

A German officer in the Wehrmacht during the dying months of the Nazi occupation of Rome is not an obvious choice as a hero of crime fiction, but in Ben Pastor's *A Dark Song of Blood*, Major Martin Bora dispels all doubts. Handsome, unlucky in love, war-wounded, cultured and often insubordinate, Bora is ordered to solve three murders, including that of a cardinal. Occasionally supported by the uneasy Italian Inspector Sandro Guidi, Bora, dreaming of a war-free future, moves morosely among Italian society and the soon to be defeated German occupiers. Pastor writes with feeling and perception, and creates a wonderfully moody atmosphere. She deserves greater attention.