

# SIMPLE ACTS

## October - Read a book about exile

Each month, we'll flag up something which lets you complete a Simple Act – whether it's a book about exile or a few weird and wonderful words in a new language. This month we're talking 'Books about Exile' - and none other than this year's winner of the Nobel Prize in Literature!

### Traveling on One Leg by Herta Müller

Traveling on One Leg describes leaving one country called home and arriving in another. Müller confronts readers with the alien world of the Ceausescu regime, but also with the alienation in her own life.

The protagonist of the story is Irene, a fragile woman born to a German family in Romania, who has recently emigrated from Romania to Germany. Despite being born to a German family, Irene's place in Germany is as a recent émigré and an unassimilated Romanian German. She feels neither longing for Romania nor any comfort in her newly adopted Germany. Politically and socially isolated, Irene moves within the orbit of three troubled men, while simultaneously embarking on an inner exploration of exile, homeland, and identity..

Characterized by the same sense of profound isolation found in Müller's *The Land of Green Plums*, *Travelling on One Leg* is a poignant exploration of exile, homeland, and identity.

[Find the Book on Amazon](#)

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### Critical Acclaim for Traveling on One Leg

*'The action in this volume may be slight, but Irene's innermost consciousness - where the political has indeed become the personal - is magnificently portrayed.'* William Ferguson, The [New York Times Book Review](#)

### About the Author

Herta Müller is a Romanian-born German novelist, poet and essayist. Müller has been an internationally well-known author since the early 1990s, and her works have been translated into more than 20 languages. She has received over 20 awards, including the 1998 International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award and the [2009 Nobel Prize in Literature](#).

Müller was born in the Romanian Banat in western Romania. A member of Romania's ethnic German minority, Müller knew persecution under the under the regime of dictator [Nicolae Ceausescu](#) where she was shadowed on the street by secret police, fired for refusing to inform on co-workers, and arrested. Eventually in 1987, under pressure from the government, she fled to Germany with her husband.

Müller's own experiences have led her to stand up for newer refugees fleeing to Europe from all over the world: "Why has it always been in this world that people should leave their countries and others are the ones committing the crimes?" [she asks](#).

Although she left Romania over 20 years ago, Müller returns constantly to the themes of oppression, exile and dictatorship in her novels and poems. Whenever she visits her native country, it is also with a sense of unease: "One never com

es back the same way," she says. "Once you leave under such circumstances, you become a different person."



