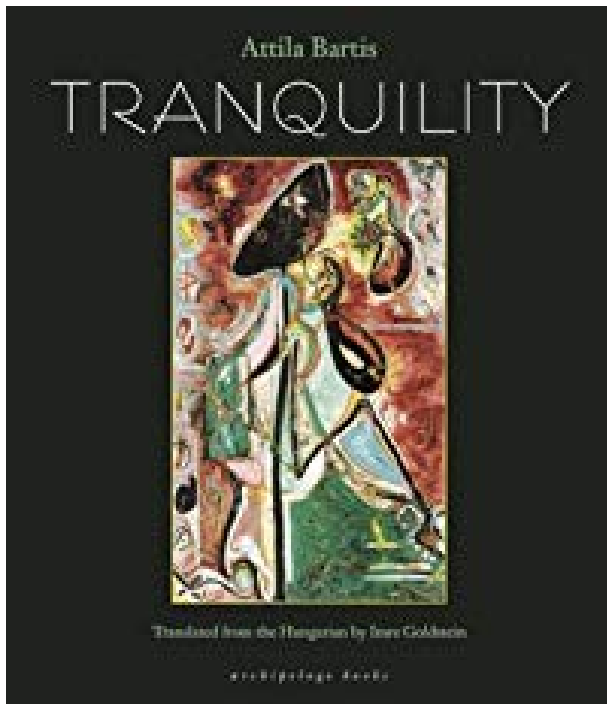


Tranquility



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Tranquility is a living seismograph of the internal quakes and ruptures of a mother and son trapped within an Oedipal nightmare amidst the suffocating totalitarian embrace of Communist Hungary. Andor Weér, a thirty-six-year-old writer, lives in a cramped apartment with his shut-in mother, Rebeka, who was once among the most celebrated stage actresses in Budapest. Unable to withstand her maniacal tyranny but afraid to leave her alone, their bitter interdependence spirals into a Sartrean hell of hatred, lies, and appeasement. Then Andor meets the beautiful and nurturing Eszter, a woman who seems to have no past, and they fall wildly in love at first sight. With a fulfilling life seemingly within reach for the first time, Andor decides that he is ready to bring Eszter home to meet Mother. Though Bartis's characters are unrepentantly neurotic and dressed in the blackest humor, his empathy for them is profound. A political farce of the highest ironic order, concluding that "freedom is a condition unsuitable for humans," Tranquility is ultimately, at its splanchnic core, a complex psychodrama turned inside out, revealing with visceral splendor the grotesque notion that there's nothing funnier than unhappiness.