

# Natural Novel (Eastern European Literature)

By Georgi Gospodinov



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"Natural Novel is simultaneously erudite and funny a lucky combination that rarely occurs in Bulgarian books." Kapital

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## Natural Novel (Eastern European Literature) By Georgi Gospodinov Bibliography

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- Original language: English
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# **Editorial Review**

#### From Publishers Weekly

It's hard to read Gospodinov's first novel and not feel indifferent at times: composed of scraps, half-stories, jokes and character sketches that haphazardly weave in and out, this slim jaunt won't satiate anyone looking for a tight plot or traditional resolutions. Its airy ruminations, delivered in banal conversational style, don't offer much in the department of prose poetics, either. In fact, Gospodinov isn't interested in any of the usual conventions of the novel, but in the nature of writing a novel itself, specifically the irreconcilable condition of being both spontaneous, or "natural," and crafting a work of critical value. Though there is a story that flits about--a man named Georgi Gospodinov and his wife get a divorce after she becomes pregnant with another man's baby--it's more an impetus for digression and narrative destabilization than an actual plot. Without the usual anchors, the novel turns into a work of small strokes and minor wit: a conversation about oft-scrawled-upon public bathrooms and their "intimate toilet revolutions" is sublime, and the motif of a fly with its multipaneled eye, each containing a fragment of the whole image, serves the work well. Others have handled the question of fictional integrity with more fireworks, but Gospodinov keeps his work swift and unbothered in the face of an ordinary yet infinitely complex conundrum. (*Feb.*) Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

### From The New Yorker

Gospodinov's anarchic, experimental début concerns a young writer, the narrator, whose marriage breaks up after his wife becomes pregnant by someone else. But this plot is little more than the framework for a lively assortment of fragments—dreams, lists, projected attempts to write a novel entirely with verbs or a Bible for flies, and a chapter called "Towards a Natural History of the Toilet." Inevitably, a book that takes such risks occasionally falls on its face; some of Gospodinov's scatology feels self-conscious, and pop-culture references, presumably intended to seem wised-up and Western, come off as just the reverse. But the hits outnumber the misses, and there is something engaging about the novel's stubborn refusal to amount to anything. As the narrator announces, "My immodest desire is to mold a novel of beginnings, a novel that keeps starting, promising something, reaching page 17 and then starting again." Copyright © 2005 *The New Yorker* 

#### Review

"The book is laugh-out-loud-funny but also touching; occasionally, it approaches the sublime. When so many postmodern novels are content to play their structural and thematic tricks, Natural Novel is an honest and human tale about loss and the awkward abyss on the other side of divorce." --*Transcript* 

### **Users Review**

#### From reader reviews:

#### William Petterson:

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