

Dutch Foundation  
for Literature

Spring 2023

NEW

DUTCH

FICTION



# QUESTIONS

This new edition of New Dutch Fiction once again presents a selection of books recently published in the Netherlands, books that have been included for their artistic and commercial success.

## Who makes the selection?

We want to showcase the best fiction from the Netherlands. Most titles have been published recently and have done very well in terms of reviews, sales and awards or nominations. Equally important is the question: 'Does it travel?' An advisory panel gives us advice and input on new fiction. The final selection is made by the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

## 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 three books by one author. If the author has changed foreign publishing house, 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 and with a maximum of 10,000 euros per translation grant.

## 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.

## Can you help us find a translator?

Lists of experienced translators are provided by e-mail. If you want to work with somebody who is not on our list, 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: [www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy](http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy). Meetings are held six times a year.

## 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.

## Can we 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: [www.letterenfonds.nl/en/travel-costs](http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/travel-costs)

# Gijs Wilbrink

## The Animals

### A riveting debut about motocross, mink farms and a legacy of dark family secrets

**A rural novel with Quentin Tarantino vibes: in this superb debut, Wilbrink juxtaposes city and country, animal activists and poachers, sinners and believers, idealists and crooks. Will Isa Keller manage to break away from her violent family and the region of her birth, a place governed by laws all of its own? Or will history repeat itself and fate intervene?**

'All I'm saying is, it seems to me things were going wrong with Tom Keller already when those two uncles of his took him out in the woods at night and had him do things a nine-year-old boy has no business doing yet.' Every village has its heroes and traumas. Tom Keller embodies both. He grows up in the most notorious family in the region, in a world defined by Sunday church services, annual funfairs, mink farms and other shady enterprises. From the moment he trades a poached rabbit for a moped, his fate is sealed: he will be an illustrious motocross rider. He soon becomes a local legend, the pride and joy of his town and his callous uncles, whom he thinks he'll finally escape when he is acquired by a British manager. Yet it's right at this breakthrough moment in his career that fate strikes and he has a bad fall. Only the narrator – still unidentified at this point – knows the details of his accident.

Years later, when Tom goes missing, his daughter Isabella is forced to return home. A student of art history in Utrecht, she spends her time with animal rights activists, punks and squatters, taking pains to hide her family history. To find her father, she has to face her past: not only her own drug addiction and her violent uncles, but also their wives, who remain silent or make excuses for them – one of whom turns out to be the narrator. Gradually Isa discovers what is hidden behind the 'dirty, disgusting fables' that are making the rounds about her family, and she finds out that the dogmatic activists in the progressive city aren't all that different from the conservative villagers.

*The Animals* is a breathtaking debut full of dramatic plot twists that drive the story forward, with Isa's moving coming-of-age as the red thread. With an ominous atmosphere, local dialect and vividly descriptive prose, set in a borderland as dark as it is true-to-life, this is the work of a gifted storyteller.



**'Gijs Wilbrink's *The Animals* is a magnificent debut. Right from the first sentence, the author plunges you deep into his world, with an allure that rivals the opening lines of Gabriel García Márquez's novels.'**

[de Volkskrant](#)

**'Wild, raw, gripping and wholly original in tone. Dazzling, breathless and riveting from the opening sentence, Wilbrink's prose grabs you by the collar and doesn't let go.'**

[Noordhollands Dagblad](#)

**'Wilbrink has situated his debut novel in the east of the Netherlands, on the German border. The muddy setting, as well as the book's cheek and flair, are reminiscent of Tommy Wieringa's *Joe Speedboat*.'**

[Trouw](#)

#### Publishing details

*De beesten* (2022)

400 pages

104,000 words

17,500 copies sold

Sample translation available

#### Publisher

Thomas Rap

Marijke Nagtegaal

[m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl](mailto:m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl)

Uta Matten

[u.matten@debezigebij.nl](mailto:u.matten@debezigebij.nl)

#### Rights sold

Germany (Ullstein Verlag), Spain (Bunker Books).

#### Gijs Wilbrink

(b. 1984) is a writer, musician and podcaster. He studied interactive media, toured in the Netherlands and abroad as the front man of the band Tenement Kids, and presents the podcast *Nooit Gezien* (Never Seen It), about film classics. *The Animals* is his debut novel, which was received to critical acclaim, won the 2022 C.C.S. Crone Stipendium Prize and was shortlisted for the 2023 Bookstore Prize.

Photo: Keke Keukelaar



# Ananda Serné

## Night Bloomers

### Audacious debut about a young woman looking for rest in a sleepless world

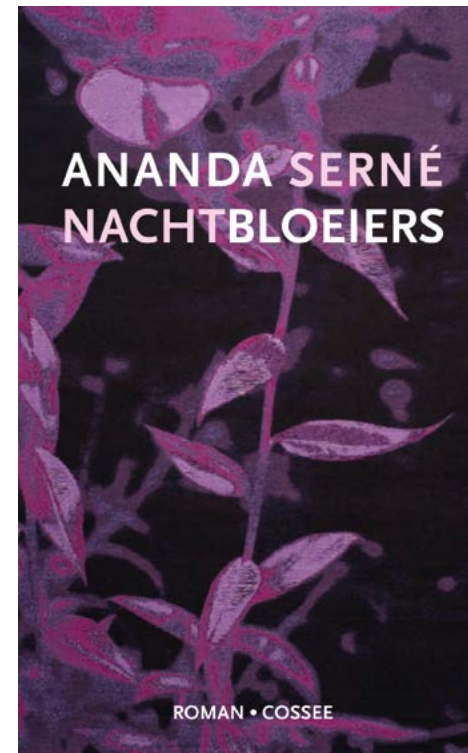
Ananda Serné's *Night Bloomers* is a captivating, funny and original debut about the relationship between people and their surroundings. She describes a near future in which many people are suffering from insomnia, one of the afflictions of a late capitalist society in which screens constantly seduce people into consuming more.

Eliza is a Dutch woman working at the Institute for Insomnia in Stavanger. After breaking up with Andreas, her supervisor at the Institute, she moves into an empty, echoing apartment. In her spare time she works on a research proposal about the correlation between insomnia and people's choice of partner, but she can't seem to get further than the opening paragraph. She has a hard time getting settled in Norway. Her love life is floundering, the people seem gruff and offish and her family is far away. Ever since her father, a sailor, died by suicide, she has felt adrift, like she has lost her anchor in the world.

*Night Bloomers* is set in a near future where everyone suffers from insomnia and uses sleep drops every night. In Norway, sleep watchers pick people who look exhausted up off the streets and take them to slumber clinics. Why the government has established these clinics is unclear – is it to get the population

fit again as soon as possible? Eliza isn't sleeping well either. She needs more and more calming drops to be able to get to sleep; on her doctor's advice, she starts keeping a sleep diary. What follows is Eliza's attempt to find stability and figure out how to live her life in a chaotic, rapidly changing world. She starts training to be a sleep watcher and, in an effort to become more rooted in her surroundings, plants a garden full of night bloomers: flowers that only unfurl their petals at night.

Ananda Serné deftly combines prose, photos, essays and passages from Eliza's sleep diary into an exciting novel about a woman in search of herself. In understated, witty prose she offers a critique of 21st-century capitalist society, where rest is seen as an irksome pause from consumption. *Night Bloomers* is a captivating novel even for those of us who don't suffer from insomnia.



**'Serné's prose is lucid (...) The dialogues are strong. The novel is also witty (...) The story is interspersed with Eliza's attempts to get a handle on the situation: notes, a sleep diary, photos, observations, all vibrant and captivating despite her exhaustion.'**

NRC

**'In understated prose, Serné peppers her febrile novel with bone-dry humour as well as facts from the world of sleep science, biological anecdotes and references to art and literature (...) Gradually this eerie debut takes on a Murakami-esque atmosphere.'**

De Morgen

Publishing details  
*Nachtbloeiers* (2022)  
224 pages  
37,700 words  
Sample translation available

Publisher  
Cossee  
Stella Rieck  
rieck@cossee.com

Ananda Serné  
(b. 1988) divides her time between the Netherlands and Norway, where she works as a writer and visual artist. She obtained an MA in Fine Art from Iceland University of the Arts. Her short stories have appeared in literary magazines and her art has been exhibited in museums all over the world. *Night Bloomers* is her debut novel and has been longlisted for the 2023 Libris Literature Prize.

Photo: Irwan Droog



# Peter Zantingh In the Meantime

## Beautiful novel about parenting in the era of climate change and the choice between head and heart

**In a moving and layered novel, Peter Zantingh explores the key issue of our time: is it unconscionable to fulfil your desire to have children in a world that's at risk of becoming unlivable? With his precise prose and compassionate eye, this author transforms a major dilemma into an intimate human story.**

Robin, a young father, is on a train to see his wife, who is in Germany for work. Tess is an illustrator of children's books and incorporates details from their life into her work. In her latest book, Robin notices something that worries him. Has she made a decision about their future without letting him know? He decides to follow her to Germany with their three-year-old, Mats.

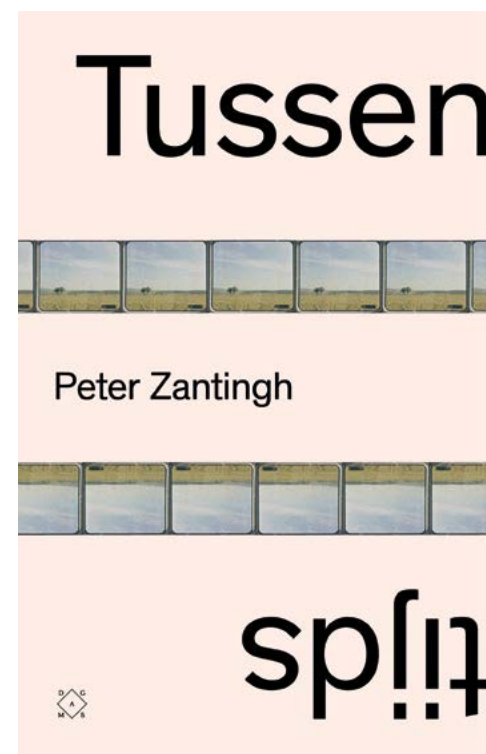
It's a summer of catastrophes. Rivers burst their banks, one heat record after the other is broken. As a landscape of parched farmland and flooded homes passes by outside Robin's window, he reflects on his life. He grieves his father, who is suffering from Alzheimer's, and grows melancholy about how fast Mats is growing up and how quickly time is passing. He worries about a natural world gone haywire and about Tess, who suspects she might be infertile.

Her desire to have children is juxtaposed with his doubt. 'A flood was coming and we had pushed new life out onto the

water, like Moses in the wrong story from the Bible.' Gradually the reader starts to notice that Mats is sitting next to Robin in the train car one moment but seems to be absent the next. Does the boy really exist? Or is he only there in his parents' imaginations, a vision of the future come to life, a 'radio signal from later on'?

The touching intimacy between father and son and beautiful moments of real joy and wonder keep the reader in the dark for a long time, until an astonishing denouement, when all the pieces of the puzzle fall into place.

*In the Meantime* is an ingeniously conceived novel about being a father, dealing with insecurity, fear of loss and the desire to maintain control as life barrels on.



***'In the Meantime is a scintillating novel, thanks mainly to its form. The moving ending takes you by surprise, but on rereading (which you'll want to do as soon as you reach the final page) you'll find the pieces were all carefully put in place.'***

**NRC**

***'In the Meantime raises questions about being a parent in times of climate change. With restraint and slight melancholy, a father looks back on his choices.'***

**de Volkskrant**

***'An accomplished, layered novel. Even more impressive than his play with existential questions is how Zantingh captures the father's love and wonder at seeing his son grow up.'***

**Het Parool**

Publishing details  
*Tussentijds* (2022)  
175 pages  
32,000 words  
Sample translation available

Publisher  
Das Mag  
Daniël van der Meer  
daniel@dasmag.nl

Rights  
Sebes & Bisseling  
Willem Bisseling and Paul Sebes  
bisseling@sebes.nl; sebes@sebes.nl

Rights sold  
Germany (Diogenes)

Translated titles  
*Nach Mattias* (After Mattias),  
Germany: Diogenes, 2020.

Peter Zantingh  
(b. 1983) is a writer of fiction and non-fiction and an editor of the weekend edition of *NRC*. He debuted in 2011 with *Een uur en achttien minuten* (One Hour and Eighteen Minutes), which was nominated for the Dioraphte, a literary prize for the best young adult novel. The novel *Na Mattias* (After Mattias, 2018) was a modest bestseller in Germany. His recent experience of becoming a father inspired *In the Meantime*, which has been shortlisted for the 2023 Libris Literature Prize.

Photo: Yara Jimmink



# Vonne van der Meer

## Personal Injury

### How much is an unlived life worth?

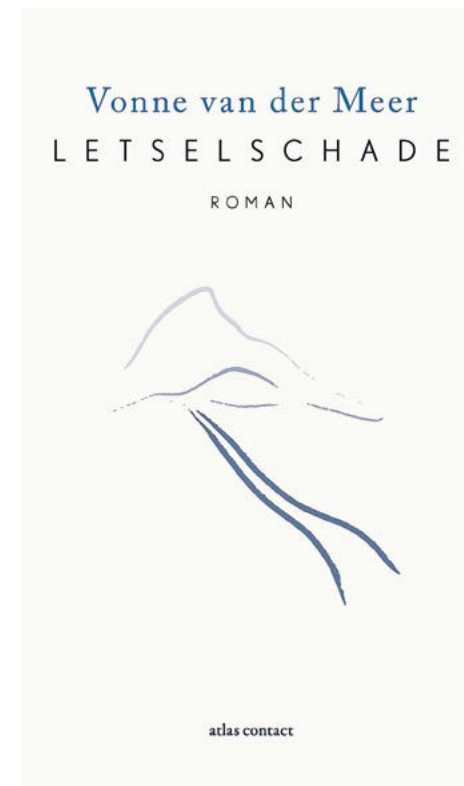
A young woman ends up in a wheelchair due to a manufacturing defect in her skis. Her lawyer pursues the highest possible compensation. It's a straightforward conceit that Vonne van der Meer takes into an unexpected direction. In *Personal Injury*, the way we see ourself clashes with the view of outsiders. Who or what determines the value of an unlived life?

Lucia Terbrugge, age 23, is recovering in a luxurious rehabilitation center by the sea. After a skiing accident she has become paraplegic and will never walk again. Her parents enlist the help of Anton Palthe, a personal injury lawyer on the brink of retirement, who wants to demand an extremely high compensation figure. With a doggedness that's in part an effort to distract himself from his lonely life as a widower, he sets out in his compensation claim how Lucia's past as a law student and the child of well-to-do academics was a guarantee for a bright future that's been stolen from her. It is Lucia's social capital that determines the amount of the injury claim.

While her friends go out to bars, have flings and cram for their exams, Lucia is stuck in her wheelchair listening to the kinds of stories in which she used to play a leading role. She sees less and less of her friends, who feel guilty telling Lucia

about things she'll never be able to do again. The only person she can confide in is Ferry, who is in the same situation. But where Lucia is able to recover in a swanky rehab center, Ferry is stuck in his mom's no-frills apartment.

As the lawyer reads his report to Lucia, she reflects on her life and comes to completely different conclusions about her imagined future. She pushes back against this glamorous version of herself and starts rewriting her compensation claim, taking responsibility for her new life. The narration alternates between Lucia and Anton, in compelling and wholly natural prose. Both characters take back control over their own lives. Vonne van der Meer skilfully combines their memorable voices into a gripping, layered and entirely credible novel.



**'Personal Injury shows how one decision can have far-reaching consequences (...) This book has both literary and moral merit. It's a refreshing message in a time when victimhood and finger-pointing seem to be all the rage. Personal Injury makes a case for accepting the vagaries of life.'**

[de Volkskrant](#)

**'Writing about serious issues in a light-hearted, almost laconic tone is a rare skill, but Vonne van der Meer has it down to a T (...) This book, with its simple but elegant design, is a real gem.'**

[Limburgs Dagblad](#)

**'A sparkling novella that keeps surprising right through to the end.'**

[HP/De Tijd](#)

Publishing details  
*Letselschade* (2022)  
108 pages  
25,384 words  
Sample translation available

Publisher  
Atlas Contact  
Hayo Deinum  
hdeinum@atlascontact.nl

Translated titles  
*Les invités de l'île* (Island Guests):  
France (Héloïse d'Ormesson 2005),  
Germany (Kiepenheuer, 2001), Serbia  
(Prometej, 2003), Spain (Maeva, 2004).

Vonne van der Meer  
(b. 1952) has written fourteen novels, several short story collections, novellas and plays. The novel *Eilandgasten* (Island Guests, 1999) and the two sequels *De avondboot* (The Evening Boat, 2001) and *Laatste seizoen* (Last Season, 2002) introduced her to a large audience. She has received widespread acclaim for her lightness of tone and her vividly drawn characters. *Personal Injury*, too, has been very well-received by the press.

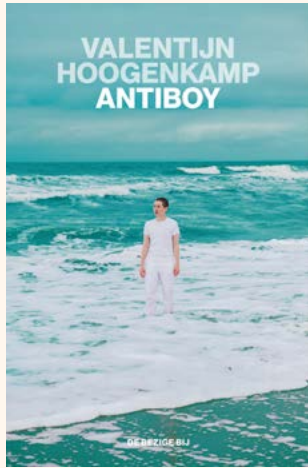
Photo: Annaleen Louwes



# SHORT ROUSING BOOKS ON GENDER AND SEXUALITY

## Valentijn Hoogenkamp **Antiboy**

A coming-of-gender story about loss and finding freedom in change



### Publishing details

*Antiboy* (2022)  
107 pages  
16,877 words  
Sample translation available

### Publisher

De Bezige Bij  
Marijke Nagtegaal  
m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl  
Uta Matten  
u.matten@debezigebij.nl

### Translated titles

*Ich und Louis Claus* (Het aanbidden van Louis Claus): Germany (Atlantik Verlag, 2023).

*Antiboy* takes place at the messy intersection between gender and orientation, gender roles and relationships. When Valentijn, formerly Helena, has to undergo a mastectomy because of a gene defect, he takes the decision not to have implants and adopts an in-between identity that feels more natural. He discards his wardrobe of women's clothes, even the perfect dress his mother was so fond of, and shaves his head. But all of this causes friction, not only are the doctors stumped, but friends, family and lovers

**'The lyrical passages and Hoogenkamp's eye for strange details make reading this at times painful distressing story, a blistering literary experience.'**

De Standaard

**'This book is much more than just a tell-all memoir: it's first and foremost a literary work, deftly constructed, with vivid and accomplished prose.'**

de Volkskrant

too. His trans ex helps him feeling more comfortable in his new guise – not a girl, not a boy but an anti-boy – and his boyfriend draws away from the relationship.

Surrounded by grief and loss, *Antiboy* searches for the ultimate freedom to be allowed to be himself and tries to rebuild relationships with those around him. This short, well-written book about outwardly adopting a new, but truer, identity is poignant without ever being sentimental.

### Valentijn Hoogenkamp

(b. 1986) debuted in 2021 to great critical acclaim with the novel *Het aanbidden van Louis Claus* (Adoring Louis Claus). Furthermore he has written works of theatre and performed poetry at cultural festivals.

Photo: Sanja Marusic



## Bregje Hofstede **December**

Pornographic pastiche of a study into the female orgasm

### DECEMBER



Bregje Hofstede

### Publishing details

*December. Vingeroefening in orgastische gelijkheid* (2022)  
73 pages  
9,596 words  
Sample translation available

### Publisher

Das Mag  
Daniël van der Meer  
daniel@dasmag.nl

### Rights

Cossee  
Stella Rieck  
rieck@cossee.com

In this remarkable novella, anthropology student Helena de Rover runs into two women in the woods. One is hanging by the arms from a tree as the other goes down on her. It sparks her curiosity as a researcher. She learns that the women belong to a commune where they are learning how to be able to come in all possible circumstances. It might sound tongue-in-cheek, but the undertone of this book is completely serious. *December* is a plea for female freedom, and sexual freedom in particular.

Helena finds out through empirical investigation that

**'A feast for the eyes and senses. Hofstede shatters all the stereotypes surrounding female sexuality.'**

Actor and playwright  
Joy Delima

**'A novella to make your ears turn pink (...) All in all, *December* not only seeks to amuse and titillate – it also aims to make you think.'**

Trouw

she's always been much too focused on turning her male sex partners on. But what desires burn inside of her? With humour, sexiness and vulnerability, Hofstede shows herself to be both a sharp observer and a gifted writer.

### Bregje Hofstede

(b. 1988) is more than an up-and-coming talent at this point in her career. In 2019, her second novel, *Drift (Drive)*, was shortlisted for the Libris Literature Prize. With her works of literary non-fiction, *De herontdekking van het lichaam – over de burnout* (The Rediscovery of the Body – On Burnout) and *Slaap vatten* (Catching Sleep), she found a wholly individual way to talk about the relevant topics for her generation.

Photo: Willemieke Kars



# Arthur Japin

## What Silence Wants

### A compelling historical novel about the desire to be yourself

After *Kolya*, about the composer Tchaikovsky, and *Mrs Degas*, Arthur Japin once again takes his readers back to the nineteenth century. *What Silence Wants* is a paean to Anna Witsen, a singer torn between her art and the mores of her time. 'The story of a woman. How she went in search of her voice, was forced into silence, but in the end made herself heard.'

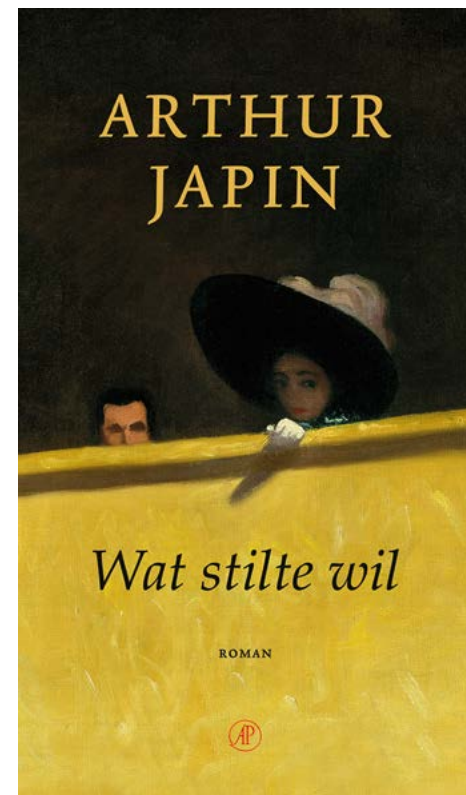
Anna Witsen grows up in an affluent family in Amsterdam. Singing is her passion, but for someone from her milieu a woman pursuing a career as a singer is inconceivable. Her father, though a great lover of the arts, only allows her to use her beautiful voice at home. It's the late nineteenth century – a time when women are supposed to be wives and mothers and can only appear in public with a male chaperone.

Things are completely different for her brother Willem, who by dint of his gender is given every opportunity to develop his talent as an artist. He and his friends form a collective of iconoclastic writers, painters and composers who seek to usher in a new era in art and literature. Staid bourgeois morality is to make way for fire and passion. In their hunger for freedom and innovation, Anna recognises her own desire to be independent and

free herself from the stifling straitjacket of her family's expectations.

There are more changes afoot: factory workers are in revolt, the women's movement is on the rise and the new concert hall is set to breathe new life into the musical scene in the Dutch capital. It seems to be the dawn of a new era, which gives Anna the courage to go her own way in music and in love. But when she is admitted to the Conservatory of Music, she realises her family's tentacles reach further than she thought. Her father and sister feel that Anna needs to be put in her place and hope that having her admitted to an asylum will bring her back to her senses. In the end her determination to be in charge of her own fate is stronger than life itself.

In *What Silence Wants*, Arthur Japin recounts the tragic story of Anna Witsen (1855-1889), a real-life historical figure whose ambitions and rebellious nature ultimately lead to her downfall – a woman cut from the same cloth as Emma Bovary, Anna Karenina and Eline Vere. Her struggle also inspired Frederik van Eeden's *Van de koele meren des doods* (The Cool Lakes of Death), a classic of Dutch literature. For Japin, Anna represents all the women who aren't allowed to be who they want to be.



**'Arthur Japin has written a sublime 19th-century novel, not just in theme, but also in structure, style and even in his choice of words.'**

Susan Smit

**'A beautiful book. (...) Japin paints a moving portrait of a talented, tormented woman.'**

Friesch Dagblad

**'What Silence Wants offers lucid historical insight and a beautiful portrait of a woman who never got the chance to be who she wanted to be.'**

Gooi- en Eemlander

#### Publishing details

*Wat stilte wil* (2022)

336 pages

81,000 words

Sample translation available

#### Publisher

Arbeiderspers

Martijn Prins

m.prins@singeluitgeverijen.nl

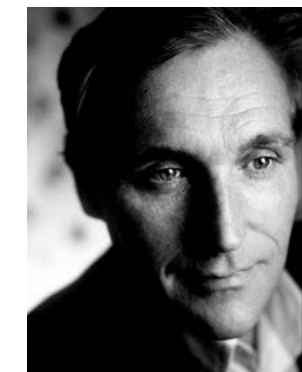
#### Selected translated titles

*Madame Degas* (Mrs Degas): Italy (Ugo Guanda, 2022), Czech Republic (Argo, 2021), *O hohem com asas* (The Winged Man): Brazil (Planeto do Brasil, 2016).

#### Arthur Japin

(b. 1956) has written for the stage as well as for radio, film and television. His breakthrough came in 1997 with the novel *De zwarte met het witte hart* (The Two Hearts of Kwasi Boachi), which sold over 150,000 copies and was awarded several prizes. *Een schitterend gebrek* (In Lucia's Eyes) won him the Libris Literature Prize in 2004. His other great historical novels – *Someone Found* and *Vaslav* – were also worldwide successes. His books have sold more than one and a half million copies in the Netherlands alone and have been published in more than twenty languages. *What Silence Wants* has been on the Dutch bestseller list since its publication and has so far sold over 55,000 copies.

Photo: Corbino





# Anton Valens

## A Wagon Full of Devils

### An absurdist novella about the irresistible urge to create art and the fear of failure

Anton Valens is the author of a small, but finely wrought body of work centred on antiheroes and their constant struggles with life. In the posthumously published novella *A Wagon Full of Devils* he lampoons the pretentious art world while at the same time showing how much beauty there is to be found in things other people tend to dismiss as banal or insignificant.

‘Somewhere in this impenetrable mist, Stanley and I had grown close, but the exact circumstances that set this process in motion, which, incidentally, progressed at a tectonic pace, can no longer be ascertained.’ The two men in the novella *A Wagon Full of Devils* have been friends for almost a quarter of a century. Neither of them has a family, nor have they been particularly successful in their careers. The narrator is an artist who has worked at a succession of odd jobs. The other man is Stanley, a dancer and the caretaker of a squat called Breeding Ground which he is trying to keep safe from developers and the local government. He is registered with social services as being a ‘Dancing Activities Coordinator’.

But it turns out Stanley has harboured dreams all his life of making it as a singer. After secretly honing his craft for years, he is ready to venture into the

limelight. He considers a passage in the *I Ching* about ‘a wagon full of devils’ to be a nudge from the universe: the time is ripe for a solo performance at the Breeding Ground. Stanley tries to enlist the help of the narrator, who is to be his lighting technician, doorman, tea server, photographer of pillbugs (the pictures are to form the backdrop to the performance) and, above all, provider of moral support. The narrator agrees to help, intrigued by Stanley’s creative enterprise: ‘The focus he brought to the task frightened me but also fascinated me. An *unsinging*, I thought to myself: it was as if he was giving birth to the song while strangling it at the same time, moaning and pushing, huffing and puffing.’

What follows is a series of hilarious performances by an inimitable – and unintelligible – singer, as his humble assistant does his best to make the evenings run smoothly. Few people turn up and they respond with bewilderment and heated debate, and yet somehow Stanley’s performance is a success.



**‘A book that can be considered one of his best. Uncompromising, remarkably original writing with heart and urgency.’**

NRC

**‘Valens excelled at creating characters with frayed edges, tortured men in the cul-de-sac we call “life” (...) Witty, slightly caricatural and poignant.’**

de Volkskrant

**‘Valens’ small yet accomplished oeuvre is full of absurd projects undertaken with great seriousness (...) Valens’ baroque, deeply funny prose shows how these valiant attempts fail spectacularly.’**

Elsevier

Publishing details  
*Een wagon vol duivels* (2022)  
112 pages  
21,000 words  
Sample translation available

Publisher  
Atlas Contact  
Hayo Deinum  
hdeinum@atlascontact.nl

Translated titles  
*Fisch* (Fish): Germany (Maren Schürmann, 2011), France (Actes Sud, 2014). *Homme de ménage* (Master of Hygiene): France (Actes Sud, 2010).

Anton Valens  
(1964-2021) was both an artist and a writer. His books were nominated many times and received various awards. He came to be a striking voice in Dutch letters who created a wholly individual literary universe, filled with plodding men who can barely cope with life, described with empathy and humour. Whether it be the sombre home help in his debut *Meester in de hygiëne* (Master of Hygiene, 2004), the impoverished artist from the novella *Vis* (Fish, 2009) or the self-help group of letter-phobics who read each other’s mail under the motto ‘a letter shared is a letter halved’ from *Het boek ONT* (Man & Post, 2013): with deft prose, cheerful irony and compassion Valens transforms people who live with frustrated ambitions on the margins of society into moving, vividly drawn characters.

Photo: Sander Steeman



# Mathijs Deen

## The Diver

### Second Wadden Sea thriller with the eccentric inspector Liewe Cupido

At the request of his German publisher, Mare, Mathijs Deen – known for his books on the Wadden Sea and the Rhine – wrote his successful thriller *The Dutchman*. Now there is a second book about Dutch-German border region detective, Inspector Liewe Cupido. Like *The Dutchman*, *The Diver* is largely set at sea, with divers who loot shipwrecks playing a major role.

When the wreck of the Hanne, a small freighter that went down in a south-westerly storm in 1950, is discovered by chance, as well as a million euros worth of copper it is also found to contain the remains of a diver – hands folded, wrists handcuffed and the keys hung just beyond his reach. Inspector Cupido's investigation leads to a diving club on Terschelling island, a burglary in a house on the German island of Föhr in the Wadden Sea and a family drama in Wilhelmshaven. The closer he comes to the perpetrator, the deeper he finds himself entangled in a confronting case involving fathers and sons who do everything to protect each other. It stirs up memories of his own childhood, blighted by a frequently absent father who worked on a fishing boat and died at sea.

Deen once again combines a riveting story with his detailed knowledge of the Wadden Sea, impressing the reader with

stunning descriptions of the water and true-to-life characters. Many will have a hard time saying goodbye to Inspector Cupido when they reach the end. Luckily, we know the third book in the series is on its way. Also, Liewe Cupido's adventures are being made into a TV show, a joint production between the Netherlands and Germany.



On *The Dutchman*:

**'With inspector Liewe Cupido, a new iconic detective is born.'**

[Dagblad van het Noorden](#)

On *The Diver*:

**'[Mathijs Deen] manages to conjure up the sounds, smells and images of the wind and the waves as you're reading.'**

[NDR 1 Welle Nord](#)

**'Atmospheric, gripping and pervaded by an underlying sense of threat.'**

[Die Presse am Sonntag](#)

**'The way he tells the story – a story about seafaring, taciturn northerners, treasure seekers and father-son relationships, told with precision and restraint – exerts an irresistible pull.'**

[Badische Zeitung](#)

Publishing details

*De duiker* (2023)

320 pages

78,000 words

Sample translation available

Publisher

Alfabet

Arend Hosman

ahosman@alfabetuitgevers.nl

Rights

Mare Verlag

Schultze-Kossack Agency

On behalf of Mare Verlag

Lars Schultze

lars.schultze@mp-litagency.com

Translated titles

Please see:

[en.vertalingendatabase.nl](#)

Mathijs Deen

(b. 1962) writes non-fiction, short stories and novels. In 2013, his book *The Wadden Islands* was published to critical acclaim and sold over 30,000 copies. In 2018 he published a collection of travel stories called *Down Old Roads: A Journey Through Europe's History*, which was nominated for the Bob den Uyl Prize and received the Halewijn Prize. *The Lightship* (2020) was longlisted for the Libris Literature Award. His work has been translated into English, German, Italian and Korean. The German translation of *The Diver* debuted at number 26 on *Der Spiegel's* bestseller list and went into its second print run within the first week.

Photo: Peter Arno Broer



# Gerrit Kouwenaar

## Fall, Bomb

### A razor-sharp novella about the hubris of youth, the yearning for adventure and the frightening reality of war

In *Fall, Bomb* Gerrit Kouwenaar, in prose as precise as it is witty, draws the reader into the mind of a young man whose life is turned upside down by the Second World War. His story starts like a boy's adventure novel but ends in loss and loneliness. Along with contemporaries like Willem Frederik Hermans, Kouwenaar brought the period of the German occupation of the Netherlands to life with searing honesty; his work drew comparisons to Sartre and Gide.

When Karel Ruis learns on the morning of May 10th, 1940 that Hitler's troops have invaded the Netherlands, he thinks to himself 'not without satisfaction' that at last something is happening – anything is better than his parents' stagnant, bourgeois existence. It's the beginning of an affecting story in which a lifetime's worth of events is compressed into just a few days.

Karel narrowly escapes an air raid, delivers a letter to his uncle's Jewish mistress and grows infatuated with her daughter. The two women are about to flee the country and he dreams of going with them. To him their attempt at survival is a thrilling adventure. To the great disappointment of the lovestruck young man, it turns out that mother and daughter didn't for a moment consider asking him to come along. At the end of

the story, Karel watches his hometown being set ablaze after another German air raid.

It's the powerful, unsparing ending to a novel in which Kouwenaar brilliantly captures the naive desires of his young protagonist and shows what happens when a seventeen-year-old is thrust into cruel maturity in the span of a few days. Later on Kouwenaar, who was himself interned for six months during the German occupation, described the war as 'Europe's education. A five-year programme, as we know.' *Fall, Bomb* is the encapsulation of that life-changing 'programme' in 120 pages, with the student being grabbed by the scruff of his neck in the first hour of class and not having a moment's peace from then on.

'The boy stared at the closed door and thought about how much fun it would be if he could make everyone and everything obey his will with a kind of magic spell. He attempted to imagine it, and felt a great urge to close his eyes as he did, but he controlled himself, merely letting his head slump against the windowpane with a soft thud. To be all-powerful, he thought. I would make a wish, concentrate with all my might, and then it would really happen.'

The math teacher abruptly collapses at his desk. The wooden compass clatters to the floor. Cardiac arrest, the doctor says, but I know better. When I see an attractive girl, I'll make a wish, *Throw yourself at my feet like a slave-girl, adore me*, and she'll obey my unspoken command that very instant. But I'd also use my incredible powers for good, he hastened to think. For good things *too*. I would save the world from Hitler.'

Gerrit Kouwenaar

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VAL, BOM

Roman • Cossee

#### Publishing details

*Val, bom* (1956, 2023)

120 pages

23,000 words

Sample translation available

#### Publisher

Cossee

Stella Rieck

rieck@cossee.com

#### Translated titles

Please see:

[en.vertingendatabase.nl](http://en.vertingendatabase.nl)

#### Gerrit Kouwenaar

(1923-2014) was one of the giants of Dutch postwar literature. He was part of the Vijftigers ('Fifties') literary movement associated with the CoBrA art collective, which effected the modernisation of Dutch poetry from 1948 onwards. In the early 1950s, Kouwenaar wrote three novels about the Second World War, challenging the cheap heroism that had characterised accounts of the occupation to that point. His work was honoured with all the major literary awards, including the P.C. Hooft Award and the Dutch Literature Prize.



# Erik Kriek

## The Pit

### Graphic novel about grief is a wonderful homage to old B movies

After the tragic loss of their son Ruben, Huub and Sara move into an old farm in the woods in the Veluwe nature reserve in hopes of leaving their grief behind and getting their life back on track. But was that really the smartest move? And what do the strange signs carved into the old beech trees mean?

Huub and Sara are each coping with the death of their son in a different way. Sara, who is a fine artist, is in therapy and is taking medication. She has lost her inspiration and can't get any painting done. Huub, an architect, focuses on his work and the future. The mourning parents have drifted apart, and the change of location doesn't really help to change this. Huub throws himself into renovating the house. Sara sleeps a lot and reads the diaries of Huub's great-uncle, which are scrawled full of magical runes, the same signs that are carved into some of the trees on the property. After Sara stops taking her medication, her inspiration comes back and she starts creating new work. She dreams of visiting a mysterious pit in the woods and seeing her son again.

The author uses colour to distinguish between different settings, deftly manipulating the reader. Initially Sara's dreams are tinged orange, whereas real life is pictured in shades of green. As Sara seems to lose her grip on reality and

people start being killed, the fantastical events are depicted in green, leaving it up to the reader to figure out what exactly happened.

This time around, Kriek sets his story not in the dark woods of North America (*In the Pines*) or the cold hills of medieval Iceland (*The Exile*) but on home turf, in the Netherlands. In his skillful hands, even the gentle landscape of the Veluwe takes on an aura of mystery.

Inspired by the work of Stephen King, old B movies and the cult classic *The Blair Witch Project*, Kriek has created a visually stunning gothic horror graphic novel about grief.

About *In the Pines*:

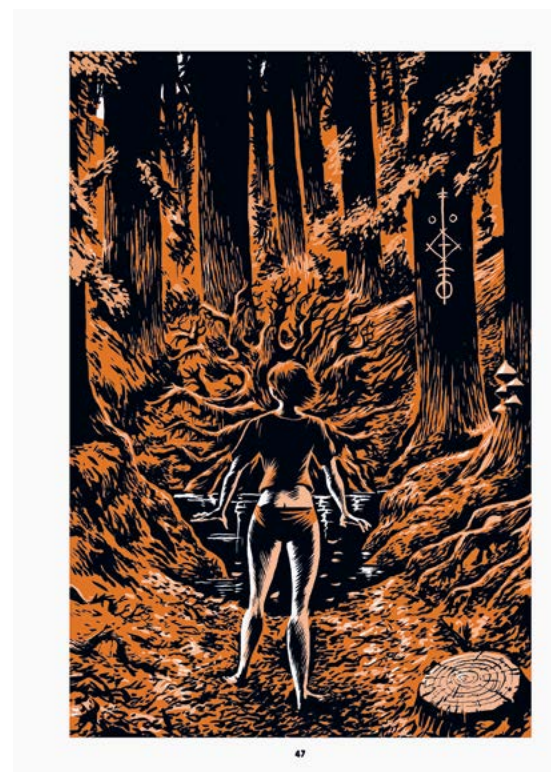
**'This is a beautiful and eerie collection, filled with betrayals, revenge, and exceptional visual storytelling.'**

[Publishers Weekly](#)

About *The Exile*:

**'The overall experience of reading *The Exile*, though, especially after finishing, is that of a rip-roaring old adventure story, a true throwback to a previous era of comics narrative.'**

[The Comics Journal](#)



#### Publishing details

*De kuil* (2023)

139 pages

Approximately 8,000 words

Black and white with spot colours

#### Publisher

Scratch Books

Chris Mokken

chris.mokken@scratchbooks.nl

#### Translated titles

Please see:

[en.vertalingendatabase.nl](http://en.vertalingendatabase.nl)

#### Rights sold

Spain (Cartem)

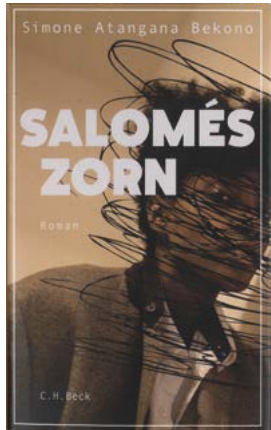
#### Erik Kriek

(b. 1966) is an illustrator and comic book artist. His illustrations have been published in *The Boston Globe*, *Weltwoche*, *de Volkskrant*, *NRC*, *Vrij Nederland*, *Het Parool* and the *VPRO Gids*. He is also a designer of record albums, posters and skateboards. In 2008 he won the Stripschapprijs, the Netherlands' most prestigious award for cartoonists. His work has been translated into Arabic, Czech, English, German, French, Italian, Serbian, Spanish and Swedish.

Photo: Ineke Oostveen

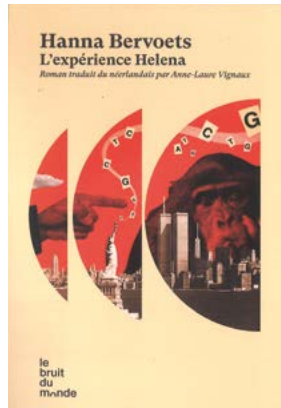


# RECENT



Simone Atangana Bekono  
*Salomés Zorn*  
(Confrontations)

Translated into German  
by Ira Wilhelm for  
C.H. Beck, 2023.



Hanna Bervoets  
*L'expérience Helena*  
(Ivanov)

Translated into French  
by Anne-Laure Vignaux for  
Le bruit du monde, 2023.



Gerda Blees  
*Mi smo svjetlost*  
(We Are Light)

Translated into Croatian by  
Svetlana Grubić Samaržija  
for Hena Com, 2023.



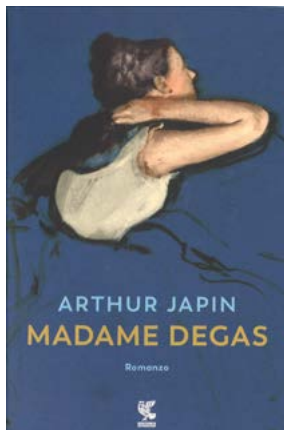
Rodaan Al Galidi  
*The leash and the ball*  
(Holland)

Translated into English  
by Jonathan Reeder for  
World Editions, 2022.



Toine Heijmans  
*Der unendliche Gipfel*  
(Oxygen Debt)

Translated into German  
by Ruth Löbner for  
Mairisch Verlag, 2023.



Arthur Japin  
*Madame Degas*  
(Mrs. Degas)

Translated into Italian  
by Laura Pignatti for Ugo  
Guanda, 2022.



Dola de Jong  
*L'albero e la vite*  
(The Tree and the Vine)

Translated into Italian  
by Laura Pignatti for La  
Nuova Frontiera, 2023.



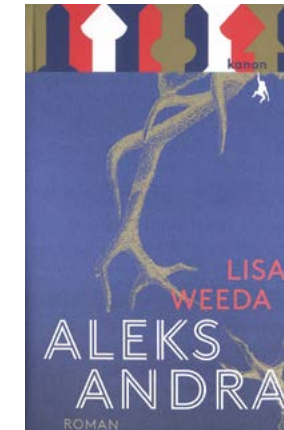
Marente de Moor  
*La Vierge néerlandaise*  
(The Dutch Maiden)

Translated into French  
by Arlette Ounanian for  
Les Argonautes, 2023.



Nina Polak  
*Zuhause ist ein großes Wort*  
(Lack Is a Big Word)

Translated into German  
by Stefanie Ochel for Mare  
Verlag, 2023.



Lisa Weeda  
*Aleksandra*

Translated into German  
by Birgit Erdmann for  
Kanon Verlag, 2022.

# 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](http://en.vertalingendatabase.nl)

Barbara den Ouden is present at the London Book Fair (IRC C12), and will be more than happy to make an appointment or arrange a videocall with you.



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Stroomberg

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***‘Wild, raw, gripping and wholly original in tone.’***

Gijs Wilbrink **The Animals** 2

***‘In understated prose, Serné peppers her febrile novel with bone-dry humour.’***

Ananda Serné **Night Bloomers** 4

***‘An accomplished, layered novel.’***

Peter Zantingh **In the Meantime** 6

***‘This book, with its simple but elegant design, is a real gem.’***

Vonne van der Meer **Personal Injury** 8

***‘A blistering literary experience.’***

Valentijn Hoogenkamp **Antiboy** 10

***‘A novella to make your ears turn pink.’***

Bregje Hofstede **December** 11

***‘Arthur Japin has written a sublime 19th-century novel.’***

Arthur Japin **What Silence Wants** 12

***‘Uncompromising, remarkably original writing with heart and urgency.’***

Anton Valens **A Wagon Full of Devils** 14

***‘Atmospheric, gripping and pervaded by an underlying sense of threat.’***

Mathijs Deen **The Diver** 16

***‘A razor-sharp novella about the hubris of youth.’***

Gerrit Kouwenaar **Fall, Bomb** 18

***‘A visually stunning gothic horror graphic novel about grief.’***

Erik Kriek **The Pit** 20