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KARL OVE KNAUSGAARD. *MY STRUGGLE: BOOK TWO: A MAN IN LOVE*. TRANS. DON BARTLETT. ARCHIPELAGO BOOKS, 2013. 573 PP. CLOTH: \$26.00.

In his second volume of memoir-fiction (the blank spots in his memory must indicate the lengthy conversations are recreations), Karl Ove Knausgaard concentrates on the relationship with his second wife, Linda, illustrating that the course of true love never did run smooth, for writing is as necessary to him as air, and this collides with domestic demands that he deliberately, at times, avoids: "... Linda phoned and screamed, said I was a fairweather father, said I was a bastard, said I was an unfeeling monster... But I didn't care, I wrote night and day..." Their fights flow throughout the book, due to his persistence at his art, the requirements of three children, and Linda's temperament that can descend into violence and depression. Bickering alone soon would grow dull, and wisely Knausgaard weaves in and out of time periods, and topic to topic, as one chain of association leads to another. As in the first volume, he bravely exposes his self-denigration, the drinking bouts and self-harm, and a worry that he has been emasculated. Torments abound, such as Rhythm Time class where he joins his eldest child in a simple children's song. "I wasn't embarrassed, it wasn't embarrassing sitting there, it was humiliating and degrading." At first we might view Knausgaard's behavior with puzzlement, but as his mannerisms become clear, and we witness his passivity, we start to understand how hard he strives to be better, for himself, and for his family: "...I so much wanted to be whole. I so much wanted to be good," as he sighs late in the book. Throwaway poetic lines, and wry ones that bring out a laugh, can suddenly lead into passages on the presence of death or Knausgaard's fear of closeness. *My Struggle: Book Two* is a compelling and honest work of art.