**Dear December book club friends,**

We are approaching the end of the year, and I am happy to have chosen a book filled with humor – and also serious matters – for us to round off the last four months of 2022.

While the translation does not quite do the Danish version justice, it is still very good, and if you have any questions about word-choices, we can discuss them in our meeting; you are also welcome to write to me to share your thoughts at aschmidt2@wisc.edu.

I am assuming that some of you may not be very familiar with the concept of “Højskole,” so I am planning a very brief power point to give some background and information about that.

I look forward to seeing you, as always, and here are some questions to ponder. Please add your own so we can ensure a lively discussion, and please don’t forget to watch Desiree’s interview with the author.

1. Where is the narrator / protagonist in the first chapter, and how does she feel?
2. In the second chapter (notice there are no chapter indications), what is the main difference between the principal of the school and the “I”? (Dolph, as she is referred to later)
3. How is the difference between the newcomer and the permanent resident described? Does it ring true to you?
4. Compare the partner’s comment, “Nobody wants to know how you are” with our very ordinary, casual, ubiquitous use of “How are you?” as a greeting.
5. What is the role of the “appendixes” – they are called “trailing spouses”, and how do they feel?
6. What is the protagonist’s problem with getting a driver’s license? – is it allegorical?
7. What do you think about the way she responds to the letters written to her by readers of the newspaper?
8. Why does she smoke after exercising? How is her lifestyle, and why?
9. The Danish title, literally translated, is “Meter per second” (as opposed to kilometer per hour / miles per hour). Is the English title appropriate and adequate?
10. How do you feel about her thoughts on children and motherhood? Are they relevant and/or relatable?
11. Comment on her thoughts about the community created via parenthood.
12. How is it possible to find the balance between being excessively happy (“lalleglad”) and negative? Is negativity just a sign of loneliness?
13. How is the concept of friendship perceived by Krisser, The Principal, and the “I”? Why is it so important for the “I” to have friends?
14. Do you agree with her description of the core of a relationship being taking on each other’s griefs?
15. How do you feel about her distinction between being a “factoid” and a “feeloid”?
16. Do you recognize the description of small town, rural life (here, in Jutland)?
17. How do you get to really know people? She says through divorce rather than marriage – is that a valid statement?
18. Is it more difficult to be “different” in a small community – and can it have its advantages?
19. Does she talk too much about problems pertaining to sleep?
20. A big question is the vacuum in conversations – and the horror of empty spaces (horror vacui). Why do we feel a need to talk constantly, and is it a trait associated with the inhabitants of bigger rather than smaller cities? What does it say about humans?
21. Comment on her thoughts about friendships and relationships. Are we all alone?
22. How do you keep the spark in a relationship alive? She talks about words and conversations – is that all?
23. Explain her relationship with Maj-Britt.
24. Comment on her final speech to the students.