

April 2017



Review by Alexa

Our choice for April was [Cold Sea Stories](#) by [Pawel Huelle](#), a Polish author born in Gdansk. He began studies in philology at Gdansk University, before becoming a journalist, working for the press office of the Solidarity Movement in the late 1980s. He is a renowned writer of novels, short stories and essays.

An interview with Huelle at the back of the book provides insights into his writing. He wrote *Cold Sea Stories* when he was about 50 years old after realising that he is “a man of the Baltic”; hence the Baltic Sea is the setting for all the stories. He says this is a culture of “herrings, potatoes and

vodka”, but also one of sadness, melancholy, nostalgia and bleakness. It is a fascinating environment for those who have never lived anywhere like it and wonder why people live there. Equally, Huelle has characters searching for the light and “ultimately disappear into it”. Added to that are themes of the cycles of time with the fluidity of time mirrored by the fluidity of memory, and of life’s beginnings and ends. Huelle adds that the stories are a synthesis of his life; consequently, they are clearly autobiographical.

Personally, the themes of language and the obsession with its origins are familiar and interesting. Huelle also suggests that if language is not passed down, then a person's past is forgotten. Therefore, the aim of this book is to record Huelle's memories and the stories told by his father to validate their existence.

Some readers were unable to connect with the themes of this book, but agreed that Huelle is an accomplished writer. Others were drawn to his imaginative and mystical style, and to how Huelle weaves the past with the present.

Find a complete review of Cold Sea Stories [here](#).

Ratings: Alexa 3.5, Claudia 3, Di 3, Gail 2.5, Janet 3.5, Judith 3, Penny 3.5 and Viv 3.

Next month we get together on the 8/05/17 at 6:30pm at [Preece House, 50 Nerang St Bischof Pioneer Park, Nerang \(next to 54 Nerang St. shops\)](#) to discuss [The House of the Deaf Man](#) by Slovak writer Peter Kristufek. This continues our year of European novels in translation. Hope to see you there and Happy Reading!

Gold Coast Book Lovers

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Other Books We Read

April 2017

Our book of the month was [Cold Sea Stories](#) by [Pawel Huelle](#), but we also read other books.

Maximum rating is 5.

[Animal Farm](#) by George Orwell 4

[Gilead](#) by Marilynne Robinson 3.5

[A Hundred Small Lessons](#) by Ashley Hay 2.5

[A bad Character](#) by Deepti Kapoor 2.5

[Tender is the Night](#) by F Scott Fitzgerald 3.5

[Cold Earth](#) by Ann Cleeves 3

[Quarterly essay No. 65: The White Queen](#) by David Marr 4

[The Curious Charms of Arthur Pepper](#) by Phaedra Patrick 3

[Elizabeth is Missing](#) by Emma Healy 3.5

[The Subtle Art of Not Giving a F*ck](#) by Mark Manson 3