

# Froon Akker

## Einum

Meandering voices of a disappearing village

**In *Einum* Froon Akker sings the praises of life in a village where on the face of it little happens. In reality it only seems that way. The surroundings are cheerless and tragedy far from unknown, but *Einum* is also a novel full of social sensitivity, warmth and empathy.**

In the fictional, unsightly, depopulating village of Einum, somewhere below the sea dyke on Friesland's Wadden Sea coast, live a handful of villagers.

The blonde Casper performs 'playground duty' at night and – although married – is actually attracted to school-boys. The little girl Agnetha, named after the singer from ABBA, falls in love with Jente, a fellow villager of the same age with a scooter and a passion for bird spotting. Old Rindert, a farmer dependent on homecare services and on his nephew and his nephew's wife, who work for him and secretly have their eye on his farm. Finally there's Alie, suffering from dementia and looked after by her loving husband, who is close to exhaustion. The background to their stories is the planned demolition of a large number of houses, which upsets the whole village.



In every chapter of the novel, Froon Akker gives one of the villagers a voice of their own, in meandering sentences in which an occasional comma allows the reader to draw breath amid the torrent of penetrating thoughts.

At first we have the impression that these are all separate stories, but gradually the relationships between the characters take shape and the stories interlock. There is much visible and invisible suffering, and life in Einum wounds and scars, it seeps away, but from time to time there is something light, something funny, something beautiful – there is life.

Akker has a surprising way of linking together protracted common-places with unavoidable strokes of fate. Something mysterious lurks between the lines and the tension slowly builds. In 2015 the book was awarded the Gysbert Japicx Prize. According to the jury, 'in eighteen subtly shifting "shots", unspoken thoughts, loneliness and dreams pay sensitive tribute to a depopulating countryside. And if one thing becomes clear, then it is that Einum is not confined to Friesland.'

Koos Tiemersma (b. 1952) made his name with a number of novels in the Frisian language, including his debut, *De Ijeder* (The Ladder, 2001), which won him the Rink van der Velde Prize and was also published in Dutch. Under the pseudonym **Froon Akker** he switched to writing e-books, which he markets on various sites including his own. In 2015 his novel *Einum* (2012) won him the most prestigious Frisian literary award, the Gysbert Japicx Prize.



### Publishing details

*Einum* (2012)  
311 pp., 79,420 words

### Publisher

Elikser  
Jitske Kingma  
jitskekingma@elikser.nl

### Translation

*Einum* (2015)

**'Ingenious writing style in which thoughts and actions are linked together in a stream of conversations.'**

– Doeke Sijens,  
*Leeuwarder Courant*

**'His prose strikes like a meteorite. What a gem of a book.'**

– Sjoerd Bottema,  
*De Moanne*

**'A unique reading experience. Unique not only because these simple, ordinary-seeming people come so vividly and multidimensionally alive but also because of the author's decision to cast much of his prose in an unusual style of minimal punctuation.'**

– Henry Baron,  
*World Literature Today*

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