

# Jakob von Gunten (New York Review Books (Paperback))

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The Swiss writer Robert Walser is one of the quiet geniuses of twentieth-century literature. Largely self-taught and altogether indifferent to worldly success, Walser wrote a range of short stories, essays, as well as four novels, of which Jakob von Gunten is widely recognized as the finest. The book is a young man's inquisitive and irreverent account of life in what turns out to be the most uncanny of schools. It is the work of an outsider artist, a writer of uncompromising originality and disconcerting humor, whose beautiful sentences have the simplicity and strangeness of a painting by Henri Rousseau.

Robert Walser (1878-1956) was born into a German speaking family in Biel, Switzerland. He left school at fourteen and led a wandering, precarious existence while writing his poems, novels, and vast numbers of the "prose pieces" that became his hallmark. In 1933 he was confined to a sanatorium, which marked the end of his writing career. Among Walser's works available in English are Berlin Stories and Jakob von Gunten (both available as NYRB classics), Thirty Poems, The Walk, The Tanners, Microscripts, The Assistant, The Robber, Masquerade and Other Stories, and Speaking to the Rose: Writings, 1912-1932.

Christopher Middleton (b. 1926) is a poet, essayist, and translator. He teaches Germanic languages and literature at the University of Texas at Austin and has translated numerous works, including Jakob von Gunten by Robert Walser. Text: English (translation)

Original Language: German

Other Books

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