

10 Books from Holland

Frankfurt Book Fair Issue

Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

Autumn 2017

Frequently Asked Questions

10 Books from Holland? Who decides the contents?

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

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

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

Do you work together with Dutch publishers and agents?

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

How many books by one author will you support?

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

Are all books in your brochure eligible for a grant?

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

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

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

Can you help us find a translator?

Lists of experienced translators are provided by e-mail.

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

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

How do we apply for a translation subsidy?

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

Do you subsidise production costs?

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

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

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

I've heard so much about the Amsterdam Fellowship.

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

Individual Publisher's Visits

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

What's Schwob?

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

Can I subscribe to Books from Holland?

Please leave your card at our stand, or send a message. All our past issues are available at www.letterenfonds.nl.

Advisors Fiction



Barbara den Ouden

Eastern and Middle Europe, Mediterranean countries, Russia, Arabic world. Graphic novels. b.den.ouden@letterenfonds.nl



Victor Schiferli

Scandinavia, German and English-language countries. v.schiferli@letterenfonds.nl



Tiziano Perez

Managing director Brazil, China, Japan. t.perez@letterenfonds.nl



Alexandra Koch

Schwob a.koch@letterenfonds.nl

Tommy Wieringa

Saint Rita

A moving and majestic novel about a lost soul who emerges from the shadows

Paul Krüzen, the novel's unlikely hero, is given a gift by his best friend Hedwiges: a medal of Saint Rita, the patron saint of lost causes. Like most of the men in this book, the two are solitary souls, misfits at odds with the modern world. In this majestic novel, Tommy Wieringa not only returns to the rural sensibilities of his barnstorming breakthrough *Joe Speedboat* but also unites a number of strands from his earlier work: the bonds of friendship, the loner's battle with his surroundings, and the shadow cast by an absent mother.

Paul Krüzen, a Catholic Dutchman, lives with his father on a farm near the German border. He tends to his father's festering leg wound, deals in military memorabilia and eats at Shu Dynasty, the local Chinese restaurant. The only women of any real significance in Paul's life are the exotic beauties at a brothel run by former classmate Steggink, whose misspent youth was a taste of things to come.

As a child, Paul was tied to his mother's apron strings. Beautiful and worldly wise, Alice was in a different league to her provincial husband Aloïs, who was racked by homesickness three days into their honeymoon in Holland. In 1975 the rut of their day-to-day existence was shaken to the core when a Russian pilot escaping to the West fell from the sky and crash-land-

ed his crop duster on the farm. The Russian departed a few months later with Alice at his side.

Wieringa's sketches of life on the farm and the social wranglings in the border village are masterly, complete with evenings at the local pub and off-colour jokes about the Chinese immigrants.

Things turn ugly when someone breaks into Hedwiges home and makes off with a small fortune. Severely traumatised, Hedwiges dies not long after and it is Paul who finds his body. He points the finger at Steggink and his Russian henchman, an accusation that does not go down well in the close-knit community. Chapter 33 delivers a chilling climax, culminating in the night when Paul prepares to settle his score with Steggink, and, more pointedly, the Russian.

A glorious portrayal of a world mired in tradition, *Saint Rita* depicts loners wrestling with the effects of globalisation, from the grocer losing his battle with the supermarket chains and their discount vouchers, to the plumber who feels threatened by his Polish rival. Packed with naturalistic detail, the tale of Paul Krüzen is emblematic of those floundering characters struggling on the margins of a changing world. *Saint Rita* is both a lament for those left behind and an ode to those with the guts to rise above themselves.

Tommy Wieringa is the author of *Alles over Tristan* (Everything About Tristan, 2002) and *Joe Speedboat* (2005), his staggeringly successful breakthrough novel which went on to sell 300,000 copies. His collection of travel stories *Ik was nooit in Isfahaan* (I Never Went to Isfahan, 2006) was followed in 2007 by *De dynamica van begeerte* (The Dynamics of Desire), a meditation on the origins of desire and the modern world's obsession with pornography. Wieringa's work has been translated into languages as disparate as French, Hebrew and Korean. *Dit zijn de namen* (These Are the Names, 2012) earned him the Libris Literature Prize and De Inktap young readers' award.



Publishing details

De heilige Rita (2017)
304 pp, 66,984 words

Rights sold

Scribe (UK)

Rights

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

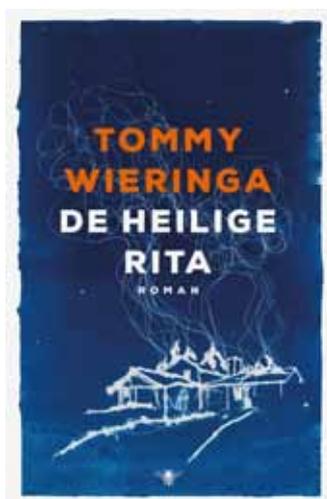
Translated Titles

Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl

On These Are the Names:
'It is superb. It has won the Libris Prize in the Netherlands and, were it eligible, could really shake up the Man Booker. (...) This is a bravura performance. Far closer to Joseph Conrad than one might expect, it makes a case for the saving power of small continuities.'
– *Irish Times*

On A Beautiful Young Wife:
'With his lyrical, sober dialogue and restrained ambience, all created with well-chosen, evocative words, the author carefully doses out the drama, and the cruelty always comes as an unexpected blow. **'**
– *Il Corriere della Sera*

Photo: Gary Doak Photography



Margriet de Moor

Sleepless Night

Baking a cake in the dead of night as a meditation on loss

Unable to sleep, a woman tries to stem the tide of sorrow at the death of her husband and the years spent trying to fathom the mystery behind his suicide. Can she honestly say she knew him? They seemed to have a sound relationship: a happy, loving marriage. And yet... Why did he take his own life? Was there more to it than she knows? And if so, what could it be?

As the young widow goes down to the kitchen in the middle of the night to bake a cake, a man lies sleeping upstairs. A man she met that day for the first time, through a personal ad. They spent a pleasant day together and she invited him to share her bed.

The memories of her husband surface with increasing clarity: a farmer's son, skating through a frozen landscape together, the first time they made love, their wedding and then, out of the blue, his suicide. Why? The question pulses through the narrative. Looking back, is an explanation hidden somewhere? She remembers the day it happened, how she reacted, the questions asked by family and acquaint-

ances. 'I would not be able to tell a single soul what possessed my husband in the final moments of his life.' Inexorably, the reader is drawn into mulling over events in the lead-up to the tragedy. Had a former girlfriend re-entered his life? Did his relationship with his mother or his sister play a part?

As in all her work, De Moor excels at creating scenes that are rich in telling, unexpected and sometimes humorous details. Her distinctive, finely wrought style eschews threadbare imagery, with subtle and wry descriptions that lighten the tone, mitigate the grief and highlight the sensitivity of the protagonist's inner world.

Ultimately, the riddle of the suicide is not solved. Any solution is left to the reader, and who is to say one even exists, since we can never know exactly what goes on inside the mind of another human being? The reason why the man she loved took his own life will always remain a mystery and there is nothing left for the woman to do but bake her cake in the middle of the night. De Moor's novella is a miracle of empathy and literary artistry.

Margriet de Moor is one of Holland's leading writers. Having studied piano and voice at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague and art history and archaeology at the University of Amsterdam, she debuted as a writer in 1988 with *Op de rug gezien* (Seen From Behind), a collection of short stories. It was the first step in a prolific and highly successful literary career. De Moor's acclaimed first novel, *Eerst grijs dan wit dan blauw* (First Grey, Then White, Then Blue, 1990) won her the AKO Literature Prize. Her work has been translated into over twenty languages.



Publishing details

Slapeloze nacht (2016)
240 pp., 22,479 words

Rights

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

Rights sold

Grasset et Fasquelle (France),
Carl Hanser Verlag (Germany)

Translated Titles

Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl

'If this novella makes one thing clear, it is that the things that happen to others never quite impinge on our own reality and sometimes remain entirely inconceivable.'
– Elsevier

'A fascinating, cleverly constructed story that unfolds delicately and with great psychological finesse.' – *Frankfurter Rundschau*

'Margriet de Moor tells us the story of a young woman who gets up in the middle of the night and starts baking a cake. Her lover is asleep in her bedroom upstairs, and when it is time to remove the cake from the oven, the reader has been told a tragic story of love and death. Without a doubt, the impression made by *Sleepless Night* is inversely proportional to its length: unforgettable.'
– Jean Mattern, *Editions Grasset*

Photo: John Foley Opale Leemage



Alfred Birney

The Interpreter from Java

An autobiographical tour de force, crowned with the 2017 Libris Literature Prize

From the first sentence, which barrels ahead at a feverish pace for more than one page, this novel grabs the reader by the throat. A son compresses his father's life in the Dutch East Indies (present-day Indonesia) into one furious eruption – everything from the atrocities of the Japanese occupation, and the war of independence that followed, to his father's violent and unpredictable treatment of his children in his new homeland, The Netherlands.

Arto Nolan is the father's name; his son Alan strives to overcome his loathing and comprehend the man who abused him and beat his mother. That strange fellow from Indonesia had fled to the Netherlands before the Indonesians could execute him as a traitor. He soon married an overweight girl from a small town, had five children, and soon became so violent that Alan and his siblings had to spend most of their childhood in boarding schools.

His father spent evening after evening typing on his Remington; his wife and children had no idea what he was working on and were happy to have him out of the way. Later, Alan discovers his father had been working on his memoirs. Early in the book, he presents passages with his own sarcastic annotations – clearly, he does not have one shred of trust in his father. Later, his bitter interruptions become less

frequent. They are completely absent from the second part of the memoirs, about Arto's ruthless work as an interpreter who not only translated but also led interrogations, tortured prisoners, and did not hesitate to murder.

Arto's passages are chilling in their detachment. He first describes how he was abused as a child by his own father (who was not married to his mother) and brothers. He later became an assassin. At first his targets were Japanese; after the occupation ended, he murdered Indonesians in the service of the Dutch, without question, without any pangs of conscience. The source of his loyalty to his overlords, from a country he had never seen, remains a mystery.

In this unsparing family history, Birney exposes a crucial chapter in Dutch history that was deliberately concealed behind the ideological facade of postwar optimism and reconstruction. The influx of refugees from Indonesia formed a threat to this illusion. Those wars turned Nolan from a boy into a monster, at least in the eyes of children. Do the memoirs offer his son a new perspective; does the monster become human? Nolan ends with the words, 'I won't fight anymore; I quit.' But of course he cannot quit, and readers of this superb novel will likewise find that it reverberates long afterwards in their memory.

Alfred Birney (1951) is the author of an oeuvre of largely autobiographical fiction and non-fiction, in which his family's history often plays a central role. He made his debut in 1987 with the novel *Tamara's Lunapark*. He edited a voluminous anthology of literary fiction from the Dutch East Indies in 1998, and two of his most important novels, *Vogels rond een vrouw* (Birds Around A Woman, 1991) and *De onschuld van een vis* (The Innocence of a Fish, 1995) were translated and published in Indonesia. For his most recent novel, considered to be his magnum opus, he was awarded the Libris Literature Prize and the Henriëtte Roland Holst Prize.



Publishing details

De tolk van Java (2016)
542 pp., 161,881 words
80,000 copies sold

Publisher

De Geus
Ad van den Kieboom
a.v.d.kieboom@degeus.nl
www.degeus.nl

Rights

Jolijn Spooren
j.spooren@singeluitgeverijen.nl

Rights sold

Indonesia (Gramedia)

English sample translation available

'With this family story, Birney mercilessly exposes a crucial part of Dutch history. This masterful novel will echo on in the minds of its readers.'
– *de Volkskrant* (***)

'A masterly novel about the violence of colonialism, the war of decolonisation, the repatriation and the far-reaching consequences all these things have had on generations of the families involved.'
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

'What a strange novel, its language and storytelling so light, but also raw and full of lyricism. What a tremendous writer. Read this bloody book!'
– *Adriaan van Dis*

Photo: Eddo Hartman



Yolanda Entius

Abdul and Akil

An intimate portrayal of lives haunted by guilt, fear and shame



It is the summer of 1978. With the world at their feet, Nola, Doris and Gaby head off on holiday together: three 17-year-old girls in search of a sun-drenched paradise. André, a devil-may-care character they bump into on the way to the campsite, is more than willing to be their guide. On the banks of a river in France the world seems sultry, free and innocent. Until romance blossoms between André and Gaby and they decide to spend the rest of the summer together picking grapes. Nola and Doris go their own way and arrange to meet up with the two lovers later.

Abdul and Akil cross the path of Nola and Doris when the girls call in at a village café to ask directions to the vineyard where André and Gaby are working. The two Tunisians offer to help but first they suggest taking a walk together. The girls agree, perhaps to prove to themselves that they have nothing to fear from a pair of young immigrants. It is a decision that changes everything: Nola is raped by Abdul and Doris is sexually assaulted by Akil. Entius gives a calm and controlled account of their ordeal.

Back in Amsterdam, Nola goes to university and seems to have put the events of the summer behind her. The friendship with Doris and Gaby fades into the background. But that one afternoon – the blue sky, the dark eyes of the two boys – is still there under her skin. Almost imperceptible

to anyone who does not know what took place, but an unmistakable influence on Nola's dealings with men. She finds herself feeling guilty for reporting the rape to the police after promising Abdul she would not. He is given a six-year prison sentence, while Nola believes that for her the consequences have not been so bad.

Doris has become fearful: afraid of men with dark eyes, afraid of the dark-skinned young men who hang around on the park bench in front of her house. She is seriously ill but cannot bring herself to tell anyone, just as she has never told Nola exactly what happened to her that afternoon in France. Eventually it is one of the boys from the bench in whom she confides. She tells him she does not have long to live and even finds the courage to invite him into her house. His name means 'angel'.

In *Abdul and Akil*, Entius brings a lightness of touch to her exploration of emotionally fraught themes. Harnessing the power of subtlety and suggestion, she shows how individuals can be shaped by moments in their lives, and how prejudice and political correctness can feed into our reasoning. Reality has many faces. A victim can feel like a perpetrator, a single event contains many stories, and as human beings we are all too ready to fill the gaps in someone else's story. *Abdul and Akil* gently interferes with our ingrained patterns of thought and that is what makes it such an unsettling and important book.

Publishing details

Abdoel en Akil (2017)
158 pp., 37,294 words

Publisher

Van Oorschot
www.vanoorschot.nl

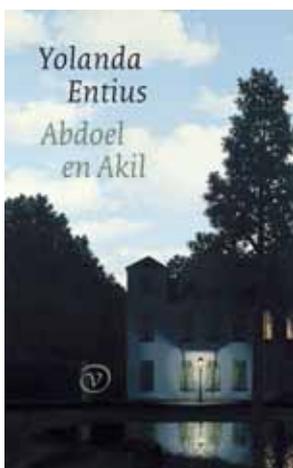
Rights

Menno Hartman
menno@vanoorschot.nl
Laura Susijn
laura@thesusijnagency.com

'Sidestepping sentimentality, Entius depicts lives that have run aground – lives that sketch a wonderful, oblique portrait of Amsterdam in the seventies and eighties – and writes of sorrow that makes her characters both lonely and independent, wounded and yet strong.'
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*

'By making everyone the measure of things, we can find a genuine sense of perspective. The plea made by Yolanda Entius [...] is that we allow this realisation to inform our lives. And that is what makes *Abdul and Akil* a hugely important book.'
– *NRC*

'With a deceptive lightness of tone, Entius leads us little by little into a quagmire of prejudices and lets us sink a good way in: the reader's own adventure.'
– *de Volkskrant*



Yolanda Entius studied history and worked in the theatre for many years as an actress and director. She debuted in 2005 with the novel *Rakelings* (*Narrowly*), which was awarded the Selexyz Debut Award. Her novel *Het kabinet van de familie Staal* (*The Cabinet of the Staal Family*, 2011) was longlisted for the AKO Literature Prize and shortlisted for the Opzij Literature Prize.

Photo: Tessa Posthuma de Boer

Lieke Marsman

The Opposite of a Person

A bold and original novel about our capacity to care about what matters most

One of the most persistent criticisms of contemporary writers, particularly the latest generation, is also the most inaccurate: that they are a bunch of navel-gazers. True, the work of young authors is often deeply rooted in personal experience, but they are equally concerned with exploring how the individual relates to the complexity of the modern world. The most fascinating book on this very subject has been published: the bold and original debut by celebrated poet Lieke Marsman.

‘Did they ever consider the possibility that apathy might also be the result of actually *having* values?’ Marsman muses. ‘Everything matters: depression can just as easily stem from an excessive lust for life as from a lack of it.’ Striking observations that echo the words of Naomi Klein, which also feature in the novel: ‘What if part of the reason so many of us have failed to take action is not because we are too selfish to care but because we are utterly overwhelmed by how much we do care?’

These quotes capture the theme of this novel: our ability to care about ‘an abstract or seemingly far-off problem’. Why is it that the issue of climate change leaves us unmoved? A topic for an essay rather than a novel, you might say. Perhaps, but the innovative fervour on display here renders such distinctions irrelevant. Marsman regularly strays beyond the bounds of the traditional novel to embrace the clarity of

more discursive and poetic forms, and does so seamlessly.

At the same time, the strong central character and storyline attest to the fact that this is still very much a novel. Ida, a young climatologist, embarks on an internship at an institute tasked with demolishing a dam in the Italian Alps. But this is also a book about love, a concern that looms as large as global warming – for Ida the two are interwoven in her contemplative nature, her analytical capacity and her tendency towards self-absorption.

Marsman has an astounding ability to make her reflections our reflections without compromising their personal nature. The novel’s eclectic form is central to this achievement: we get to know Ida through the aphoristic poem ‘I Hate the Storm, I Love the Storm’ and through her essays. This produces highly relevant philosophical literature that touches on all manner of intellectual preoccupations, from our inner workings to the world around us. Above all, it produces literature with the power to move.

This is an extraordinary, compelling novel of ideas, profound and poetic. Cerebral too, in its relentless exploration of how our minds operate. Which brings us back to our arrogance in imagining ourselves to be the centre of the universe. A claim the natural world shrugs off with glacial indifference.

Lieke Marsman (1990) is currently studying philosophy in Amsterdam. Her first volume of poetry, *Wat ik mijzelf graag voorhoud* (What I Like to Impress on Myself, 2010), earned her three major literary awards: the C. Buddingh’ Prize, the Lucy B. and C.W. van der Hoogt Prize and the Liegend Konijn Debut Award. *The Opposite of a Human Being* (2017) is her first novel.



Publishing details

Het tegenovergestelde van een mens (2017)
176 pp., 30,505 words

Rights

Atlas Contact
Hayo Deinum
hdeinum@atlascontact.nl
www.atlascontact.nl

‘An extraordinary and gripping novel of ideas.’ – ****
NRC Handelsblad

‘The originality and flair that characterises Marsman’s poetry is very much in evidence in her novel.’
– *de Volkskrant*

‘For such a young writer, Marsman is a strong and consistent stylist. Her sentences are so clearly her own. (...) Her readiness to experiment with form makes this an audacious novel, distinct from the work of many of her contemporaries. Ample proof that Marsman is more than a gifted poet.’
– **** *Het Parool*

‘A surprisingly playful novel, ideologically committed, an edifice of ideas both pessimistic and optimistic. Every page is engaging and the tone is remarkably consistent despite the abundance of stylistic variation. All this and highly topical into the bargain.’
– *De Groene Amsterdammer*



Marjolijn van Heemstra

And His Name Is

A thrilling, probing novel about the dark truth behind a family legend

Marjolijn van Heemstra has a conversation with her partner about what to name their child. She's pregnant and, as the chapter title explains, still has 27 weeks to go. Her partner tells her that a name always fits in the end, like a leather shoe that takes on the shape of the foot. Marjolijn thinks it's the other way round: 'You grow into your name. The name is the foot.'

Van Heemstra had a legendary uncle, known to his relatives as 'Cousin Bomber'. As the story went, he fought against the Nazis in the Dutch Resistance, and some six months after the war ended, he had a bomb delivered to a former collaborator on St. Nicholas Eve, the fifth of December, when children are traditionally given presents. Many years later, on his deathbed, the same uncle sent a very different package to Marjolijn's grandmother: his ring, with instructions to give it to the first child in the family to bear his name. Surprised by her own decisiveness, Marjolein says their child should be named after her uncle.

The decision introduces the question of how history echoes into the future. When she starts to ask around, none of her relatives seem to know the details. As the bulge in her belly grows, she delves deep

into the archives. Time and again, the myth of Cousin Bomber is debunked. First, it proves controversial whether his victim ever worked with the Nazis. There is no hard evidence.

Marjolijn keeps running up against a fundamental truth: history is no more than an assortment of people muddling their way forward, all without any clear notion of how things will turn out. She learns what Cousin Bomber never wanted to know, about that St. Nicholas Eve. The whole family leaned in as Father unwrapped the unexpected gift. The autopsy report makes the incident all the more gruesome: the explosion killed not only the suspected collaborator, but also his wife and their maid, aged seventeen.

Marjolijn continues her search, trying to pierce the veil of half-truths. The book also has a second storyline: her pregnancy. As the chapter titles count down, the complications mount. This subplot provides a deadline for her investigation, and perhaps also opens a door onto the central theme: life goes on, as messy as ever, and anything that too closely resembles a neatly wrapped-up story is, in fact, little more than coincidence.



Publishing details

En we noemen hem ... (2017)
215 pp., 45,000 words

Publisher

Das Mag

Rights

Cossee
Stella Rieck
rieck@cossee.com
www.cossee.com

English sample translation available

'Towards the end, the tension between the all-too-human urge to cover up evil and our longing for the honest truth becomes increasingly palpable. That is the true masterstroke of *And His Name Is*, making it not just a fascinating non-fiction book about the complex nature of heroism in wartime, but also an urgent work of literature about our relationship to the Second World War in particular, and to the past in general.'

– *NRC Next* (5 stars)

'A stirring, electrifying story, packed with keen observations about myth and narrative.'

– *Trouw*

'An exquisite novel about the importance of myths and the necessity of unravelling them.'

– Tommy Wieringa



Poet, novelist, and playwright **Marjolijn van Heemstra** (b. 1981) holds a master's degree in religion. Her first poetry collection, *If Moses Had Gone On Questioning* (2009) won the Jo Peters Poetry Prize. She debuted as a novelist with *The Last of the Aedemas* (2012).

Photo: Maarten van der Kamp

Roman Helinski

The Waffle Factory

An absurdist fable about leadership and our hunger to be misled

With his second novel, *The Waffle Factory*, Roman Helinski has given us a modern-day *Animal Farm*, only now the setting is industrial and it's people not animals caught up in the machinations of power. In the factory, as in Orwell's farmyard dystopia, some are more equal than others.

Waffles are waffles. For decades they have been rolling off the factory conveyor belt according to the same tired old production process. Of course there's hygiene and health and safety to consider, but where's the harm in turning a blind eye now and then? And while workers are under strict orders to keep their hands off the merchandise, munching a waffle on the fly is one of life's little perks.

Wannes is in charge of the oven, while Patrick works in the warehouse. Down on the production line, it's the ladies who rule the roost. 'Men are just not up to the physical and psychological rigours of the factory floor.' Big Gerda is the forewoman, a formidable buffer between the workers and the Board of Directors. Mathilda, the only girl in the factory with a winning white smile, is having it off with the CEO. Meanwhile the boss man himself has a hotline to Tokyo and is a fervent believer in hands-off management.

What has long been considered normal

practice suddenly takes on a whole new aspect when the bloke standing next to you sees things in a different light. Arka Narovski – bald, muscular and seven feet tall – even has his colleagues focusing on the invisible. 'Why do we need to look at the air?' Big Gerda asks. 'Trust me,' Arka grins.

Before long Arka has his fellow workers eating out of the palm of his hand. In the thrall of his steely charisma, they are all too willing to overlook his shortcomings. The mighty Pole – or is he Russian? – gives them the guts to break with time-honoured regulations. Though his ultimate objective remains a mystery, the workers obey Arka's commandments without a second thought and the old factory regime starts to crumble. A strike is held, a section of the factory burns down and the world is turned upside down. The sacrifices Arka demands are absurd and cruel, yet everyone follows him blindly.

With an effortless knack for presenting the extraordinary as everyday, Helinski instantly makes the reader feel right at home in and around the factory. We empathise completely with the workers' infatuation for the Polish giant – or is he Russian? The result is a timeless novel about how simple it can be to mislead an entire group, and about our hunger to be misled.



Publishing details

De wafelfabriek (2017)
176 pp., 36,938 words
English sample available
Publisher: Hollands Diep

Rights

2 Seas Agency
Marleen Seegers,
marleen.seegers@2seasagency.com

'One can only admire Helinski's ironic subtlety, which is based more on classic writers like Gogol than on any modern trends. And on his own talent for comic absurdity. An allegory? A fairy tale? A dystopia? Whatever it is, Helinski is a born storyteller.'
– *NRC Handelsblad* (****)

'A fascinating, mysterious book. Helinski's specific writing style – using short simple sentences and telling everything in the present tense – makes *The Waffle Factory* a universal story that leaves a lasting impression.'
– *Knack* (****)

'*The Waffle Factory* is a perfectly crafted story about people who discover their right to dissatisfaction. [...] Witty and wry, topical and timeless: this is a tale that nags away at you for a long time – like the pain in your mouth after a tooth has been extracted.'
– Niña Weijers

Photo: Perry Schrijvers



Roman Helinski (b. 1983) is a journalist and writer whose short stories and articles have featured in a range of literary magazines. His 2014 novel *Bloemkool uit Tsjernobyl* (Cauliflower from Chernobyl) was included as one of the most notable Dutch debuts of the new millennium in the anthology *De Nederlandse literatuur van de 21e eeuw* (Dutch Literature in the 21st Century).

Willem Frederik Hermans

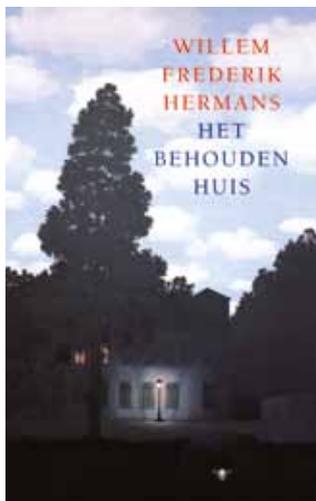
An Untouched House

Classic war novella dissects the destructive force of human nature

Without a doubt, the Second World War is a central theme in the work of Willem Frederik Hermans. His is a remarkable, unflinching oeuvre driven by the dark world-view that civilization as we know it is only a thin veneer covering the monstrousness of human nature. In this peerless novella, Hermans offers a chilling dissection of the horror that ensues when the mask of decency is cast aside in the savagery of war.

Eastern Europe, 1944. A Dutch soldier fighting with the partisans – a motley band of volunteers from disparate countries – comes across an abandoned house and takes shelter there during a lull in the hostilities. This grand residence seems almost untouched by the war, and the partisan assumes the role of the owner, dressing in clothes he finds in the wardrobe and feasting on the food left in the kitchen. Before long, the conflict resumes. German forces recapture the town and come knocking at the door. They take the first-person protagonist to be the owner and coerce him into providing the soldiers with lodgings.

The German colonel maintains a stiff upper lip and a breezy disposition amid the wartime carnage: 'Since joining the army [...] I have shaved every day without fail at exactly half past six in the morning. [...] That is what I understand by culture!'



The Dutch partisan seems to be on to a good thing until one day he is accosted by a man who turns out to be the rightful owner of the house. The man's wife also makes an appearance. Terrified of being exposed as an impostor, the partisan kills them both in cold blood.

When the Germans lose control of the town once more, the victorious partisans go on the rampage and raid the house, slashing paintings and relieving themselves in vases. The German colonel is strung up with piano wire. As the partisans leave the ravaged house behind, the narrator – who has ditched his disguise and merged back into the group – lobs a hand grenade into the hallway, completing the devastation. Thus ends the tale of a house once untouched by war: 'It was like it had been putting on an act the whole time and was only now showing itself as it, in reality, had always been: a hollow, draughty cavern, rancid and rotting at its core.'

The novella has appeared in many editions and has sparked intense critical debate ever since its publication. Readers have been fascinated and troubled in equal measure by the way in which Hermans gives this abandoned house a life of its own and pits civilization against brute force, truth against lies, and order against chaos. Through the decades, this profound and mesmerising work has lost none of its dark and disturbing power.

Willem Frederik Hermans (1921-1995) was one of the most prolific and versatile Dutch authors of the twentieth century. He wrote essays, scientific studies, short stories, and poems, but was best known for several novels, the most famous of which are *De tranen der acacia's* (The Tears of the Acacias, 1949), *De donkere kamer van Damocles* (The Darkroom of Damocles, 1958), and *Nooit meer slapen* (Beyond Sleep, 1966).



Publishing details

Het behouden huis (1951)
80 pp., 14,457 words

Rights

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

Rights sold

Pushkin Press (UK), Archipelago Books (US), Aufbau (Germany), RCS Libri (Italy).

'A literary tour de force that contains the quintessence of Hermans's work. Inhabitants of a sadistic universe full of malice and misunderstanding, a place that allows no escape, at least not in this disturbing book.'
– *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*

'A violent apotheosis without equal in modern literature. A sadistic universe that offers no room for escape.'
– Cees Nooteboom

'Unsurpassed in its stylistic precision, unsettling in its language, dialogue, atmosphere, humour.'
– Harry Mulisch

Photo: Jutka Rona

Felix Weber

Unto Dust

Multi-layered thriller unlocks the harrowing secrets of a Catholic asylum

The man at the heart of Felix Weber's rich and deftly constructed historical thriller is Siem Coburg, a former Resistance fighter wrongfully accused of collaborating with the Germans in occupied Holland during World War Two. He was guilty by association, having survived the war alongside traitor Willem Ashoff, who posed as a member of the same Resistance network while using his connections to deal in contraband.

Ashoff ruthlessly conned Siem's lover Rosa into risking her life on what she thought was a vital operation when in fact she was smuggling watches and tobacco. In the aftermath of a mission sabotaged by Ashoff, Rosa was taken prisoner and killed by firing squad.

Embittered, Siem has turned his back on the world, but his sister Maria rouses him from his self-imposed exile. She has been approached by Tammens, a farmer who helped save Siem's life shortly before the war ended. On the run after killing a couple of Nazi sympathisers who were planning to inform on him, Siem found refuge on Tammens' farm and only narrowly avoided discovery: at the last minute, his pursuers were driven away by the bloodcurdling screams of the farmer's mentally disabled grandson Siebold.

After the war, Tammens was forced to place Siebold in the care of the monks

of St Norbert's, a Catholic home for mentally disabled children. Aged only 17, the boy died within its walls, a violent death judging by the welts and other wounds covering his body. Tammens asks Siem to find those responsible.

Siem rents a room in the village close to St Norbert's and begins his surveillance of life in and around the institution. Posing as a journalist he is given a tour of the grounds and the buildings. The suspicions aroused during this visit are confirmed when he sneaks into the complex and witnesses a violent outburst by one of the monks.

Weber weaves a second plotline through his narrative, focusing on Brother Felix who is a virtual outsider within the order at St Norbert's. Having endured the horrors of the trenches during the First World War, where he served as a medic, he has a keen eye for suffering. But traumatised by his wartime ordeal he lacks the resolve to intervene in the cycle of abuse he sees around him.

Siem Coburg's recollections of life in the Resistance, the diaries of Brother Felix and the revelations surrounding the abuses in the institution come together to form an intriguing and multi-layered narrative set against the insular life of the village dominated by St Norbert's, where silence and intimidation go hand in hand. Human frailty is evocatively expressed in Felix Weber's tense and richly imagined thriller.

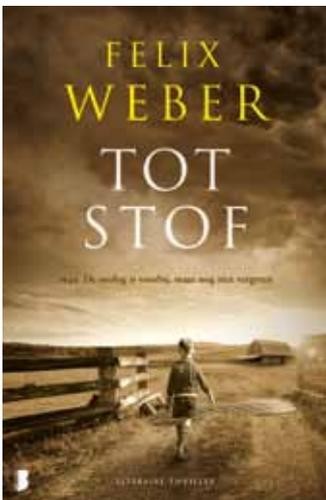


Publishing Details

Tot stof (2016)
351 pp., 103,923 words
8,000 copies sold

Rights

De Boekerij
Maaikje le Noble,
mlenoble@meulenhoffboekerij.nl
2seasAgency
Marleen Seegers, marleen.
seegers@2seasagency.com



Felix Weber is the pseudonym of well-established thriller writer Gauke Andriessse. *Unto Dust* earned him his second Gouden Strop Award for crime fiction, having won under his own name in 2011 with *De handen van Kalman Teller* (The Hands of Kalman Teller). Adopting a new pen name is indicative of Andriessse's urge to take his writing in a new direction.

'Storylines that dance around one another till they are seamlessly woven together, characters that work their way under your skin and into your heart.'
– *Jury of the Gouden Strop Award*

'Whether the author of *Unto Dust* calls himself Weber or Andriessse doesn't matter. Far more interesting is the fact that he has written one of the best thrillers of 2016.'
– *de Volkskrant*

'With chilling intensity, Weber brings to life his grisly kingdom of monks and the poor souls entrusted to their care.'
– *VN Detective en Thriller Gids*

Photo: Anja van Wijgerden

Frenk Meeuwsen

Zen Without a Master

Visual philosophy in a surprisingly layered comic

For Frenk Meeuwsen, a drawing is like a Zen garden: wavy lines on snow-white paper. In those lines, he searches for the essence of Japan, for truth, and for himself. His book *Zen Without a Master* is visual philosophy.

Meeuwsen worked for three years on the graphic novel *Zen Without a Master*, in which he puts his search for spirituality down on paper in 55 brief chapters. Many of the experiences take place in Japan, where he draws sad girls' eyes for an animation studio. He also regularly revisits his youth in the Netherlands, with his father as his first guru.

As the result of an eye defect, Meeuwsen has no depth perception and, as a storyteller, he makes repeated use of this irony to point out pitfalls in the way to the truth.

What is the sound of one hand clapping? Meeuwsen solves this famous puzzle of Zen philosophy quite simply: it "sounds" the

way applause is depicted in sign language for the deaf. And, of course, he provides an illustration too, and this solution is also characteristic of his approach to spirituality, in which laughter is encouraged. Applying Dutch common sense, he takes on Japanese Buddhism, making some surprising discoveries along the way.

Zen Without a Master is drawn in crisp black and white, in the style of the French artist David B., who is one of Meeuwsen's great role models. In Asian calligraphy, the black brushstroke on snow-white paper is an exercise in both concentration and gracefulness: the artist has to focus while letting go. In the Japanese Zen garden, the dark grooves in the white gravel create patterns for meditating monks to follow, in order to forget themselves. Meeuwsen also has a fine tale to tell about the black belt that he received as a karateka: if you often fight, the black wears off, until a white belt remains. The art of the paradox.



Publishing details

Zen zonder meester (2017)
280 pp, approximately
18,285 words

Publisher

Sherpa
Mat Schifferstein
mat@sherpa.nu

Rights

avant-verlag
Johann Ulrich
info@avant-verlag.de

Frenk Meeuwsen (b. 1965) studied at the Gerrit Rietveld Academie and the Rijksakademie van Beeldende Kunsten in Amsterdam. He is also a practitioner of martial arts and has a black belt in karate. His fascination with the philosophical thinking of the Far East took him to Japan in the mid-1990s, where he lived in the temple city of Kyoto. Meeuwsen has exhibited his art at home and abroad, and is now making his debut as a comics artist with *Zen zonder meester*.

"A surprisingly layered comic, which simultaneously informs, moves and prompts the reader to reflect upon life and its meaning. Highly recommended!"
— Erik Kriek



Successful Titles

Making a Splash on the International Literary Market

Literary self-help fable which sold 120,000 copies in Japan

Toon Tellegen
What the Hedgehog Really Wanted
 (Het verlangen van de egel)
 18,000 copies sold

Rights: Jolijn Spooren,
 j.spooren@singeluitgeverijen.nl
Rights sold: Japan (Shinchosha),
 China (CITIC Press Corporation),
 Korea (Book21), Taiwan (Global Kids
 Books), Turkey (Palto)

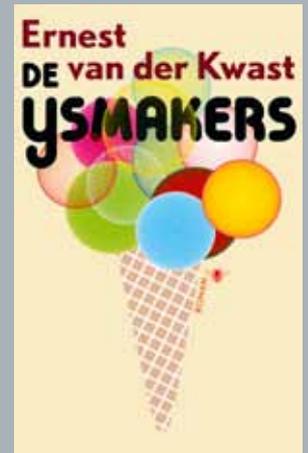
'Tellegen writes in a moving and entertaining manner. As much as he twists, exaggerates, shrinks and fools around, he never hides his subject matter; recognizable human behaviour and recognizable human emotions.'
 – *de Volkskrant*



Eldest son breaks with a proud family tradition and finds himself saddled with a brotherly debt

Ernest van der Kwast
The Ice-Cream Makers
 (De ijsmakers)
 25.000 copies sold

Rights: Marijke Nagtegaal,
 m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl,
 Uta Matten, u.matten@debezigebij.nl
Rights sold: China (Shanghai Dook
 Publishing), Croatia (Fraktura),
 Germany (BTB), Italy (Ponte alle
 Grazie), UK and Australia (Scribe),
 US (37 Ink)



'A delightful read; smooth as ice cream on a hot summer day'.
 – *Kirkus Reviews*

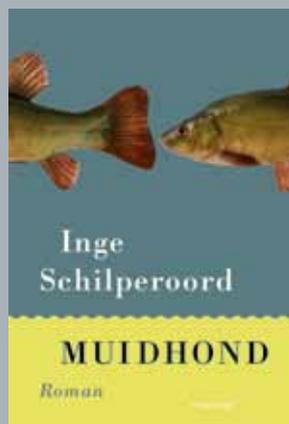
Acclaimed debut about a man who falls victim to his own desire

Inge Schilperoord
Tench
 (Muidhond)
 25.000 copies sold
 Nominated for the Prix Femina

Rights: Merijn Hollestelle,
 mh@uitgeverijpodium.nl
Rights sold: Catalonia (Enciclopèdia
 Catalana), Colombia (Intermedio),
 France (Belfond), Italy (Fazi), Norway
 (Aschehoug), Spain (Enciclopèdia
 Catalana), Turkey (Pinhan)

'A dark and powerful read, underpinned by a growing sense of terrible tension'.
 – *Daily Mail*

'Stunningly accomplished... claustrophobic and compelling... deeply unsettling, strangely beautiful... an extraordinary debut'.
 – ***** *DailyTelegraph*

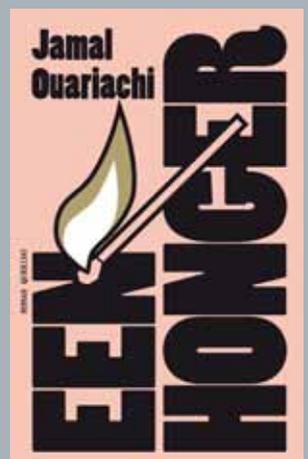


Masterly novel of ideas based on the life of Nobel Prize-winner Daniel Carleton Gajdusek

Jamal Ouariachi
A Hunger
 (Een honger)
 6,000 copies sold
 Winner of the European Union
 Prize for Literature 2017

Rights: Jolijn Spooren,
 j.spooren@singeluitgeverijen.nl
Rights sold: Albania (Dituria), Bulgaria
 (Colibri), Czech (Bourdon), Hungary
 (Vince), Macedonia (Antolog), Poland
 (Relacja), Serbia (Akademska Knjiga),
 Slovenia (Mladinska Knjiga), Spain
 (Tres Hermanas)

'Few writers immerse themselves so deeply in their characters as [Ouariachi] does. *A Hunger* is not only a catalogue of peerless sentences, but also a miracle of imagination and empathy'.
 – *De Standaard*



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.



Louis Couperus
Footsteps of Fate

[*Sudbina*]

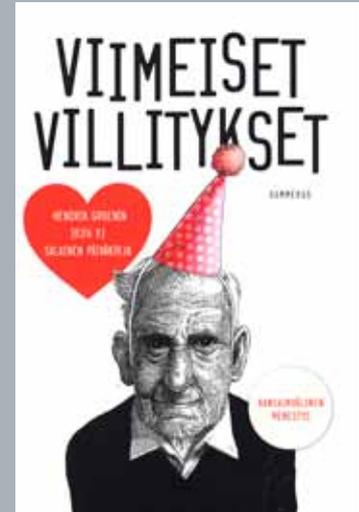
Translated into Macedonian by Darko Cvetanoski for Makedonika Litera, 2017.



Renate Dorrestein
Seven Sorts of Hunger

Sette tipi di fame

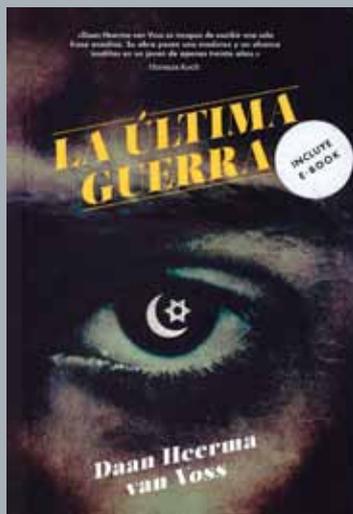
Translated into Italian by Laura Pignatti for Ugo Guanda, 2017.



Hendrik Groen
The Secret Diary of Hendrik Groen, 83 1/4 years old

Viimeiset villitykset

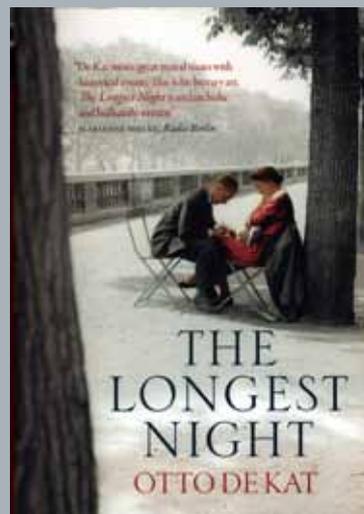
Translated into Finnish by Sanna van Leeuwen for Gummerus, 2017.



Daan Heerma van Voss
The Last War

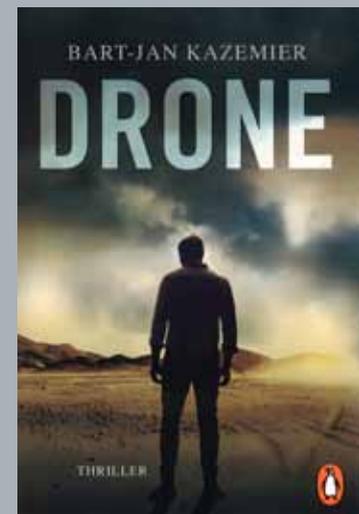
La última guerra

Translated into Spanish by Marta Arguilé Bernal for Malpaso, 2017.



Otto de Kat
The Longest Night

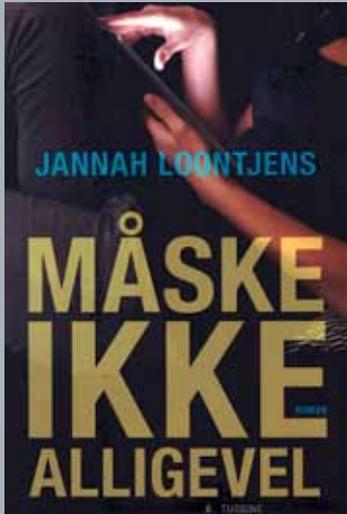
Translated into English by Laura Watkinson for MacLehose Press, 2017.



Bart-Jan Kazemier
Drone

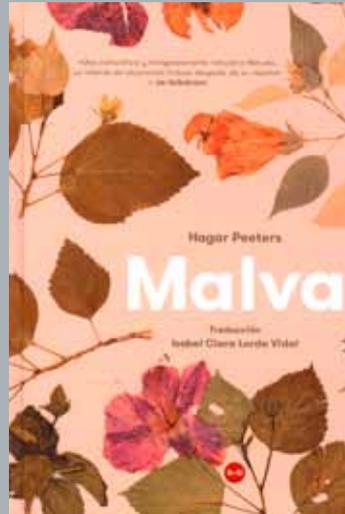
Drone

Translated into German by Marjolijn Storm and Simone Schroth for Penguin Verlag, 2017.



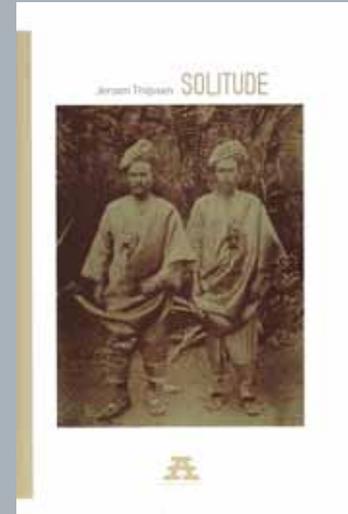
Jannah Loontjens
Perhaps Not

Måske ikke alligevel
Translated into Danish by Miriam Boolsen
for Turbine, 2017.



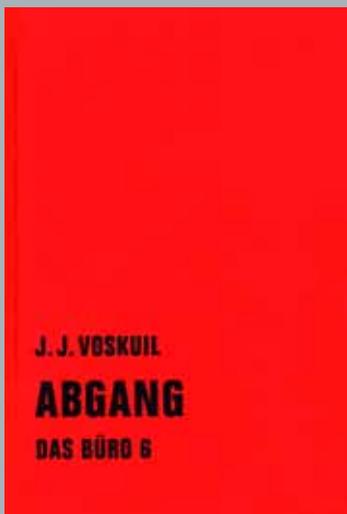
Hagar Peeters
Malva

Malva
Translated into Spanish by Isabel-Clara
Lorda Vidal for Rey Naranjo Editores, 2017.



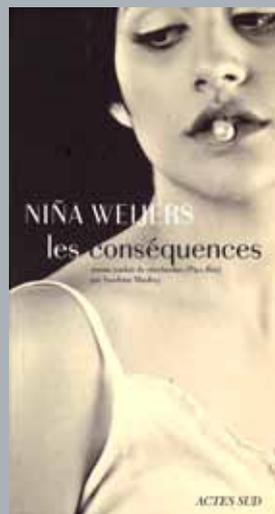
Jeroen Thijssen
Solitude

Solitude
Translated into Spanish by Gonzalo
Fernández for Arango Editores, 2017.



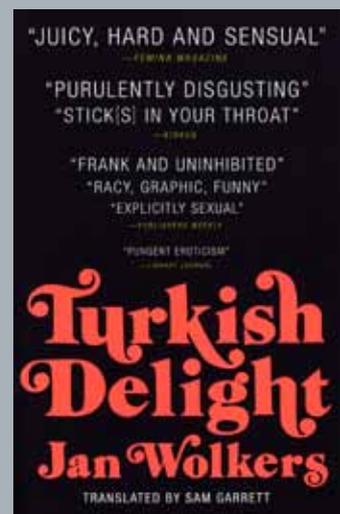
J.J. Voskuil
The Bureau 6

Abgang - Das Büro 6
Translated into German by Gerd Busse for
Verbrecher Verlag, 2017.



Niña Weijers
The Consequences

Les conséquences
Translated into French by Sandrine Maufroy
for Actes Sud, 2017.



Jan Wolkers
Turkish Delight

Translated into English by Sam Garrett for
Tin House Books, 2017.

Tommy Wieringa
Saint Rita

Margriet de Moor
Sleepless Night

Alfred Birney
The Interpreter from Java

Yolanda Entius
Abdul and Akil

Lieke Marsman
The Opposite of a Person

Marjolijn van Heemstra
And His Name Is

Roman Helinski
The Waffle Factory

Willem Frederik Hermans
An Untouched House

Felix Weber
Unto Dust

Frenk Meeuwssen
Zen Without a Master

Books from Holland

is distributed to international editors and publishers. Please contact us if you would like to be included on our mailing list.

Editors

Dick Broer, Barbara den Ouden, Tiziano Perez, Victor Schiferli

Contributions

Dick Broer, Kees 't Hart, Marlies Hoff, Janita Monna, Barbara den Ouden, Joost Pollman, Victor Schiferli

Some texts in this brochure are based on reviews by Wim Bossema (De Volkskrant), Joost de Vries (De Groene Amsterdammer) and Thomas de Veen (NRC).

Translation

David Doherty, David McKay, Laura Watkinson

Cover Image

Victor Schiferli
www.flickr.com/victorschiferli

Printing

Platform P

Design

Kummer & Herrman, Utrecht

Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

Postbus/PO Box 16588
NL - 1001 RB Amsterdam
t +31 (0)20 520 73 00
post@letterenfonds.nl
www.letterenfonds.nl

visiting address
Nieuwe Prinsengracht 89
1018 VR Amsterdam