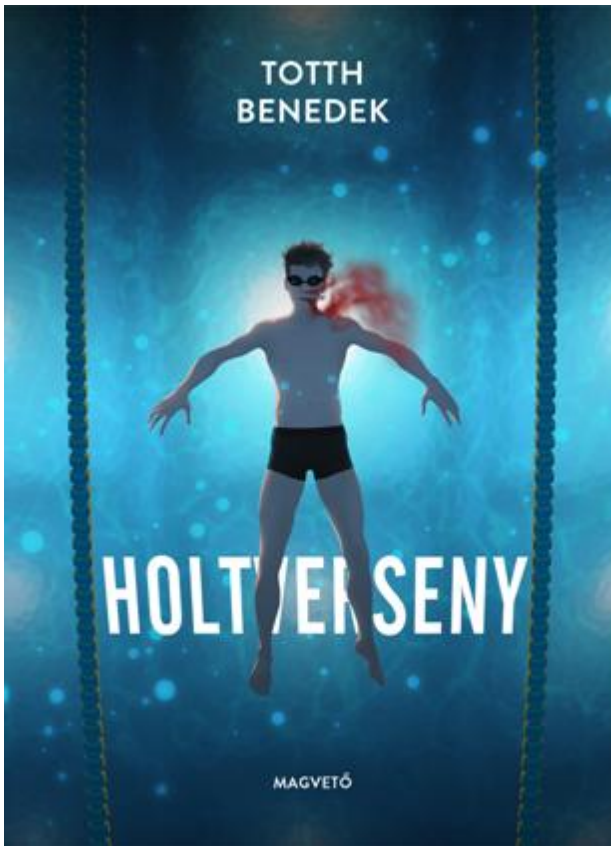


‘Trainspotting in the swimming pool. A whack in the face that’ll leave you reeling from the shock.’

György Dragomán



Dead Heat (Holtverseny)

Benedek Totth

(Novel, 248 pages, MAGVETŐ Publishing, 2014)

On a deserted bypass somewhere in the Hungarian countryside a sports car full of teenagers races through the pitch black night. A threatening enough start to a novel, yet even so, what follows is unexpected. Neither the readers nor the characters can expect the kid-glove treatment from Benedek Totth in this, his first novel. Elements of the teenage novel, the detective story, the psychological thriller, and the Bildungsroman mingle in this strange novel, which is oppressive (yet at times humorous), and cruel (though not for the sake of it). If anyone recognizes today’s Hungary, with its more or less abandoned teenagers, loitering mostly unhappily, sometimes sad but more usually angry – then they’ve got the picture. Yet this is less a social critique than a highly personal confrontation with the teenager we all once were, or might have been, in this dismal place (no country for old men), where even wild boars are not what they seem.

Benedek Totth



Benedek Totth was born in 1977 in Kaposvár.

He is a noted translator of literature – among others, he has translated novels by Cormac McCarthy. He works in publishing.

Holtverseny is his first book.

“I once had a dream where he came back to us, to explain what happened. He didn’t want us to find out from anyone else. He sat down in the lounge, switched on the TV, and said he hadn’t died because he stopped, but that he stopped because he died. I didn’t quite get it, but I didn’t want to ask any questions. Then his head turned into a shark, and he said ‘Keep swimming, lad, even if it kills you!’ All the time we’d lived together, we hadn’t exchanged that many words.”

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