

Read this:
***The Sage of Waterloo* by Leona Francombe**

This week's book review comes all the way from my sister, Amber Older, in Auckland, New Zealand. A friend of hers randomly picked up *The Sage of Waterloo* at the local library. He raved about it, so she checked it out – and loved it just as much. Here's what Amber has to say about this fascinating book:

I've been captivated by a short (218 pages), small (5×7 inches) “historical meditation” (my term) called *The Sage of Waterloo*. The novel recalls, reexamines and relives the fateful, blood-filled day of June 17-18, 1815, when the first shots of the Battle of Waterloo were fired at Hougoumont, a Belgian farmstead near the forsaken battleground. More than 6,000 men died over the course of that day, due in no small part to Napoleon's myopic and lethally misguided vision of power. But this is no ordinary recounting of history. This tale is told through the eyes (not to mention the highly-sensitive ears and feet) of William, a white rabbit who was raised at Hougoumont two hundred years after the bloody battle. With lyricism that no doubt reflects the author's other profession as a concert pianist, Leona Francombe skillfully conducts two quite different scores: a “symphony of hell” that brings to terrifying life the ravages of war caused by the hubris of power-hungry men and a quiet yet powerful incantation on how to seek, and find, peace in a post-war world. As imparted by Old Lavender, William's sagacious and supernaturally inclined grandmother, “A place of great conflict should bring on great reflection. If it doesn't, all might well have happened in vain.” It's not often you read a book that feels simultaneously earthy and ethereal; perhaps history should always be retold by a herd of erudite bunnies.

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