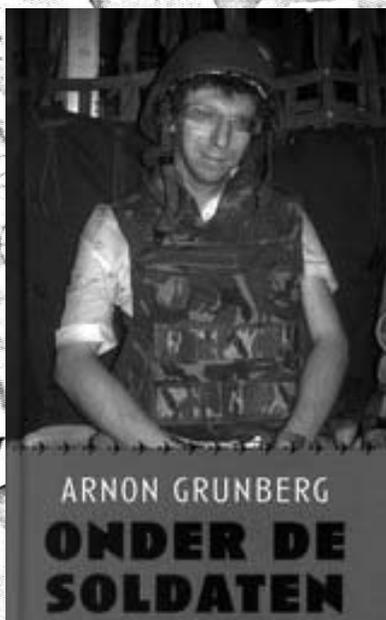


Arnon Grunberg

Onder de Soldaten

Among Soldiers



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ARNON GRUNBERG, 39, likes to note in his biography that he got kicked out of high school at the age of 17. That apparently set him on his course in life so that today he is an esteemed Dutch novelist and narrative journalist. For his fiction, he has received some of the most distinguished literary awards in his country. In 1994 at the age of twenty-three he published *Blue Mondays*. It became a best seller in Europe and has been translated into thirteen languages.



It was also honored with the Anton Wachter prize for the best debut novel. The following decade Grunberg's literary oeuvre grew rapidly with bestsellers like the *Asylum Seeker*, *The Jewish Messiah*, and *Tirza*. The latter was awarded the Libris Literatuur prize for best novel in 2006, and made Grunberg one of the most honored and successful contemporary of Dutch novelists. In 2009 his stature was confirmed when, at a very early age, Grunberg was awarded the Constantijn Huygens prize for his complete works.

But that is only the one side to Grunberg. Because he is also a narrative journalist in the true sense of what "narrative" means. Between 1995 and 2006 he wrote many columns about his life while traveling around the world. Since then his reportage has appeared regularly in the highly respected Rotterdam newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*, entitled "Grunberg Among the People." He has explored subjects ranging from the war in Iraq to his experiences as a chambermaid in Germany. His work has also been published in *Salon*, *Culture+Travel*, *The New York Times Magazine*, *Booksforum*, and *The Literary Review*. He has been a featured author and speaker at many writer's conferences and festivals, including the PEN World Voices Festival in New York City in 2007 and 2008.

Grunberg's journalistic approach and his style make his stories some of the best examples of contemporary Dutch literary journalism. His three-part Afghanistan series, which also appeared in *NRC Handelsblad*, was compiled and published in Dutch in a private printing commissioned by Grunberg and distributed to the Dutch army. It is republished here in English in an abridged form. An interview with Grunberg follows.

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