed down the last few meters. Their tracks glistened desolate and empty in the moonlight, a dreary portent of what now awaited the searchers at the bottom of the ravine. The errand boy moaned at the world's injustice and dropped to his knees in the snow. He sat there motionless while Hermann moved slowly toward the ravine's edge.

Even though the ravine is dragged the next morning, no trace is found of the two strangers and the unknown owners of the hotel (the country's Prime Minister is a stakeholder in the hidden ownership) decide to fire Hermann, making him responsible for the disappearance. Through a mysterious chain of events, Hermann becomes known in the following days for

abseiling into the ravine to save the lost child, thus becoming a poet hero in the eyes of the Icelandic public. The poet's new-found fame draws the interest of the President of Iceland, an avid book collector of modernist 1st editions who in secret enjoys reading old romances by authors such as Charles Garvice (see ts. from chapter 9). The President decides to employ the poet Hermann, who is known for his ruthless columns. He hopes to hurt his arch-nemesis, the Prime Minister's by leaking information about his hidden real estate empire. The PM, Ólafur Helgi Haraldsson, the namesake of Norway's greatest king, on the other hand, decides to outdo the president in terms of cultural capital. The President hosts the Icelandic Literary Awards, so the PM decides to establish his own awards, with prize money that far exceeds that of the competitor. What ensues is a highly satirical struggle between the Prime Minister and the President, who decide to battle it out by thrusting their poets into the foreground, turning the *Light Trap* into a modern equivalent to a medieval tale about skalds and kingly courts.

The two poets can be seen as opposites. H.M.S. Hermann represents the satire in the novel, while Jakob takes up the tragic narrative strands of the story. Hermann is a ruthless rogue, a modern-day malcontent, such as *Othello's* Iago, who is intent on making the most out of his newfound fame, and when both poets are nominated as candidates for the Icelandic Literary Awards, he is determined to destroy his competitor. Jakob on the other hand is caught up in his personal tragedy, after having lost his wife, Lára, to cancer (see ts. chapters 4–5), and lives now alone with his five-year-old daughter Lilja in a large house in the most prosperous part of Reykjavík. As the story progresses the reader witnesses Jakob's slow descent into what appears to be madness, for after a meaningful journey to Spain with his daughter where he visits Gaudi's Sagrada Família (see ts. 8.4), he returns home and gradually becomes certain that his dead wife has returned to the garden in front of their house.

Jakob's world is private and deeply personal while Hermann belongs to the public realm of cultural conflict. Their worlds collide through the political feud between the two pillars of power, the President and the Prime Minister, but there are bigger and darker forces driving the events behind the scenes, pulling the main protagonists further and further into chaos. Leading the group is a young girl, who appears to be around ten years old, but is much older. Outwardly she is seen as a figure of faith, but in the context of the novel, as the author himself has pointed out in interviews, the reader is reminded of the old Polish proverb that "hope is the mother of fools". This young girl can be read as the allegorical figure of progress or unlimited growth, as the embodiment of what many environmentalists have defined as the madness gene that is driving humanity to destruction. She is the one who attends the annual meeting of a group of climate change deniers in chapter 10 and stirs them into a mad frenzy, becoming a beacon of hope to them, a modern-day anti-Greta-Thunberg. She is also the one who aids H.M.S. Hermann in securing the folders he needs to bring the PM's financial empire down in the most carnivalesque chapter (13) of the novel, which takes place during the party's literary award ceremony on the evening of Twelfth Night. Examples showing how she and her cohorts operate can be found in the translation selections, e.g., in the opening parts of the novel when Herman encounters the mysterious stranger during the snowstorm at Hotel Þingvellir (see ts. from chapter 1), and again when the President is visited by the photographer from *Life* magazine (see ts. 9.6-7).

Although the men take up the largest part of the narrative in *The Light Trap*, this is a feminist novel that deals with a masculine world on the verge of collapse, not only on a personal level but also in the broadest sense, in the global context. All four main protagonists are toxic men, and the women are, in a sense, the product of their fantasy lives, as becomes clearer as the story evolves and the female voices are not filtered through their centers of

consciousness. All four fail as family men and are either inadequate fathers or have not fathered offspring. Most of their fantasy life is centered around the concept of womanhood, the love-struck President dreams of the pure girls in old romance fiction, while Jakob muses on his muse, Lára, whom he elegizes in a long poem, which is also called the *Light Trap* and is included in its entirety within the novel (8.8.). The rogue H.M.S. Hermann writes a poem about his ex, whom he calls P.M.S. Hermann, and even the PM is driven by his love for a woman, in his case his long-lost mother. The roots of his real estate empire arise from his desire to secure his childhood home, where he lived until his mother's death when he was only ten years old. But slowly and gradually the voices of the female characters become louder and the men's underlying fear of them is revealed. This old patriarchal order is threatened by various groups of young women, as when three female anarchists shake up the meeting of the Climate Denial Society, and when different groups of young women emasculate H.M.S. Hermann, on two occasions.

As is so often the case with dark comedies some of the characters are destroyed while others emerge victorious. The novel ends with Jakob's suicide on the anniversary of his wife's death, the morning before H.M.S. Hermann is selected as the winner of the Icelandic Literary Awards. Kapítóla, the President's wife, is so disgusted with her husband's nefarious power struggle that she decides to leave him after the award ceremony. In the final pages of the novel, we see Ólafur Helgi standing out on the terrace of his penthouse on top of the highest building in Reykjavík. In a few minutes journalists from the National Broadcasting Service will arrive, but they, unbeknownst to him, are going to question him about his hidden ownership in various real estate companies, building on the materials H.M.S. Hermann secured during his visit to the party headquarters. The novel concludes with one of the most moving passages from the novel, where the PM looks out onto the ocean and is lost in the beauty of a single wave (see ts. 16.14):

Ólafur Helgi walked to the railing, looked down at the rocky shore and contemplated the frothing surf. Turning his eyes back to sea, he fixed them on a single wave far out in the bay and watched as it headed toward land, where it would crash on the boulders below Hnitbjörg in the next minute. There it rose and fell, white-ruffled and cold, driven by the bay's eternal wind and bound to the moon that was still visible in the sky despite it being close to noon. As Ólafur Helgi watched, everything slowed down and each cell of his body reached outward, his breath becoming part of that deterministic yet fragile context he'd heard of but never experienced. There you are, he thought. There you are in your eternal flight. So, you move onward, just like me, up and down in rhythm with the breath of the deep.

Keeping his eye on the wave, Ólafur Helgi breathed with it and the deep. And then nothing mattered anymore. Not the power. Not the office. Not the endless rivalry. Not the snow that falls on a hundred properties beneath colored roofs. The neighborhood where he grew up did not matter, nor his mother's house, she who had been named after the sea. He kept watching the wave approach the shore at its extraordinary speed and knew that soon it would merely be wetness on the black boulders below Hnitbjörg.

Still, not even that mattered, as nothing mattered except that one white wave.

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While *The Light Trap*'s most central narrative strand is both entertaining and engaging, taking cues from fantastic tales such as *Master and Margarita*, it also pushes creatively at the limits of the novel form by clashing together various literary traditions to create a "polymorphic perversity" of the highest order, to quote John Swedenmark, the Swedish translator of the novel, who also compares it in an article in the Swedish literary journal

Ord&Bild to “a construction of limitless dimensions”, to Robert Musil’s *A Man Without Qualities* and to Gaudi’s Sagrada Família (see the passage on Gaudi’s basilica in ts. 8.4).¹ Not only does *The Light Trap* include a children’s story, a whole volume of poetry, in addition to sonnets, psalms, children’s songs, and lullabies, but it also fuses together various genres to create a dynamic hybrid, at once familiar and profoundly original. As is the case in Musil’s work and Melville’s *Moby Dick*, what appear to be deviations from the main storyline are never actually deviations but a targeted means of highlighting certain themes or deepening them, threads in a finely meshed network of meaning that weave the work into a whole. The author has himself likened these deviations as well as the central imagery in the story to metastasis, since the book’s main theme addresses how unquestioned harmful archetypes and metaphors are used to exercise control and drive life to exhaustion, from the personal narratives we use to promote and justify our behavior to the grand narratives that govern entire societies.

On the surface, *The Light Trap* is a smooth and absorbing tale that at times reminds the reader of the early novels of Stephen King (see ts. chapter 1), but the longer you think about it and the more you grapple with it the more complex it becomes. It is a novel about the very act of reading and rises seamlessly out of Western literary traditions with its structure relying on Dante’s *Divina Comedia* and Milton’s *Paradise Lost*, where the percentages in the footer serve the same purpose as the numbered lines in the highly structured epic poems of the late medieval period and early modernity (e.g. important events happen at 25%, 33%, 50%, 66%, and 75% and these events mirror each other).²³ In the novel various genres and literary traditions blend together and clash, e.g. revolutionary tracts and novels (such as Lenin’s and Chernyshevsky’s *What is to be Done?*) and the consolatory mode of Boethius (with Toole’s *A Confederacy of Dunces* as the most obvious modern counterpoint) (e.g. chapter 1 in ts.). The novel moves effortlessly between comedy and tragedy, high modernism and mass romance (e.g. ts. 9.1-5) and makes use of a number of other genres, such as horror, fantasy, and satire, while at the same time maintaining a strong and unified narrative structure and drive. Thus the frequent reference to world literature, through direct quotations and by allusion to various events, persons, and situations, are not mere allusions or “gestures” intended for the learned reader but are more meant as a way to deepen and drive the narrative further, as an age-old aesthetic method, a well established and often unconscious way of thinking about literature and the world (e.g. ts. 9.3). In this way, the author not only nods to Icelandic medieval texts such as the histories of the Norwegian kings, and Icelandic sagas such as *Njáls* and *Grettis’ sagas* but purposefully writes himself into the European literary tradition. This is accomplished through the systematic transformation of classical narratives, and through specific allusion to authors such as James Joyce, Leo Tolstoy, Vladimir Nabokov (see ts. 9.1), Rabelais, Shakespeare, Goethe, Stendhal, Stephen King, Jane Austen, along with

¹ <http://www.tidskriftenordobild.se/ordoblogg/category/ordampbild-2-2023>

² https://www.mbl.is/mogginn/bladid/innskraning/?redirect=%2Fmogginn%2Fbladid%2Fgrein%2F1796178%2F%3D956613129&page_name=grein&grein_id=1796178

³ The novel also abounds with esoteric numerology, e.g. see in ts. chapters 4.3. and 8.4 that are each exactly 1000 words and the numer reflects the subject matter of the chapters, as is the case in the final passage (see ts. 16.14) which is exactly 250 words.

Ovid, as the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice is at the heart of the story. But as Nobel laureate Louise Glück reminds us, everyone wants to be Orpheus, and no one wants to be Eurydice.

To conclude the novel is an ambitious attempt to capture a tumultuous period in the history of the Icelandic people, where the past has mostly been forgotten and people are full of blind hope for the future. But the Icelandic context has a more general application for the novel raises interesting questions about our responsibilities for future generations, not only our immediate family but also within a social and political context, and not least in a period of catastrophic warming. The gender wars depicted in the book are also generational wars, and it is particularly interesting to consider how language is often used in the novel as a tool to silence others.

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The committee for the 2021 Icelandic Literature Prize called the novel a “multi-layered and complex work of fiction that is all at once a tragic elegy, a picaresque novel, a story of our times, a satire on society’s values and a carnivalesque deconstruction where strange creatures shed light on the contemporary power system. The structure is deeply thought out but regularly blown to pieces – when the text overflows the boundaries of everything that has so far defined novels. A ground-breaking work where literally every aspect of reality is under scrutiny.”⁴ The literary critic Gréta Sigríður Einarsdóttir reviewed the novel for the National Broadcasting Service and called it “a well-crafted masterpiece”, which is “based [...] on all the central things that Western culture has to offer”, while still “a hilarious read”.⁵ In a review at the Reykjavík City Library’s website (the biggest literary website in Iceland) Hlín Agnarsdóttir, writer, director, performing arts scholar, and literary critic, calls *The Light Trap*: “The heavyweight book of the year” and a “landmark” novel, and a “feast in most senses of the word”⁶ while Sjöfn Hauksdóttir points out in her review that the novel stands alone in the Icelandic literary tradition and reminds her mostly of “fat American generational novels about contemporary issues” such as the Pulitzer Prize-winning book *Middlesex* by Jeffrey Eugenides “or Russian tomes about misery and suicide. Still not.” Hauksdóttir’s conclusion is that this is a novel that everyone should read.⁷

Guðni Elísson is a professor of literature at the University of Iceland (Háskóli Íslands) and founder of the climate project Earth101,⁸ where many of the world’s leading climate scientists have participated. He wrote his Ph.D. dissertation on the English Poet Lord Byron and has written books and articles on literature, film (he is the founder of film studies in

⁴ <https://boklist.hi.is/is/gudni-tilnefndur-til-bokmenntaverdlauna>

⁵ <https://www.ruv.is/frettir/innlent/2021-11-15-vel-smidad-en-krefjandi-meistarastykki>

⁶ https://borgarbokasafn.is/starfid-a-safninu/vid-maelum-med/lesandinn-hlin-agnarsdottir?_ga=2.150762110.913973480.1695748350-1894512236.1695748350; see also: https://www.hlinagnars.is/hugleidingar/shadows-light-amzr5-toMW2-mfzyn-zhda8-zx8kg-fxkcm-dgm9f-nrsrf-lx8g6-sc8dk-a78z4-dsrgg-sx39y-dl69c-9x2td-teb4x-dtex2-7dnzy-cfsjb-fst7d-cdbmn?fbclid=IwAR00yFAYhik0ovjfBlv2huCiYwHA979GveEjKvx8aNPsdUOfsrex7dpGAX0&_ga=2.112491724.913973480.1695748350-1894512236.1695748350

⁷ https://lestrarklefinn.is/2021/11/01/ljosgildran/?fbclid=IwAR37vK9IGhASnrVY_kQP-fkB8aJZ5JHcvbpBROFilNb81qh4_qETY2i0Q7Q&_ga=2.112491724.913973480.1695748350-1894512236.1695748350

⁸ https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCPaPEGS04KYV_RbkCLZXbMw/videos

THE LIGHT TRAP by Guðni Elísson / Reader's Report prepared by Sigrún Margrét Guðmundsdóttir

Iceland), feminism, cultural studies, the economic collapse in Iceland in 2008, and for the last 25 years he has been focusing on climate change, esp. the denial industry. *Ljósildran* is his first novel. It was nominated for the 2021 Icelandic Literature Prize and is nominated for the 2023 Nordic Council Literature Prize. His second novel, *Brimhólar (The Breakers)*, was published the following year and Elísson is at the moment working on his third novel.

Guðni Elísson

The Light Trap

Original title: Ljógildran

Novel, 800 pp, Lesstofan, Iceland, 2021

In this intoxicating work of fiction that captures the spirit of our time and tackles our responsibilities for future generations, everything, quite literally, is at stake.

Nominated for the 2023 Nordic Council Literature Prize

Iceland, in the darkest weeks of winter at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic. An enigmatic stranger walks into the five-star hotel Þingvellir in the middle of the night during a snowstorm and disappears a few hours later, escorting a small child through the blizzard into a nearby lava field. This event has the effect of thrusting receptionist and poet H.M.S. Hermann into a cascade of events, right at the heart of a political feud between the two pillars of power: the President and the Prime Minister of Iceland. While the President, an avid collector of modern first editions and secretly a fan of old romances, seeks to bring down the Prime Minister by leaking information about his hidden real estate empire, the Prime Minister, on the other hand, aims to enhance his prestige and influence through literary awards. In this burlesque struggle for power (a modern equivalent of medieval tales with bards and royal courts), two worlds collide: that of the poet H.M.S. Hermann, a ruthless rogue intent on making the most out of the situation and destroying his rival Jakob, whose wife and muse, Lára, is suffering from terminal cancer. But as the tragic love tale between the latter and his wife unfolds, mysterious forces take over Reykjavik, exposing the country's contemporary power structures.

But *The Light Trap* is just as much about the joy of reading, about the stories we tell ourselves at night when the lights are out, and the stories that society tells itself when it wants to believe that the path forward is clear. But how trustworthy are those stories? Addressing the unquestioned harmful archetypes that are used to drive life to exhaustion, from the personal narratives we use to promote and justify our behavior to the grand narratives that govern entire societies, *The Light Trap* delves into the biggest battles of our time: such as the fight for gender equality, as well as increased market thinking and neoliberalism, and their consequence, the growing climate crisis.

While, on the surface, *The Light Trap* is a smooth and absorbing tale that at times reminds us of the early novels of Stephen King, it also creatively pushes at the limits of the novel form by clashing together various literary

traditions to create a 'polymorphic perversity' of the highest order, to quote John Swedenmark, the Swedish translator of the novel. By fusing together various genres (fantastic, satiric, epic, elegiac, poetic...), it creates a dynamic hybrid that is at once familiar and profoundly original. Additionally, this multi-layered work rises out of Western literary traditions, taking a cue from fantastic tales such as *The Master and Margarita* by Mikhail Bulgakov and the myth of Orpheus and Eurydice, which lies at the heart of the novel, with the tragic love story of the married couple Jakob and Lára. Although it addresses challenging issues, the book remains a highly enjoyable read, thanks to its acute insight, humor, and engaging narrative style.

In an attempt to categorize this true literary UFO, one could liken it to Gaudi's Sagrada Familia (a building that occupies a central part of the book), a work of art that leaves no one indifferent and is profoundly alive, constantly pushing our understanding of our times and the hardships ahead if we do not join hands to create a better future.

Press review

"A well-crafted masterpiece", which is "based [...] on all the central things that Western culture has to offer", while still "a hilarious read"

Gréta Sigríður Einarsdóttir for the National Broadcasting Service

"The heavyweight book of the year", a "landmark" novel, and a "feast in most senses of the word"

Hlín Agnarsdóttir for Reykjavík City Library's website

"Ljósildran is an extraordinarily well-crafted literary work that is brimming with the joy of writing."

The committee for the 2023 Nordic Council Literature Prize

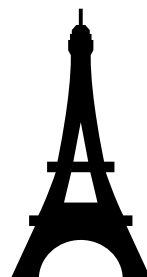
"A multi-layered and complex work of fiction that is all at once a tragic elegy, a picaresque novel, a story of our times, a satire on society's values, and a carnivalesque deconstruction where strange creatures shed light on the contemporary power system. The structure is deeply thought out but regularly blown to pieces - when the text overflows the boundaries of everything that has so far defined novels. A ground-breaking work where literally every aspect of reality is under scrutiny."

The committee for the 2021 Icelandic Literature Prize

Guðni Elísson is a professor of literature at the University of Iceland and founder of the climate project Earth101, where many of the world's leading climate scientists have participated. *Ljósildran* (The Light Trap) is his first novel. It was nominated for the 2021 Icelandic Literature Prize and is nominated for the 2023 Nordic Council Literature Prize. His second novel, *Brimhólar* (The Breakers), was published the following year and Elísson is at the moment working on his third novel.

Reading material: English excerpts (40 pp)
and a detailed reader's report in English

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Guðni Elísson

The Breakers

Original title: Brimhólar

Novel, 136 pp, Lesstofan, Iceland, 2022

At the crossroads of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and the amorous crystallization described by Stendhal, a moving and tragic love story unfolds against the intense landscapes of the Westfjords in Iceland.

“Why did you come? I was doing all right. Nothing ailed me. I was in dialogue with silence, with everything that never replies. I bound my consciousness to the surf, the birds, and the wind blowing in from the fjord. I conversed with all that is lifeless and speechless, and since it was I who did all the talking it presented no problems. I lacked nothing, and nothing troubled me as I had little expectations for the future.”

Raised in London, sixteen-year-old Hjörtur comes with his family to spend the summer in the Westfjords of Iceland, his native country. His father, a businessman who owns nearly everything in the region — from the trawler to the freezing plant, not to mention the village houses — has built a splendid residence by the seaside called The Breakers. In this wild environment, where sand, sea, and silence prevail, Hjörtur, a solitary young man enamored with poetry, meets Cecylia a young woman of Polish origin, who is a friend of his sister and dreams of returning to her home country. Both decide to meet once a week in the dunes to read together. However, the young woman does not show up for the rendezvous.

In this moving and tragic love story, where connections are woven in the realm of imagination between Icelandic nature and Polish poetry, Hjörtur awakens and discovers the invisible drama that has unfolded in the adult world.

Press review

“What was I reading? The short answer would be a masterpiece. A little bit more detailed description would be a low-key lyrical prose that slowly discloses a great peril. A magnificently woven plot laid out with the precision of a watchmaker that reveals to us great grief. In addition, the reader is awarded with assorted chocolates from other boxes. One wakes up transfixed to a new day.”

Hallgrímur Helgason, leading Icelandic novelist

“Brimhólar [The Breakers] is an ingeniously written book and an unforgettable love story. It deals in an impressive way with contemporary issues in an amazing story that somehow seems classic and timeless. There are no loose ends, the treatment of the material is well thought out and the reading experience is extremely enjoyable. This is an exceptionally well-crafted piece of literature, profound, original, and strong, which inscribes itself in the tradition at the same time as it maintains its originality.”

Snædís Björnsdóttir, Five-star review in Morgunblaðið

“An amazing story, an extraordinary Romeo, and a new Juliet in Icelandic literature”

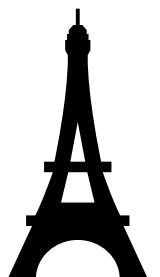
Dagný Kristjánsdóttir, professor emeritus in Icelandic literature at The University of Iceland

“This book is a required reading for Poles here in Iceland. It is an acknowledgment that there are Icelanders who see us as we are, not as the cliché says.”

Margrét Adamsdóttir, reporter at RUV and host of the Polish podcast Wyspa at RUV

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Reading material: Full text in English



At the crossroads of Thomas Mann's *Buddenbrooks* and the amorous crystallization described by Stendhal, this tragic love story unfolds against the intense landscapes of the Westfjords in Iceland. Raised in London, sixteen-year-old Hjörtur spends a summer in *The Breakers*, his father's splendid residence by the sea. In this wild environment, the young man, enamored with poetry, meets Cecylia, a young woman of Polish origin who is a friend of his sister and dreams of returning home. They decide to meet once a week in the dunes to read together but she fails to show up for the rendezvous. In a narrative where connections between Icelandic nature and Polish poetry are woven within the realm of imagination, Hjörtur awakens and discovers an invisible drama unfolding in the adult world.

"What was I reading? The short answer would be a masterpiece. A more detailed description would be a low-key lyrical prose slowly disclosing a great peril. A magnificently woven plot laid out with the precision of a watchmaker revealing great grief. [...] One wakes up transfixed to a new day."

HALLGRÍMUR HELGASON, NOVELIST

"An exceptionally well-crafted piece of literature, profound, original, and strong." ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

SNÆDÍS BJÖRNSDÓTTIR, IN MORGUNBLAÐIÐ

Guðni Elísson is a professor of literature at the University of Iceland. His first novel, *The Light Trap*, was nominated for the 2021 Icelandic Literature Prize and the 2023 Nordic Council Literature Prize.

THE BREAKERS

"A required reading for Poles in Iceland."

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THE BREAKERS

GUÐNI ELÍSSON



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Brimhólar (The Breakers) by Guðni Elísson

(novel, 136 p, Lesstofan, 2022)

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★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Five-star review in *Morgunblaðið*
Snædís Björnsdóttir

Brimhólar [The Breakers] is an ingeniously written book and an unforgettable love story. It deals in an impressive way with contemporary issues in an amazing story that somehow seems classic and timeless. There are no loose ends, the treatment of the material is well thought out and the reading experience is extremely enjoyable. This is an exceptionally well-crafted piece of literature, profound, original, and strong, which inscribes itself in the tradition at the same time as it maintains its originality.

Dagný Kristjánsdóttir
professor emeritus in Icelandic literature at The University of Iceland

An amazing story, an extraordinary Romeo, and a new Juliet in Icelandic literature.

Margrét Adamsdóttir
reporter at The Icelandic National Broadcasting Service (RUV) and host of the Polish podcast Wyspa at RUV

This book is a required reading for Poles here in Iceland. It is an acknowledgment that there are Icelanders who see us as we are, not as the cliché says.