

10 Books from Holland



Nederlands
letterenfonds
dutch foundation
for literature

FRANKFURT
BOOK FAIR
GUEST OF HONOUR
2016

FLANDERS &
THE NETHERLANDS

2016

This Is What We Share

This year the Netherlands and Flanders are guest of honour at the Frankfurt Book Fair.

The Dutch Foundation for Literature, which is organizing the related events along with the Flemish Literature Fund, stimulates the promotion of Dutch- and Frisian-language literature worldwide. We're presenting our authors under the heading 'This Is What We Share'.

More than seventy writers in different genres will be making public appearances at the Fair. Naturally we're proud of the more than 300 translations of Dutch-language titles that are appearing in German as a result of the choice of the Netherlands and Flanders as guest of honour, and they will be receiving huge attention from the media and the reading public this autumn.

As an introduction to the variety that Dutch and Frisian literature have to offer, we've collected together a batch of new and exciting titles that we'd like to present to you. In our various brochures you'll find novels, non-fiction, children's and young adult literature, graphic novels and poetry. These are the stories we share. Ultimately it's not about our language or our country: let it be the stories that convince you.

Here, now, in Frankfurt, or later, elsewhere in the world: Willkommen.



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Dutch books in translation:
www.vertalingendatabase.nl.

Margriet de Moor

Of Birds and People

A tender, sensitively written novel in which revenge and love form an impressive alliance

Margriet de Moor's stunning new novel is the story of a family in which the perspective flits between members, from a thoughtful father to his three sons, to a woman who loves all three sons and their father, and to Marie Lina, the true love of son Rinus, a wildlife manager at Schiphol, and their little son Olivier.

Marie Lina's entrance into the novel casts a black shadow over the family. Marie Lina's mother, Louise Bergman, has been convicted of the murder of the elderly Bruno Mesdag. Louise is innocent. She cleaned his house and cared for him lovingly for years. The elderly Bruno, who had rescued a young man from drowning at an advanced age, was very fond of her.

Nevertheless, Louise confessed to the murder, almost believing that she had indeed committed it. How could that have happened? In recent years, the Netherlands has seen a remarkably high number of people convicted of crimes but acquitted after serving their sentence because their confessions turn out to be false. Under horrific pressure, 'Louise B.'

made up everything her interrogators wanted to hear. 'it slowly trickled into my eyes, hands and brain, heavy and gruesome, drip, drip, drip.'

Louise soon retracts her confession, but is still convicted. Her young daughter, Marie Lina, grows up largely without her mother and sets her sights on revenge. 'You are revenge. You are malice. You have grown up with a special proclivity for ruthless violence.'

How will this end? Does Marie Lina succeed in taking revenge on the true culprit? Will Rinus be able to forgive her? How well does he really know her? These questions give *Of Birds and People* the tension of a hardboiled thriller.

Margriet de Moor keeps readers gripped through the sensitivity with which she reveals the thoughts and feelings of her characters, in language which is as delicate as it is tender. Even at horrific moments, her style remains loving and as light as a feather. De Moor puts us in the position of an eagle gliding above its prey. That is what literature is capable of.



Publishing details

Van vogels en mensen (2016)
336 pp., 60,399 words
English sample available

Rights

De Bezige Bij
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Rights sold

Germany (Hanser Verlag)

Translated titles

Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl



Margriet de Moor (b. 1941) is one of Holland's most prominent writers. She started her writing career in 1988 with a collection of stories, *Op de rug gezien* (Seen From Behind). A year later, *Dubbelportret* (Double Portrait) appeared, three novellas in one volume. De Moor's highly praised first novel, *Eerst grijs dan wit dan blauw* (*First Grey, Then White, Then Blue*, 1990) won her the AKO Literature Prize. Three years later, *De virtuoos* (*The Virtuoso*, 1993) was also nominated for this prestigious award. She has since published novels such as *Hertog van Egypte* (Duke of Egypt, 1996), *Kreuzersonate* (The Kreuzersonata, 2001), *De verdronkene* (Drowned, 2005), *De kegelwerper* (The Juggler, 2006), *De schilder en het meisje* (The Painter and the Girl, 2010) and *Mélodie d'amour* (2013). Her work has been translated into 24 languages.

'A clever, surprising, and above all stirring novel which stays with you long after reading.'

– *Opzij*

About *The Storm*:

'It's hard to resist using the word "symphonic" to describe this exquisitely composed, piercingly moving story. De Moor continues to scale increasingly impressive heights.'

– *Kirkus Review*

Photo: Maria Neeffjes

Arnon Grunberg

Birthmarks

A razor-sharp absurdist novel written by a son for his dying mother

Hannelore Grünberg-Klein, mother of Arnon Grunberg, died on 10th February 2015. She was eighty-seven and a survivor of Auschwitz. Anyone who has followed Grunberg's career will be conscious of what a blow that must have been. Their relationship was symbiotic. When she died Grunberg wrote, 'Now I'll have to live on as my mother.'

Even before his mother became terminally ill, Grunberg announced his intention to move back home for a while. He was to be 'embedded' in his mother's house and write about the experience. A year after her death his major new novel appeared: *Birthmarks*, a book that in no sense delivers what you would expect.

Birthmarks is about a psychiatrist, Otto Kadoke. He was named after Otto Frank but dislikes the Jewishness of his forename. His surname is pronounced like a mangled 'okay', although he is anything but okay. Or might it be *kaput*? Kadoke's mission in life is to guard people against death. His elderly mother for a start, for whom he employs a Nepalese home help. In his job, too, he guards against death since he works for the emergency suicide-prevention service. Kadoke's mission

seems doomed to failure, mainly because he totally misjudges the people around him. He falls for the Nepalese home help, for example. When she opens the door of his mother's house wrapped in a towel, he mistakenly takes it as an invitation to sex. At the point when he overpowers her, his mother comes into the room and he quarrels with her during the act. 'You're worse than the Nazis,' she says.

The novel soon becomes absurd. On page 72 we abruptly discover that Otto's mother has 'a prick'. She is actually his father, who, after his mother's death began wearing her clothes out of grief and then took over her role. The situation grows increasingly desperate. Kadoke is beaten up by the Nepalese home help's boyfriend, becomes more psychologically disturbed than his patients and develops birthmarks, benign 'anxiety spots'.

With his razor-sharp writing, Grunberg makes the reader laugh and cry at the same time. There is, in the end, a glimmer of hope for the tragic and blundering Kadoke, even as he gropes in the dark. *Birthmarks* is the ultimate attempt by Arnon Grunberg to keep both his mother and himself alive through literature.



Publishing details

Moedervlekken (2016)
399 pp., 125,000 words
60,000 copies sold
English sample available

Rights

Arnon Grunberg Agency
Janny Nijhoff / Oscar van Gelderen
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Rights sold

Germany (Kiepenheuer & Witsch)
France (Heloise D'Ormesson)
Brazil (Radio Londres)

Translated titles

Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl



Arnon Grunberg (b. 1971) is a celebrated novelist, columnist and essayist; his work has been published in more than twenty-six languages and he has won countless prestigious prizes. He lives and works in New York. Grunberg writes for various European and American newspapers and magazines as well as for *NRC Handelsblad*, *Vrij Nederland*, *HUMO* and the *VPRO Gids*. He has a blog at www.arnongrunberg.com and writes a daily column in the national newspaper *de Volkskrant*. *Birthmarks* has been shortlisted for the ECI Literature Prize (formerly the AKO).

'What Grunberg describes here is a prohibition on happiness that's passed on from one generation to the next. He's not the first to do it and it's not the first time he's done it, but he does it extremely incisively.'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'*Birthmarks* is a stylistic tour de force, a breath of fresh air and already one of my favourite Grunbergs.'
– *HUMO*

Photo: Bob Bronshoff

Karin Amatmoekrim

If Not the Father

A moving novel about a complicated father-daughter relationship

At the age of eleven, Karin learns that her father is not her real father. Her mother tells her, ‘He’s your little brother’s and sister’s father, but not yours.’ Karin finds out that her biological father, Eric Lie, is a taekwondo grandmaster who lives in Suriname.

This news – that her stepfather, an unreliable drunk, is unrelated to her – comes as a relief to Karin, empowering her to break free of his influence completely. She takes her mother’s last name.

Karin realizes that she wants to travel to Surinam, the country she left as a toddler. But she also feels enormous apprehension, ‘I knew who I was in the Netherlands but had no idea who I would be in the country where I was born’. Eventually she musters her courage, and although she’s delighted to be back in her native country, it’s not always easy for her to build a relationship with her father and the rest of her Surinamese family.

Eric is a flamboyant cult figure, yet despite his often erratic behaviour, he welcomes his daughter and sets out to show her Suriname. He takes her out hunting in the wilderness, which she finds terrifying. A charming womaniser, he has

eight children by different mothers. Karin strikes up friendships with some of them but finds it awkward to socialise with her father’s ever-expanding family tree. With new relatives popping up at every turn, it’s sometimes hard for her to figure out who is really part of her family.

The author offers an unsentimental account of fumbling intimacy, reservations, divided loyalties and false expectations, but also of love and affection. Karin remains level-headed and tries to keep her distance, yet at the same time she yearns to discover her true identity. So she decides to write a biography of Eric Lie, which forms the second part of the book – an honest, warm-hearted portrait of an unconventional, adventurous man. ‘Men wanted to be like him; women wanted to be with him.’ Her father’s life story alternates with reflections on being a writer and on relationships between parents and children, in particular, fathers and daughters.

In *If Not the Father*, Amatmoekrim tells the gripping, intimate story of her reunion with her father and her country of birth, adroitly expressing the universal longing to find a narrative in our parents’ history.

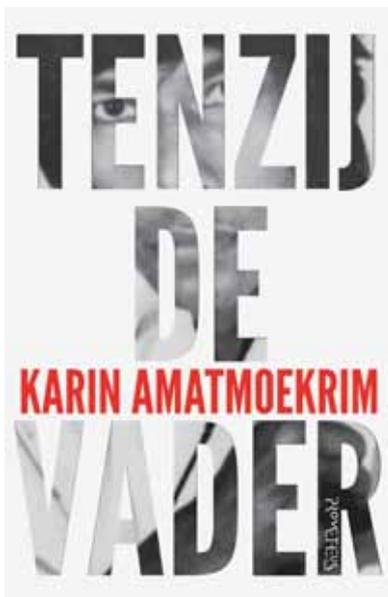


Publishing details

Tenzij de vader (2016)
272 pp., 74,028 words

Publisher

Prometheus
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Karin Amatmoekrim (1977) was born in Paramaribo and emigrated to the Netherlands in 1981. She studied psychology and modern literature, and has published five novels to date. The protagonist of her last book, *Het gym* (The Gym, 2011) is a West Indian girl from a poor neighbourhood who attends a gymnasium (university-track secondary school). *Het gym* was a hit with the press and the reading public. Another novel, *De man van veel* (The Man of Many) (2013) also received much praise.

‘Amatmoekrim is impressive. Her writing is direct, precise and compelling.’
– *Vrij Nederland*

About *The gym*:
‘Amatmoekrim has been lauded for her writing skills ever since her debut. *The Gym* is not only merciless, but also remarkably funny.’
– *de Volkskrant*

Photo: Bob Bronshoff

Martin Michael Driessen

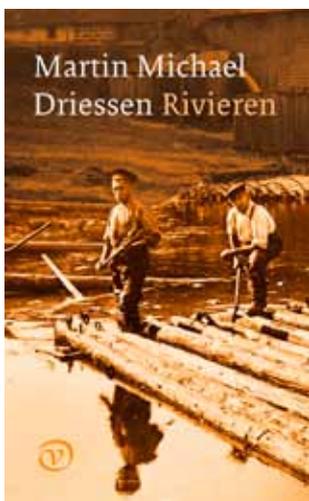
Rivers

A masterful ode to the capriciousness of rivers

In the three novellas that make up this book, the main role is assigned to the flowing water of the river. Here the river is the last refuge for a stranded life, an opening onto new worlds, or the distributor of worldly goods, love and power. In all three, Driessen demonstrates his great narrative talent.

An aging actor, spurred on by his wife and his agent, travels to Sainte-Menehould in north-east France, where he gets into a canoe borrowed from his son. He has been drinking too much, to the disgruntlement of his family, 'If you have to drink, then at least do it where you're not going to bother anyone.' He knows he's an aggressive drunk, but he can't control his craving. He lost a role in *Don Carlos* after hitting the director's assistant when she made a critical remark. He is now faced with a choice between renouncing alcohol and losing his wife, son and job. The two bottles of merlot and one of whisky in his rucksack will be the last he ever drinks, he tells himself. The Aisne is high after heavy rains. Canoeing is not without its dangers. Amid references to Lohengrin and Hamlet, Driessen has his drunken actor launch himself towards a violent end.

In the second novella, the river carries great rafts made of tree trunks, the centuries-old method of transporting timber to villages and towns downstream.



The river connects the lives of Konrad, son of a labourer, and Julius, son of the forester. Both dream of a world elsewhere along the river. Hardworking Konrad cares only about work on the waterway. He controls the rafts to perfection. Julius is more ambitious; a raft is not enough for him. In his restlessness he is lonely, all the more so because he is attracted to men. Konrad is bound to Julius by fate and by comradeship, but he's too much the ascetic to be more than a friend to him. In the story, which spans decades, they travel further and further down the river. Their world grows bigger without ever extending beyond the world of the raft.

In the third part, *Pierre and Adèle*, the water is capricious. The river that divides the land owned by the Chrétien family (Catholic) from that of the Corbé family (Huguenot) keeps carving out a new channel whenever its level rises. Each change in its course alters the size and shape of the families' properties. The riverbed determines whose land it is, which leads to a lengthy, exhausting feud. Lawyer Eduard Salomon, who has taken over the business from his father, can think up whatever he likes – the two families continue to confront each other, daggers drawn. In a grand, dynamic ending, Driessen turns the status quo upside down.

Martin Michael Driessen (b. 1954) is a director of plays and operas, a translator and a writer. He made his debut in 1999 with the novel *Gars*, which was followed in 2012 by *Vader van God* (Father of God) and in 2013 by *Een ware held* (A True Hero), all of them acclaimed by the press and nominated for literary prizes. His work has been translated into Italian, German and Hungarian. 2015 saw the publication of the weighty novel *Lizzie*, written in collaboration with poet Liesbeth Lagemaat. *Rivers* is one of the six books in the running for the prestigious ECI Literature Prize (formerly the AKO).



Publishing details

Rivieren (2016)
140 pp., 42,220 words

Publisher

Van Oorschot, Amsterdam
www.vanoorschot.nl

Rights

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Translated title

Vader van God. Translated into Italian as *Padre di Dio* (Del Vecchio Editore, 2015).

'Rivers compels admiration for the author's mastery. He can depict complex, lifelike characters in just a handful of scenes. The effect is to evoke great melancholy, since the reader can only watch powerlessly as the characters pass up opportunities for love and a better life. And you want to read on as quickly as possible, because you never know what the author will have happen to them beyond the next bend in the river.'

– *De Standaard* (*****)

'More than anything else, the river is a metaphor for Martin Michael Driessen's writing: fast-running, unpredictable and sometimes ravishingly beautiful.'

– *NRC Handelsblad*

Photo: Bob Bronshoff

Nelleke Noordervliet

At the End of the Day

A major novel about growing older, failure and survival

Nelleke Noordervliet's latest novel, *At the End of the Day*, opens with a well-known photograph of the Swiss-German writer Robert Walser, who was found dead in the snow on Christmas Day 1956. Seeing the photo casts Katharina Mercedes Donker's mind back to that same day in her own life.

She was a teenager, sitting at the kitchen table in her parental home, attempting to read *L'Étranger* by Camus in French; an oppressive family scene that might spontaneously combust at any moment. Her father had volunteered to fight in the Spanish Civil War and it had left him traumatized. His wife often served as a sitting target for his aggression. Katharina's twin sisters managed to withdraw from the drama, but she was right there in the midst of it.

This reminiscing has everything to do with a recent request from a young academic, who wants to write a biography of Katharina, a former politician and author of two bestsellers about politics and the role of women. Katharina's response to the request is not exactly positive, 'If she shows up at my door I'll come out shooting.'

This is typical of Donker. All of her choices are obstinate. Her autonomy and single-mindedness made and broke her political career, and they have stood in the way of her personal happiness. She cannot avoid thinking about her life story; her memory thrusts her back into important, often painful episodes. Her son from a relationship with a Spanish economist opted for his father's family, which firmly rejected her. Hugo, the great love of her life, full of grand ideas, disappeared to Surinam after suffering psychological problems. The daughter she had by him inherited her father's unstable mental health and rightly blames her mother for neglecting her. An East German lover used Katharina for political ends. The burden of her past eventually leads to a break with her present life.

Noordervliet plays an astonishing game with memory, past events, biography and the sacrifices a statesman has to make to achieve and hold onto a position of power. Her novel presents a wonderful picture of the politics of the 1960s, full of progressive and feminist ideals. All told, this is a touching portrait of the life of a strong-willed human being.



Publishing details

Aan het eind van de dag (2016)
347 pp., 103,000 words

Rights

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Translated titles

Das Auge des Engels
(Het oog van de engel, DTV, 1996).
Das Paradies ist nicht weit
(Uit het paradijs, DTV 2003).
Der Name des Vaters
(De naam van de vader, DTV 1995).
Die Schatten von Pelican Bay.
(Pelican Bay, Paul Zsolnay, 2005).
Also in Greek (Kastaniotis, 2005)
and *Ukrainian* (Universe, 2006).



Nelleke Noordervliet (b. 1945) writes both historical novels in the tradition of Hella S. Haasse and novels set in the present day. She has garnered awards and nominations for her books, which include *Het oog van de engel* (The Eye of the Angel, 1991), *De naam van de vader* (The Name of the Father, 1993), *Uit het paradijs* (Paradise Lost, 1997), *Pelican Bay* (2002) and *Snijpunt* (Intersection, 2008). She also writes stories, essays and autobiographical non-fiction. Her work has been translated into several languages.

About *Free Man*:

'You should not use essays to defend yourself against those who claim that the novel is dead. What you need to do is to press a book like *Free Man* into their hands.'

– *Het Parool*

'Noordervliet sparkles.'

– *de Volkskrant*

Photo: Annaleen Louwes

Roos van Rijswijk

Unholy

The sacred, yet fragile bond between parent and child

Roos van Rijswijk's first novel is in no sense typical of a debut. You will find no adolescent angst here, no vacuous student lives. This young writer has cleverly succeeded in getting inside the head of a terminally ill woman of fifty-seven, depicting Angelique's decline, fear, regret, anger and ultimate acceptance as convincingly as if they were her own.

On the advice of her therapist, Angelique starts to write. Piecemeal, through her letters and diary entries, the reader learns that there is a gaping hole in her life. She has never managed to be a mother to her son Miguel. Born into a wealthy environment, she had no need to work. Miguel was conceived as the result of an impulsive act with a Mexican whom Angelique has barely seen since. She felt no love for the unwanted child.

Miguel was thrown back on his own resources and left home at the age of eighteen. He moved to the German town of Nieheim (what's in a name?), where he took into his care a mentally handicapped

man called Jorge. Eventually he gets onto a train to Amsterdam, along with Jorge, just as his mother is setting out on a journey in the opposite direction, determined to see her son one last time before she dies.

Van Rijswijk wisely avoids telling us whether or not a final meeting takes place between the two. This is not a writer of clamorous apotheoses. She is mainly concerned to show us the confusing inner worlds of a mother and son, and what lies beneath the surface of their troubled relationship.

Unholy fearlessly tackles the difficult topics we usually shy away from. What will you do, faced with the end of your life? Will you stand by the choices you made in the past, or change course while you still can? In striking, evocative language, the author explores how the sanctity of the family may not be as holy as we want it to be, while questioning the existence of unconditional love that one often takes for granted. With her self-assured, resolute style, Roos van Rijswijk touches the reader deeply.



Publishing details

Onheilig (2016)
224 pp., 47,000 words
2,000 copies sold
English sample available

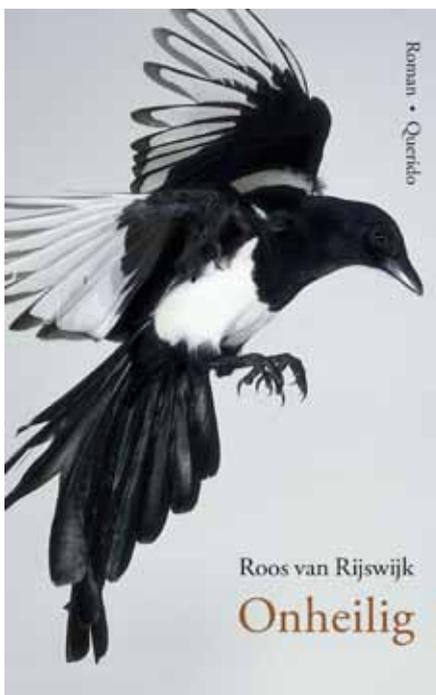
Rights

Querido
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'Unholy explores the sacred bond between a mother and son, and the impediments that arise from it. Van Rijswijk desecrates their bond in her own fashion, in a subtle, against-the-grain novel. Loving this book isn't easy – and yet...'
– *NRC Handelsblad*

'The tone of the book is, at times, crude and unpolished. In Angelique's monologues in particular, Van Rijswijk is a fierce observer without any respect for taboos. (...) This is an elegant debut novel about disrupted parental love and painful decline.'
– *De Morgen*

'A beautiful novel, about a bond as fragile as a spider's web – one gentle blow and it will instantly dissolve.'
– *de Volkskrant*



Roos van Rijswijk (b. 1985) is a literary critic for *NRC Handelsblad* and has published short stories in the majority of Dutch literary magazines as well as on several renowned literary websites. For her debut novel *Unholy* she drew inspiration from a small German town where she landed up after impulsively booking a holiday. In 2014, Van Rijswijk co-founded the annual J.M.A. Biesheuvel Award, the first Dutch literary prize for short story collections, which has since been hailed in the Netherlands as having 'rescued a literary genre'. She is currently working on her second novel.

Photo: Irwan Droog

Renate Dorrestein

Seven Sorts of Hunger

Family secrets and keeping up appearances, delivered with that utterly original Dorrestein irony

In *Seven Sorts of Hunger* everything revolves around eating. Or in fact around not eating, since Renate Dorrestein's latest novel is set in a luxury slimming retreat, the William Banting Institute, where overweight rich men – CEOs, film producers, property developers – come to rid themselves of their excess kilos. Nadine and Derek Ravendorp, owners of the institute, prefer to call it a 'change of lifestyle'.

It's a recipe tried and tested over twenty-five years, but recently there has been a 'contraction in bookings'. In the week covered by the novel, serious cracks threaten to appear in the institute's painstakingly built reputation.

A stupid mistake and its cover-up sets the story in motion. Nadine is caught driving under the influence. Charges are brought. She doesn't dare tell anyone and as a result becomes so mixed up that on top of it all, having just seen Derek off on a plane to Iceland, she knocks down a tramp as she's driving away. Terrified of another confrontation with the police, she takes him back with her to the Institute.

There she does her best to make sure the tramp, now dubbed 'my cousin Helmut', stays away from the wealthy fatties who are there for the cure. But Helmut violates all the conventions of the retreat. Nadine

seems to parry difficult questions from staff and guests with aplomb, but inside she's sinking ever further into the morass of keeping up appearances.

In an attempt to turn the financial tide, she allows a corpulent television producer to bring his anorexic teenage daughter to the institute with him. The childless Nadine unexpectedly develops a special relationship with the girl.

Seven Sorts of Hunger is a novel of tremendous pace. Scenes full of lively dialogue come thick and fast, and Dorrestein, master of the cliff-hanger, gives the story several unexpected twists. The superficially rather awkward Derek, for instance, turns out on his return from Iceland to have a secret beside which driving under the influence pales into insignificance. Husband and wife steer straight towards the abyss. But then help arrives from an unexpected quarter.

Nothing is what it seems in this novel, where fashionable subjects like health obsession and being overweight – 'fat is the new poor' – are intertwined in an utterly original way with timeless themes such as family secrets, maintaining control, and parent-child relationships. Partly thanks to Dorrestein's ever-present subtle irony, these weighty subjects are kept agreeably light.



Publishing details

Zeven soorten honger (2016)
270 pp., 65,000 words
20,000 copies sold
English sample available

Rights

Podium
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Translated titles

Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl

'The story is composed according to the iron laws of the novel. But where Dorrestein excels is in creating a plot that's more layered than the run-up to it would have us imagine. *Hunger* is about wanting, about an emptiness that – take note! – doesn't necessarily need to be filled. It's a matter of discipline and self-preservation. Perhaps that's the greatest secret of all.'

– *Het Parool*

'A book that surprises on every page with new intrigues, like a comedy of errors. (...) So much enjoyment leaps from the pages that it has a contagious effect on the reader. Astonishing craftsmanship.'

– *De Limburger*



Renate Dorrestein (b. 1954) has been universally praised for the force of her imagination, her sharp psychological insight, her suspenseful plots and her ironic sense of humour. Her books have been nominated for the AKO Literature Prize, the Libris Literature Prize and the International IMPAC Dublin Literary Award, and translated into fifteen languages. Her international breakthrough came in 1998 with *A Heart of Stone*, published by Viking.

Photo: Ruud Pos

Joost Zwagerman (Ed.) The Penguin Book of Dutch Short Stories

An ideal introduction to Dutch literature

In 2005 Joost Zwagerman gathered the very best short stories by Dutch and Flemish writers in a monumental anthology numbering almost 1,600 pages. Unlike English speaking countries and elsewhere, the Netherlands had never held the short story in very high regard. Zwagerman's intention was to give 'literature's stepchild' the attention it deserved. The anthology was a runaway success. A year later Zwagerman published another collection of sixty 'long short stories', or novellas.

More recently, Zwagerman, who died in 2015, undertook the editing of this English anthology, published by Penguin Books on 29th September 2016 – a shortened version of the Dutch original, providing a priceless overview of the very best of Dutch literature.

The collection contains, in chronological order from 1880 – the birth of the modern short story – to the present day, 250 short stories by major writers. Zwagerman selected stories by canonical authors like Marcellus Emants, Nescio, Louis Couperus, Hella S. Haasse, Harry Mulisch and Cees Nooteboom, but also by contemporary writers such as Arnon Grunberg, Sanneke van Hassel and Joost de Vries. In his introduction, he places the Dutch short story in both its historical and international context.

These stories present some of the most ground-breaking and innovative writing in Dutch literature. Blending unforgettable snapshots of the realities of everyday life with surrealism, fantasy and subversion, this collection shows Dutch writing to be an integral part of world literary history.



Publishing details

The Penguin Book of Dutch Short Stories (2016)
592 pp.

Publisher

Penguin UK

Original Dutch publisher

Prometheus
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Joost Zwagerman (1963-2015) was a novelist, poet, essayist and editor of several anthologies. He got his first break with *Gimmick!* (1989), a novel about the racy, hedonistic Amsterdam art scene of the 1980s. He caused quite a stir with his next book, *Vals licht* (Bad Light, 1991), in which he tells of the fatal love of a student for a prostitute. Other novels are *De buitenvrouw* (The Mistress, 1994), *Chaos en rumoer* (Chaos and Commotion, 1997) and *Zes sterren* (Six Stars, 2002). In later years he concentrated on writing poetry and essays – notably on pop culture and the visual arts.

'A gift to the reader: a treasure trove of stories, including many classic tales, but also heretofore unknown jewels and startling recent additions to the canon of Dutch literature.'

– *Biblion*

Barbara Stok

Happy Anyway

A graphic novel about happiness, stress and minimalism

For an average woman with an average life, Barbara Stok is really rather successful. She already has seven collections of autobiographical comic strips to her name, and she won the most important Dutch comics prize for her body of work: the Stripschapprijs. The Van Gogh Museum also entrusted her with a very special commission: to produce a graphic novel on the life of Vincent van Gogh.

In *Happy Anyway*, we follow the process as the artist draws this story. Barbara wants to present an honest portrait of Vincent, rather than the usual caricature of a poor, tragic artist. His letters show that he also experienced moments of great euphoria, such as when he was painting in and around the city of Arles.

Meanwhile, we also get a peek into Barbara's everyday life, with her husband Ricky and her dog Wisky. She drums, undertakes her first major sailing expedition across the IJsselmeer and enjoys her vegetarian fennel soup. Sometimes she's plagued by doubt. Even though she uses energy-saving lightbulbs and eats

lots of organic food and she only goes on holiday once a year at most – and *not* by plane – is it enough to prevent the Irreversible Climate Catastrophe? Physical decline is also an issue: 'Even if I stand two metres away from the mirror, I can still see my wrinkles. That's how deep they've got!'

'Then you still have good eyes,' Ricky consoles her.

After three years of constant work on the project, *Vincent* is published. This biography in the form of a graphic novel is Barbara Stok's international breakthrough. She gets invited all over the place to sign books and to give interviews. She's happy with the book's success, but... 'It has a downside,' comments Vincent, who turns up in her life on the final pages. 'Have you heard about the fireflies in Brazil?' he asks her. 'They give off so much light that the ladies pin them in their hair at night.' And he concludes philosophically, 'Fame is to an artist what that hairpin is to those insects.'

Happy Anyway offers an honest and refreshing perspective on success and is a moving meditation on living authentically.



Publishing Details

Toch een geluk (2016)
160 pp.
1,500 copies sold

Publisher

Nijgh & Van Ditmar
Jolijn Spooen
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Translated title

Vincent. Translated into Czech (Mlada Fronta), Danish (Turbine), English (SelfMadeHero), French (Emmanuel Proust/Paquet), Greek (Aiora Press), Italian (BAO Publishing), Korean (Open Books), Portuguese (L&PM Editores), Turkish (Yapi Kredi).

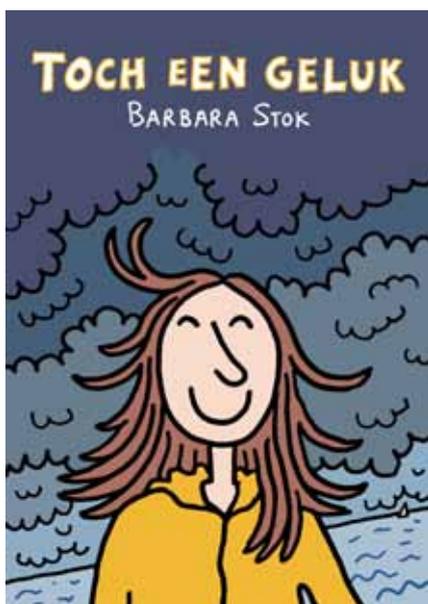
Rights Sold

Korea (Open Books)

'Tellingly, crossing the IJsselmeer in a sailing boat proves to be the source of just as much stress and euphoria as an international tour with *Vincent*. It is precisely this sense of perspective that is Stok's greatest strength, ensuring that her minimalist style of storytelling remains captivating. Even when there's an apparent lack of major drama or the supposed climax has been reached, there are new adventures waiting.'
– *Dagblad van het Noorden*

About *Vincent*: 'This inventive art biography eschews the usual visual clichés and brings its subject into a sharp and sympathetic focus.'
– *Publishers Weekly*

Photo: Gert Jan Pos



Barbara Stok (b. 1970) briefly studied at the Fotoacademie in The Hague and worked as a journalist, before becoming a comic-book writer and illustrator. She depicts her own everyday life in her comics: concerts, nights out, getting drunk, the first steps on the path to love, the fear of death. Stok constantly poses questions about the meaning of life and right or wrong, but always with a light touch.

Esther Verhoef

Dear Mama

In her award-winning whydunnit, Verhoef shows how easy it is to commit a crime

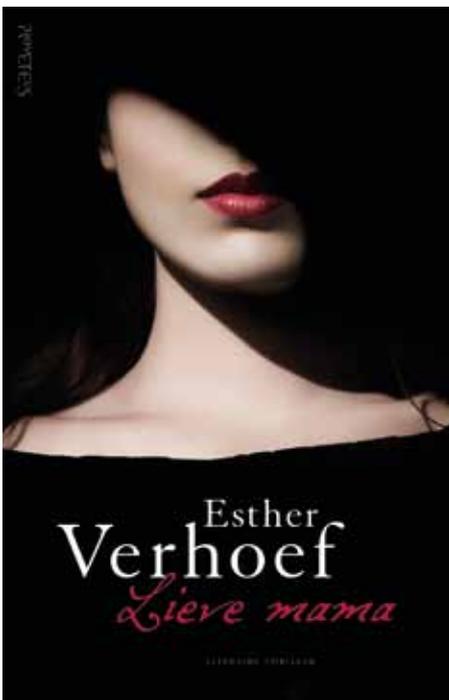
The clever thing about Verhoef's thrillers is that they never stray far from a familiar, everyday environment, yet her characters always go just that one step further. It's easy to commit a crime. A vicarious anxiety arises in us as readers and we have to stop ourselves from shouting out, 'No, don't do that!' This is even more the case in her latest bestseller, the award-winning *Dear Mama*.

Behind the saccharine title lies a cruel world. Ralf and Brian, two lanky youths, are determined to pull off something big. Ralf dropped out of school and needs money for his proudly-owned car. His friend Brian is unemployed and uses more powders and pills than his resources allow. They decide to alleviate their money worries by burgling a rich family's house. Ralf keeps a lookout while Brian breaks in.

When nurse Helen Möhring and her husband Werner, owner of a successful chain of fast-food restaurants and parents

of a clutch of spoilt adolescents, catch the burglar, they don't panic or hand over their valuables. Werner lets fly at him and Helen resolutely shoots the intruder dead. Instead of calling the police they try to think of a solution. It would never occur to the average person to make a body disappear with the medical waste at a hospital, but it does to these two. Buying a powerful electric saw – recommended by the salesman with the words 'Good tools are half the work' – is simply a matter of a trip to the builder's merchants.

Verhoef subtly interweaves Ralf's search for his vanished friend with the couple's efforts to get rid of the body, bit by bit, without being noticed. As the genre requires, everything turns out a little differently than we are led to expect. Verhoef uses all the tricks in the thriller writer's handbook to keep us enthralled to the very end, biting our nails and wringing our hands.



For many years, **Esther Verhoef** (b. 1968) has been one of the most widely-read thriller writers in the Dutch language. Her thrillers have sold over 1.5 million copies and been translated into Spanish, French, German, English and Russian. Her work has brought her widespread recognition in the form of the NS Readers' Prize. She is the winner of several leading crime fiction awards. For *Dear Mama* she won the Gouden Strop 2016.



Publishing details

Lieve mama (2015)
376 pp., 82,290 words
170,000 copies sold

Rights

Prometheus
Ronit Palache
r.palache@pbo.nl
www.pbo.nl

Translated titles

Please see
www.vertalingendatabase.nl

'Nothing is what it seems in this thriller. Verhoef's greatest achievement lies in the way she allows the story to expand without losing her grip on it.'

– Jury, Gouden Strop

'Getting the reviewer's adrenaline flowing until deep in the night – that's craftsmanship.'

– *de Volkskrant*

'Dear Mama is one of Verhoef's best books. Highly readable with a first-rate plot, and the tension builds beautifully.'
– 4 stars in the VN Thrillergids

Photo: Jacqueline de Haas

Successful Titles

Making a Splash on the International Literary Market

More adventures of our favorite feisty old codger

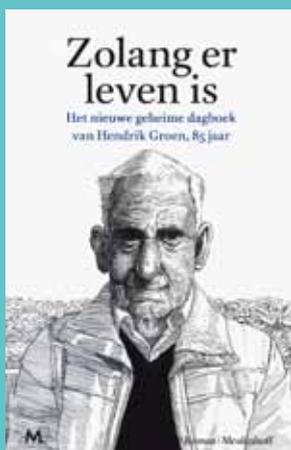
Hendrik Groen

As Long As There Is Life

(Pogingen iets van het leven te maken. Het nieuwe geheime dagboek van Hendrik Groen, 85 jaar)
75,000 copies sold

Rights: Marleen Seegers, marleen.seegers@2seasagency.com

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'Groen brings us a slow elderly people's existence which is worth living and offers us wisdom, humour and joie de vivre. He all makes us a little less afraid of growing older.'
– *Nederlands Dagblad*

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

Tommy Wieringa

A Beautiful Young Wife

(Een mooie jonge vrouw)
700,000 copies distributed

Rights: Marijke Nagtegaal, m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl, Uta Matten, u.matten@debezigebij.nl

Rights sold: China (People's Literature Publishing House), Denmark (Tiderne Skifter), Germany (Hanser), Hungary (Libri), Italy (Iperborea), Korea (Solbitkil), World English (Scribe), World Spanish (Edhasa)



'The evocations of sex, bodies, appetites and desires are reminiscent of Updike at his very best'
– *The Guardian*

Wicked witch holds town prisoner

Thomas Olde Heuvelt

Hex

10,000 copies sold

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'This is totally, brilliantly original.'
– *Stephen King*

'Reminiscent of Spielberg. A fabulous, unforgettable story.'
– *The Guardian*

A rediscovered classic about the growing pains of a Jewish girl between the world wars

Ida Simons

A Foolish Virgin

(Een dwaze maagd)
25,000 copies sold

Rights: Stella Rieck, rieck@cossee.com

Right sold: Armenia (Antares), Brazil (Alfaguara), Catalan (Empuries), Czech Republic (Pistorius & Olanská), Denmark (Klim), Finland (Gummerus), France (Belfond), Germany (Luchterhand), Iceland (Bjartur), Israel (Yedioth Books), Italy (Rizzoli), Norway (Pax), Rumania (Polirom), Spain (Alfaguara), Sweden (Natur & Kultur), Turkey (Bence Kitap), World English (MacLehose Press)



'The novel has a remarkable timeless quality. The language is light and simple, sometimes even poetic, and Ida Simons has a particular talent for understatement, which yields a gentle and sometimes biting humour.'
– *De Morgen*

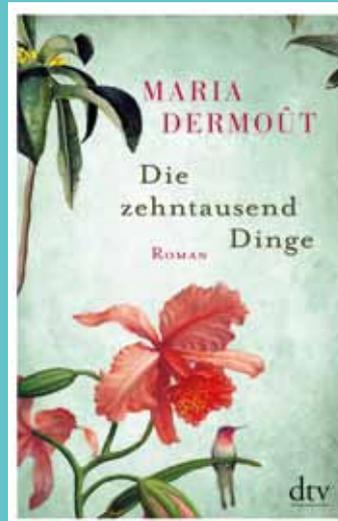
Recent Translations

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



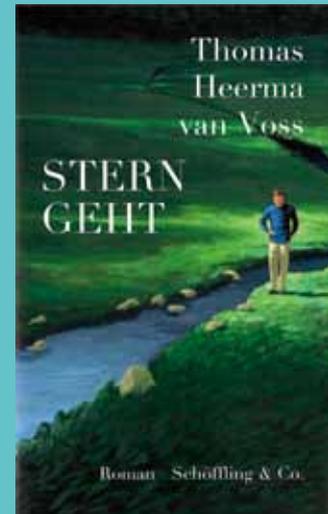
Adriaan van Dis
I Will Return

Das verborgene Leben meiner Mutter
Translated into German by Marlene Müller-Haas for Droemer Knaur, 2016.



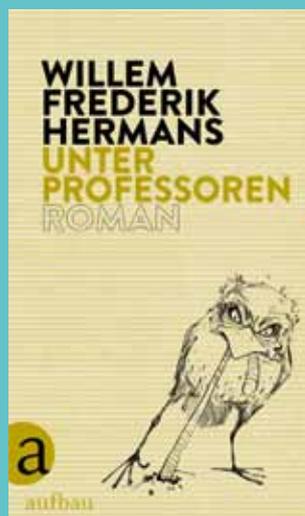
Maria Dermoût
The Ten Thousand Things

Die zehntausend Dinge
Translated into German by Bettina Bach for DTV, 2016.



Thomas Heerma van Voss
Stern

Stern geht
Translated into German by Ulrich Faure for Schöffling & Co., 2016.



Willem Frederik Hermans
Among Professors

Unter Professoren
Translated into German by Barbara Heller and Helga van Beuningen for Aufbau, 2016.



Frans Kellendonk
Letter and Spirit

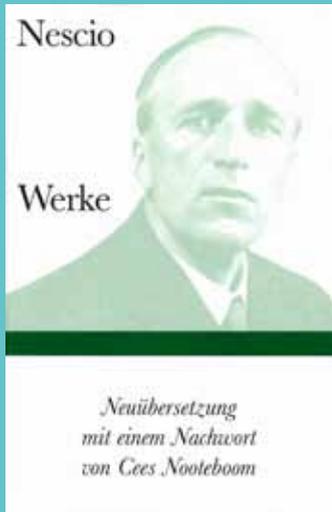
Buchstabe und Geist
Translated into German by Rainer Kersten for Lilienfeld Verlag, 2016.



Ernest van der Kwast
The Ice-Cream Makers

Die Eismacher
Translated into German by Andreas Ecke for BTB, 2016.

More than 300 literary works have been translated into German this year, published on the occasion of the Frankfurt Book Fair.



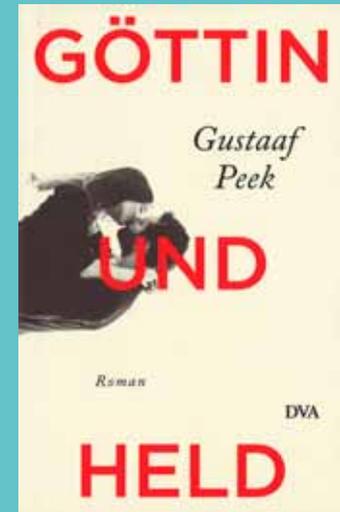
Nescio
Works

Werke
Translated into German by Christiane Kuby and Herbert Post for Suhrkamp, 2016.



Connie Palmen
You Said It

Du sagst es
Translated into German by Hanni Ehlers for Diogenes, 2016.



Gustaaf Peek
Goddess, Hero

Göttin und Held
Translated into German by Nathalie Lemmens for Deutsche Verlags-Anstalt, 2016.



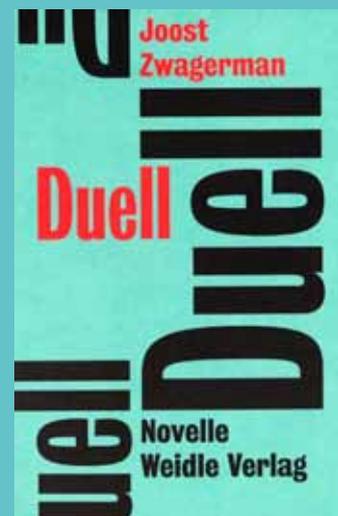
Jaap Robben
Birk

Birk
Translated into German by Birgit Erdmann for Ars Vivendi, 2016.



J.J. Voskuil
The Office, 5

Und auch Wehmütigkeit - Das Büro 5
Translated into German by Gerd Busse for Verbrecher Verlag, 2016.



Joost Zwagerman
Duel

Duell
Translated into German by Gregor Seferens for Weidle Verlag, 2016.

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Of Birds and People

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Michael Driessen
Rivers

Nelleke Noordervliet
At the End of the Day

Roos van Rijswijk
Unholy

Renate Dorrestein
Seven Sorts of Hunger

Joost Zwagerman (Ed.)
The Penguin Book of
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Barbara Stok
Happy Anyway

Esther Verhoef
Dear Mama

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