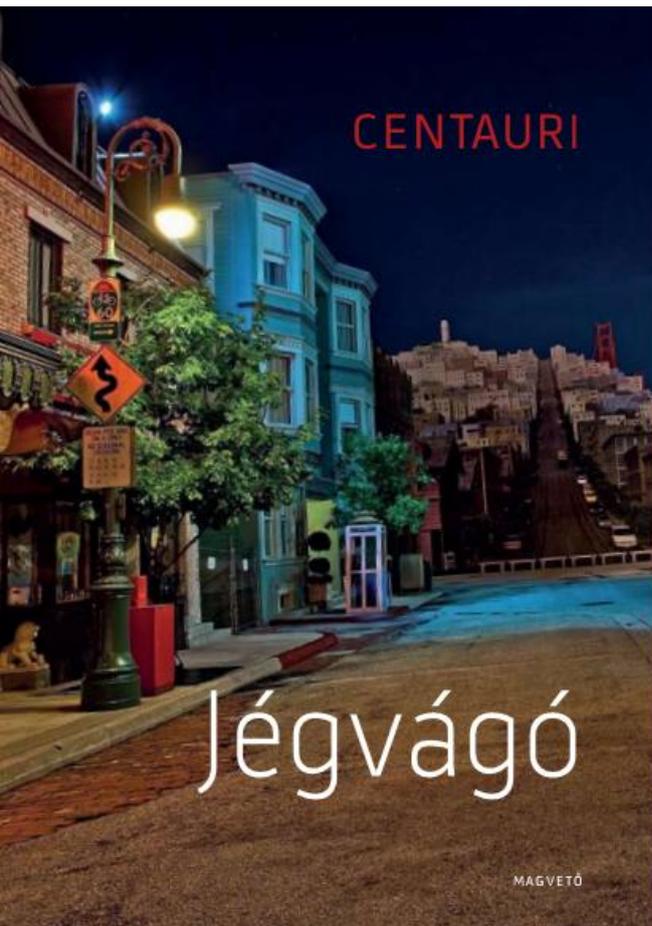


*'Dan Coolbirth?' he asks.
'Fuck no, it's Jack London'—and I shoot.*



Centauri: Icepick

A (grand American) novel. 416 pages. Published by **Magvető Publishing, Hungary**

Centauri, the 'mysterious writer', doesn't live in the States, and yet his first novel is a genuine modern grand American novel. Spine-tingling accidents, attacks, brain surgery, boozing sessions, crises, and amorous disappointments mark the life of young Dan Coolbirth, whose romance with the much older Angelica is interrupted by a double homicide. That is when the road movie starts, and Dan flees from California northwards to Montana, where he comes across Teya, an Indian girl of ravishing beauty and special powers.

Almost filmically, the story of an extravagant, mad and yet in many respects painfully average family is pieced together, with appearances from countless colourful and unforgettable figures, with writers like Salinger and Melville appearing as indirectly important characters, and light is even shed on what links the family to Jack London. Dan, like a true teenager, is critical of the world around him, particularly his parents, (and even his beloved grandmother, who with the help of her screwball friends tries to make a 'ballsy lad' out of him). Though he does have a brilliant sense of humour. But it's difficult to say whether Dan's story takes him into the past, or into a world where no living person has yet been.

Centauri

Centauri, the author with a pseudonym, was born in 1972 and lives in the Transdanubian region.

His fiction has been tentatively categorized as magical realism, and compared to the work of Márquez, Rushdie, Grass, Kafka and Szentkuthy. He is not disclosing his real identity, referring mostly to the freedom of writing. He does not disclose photos of himself and does not appear in public.

'I'll stand in the door with the rifle aimed straight ahead, and if they come in, I shoot, it makes no difference now.' Teya runs to me and tries to disarm me, but I don't let her. 'I won't let them take you. If I've shot once, I'll shoot again. The door is closed. They knock, wait a couple of moments, then one of the cops comes in, a pistol in his hand. 'Dan Coolbirth?' he asks. 'Fuck no, it's Jack London'—and I shoot.

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