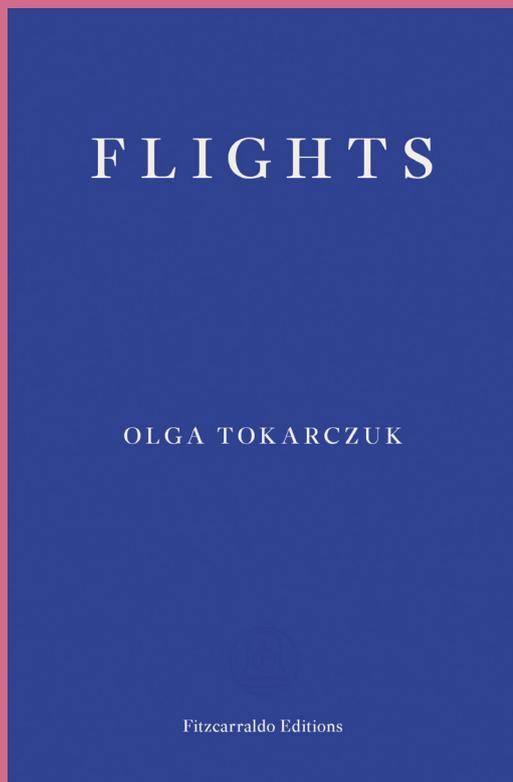




Reader's Guide



Other novels by Olga Tokarczuk
House of Day, House of Night (2003)
Primeval and Other Times (2010)

Flights Olga Tokarczuk

Translated by Jennifer Croft

Fitzcarraldo Editions

www.themanbookerprize.com
#FinestFiction #MBI2018

THE
READING
AGENCY

M
Man

The
Booker
Prize
Foundation

About the author	Olga Tokarczuk was born in Sulechów, Poland, in January 1962. In 2015 she received the Brueckepreis and the prestigious annual literary award from Poland's Ministry of Culture and National Heritage, as well as Poland's highest literary honour, the Nike and the Nike Readers' Prize. Tokarczuk also received a Nike in 2009 for <i>Flights</i> . She is the author of eight novels, two short-story collections and has been translated into a dozen languages.
About the translator	Jennifer Croft was born in Oklahoma, USA, in September 1981. She is the recipient of Fulbright, PEN and National Endowment for the Arts grants, as well as the Michael Henry Heim Prize, and her translations from Polish, Spanish and Ukrainian have appeared in the <i>New York Times</i> , <i>n+1</i> , <i>Electric Literature</i> , <i>The New Republic</i> , <i>BOMB</i> , <i>Guernica</i> and elsewhere. She holds a PhD from Northwestern University and an M.F.A. from the University of Iowa. She is a founding editor of <i>The Buenos Aires Review</i> .
About the book	<p><i>Flights</i> is a novel about travel in the 21st century and human anatomy. From the 17th century, we have the story of the real Dutch anatomist Philip Verheyen, who dissected and drew pictures of his own amputated leg, discovering in so doing the Achilles tendon. From the 18th century, we have the story of a North African-born slave turned Austrian courtier stuffed and put on display after his death in spite of his daughter's ever more desperate protests, as well as the story of Chopin's heart as it makes the covert journey from Paris to Warsaw, stored in a tightly sealed jar beneath his sister's skirt. From the present we have the trials and tribulations of a wife accompanying her much older professor husband as he teaches a course on a cruise ship in the Greek islands, the quest of a Polish woman who emigrated to New Zealand as a teenager but must now return to Poland in order to poison her terminally ill high school sweetheart, and the slow descent into madness of a young husband whose wife and child mysteriously vanished on a vacation on a Croatian island and then appeared again with no explanation.</p> <p>Through these narratives, interspersed with short bursts of analysis and digressions on topics ranging from travel-sized cosmetics to the Maori, <i>Flights</i> guides the reader beyond the surface layer of modernity and towards the core of the very nature of humankind.</p>
Discussion points	<p>The book follows a nameless woman as she travels around the world, seemingly without purpose. Discuss how this reflects our modern society.</p> <p>Interspersed with the main character's story are strange vignettes about body parts and embalming. How well did the author balance the two parts?</p> <p>Which of the characters most resonated with you and why?</p> <p>The book contains fictionalised versions of some true events (such as the burial of Chopin's heart) – were you aware of any of them before reading the book?</p>
Themed reading	<p>WG Sebald <i>The Emigrants</i> Milan Kundera <i>Immortality</i> Danilo Kiš <i>The Encyclopedia of the Dead</i> Dubravka Ugrešić <i>Baba Yaga Laid an Egg</i></p>
Useful links	<p>https://www.theguardian.com/books/2017/jun/03/flights-by-olga-tokarczuk-review</p> <p>https://www.ft.com/content/efae24e2-6aed-11e7-b9c7-15af748b60d0</p> <p>https://www.thelondonmagazine.org/review-flights-olga-tokarczuk/</p> <p>https://theculturetrip.com/europe/poland/articles/polish-literary-stars-latest-novel-offers-reading-experience-like-no/</p>