

10 Books from Holland

London Book Fair Issue

Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

Spring 2014

The Dutch Foundation for Literature / Nederlands Letterenfonds supports writers, translators and Dutch literature in translation

Information

The Foundation's advisors on literary fiction, quality non-fiction, poetry and children's and youth literature are present each year at prominent book fairs, including Frankfurt, London, Beijing and Bologna. *Books from Holland*, *Quality Non-Fiction from Holland* and *Children's Books from Holland* recommend highlights from each category's selection.

Translation Grants

Foreign publishers wishing to publish a translation of Dutch or Frisian literature may apply for a subsidy towards the translation costs. Having acquired the rights, the publisher's application must be accompanied by a copy of the contract with the rights owner and a copy of the contract with the translator. Application forms are available from the Foundation's website. Subsidies are paid after receipt of complimentary copies, with printed acknowledgement of the Foundation's support. A sample translation may be required and evaluated by our external advisors. Applications for translations that have already been published cannot be taken into consideration. Publishers looking for a qualified translator can request a list of endorsed translators for their language area.

Illustrated Books

In the case of illustrated children's books and/or graphic novels, foreign publishers can apply for assistance to cover a portion of the production costs. Subsidies are jointly funded by the Mondriaan Fund and the Dutch Foundation for Literature.

Promotional Travel

The Foundation is able to support a publisher wishing to invite an author for interviews or public appearances. Literary festivals are likewise eligible for support. Additionally, the Foundation organizes international literary events in co-operation with local publishers, festivals and book fairs.

Writers-in-Residence

The Foundation coordinates writer-in-residence programmes together with foreign universities and institutions. International authors are invited to spend time working in Amsterdam. They may stay one or two months at the writers' lodgings above the Athenaeum Bookshop on the Spui (in co-operation with the Amsterdam Fund for the Arts).

International Visitors Programme

The visitors programme and the annual Amsterdam Fellowship offer publishers and editors the opportunity to acquaint themselves with the publishing business and the literary infrastructure of the Netherlands.

Translators' House

The Translators' House offers translators the opportunity to live and work in Amsterdam for a period of time. It is involved with numerous activities assisting and advancing translators' skills. Each year the Literary Translation Days are held for those translating into and from Dutch.

Schwob: Discovering International Classic Works of Fiction

Schwob draws attention to and supports as-yet undiscovered, untranslated classics of world literature. Each month the editors select new titles on www.schwob.nl.

Background

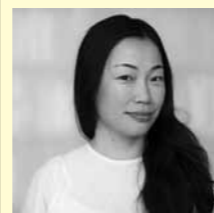
The Dutch Foundation for Literature, created in 2010 as the result of the merger between the Foundation for the Production and Translation of Dutch Literature (NLPVF) and the Foundation for Literature (FvdL), is an independent organization financed by the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Policies and projects are carried out in co-operation with the Flemish Literature Foundation.

Interested in receiving our newsletter? Send your request to post@letterenfonds.nl or sign up on www.letterenfonds.nl.

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Advisors Fiction



Barbara den Ouden: Eastern and Middle Europe, Mediterranean countries, Russia. Graphic novels. b.den.ouden@letterenfonds.nl

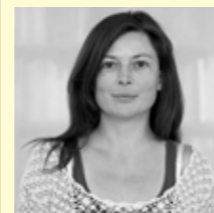


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Schwob



Alexandra Koch
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Toine Heijmans Pristina

A beautifully composed novel about the conflict between the rules and the reality of asylum policy

In this intricately structured novel, Heijmans delivers a compelling examination of the relative nature of our roots and the loneliness of the asylum seeker, for whom home has become an abstract concept. He contrasts this with the rigidity of a clinical system that masquerades as humane.

Albert Drilling, a special government officer of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, is a diligent technocrat and a man with a mission: to personally ensure that asylum seekers return to their homeland once their legal avenues have been exhausted, ideally with a minimum of embarrassment to the relevant government minister. This mission takes him to an island off the north coast of Holland to track down an asylum seeker who has stayed behind as an illegal alien following the closure of the local detention centre. All he has to go on is her name.

Irin Past – she bears a name dreamt up by her father – feels at one with the islanders and they have taken her to their hearts. She has struck up friendships with the ferry captain, the mayor and the

island's most successful entrepreneur. Her exemplary integration into Dutch society leaves Albert undeterred. However, professional pride dictates that he must find a safe and familiar environment for asylum seekers in their country of origin.

What form might that take for Irin? She believes her roots lie in Egypt, but this too is the product of her father's imagination. Albert heads to Cairo to find the house where she was born. There he wades his way through the uprisings of the Arab Spring, detached yet unable to escape entirely unscathed. An ironic thread is that Irin seems to be welcomed by her surroundings, while Albert is forced to grapple with a recalcitrant and hostile reality – from riots on the streets of Cairo to the treacherous wetlands of a Dutch island.

Irin's origins lie in the Kosovar capital Pristina, of which her name is an anagram. For Albert, this is sufficient grounds to insist that she be sent back there. Irin and her friends abandon their attempts at resistance. Or could governmental rules and regulations offer an escape route after all?

By the
winner of
the Prix
Médicis
étranger



Toine Heijmans (b. 1969) is a journalist for *de Volkskrant*. After writing the non-fiction book *La Vie Vinex* (2007), he made his mark with his debut novel *Op Zee* (At Sea, 2011). The book was lauded by reviewers and booksellers alike, and has been translated into German, French, Danish and Hungarian. The French translation was honoured with the Prix Médicis étranger.



Publishing details

Pristina (2014)
347 pp., 90,261 words

Rights

Shared Stories
Elaine Michon,
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Uta Matten, uta@sharedstories.nl
www.sharedstories.nl

Publisher

Atlas Contact

Rights sold

France (Christian Bourgois)

Translated titles

En mer (Op zee). Christian Bourgois, 2013. Also in German (Arche, 2012), Danish (Turbine, 2013) and Hungarian (Gondolat, 2013).

'*Pristina* is polished to perfection. A rich book.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'The great merit of *Pristina* is that Heijmans has cast a major socio-political issue in the form of a well-written novel.'
– *de Volkskrant*

Photo: Merlijn Doomernik

Wytske Versteeg

Boy

A gripping novel about parenthood and loss, bullying and revenge

Boy grows up as the only child of his adoptive parents. Chubby and dark-skinned, he is ruthlessly bullied at school, but at home he says nothing about what he is going through, only that he has pains in his stomach. After a class outing to the beach, he does not return. His lifeless body is later discovered washed up on the sand.

'A major new talent.' That was how *NRC Handelsblad* described Wytske Versteeg on the evidence of her debut novel. In *Boy*, her second book and winner of the BNG Literatuurprijs, the young writer confirms her status as a bold and highly individual voice. Her protagonist, Boy's mother, is not immediately overcome by grief in the aftermath of her son's death but is determined to find out exactly what happened. How did Boy die? Was he murdered? Did he take his own life? The police believe his death was suicide but his mother is not so sure.

Every little detail of the story seems to crowd in on the mother. She mulls over every aspect of how her son's body was discovered by someone out walking their dog on the beach. She homes in on the 'deep-purple smock of a dress' worn by

the policewoman who comes to break the news and the 'jarring tone' of her voice. Tuning into details seems to offer her a way of drowning out the naked truth of what has happened.

Her efforts to unravel the course of events lead her to an unsettling confrontation with the class bully and expose her to a torrent of abuse from a girl from the same class. Eventually she sets her sights on the drama teacher, who was preparing her pupils for a performance of *Richard III* at the time of Boy's death. This somehow appears to have triggered the fateful events at the beach, but no one is able or willing to fill in the details.

Hannah, the drama teacher, has left the teaching profession and moved to a remote village in Bulgaria. Boy's mother follows her there; she poses as a voluntary worker who can help with the gardening but her true purpose is revenge. Yet as soon as she arrives at her destination, her resolve crumbles. Although Hannah leaves her stranded for hours, she cannot feel angry. In the end there is no violence, just the dark and harrowing story of a woman who sought to steer the group dynamics of her class and instead precipitated a tragedy.

Wytske Versteeg (1983) is a political scientist. In the spring of 2012 she made a successful debut as a novelist with *De Wezenlozen* (Weightless), which was nominated for the Opzij Literature Prize 2013 and long-listed for the AKO Literature Prize. In 2008 she published the non-fiction book *Dit is geen dakloze* (This Is Not a Homeless Person) based on her experiences as a volunteer, mixing philosophical literature with journalistic observations and personal accounts of homelessness. The book was nominated for the Jan Hanlo Essay Prize. The novel *Boy* was awarded the BNG Literature Prize. Versteeg has published articles and stories in a variety of magazines and newspapers.



Publishing details
Boy (2013)
189 pp., 62,900 words

Publisher
Prometheus
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www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

Rights
Sebes & Van Gelderen
Literary Agency
Willem Bisseling,
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Rights sold
Turkey (Kahve Yayınları)

'Two novels in, we can safely conclude that estrangement between family members is a theme that Versteeg favours. In *Boy* she once again demonstrates a meticulous eye for the fine detail of human relationships.'
– *Trouw*

'In fewer than 200 pages – and against the backdrop of Shakespeare's *Richard III* – Versteeg raises profound questions which give *Boy* a timeless character, while doubts about background and origin, innocence and betrayal, love and self-interest take on an original and contemporary form in her narrative.'
– *Jury report for the BNG Literatuurprijs*

Photo: Eline Spek

Tommy Wieringa

A Beautiful Young Woman

A man brought to ruin by his marriage and his fear of decline

One of the most important Dutch writers of the last decade took on the challenge of writing the novella that would form the centrepiece for the annual Book Week. The result is an exquisite tragedy fuelled by an age gap and irreconcilable differences, which has garnered five-star critical acclaim.

For Edward, a virologist in his mid-forties and the protagonist of *A Beautiful Young Woman*, decline and deterioration have become an obsession. In Buddhism, a keen awareness of decay is seen as one of the principal sources of suffering. For that reason alone he regards his relationship with a woman fifteen years his junior as a stroke of fortune: Ruth is not only beautiful, intelligent and down to earth, but she seems to have given him a new lease of life.

Edward and Ruth's roles reverse, however: 'He did not grow younger thanks to her, she grew older thanks to him'. Their wedding celebrations mark the highlight of their relationship; from that point on, their woes multiply. Ruth has trouble

accepting the morally questionable aspects of Edward's career (lab tests on animals, corporate junkets). She wants a child (something Edward can live with-out), and when their baby son is finally born, he won't stop crying.

Bruised by fatigue, Ruth starts to think her child is crying because he senses that his father didn't want him and she throws Edward out of their home. By this stage he has long been involved in an extra-marital affair, which will bring him even less happiness.

Edward is a modern-day Job, and Wieringa describes his ordeal in fast-paced, lyrical prose that taps into rich seams of humour and depths of emotion. Edward largely brings his downfall upon himself, through his insecurities and his negative thinking. His fate is even prefigured in a dream he has halfway through the narrative: 'This is what he has made of his life, a wasteland that stretches off in every direction, and of all the feelings he ever possessed, only fear and confusion remain.'

With his coming-of-age novel *Joe Speedboat* (2005), translated into 15 languages, **Tommy Wieringa** (b. 1967) entered the pantheon of modern Dutch literature. The book's romantic vision combined with Wieringa's gift for storytelling and his vibrant prose style to secure his breakthrough. His love of exotic locations, eccentric characters and boy's-own adventure also feature in his travel stories *Ik was nooit in Isfahan* (I Never Went to Isfahan, 2006) and in his novels *Caesarion* (2009, translated into German, French and English) and *Dit zijn de namen* (These Are the Names, 2012, translated into five languages). For this last novel, Wieringa was awarded the Libris Literatuurprijs.



Publishing details
Een mooie jonge vrouw (2014)
94 pp., 28,000 words
700,000 copies distributed

Publisher
CPNB/De Bezige Bij

Rights
De Bezige Bij
Marijke Nagtegaal,
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Hayo Deinum,
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www.debezigebij.nl

Rights sold
UK/Australia (Scribe), France (Actes Sud), Germany (Hanser), Italy (Iperborea)

Sample translation available

'A masterly portrait of a faltering marriage'
– *de Volkskrant*

'The work of a wizard.'
– *De Morgen*

About *Caesarion*:
'The only writers who have successfully pursued this Holy Grail of the complete novel in recent years (the list is perhaps not exhaustive) are Roberto Bolaño in his *The Savage Detectives*, W.G. Sebald in *Austerlitz*, J.M. Coetzee in *Disgrace* and Philip Roth in *My Life as a Man*. From now on, however, to that list must be added the name of Tommy Wieringa.'
– *Le Figaro*

Photo: Johan Jacobs

Mano Bouzamour

The Promise of Pisa

A vibrant coming-of-age novel about growing up in the gap between two cultures

Mano Bouzamour's debut novel has been a runaway success, catapulting its young author into the media spotlight. As he was appearing on talk shows, he became the target of a backlash among the Dutch-Moroccan community. In this sparkling and controversial novel, the author makes it painfully clear that assimilation is the beginning, not the end, of your troubles.

The novel's narrator is Sam Zafar, a boy growing up in Amsterdam's Diamantbuurt, a neighbourhood that is home to many deprived Moroccan families and where youth crime is rife. Bouzamour gives a voice to this boy who is caught between two cultures. His illiterate parents speak no Dutch and are dutiful followers of Islam, a sharp contrast to the life Sam experiences at school and on the streets.

Sam's big brother is serving a six-year jail term for armed robbery, yet he was always one of the few people to understand his little brother, and Sam feels his absence keenly. On the eve of his incarceration, he holds Sam to a promise, made at Pisa, the local ice-cream parlour: don't screw up like your big brother did. 'Promise me that you'll go on where I came unstuck.' Fingers

sticky from the ice cream, they seal the pledge with a handshake.

Sam finds himself steering a path between extremes: beatings at the Qur'an school, surveillance by police patrolling his neighbourhood and confrontations with the lives of luxury led by many of his classmates. He is no angel but he is different to many of his neighbourhood friends: he has a deep love of classical music and his Mozart ringtone both betrays his ambition to become a pianist and earns him the label 'gay boy'. He also takes an interest in history. Many might call Sam a model immigrant son, but his story powerfully lays bare the cultural minefield of the assimilation process.

The book can clearly be read as a classic coming-of-age novel, concerned to a large extent with the quest for identity and the transition to adulthood. What gives it a real sense of urgency is Bouzamour's expressive use of telling details that illustrate just how great the divide is between East and West. And that's not all: he has an infectious sense of humour, a flair for punchy dialogue and the scenes – most notably a night-time scooter ride through Amsterdam – are so vivid that they leap off the page. Bouzamour is a name to watch.

Since the publication of *The Promise of Pisa*, **Mano Bouzamour** (b. 1991) has been the subject of reviews, interviews and feature-length articles in the national press. This high media profile has provoked a storm of criticism from the Moroccan community. Meanwhile, the film rights have been sold.



Publishing details
De belofte van Pisa (2013)
285 pp., 66,750 words
9,000 copies sold

Rights
Prometheus
Sarina van der Ploeg,
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www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

'Mano knows what it is to grow up as the son of Moroccan parents in the notorious Diamantbuurt and has a fantastic talent for bringing that world to life. When I met him I thought, if he can get this down on paper, it'll be a book that everyone should read. And now here it is, on paper.'
– Joris Luyendijk

'His language crackles with sparkling, coarse, sometimes clinical formulations, portraying a teenage life that illustrates the multicultural problem in a way that is both light-hearted and subtle. This admirable debut, pulsing with energy, snappy dialogue and urban slang, is sure to hit the spot with young readers.'
– NRC Handelsblad (****)

'Bouzamour is full of bravura, with a charm that's hard to resist, in person and on paper.'
– Trouw

Photo: Anneke Hymmen

Jan van Mersbergen

The Last Escape

Two fathers and two sons in search of love, respect and renewed balance

Ivan, an exile from the former Yugoslavia, performs an escapology act in bars and at festivals in the Netherlands. At the age of 41, this modern-day Houdini discovers that he has a ten-year-old son and feels a powerful urge to build a relationship with the boy. It is a decision that will have far-reaching consequences for his freewheeling lifestyle.

The Last Escape is narrated by a close friend of Ivan's, a man who is also father to a ten-year-old son and who sees Ivan and his devil-may-care attitude as something to aspire to. The narrator is at a crossroads in his life: he has lost his job and is bailing out of his relationship with his girlfriend. The only passionate connection he feels is with his son Ruben. This reinforces his bond with Ivan, who is overwhelmed by paternal feelings upon seeing his own son Deedee for the first time – if only because the boy bears a striking resemblance to his dead brother.

The two fathers and two sons spend much of their time together and, when

Ivan is invited to perform his most spectacular escapology trick on the Côte d'Azur, all four of them fly down to the south of France. The trick involves Ivan being tied to a chair and attempting to free himself while flames lick at his clothes. But by this time Ivan has more on his mind than his act, especially when a deeply traumatic event from his past comes back to haunt him.

Jan van Mersbergen's style – sparse in dialogue, rich in indirect discourse – conjures up associations with Hemingway. It is the ideal medium in which to tell an emotional tale of diamonds in the rough; of a man torn between domesticity and the wild side of life; of the rootlessness of the modern migrant; of young boys who are wiser than their parents; and ultimately of what it takes to be a good father. *The Last Escape* echoes the themes of Van Mersbergen's earlier novels, but expresses them more powerfully and succinctly than ever before. This, his seventh novel, may well be his best yet.



The Last Escape is a fitting title for a novel by **Jan van Mersbergen** (b. 1972), a writer whose central theme can be summed up as 'men on the run'. Van Mersbergen's main characters are gruff and graceless men of few words who like their drink and yet harbour a sensitive soul. His previous novel, *Naar de overkant van de nacht* (To the Other Side of the Night, 2010) – about a man who reassesses his life one drunken night during Carnival – won him the BNG Literatuurprijs and has since been translated into Spanish, Catalan and Turkish. His breakthrough novel *Morgen zijn we in Pamplona* (Tomorrow Pamplona, 2007), set in the world of boxing, has been translated into English, French, German and Turkish. The film rights to *Naar de overkant van de nacht* and *Morgen zijn we in Pamplona* have been sold to a London-based production company.



Publishing details
De laatste ontsnapping (2014)
218 pp., 61,000 words
5,000 copies sold

Rights
Cossee
Laurens Molegraaf,
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www.cossee.com

'A novel that overshadows virtually everything that has recently been published in the world of Dutch literature.'
– Tubantia

'Phrases that combine beauty and precision are Van Mersbergen's hallmark.'
– De Groene Amsterdammer

'Van Mersbergen has a gift for scenes in which simple gestures and unspoken thoughts suddenly take your breath away.'
– NRC Handelsblad

Photo: Irwan Droog

Arie Storm

Listening to Houses Breathe

An exhilarating mix of media satire and autobiographical fiction in the tradition of Philip Roth

‘The past, what was all that about?’ Welcome to Arie Storm’s seventh novel. In *Listening to Houses Breathe*, Storm’s alter ego, August Voois, is plunged into a deep crisis and comes face to face with a distant past with which he has yet to make peace.

Like his creator, August Voois is a writer, an academic and a book reviewer for a newspaper and a radio show. Yet he increasingly finds himself questioning the meaning of virtually everything he does. In his eyes the world is falling prey to stupidity and infantilism, while the serious appreciation of literature has become the domain of a paltry few. And as if that were not enough, his state of mind is being rattled by strange sighs that seem to be emanating from the walls of his home.

One day our cynical protagonist decides he can take no more and bids farewell to his jobs at the university and the radio station. A raging storm hits the city and

rips a gaping hole in the fabric of his home, through which he, his wife Alice and his daughter Masja are able to travel back in time. They become onlookers in Voois’ past as a greengrocer’s son in a rough neighbourhood of The Hague. As he revisits the houses of his youth – his parental home and the homes of neighbours with whom he spent much of his time – long-suppressed traumas rise up from the depths.

While Storm’s novel contains subtle references to *Alice in Wonderland*, it is far from a series of absurd adventures. *Listening to Houses Breathe* begins as a cynical yet upbeat satire on the literary world, but goes on to develop into a thoughtful reflection on the workings of nostalgia and the pain hidden away behind some of our childhood memories. When the time comes for the reader to emerge from the wormhole with Voois, he cannot help but feel an abiding fondness for the man.

Literary critic, translator and biographer **Arie Storm** (b. 1963) grew up in The Hague, studied Dutch and made his literary debut at the age of 31 with *Hémans duik* (Hémans Dive), a novel that playfully manipulates the relationship between autobiography and fiction. In the six novels that followed, Storm has continued in the tradition of his literary heroes Vladimir Nabokov and Philip Roth. Two of his novels – *Afgunst* (Envy) and *Gevoel* (Feeling) – have been nominated for the Netherlands’ most distinguished literary awards.



Publishing details
Luisteren hoe huizen ademen
(2013)
159 pp., 32,500 words

Rights
Prometheus
Sarina van der Ploeg,
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www.uitgeverijprometheus.nl

‘A slim yet splendid novel about an author who is wrestling with his past and about the importance of literature.’
– *de Volkskrant*

‘He gives an almost mystical charge to the everyday [in] one of the most extraordinary novels published in the Netherlands this year.’
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

‘A book that is constantly on the move.’
– *NRC Handelsblad*

Photo: Anneke Hymmen



Jamal Ouariachi

Tenderness

A hard-hitting psychological novel that takes the reader deep into the mind of a narcissist

This kaleidoscopic narrative is shot through with the unease of its thirty-something protagonist, tormented by the emptiness of his existence and prone to violent outbursts directed at his girlfriends. At the same time it is a compelling and darkly humorous exploration of the male condition, complete with its own twisted take on couples therapy.

When the bar he owns goes bankrupt and his relationship with Elsa, the love of his life, comes to a violent end, the nameless protagonist of *Tenderness* falls into despondency. He finds a job as a postal worker for a magazine publisher and lives life according to a fixed pattern: every Saturday he hits the bars with two bachelor buddies and every Sunday his mother comes to call.

His weekly grind is disrupted when he finds a basket of kittens near his office one day. He decides to keep one, christens him Buscemi, and before he knows it his newfound pet has brought him into contact with Zerline, who quickly becomes the new woman in his life. Initially all is well in love, but before long a familiar tension starts to build and cracks appear in their relationship. As with Elsa, he is unable to control his fits of rage. During

one such explosion, he throws a lamp at Zerline and accidentally kills Buscemi.

Alone again, he backslides into an aimless existence. He tries to analyse his state of mind, considers seeking professional help and loses himself in the cinematic violence of Lynch, Tarantino and Hitchcock. *Vertigo* inspires him to embark on a crazy experiment with a colleague who has fallen in love with him. He begins a relationship with her in which they re-enact his previous conflicts with Elsa and Zerline: an uneasy mix of anger management and couples therapy.

Convinced that he is cured of his violent impulses, he tries to get back together with Zerline and pick up where they left off. She rebuffs him outright and tells him that aggression is not the root of his problems. The heart of the matter is not entirely clear, not even for the reader, who by this time has been lured into the dark recesses of the narrator’s mind. In this gripping novel, Ouariachi leaves plenty to the imagination and immerses the reader in an intense depiction of a born narcissist who is both desperately in need of love and incapable of having a relationship: ‘Alone with his thoughts, burdened with nothing or no one other than himself.’

Jamal Ouariachi (b. 1978) studied psychology and spent years working as an online therapist. He made his literary debut in 2010 with the novel *De vernietiging van Prosper Morèl* (The Destruction of Prosper Morèl). Since then he has written controversial stories, articles and columns for a range of leading publications including *nrc.next*, *HP/De Tijd*, *de Volkskrant*, *Knack Focus* and *Vogue*. His second novel *Tenderness* has earned him nominations for the BNG Literatuurprijs and the Gouden Uil. He has followed it up with *25*, one third of a Dutch literary trilogy written in response to *Fifty Shades of Grey*.



Publishing details
Vertederling (2013)
367 pp., 112,000 words

Rights
Querido
Annette Portegies,
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Maria Vlaar, mg.vlaar@xs4all.nl
www.querido.nl

‘Read till your stomach aches; this magnificent, painful journey of an unfathomable man with an unquenchable thirst.’
(****)
– *de Volkskrant*

‘This is a quintessentially psychological novel [...], a book that shows the reader many facets of the human soul. [...] A relatively young talent but a mature and impressive novel.’
– *Trouw*

‘An intelligent and compellingly written book which immediately convinces the reader that this is not the work of an ordinary young writer. This is an oeuvre in the making.’
– *De Standaard*

‘What we’re dealing with here is full-blown insanity – an experience to savour.’
– *Vrij Nederland*

Photo: Lona Aalders



Pauline Genee

Duel with Horse

An elegant historical novel with a starring role for an arithmetical wonder horse

The scene is Berlin, 1904. Former teacher Wilhelm von Osten is the proud owner and trainer of Clever Hans the wonder horse. By stamping his hoof, Hans can solve all manner of arithmetical puzzles, from fractions to square roots. Public speculation is rife. Is Von Osten a con artist? A dabbler in the occult? Is he resorting to electrical trickery? Deftly weaving historical fact and fictional narrative, Genee reconstructs the reasons why Von Osten's horse never became a household name to rival Pavlov's dog.

Von Osten's love for his horse and his faith in science help him forget the cruelty he endured as a boy whose father beat him mercilessly. He teaches his horse arithmetic for hours on end and their demonstrations draw huge crowds. But Von Osten has loftier ambitions. He hopes to gain official recognition for his pedagogical achievement and his discovery that animals are capable of independent reasoning. He likens himself to Mendel, Darwin and Copernicus, pioneers whose discoveries initially met with disbelief.

With the arrival of wayward Italian painter Emilio Rendich, scientific recognition seems closer than ever. Rendich has friends in high places, including General Zobel, who publishes an article about the wonder horse in the *Military Weekly*. The

early 20th century equivalent of a media hype ensues and a committee of thirteen experts is formed to get to the bottom of Hans's remarkable way with numbers.

Von Osten is convinced that his ambitions are about to be realized and is already looking forward to the day when 'Ostentism' will become a field of scientific study. By this stage he has grown extremely fond of Rendich but with recognition within reach it is Rendich who shatters his dreams. With his painterly eye for detail, the artist has noticed that Hans is in fact responding to the body language of his interrogator. The wonder horse is unmasked as a scientific fraud. When Rendich subsequently perishes in a duel over an affair with a married woman, there is nothing left for Von Osten but to continue teaching arithmetic to his equine companion.

Genee has written an exciting and immensely readable tale of ambition and second chances at the turn of the 20th century. She stylishly blends fact and fiction in a thematically rich book that centres on the pursuit of truth. Along the way, she paints a glorious portrait of a period in which the scientific world found itself on a fault line. The fact that it is a painter who first solves the mystery of the wonder horse can be regarded as a triumph for the eye of the artist.

After studying French and Russian, **Pauline Genee** (b. 1968) went on to hold a number of positions at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Since 2011 she has combined her literary career with freelance work. She first encountered the story of Clever Hans the wonder horse when she took an introductory course in psychology at university and became fascinated by a photograph of old Wilhelm von Osten with his horse and a blackboard full of sums. She describes *Duel with Horse* as an ode to wilfulness.



Publishing details
Duel met paard (2014)
254 pp., 53,000 words

Rights

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'The pleasure the writer must have taken in rendering the lines and colours of Berlin 1904 radiates from every page [...] she weaves an intriguing plot.'
— *NRC Handelsblad*

'A wonderfully detailed portrait of a bygone age, drawn with flair and irony. [...] The colourful characters and Genee's assured and sparkling narrative style lend unique colour to an unknown world.'
— *Trouw*

'The chapters are short and simply fly by. Soon only one question remains: how will it end? Will Genee bow to historical fact? Will Von Osten's dream be shattered? Anyone who starts reading this story will find out before long: that's how unputdownable this book is.'
— *Nederlands Dagblad*

Photo: Denise Winters



Tip Marugg

The Roar of Morning

The most Latin American of Dutch writers

Tip Marugg was the hermit of Curaçao, an island in the Netherlands Antilles, and the author of a small body of exceptionally fine literary work. His novels show the touch of a master stylist who transforms his themes – death, night, the grim fate of the alcoholic, and loneliness – into unparalleled literature.

In *Weekend Pilgrimage* (1957) the first-person narrator veers in his car on to the road's shoulder while drunk and reflects back on his life in one long interior monologue. The protagonist of *In de straten van Tepalka* (In the Streets of Tepalka, 1967) relives his experiences in fantasies and nightmares as he lies on his deathbed in a hospital.

In Marugg's most important novel, *The Roar of Morning* (1988), a man sits on his doorstep, armed with a bottle of whisky, waiting for daybreak. He observes nature, thinking about Kierkegaard, his childhood in Venezuela, and his life on Curaçao, where he feels out of place as a white Antillean, and he has feverish dreams about women. The novel contains

one of the most beautiful scenes in world literature, in which the narrator watches scores of birds in flight crashing into a steep rock face and dying, a daily event. The passage is unforgettable:

'With fading recognition I look at the familiar things around me: the wardrobe full of clothes, most of which I have never worn; the big curtain over the window, lined with thick material to keep out the light when I sleep all morning; the small, colourful vase that I have been looking at for twenty years and which every Wednesday I am afraid the cleaning woman will smash, as she has done with most of the glassware; the orange rug next to my bed, on which I sometimes let one of the dogs spend the night when it is ill or sad. The feeling of oneness with these things has vanished – it is as if they already belong to others. I light a cigarette. The smoke I exhale is sucked up to the ceiling by the air conditioning and then snakes lazily back down the wall. Outside I can hear the crowing of the cocks. The roar of morning is here once more and is not to be trusted.'

Silvio Alberto Marugg, known as Tip (b. 1923, Willemstad, Curaçao), wrote three novels at long intervals, also publishing a volume of poetry, *Afschuw van licht; gedichten 1946-1951* (Horror of Light: Poems, 1946-1951; 1976). He received the Cola Debrot Prize for *The Roar of Morning* and was nominated for the AKO Literature Prize. Tip Marugg was called 'the island's thinnest shadow' because of his lanky frame. He led a reclusive existence, avoiding the public eye, although one colourful article described his life in a remote house surrounded by dogs, with a pistol on his bedside table. He died, solitary and blind, in 2006. His collected work was published three years later under the title *De hemel is van korte duur* (Heaven Doesn't Last).



Publishing details
De morgen loeit weer aan (1988)
138 pp., 36,991 words

Rights

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Translated titles

Auch Vögel sterben im Morgenblau (De morgen loeit weer aan).
Germany: Twenne, 1991.
Weekend Pilgrimage (Weekeindpelgrimage).
UK: Hutchison, 1960.

Full English translation available

'Every detail, every digression is purposeful, the subject matter significant, the style perfect. I would like to quote as much of this novel as I possibly can, to read it over and over again right away. Such a novel deserves a magnificent reception.'
— *Vrij Nederland*

'The final chapter brings an uncommon climax; the hallucinatory, apocalyptic images in which Marugg describes the swelling roar of the morning are breathtaking – I would describe this, without hesitation, as one of the most gripping chapters in all Dutch literature.'
— *De Groene Amsterdammer*

Photo: Enid Hollander



Esther Verhoef

Close to the Cradle

A deeply disturbed, murderous nurse threatens the fragile happiness of young parents

Violence inflicted on children: even the prospect leaves us with a sickening feeling of helplessness. We would do anything to stop it and, as readers, we turn the pages anxiously in the hope that the unthinkable can be averted. Esther Verhoef makes clever use of this impulse in her intense thriller, which grips the reader from beginning to end.

Verhoef seamlessly interweaves the narrative strands of her tale of intrigue, placing the reader in close proximity to both crime and crime fighter. She opens with police inspector Miriam de Moor, who has just discovered that her brother's widow has taken up residence in a luxury penthouse. Miriam's brother died six months previously after a fall down the stairs. She suspects that his death may not have been an accident and that her former sister-in-law may somehow have been involved.

That same morning, Hennequin Smith starts work as a maternity nurse at the home of brand new parents Didi Stevens and Oscar Vos. Didi is confined to a wheelchair due to pelvic problems related to her pregnancy and the difficult birth has left her barely able to take care of her newborn child. She is almost completely dependent on Hennequin's help.

Not only is the nurse an impostor – her qualifications are fabricated, her work experience a pack of lies – but she is also a sadist with her mind set on a single purpose: to inflict endless suffering on both mother and child. She takes subtle advantage of hard-working Oscar's reluctance to accept his role as a father and of Didi's distress in the face of her physical incapacity.

Miriam conducts her investigation on her own time, knowing that she faces summary dismissal if her bosses ever find out what she's up to. Despite the risks, she vigorously pursues her inquiries and little by little begins to uncover the past that Hennequin has gone to such pains to conceal. She discovers the maternity nurse's true identity and brings her quarry into sharper focus by questioning former teachers, guardians and institutional directors. Eventually Miriam manages to contact Hennequin's father, who refuses point-blank to cooperate with the one-woman investigation.

In this claustrophobic thriller, Esther Verhoef demonstrates her complete mastery of the genre, steering her plot expertly towards its unexpected climax without ever giving away more than is strictly necessary.

For many years, **Esther Verhoef** (b. 1968) has been one of the most widely read thriller writers in the Dutch language. Her thrillers have sold over 1.5 million copies and have been translated into Spanish, French, German, English and Russian. Her work has brought her widespread recognition in the form of the NS Publieksprijs. She is the winner of several leading crime fiction awards.



Literary Thriller



Publishing details
De kraamhulp (2014)
329 pp., 81,476 words

Rights
Anthos
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www.estherverhoef.nl

Translated Titles
Tegenlicht Germany: btb
Rendez-Vous Germany: btb, UK:
Quercus, Russia: Mir Knigi
Close-up Germany: btb, UK:
Quercus, Danmark: JP Politiken,
France: Denoël, Russia: Mir Knigi,
Spain: Circulo de lectores
Déjà vu Germany: btb
Alles te verliezen Germany: btb

'The stories of the three female protagonists are ingeniously woven together. Verhoef effectively packages her tightly plotted narrative in concise sentences and compact chapters, liberally sprinkled with gripping cliffhangers.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'A true pageturner with a masterful plot twist.'
– *de Volkskrant*

'Full of nail-biting suspense.' (*****)
– *Algemeen Dagblad*

Photo: Liselore Chevalier

Robert van Raffe

Unfiltered

A brilliant graphic novel about a young artist's identity crisis



Publishing details
Zonder filter (2014)
210 pp., 11,400 words

Rights
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James Joyce's *Ulysses* as the basis for a comic book: it takes a dandy like Robert van Raffe to come up with something quite this bold. Modesty is for the mediocre! In *Unfiltered*, a vagabond comics artist drifts through the streets of a university town in search of insight and distraction. He knocks back the booze, he chews the fat, he suffers. Along the way he weaves a wondrous visual narrative.

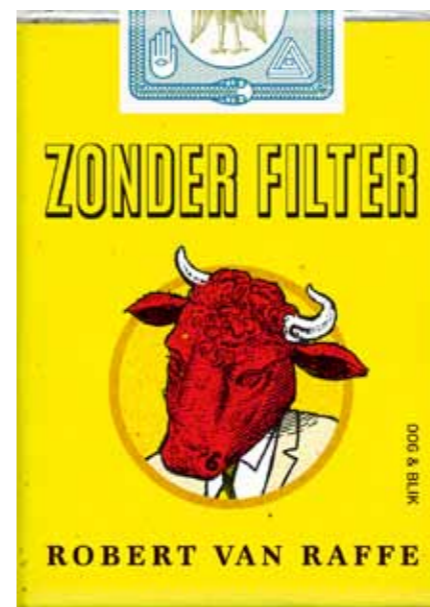
The young artist stands beneath the dome of Rome's great Classical temple, the Pantheon, as God stares down at him through the oculus. This is the opening gambit of *Unfiltered*, Robert van Raffe's debut graphic novel, in which he himself features as a character. From the cosmic grandeur of this first scene he constructs a layered narrative, which on the surface appears to tell a tale of student life, with its familiar ingredients of wine, women and tedium. Raffe is a Chianti-swilling poseur, who models himself on celebrated dandies such as Oscar Wilde and James Whistler, and sneers at the banality of everyday reality.

But beneath this surface, there are deeper, more serious forces at work. The chapter titles in this novel refer directly to Joyce's

Ulysses, which in turn is modelled on Homer's *Odyssey*. This is High Culture in comic-book form. Raffe intercuts his portrait of student life with imaginary dialogues in which masters such as Bacon, Warhol and Camus act as his sounding board. It is here that the title of the book begins to resonate: Raffe's dandyism is not a pose at all but an unfiltered attempt to connect to the fullest with the history of art and literature.

The journey continues and we enter yet another layer: that of Raffe's own psyche. He is a young student who spends his days and nights in bedsit land, drinking, pining for his lost love Penelope and thinking himself into an early grave: 'In the darkness, I was drowning in conceit.' What begins as a flirtation with life as a dandy morphs into an intense identity crisis that takes him to the brink of complete madness.

The true brilliance of *Unfiltered* is the freewheeling, experimental visual style in which Raffe expresses all of these events and layers. When the mood strikes, his drawings spiral out of control, colours flow over lines and frames dissolve in a maelstrom of psychological turmoil. A book to make your head spin.



Graphic Novel

Robert van Raffe (b. 1982) studied Arts, Media & Design at the Willem de Kooning Academy in Rotterdam and is currently studying philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam. He debuted in 2005 in the magazine *Zone 5300* with *A conversation piece*, a dialogue in painted scenes between Oscar Wilde and James Abott McNeill Whistler. Robert also goes by the name of Dandy Raffe and has published works with titles such as *Dandy tegen wil & dank* (A Dandy Willy-Nilly) and *Dandy op herhaling* (Dandy Repeats Himself).

'A masterpiece. World class. Van Raffe has employed entirely different styles to illustrate the various chapters – sketchy, expressive, sensitive, explosive – yet never sacrifices clarity or legibility. He has substantially expanded the comic-book idiom.'
– *Joost Swarte*

Photo: Gert Jan Pos

Recent Translations

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



Abdelkader Benali
My Mother's Voice

Glas moje majke Translated into Bosnian by Goran Sarić for Buybook, 2013.



Bernlef
Out of Mind

[Chezjonot sjaw] Translated into Hebrew by Ran HaCohen for Am Oved, 2013. Also in: Czech (Za trati), Chinese (People's Literature Publishing House), Danish (Hekla), English (Faber and Faber), German (Nagel & Kimche) and many other languages.



Peter Buwalda
Bonita Avenue

Translated into English by Jonathan Reeder for Pushkin Press, 2014. Also in: Czech (Odeon), French (Actes Sud), German (Rowohlt), Greek (Alexandria), Hungarian (Scolar), Icelandic (Forlagid), Italian (Mondadori) and Spanish (Salamandra).



Anna Enquist
The Sedators

Les endormeurs Translated into French by Arlette Ounanian for Actes Sud, 2014. Also in: German (Luchterhand) and Swedish (Natur och Kultur).



Esther Gerritsen
Thirst

Porsti Translated into Icelandic by Ragna Sigurdardottir for Mál og menning, 2013. Also in: Czech (Mál og menning), English (World Editions) and German (Berlin Verlag).



Anne-Gine Goemans
Gliding Flight

Svifflug Translated into Icelandic by Ragna Sigurdardottir for Forlagid, 2013. Also in: Danish (Turbine), English (World Editions), German (Insel) and Italian (Iperborea).



Arnon Grunberg
The Man without Illness

Hastaliksız Adam Translated into Turkish by Gül Özlen for Alef Yayinevi, 2013. Also in: French (Héloïse d'Ormesson), German (Kiepenheuer & Witsch), Hebrew (Hakibbutz Hameuchad), Hungarian (Gondolat) and Italian (Feltrinelli).



A.F.Th. van der Heijden
Tonio

[Tonio] Translated into Chinese by Can Zhai for Flower City Publishing House, 2013. Also in: English (Scribe), German (Suhrkamp) and Hungarian (Gondolat).

Recent Translations



Toine Heijmans
At Sea

A tengeren Translated into Hungarian by Veronika Máthé for Gondolat, 2013. Also in: Danish (Turbine), French (Christian Bourgois), German (Arche) and Turkish (Hit Kitap).



Otto de Kat
News from Berlin

Translated into English by Ina Rilke for MacLehose Press, 2014. Also in: German (Schöffling & Co.).



Margriet de Moor
The Painter and the Girl

Maleren og pigen Translated into Danish by Gudrun Gilhuis-Glenthøj and Lise Bøgh-Sørensen for Turbine, 2013. Also in: Czech (Pistorius and Olsanska), Croatian (Fraktura), French (Maren Sell), German (Hanser), Italian (Neri Pozza), Slovenian (Studentska Založba) Turks (Doğan Kitap) and Ukrainian (Folio).



Jan Jacob Slauerhoff
Foam and Ashes

Pena a popol Translated into Slovak by Adam Bžoch for Európa, 2013. Also in: French (Circé), German (Vertaal & Verlaait), Italian (Iperborea) and Spanish (Textofilia).



Eva Maria Staal
Try the Morgue

Die Waffenhändlerin Translated into German by Ilja Braun for Arche, 2013. Also in: English (W.W. Norton & Comp.) and French (éditions du Masque, JC Lattès).



Barbara Stok
Vincent

Translated into English by Laura Watkinson for SelfMadeHero, 2014. Also in: Turkish (Yapi Kredi), Italian (BAO Publishing), French (Emmanuel Proust), Brazilian (L&PM Editores), Greek (Aiora Press), Korea (Open Book) and Spain (Salamandra Graphic).



Arjan Visser
Hotel Linda

Der blaue Vogel kehrt zurück Translated into German by Bettina Bach for DTV, 2014.



Pieter Webeling
Laughter and Death

Das Lachen und der Tod Translated into German by Christiane Burkhardt for Karl Blessing, 2013. Also in: Danish (Turbine), French (Denoël), Norwegian (Bazar) and Turkish (Neben Kitap).

Toine Heijmans
Pristina

Wytske Versteeg
Boy

Tommy Wieringa
A Beautiful Young Woman

Mano Bouzamour
The Promise of Pisa

Jan van Mersbergen
The Last Escape

Arie Storm
Listening to Houses Breathe

Jamal Ouariachi
Tenderness

Pauline Genee
Duel with Horse

Tip Marugg
The Roar of Morning

Esther Verhoef
Close to the Cradle

Robert van Raffe
Unfiltered

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