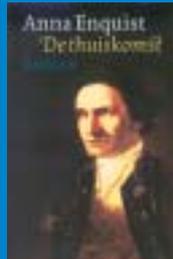


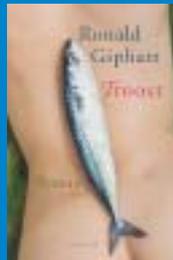
10 Books

from Holland and Flanders



Anna Enquist

Tommy Wieringa



Ronald Giphart

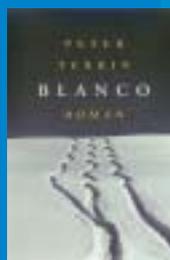
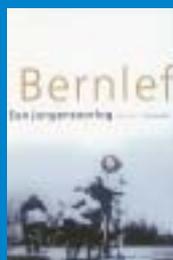
Bart Koubaa



Margriet de Moor

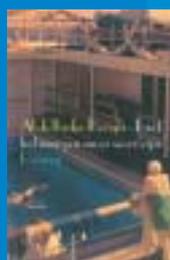
Tomas Lieske

Bernlef



Peter Terrin

Patricia De Martelaere



Abdelkader Benali



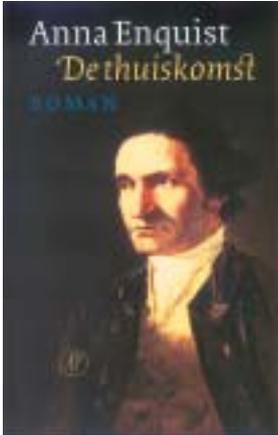
FOUNDATION FOR
THE PRODUCTION AND
TRANSLATION OF
DUTCH LITERATURE

Flemish
Literature
Fund



Consolation is for the undamaged

Anna Enquist The Homecoming



WITH *THE HOMECOMING*, a historical novel, Anna Enquist has changed course. Elizabeth Batts, the main character, is married to James Cook, the eighteenth-century explorer who during his voyages charted large parts of the world. During his third venture to Hawaii, he was murdered by the local populace for circumstances that have never been explained.

The novel opens with Elizabeth waiting for James' return after his second voyage, one which has lasted several years. Three of their five children have died in his absence; the accidental death of their little daughter Elizabeth being an especially heavy blow. Once Cook is back, the couple seems to have drifted apart. James may be a hero to the world at large, but as husband and father he is a failure. He has seen none of his children grow up, and the burden of their deaths falls entirely on Elizabeth, all of which makes her the true hero of the marriage. This is also evident in the editing of his travel reports with Elizabeth correcting James' grammatical mistakes and his style and resisting the editorial bowdlerization which James has accepted without complaint. On shore James is not to be the superior commander he is at sea; he is often ill, is terrible at carrying out his tasks as advisor, and feels ill at ease in society.

No wonder that Cook accepts a new commission to find a northern passage to the east. He is present for the birth of his sixth child, but by the time of its death as well as that of his two remaining sons he sailed away and Elizabeth has to cope with the grief and mourning by herself. Even though she is strong, she finds it hard – not helped by being continually haunted by the death of her young daughter. As the violin teacher of her musical son Nathaniel tells her: 'Consolation is for those who've suffered no more than a minor blow. I don't think you can bear consolation.'

Now, in addition to the loss of her six children, Elizabeth has James' death to mourn too. The facts of the case are concealed by the authorities in order not to detract from his heroism, and for the rest of her life Elizabeth hears the 'true' facts about his death bit by bit – a fictional dénouement that makes the futile waiting for his homecoming extra poignant. *The Homecoming* is a story about loss and sorrow and expectations not realized, but it is also a insightful and splendidly written portrait in which Enquist effortlessly bridges the distance in time.



photo Bert Nienhuis

Anna Enquist (b. 1945) started her literary career as a poet with *Soldatenliederen* ('Soldiers' Songs', 1991) which was awarded the C. Buddingh' prize for best poetry debut. For her second collection *Jachtscènes* ('Hunting Scenes', 1992) she received the Lucy B. and C.W. van der Hoogt prize. In 1994 Enquist published her first novel, *Het meesterstuk* (*The Masterpiece*) which sold 150,000 copies in three years. Her second novel, *Het geheim* (*The Secret*) was also a success and received the Trouw prize awarded by the public. Since then the work of Enquist has appeared in a great number of countries, Germany, England, Sweden, and Portugal among them.

Her best, most comprehensive and most touching novel. NCR *HANDELSBLAD*

A surprising and touching novel about the loss of children, about a ruined union between a man and a woman, and, above all, about the inadequacies of facts in helping to understand people. *HAARLEMS DAGBLAD*

PUBLISHING DETAILS

De thuiskomst (2005)
416 pp

RIGHTS

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SELECTED TITLES IN TRANSLATION

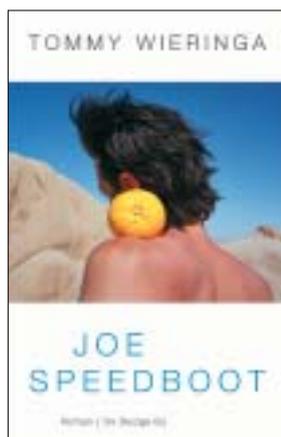
The secret (*Het geheim*). London: The Toby Press 2000. Also in German (Luchterhand 1997, DTV 1999), in Swedish (Natur och Kultur 1999, Bilda 2000), in French (Actes Sud, 2001, 2003) and in many other languages.
The masterpiece (*Het meesterstuk*). London: The Toby Press 1999. In Italian (Marsilio 2001), in French (Actes Sud 2001), in German (Luchterhand 1995 / DTV 1998).
The ice carriers (*De ijsdragers*). London; Connecticut: The Toby Press 2003. Also in in French (Actes Sud 2003), German (Luchterhand 2002 / BTB 2004), in Swedish (Natur och Kultur 2004) and Hebrew (in prep.)



Phenomenally imaginative

Tommy Wieringa

Joe Speedboat



WITH HIS WHEELCHAIR-BOUND spastic narrator, Fransje Hermans, who can only speak in unintelligible grunts, Tommy Wieringa has succeeded in writing a dazzling novel whose every page sparkles with imagination, it is a splendid literary achievement. The story is driven by Joe Speedboat, friend and classmate of the narrator and, of course, his enterprising counterpart. A newcomer to the small community of Lomark, Joe Speedboat – a selfchosen name – continually startles the villagers out of their lethargy with his spectacular actions. Whether he's placing

bombs or building an aeroplane in order to spy on Mrs. Eilander, supposedly sunning herself in the nude in her back garden, Joe is a centrifugal force who manages to turn the immobile Fransje into a sportsman by having him participate in arm-wrestling contests.

'He wasn't so much a special guy as a force that was freed. You tingled expectantly in his presence – there was an energy that took form in his hands, in no particular order he conjured up bombs, race-mopeds, and aeroplanes, juggling them like a lighthearted magician. I had never met anyone for whom ideas led so naturally to action, on whom fear and convention had so little influence.' *Joe Speedboat* is also brilliant in showing the development of a close group of young people as they lose their innocence. A central role is reserved for Mrs. Eilander's daughter, the gorgeous PJ, who with her cascade of blond curls causes all the boys to lose their heads. They all fall in love with her, without realising who exactly they are dealing with. Fransje is the only one who does. A chaotic wedding party ensues which gets completely out of hand. It's Joe's doing. As the narrator Fransje says, all 'is show with him until the last minute.'

Joe Speedboat has everything that turns a novel into a unique experience: intriguing characters who come alive in a dazzling, tragic-comic story that is wonderfully told – Wieringa surprises the reader with beautiful images, striking descriptions, and magnificent details on every page. His imagination is phenomenal.

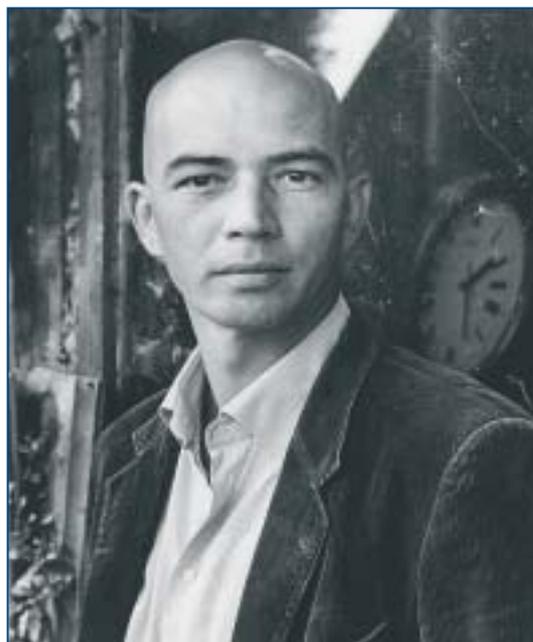


photo Roeland Fossen

In 1995 Tommy Wieringa (b. 1967) debuted with the novel *Domantique's manco*. His breakthrough came with *Alles over Tristan* ('All About Tristan', 2002), which was awarded the Halewijn prize and nominated for the AKO Literature Prize. Some critics believe that Wieringa stands an even better chance for this prize with *Joe Speedboat*. Wieringa publishes in *de Volkskrant*; he is also a columnist of *Spits* and writes travel reports for *Rails*, the Dutch railways magazine.

A book to fall in love with, right from the first page. It reminds one of the work of John Irving and Paul Auster. (...) With Joe Speedboat, Wieringa's authorship has reached full maturity. HET PAROOL

Wieringa has been admirably successful in making the world of these not-so-nice boys tangible. (...) He has an enormous sense of rhythm. His sentences never lose their intensity. It keeps on going, keeps on swinging. A cracker. TROUW

Joe Speedboat is the kind of book that you would prefer to finish in bed with a flashlight.

PASSIONATE

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Joe Speedboat (2005)
316 pages

RIGHTS SOLD

Germany (Hanser)

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OTHER TITLE IN TRANSLATION

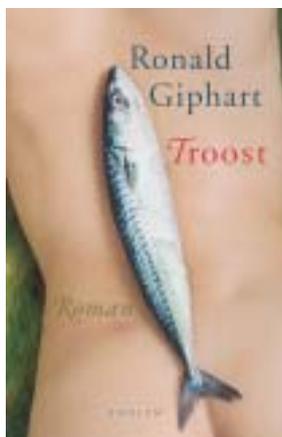
Tout sur Tristan (Alles over Tristan). Chatenay-Malabry: Alteredit, 2002.



The other side of a chef's life

Ronald Giphart

Consolation



RONALD GIPHART has been one of the most successful Dutch authors from the start. His debut *Ik ook van jou* ('I Do Too', 1992) was a bestseller as were the later novels *Giph* (1993), *Phileine zegt sorry* ('Phileine Says Sorry' 1996), and *Ik omhels je met duizend armen* ('I Embrace You With A Thousand Arms', 2000).

The ups and downs of modern love written with a combination of humour and melancholy, and the quest for literature are Giphart's trademark, and these ingredients are present in force in *Consolation*, except that here the autobiographical nature of his earlier books has been exchanged for a fictional perspective. The novel, which had glowing reviews, has been nominated for the NS Publieksprijs.

The main character Art Troost – his name more or less means 'art consoles' – is a famous chef with two Michelin stars. He hosts a television programme in summer when his restaurant is closed. He cooks experimental dishes for his famous guests and they eat them together while he provokes revelations from them. The story takes place during the fifth season of the series, which is turning out to be a disaster. His guests, a writer and a philosopher, place a time-bomb under the programme with their impromptu disclosures to the press. This is exacerbated by the ups and downs of Art's relationship with his girlfriend, and an ominous letter he receives from Michelin. Gradually the novel develops into a sublime parody on the world of television which turns chefs into stars and where food is no more than a byproduct for tasteless entertainment.

But *Consolation* is also a sensually stimulating story because of its reflections on cooking and the many rather special recipes, which are to be read as a metaphor for literature. Just as food consoles, so does the act of reading, and, as in literature, the art of cooking demands sacrifice. The parallel between cooking and eating emerges in countless ways: in the envy among chefs, which holds its own with literary controversy, and in Art's intention to write a book about the other side of his life as chef – it resembles the technique of *Troost*. However extensive the comparisons between literature and cooking may be, Giphart is never pretentious and manages to retain his characteristic loose narrative style, full of dynamic and humour. *Consolation* is a book for the literary connoisseur, a perfectly seasoned novel.



photo Eric van den Elsen

While at university studying Dutch literature, Ronald Giphart (b. 1965) worked as a hospital night porter. During these night hours he wrote his first novel, *Ik ook van jou* ('I Do Too', 1992), which won the Gouden Elzesoer prize for the best-sold debut and which was made into a movie in 2001. *Phileine zegt sorry* (1996) was also made into a movie. In addition *Giph* (1993), *Feest der liefde* ('The Feast of Love', 1995) and *De voorzitter* ('The Soccer President', 1999) appeared. Giphart's books have sold an average of 150,000 copies; which makes him one of the most successful writers in the Netherlands today.

A smoothly written clever novel. ... Troost is a biting satire. ELSEVIER

Witty and good ... a 'delicious' novel, literally and figuratively. DE TELEGRAAF

Troost develops at a fast pace and is full of witty passages. ... The chastening of the top chef is one of Giphart's most amusing and surprising books. ... This is a delightful book.

NRC HANDELSBLAD

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Troost (2005)
221 pp

RIGHTS SOLD

Germany (Kiepenheuer & Witsch), Italy (Scrittura)

RIGHTS

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TITLES IN TRANSLATION

Phileine chiede scusa (Phileine zegt sorry). Roma: Fazi 2002. Also in German (Droemer Knauer, 1999) *Ich umarme dich vieltausendmal* (Ik omhels je met duizend armen). München: List Taschenbuch 2001.



In search of the ultimate haiku

Bart Koubaa

Air

KUDO YAMAMOTO, the main character of Bart Koubaa's second novel *Air*, drags an eventful past with him. At fifteen years of age he followed his father to the USA. He worked his way up to become a translator for the FBI, but in 1945 made a vital mistake: in hesitating over the imperial idiom, he missed the unconditional capitulation of the Japanese emperor,

which resulted in the USA dropping a bomb on Hiroshima and Nagasaki. In the resulting destruction, his daughter – of whose existence he knew nothing – also died. Could he have prevented this? Why did he remain silent?

Yamamoto resolves to represent the entire cosmos in seventeen syllables – in a haiku thus. He has returned to his parental home in Japan, and wishes to pose, at the request of a female photographer, in front of seventeen shelves with Western books. The story of measuring, elaborating and placing the bookshelves is a metaphor for ordering his cultural evolution and his life experience, as a preparation for the generation of the ultimate haiku.

Bart Koubaa brings the life story of an ordinary man, Kudo – which spans a great deal of the twentieth century – into direct connection with historical events and developments. Kudo contrasts Eastern and Western philosophies of life; the glorious, emotion-packed tradition has values that cannot be compared to those of materialistic progress. His experience of life guides him toward an increasingly ascetic view of life, and after 'air' has been dealt with in all its manifestations – wind, breath, oxygen, void – Kudo's already disengaged existence ultimately dissolves into futility.

Air is a melancholy story with a vague undertone of a tragic, long history. Rich in light-footed images and symbols, the novel is saturated with ideas on the great coherence and meaning of life, and the resigned acceptance of the all-embracing advance of life as mirrored in nature. Or, as Kudo says in his haiku:

Did he see a flower
Return to its branch?
It was a butterfly.

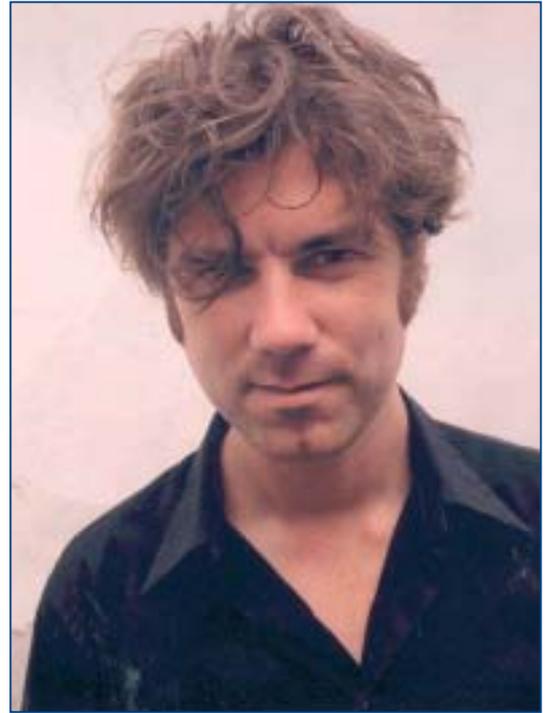


photo Laila Koubaa

In his prose, Bart Koubaa (b. 1968) wishes to capture something of the great bond that links people and the world in general, the great cohesion, a comprehensive vision. In his first published novel, *Vuur* ('Fire', 2000), which is set among gypsies, a grandchild pays a written tribute to his grandfather, 'the Indian who walked over fire', with whom he had a playful and loving relationship his whole life long. Fire was the theme, and it runs as a leitmotiv through the story as a metaphor for passion and determination. The novel was awarded the Prize for the best Flemish Debut Novel.

Air is an original novel, by an ambitious author who made his name with his novel *Fire*. It looks like we'll have to wait for 'Earth' and 'Water'.

VRIJ NEDERLAND

You will finish *Air* in an hour, but you will immediately feel the need to reread it and think up creative interpretations for the metaphors, for that is where its internal logic lies.

DE STANDAARD

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Lucht (2005)
124 pp

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An impressive novel, painfully beautiful

Margriet de Moor

Drowned



MARGRIET DE MOOR has proved in her novels and short stories that she can say all she wants with very little. Her sensitive, perceptive, delicate writing and her careful construction carry the reader away slowly but surely and this is more true than ever in her new novel *Drowned*.

In Margriet de Moor's universe, living is tantamount to feeling your way, managing, and being preoccupied by things that leave no trace. Shocking events only serve to underline how inevitably an action or lack of action shapes people's lives, and can, invisibly to others, also unravel them. In face of death, the drowning woman has no thoughts deeper than her regret at no longer being able to try out a recipe for ginger pancakes.

In *Drowned*, the shock that changes many human lives forever is meteorological: a disastrous flood that the writer bases with documentary precision on the floods that hit the province of Zeeland in 1953. But before the meteorological shock there is a matter of petty human action with great consequences, a dirty trick of fate that causes Lidy to be on the scene of the disaster, instead of her sister Amanda.

Coolly and accurately, De Moor lets fate take its turn, lets the land be flooded, cattle drown, and drowning people in an attic witness a birth. People still converse, but without being able to hear one another over the roar of the wind. De Moor saves the ultimate conversation, the one between the two sisters at the gate to the hereafter, for the end. One sister always wanted to lead her sibling's life, the other heads agonizingly slowly toward the bottom, surrounded by staring fish. The reader remains behind, trembling.



photo Vincent Mentzel

Margriet de Moor (b. 1941) debuted in 1988 with her collection of stories *Op de rug gezien* ("Seen From Behind") which immediately attracted attention as the work of a mature talent. Short-story collections and novels followed with regularity, among them *Eerst grijs dan wit dan blauw* (*First grey, then white, then blue*, 1991) which became a bestseller, much praised and translated. This spring the translation of De Moor's *Kreutzer sonate* (*The Kreutzer Sonata*) was reviewed favourably in the *New York Times* by Kathryn Harrison who succinctly wrote: 'De Moor works on the periphery of realism, satisfying both narrative and aesthetic agendas.'

A technically perfect novel, informative and compelling, exciting and contemplative. DE STANDAARD

Margriet de Moor knows how to portray magnificently the brute force of nature as well as human resistance to death. TROUW

Every story is in good hands with De Moor. HET PAROOL

PUBLISHING DETAILS

De verdronkene (2005)
331 pp

RIGHTS SOLD

Germany (Hanser), Czech Republic (Paseka)

RIGHTS

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SELECTED TRANSLATED TITLES

First gray, then white, then blue (*Eerst grijs dan wit dan blauw*). London: Picador 1994. / Woodstock; New York: The Overlook Press 2001. Also in French (Robert Laffont, 1993), in German (Hanser, 1993 / DTV, 1996, 1999) and in many other languages. *The Kreutzer sonata* (*Kreutzer sonate*). New York: Arcade 2005 / Duckworth (in prep.) Also in

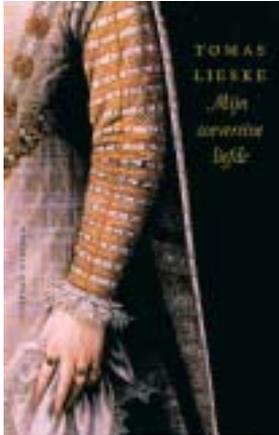
German (Hanser, 2002 / DTV, 2004), in French (Seuil, in prep.) and in many other languages. *Duke of Egypt* (Hertog van Egypte). London: Picador 2001, 2002 / New York: Arcade 2002. Also in French (Édition du Seuil 1999), in German (Hanser, 1997) and in many other languages.



Sensitive, light and lyrical

Tomas Lieske

My Sovereign Love



IN THE HISTORICAL NOVELLA *My Sovereign Love*, Tomas Lieske takes the reader back to the court of Philip II of Spain, halfway through the sixteenth century. Turbulent times, in which wars between Spain, France, and England are settled by strategic marriages. But Lieske's narrator, Marnix de Veer, is not much interested in politics. He is interested in mathematics and instruments of measurement, in

mechanics and in buildings. It is because of his expertise in these areas that Philip takes him into his service. De Veer is 21 at the time, just the same age as his employer. De Veer's account starts fifty years further on. Felipe is lying on his deathbed in the Escorial. He is suffering hellish pain, which is relieved somewhat by means of ingeniously hinged hoisting systems, conceived and designed by his faithful servant. No shortage of devotion, you would think. All the more interesting that the first chapter ends with the lamentation: '...How terribly I have hated that man.'

In the chapters that follow we witness the development of a complicated relationship between the master and his servant. A relationship that is by definition based on power and a loyalty that is taken for granted but, because of the effects of time and mutual respect, flowers into friendship bordering on love. The fidelity of the servant is tested, though, when he sees the lady-in-waiting he loves, Isabel Osorio, carried off under his very eyes by his sovereign, who claims her for himself.

My Sovereign Love is an engrossing novella that transcends time and historical anecdote as a result of Lieske's directly personal style of narration. We see the king through the eyes of Marnix de Veer, join him in his growing loyalty and at the same time in his rage, so much so that ultimately the question becomes to what extent he is a 'trustworthy' narrator.

Within the framework of a novella, Lieske gracefully and accurately touches on obscure urges and conflicting emotions. The tale his sixteenth-century protagonist tells is crystal clear on the one hand, as complicated as a densely-packed psychological novel on the other. So much so that after reading the book one sees even the title, *My Sovereign Love*, in a profoundly different light. Whom does that sovereign love refer to? And can that love be called sovereign at all? As the narrator summarizes soberly: 'For me he continued to be the man who shared my life, no matter how strange that may sound.'



photo Friso Keuris

Tomas Lieske (b. 1943) made his debut at the age of 38 with poetry in the literary journals *Tirade* and *De Revisor*. In 1992 his first prose work, *Oorlogstuinen* (*War Gardens*), gained him the Geert-Jan Lubberhuizen Prize. In 1996 his novel *Nachtkwartier* ('Night Quarters') was nominated for the Libris Literature Prize, an award he finally received for his novel *Franklin* (2001). Magic, myth, and chance play a central role in Lieske's universe. With the successful novel *Gran Café Boulevard* (2003) he was able to find a prosaic, tempting, and accessible form for expressing the ineffable. In his historical novella *My Sovereign Love*, Lieske hones his baroque narrative style sharper than ever.

Lieske needs only 107 pages to interweave a historical storyline, a psychological narrative, and a love affair in an expressive and convincing manner. HET PAROOL

Tomas Lieske admirably brings a non-historical figure to life. NRC HANDELSBLAD

Tomas Lieske tells the story of Marnix de Veer in an elegant and precise style, with great feeling for form. DE VOLKSKRANT

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Mijn soevereine liefde (2005)
108 pp

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TITLES IN TRANSLATION

Franklin (Franklin). Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2004.
Gran Café Boulevard (Gran Café Boulevard). Berlin: Aufbau, in prep.



Early adolescence at a time of war



Bernlef

A Boy's War

A *BOY'S WAR* has a special place in Bernlef's substantial work. Previously published as *Achterhoedegevecht* ('Rearguard Action', 1989) Bernlef has since pared this coming of age drama down to its essence.

Twelve-year-old Michiel is sent away from Amsterdam by his parents in the last year of the war, to the Tulp family in the village of Driewoude, to fatten up. There in the country the war manifests itself completely differently. 'At home the war had been so much easier. It was visible behind barbed wire, it wore a uniform, it was discernible from everyday life. Here it often surrounded him with incomprehensible signs.'

Bernlef shows the world purely and solely through a boy's eyes at the start of adolescence; a fragile perspective that is charged more than ever in wartime. The change from city to country, the forced intimacy with strangers, and living under wartime occupation make a survivor of Michiel. The physical sensations of early adolescence are marvelously evoked by the author: 'Aunt Merel's' fleshy arms, his 'adoptive sister' Alie's hairy genitals, his own chafing ankles, not used to clogs. Michiel also has his hands full trying to distinguish 'good' from 'bad'. The village doctor shouldn't be greeted, because he fraternizes with the enemy, the neighbour is a member of the NSB and a rake, and must be spied on; in order to get into his classmates' good books, he must report things he doesn't understand himself. Before falling asleep at night he comforts himself with a book from home: *Mother Reads* and identifies with Hagar and Ishmael, who, like himself, were betrayed by their loved ones and sent into the wilderness.

By the time Michiel can go back to Amsterdam, he has discovered that not everything is what it seems. The girl with the gorgeous hair is a Kraut whore. He has learned that principles come at a price and that honesty is relative. At the same time, all that he has experienced happened in such a closed world and period that he feels nothing has happened at all. This paradox, of 'all' and 'nothing', is beautifully brought to life in this novella.

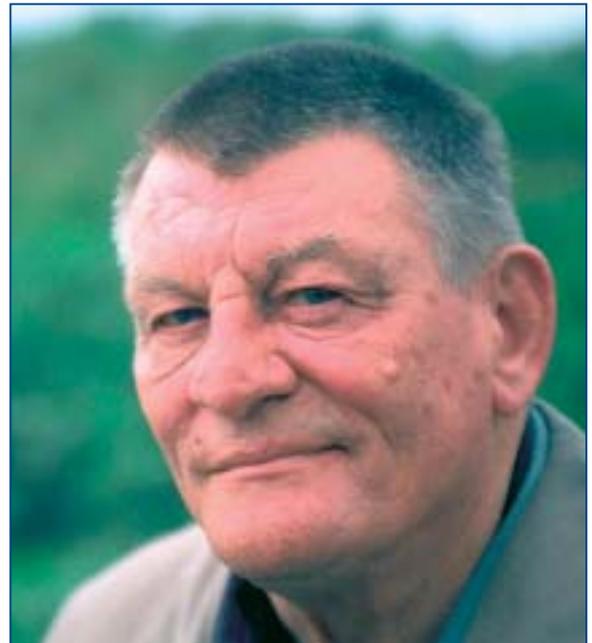


photo Chris van Houts

Bernlef (J. Bernlef, b. 1937) has been published regularly since 1960. He has written novels, stories, poetry, plays, and essays. He has also translated the Scandinavian poets Gustafson and Tranströmer into Dutch. He was editor of the literary periodicals *Barbarber* and *Raster*. He received the P.C. Hooftprijs in 1994 for his poetry, but made his name with *Hersenschimmen* (*Out of Mind*, 1983), which is a coolly, yet emotional novel about the fragility of memory. His last novel *Buiten is het maandag* ('*Outside It's Monday*', 2003) was also a big success and was nominated for several prizes.

Bernlef may well have come the closest to the reality of most Dutch people in May 1945.

HAARLEMS DAGBLAD

Bernlef is a real pro who grabs the reader's attention with each novel.

DE TELEGRAAF

A Boy's War is a sympathetic story... Plainly told, with much empathy in the detailing of the daily life of a twelve-year-old.

AD MAGAZINE

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Een jongensoorlog (2005)
132 pp

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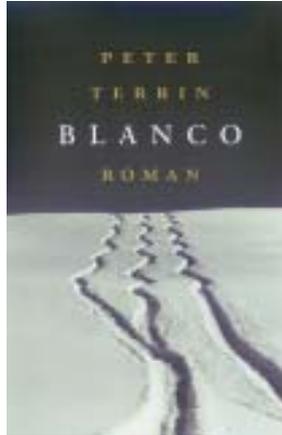
SELECTED TITLES IN TRANSLATION

Boy (Boy). Stockholm: Norstedts 2001.
Eclipse (Eclips). London; Boston: Faber and Faber 1996. Also in Danish (Hekla, 1995) and in Swedish (Norstedts; Scandbook 1996).
Out of mind (Hersenschimmen). London; Boston: Faber and Faber 1988, 1989 / Boston: David R. Godine 1989. Also in German (Nagel & Kimche 1986 / Piper, 1989), in French (Calmann-Lévy 1988, 1990),

in Swedish (Hekla, 1987) and in many other languages.
Public secret (Publiek geheim). London; Boston: Faber and Faber 1992. Also in French (Calmann-Lévy, 1990) and in Swedish (Norstedts, 1987).
En stjerne falder (Vallende ster). København: Hekla 1990. Also in Swedish (Norstedts, 1991).



A trenchant fable of angst and risk tolerance



Peter Terrin

Blanco

IN PETER TERRIN'S first three novels, emotions are expressed largely in terms of alienation and oppression. In *Women and Children First* (2004), a team of engineers and technicians have to dismantle a tile production line in an abandoned factory abroad. They stay in a rundown hotel in a Kafkaesque existential isolation. In *Crass* (2001), three men, almost seventy years old, rape the lively young cleaning lady of their apartment block and then flee, unbridled and reckless. The transition from a normal life to complete disorder, caused by unexpected and unsuspected motives, is again the theme of *Blanco*, the novel which provides the best introduction to Peter Terrin's work.

Victor, a cell biologist working for the Ministry of Public Health, has difficulty in coming to terms with the death of his wife during a carjack. Nightmares disrupt his experience of reality. He is allowed to stay at home to continue research into the influence of environmental pollution on the workings of the cell. The disquieting results of his work are brushed aside at the Ministry, but, in his unstable state, he cultivates them until they turn him paranoid, radically altering his life and leading him to a tragic end.

To Victor, the outside world is full of acute danger. Initially, he is worried about the assumed lack of security at his son Igor's school. He has the teacher followed because he does not trust him with children. The boy is expelled from school because, on his father's instructions, he has carried a knife in order to defend himself. Subsequently, Victor barricades the two of them in their flat. He has bars installed in front of the windows, the doors are made burglar-proof, an air filter is installed. He locks his son in his room with a coded lock and only gives him food that is guaranteed safe. His extreme care and oppressive responsibility gradually turn into pure insanity. At a certain moment, he no longer realizes that his son has died. And is his wife dead and buried, or not?

Peter Terrin forces the reader through this gradual process, which evolves from suppressed sorrow, via an unbearable sense of responsibility, to the unreasonable anxiety and desperation that causes Victor's life to tragically disintegrate. Terrin describes this process coolly and succinctly, with an exceptional eye for visual detail and apt formulation. The psychological oppression of the character, terrifyingly elaborated, remains in the reader's mind long after the book is finished.

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photo Roeland Fossen

In 1996, Peter Terrin (b. 1968) won a short story competition. He collected this and other stories in *De code* ('The Code', 1998). His first novel *Kras* ('Crass') appeared in 2001, followed in 2003 by *Blanco* and in 2004 by *Vrouwen en kinderen eerst* ('Women and Children First').

A terrifying novel about anxiety and risk tolerance.

NRC HANDELSBLAD

In Blanco, Terrin demonstrates that he is a master of suspense.

DE VOLKSKRANT

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Blanco (2003)
185 pp

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RIGHTS SOLD

Sweden (Augusti)



A moving novel of longing and deprivation

Patricia De Martelaere

The Unexpected Answer



WITH *THE UNEXPECTED ANSWER* Patricia De Martelaere illustrates her claim that language is ‘not a tool’ but ‘material’ to an author. In the novel, she does not allow the writer, philosopher, husband, lover, and father Godfried H. to speak, but makes him instead the subject of six texts written from the points of view of the women who play a role in his life. The first draws his portrait. Initially she keeps her distance, later she embarks on an unexpected and brief relationship with him. With this, the author immediately indicates that the book is dealing with identity, about

how people regard one another, perhaps touch one another. The second woman, a geneticist, who largely bases her life on scientific perception, attempts to fit her irrational yearning for Godfried into the context of the theory of evolution. The third woman is his wife, a psychoanalyst, who tries to weigh up the importance of truth and fantasy when a patient reveals a relationship with her husband during a psychoanalytical session. The account given by this manic-depressive patient is particularly fascinating in its representation of her complex experience of the world. A former student meets Godfried H. on the train and her admiration is first reinforced by his fame, then tarnished. In the concluding chapter, H. puts his daughter to bed and has to confront the demons of his and her imagination.

The longest chapter, which takes up almost half of the book, consists of a letter, addressed to Godfried H. during his absence in the course of a summer holiday. In this chapter, the question of the author’s identity remains open for quite a while. This is ever more relevant as the reader is increasingly astonished by an overwhelming articulation of deprivation, longing, passion, and absorption into the other. Unchecked emotions and existential yearning submerge the scarce scientific and philosophical references present here. The conclusion can only be that this chapter expresses the feeling of all the women collectively. Thus ‘the unexpected answer’ (‘Yes’) to a question that was not explicitly asked seems to imply the embrace of life as a passionate, sensual experience. *The Unexpected Answer* is not only a challenging but also a passionate and moving novel.



photo Steye Raviez

Patricia de Martelaere (b. 1957), an author and philosophy lecturer, has won the Belgian State Prize for Literature. She published her first work at the age of thirteen and subsequently published three novels that were comprehensively praised: *De schilder en zijn model* (‘The Painter and His Model’), *Littekens*, (‘Scars’), and *De staart* (‘The Tail’). She was twice nominated for the AKO Literature Prize. Her collection of essays *Een verlangen naar ontroostbaarheid* (‘A Longing for Inconsolability’) received the J. Greshoff Award in 1994. Now, more than a decade after the publication of her last novel, Patricia De Martelaere surprises her readers with *Het onverwachte antwoord*.

A bizarre deep sea of vortices, speedboats and rapids, full of colour, sounds, clear water, and pure poison. DE STANDAARD

Her language displays rare enthusiasm and concentration, which encourage the reader to leaf back through the pages – eager to follow the story yet unwilling to miss a thing. DE VOLKSKRANT

*A hurricane in the lee of Flemish literature
KNACK*

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Het onverwachte antwoord (2005)
286 pp

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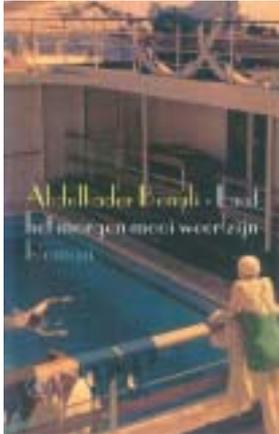
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Life stories plaited together

Abdelkader Benali

Let Tomorrow Be Fine



THE THIRD NOVEL by Abdelkader Benali, *Let Tomorrow Be Fine*, is about Malik Ben, sent by his father on a cruise after his mother has died. During the trip the young man falls under the spell of a Spanish beauty; at her request, he leaves her with her brother in Tanger, while himself continuing his journey to his parents' home country, to find out whatever possessed his father to become a spy. He returns home cleansed, to find that his father has died. He is warmly welcomed by his father's new widow. He follows his

father's last wish, establishing an Institute for the Soul, and becomes himself an authenticity healer. Many years and kilos later he decides finally to lead his own life.

Told like this the story is straightforward; it is anything but. The cruise is already in the past when the novel starts 'Malik Ben weighed 140 kilos the day he decided to have his name deleted from the yellow pages.' He decides to stop both his soul practice and his overeating. He remembers the life lessons of the 'Spanish beauty' and his mind takes him back to *SS Latina*. The rest of the novel switches between the cruise and the soul practice, between his parents' life story and that of the Spanish girl, with the life story of Juan the bartender thrown in.

The clever structure and plot make *Let Tomorrow Be Fine* very special. On the one hand there is the cruise, on the other the main character's odd profession of authenticity healer. There is the life story of his parents and that of the Spanish Beauty he meets during the cruise who teaches him not to search for the meaning of life, rather to use the entire space of life.

The narrative layers correspond with the thematic layers. The novel can be read as the story of a son who leaves his parents' home, weighs anchor and sails his own course. At the same time it is a declaration of intent by an author who states that he is going to do what nobody expects, 'Something very simple and yet grand'. That he has succeeded, is clear.



photo Chris van Houts

Abdelkader Benali (b. 1975) wrote his debut aged 21. It was the surprising (for a butcher's son) *Bruiloft aan zee* (*Wedding by the Sea*, 1996), a novel about a Dutch Moroccan who goes back to his home country to search for his sister's deserted bridegroom, it received the Geertjan Lubberhuizen Prize. His second novel, *De langverwachte* ('The Long-Awaited', 2002), received the Libris Literature Prize. Benali also writes plays and does journalistic work, most recently *Marokko door Nederlandse ogen* ('Morocco Through Dutch Eyes', 2005), together with Herman Obdeijn. Abdelkader Benali lives and works in Amsterdam.

Benali's newest novel proves yet again that he is a true storyteller who excels in sometimes laconic, sometimes absurd observations.

VRIJ NEDERLAND

Benali's mosaic depicts the uncertain destiny of humanity.

TROUW

PUBLISHING DETAILS

Laat het morgen mooi weer zijn (2005)
239 pp

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OTHER TITLES IN TRANSLATION

Wedding by the sea (*Bruiloft aan zee*). London: Phoenix House / Weidenfeld & Nicolson 1999, 2000 / New York: Arcade 2000. Also in Danish (Fremad, 1998), in French (Albin Michel, 1999), in German (Piper, 1998, 2000), in Greek (Kedros, 2000), in Hungarian (Gondolat, 2004), in Italian (Marcos y Marcos, 2000), in Portuguese (Teorema, 2002), in Spanish (Grijalbo Mondadori, 2000).
La lunga attesa (*De langverwachte*). Roma: Fazi 2005. Also in Spanish (Mondadori, in prep.), in Portuguese (Teorema, in prep.).



Recent publications

Remco Campert
A Love in Paris



The German translation (by Marianne Holberg) of Remco Campert's *Een liefde in Paris* (A Love in Paris) has been published by Arche. 'The novelist, poet, essayist, and columnist Remco Campert effortlessly binds past and present, and demonstrates that he is the master of mild irony.' This was how the German broadcasting company ZDF literary programme *Lesen!* (Read!) described Campert's latest novel.

Abdelkader Benali
La lunga attesa
(The Long-Awaited)
Published in Italian by Fazi

Hafid Bouazza
Paravion
Published in German by Klett-Cotta

Diane Broeckhoven
Ein Tag mit Herrn Jules
(The Outside of Mister Jules)
Published in German by C.H. Beck

Arnon Grunberg
Der Vogel ist krank
(The Asylum Seeker)
Published in German by Diogenes

Maarten 't Hart
Die Jakobsleiter
(De jacobsladder)
Published in German by Piper

Willem Frederik Hermans
[Ho skoteinós thálamos tou Damoklé]
(The Dark Room of Damocles)
Published in Greece by Kastaniotis

Vonne van der Meer
La maison dans les dunes
(Island Guests)
Published in French by Éditions Héloïse d'Ormesson

Nelleke Noordervliet
Die Schatten von Pelican Bay
(Pelican Bay)
Published in German by Paul Zsolnay

Cees Nooteboom
Paradies verloren
(Paradise Lost)
Published in German by Suhrkamp

Connie Palmen
Tout à vous
(Geheel de uwe)
Published in Frans by Actes Sud and in Danish by Tiderne Skifter

P.F. Thomése
Shadow child
(Schaduwkind)
Published in English by Bloomsbury / Farrar, Straus & Giroux, in Spanish by Lumen and in Estonian by Pegasus

Annelies Verbeke
Schlaf!
(Sleep!)
Published in Italian by Instar Libri and in German by Reclam

Dimitri Verhulst
Problemski Hotel
(Problemski Hotel)
Published in English by Marion Boyars Publishers

Most of these books were covered previously in our 10 Books brochures. For a complete list of translations of Dutch fiction, please consult our website: www.nlpvf.nl

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