

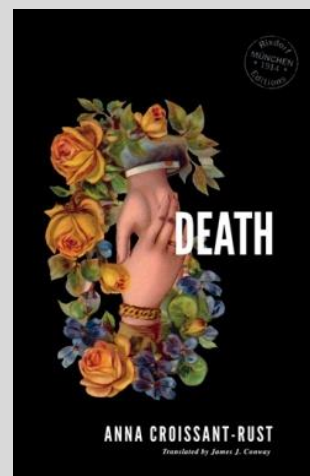
A rich and lyrical engagement with mortal doom in a major English-language debut

DEATH by Anna Croissant-Rust

To the fretful mother of a sick child it comes in the form of the long-awaited doctor. To a feeble old man it arrives as an obliging stranger who helps him to his feet and out through the garden gate. To the hapless workers of an overtaxed factory it is an industrial disaster with a paranormal dimension. In Anna Croissant-Rust's cycle of stories, DEATH comes to them all. But the surprise for anyone expecting morbidity or even butchery is how lyrical, rich and heady these tales can be, how full of light and colour and, indeed, life. An inventive revival of the medieval *danse macabre*, DEATH was issued in Germany on the eve of World War One. It is paired here with the author's earlier collection *Prose Poems*, which fused free verse and fragmentary narrative to create something sublime and entirely original. The intense emotional register and singular style confounded critics when it was first published in 1893, and by the time other writers were producing comparable work in the early 20th century it had been forgotten. This major English-language debut confirms Anna Croissant-Rust as a hugely powerful writer well overdue for recognition.

Even within her native Germany, ANNA CROISSANT-RUST (1860-1943) remains an obscure figure. In 1890 she became the sole female member of Munich's forward-looking 'Society for Modern Life'. In 1893, she issued three books that blended Naturalism with formal experiments for which there was little precedent, with an acute subjectivity that pointed ahead to Expressionism. Her later fiction and drama tended to deploy more traditional story-telling modes, although sometimes rendered in regional dialect. Common to all of her works is a profound engagement with natural forces and a tireless fascination for psychological motive.

Described by the *TLS* as an 'exciting new list', RIXDORF EDITIONS is a Berlin-based press which is introducing forgotten German classics to a contemporary English-language readership, focusing on the Wilhelmine period (1890-1918), a time of unexpected daring and innovation. Its first two titles were *Berlin's Third Sex* by Magnus Hirschfeld and Franziska zu Reventlow's fiction collection, *The Guesthouse at the Sign of the Teetering Globe*, with *The Beauty of the Metropolis* by August Endell also appearing in spring 2018.



Anna Croissant-Rust

Death

translated and with an afterword
by James J. Conway

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