



## Coup d'État in the Land of Zep Tepi: A Progress Report

**Buiteboer**

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*With its apocalyptic and surreal elements, this work is a fascinating and strange trip.*

Buiteboer's *Coup d'État in the Land of Zep Tepi* starts with the end of the world and then gets ever more out there. This is a trippy, surrealistic book where the beatnik author William Burroughs rules as a tyrannical warlord over an otherworldly zone.

Buiteboer narrates. He begins jotting down notes on the eve of December 21, 2012, when the Mayan calendar prophesied the apocalypse. The world does not come to an end, however, so Buiteboer sets out on his motorbike on a journey across Africa, and across ancient mythologies and metaphysical realms, to find out why.

Convinced that the apocalypse was averted—and may indeed have only been postponed—Buiteboer tries to track down his friend Story Hunter, who has mysteriously disappeared and who “believes that one can never trap a story—it has to choose to reveal itself to you.” Story Hunter had been investigating a legend of a Ugandan tribe, the Bachwezi. Upon learning of their doom, they walk onto the burning Lake Mwitanzige, passing through a portal to heavenly realm Zep Tepi, ancient Egypt's “time of creation, when gods like Ra, Ptah, Thoth, Horus, and Osiris moved through the void.”

It's an act of cosmic rebellion against ancient mythological rulers who would inflict cataclysms upon the world. Waiting on the other side are chaos, constant flux, and the heavily armed *Naked Lunch* writer William Burroughs, who wants to teleport infiltrators back to earth so they can't enter heaven. As the author puts it, “it is all very confusing.”

*Coup d'État in the Land of Zep Tepi* is an avant-garde, experimental book where plot, dialogue, and character development are incidental—and where none of that is the point, anyway. The plot rambles along in a shaggy-dog way, with six different chapters containing “fragment” in the title.

The author explains—in his freewheeling, idiosyncratic way—that “the fragmentary segments of the report to follow below will prove, beyond a shadow of doubt, that all is not Kosher, Halaal, or even Vegan in the lands of Zep Tepi, heaven and earth.” Dialogue swings from having verve—“You guys are talking stinking primal mounds of kak tonight, I suppose”—to being purely expository.

The prose is lively and engaging. It crackles with energy and lines like “Several questions kamikaze their way into Hunter's view at the same time... This night is suddenly in overdrive.” Buiteboer has a well-developed voice. The writing is vaguely reminiscent of Tom Robbins—it's ornate, keyed up, irreverent, and bizarre. It can be humorous and self-referential, as well. Inconsistencies, such as those with the story hunter character's moniker, are somewhat distracting, though.

The author forwards a unique vision in *Coup d'État in the Land of Zep Tepi*, a work that would appeal to anyone interested in the apocalypse, Mayan doomsday predictions, and the mysteries of ancient mythology, or who is just searching for something strange and different to read.

JOSEPH S. PETE (January 23, 2017)

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