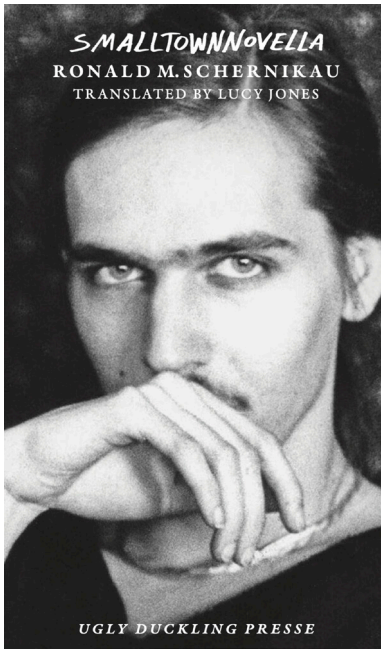
Ronald M. Schernikau
SMALLTOWNNOVELLA

translated from the German by Lucy Jones

A previously-untranslated classic of the queer canon, *SMALLTOWNNOVELLA* follows b, a teenaged, working-class communist who falls in love with leif, a popular jock. When leif becomes fearful of the consequences of their affair, he instigates a community-wide assault. Written in a brilliant, all-lowercase, stream-of-consciousness, Schernikau's novella is a radical reimagining of the German Bildungsroman. Originally published in West Germany in 1980, Lucy Jones' clear-sighted translation brings *SMALLTOWNNOVELLA* to English readers for the first time.



"This slender book is a fierce account of queer teenage imagination: provocative, haughty, coy, insolent, and wild. As angsty as it is intelligent, Schernikau's prose also feels protective and sweet. *SMALLTOWNNNOVELLA* is the book, the friend, I wish I had in high school.

—Eliot Duncan, author of *Ponyboy*

"A vital German author finally appears in English. *SMALLTOWNNOVELLA* is a potent, thought-provoking, deeply memorable work of fiction. Schernikau's writing is both tender and tough; his analysis of the structures enforcing sexual, social, and political conformity is as true today as it was in 1980. The book's radicalism, as local as a love affair and as universal as the world, makes this no easy text to translate—and Lucy Jones has met the challenge with aplomb.

—Alexander Wells

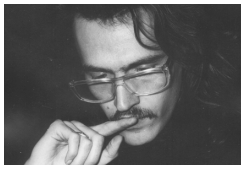
"Schernikau's *SMALLTOWNNOVELLA* is a clarion call for radical community. Reading it again in English—I am once more devastated, healed, and remade anew.

—Lauren Foley, author of *Polluted Sex*

Trade Paperback
Fiction | $18
4.25" x 7.25" | 112 pp.

ISBN: 978-1-946604-41-5

Distributed by:
Asterism Books
Release Date: November 1, 2025



Ronald M. Schernikau was born in 1960 in Magdeburg, East Germany and grew up in Hanover, West Germany. After completing his Abitur in 1980, he moved to West Berlin and studied German literature, philosophy, and psychology. In 1986, he started studying at the Institut für Literatur Johannes R. Becher (German Institute for Literature) in Leipzig, GDR. In 1989 he obtained GDR citizenship and relocated to Berlin. He worked as a dramaturge, and in radio and TV until his AIDS-related death in 1991.

Lucy Jones is a British translator and writer based in Berlin. She is the translator of Brigitte Reimann's *Siblings*, (Penguin Modern Classics), Anke Stelling's *Higher Ground* (Scribe) and Annemarie Schwarzenbach's *Lyric Novella* (Seagull Books), among others. Her translations and book reviews have appeared in *Asymptote*, *Words Without Borders* and *CulturMag*. She was the runner-up for the Society of Author's Schlegel-Tieck Prize in 2023.

Media contact: publicity@uglyducklingpresse.org