**The National Danish Book Club, March 2023.**

**Naja Marie Aidt, *Bavian / Baboon*, 2006**

Dear Book Friends,

Following our “classic” book from last month, (*The Fall of the King*), we are switching directions this month and reading a collection of contemporary short stories.

The author was born in Greenland and spent part of her childhood there before moving to Denmark. She is primarily a poet, and she has several published collections of poems starting in 1991 as well as other collections of short stories. In 2008, she was awarded the Nordic Prize of Literature, (the “little” Nobel Prize), and, recently in 2019, she wrote a much-acclaimed book about losing her son at the age of 25, *When Death Takes Something from you, Give It Back*.

Reading short stories is a very different experience from reading a novel. I hope you found it refreshing to approach a different kind of writing with the need for quick, sharp, yet sinuous plot-lines that demand immediate immersion and understanding. The stories start “in medias res” (in the middle of things), so my first question is the same for my chosen stories.

I have chosen 5 novels for our discussions, and the following questions pertain to these five selections. However, if you have a favorite story you would like us to discuss, please do not hesitate to bring it up either before or during our talk on March 14. As always, the quality of our discussion depends on your participation.

I hope you will enjoy reading her stories and look forward to seeing you in March.

**Questions:**

**Bulbjerg**

1. Describe and clarify the situation of the “we” in the beginning of the story – where are they, who are “we”, what are they doing, who is the narrator, etc.
2. How is the relationship between the male and female character? (She is called Anne), and how is their relationship to their son?
3. What do the various bikes signify?
4. What is the male protagonist’s “problem”? And why does he bring it up?
5. Explain the role of Sebastian and their son’s name.
6. What is this story about?

**Solbær / Black Currants**

1. Describe and clarify the situation of the couple in the beginning of the story – where are they, who are they, what are they doing, who is the narrator, etc.
2. What is Helle’s problem?
3. What is the significance of the chicken?
4. Why does the narrator think of previous relationships with men?
5. What is the significance of the black currant jam? (it is very tart!)

**Torben and Maria**

1. Describe and clarify the situation of the protagonists in the beginning of the story – where are they, who are they, what are they doing, who is the narrator, etc.
2. What characterizes Maria’s life, and how is she perceived by others around her?
3. What is the function of Maria’s brother, Bjørn, in the story?
4. How does the social network react to Torben and his bruises – and why?
5. What role does “The Mountain” play in Maria’s life – and that of Torben? What kind of a man is he?

**Trip in a Car**

1. Describe and clarify the situation of the family in the beginning of the story – where are they, who are they, what are they doing, who is the narrator, etc.
2. What role do each of the children play, and what is their relationship to the adults? How does that shape their behavior? Tobias, Signe, Andreas, Brormand.
3. How is the interaction between the children described?
4. What is the role of nature in this story?
5. Explain the ending of the story and how it specifically relates to Mie and her approach to life.

**Wounds**

1. Describe and clarify the situation of the protagonist in the beginning of the story – where is he, who is he, what is he doing, who is the narrator, etc.
2. What is the philosophy of life of the protagonist – in the beginning?
3. What is the significance of the meeting with the British lady – and especially her words about her late husband?
4. What happens to the well-laid plans of the protagonist, and how does it influence his future life?
5. What is the explanation of it all – at the end?