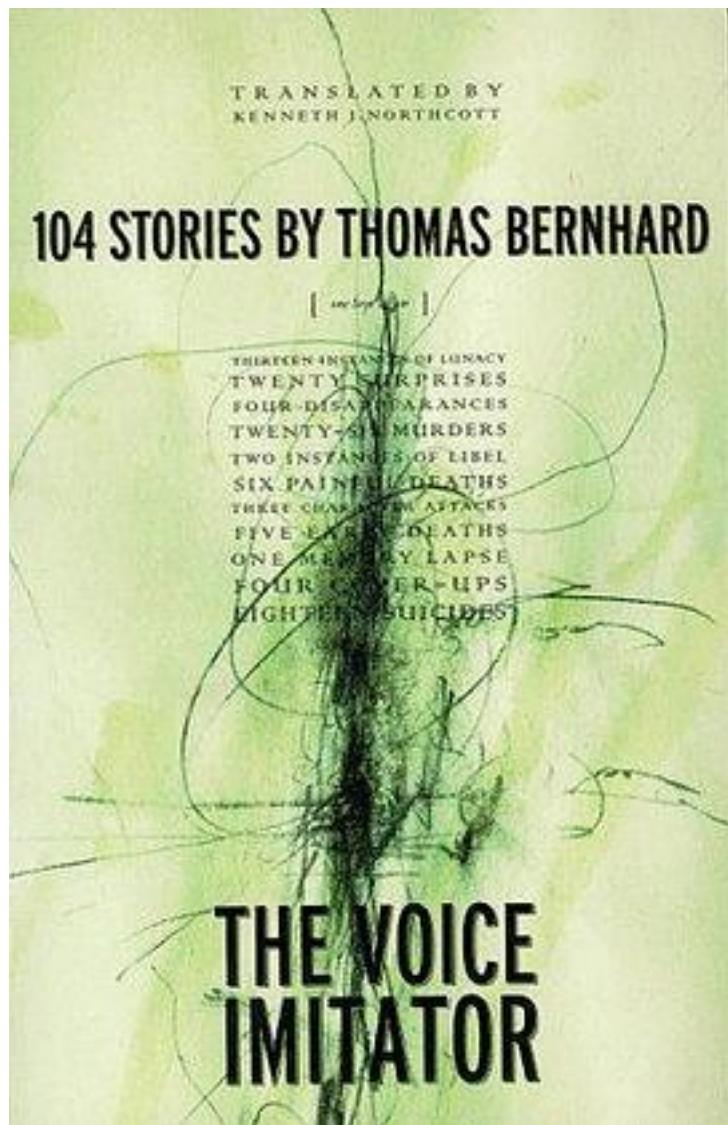


The Voice Imitator



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著者:Thomas Bernhard

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The Austrian playwright, novelist, and poet Thomas Bernhard (1931-89) is acknowledged as among the major writers of our times. At once pessimistic and exhilarating, Bernhard's work depicts the corruption of the modern world, the dynamics of totalitarianism, and the interplay of reality and appearance.

In this stunning translation of *The Voice Imitator*, Bernhard gives us one of his most darkly comic works. A series of parable-like anecdotes--some drawn from newspaper reports, some from conversation, some from hearsay--this satire is both subtle and acerbic. What initially appear to be quaint little stories inevitably indict the sterility and callousness of modern life, not just in urban centers but everywhere. Bernhard presents an ordinary world careening into absurdity and disaster. Politicians, professionals, tourists, civil servants--the usual victims of Bernhard's inspired misanthropy--succumb one after another to madness, mishap, or suicide. The shortest piece, titled "Mail," illustrates the anonymity and alienation that have become standard in contemporary society: "For years after our mother's death, the Post Office still delivered letters that were addressed to her. The Post Office had taken no notice of her death."

In his disarming, sometimes hilarious style, Bernhard delivers a lethal punch with every anecdote. George Steiner has connected Bernhard to "the great constellation of Kafka, Musil, and Broch," and John Updike has compared him to Grass, Handke, and Weiss. *The Voice Imitator* reminds us that Thomas Bernhard remains the most caustic satirist of our age.

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