

John Fraser was born in London. He wrote on and taught social and political theory (especially Marxism) in the UK, Canada and, after 1980, in Rome and Ferrara. Since 1982 he has lived in Rome and has also worked as a musician.

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'One of the most extraordinary publishing events of the past few years has been the rapid, indeed insistent, appearance of the novels of John Fraser. There are few parallels in literary history to this almost simultaneous and largely belated appearance of a mature oeuvre, sprung like Athena from Zeus's forehead. And the novels in themselves are extraordinary. I can think of nothing much like it in fiction.'

'Fraser maintains a masterfully ironic distance from the extreme conditions in which his characters find themselves. There are strikingly beautiful descriptions, veiled allusions to rooted traditions, unlikely events half-glimpsed, abrupt narratives, surreal but somehow apposite social customs. Like Thomas Pynchon, whom in some ways he resembles, Fraser is a deep and serious fantasist, wildly inventive.'

'The reader rides as on a switchboard or luge of impetuous attention, with effects flashing by at virtuoso speeds. The characters seem to be unwitting agents of chaos, however much wise reflection the author bestows upon them. They move with shrugging self-assurance through circumstances as richly detailed and as without reliable compass points as a Chinese scroll.'

John Fuller, English poet,
novelist, Booker prize nominee
and Fellow Emeritus at
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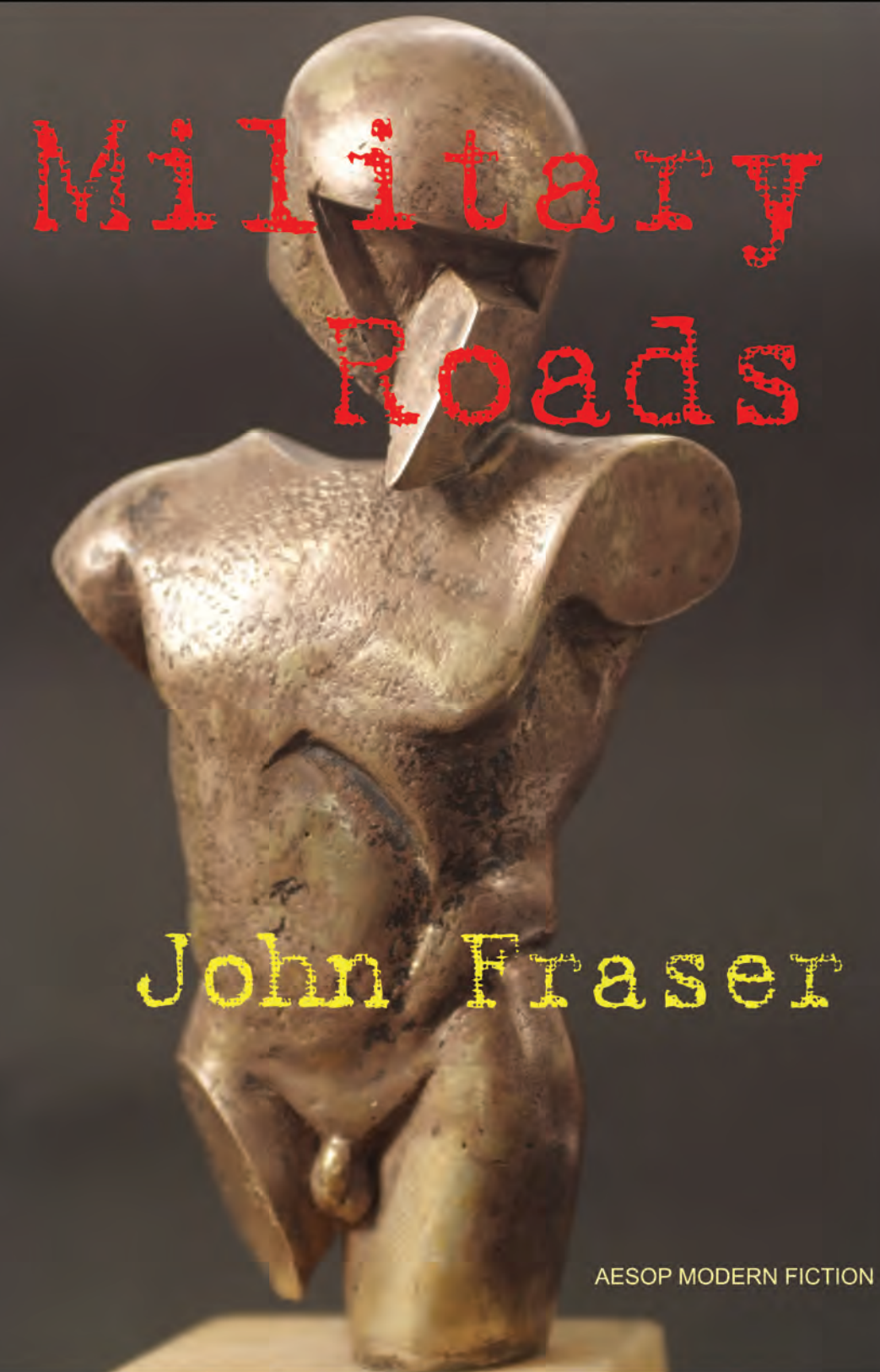
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John Fraser

Military Roads



The latest tour de force in speculative fiction from John Fraser. Military Roads consists of three tales: first, the adventures of a narrator following the fortunes of a leader of a revolution in a distant country; second, a journey starting in the 'military road', which, in Soviet times and before, ran from Moscow to the Caucasus; and finally, a mission undertaken from Italy, through North Africa, with the aim of recruiting a private army of bodyguards for a global tycoon.

The narrator's amorous adventures, and his struggles to survive these radical shifts of place, commitment and perspective, conclude with a sweet-and-sour relationship with his boss's partner, and a precarious acceptance of traditional religious practices. The military roads, it is supposed, will continue to be travelled, with results which never achieve a lasting resolution, but provide temporary satisfaction for some, at least, of the protagonists.

'It doesn't hurt, but what I am is not in dreams, I'm like a building with its pipes and conduits hung outside – and now some guys are combing me, and what's inside is now turned inside out, the gut, the heart, and now the brain – oh, how embarrassing, and every thought is fingered through, and every rivulet of memory is sluiced and flooded, who can tell where it flows out, maybe this urn contains a tap – and every error, every slip, faux pas, the acts of faith misplaced or lied about, they're all scoured out, and trickle down, away.'

from Military Roads

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