

A landscape photograph featuring a vibrant red field in the background, a row of bare trees in the middle ground, and a gravel path in the foreground. The text is overlaid on the image.

# DUTCH

Dutch Foundation  
for Literature

Spring 2023

# NON- FICTION

# TIME FOR NON-FICTION



VICTOR  
SCHIFERLI

Almost twenty years ago the novelist Tommy Wieringa and I were walking through the Dutch polder and discussing a number of urgent social and political issues. 'It's a time for non-fiction,' he said, looking at the sheep and cows, the peaceful river. Much has happened since then but that statement seems truer than ever. The upheaval of the twenty-first century with the climate crisis, war in Europe, our continuing attempts to deal with the aftermath of slavery and the colonial past, inequality between the sexes, a new moral compass – change is taking place at breakneck speed and the topics are inexhaustible.

While making the selection of recent Dutch non-fiction for this brochure we were guided by the principle that the chosen books need to shed a new light on the time in which we live or the question of who we are. The titles have been well-received, they've sparked reactions, sold well or at least reasonably well and rise, in our eyes, above the polder – calling out for an international readership.

After many years as our non-fiction specialist, my colleague Mireille Berman is now taking a temporary leave of absence to coordinate our programme as Guest of Honour at the 2024 Leipziger Buchmesse. In this period I will temporarily fulfil her non-fiction role. It is both a challenge and an honour. If you would like to know more about one or more of the books in this brochure, feel free to email me at [v.schiferli@letterenfonds.nl](mailto:v.schiferli@letterenfonds.nl). Hopefully we will see each other at one of the spring book fairs, either the London Book Fair or the Leipziger Buchmesse.

# Maxim Februari

## Give Us a Break



Dutch title  
*Doe zelf normaal. Menselijk recht in tijden van datasturing en natuurgeweld*

Year of publication  
2023

Edition  
5th

Page count  
144 pp

Publisher  
Prometheus

Rights  
Marisca van der Mark  
foreignrights@pbo.nl

Sample translation available

In liberal democracies, human behaviour is regulated by the justice system. This way of establishing and maintaining norms is now being replaced with data-driven technologies in the rush to meet simultaneous crises. Written with erudition and wit, *Give Us a Break*, by judicial philosopher Maxim Februari, examines how this digitalization is rapidly transforming democracy, basic rights and the rule of law in practice.

According to Februari, humanity now finds itself sandwiched between two systems. On the one hand, the urgency of the climate crisis demands drastic government action which democracy seems ill-equipped to deliver. On the other hand, advancing data-driven technology promises to solve humanity's problems, and increasingly is being entrusted with decision-making in all aspects of life. These machines, working in a vast and opaque network of communicating devices, are being given license to derive their own rules and norms. After all, they 'know' everything about us.

The question is whether, in our techno-enthusiasm, we are losing the ability to publicly contest these norms and determine our own behaviour. For Februari, a democratic society exists by virtue of public debate, and yet with the innovations of digital technology, the idea of political representation has come under pressure. The ability to communicate instantly has empowered citizens but also exposed them to manipulation. Governments, meanwhile, are handing power to tech companies whose technologies – and moral assumptions – they have little insight into. The danger is that we turn to intelligent technology that eliminates dis-

## Human justice in times of data-driven decision-making and natural disaster

agreement entirely by viewing people as data. We're not far from a future where public decisions are made for us, based on data about our preferences.

Digitalization is also transforming our justice system in unprecedented ways. More and more we are being forced to obey rules rather than encouraged to follow them. Take technology that prevents cars from speeding. Handy, sure, but one can also wonder whether laws are still laws if it's impossible to break them. We must think critically about how such technologies can be repurposed, especially when algorithms are being used to detect and predict crimes. One of the main challenges of digitalization, and its application here, is that the law is ultimately about justice, not administration and efficiency.

Far from pessimistic about the future, Februari describes a historic transition which requires us to rethink fundamental philosophical questions – and preferably, together: 'Too much knowledge about the future threatens to get stuck with experts and at universities; I think it would be good to retrieve that knowledge and have a timely public conversation about the changes awaiting us.'

Maxim Februari (b. 1963) is a writer and judicial philosopher. He is interested in the influence of technology on law, politics and policy-making. He is the author of acclaimed novels (*Lump* and *The Book Club*), essays and columns. *The Making of a Man: Notes on Transsexuality* was published in English in 2015, and Spanish and Turkish in 2016. In 2008,

Februari received the Frans Kellendonk Prize for his oeuvre and, in 2018, the J.H. Heldring Prize for his column writing. In 2020 he was awarded the prestigious P.C. Hooft Prize for his essays.

**'Never before has such an accessible – and so important! – text been written about rampant information technology eroding the foundations of citizenship and the democratic rule of law.'**

**Tzum**

**'Maxim Februari doesn't deal in cut-and-dried answers, though for this very reason it's to his credit that he bravely feels his way through the dark. He builds up his reasoning in small but sure steps and illustrates them with anecdotes, such as about voting with your toothbrush.'**

**Humo**



Photo (© Linette Raven)

# Thijs Lijster

## What We Have in Common — A Philosophy of the Commons



Dutch title  
*Wat we gemeen hebben.*  
*Een filosofie van de meenten*  
Year of publication  
2022  
Page count  
272  
Publisher  
De Bezige Bij  
Rights  
Uta Matten  
u.matten@debezigebij.nl  
Sample translation available

Inspired by a wide range of critical thinkers, Thijs Lijster finds an alternative to neo-liberalism in the tradition of thinking about the commons, or shared resources that anyone can use, without them being anyone's property. In the olden days they were forests or pastures, but (scientific) knowledge, public space in the city or the Internet can also be seen as such commons.

Like Naomi Klein, Lijster reminds us that neoliberal policies have been characterized by the expropriation and privatization of common property and public services, erosion of the welfare state, and upward distribution of wealth. These policies also created new forms of resistance and the demand that the most basic, crucial aspects of our daily lives – like housing, care and education – should not be treated in terms of capital gain but as valuable common property. As a result of a cascade of crises, we are witnessing an overall systemic one. The promised trickle-down effects of growth, geopolitical stability and increasing democratization and freedom have failed to arrive. Billion-dollar injections into banks and big business at citizens' expense have punctured the illusion of free competition and unmasked the once vehemently professed curse on government intervention.

The pandemic, the economic crisis and climate catastrophe have put a dent in our self-image as autonomous individuals. The ideal of the self-sufficient and self-reliant *homo economicus* is one that fewer and fewer people uphold. Calls for a greater 'sense of community' are everywhere. But what is community and what actually connects us? That question is usually answered in terms of 'norms

## A polemical tract in defence of community and shared resources

and values' or 'national identity,' but it can also be answered as what we have in common and in this, the collective commons can form a starting point.

The book is divided into five parts. In the first, Lijster examines the 'undeath' of neoliberalism and the rise of far-right movements. Part two deals with the concept of the commons; what they are, why they have attracted interest, and why the *commons* and *capital* should be seen as two opposing social systems. In part three, Lijster argues that the commons should not be seen as a defined 'thing' but primarily as *practice*, a notion illustrated by the university, the digital world, and the city. He goes on to discuss the 'community of the commons' and 'common sense' – a way of seeing and understanding that points to our ability to *see* the commons, and ourselves as a community. In his conclusion, Lijster explores what kind of politics might follow from the concept and practice of the commons. His aim is not to develop a new political system, but to propose a change of perspective.

Thijs Lijster (b.1981) is associate professor of Philosophy of Art and Culture in Groningen. He co-wrote *Among Philosophers* (2005) with Jan Sietsma and was co-editor of *The New German Philosophy* (2014) and *The Art of Criticism* (2015). His book *The Great Leap Inward* (2016) was shortlisted for the Socrates Cup and awarded the Royal

Academy of Dutch Language and Literature's essay prize. Other titles include *Look, Taste, Think* (2019, Socrates Cup shortlist) and *People Unite!* (2019).

**'With *Wat we gemeen hebben*, he joins the search for an alternative to the failing neoliberalism that is ruining the planet and wrecking society.**

Humanistisch Verbond

**'Lijster's writing is accessible and stimulating, with a good sense of humour and well chosen examples.'**

Trouw



Photo (© Harry Cock)

# Lotte Jensen

## War Against the Water — A Dutch History



Dutch title  
*Wij en het water.*  
*Een Nederlandse geschiedenis*

Year of publication  
2022

Page count  
232, illustrated

Publisher  
De Bezige Bij

Rights  
Marijke Nagtegaal  
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Full English translation available

Floods are a fundamental part of Dutch history. Indeed, having ‘tamed’ the threats associated with living below sea level is part of Dutch national identity. In the cultural depictions of these devastating events, however, national pride at a certain collective resilience goes hand-in-hand with the collective trauma of exposed vulnerability. All too often, the Dutch were the losers in these battles against the elements. In a time of rising global sea levels, cultural scholar Lotte Jensen dives into the stories and images of the past to unpack this paradox for today.

Over the centuries, large parts of the Netherlands have been progressively reclaimed from its river delta home. Throughout that process, the country suffered countless floods, a number of which were truly catastrophic, such as the Saint Elizabeth’s Flood of 1421 or the North Sea Flood of 1953. Jensen describes how the Dutch have dealt with these disasters, in practice but also in the imagination. It is the story of babies in floating cradles, fatherly monarchs, community fundraisers, and the boy who stuck his finger in the dike. Centuries before the nation-building associated with the 1800s, the Dutch created a unifying ‘us’ – the image of the Dutch lion – against a ‘them’ – the ‘waterwolf’, the major threat which water embodied.

This national feeling and narrative were crafted with a set repertoire of images; role models (heroes and monarchs); charity (national and international solidarity); and a culture of remembrance. Jensen gives particular attention to the at times funny poems, books and songs, later criticized as

## A cultural history of the Dutch struggle against rising water levels

clichéd or melodramatic, which these collective traumas inspired. She also demonstrates through monuments and works of art how this narrative has multiplied and acquired variations with time right up to the present. Though once cast in a more religious light – the flood as punishment for a general lack of religious devotion – the waterwolf has become, for example, a collective responsibility for the environment that begins with lifestyle choices.

Today the Netherlands lives with the water more than it battles it, some thinkers even envisioning an ‘amphibian’ future for the country. The stories and images of the past, however, reveal that precisely vulnerability can be fertile ground for solidarity and togetherness. With rising sea levels representing a growing threat, this well-researched and highly readable cultural history shows how over time a culture’s imagination can gain new relevance beyond its borders. Acknowledging and building from a place of collective vulnerability might now be more important than ever.

Lotte Jensen (b. 1972) is a professor of Dutch Cultural and Literary History at Radboud University Nijmegen and writes about national identity, Dutch literature and history. Her previous works include *The Glorification of the Past and Celebrating Peace: The Emergence of Dutch Identity, 1648-1815*, and she edited the anthologies *Napoleon’s Legacy* and

*The Great and Terrible Flood*. Jensen also reviews books for *de Volkskrant*.

**‘A book full of subtle, precise research, written in a pleasantly light tone.’**

**NRC**

**‘*War Against the Water* is especially worth reading for the fine examples with which Jensen substantiates her reflections.’**

**Trouw**



Photo (© Babet Hogervorst)

# Fanta Voogd

## Futurama — A Chronicle of the Future



Dutch title  
*Futurama*.  
*Een kroniek van de toekomst*  
Year of publication  
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Page count  
432  
Publisher  
Alfabet Uitgevers  
Rights  
Shared Stories  
Julia Foldenyi  
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Sample translation available

When we focus on the success stories of technology's evolution, innovation can seem an inevitable and linear process. But that's only half the truth. Behind every technology is a sea of experiments, misfires and detours, along with predictions that often wildly (and entertainingly) miss their mark, though on occasion can be eerily accurate. In *Futurama*, Fanta Voogd collects dozens of visions of the future, from 335 BC to the recent past, and paints a truer picture of technology's whimsical course.

Each chapter begins with a quote drawn from a wide array of thinkers, scientists, artists and dreamers, including such names as Aristotle, Roger Bacon, Adam Smith, Christiaan Huygens, Jules Verne, Isaac Asimov, Arthur C. Clarke, Jane Loudon, Ray Kurzweil, Rachel Carson and Douglas Engelbart, as well as better and lesser known newspapers. By focusing on the expectations that accompanied different technologies, Voogd is able to show that many of these have much older histories than one might assume. Or that they failed to meet expectations and disappeared before maturing – sometimes to re-emerge years or even centuries later.

Some of these visions are bizarrely ahead of their time. Aristotle, for example, dreamed of robots in the fourth century BC. But also ideas like hydrogen-fuelled cars, nanotechnology, personal computers and FaceTime circulated long before their actual 'invention'. Other predictions, in turn, were spectacularly wrong. Arthur C. Clarke proclaimed the end of the wheel upon the appearance of the hovercraft. The economist Roger Babson was right about the financial crash of 1929 – less

## An eye-opening catalogue of history's visions of the future

so about kerosine-based food. Plenty of ideas failed by chance, while a number were smothered by industry, such as virtually eternal lightbulbs (early 1900s), or, like electric cars (first invented in 1835!), failed to catch on for not being as cool as rival technologies. Still other predictions seem plain wacky from today's perspective. Asimov imagined that by now humanity would be living on the seabed. And what to make of the steam-punk fantasy of the pneumatic train, a precursor to the Hyperloop?

Whether sprouting from the head of a genius, or – more often than not – from simple luck, these visions of the future speak to their present, reflecting the anxieties of the Cold War or, say, the optimism of the Industrial Revolution. Certain hopes or fears prove to be of all times: take Tertullian of Carthage, who warned of global overpopulation nearly two millennia ago. And even when successful, technologies can fail to have the imagined impact. Compare Concorde and the Boeing 747.

Written with a gentle humour, *Futurama* is an entertaining and revelatory testament to the essential bond between art, science and technology.

Fanta Voogd (b. 1961) started his career as a journalist at *De Waarheid*, a Dutch communist daily. Currently he is affiliated with the *De Ingenieur*, a monthly magazine on tech and policy, where he specializes in the history of technology. As a freelance journalist, he also writes for the magazines *Maarten!*, *Historisch Nieuwsblad* and

*De Groene Amsterdammer*, as well as the newspaper *NRC Handelsblad*.

**'If *Futurama* demonstrates one thing it is that the ability to dream is the motor driving scientific progress.'**

New Scientist

**'*Futurama* is an immensely readable collection of ninety-three sharp-witted pieces to inform, stimulate, entertain, and bathe in the romanticism of the futurism of old.'**

Trouw



Photo (© Peter Arno Broer)

# Louise O. Fresco

## Our Food — A Life-long Story



Dutch title  
*Ons voedsel. Een levenslang verhaal*  
Year of publication  
2023  
Page count  
304  
Publisher  
Prometheus  
Rights  
Marisca van der Mark  
foreignrights@pbo.nl  
Sample translation available

Louise O. Fresco is one of the Netherlands' most influential voices when it comes to food and agriculture. Her prolific career – as a thinker, scientist, advisor and writer – has taken her around the globe, much of it to help answer the question of how to feed a growing population. In *Our Food* she describes how her thinking has changed, combining nuanced reflections on many of today's most pressing questions with colourful memories from a life dedicated to the fascinating world of food.

Food is an essential part of our lives, and yet its relatively recent abundance in the Western world has come with a disconnect concerning where our food originates. Food is so much more than ingredients, calories and nutrients. Everything we eat has a history, numerous ones in fact, for individuals and collectives. Food means memory, ritual and identity; it brings joy and magic. But we must also consider the future of food if we're to feed 10 billion mouths by 2050: what will we eat, where will it be produced, and by whom? Feeding the world is not a technological question (we can already do it), but a political one.

Science and writing have always been two complementary modes of inquiry for Fresco, and across fourteen chapters she blends passions and experiences with the latest scientific insights and philosophical reflections on the cultural and ecological facets of food. Food's history feeds into its future – the stories behind what we eat offer new perspectives. With the clear-sightedness of experience, Fresco explores current preoccupations like our idealisation of more rustic food cultures of the past ('cucina povera'), the local and hand-picked,

## Looking back on a life's work in food and agriculture – and to the future

and ingredients seen as belonging to specific communities. Things are often more complex than they seem. Much of what is traditional now spread with the movement of people over millennia – a fact recent genetic research is revealing. Many of the supposed benefits of certain sources of food have more to do with expectation, romanticism and purchasing power. Fresco addresses scarcity and abundance, health and disease, GMOs and diversity, commandments and taboos, and the roles of meat and cattle. She offers her vision of the future, in which ecologically-responsible technology is essential to global food security.

Fresco writes with an elegant, associative style, weaving in her personal stories with a rich content, always seeking to disarm polarising debates. *Our Food* is a highly readable and optimistic plea to reflect on the wonder that is food and the countless aspects of our lives touched by it. For Fresco, knowledge is the gateway to eating with intention (knowing what you eat and why), and the start of living responsibly.

Professor Louise O. Fresco (b. 1952) is a writer, researcher and columnist for *NRC Handelsblad*. Among other works, she has written *Hamburgers in Paradise* (Princeton University Press, 2015; Laffont, 2015) and the novels *The Cosmopolitans*, *The Utopians* and *The Idealists*. During her long career, she has been Chairman of the Executive

Board at Wageningen University & Research and the Director of Research at the Agriculture Department of the UN's FAO, which leads international efforts to defeat hunger. In 2022, she was appointed Commander in the Order of the Netherlands in recognition of her social commitment.

**'In *Our Food*, O. Fresco shares in a nuanced way the knowledge she has gained from the dozens of countries she has visited for work. She does so associatively, infectiously and interwoven with personal events from her life.'**

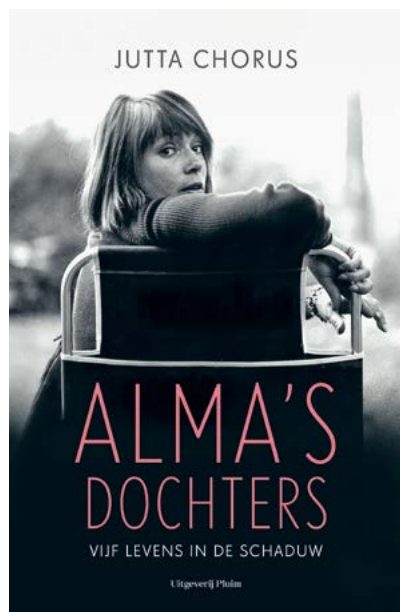
**Trouw**



Photo (© Marjoleine Boonstra)

# Jutta Chorus

## Alma's Daughters — Five Lives in the Shadows



Dutch title  
*Almas dochters.*  
*Vijf levens in de schaduw*  
Year of publication  
2022  
Page count  
333, 12 page colour insert  
(photographs)  
Publisher  
Uitgeverij Pluijm  
Rights  
Cossee International Agency  
Stella Rieck  
rieck@cossee.com  
Sample translation available

In this innovative multi-biography, Jutta Chorus follows a fascinating female family line over the course of the past century and a half. The book begins in the nineteenth century with matriarch Alma and then follows the lives of Alma's daughter Elly, her granddaughters Sylvia and Elly, and her great-granddaughter Lili. A writer, an agricultural scientist, a journalist, a photographer and a filmmaker. Had they been men, the biographer argues, they would have displayed their talents with more bravado and most likely gone down in history.

A female line is repeatedly concealed behind different surnames and is therefore less visible, realizes Jutta Chorus when she stumbles upon these astonishing women who were all related. An elderly family friend, Lili Veenman, shares a suitcase filled with letters, diaries and photographs, when Chorus shows interest in her forebears. 'I know nothing of the lives of these women,' Chorus writes, 'because they never became famous. Leafing through the documents, I don't think: how did their lives unfold, but how *will* their lives unfold? They lived in the shadow of history.'

The matriarch of this story is German-born Alma Bimmerman (1853-1948), an independent woman, educated in the Netherlands. A teacher, she left for Batavia to marry her fiancé, who died just before she arrived. She pioneered as a woman alone and later married a forester who considered women to be equals. In addition to raising her four children, she wrote several novels. The first child born in this egalitarian marriage was Elly Berkhout (1882-1943) whose life began promisingly: she was the first woman to graduate from the Agricultural School

## The untold 'herstories' of a family of talented women

in Wageningen. But she abandoned her job as an agricultural researcher to marry a philandering man in the East Indies.

The third generation of women in the book are granddaughters Sylvia (1907-1994) and Elly Brandts Buys (1913-1985). The oldest, the unruly Sylvia, became editor-in-chief of the weekly *Haagse Post* and developed a new journalistic style. Her relationships with men were troubled. Sylvia's younger sister Elly had a very different life. She travelled all over Europe, settled in Rome, was well-liked as a fashion model and photographer. Although she married, she remained childless. Finally, Chorus tells the story of Lili Veenman (b. 1930), Sylvia's only daughter, who trained in Paris and was the first female film director in Rome. In 1960, she married film director Fons Rademakers, and remained in his shadow, working on his sets as an assistant.

*Alma's Daughters* is a rich book, written in an engaging style, that provides food for thought on gender inequality and the course of history.

Jutta Chorus (b. 1967) is a writer and journalist. She has co-written books on Pim Fortuyn's political career, and the murder of Theo van Gogh. Her chronicle of the Rotterdam migrant neighbourhood *Afri* was nominated for the 2010 M.J. Brusse Prize for the best journalistic book.

In 2020, she produced a documentary about Queen Beatrix, based on an earlier book.

**'Five women, five lives in shadows. A haunting, breathtaking ramble through the generations. This is another way of writing history!'**

Author Geert Mak

**'Chorus has written a book you will finish in a single sitting. She forges a story from many separate life details. Lively voices resound from a trove of authentic documents. She shows that as a nonfiction writer you certainly don't have to fictionalize to get close to people and bring them to life.'**

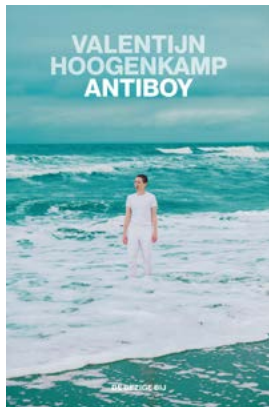
De Volkskrant



Photo (© Tessa Posthuma de Boer)

# NEW & NOTEWORTHY

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



Page count  
107  
Publisher  
De Bezige Bij  
Rights  
De Bezige Bij  
m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl  
Sample translation available

## Valentijn Hoogenkamp Antiboy

*Antiboy* takes place at the messy intersection between gender and orientation, gender roles and relationships. When Valentijn, formerly Helena, has to undergo a mastectomy because of a gene defect, he takes the decision not to have implants and adopts an in-between identity that feels more natural. He discards his wardrobe of women's clothes, even the perfect dress his mother was so fond of, and shaves his head. But all of this causes friction, not only are the doctors stumped, but friends, family and lovers too. His trans ex helps him feeling more comfortable in his new guise – not a girl, not a boy but an anti-boy – and his boyfriend draws away from the relationship.

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

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

**De Standaard**

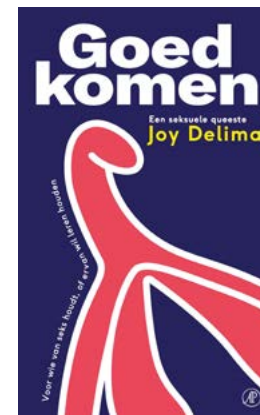
Dutch Non-Fiction Spring 2023

14



Photo (© Sanja Marusic)

A taboo-breaking memoir about sexuality



Page count  
288  
Publisher  
De Arbeiderspers  
Rights  
m.prins@singeluitgeverijen.nl  
Sample translation available

## Joy Delima Getting There — A Sexual Quest

If anything has intrigued Joy Delima – the 27-year-old actress from Netflix's *Dirty Lines* series – from a young age, it is sex. But sex is precisely what she learned to talk about the least in her youth. Years of shame, misunderstanding and, above all, a lack of pleasure, orgasms and knowledge followed. Unconsciously, this led to the greatest quest of her life so far: a compulsive search for sexual pleasure, which she describes in graphic, by turns comic, by turns horrifying, detail. Temporary celibacy provides part of the cure.

Delima writes vulnerably, with humour and complete openness about her disappointing sexual encounters, the takeaway being to understand your own body before anything else, to ask for what you want and set clear boundaries. It makes for an important, urgent feminist book with an infectious amount of self-love.

**‘Joy’s experiences apply to many women. The book is brave, funny and well-written with stories I find very recognisable. It is more than praiseworthy and will hopefully set off a good discussion of how to turn the tide and make sex more satisfying for women too.’**

**Hebban**

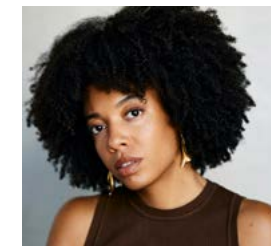
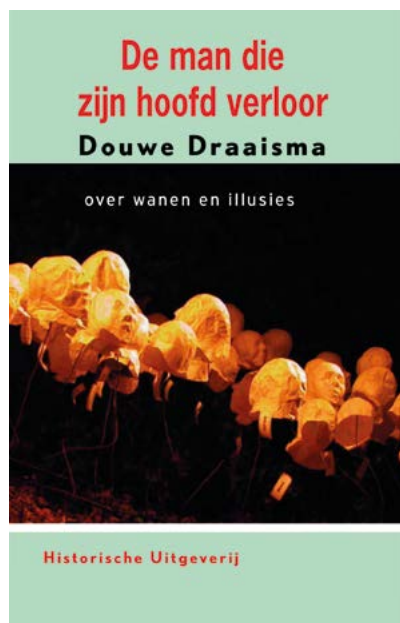


Photo (© Isabel Sanchez Olid)

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# Douwe Draaisma

## The Man Who Lost His Head — On Illusions and Delusions



Dutch title  
*De man die zijn hoofd verloor.*  
*Over wanen en illusies*  
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2022  
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208  
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Rights  
Patrick Everard  
p.everard@historischeuitgeverij.nl  
Sample translation available

Psychiatrists, neurologists and clinical psychologists meet patients who believe the most impossible things: that they are made of glass, that their deceased spouse is busying about the kitchen, that they drowned two years ago, that they are Jesus Christ. The variations are endless. How these delusions and hallucinations arise has long been unclear. *The Man Who Lost His Head* explores in six short chapters some of the strangest brain disorders documented throughout history.

Draaisma argues that delusions are the result of the self's ingenuity in maintaining inner order in the midst of chaos. Delusions form a mosaic in which certain patterns can be recognized. Some are linked to brain damage and help understand the neurological circuits that must remain intact to ensure mental balance. Others are an attempt to put confusing sensations into an intelligible context. For example, Draaisma offers an account of a watchmaker who becomes convinced he has lost his head – during decapitation's heyday. The man acknowledges there is a head on his body, but it is an inferior one, taken from the guillotine's pile. Delusions, Draaisma argues, are linked to time and place.

There is an internal logic to delusions, take Cotard syndrome, whose sufferers are convinced they have died. Patients are aware they are still walking around and talking to others, yet they remain convinced they are dead and don't eat. One possible explanation is the body's representation in the brain. Specific body parts are linked to sites in the cerebral cortex. If one's entire bodily representation is disrupted, then the whole body

## An empathetic investigation into exceptional people driven by the most absurd and tragic delusions

feels foreign. It is the opposite of the phantom limb sensations to which Draaisma devotes another fascinating chapter. Draaisma discusses the thousands of war veterans who experience this.

Sufferers of Capgras syndrome believe that a loved one has been replaced by a double. Unfortunately, these patients can never be freed from their delusion. Rather, the opposite happens: the doctor is soon perceived as being part of the conspiracy. Other chapters cover a dubious psychological experiment with three delusional Christs in a Michigan psychiatric facility, and people desperate to rid themselves of a limb. Draaisma concludes his book with a chapter on grief-induced hallucinations, which are surprisingly common, though only a minority reports them for fear of being declared insane.

This entertaining book is relatively short, but it contains a wealth of information and fascinating insights. Draaisma is a compelling storyteller and always instructive.

Douwe Draaisma (b. 1953) is a Dutch psychologist, university professor and the author of many books on human memory. His best-known book, on autobiographical memory, translated into twenty-five languages, is *Why Life Speeds Up As You Get Older* (2001). He has also written *Disturbances of the Mind* (2006) and *The Nostalgia*

*Factory* (2008) in which he compassionately describes the ageing memory. In *Forgetting* (2010) he looked at the phenomenon of forgetting, and in *The Dream Weaver* (2013) he examined our nocturnal longings and fears.

**'His work is reminiscent of the late Oliver Sacks, another writer who with seeming effortlessly conveyed specialized scientific knowledge to the general public in a narrative fashion.'**

Humanistisch Verbond

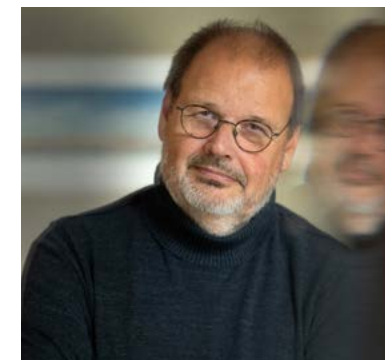


Photo (© Sake Elzinga)

# Marli Huijer

## The Future of Dying



Dutch title  
*De toekomst van het sterven*  
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2022  
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160  
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Cossee International Agency  
Stella Rieck  
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Sample translation available

With the advances in modern medicine and science, the ideal of enjoying at least a hundred years of good health is gaining traction. Immortality feels within reach. By idealizing longevity, however, we often turn a blind eye to the increasingly gradual process of dying – with far-reaching social, ecological and political consequences. In this frank inquiry, philosopher Marli Huijer explores whether there could be a *right time* to die, and sketches a more meaningful relationship with mortality for an aging society.

Huijer introduces the metaphor of the ‘house of mortality’ – the world into which generations are born and from which they pass. It is a structure that requires upkeep, though it has fallen into neglect as death and aging are pushed from our collective consciousness. Generally we seem to ignore the fact that, for most of us, decline and ill-health set in shortly after we retire. The majority of us die in care homes, hospitals or hospices. What were once death-sentences (cancer, heart disease, AIDS etc.) have become chronic diseases. For Huijer, society’s pursuit of health as the greatest good renders this gradual suffering and dying meaningless, despite the way we confront dying being one of the few things within our grasp. At a certain point, stretching our lifespans not only becomes hard to justify ecologically, it aggravates intergenerational divides and will soon make care impossible in aging populations. The question of the right time to die, by contrast, is one of life’s meaning. It is inseparable from our relations with the world – especially other people.

## Finding meaning in aging, death and increased longevity

A society that prioritizes a meaningful existence over the extension of life, Huijer imagines, is a more inclusive society, in which the old are not set apart but integrated in daily life with the young. If we can build on a long-term vision, we can strengthen the bonds between successive generations through mutual attention and appreciation. A politics that values aging won’t act on the individual interests of the young or the old, but will always consider of the many and various dimensions that make personal, collective and political life worthwhile.

Written with disarming clarity, and drawing on thinkers like Foucault, Roman Krznaric and Ivan Illich, *The Future of Dying* is a compelling plea for an open discussion. Ultimately it is not the desire for the longest life possible, but the meaning our lives have for ourselves and through others that is decisive when determining a life is complete. Solidarity, Huijer shows, is a practice that requires constant investment in social relationships between *all* ages. By preparing for old age and choosing how we die, we regain power over our lives in a medicalised world.

Marli Huijer (b. 1955) studied Medicine and Philosophy and is Professor of Public Philosophy at Erasmus University Rotterdam. From 2015 to 2017, she was the Philosopher Laureate of the Netherlands. Her research focuses on the public role of philosophy; order and time in human affairs (rhythm, discipline); philosophy of science and technology;

gender and biomedical sciences. Her previous books include *Rhythm: In Search of Recurring Time* (2011) and *Discipline: Survival in Surfeit* (2015).

**‘Huijer calls for a greater appreciation of suffering and dying, advocates more contact between generations, and speaks out against the medicalisation of old age – all rightly so.’**

**NRC Handelsblad**

**‘Her well-written, engaging argument sparks a thought-provoking discussion.’**

**De Volkskrant**



Photo (© Merlijn Doomernik)

# Tijs Goldschmidt

## Wolves On the Bridlepath — On People and Other Pack Animals



Dutch title  
*Title Wolven op het ruiterspad.*  
*Over mensen en andere roedeldieren*  
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Publisher  
Athenaeum-Polak & Van Genneep  
Rights  
m.prins@singeluitgeverijen.nl  
j.spooren@singeluitgeverijen.nl  
Sample translation available

Goldschmidt's essays have been dubbed 'Goldschmidt Variations' in the past. Nothing is ever as it seems in them; culture and evolution always turn out to be more connected than you might initially suspect. In an essay on the digitization of texts, for example, the biologist looks for parallels between copying DNA and the increasingly precise copying and distribution of texts ('cultural evolution'). In another essay, he links a botanical art installation to the spread of tulip varieties to the migration patterns of immigrants. Goldschmidt's essays are delightfully erudite, nimble and associative.

'An essay or personal reflection should read like a letter to a good friend,' Goldschmidt himself explains. He effortlessly links biological themes to cultural ones, does not shy away from philosophical and art-historical asides, and keeps his stories light and accessible. The topics of these particular essays are more surprising than ever: our dealings with asylum seekers and stray wolves; the racist subtexts to the search for the yeti, the tribal inspiration of Belgian couturier Walter van Beirendonck, and Congolese art forms. He often alights upon scientific injustices and racial prejudice along the way. Other topics covered are the gory hunting behaviour of the grey shrike, our culturally-determined aversion to eating insects, Jordan Peterson's dangerous mental error, and the role of shame in Marlene Dumas's art.

The wolf receives the most attention in these collected epistles. Since young male wolves set off at random to seek out new territories many find themselves in shopping precincts or industrial estates, tracked by CCTV cameras. Goldschmidt

## Winner of the Jan Wolkers Prize for Nature Writing and the P.C. Hooft Oeuvre Prize

comes to the realization that all the fuss about the wolf is often based on mythology and fear. There are countries where wolves, and bears, live with humans without too many issues and where there are actually ecological and health benefits.

'As an essayist, he is a storyteller who knows that form and content go hand in hand. He is brilliant at subtly shifting emphasis, establishing unexpected relationships and exploding clichéd connections [...] We laud his earnest abandonment to the pleasure of thinking, associating, observing and studying; the pondering, dwelling and observing that form a basis for his writing.'

*P.C. Hooft oeuvre prize*

'A book in which love, vitality and inspiration drips from every page. A book about the richness that nature has to offer, a book which transports and enchants you. It could only have been written by someone possessing the knowledge, authority and talent to dish this all up. In short, a book that excels in its masterful style.'

*Jan Wolkers prize for nature-writing*

Tijs Goldschmidt (b. 1953) is an internationally acclaimed expert on evolutionary biology and on the ecology of Lake Victoria. His most famous book, *Darwin's Dreampond* (1994) was short-listed for the AKO Literature Prize and was awarded the prestigious Science Prize from the Dutch Organization for Scientific Research. It was translated into Chinese,

German, English, French, Italian, Japanese and Polish. *The New York Times* called it 'both unusual and eminently readable'.

**'A breath of fresh air... a voice like Goldschmidt's strikes me as a rarity in a culture in which loud, firmly-declared opinions determine the tone.'**

*De Volkskrant*



# Iki Freud

## Men and Mothers — The Life-Long Struggle of Sons and Mothers



Dutch title  
*Mannen en moeders. De levenslange  
worsteling van zonen en hun moeders*

Year of publication  
2002

Page count  
271

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Van Gennep  
Rights  
Chris ten Kate,  
chris@vangennepboeken.nl

Rights sold  
*Men and Mothers. The Lifelong  
Struggle of Sons and Their  
Mothers.* London: Karnac Books,  
2013.

Full English translation available

**A book for and about sons but also for the mothers of those sons. Where Sigmund Freud once described the way men interacted with their fathers, Iki Freud turns her gaze to their mothers. Sons can also develop a symbiotic bond with their female parent. This leads to identification with the mother instead of the father and is often correlated with either homosexuality, or sexual perversion – which is problematic when it becomes compulsive and exclusive.**

Not every man has an Oedipus complex. Not every man fantasized fighting a silent battle with his father as a boy to secure his mother's exclusive love, finally giving her up for the sake of an adult love life with another woman. There are also men who followed a different course. Some fantasize about matricide and continue to struggle with their mother's influence throughout their lives. In a normal situation, a mother does not need her child to survive. Processing this truth is necessary for the child to become an independent individual. However, if the mother does need the child as a psychological prop, it is unhealthy: a co-dependency is created, which can lead to perverse behaviour.

Iki Freud insightfully shows how this can be expressed. Perversion involves acting out fantasies in a ritualistic and compulsive manner. Stereotypical sexual play can offer protection against a fear of merging with one's partner and channel unconscious anger against the maternal figure. Perversion is a tool for maintaining emotional balance. Drawing on the works of Proust and Freud as well as anonymised examples from her own practice, Iki Freud paints a picture of men who have been

## A classic work of psychoanalysis filling a gap left by Freud

unable to detach themselves from their mothers. Famous passages such as the bedtime kiss episode in *In Search of Lost Time* are analysed. The child needs a bedtime ritual, but the mother refuses, fearing to spoil him.. A perverted mother-son relationship continues in later love life.

For Iki Freud, Proust's homosexual protagonist is a perfect complement to Freud's model of the damaged heterosexual child. While Freud developed the concept of symbolic parricide, Proust thematised the concept of matricide: sons who make a pact with their mothers and struggle with it throughout their lives.

'It all doesn't have to go wrong and lead to trauma,' explained Iki Freud in an interview. 'Mothers are interested in how they interact with their sons, the influence they have. And for adult sons struggling with these kinds of issues, the book can offer insights into their inner world and how it is shaped. After all, the forms that love takes, are mainly learned from the cradle.'

**'Human relationship problems in a nutshell; whether it's girlfriends, family ties, male-female relationships or homosexual contacts, it always revolves around the same thing: the longing for eternal happiness.'**

**De Volkskrant**

Iki Freud (b. 1937), a distant relative of Sigmund Freud, was born in Amsterdam and trained as a child, adolescent and adult psychoanalyst. She was associated with the child psychiatry department of the University of Amsterdam and has a private practice in Amsterdam. In 1977 she earned her doctorate on sadomasochism in the work

of Proust and Sigmund Freud. Earlier titles include *Electra vs Oedipus: The Drama of the Mother-Daughter Relationship*.



# PRIZE-WINNERS

## WINNER OF THE SOCRATES CUP FOR THE BEST PHILOSOPHY BOOK 2022



Page count  
176  
Rights  
Uta Matten  
u.matten@debezigebij.nl  
Sample translation available



## Jurriën Hamer Why Bad Guys Have Bad Luck — A New Philosophy of Free Will

For centuries philosophers have debated the existence of free will. Biologists and neurologists have declared it an illusion for decades. The evidence against free will grows with every year: we are a product of our genes, our history and our surroundings. And yet this myth seems to hold more influence than ever – in our criminal justice system, our economy and our quest for happiness. In this confronting debut, jurist and philosopher Jurriën Hamer ventures where others turn a blind eye. He argues that free will doesn't exist, and examines how we are coaxed into believing otherwise. In this he makes a distinction between libertarian free will, or what we think of as absolute free will, and reflective free will, which maintains that our choice of action is always limited and determined by circumstance. When we reject the former, the concept of justice gains new meaning in a world where nobody 'deserves' to be punished and success is the product of luck. Along the way, he shows us the implications for the justice system, personal morality and the idea of social engineering, using numerous concrete examples and thought experiments. Written in a clear and accessible style, this is a provocative read suitable for a broad audience.

**'Jurriën Hamer shows that serious philosophy doesn't make life easier, but more difficult. Read this book at your own risk, because once you've read it you won't be able to unread it.'**

**Rutger Bregman**

Dutch Non-Fiction Spring 2023

24

## WINNER OF THE LIBRIS HISTORY PRIZE 2022 & THE DUTCH BIOGRAPHY PRIZE 2022



Page count  
944, illustrated  
Rights  
Martijn Prins  
m.prins@singeluitgevers.nl  
Sample translation available



Photo (© Bob Bronshoff)

25

## René van Stipriaan The Silent — The Life of William of Orange

William of Orange (1544-1584) is credited with leading his country to independence from the Spanish Habsburgs. This proved to be a long, bitter struggle, typified by cruel massacres throughout the Low Countries, which only strengthened the resolve of his fanatical Protestant and Catholic supporters. What drove Orange? He was certainly no saint and was less popular in his time than is commonly believed. In this monumental work, René van Stipriaan unravels the dizzying career of one of the most uncompromising figures in world history: his ambitions and manipulations, his successes and defeats – until his assassination. Orange's life is compelling without being romanticised, or as the Libris Prize jury wrote: 'Van Stipriaan sketches a man who was constantly in danger of being crushed by all the conflicts he was also involved in, but who survived time and again, by opportunistic action, though luck too.'

The emergence of the Netherlands is also largely European history. Often in vain, Orange sought support from Lutheran German princes, England and France. *The Silent* is then both an intimate portrait of a complex man, and the turbulent age he lived in.

**'A beautiful biography full of personal details and clear descriptions of the world in which William of Orange lived and acted.'**

**NRC Handelsblad**

# RECENT TRANSLATIONS



**Daan Heerma van Voss**  
**The Anxiety Project**

Dutch title  
De bange mens

Published in  
German by Diogenes  
(2023)

Translated by  
Gregor Seferens

Other translations  
English (Maclehose Press)  
Polish (Stowne)



**Raoul de Jong**  
**Jaguar Man**

Dutch title  
Jaguarman

Published in  
French by Buchet Chastel  
(2023)

Translated by  
Myriam Bouzid

Other translations  
Bulgarian (Perseus)



**Menno Kalmann**  
**Michael**

Dutch title  
Michael

Published in  
German by Elsinor Verlag  
(2023)

Translated by  
Gerd Busse

A selection of recently published translations from the Dutch.  
For more information please go to our online database of translations:  
[en.vertalingendatabase.nl](https://en.vertalingendatabase.nl)



**Anton de Kom**  
**We Slaves of Suriname**

Dutch title  
Wij slaven van Suriname

Published in  
English by Polity (2022)

Translated by  
David McKay

Other translations  
Arabic (Sefsafa)  
German (Transit),  
Macedonian (Makavej  
Dooel)



**Thomas Rueb**  
**Laura H.**

Dutch title  
Laura H.

Published in  
Czech by Jota (2023)

Translated by  
Blanka Juranová



**Wieteke van Zeil**  
**Looking closely start  
with ignoring**

Dutch title  
Goed kijken begint met  
negeren

Published in  
German by Seemann  
Henschel (2022)

Translated by  
Bärbel Jänicke

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