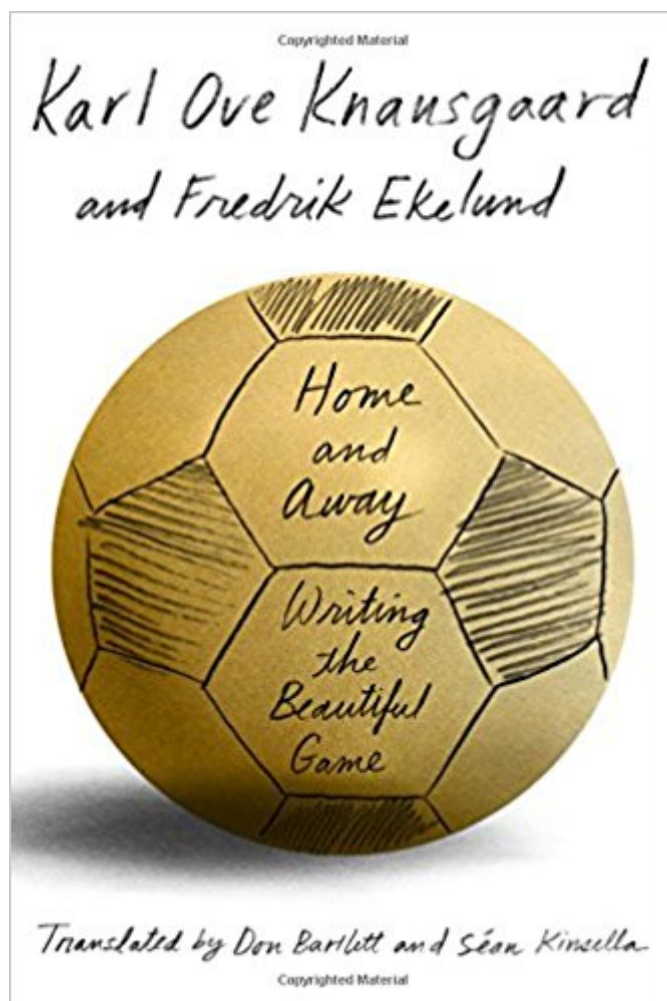


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# Home And Away: Writing The Beautiful Game



## Synopsis

Two world-class writers reveal themselves to be the ultimate soccer fans in these collected letters. Karl Ove Knausgaard is sitting at home in Skjerve with his wife, four small children, and dog. He is watching soccer on TV and falls asleep in front of the set. He likes 0-0 draws, cigarettes, coffee, and Argentina. Fredrik Ekelund is away, in Brazil, where he plays soccer on the beach and watches matches with others. Ekelund loves games that end up 4-3 and teams that play beautiful soccer. He likes caipirinhas and Brazil. *Home and Away* is an unusual soccer book, in which the two authors use soccer and the World Cup in Brazil as the arena for reflections on life and death, art and politics, class and literature. What does it mean to be at home in a globalized world? This exchange of letters opens up new vistas and gives us stories from the lives of two creative writers. We get under their skin and gain insight into their relationships with modern times and soccer's place in their lives, the significance the game has for people in general, and the question: Was this the best soccer championship ever?

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Knausgaard and Ekelund make an ideal pair. . . . [Knausgaard's] talent in describing his family life amid the chaos of watching and writing about football is evident throughout. • National Post "[F]or whom these letters resonate, the effect is powerful and cascading, a pleasing waterfall of imagery and intellect. Though the correspondence is mostly about soccer, it is also about so much more. • Kirkus Reviews (starred review) "[A] captivating tribute to soccer. Soccer fans will love *Home and Away: Writing*

the Beautiful Game, perhaps persuaded by the title alone. My mission, then, is to exhort readers less familiar with the sport to try this captivating and even profound book by two writers at the top of their game. . . . Lifelong soccer fans, the authors each write from a passionate fan's point of view, often describing the same match with wildly differing opinions. This book spoke to me as a soccer player and fan, highlighting in sublime detail the players and plays from a dramatic tournament. . . . Both authors have a knack for metaphor and apply it liberally to their sports writing. . . . Among the unexpected pleasures of the book is the power of letter writing to tell stories and deepen relationships. The two friends write intensely about the match of the day, then launch into fascinating musings that never seem off-topic or tangential because they are connected in the minds of the writers, who have revealing takes about, say, the rise of anti-immigrant sentiments in Europe . . . or improving economic conditions in the Third World or Swedish feminism. . . . So yes, Home and Away is about soccer, but it is, unpredictably and delightfully, much more than that.

• The Seattle Times "The book takes the form of a competitive exchange of emails over the course of a month, in which the writers take turns to outdo each other with long improvisations of thought inspired by watching football and going about their lives. It's a deeply intelligent and enjoyable correspondence: superb analyses of game. . . . [Knausgaard's] portrayal of life at home with his wife and four children, running his publishing house, travelling to speak at events, evoke a quiet, vivid and sociable happiness. The man who never laughs is frequently very funny.

• Financial Times "Karl Ove Knausgaard and Fredrik Ekelund . . . conjure up something substantial in Home And Away. . . . The results are invigorating, unexpected.

• Sunday Herald "[A] fantastic book of correspondence. . . . Although soccer fans will get the most of these lengthy discussions on players and tactics, readers with just a passing interest in the sport will be enlightened by their thorough exploration of how soccer has evolved over the years. . . . Filled with exquisite, solemn passages about the stark Scandinavian landscape and the quiet life of caring for children, Knausgaard's letters are the weightier of the two. . . . As the book progresses, readers can see Knausgaard and Ekelund learning from each other, realizing new desires and prejudices, reevaluating former positions, reposition themselves. The discourse is so open, so productive and thoughtful, that when readers reach the final letter . . . sadness takes over.

• Publishers Weekly "Knausgaard is a writer with an astonishing ability to elevate the prosaic, not by superimposing great symbolic truths, but by examining it, describing it, almost fetishizing it. This, after all, is the real stuff of existence. Reading his books, one starts from a position of disbelief at the minutiae he explores . . . But if you persevere, you find yourself gradually

absorbed into his world, you succumb to it, until you can't get enough of these details, and find yourself wanting to wallow in them forever. *Home and Away: Writing the Beautiful Game* is no different. You might recoil from the concept, but it soon has you by the collar with the subtlest of grips. . . . The effect is part lyrical, part familiar, part philosophical. . . . As a reading experience, *Home and Away* is diverting, indulgent and stealthily enjoyable.

• *Esquire UK* "Their interplay takes on the familiar cut and thrust of a football match. . . . [A] genuinely unusual, genuinely engaging two-hander of real affection and insight."

• *Literary Review* "This might be the oddest book ever written about football. It is also fascinating, insightful. . . . Both men are as keen to discuss art, politics and death as they are to reflect on the beautiful game, and this strange, unclassifiable but engrossing book is the result."

• *The Sunday Times* "[F]ascinating and complex insights into the way modern football is manufactured and disseminated, the way it reaches into our lives and what we make of it when it's there. . . . From the rosy glow of remembered childhood televisions Knausgaard makes a lovely note about the sound, just the sound, of a World Cup game on television on a summer evening through to the semi-political assemblies of lower league away days, football means something to almost everybody. For all its tribal allegiances, in a world where culture and politics have splintered into ever more segregated niches, there is undoubtedly something non-denominational about football. . . . What [this book] does is important because [it] thinks about football as a part of life, not as some specialist endeavour."

• *The Irish Times* "Readers looking for a gentle introduction to Mr. Knausgaard's work could do worse than pick up a copy of *Home and Away*. . . . Mr. Knausgaard offers incisive observations on football in his typically understated tone, which can often be hilarious. . . . The best part of the book focuses on Brazil's thrashing in the semifinal at the Mineirão stadium. And Mr. Ekelund's portrait of Rio after the match is haunting. . . . For a book which, at heart, is no more than two friends chatting about football, there is a lot to like."

• *The Economist* "PRAISE FOR KARL OVE KNAUSGAARD: [Knausgaard] is contemporary fiction's alchemist of the ordinary. . . . This writer is constructing a towering edifice, in what feels like real time. Few artistic projects of our era feel more worth attending to."

• *The New York Times* "With each subsequent book of his that is translated into English, Mr. Knausgaard continues to solidify his reputation as one of the most vital writers working today."

• *The Observer (UK)* "Knausgaard is a genius, without

doubt. • Heather Mallick, *Å* *Å* Toronto Star *Å* *Å* *Å* “Mr. Knausgaard seemed to be able to write about anything. . . . [T]he great chronicler of the modern condition. • Ian Brown, *The Globe and Mail* *Å* *Å* *Å* “Once or twice a decade, word of mouth elevates a seemingly uncommercial literary writer to the status of a mass cult: you look around and suddenly it seems everybody is reading a particular book. To the ranks of David Foster Wallace and Haruki Murakami can now be added Karl Ove Knausgaard. • *Montreal Gazette* (formerly *Å* *Å* *The Gazette*) *Å* *Å* *Å* “A living hero who landed on greatness by abandoning every typical literary feint. • Jonathan Lethem, *The Guardian* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Karl Ove Knausgaard was born in Norway in 1968. His debut novel, *Out of This World*, won the Norwegian Critics Prize in 2004 and his novel *A Time for Everything* was a finalist for the Nordic Council Prize. For *My Struggle: Book 1*, Knausgaard received the Brage Award in 2009, the 2010 Book of the Year Prize in *Morgenbladet*, and the P2 Listeners' Prize. *My Struggle: Book 1* was a *New Yorker* Book of the Year and *My Struggle: Book 2* was listed among *The Wall Street Journal*'s 2013 Books of the Year. *My Struggle* is a *New York Times* bestseller and has been translated into more than fifteen languages. Knausgaard lives in Sweden with his wife and four children. Fredrik Ekelund was born in Sweden in 1953. He published his first book, *Stuv Malmfågl*, in 1984, and has since published another sixteen works novels, detective novels, collections of poetry, and three books about soccer. Ekelund is also a playwright, and has made two films (with documentary filmmaker Lars Westman), as well as working as a translator specializing in Danish, Spanish, Portuguese, and French.

An engrossing read through and through.

I wasn't sure I'd be all that interested in this book; I had thought it would be about football (soccer to Knausgaard and all Europeans). But as I began to read it I discovered that in the correspondence between these two close friends much more was discussed than the game. Conversations ranged from the topics of literature, philosophy, history, psychology, memoir-writing, and more, and all proved to be fascinating and quite well-written. A really good read.

Letters based on the game of soccer between two friends. Letters that really about their lives .

As a correspondence these two men have made a safe space for themselves to ramble on about football. Sometimes that rambling is engaging like a good pub discussion but mostly it's banal & rather frequently unapologetically chauvinist & racist. Knausgaard is the Jonathan Franzen of Europe. His sexism is so casual. I suppose I shouldn't expect less from a writer whose success is predicated on mansplaining 'not all men' over 3600 pages. Ekelund balances this with a fervent distaste or fetishization of any race/religion outside his own. His is the sad bigotry of the Enlightenment white man. All of this made the tiny gems about football too few to warrant the effort. A profoundly disappointing book

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