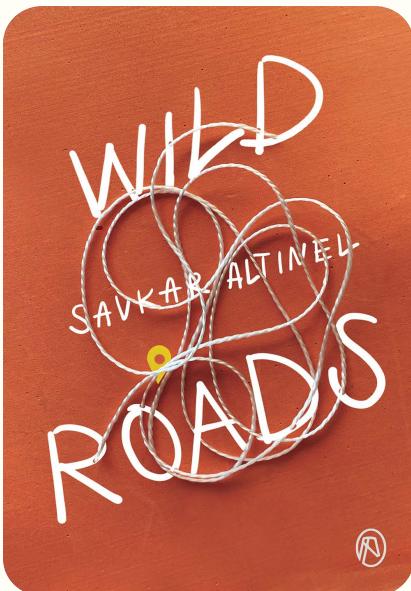




WILD ROADS

Written and Translated by *Savkar Altinel*



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About the Author

Savkar Altinel was born in 1953. After high school at Robert College, he left Turkey and studied English literature at the University of Chicago and the University of Glasgow. A laureate of numerous poetry and literary awards, Altinel's poems have been compiled in *Road Notes*, a testament to his poetic voice. His travel writings and memoirs, blended with a Sebaldian narrative style, stand out as uniquely significant contributions to Turkish literature.

“He isn’t just describing places but trying to understand the meaning of life: that’s what raises this book to the level of literature.”

—Daily Newspaper *Sabah*

“Landscape turns into poetry under his gaze.”

—Literary Magazine *Varlık*

- Praised by Orhan Pamuk as “the best living Turkish poet”
- Praised by Turkey’s most renowned newspapers and literary magazines such as *Sabah*, *Hürriyet*, *Cumhuriyet*, and *Varlık*
- Known as a “road poet” in Turkish literature, Altinel’s prose seamlessly transcends genres, blending poetry with narrative.

During a winter visit to Helsinki, a writer and inveterate traveller reflects on his recent journeys through the Far East and muses on the nature of travel itself. As his memories take him from country to country, his awareness deepens of both the unsettling rootlessness that lies behind his wanderlust, and the hurt and pain in the lives of most of the individuals he encounters along the way.

Meanwhile, in the background, the Finnish winter gives way to Malaysia’s sweltering heat, fading quietly into Hong Kong’s crisp, Korea’s biting winds and the grey rains of Shanghai, until the snowfall in Tokyo takes the narrator back to the winter of Helsinki. Here, in a final chapter set in an imaginary museum devoted to his journeys, he finally confronts all of what his ceaseless travelling has been designed to help him evade.

Wild Roads is both a chronicle of journeys rendered with a strange blend of detachment and stark lyricism, and highly structured narrative that focuses on the ceaseless drifting of its central figure. It is an attempt to understand why we travel, what we are, and how our lives can come to seem like a collection of strange exhibits in yet another museum we wander into on a dull afternoon in a foreign city.

Excerpt: I remembered that someone had said the aim of travel should be not to see foreign countries but to reach the stage where we could see our own country as foreign. That, though, was a trick that even the most inexperienced traveller mastered quite early on. A more advanced stage came with our beginning to see ourselves, too, as foreign, a stranger we had somehow fallen in with during our travels and didn’t find particularly interesting or likeable. When this happened our lives stopped being our lives and became just a museum we were wandering in.



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