



News from **New Directions**

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A lavishly illustrated co-production with the Christine Burgin Gallery

MICROSCRIPTS

by Robert Walser

Translated from the German and with an introduction by Susan Bernofsky • Bilingual

Afterword by Walter Benjamin

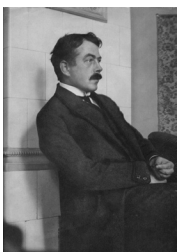
“The most beautiful and important book published this year.” —Wayne Koestenbaum

“A truly wonderful, heart-breaking writer.” —Susan Sontag

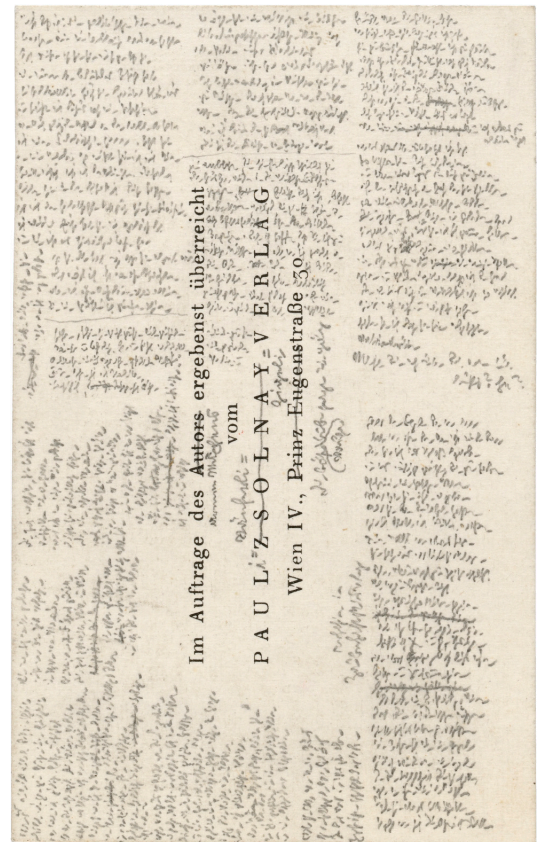
“Incredibly interesting and beautiful.” —John Ashbery

“Robert Walser is a bewitched genius.” —*Newsweek*

Considered by J. M Coetzee and W. G. Sebald to be Walser’s finest writing, Robert Walser’s microscripts are microscopic masterworks of illumination and musing, written episodically by Walser on small scraps of paper in the 1920s and during his stay at the Waldau sanatorium in the early 1930s. Assumed by his literary executor to be a “secret code” and a further symptom of his mental illness, the microscripts were later discovered to be a minute form of *Kurrent*, the standard German handwriting at the time, and were painstakingly transcribed. These once inaccessible texts now burst forth from the page in *Microscripts*, a selection of twenty-five pieces revealing “some of Walser’s most beautiful and haunting writing” (Benjamin Kunkel, *The New Yorker*). Each microscript is infused with the wit and wisdom of Walser’s genius at its fullest, coupled with his ability to cut to the core of humanity and human behavior. Published for the first time as a bilingual edition and accompanied by exquisitely reproduced lustrous images of the original works, this exciting new edition has been translated into English by Susan Bernofsky, who also contributes an insightful introduction, and is accompanied by an afterword by Walter Benjamin, who counts Walser’s microscripts as “one of the profoundest products of modern literature.”



ROBERT WALSER (15 April 1878–25 December 1956) was born in Switzerland and raised speaking German and French. Upon leaving school at fourteen, he drifted, working various odd jobs, all the while writing novels, essays, and stories. Admired by Kafka, Musil, and Hesse, Walser wrote nine novels and countless stories and has been noted as “one of the most remarkable and fully realized stylists in modern literature” (*The Nation*).



SUSAN BERNOFSKY is a writer, scholar, and an award-winning translator. She is currently writing a biography of Robert Walser.

An exhibition of the original microscripts accompanied by Maira Kalman’s paintings of the life of Robert Walser will be held at the Christine Burgin Gallery, New York, in autumn 2010.

Microscripts by Robert Walser

Jacketed hardcover; debossed tip-on art on cover

6½ x 8¾" • 160 pages • U.S. \$24.95 / Canada \$31.00

28 color and 28 black-and-white illustrations

ISBN 978-0-8112-1880-1

Publication date: May 31, 2010