

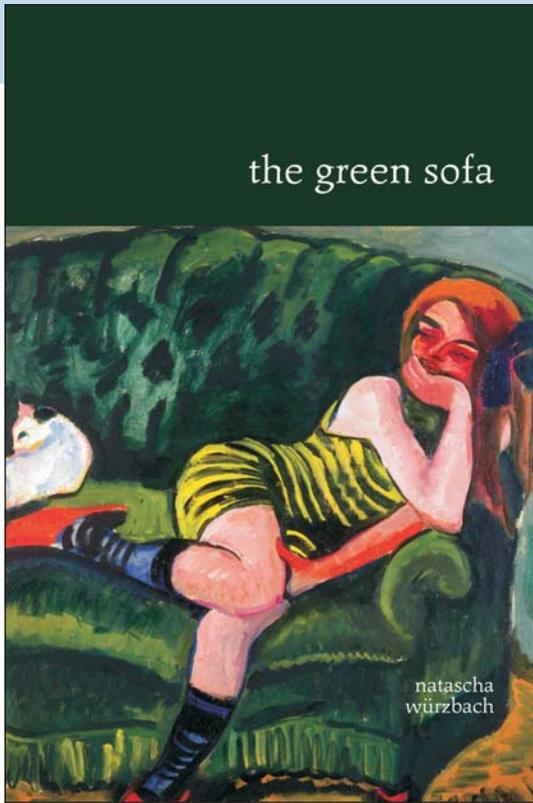
## New from Wilfrid Laurier University Press

### The Green Sofa

Natascha Würzbach

Raleigh Whiting, translator

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In heartbreaking detail, Natascha Würzbach recounts what it was like to grow up in 1930s Germany as the sensitive, lonely daughter of intellectual parents, on the run from the Nazi regime that her father openly criticized. Whether she is telling us about her family's attempt to conceal their Jewish origins, the unexpected gift of getting to live in the Bavarian countryside when she was very young, or the pain of finding (and losing) young love, Würzbach reveals herself to be a master storyteller as she recounts the violence of the Nazi regime in the everyday life of dissenting Germans.

— Julie Rak, Department of English and Film Studies, University of Alberta

Natascha Würzbach grew up an only child in an unconventional artistic household in wartime Germany. *The Green Sofa* covers her childhood and youth, from 1936 to 1956, offering a perspective on the everyday realities and historical developments in Germany through the war years and into the time of prosperity that followed.

Nazi political and racist policies deprived her scholarly father—co-founder of the German Nietzsche Society in 1919—of his livelihood in the culture division of Radio Bavaria. He took on the role of househusband and in so doing discovered the joys of caring for and educating his inquisitive preschool daughter. Her mother, an exponent of modern expressionist dance, supported the family through her work in an army service troupe that entertained German soldiers on the eastern front—a connection that probably saved the family from more than one nasty run-in with the Gestapo.

The eponymous green sofa is a cherished piece of furniture that accompanied the family from their home in Munich to their exile in the Bavarian countryside following the bombing of the city. Through carefree early days reading stories with her father and the years of family life in even the smallest of their refuges, it represents for the author a symbol of reassuring constancy amid change.

The book's epilogue presents a retrospective on Würzbach's father and his long-hidden struggle as an unrelenting anti-Nazi. To secure his family's precarious well-being through the Hitler years, he concealed, and even denied, his Jewish heritage.

**Natascha Würzbach** was born in Munich in 1933 and studied English and German literature, history, and philosophy at the universities of Munich, Freiburg, and Edinburgh. From 1975 to 1999 she was a professor of English literature at Cologne University. She has published on subjects ranging from balladry to modern literature and has published autobiographical stories as well as poems.

Translator **Raleigh Whiting** has taught German language, literature, and translation studies at the University of Alberta since the early 1970s. He has published articles on German literature since Romanticism and a book on naturalist drama (Johannes Schlaf). Since 2002 he has been the editor of *Seminar: A Journal of Germanic Studies*. His publications include translations of three nineteenth-century works.

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