

10 Books from Holland

Frankfurt Book Fair Issue

Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

Autumn 2018

Frequently Asked Questions

10 Books from Holland? Who decides the contents?

Our editors. We want to showcase the best fiction from the Netherlands for our audience of literary publishers. Most titles have been published recently and have enjoyed good sales, excellent reviews and one or more literary awards or nominations. Though sometimes one of these factors is enough. Equally important is the question: 'Does it travel?' Our advisors talk to publishers from all over the world and while it is impossible to say with certainty which novels will travel where, we have the expertise to make an educated guess.

At book fairs, do you talk about these books exclusively?

While we like to discuss our catalogue, there are always other titles: books that have just appeared or are about to come out or books that just missed our selection. Our advisors read as much fiction as they can.

Do you work together with Dutch publishers and agents?

We keep each other informed about interest in titles and rights sales. When we commission a sample translation, we usually share the costs. However, we always make our own decisions, and remain completely independent.

How many books by one author will you support?

We can support one author with three books. If the author has changed publishing houses, previous titles are not counted.

Are all books in your brochure eligible for a grant?

Yes they are, with a maximum subsidy of 100% of the translation costs for classics and 70% for contemporary prose, based on the actual fee paid by the publisher.

Are books that aren't included in your brochure eligible?

As long as it's a good literary title, it probably is. We make our decisions based on three criteria: literary quality of the book, status of the publishing house and quality of the translator. You can always ask in advance if a book is eligible or not.

Can you help us find a translator?

Lists of experienced translators are provided by e-mail.

We want to work with somebody who is not on your list.

Then we require a sample translation of 20 pages and the translator's CV. If the translation is good, the translator will be added to our list. If the translation needs repair, we can make suggestions. If the translation is beyond repair, you are advised to hire somebody who is on our list.

How do we apply for a translation subsidy?

We need contracts with the rights holders and the translator, plus the application form. You can submit digitally from our website: <http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy>. Meetings are held six times a year, the dates are announced on our website.

Do you subsidise production costs?

This is possible in the case of editions of poetry, illustrated children's books or graphic novels. For regular fiction and non-fiction, we support translation costs only.

We would like to invite a Dutch author for a promotional visit.

If you organise a good programme and offer the author accommodation, we can cover the travel costs.

How to apply for the Amsterdam Fellowship.

Every September, we organise a fellowship (4 days) for publishers and editors. We do not have an application procedure, but you can always send us an e-mail stating your interest.

Individual Publisher's Visits

We host 8 to 10 publishers and editors per year on an individual basis. Usually, these are great if you already have one or more Dutch authors on your list and would like to see them, combined with a schedule of meetings.

What's Schwob?

Schwob.nl is a European network for forgotten or undiscovered books, established and maintained by translators, publishers and editors, researchers, readers and critics.

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Advisors Fiction



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Arnon Grunberg

Good Men

Brilliant absurdist chronicle of a hapless outsider's struggle to do the right thing

Arnon Grunberg's 14th novel charts the downfall of Geniek Janowski, a Polish-German firefighter doing his best to be a good father, husband, lover and colleague, only to fail on all fronts.

Geniek – his name is Polish shorthand for 'a clumsy person' – leads a seemingly unremarkable life with his wife Wen and his son Jurek in the sleepy Dutch province of Limburg, where everyone simply calls him 'The Pole' because they can't pronounce his name. He is the only foreigner and the only vegetarian at the fire station, yet to him the crew feels like a band of brothers.

When he discovers that the wife of his colleague Beckers is dying, The Pole is reminded of the role she played in his life following the death of his eldest son, Borys, a lonely lad who still soiled his pants at the age of twelve. The Pole bought an old pony as company for the boy and for a while it seemed to help. When Borys threw himself in front of a train, it was The Pole himself who cleared away his remains.

In his hour of need, the fire crew offered The Pole a helping hand by painting his house, while Beckers' wife provided consolation in the form of unorthodox sexual acts. Racked by guilt, The Pole

confessed the affair to his wife, and retreated to a monastery for a year, where he ended up living in the henhouse. On his return, he is allowed to rejoin the fire brigade, though his colleagues have their doubts ('he's like one of them Muslim fundamentalists'). His wife has had enough and walks out on him ('everything around you dies'). He books a trip to Ukraine with an agency called Love Over Borders and returns home to Limburg with the beautiful Yulia in tow. Happiness seems tantalisingly close but at a Christmas party at the fire station, when Yulia is assaulted by the crew and the attack is passed off as a joke, it becomes clear that The Pole was never one of them. In the end, Geniek heads off into the woods, leaving everyone and everything behind.

Grunberg has lost none of his edge in this acutely absurdist account of the powerlessness of human beings to alter their fate. Comfort, salvation, love and solidarity seem out of reach, at least in any conventional sense. In the world of *Good Men*, illusions about humanity and above all brotherhood will never prevail. Grunberg chronicles Geniek's crushing humiliation in a peerless style that defies any reader not to be moved by The Pole's fate.



Publishing details

Goede mannen (2018)
512 pp., 154,000 words

Rights

Nijgh & Van Ditmar
Jolijn Spooren
j.spooren@singeluitgeverijen.nl

Translated titles

Please see en.vertalingendatabase.nl

'Grief, comfort, fear and love: life's great questions are all played out in *Good Men*. In this seamless novel, Grunberg presents us with an ordinary, sympathetic guy lost in a turbulent existence.'
– *De Telegraaf*

'By the end, Grunberg has his readers exactly where he wants them: right there on the chopping block with his characters. Strange to read a novel about a firefighter, a life saver, in which no fires are fought and no one is saved. Very strange indeed, yet vintage Grunberg.'
– *Trouw*

'It's undeniable: from the very first page you are in the hands of a truly exceptional writer, one who dares to write with complete assurance about things no other writer would dream up.'
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

'Seldom has a novel left us feeling so unsettled.'
– *Knack*

Photo: Koos Breukel



Arnon Grunberg (b. 1971) debuted at the age of 23 with the novel *Blauwe maandagen* (Blue Mondays, 1994), a wry and humorous coming-of-age novel which brought him instant success. *Figuranten* (Silent Extras, 1997) and *Fantoompijn* (Phantom Pain, 2000) cemented his reputation among readers and critics alike as a bold new voice and a great writer. His extraordinarily prolific output also includes plays, essays and travel columns. A winner of several literary awards, Arnon Grunberg lives and works in New York. While researching *Goede mannen* (Good Men), he was embedded with a fire crew, stayed at a monastery and took a romance tour to Ukraine.

Jaap Robben

Summer Coat

Profoundly tender coming-of-age novel
about love found between brothers

In Jaap Robben's debut novel *Birk*, a boy is manipulated into taking his dead father's place. Now, in *Summer Coat*, Brian, the 13-year-old protagonist, also feels the crushing weight of an adult responsibility too much to bear as he is expected to care for his physically and mentally disabled brother Lucien for a whole summer.

Brian lives on a forgotten patch of no-man's land with his divorced father Maurice and two dogs, in a caravan they rent from a couple of shady characters. Brother Lucien, now 16, has been institutionalised for years but his care home is in dire need of renovation. The boys' mother has recently remarried and is on honeymoon, so the home asks Lucien's father to take him for the summer while the work is carried out. Maurice agrees when he finds out there's a generous weekly allowance to be had, but soon leaves Lucien to the tender mercies of his little brother.

To begin with Brian neglects his task. Leaving one of the dogs to look after Lucien, he tears off on his souped-up moped to impress Selma, an older girl who is also a patient at the care home. As a result Lucien spends hours lying in soiled nappies and ends up with severe sunburn. One of the dogs gobbles down Lucien's pills and dies the same night.

Maurice, who always has a deal on the go, is hardly ever around. Brian's only real support comes in the shape of Emile, a mysterious figure who has moved into one of the caravans on the site.

Flashbacks reveal the family's struggle to cope with Lucien: father exploits the situation for his own gain, mother abandons hope and Brian often resents the attention focused on his disabled brother. Yet as the adult world around the brothers turns grimmer, Brian moves closer to Lucien. He teaches him to walk and starts to notice what makes him smile, simple things like chucking bottles into the bottle bank. Slowly Brian discovers an urge to look out for his brother. When tensions at the caravan site come to a head, he makes a moving final pledge to Lucien: 'When I'm old enough, you can come and live with me. Promise. And you won't have to take those drugs anymore.'

Summer Coat is an honest, tender account of brotherly love in troubled circumstances. Like its predecessor *Birk*, the novel is sure to find an enthusiastic young adult audience. But its subtle yet unflinching examination of how people try and sometimes fail to cope with disability make this a coming-of-age novel that will resonate deeply with every reader.

Jaap Robben (b. 1984) is a writer, poet and theatre director. Since 2000 he has published several books of poems and stories for children and grown-ups, including *Twee vliegen* (Two Flies, 2004), *De nacht krekelt* (The Night is Full of Crickets, 2007), *Zullen we een bos beginnen?* (Shall We Start a Wood?, 2008, shortlisted for the Gouden Uil for Children's Literature), *De Zuurtjes* (The Sourballs, 2010) and *Als iemand ooit mijn botjes vindt* (If Anyone Finds My Bones, 2012). His widely acclaimed novel *Birk*, published in the UK and the US as *You Have Me to Love*, won the Dioraphte Prize, the ANV Debut Prize, and was voted Best Book of 2014 by Dutch booksellers. It has since been translated into four languages.



Publishing details
Zomervacht (2018)
312 pp., 64,682 words

Rights
De Geus
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Translated titles
Birk: Czech (Vysehrad), English (World Editions), German (Ars Vivendi), Turkish (Kahve).

Rights sold
English (World Editions)

'Robben's style is deceptively simple. You don't have to be an adult to read *Summer Coat*, yet Robben's imagery, subtle humour and surprising plot will connect with the most literate of readers. The novel gives a moving insight into a boyhood that gives pause for reflection.'
– *De Standaard*

On *Birk*:

'Form and content come together beautifully in a gripping tale of trust, betrayal, solidarity and adolescence.'
– *De Limburger*

'Jaap Robben handles delicate, dangerous material with subtlety and sympathy, but also with a visionary sense of truth that is masterly and unforgettable.'
– Colm Tóibín on *You Have Me to Love*

Photo: Charlie De Keersmaecker



Marente de Moor

Phon

A page-turning evocation of the resilience of Russian dreams and imaginings

Marente de Moor understands the art of storytelling like no other. In this dark psychological novel she explores the power of the imagination and gradually unearths the secrets buried deep in the memory of her protagonist, Nadja. As a young lab analyst, Nadja set off into the forests of Russia with her scientist husband, but now, in old age, the full extent of the loneliness that connects her to nature is making itself felt. It is a void she will fill with love and with stories.

Nadja longs for peace and stillness, for the company of the animals that roam the vast, deserted forests. The laboratory is standing empty, so too the old factory. Her husband Lev – a man who never feared anything – is now troubled by a mysterious sound heard only at night. He takes this as a sign that they must leave the forest but Nadja sees things differently. 'It's just the way things sound, a melancholy not found in any other country, because we have railways without end and a winter that refuses to yield and a bunch of other circumstances to make you howl and rust.'

The electricity has been cut off, the tap spouts water only intermittently, but Nadja remains undaunted. People disappear and she reckons that people have that right. Yet still the doubts creep in: am I the witch who has driven everyone away?

Memories from a year she would rather forget begin to surface, but Nadja spins her yarns and continues to believe in her own choices. Everyone filters the tales they want to tell, everyone has their own story: whether it's the threat of the bear, the all-conquering strength of a mother, or Flight MH17 being blown out of the skies above Ukraine.

Fear has to be warded off with words but when one day the great sound is heard no more, Nadja misses it. 'It's not the explanation I miss, it's the riddle.' Her children accuse her of walking away from problems. Her son Dimka stirs up a disastrous episode with the Dutch woman who once seduced Lev and turned her daughter Vera against her. But nothing and no one is about to deprive Nadja of her love for her husband, the natural world and the stories she feels compelled to tell.

De Moor displays a profound understanding and love of life in Russia, not least the 'dreams and imaginings of the common man.' As in her earlier work, the sheer joy of storytelling leaps from every page. *Phon* is a brooding yet salutary novel in the tradition of the Russian masters: vast emptiness, long nights of bitter cold, a deep connection with the animal world and countless glasses of vodka combine to make this an enigmatic and turbulent page-turner.



Publishing details

Foon (2018)
320 pp., 85,000 words

Rights

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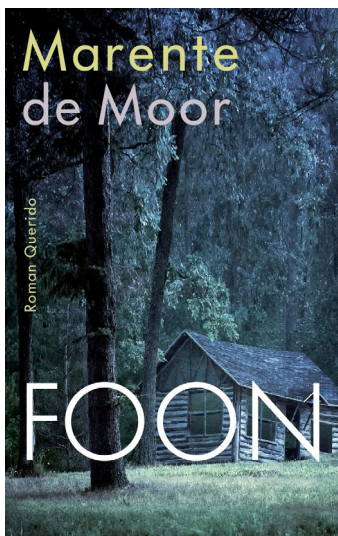
Translated titles

De Nederlandse maagd. German (Suhrkamp), English (World Editions), and in many other languages.
De overtreder. German (Suhrkamp).
Roundhay, tuinscène. German (Hanser, in preparation).

'Oh, those sentences of hers! They brilliantly conjure up the woodlands of Russia, as empty and forbidding as they are gloriously wild.' – NRC

'It all comes together in a tightly woven, satisfying dénouement (...) which resonates with the concentrated power of the opening chapters and highlights the finesse of De Moor's ingenious plot. *Phon* reveals itself to be an exceptional, richly layered novel.' – NRC

'Until you discover the truth behind it all, *Phon* is quite simply unput-downable.' – *de Volkskrant*



Marente de Moor (b. 1972) worked as a correspondent in Saint Petersburg for a number of years and wrote a book based on her experiences, *Peterburgse vertellingen* (Petersburg Stories), which was published in 1999. She made a successful debut as a novelist in 2007 with *De overtreder* (The Transgressor); the translation, *Amsterdam und zurück*, was well received in Germany too. For her second novel, *De Nederlandse maagd* ('The Dutch Maiden', 2010) De Moor was awarded the AKO Literature Prize 2011 and the European Union Prize for Literature 2014. In 2013, her third novel *Roundhay*, *The Garden Scene* was shortlisted for the Libris Prize for literature.

Photo: Eddo Hartman

Rinske Hillen

Dry Rot

A dazzling exposé of the family tensions and dark truths behind a crumbling façade

For centuries, the canalside residence of Keizersgracht 286 enjoyed a dubious reputation as Amsterdam's haunted house, a magnet for sinister conjecture. Twenty years ago, the building came crashing down when the foundations gave way. Rinske Hillen has chosen this ill-fated pile as the setting for the intense family drama at the heart of her prize-winning debut *Dry Rot*.

The house has been in the family for generations – the ancestors are buried in the garden – but the home behind the stately frontage is rapidly going to ruin. The foundations are rotting and there's a crack in the wall you can put your fist through. The owner Bram Wenksterman initially seems immune to impending disaster. The houses of Amsterdam subside, it's a fact of life. 'They may look upright, but expose the skeletons within those dignified shells and you would soon see how they cling to each other for support [...] how they drag each other down in their embrace. That's the way with houses, that's the way with people. It's the law of nature.'

Biologist and columnist Wenksterman, a man of few words, lacks the funds to have the foundations seen to. Besides, he has other things on his mind. His wife Veerle has been admitted to an asylum, and his daughter Amber has inexplicably abandoned her philosophy degree at

Cambridge and returned home to Keizersgracht. And then there is Ella, his lover and his wife's cousin, who is no longer prepared to settle for a role behind the scenes. Wenksterman's 55th birthday must be celebrated in style and she is determined to be the hostess at his side. In full view, out in the open.

But there are revelations that run deeper than the affair between Ella and Wenksterman. The house at Keizersgracht 286 has another secret to keep, a dark truth that little by little edges into the light. When the day of the party dawns, the silence of decades is unexpectedly broken.

Dry Rot is a dazzling novel, thanks in no small part to the trio of characters around whom the drama revolves. In Wenksterman, Amber and Ella, Hillen has created three beautifully rounded human beings, each with their own admirable qualities and unsightly flaws. We cannot help but identify with their aspirations, their doubts and their idiosyncrasies. This makes for relationships that pulse with life, and for conversations and trains of thought that seem entirely natural.

Hillen plays adroitly with our expectations, effortlessly ratcheting up the tension. The narrative bristles with thought-provoking observations yet the pace never flags as the plot sweeps towards its inevitable climax. An extraordinary debut.

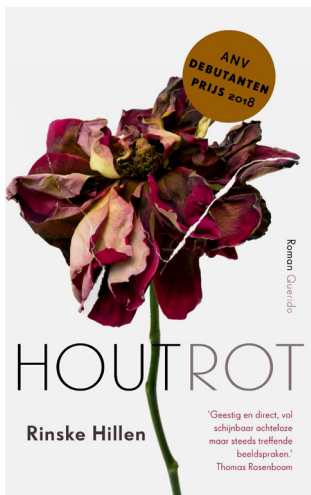


Publishing details

Houtrot (2017)
256 pp., 81,000 words

Rights

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Rinske Hillen (b. 1975) studied philosophy at Cambridge and Amsterdam, and law in Utrecht. Her first novel *Houtrot* (Dry Rot, 2017) won the ANV Award for Best Debut. www.rinskehillen.nl

'Countless sparkling observations testify to a genuine joy of writing.'
– Jury of the ANV Award

'With irrepressible force, Hillen draws you into her narrative.'
– *Haarlems Dagblad*

'Hillen piles on the tension and always stays two steps ahead (...) Key plot twists come as a complete surprise and never at the cost of disbelief.'
– *Het Parool*

Photo: Amaury Miller

Gerwin van der Werf

A Merciless Road

A gripping road novel that lays bare the anguish of a marriage on the rocks

Tiddo, the narrator of this tense and tautly constructed novel, decides to save his marriage by hiring a camper and touring Iceland with his wife and son. Setting out with the best of intentions, he not only puts his own life in danger but also the lives of his family. A chilling examination of how the will to do good can tear us apart.

A classic anti-hero who expects little from life, Tiddo still feels the need to seize one last opportunity to do the right thing. He and his wife Isa no longer make love. Following her last miscarriage, around eight years ago, the tenderness has seeped out of their marriage. With his son Jonathan, too, Tiddo has no real contact. Is it simply a quirk of adolescence or is there something more sinister behind the gruesome images Jonathan draws, day in day out?

Even before the journey begins, things start to unravel. Tiddo's mother asks him to come and see her before they leave: he arrives to find money and a letter on the kitchen table, but no trace of his mother. Tiddo keeps this discovery from Isa and a sense of foreboding sets in: this will not be the last blunder he makes.

Once the family is on the road, a row erupts about whether or not to pick up hitchhikers. Tiddo has visions of horror stories but eventually concedes. When a short while later they do stop to pick up a lone girl, Tiddo's worst nightmares seem about to be realised when a red-haired giant of a man climbs aboard the camper right behind her. Svein is a big, handsome American with Icelandic roots and with runes tattooed on his body.

For Tiddo, Svein's presence spells danger, but also brings flashes of salvation. Is there wisdom to be found in the stories told by their uninvited fellow traveller? A strange power in the symbols inked on his skin? Perhaps, but Tiddo is not about to sit back and do nothing while this primitive soul wins the trust of both his wife and his son.

The novel hurtles to a startling climax. Along the way, Van der Werf conjures up the breath-taking beauty of the Icelandic landscape, shares telling observations on tourism gone mad and above all evokes the everyday loneliness of a spent marriage – hands that forget to touch, eyes that no longer light up but look away resentfully.



Publishing details

Een onbarmhartig pad (2018)
232 pp., 56,000 words

Rights

Atlas Contact
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Gerwin van der Werf (b. 1969) is a musicologist, teacher and regular columnist for the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*. His novel *Wild* (2011) was longlisted for the Libris Literature Prize. *Een onbarmhartig pad* (A Merciless Road) is his fourth novel.

‘Compelling and thoroughly satisfying novel written in a gratifyingly assured style.’
– *Trouw*

‘The themes explored in *A Merciless Road* – a father on the edge, the classic anti-hero – spark favourable associations with Grunberg’s *Tirza*, Herman Koch at his best and even flashes of US TV smash *Breaking Bad*.’
– *Het Parool*

Photo: Fjodor Buis

Peter Zantingh

After Mattias

Restrained and intricate mosaic of mourning
by a writer of exceptional promise

Nine lives intersect in a more or less random fashion, touched in one way or another by the death of Mattias. As the novel begins, we are left in the dark as to what has happened. All we know is that a young man has died. Tracing his way expertly through a tangle of storylines, Peter Zantingh subtly shows how lives touch, diverge and fold around one another. Connections that are not immediately apparent suddenly swim into focus, triggering a surge of emotion. A novel about loss and grief, chance and fate, written with haunting musicality.

The facets of Mattias's life are unveiled through the stories told by nine different characters. For him life centres on music and flashes of incandescence. He lives carelessly, seldom seeing things through, but with a boundless enthusiasm that draws people in. His girlfriend Amber feels the emptiness he has left behind. The unfinished projects that used to exasperate her now symbolise what she has lost. Mattias played his favourite songs too loudly and sang along, but she longs for the irritation she once felt to replace the quiet his death has left her. She talks about his work at a booking office for folk, jazz and world music, and about the fanatical gaming

habit that saw him in Football Manager simulate his way fifty years into the future.

When another narrator, Quentin, took a bus trip with Amber and Mattias, he realised how their relationship worked. 'She was the one who sorted through the loose ends.' He sees the pitfalls inherent in their plan to start a coffee house called Playlists, where customers can enjoy a good cup of coffee while savouring their own painstakingly compiled selection of music. Quentin tries to blank out the death of his friend by running long and hard.

We see Mattias's grandparents, for whom marriage has become a matter of attrition, bickering on the sofa as they watch Netflix, a subscription Mattias gave them as a present. Then there's Issam, the roadie for the band, a fervent gamer who struck up a friendship with Mattias after his laptop was stolen. The rage and sorrow experienced by Mattias's mother as she tries to give her life new meaning by working with refugees. Chris, a blind runner who has Quentin as his guide.

One by one we grow closer to the people at the heart and on the margins of Mattias's life. Until this remarkably intricate and profoundly moving mosaic of a novel allows us to understand it all.



Publishing details

Na Mattias (2018)
200 pp., 40,500 words

Publisher

Das Mag
Daniël van der Meer
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www.dasmag.nl

Rights

Cossee
Stella Rieck
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www.cossee.com

Rights sold

German (Diogenes).



Peter Zantingh (b. 1983) is the author of the novels *Een uur en achttien minuten* (One Hour and Eighteen Minutes, 2011), shortlisted for the Dioraphte Award, and *De eerste maandag van de maand* (First Monday of the Month, 2014). He is also deputy editor-in-chief of the Saturday edition of daily newspaper *NRC*.

'In this novel of interwoven storylines, Zantingh once again proves himself a skilful writer with a warm and expansive empathy for misunderstood and emotionally flawed characters.'

– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

'*After Mattias* is a chain of subtle, psychological stories. Zantingh goes beyond family and friends to give a voice to people with more unexpected links to Mattias. They all come together to form a wonderful novel.'

– *Dagblad van het Noorden*

Photo: Koos Breukel

Mirthe van Doornik

Other People's Mothers

Two sisters bravely battle neglect in an unsettling, tenderly observed debut

In *Other People's Mothers*, Mirthe van Doornik tells the story of two sisters, Kine and Nico, left to fend for themselves by their mother and their absent father. Van Doornik's gripping debut spans the period from 1997 to 2014, with a narrative perspective that alternates between the two girls.

At the outset, Kine is 11 and Nico 14. They travel to school on the metro every morning, without a ticket. 'It's not worth the money,' their mother Nora insists. If they get caught, they have to talk their own way out of trouble. Acting, they call it, not lying.

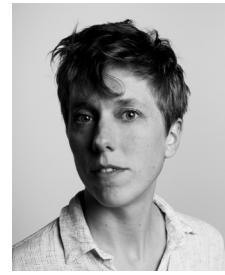
Nora – or Eleonora as she likes to be called in the conviction that she has Romany blood – is completely unpredictable, a lost soul. In Kine's eyes she starts the day small and warm, but is hard and cold by the time they come home in the evening. The girls have divided their mother into three: the mother who treats them to a slap-up Chinese meal when she gets lucky on the scratch cards, the mother who sees conspiracies around every corner, and the dangerous mother you had better steer clear of when she's drunk or stoned, who pleads with you and twists your emotions.

They can tell from the music playing when they get home what kind of mood Nora is in. 'Damage assessment's the first

thing that needs doing when we walk through that door.'

The girls learn to live with a mother who feels no sense of responsibility whatsoever. She splashes out on taxis but refuses to pay for a school trip or a calculator. When Nico makes a pretty show-box for an art contest and wins a weekend at Disneyland Paris, Nora has a seedy acquaintance drive them all there. As soon as they arrive, she shows her daughters where they can have breakfast and she and the driver disappear for a Parisian fling, without a backward glance.

The girls refuse to let life get them down and survive by straining to put everything in perspective. It's a strategy that takes its toll. At times they want nothing more than to be invisible and stay silent all day. Nico sees danger at every turn and, especially after 9/11, develops an unhealthy fascination for disasters and accidents. She is first to leave home but it's more of a struggle for her to build an independent life than it is for Kine, who finds a relationship and a way to care about her mother in spite of it all. Kine still has hope, Nico has lost hers. 'Nothing is going to change. No one thinks about us.' Ultimately it is Kine who prevents another mother entering their lives: a dead mother 'more present and more angry than all the other mothers put together.'



Publishing details

Moeders van anderen (2018)
288 pp., 74,000 words

Rights

Prometheus
Ronit Palache
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www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

'Van Doornik succeeds beautifully in giving her two protagonists their own voice, and shows an exceptionally rich gift for telling details and turns of phrase.'

– *Trouw*

'An impressive debut (...) Honest and mature. Bleakly comic, unsettling and yet tender.'

– *Dagblad van het Noorden*

'When writing about a troubled youth, there's always a temptation to pile on the misery. Happily for us, Mirthe van Doornik serves up the sorrow as casually as her protagonists experience it, sketching the everyday lives of two teenage girls as they muddle on through. She does this with such humour and lightness of touch that the tragedy hits all the harder.'

– *Sylvia Witteman*



In 2016 **Mirthe van Doornik** (b. 1982) won the Scheltema Writers' Academy winning talent award and the jury prize in the NPO writer's competition. www.mirthevandoornik.com

Photo: Martijn Gijsbertsen

Marga Minco

Bitter Herbs

An understated yet powerful story of immense sorrow

Marga Minco is the only member of her immediate family to have survived the Second World War. Her mother and father, her brother and his fiancée, her sister and her sister's husband were all deported to concentration camps. Her entire body of work is informed by these facts. 'Whether I want to or not, I always return to 1940-45. Those were the years that made the most impression on me.' This inability to let go of the past is the undeniable, overarching theme of Marga Minco's work.

Bitter Herbs, which dates from 1957, is Minco's debut novel. The title refers to a ritual which is part of the Jewish Seder, when unleavened bread and bitter herbs are eaten, partly to commemorate the exodus from Egypt, and partly to symbolise the hospitality offered to strangers. She calls her ninety-page novel 'a little chronicle', and in it she evokes her

memories from the war years: the evening the whole family gathered to sew Jewish stars onto their coats, the day the call-up for the 'work camp' arrived, a forbidden train trip, and the razzias which emptied whole streets.

As in the work of Primo Levi and Imre Kertész, it is not simply the facts that make Minco's work so impressive, but the manner in which those facts are presented. *Bitter Herbs* is written in a limpid, immediate, almost casual style. The scenes in the book are deceptively ordinary, rendered profoundly moving by the brutality of their context. Minco is never overly explicit; she understands the power of saying only what needs to be said. Her reminiscences leave a lasting impression because of the open sincerity of the writing and her refusal to resort to heightened literary prose to tell a story that is in itself poignant and dramatic.



Publishing details

Het bittere kruid (1957)
90 pp.

Rights

Prometheus
Ronit Palache
r.palache@pbo.nl
www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

Rights sold (a selection)

China (Sichuan People's Publishing House, 1995), Germany (Fischer Taschenbuch, 1995), France (Lattès, 1977), Israel (Salomon, 1986), Italy (La Giuntina, 2000), Brazil (Record, 2018), Spain (Libros del Asteroide, 2007), UK/US (Penguin, 1991) and other languages. Please see en.vertalingendatabase.nl for more details.



Marga Minco (b. 1920) grew up in a family of five in Breda. Unlike her sister, brother and parents, she went into hiding during World War II. In 1957 she made her debut as a writer with *Het bittere kruid* (*Bitter Herbs*), the laconic and devastating story of a young girl who escapes through a back door when her family is arrested, and ultimately discovers that she has lost everyone close to her. The book was a great success at home and abroad, with over 400,000 copies sold in the Netherlands alone. New work followed at irregular intervals: *De andere kant* (*The Other Side*, 1959), *Een leeg huis* (*An Empty House*, 1966), *De val* (*The Fall*, 1983) and *De glazen brug* (*The Glass Bridge*, 1986). In 2004, she published *Storing* (*Interference*), a collection of stories. The following year, Marga Minco was awarded the prestigious Constantijn Huygens Prize for her entire oeuvre.

'The family's incorrigible optimism enhances the nightmarish effect of this impressive little book. Moving and memorable.'
– *The Times Literary Supplement*

'This book deserves a wide audience.'
– *Die Zeit*

'Europe's catastrophe in microcosm.'
– *The Times*

Photo: Hans van Dijk / ANEFO

Anita Terpstra

Spark

A deadly pas de deux ignites the bold new thriller by breakthrough Dutch crime writer

The world of ballet might seem an improbable setting for a thriller. But in the hands of Anita Terpstra, the most refined of settings is soon shot through with betrayal and nail-biting suspense. In a world driven by beauty, ambition and athletic prowess, expect danger at every turn.

A fire breaks out and two victims are rushed to hospital: they are dancers and lovers Mischa de Kooning and Nikolaj Ivanov. After a distinguished career at the Royal Ballet, they have recently traded London for Amsterdam and a future with the Dutch National Ballet. Till the friends' house where they were staying goes up in flames.

The celebrated couple are admitted to Intensive Care with serious burns. The circumstances of the blaze are unclear but suspicious enough to arouse the interest of the police. As the investigation proceeds, we are drawn alternately into the lives of Mischa and Nikolaj. Mischa gradually awakes from her comatose state. A nurse at her bedside tells her she has survived a fire at her home. She wants to respond but can't.

By this time Nikolaj – loosely based on Sergei Polunin, the James Dean of contemporary dance – has already regained consciousness. He immediately points the blame at Mischa. 'If I could still use my hands, I would wrap them around her slender neck and happily squeeze the life out of her.' He receives a visit from Hans Waanders, a detective with one more case to solve before he retires. Nikolaj tells him that Mischa set fire to the place in an attempt to kill him. In the chapters that follow, told from Mischa's perspective, Nikolaj turns out to be a man who has a troubling relationship with the truth.

Switching smoothly between the two perspectives, Terpstra picks more and more holes in her protagonists' steadily unravelling stories. Both Nikolaj and Mischa turn out to be entirely unreliable narrators. What actually happened? Who started the fire and what motive could they have? What's the story behind the death of the couple's young daughter Natalja? And what about the mysterious demise of their friend and rival dancer Eliza? Terpstra deftly avoids answering these questions until the very end of the novel.



Publishing details

Vonk (2018)
286 pp., 74,394 words

Publisher

Cargo
Chris Kooi
c.kooi@debezigebij.nl

Rights

Marijke Nagtegaal
m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl
Uta Matten
u.matten@debezigebij.nl
www.debezigebij.nl

Translated titles

Anders [Different]: Germany (Blanvalet), France (Denoël).
Samen [Together]: Germany (Blanvalet).

Rights sold

German (Blanvalet).

'The novel's setting, the world of international ballet, never fails to convince. Terpstra excels at the dark side of beauty, the price paid for the applause, the erosion of moral values.'
– *Dagblad van het Noorden*

'Terpstra tellingly describes a relationship turned toxic, recounting both sides alternately. It's a coupling enmeshed in the claustrophobic world of the ballet company, of long days spent in unbearably close proximity. This suffocating intensity really comes to life.'
– *De Telegraaf*

Photo: Harry Cock



Anita Terpstra (b. 1974) studied journalism and art history. In 2009, she made her crime fiction debut with *Nachtvlicht* (Night Flight), nominated for the Shadow Prize and the Crimezone website's annual award. After *Dierbaar* (Beloved, 2011) and *Overmand* (Overpowered, 2013), her 2014 novel *Anders* (Different) took her popularity to a new level, a success consolidated two years later by *Samen* (Together, 2016), a dark story about the disappearance of four women.

Typex

Andy: A Factual Fairytale. The Life and Times of Andy Warhol

Masterly graphic biography of the artist
who designed the 20th century

This visual tour de force recounts how little Andrew Warhola went from being a sickly kid in the industrial town of Pittsburgh to Andy Warhol, the enfant terrible of the New York art world and global cultural superstar. Not content with creating a spectacular illustrated portrait of Warhol the artist and Warhol the man, *Typex* also delivers a stunning overview of pop culture in the 20th century.

Andy Warhol is hailed as the master of art as mass production, a man with a prescient awareness of the power of consumerism, who foresaw the modern obsession with glamour and sensation. Lauded and despised for his fixation on image, superficiality and fame, Warhol – coiner of the phrase ‘fifteen minutes of fame’ – emerges in this biography as a prophet of our celebrity-centric, selfie culture.

Andy consists of ten sections devoted to the distinct periods in Warhol’s life, each illustrated in a radically different style to reflect Warhol’s constant drive for renewal.

In his work and in his personal life, Warhol repeatedly broke free of styles, places and people: in the course of over 500 pages, we see him successively embrace pop art, flower power, punk and hip-hop only to move on and leave them behind.

Each chapter is preceded by twelve mini-biographies. Together they read like a Who’s Who of the 20th century, from Shirley Temple to Ayatollah Khomeini, from Lou Reed to Donald Trump. This overload of personalities stands in stark contrast to Warhol’s loneliness: *Typex* depicts him as a man who yearns for genuine contact yet who grows frightened when people come too close. This is highlighted by the touching rendition of the complex relationship between Warhol and his mother, in whom he never confided about his homosexuality.

Andy: A Factual Fairytale is a monumental graphic novel: multi-layered, funny and moving. It is also a visual spectacle, packed with sly nods and winks to the art and music of Warhol’s life and times.



Publishing details

Andy: Feitelijke Fictie. De vele levens van Andy Warhol (2018)
562 pp., 56,000 words

Rights

Casterman, Belgium
Jerome Baron,
jbaron@casterman.com
www.casterman.com

Rights sold

SelfMade Hero (English World Rights), Carlsen (Germany), Bao (Italy), Scratch (Netherlands), Penguin Random House (Spanish World Rights)



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Typex (b. 1962) is a Dutch comic book artist and illustrator. A graduate of the Amsterdam University of the Arts, he has furnished illustrations for a vast range of publications and cultural events, from the Crossing Border Festival, NRC and *Vrij Nederland*, to *Playboy*, *Oor* and *Nieuwe Revu*. He has also illustrated and written children’s books, and produced his own comic book magazine *Chorizo*. In 2013 his graphic novel *Rembrandt* was published to widespread acclaim and has since been translated into eight languages.

On Rembrandt:

‘Here is to the greatest Dutch artist... I mean the second greatest. First there was Rembrandt, then there was Typex!’
– Nick Cave

Photo: Ringel Goslinga

Successful Titles

Making a Splash on the International Literary Market

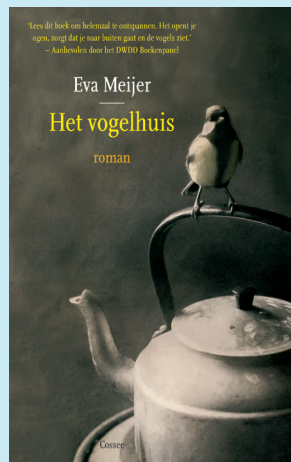
An amazing story about a woman's extraordinary relationship with birds

Eva Meijer
Bird Cottage

(Het vogelhuis)
10,000 copies sold
Winner BNG Bank
Literatuurprijs 2017
Shortlisted for the Libris
Literature Prize 2018

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(btb), Poland (Marginesy), Sweden
(Weyler Förlag), Turkey (Nebula)



'I tend my herd and flock by day so I have to read into the night; I cannot put it down.'
– Rosamund Young, author of
The Secret Life of Cows

'A celebration of a life spent immersed in nature.'
– *Town & Country*

Legendary debut novel that saw its international breakthrough 70 years after its original release

Gerard Reve
The Evenings

(De avonden)
300,000 copies sold

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Uta Matten, umatten@debezigebij.nl

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Slovakia (Európa), Spain (Acantilado),
Sweden (Ersatz), Turkey (Kedi
Yayınları), UK and US (Pushkin
Press), Vietnam (Taodan Books)

'Not only a masterpiece but a cornerstone manque of modern European literature. [...] Reve's sparkling collage of acute



observation, droll internal monologue and pitch-perfect dialogue keeps the reader breathless right through to the grand finale.'
– Tim Parks, *The Guardian*

Intense, poetic debut about the daughter in a God-fearing family coming to terms with the loss of her brother

Marieke Lucas Rijneveld

The Discomfort of the Evening

(De avond is ongemak)
40,000 copies sold

Rights: Hayo Deinum,
hdeinum@atlascontact.nl

Rights sold: World English (Faber & Faber), Germany (Suhrkamp), Italy (Nutrimenti), Korea (Gimm-Young)

'We would launch *The Discomfort of the Evening* as a hot literary debut, situating it alongside two celebrated Faber novels which also explore childhood and grieving: Eimear McBride's *A Girl is a Half-Formed Thing* and Max Porter's *Grief is the Thing with Feathers*.'

– Lee Brackstone from Faber & Faber



'The Discomfort of the Evening is dark, claustrophobic and of great literary prowess.'
– Sabine Erbrich from Suhrkamp

Classic war novella dissects the destructive force of human nature

Willem Frederik Hermans
An Untouched House

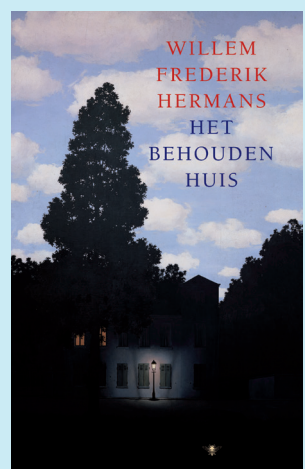
(Het behouden huis)

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Rights sold: Germany (Aufbau),
Italy (RCS Libri), UK (Pushkin Press),
US (Archipelago Books)

'It takes an hour or two to read, but *An Untouched House* is the kind of book that stays with you forever.'

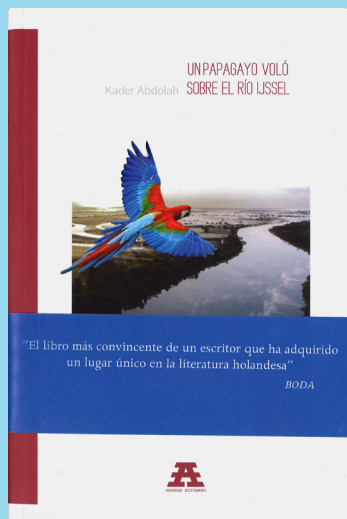
– *The Guardian*



'As disturbing and powerful as anything by Joseph Heller or Kurt Vonnegut.'
– Michel Faber

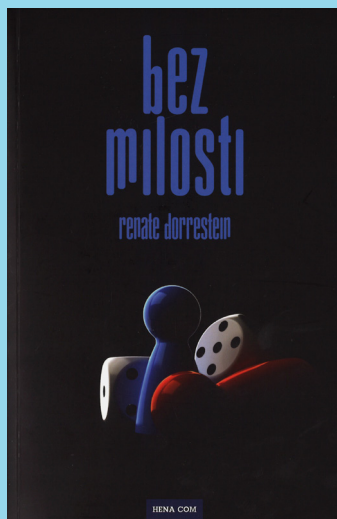
Recent Translations

This is a selection of recently published translations from the Dutch. For more information please go to our online database of translations en.vertalingendatabase.nl



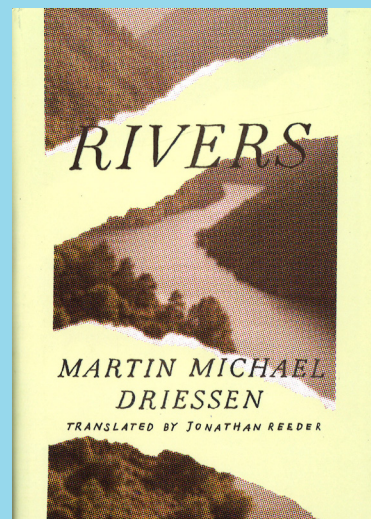
Kader Abdolah
Parrot Flew Over the IJssel

Translated into Spanish by Catalina Ginard Féron for Arango Editores, 2018.



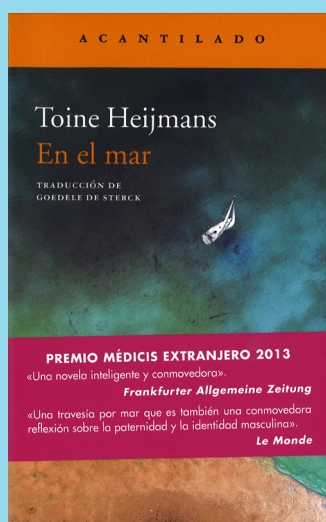
Renate Dorrestein
Without Mercy

Translated into Croatian by Maja Weikert for Hena Com, 2018.



Martin Michael Driessen
Rivers

Translated into English by Jonathan Reeder for AmazonCrossing, 2018.



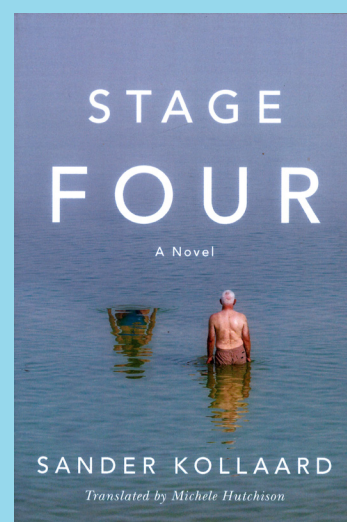
Toine Heijmans
At Sea

Translated into Spanish by Goedele de Sterck for Quaderns Crema S.A, 2018.



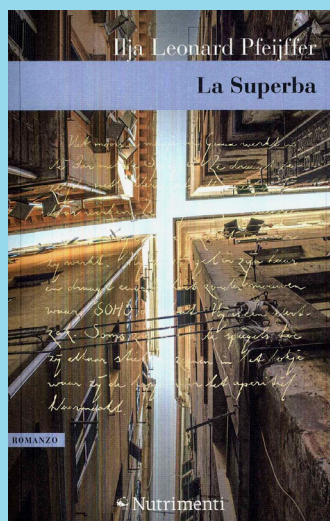
Dola de Jong
The Tree and the Vine

Translated into Swedish by Per Holmer for Nilsson Förlag, 2018.



Sander Kollaard
Stage Four

Translated into English by Michele Hutchison for AmazonCrossing, 2018.



Ilja Leonard Pfeijffer
La Superba

Translated into Italian by Claudia Cozzi for Nutrimenti, 2018.



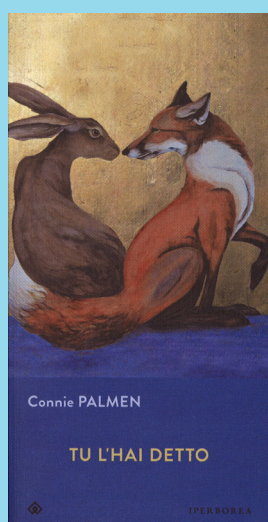
Josepha Mendels
I Told You So

Translated into German by Marlene Müller-Haas for Klaus Wagenbach, 2018.



Nescio
Amsterdam Stories

Translated into Danish by Miriam Boolsen for Jensen og Dalgard, 2018.



Connie Palmen
You Said It

Translated into Italian by Claudia Di Palermo and Claudia Cozzi for Iperborea, 2018.



Anita Terpstra
The Bride

Translated into German by Simone Schroth for Blanvalet, 2018.



Tommy Wieringa
A Beautiful Young Woman

Translated into Serbian by Ivana Šćepanović for Booka, 2018.

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Phon

Rinske Hillen
Dry Rot

Gerwin van der Werf
A Merciless Road

Peter Zantingh
After Mattias

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Other People's Mothers

Marga Minco
Bitter Herbs

Anita Terpstra
Spark

Typex
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