

2022

2023

2024

**NOMINATED AUTHORS**

**CYCLE 05**



EUROPEAN UNION  
PRIZE FOR LITERATURE

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Can you imagine a European literary Prize, covering the 40 or so countries taking part in the Creative Europe programme, with the ambition of raising the profile and recognition of authors who have received little or no translation? And if so, how can it be organised and how can the authors receiving this unique award be promoted? Since 2009, the organisers, with financial support from the European Union, have been tackling this almost impossible task.

The task is to find trustworthy and experienced contacts in the various participating countries, so as to be able to put the spotlight on the author who will represent his or her literature. But not all at the same time, as it is not possible to make such a selection from so many countries each year, so it was decided to work in three-year cycles, with all countries represented once per cycle.

Each year, between eleven and fourteen countries take part in the selection of authors who have published between two and four works of fiction and

who have not yet been discovered by publishers in other countries, whether in Europe or beyond.

Over the years, the Prize has changed, but the rules for selecting authors have remained the same. The vast majority of the authors featured in this compilation have been translated into many European languages and beyond. The Prize is therefore achieving its objective of highlighting new European works and introducing new readers to the talents of neighbouring countries (in the broadest sense).

The Prize organisers would like to thank all those who have been associated with this prize since its inception, who have selected the books, promoted the authors, translated them and introduced them to new readers.

The authors' bibliographical notes refer to the date on which they took part in the prize. For longer translated extracts, please visit the Prize website.

Long live literature, long live Europe!

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# 2022

Nominated Authors



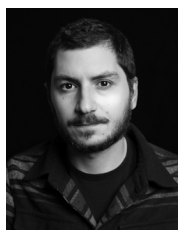
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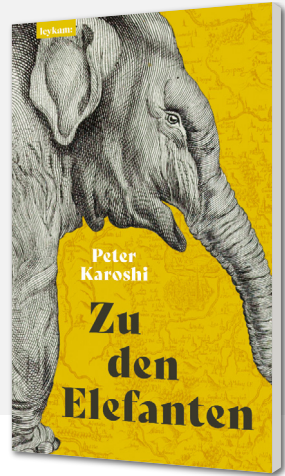
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## AUSTRIA

### Peter Karoshi Zu den Elefanten *The Elephants*

Leykam Verlag, 2021



### BIOGRAPHY

**Peter Karoshi (1975) studied history, English and American studies at the University of Graz. In 2009, his first novel *Grünes, grünes Gras* (*Green, Green Grass*) was published by Milena Verlag. His novel *Zu den Elefanten* (*The Elephants*), published by Leykam Buchverlag, was nominated for the Deutschen Buchpreis in 2021.**

### SYNOPSIS

Theo, a cultural scientist, is stuck in a strange state of limbo when he resolves to change his relationship with his wife, Anna, and his son, Moritz. Together with Moritz, he undertakes a journey along the route from the Mediterranean to Vienna that the future Emperor Maximilian II took centuries ago with the elephant Soliman. This time, they travel in the opposite direction, from Austria via South Tyrol to Genoa. But the pair soon face major problems. Seemingly lost in himself and despairing of the present, Theo tells in diary form of a journey towards the realisation that it is the past, memories and memory that shape the present. It is a journey that takes a dramatic turn, through which the narrator realises that life is a stream of attempts to explain and observe, and that people must first lose themselves to find each other.



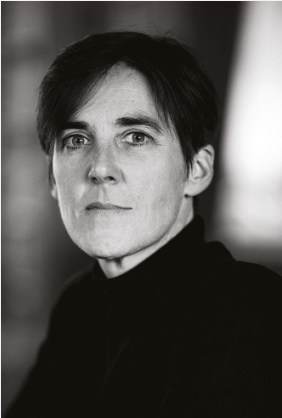
### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Doch mich hatte eine große Sprachlosigkeit ergriffen. Ich hätte meinen Menschen, den wenigen, die mir noch geblieben waren, sagen sollen, wie sehr ich sie liebte. Stattdessen ging ich unruhig und getrieben von etwas, das ich nicht fassen konnte, durch die alte Landschaft.

*Mais j'avais été saisi par un profond mutisme. J'aurais dû dire à mes proches, les quelques-uns qu'il me restait, à quel point je les aimais. Au lieu de ça j'avancais, nerveux et porté par quelque chose que j'étais incapable d'appréhender, à travers ce paysage ancien.*

(Traduit par Virginie Pironin)






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**BELGIUM**

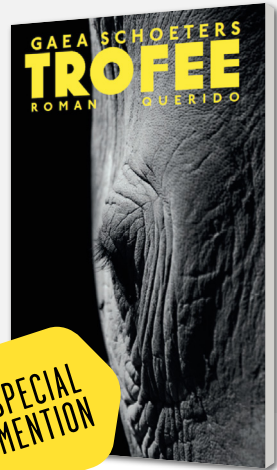

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**Gaea Schoeters**

**Trofee**

*Trophy*

Querido, 2020



**SPECIAL  
MENTION**

**BIOGRAPHY**

Gaea Schoeters, born in 1976, is a writer, screenwriter, librettist and journalist. She made her debut with the travel book *Girls, Muslims and Motorcycles* (Querido). This was followed by the novels *Diggers* (Manteau), *The Art of Falling* (De Bezige Bij) and *Untitled #1* (Querido). All of her work lies at the intersection of formal experimentation and social engagement. She is a much sought-after columnist and essayist for various newspapers and magazines, and the curator of the *Dead Ladies Show*, a café chantant that spotlights forgotten women.

**SYNOPSIS**

In *Trophy*, Schoeters takes us into the twisted mind of a Western hunter. White is guided by a morally dubious compass as he weighs up the value of a life, whether of a person or of an animal. In a stylistic tour de force, Schoeters builds the tension step by step and sets Hunter White, local tracker Dawid and young hunter !Nqate against each other in a gruesome and captivating psychological game of chess. Her rhythmical style underscores the almost physical sense of threat created by the plot.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Als een roofvogel duikt het vliegtuig uit de inktzwarte hemel naar beneden, om vervolgens af te remmen, even schijnbaar bewegingloos te blijven hangen dan een wijde cirkelende beweging in te zetten, alsof het aarzelt tussen twee mogelijke prooien en nog niet besloten heeft op welke het zich zal storten.

*The plane plunges from the pitch-black sky like a bird of prey, then slows – it seems to hang motionlessly for a moment before settling into a wide circling movement, as if hesitating between two possible victims, not yet having decided which it will swoop down upon.*  
(Translated by Michele Hutchison)



## BOSNIA AND HERZEGOVINA

Slađana Nina  
Perković

**U jarku**  
*In the Ditch*

Imprimatur, 2020



### BIOGRAPHY

Slađana Nina Perković, born in 1981, is a Franco-Bosnian journalist and fiction writer. After finishing her studies in political sciences at the University of Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne, she mainly worked for media outlets in the former Yugoslavia. She has published the short-story collection *Kuhanje (Cooking)* and the novel *U jarku (In the Ditch)*. *In the Ditch* was listed for the 2021 NIN Award and the Meša Selimović Award.

### SYNOPSIS

With each new page, Slađana Nina Perković creates a unique novelistic world built on the display of everyday life – only that everyday life, expressed in extremely sharp language and with a dose of black humour, is moved almost to the limits of absurdity and the grotesque. A funeral and the sale of a family home and land – with the events almost automatically perceived as tragic or shocking – are transformed into the ridiculous, which does not ignore tragedy and reality, but instead helps us build a more complete picture of the world we inhabit.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

“Morala sam prepješačiti pola grada. Račune za stan, znate ono, struja, odvoz smeća, grijanje, kablovska i tome slično, inače, plaćamo u banci u našem naselju, ali njima je pao sistem ili tako nešto, pa su me uputili u njihovu centralu u drugom dijelu grada.

*I had to go halfway across town. We usually pay the bills for our apartment—you know the ones, electric power, trash removal, heat, the cable connection and so forth—at a bank in our neighborhood, but their system crashed or whatever and they sent me to their main office in another part of town.*

*(Translated by Ellen Elias-Bursać)* ”




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**GEORGIA**


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**Iva Pezuashvili**
**ბუნკერი**  
***A Garbage Chute***

 ინტელექტი/Intelekti,  
 2020

**BIOGRAPHY**

Iva Pezuashvili's (b.1990) writing career kicked off in 2014 with his book of short stories *I Tried*. In 2018 his first novel *Gospel of the Underground* was published. Iva is also the author of TV series and films in Georgia. Based on his short story *Alchu (Lucky Toss)*, he shot his first movie, *Babazi*. He also worked as a screenwriter and director for one of Georgia's most popular film series, *Tiflis*, between 2014 and 2016.

**SYNOPSIS**

Milla, who has lost hope for her husband Genna, is planning her future without him. Their daughter, Zemma, who is working in the police system, decides that revenge is the only purpose she will ever serve. Lazare, the youngest member of the family, who follows left-wing ideals, is suddenly forced to give up on his principles. It is a saga about a Simonian family that flees from the war in Karabakh to Tbilisi, a city of corruption, violence and dirty politics. The story develops in the space of 24 hours, with all the conflicts, drama and challenges pouring down on the family at the same time. On the top of this, demons and people from the past start to awaken once again, reminding Genna that if something rotten is buried deep below, there is no chance of a bright future.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

“შუქი გამთენიისას, სადღაც ექვს საათზე ჩართეს. მილამ დენის გამათბობლები აამუშავა, სახლი შეძლებისდაგვარად გააღულუნა და საცოდავი ზემა საწოლიდან წამოაფრინა, რომ ორი კვირის დაუბანელი თავი ჯერ სარეცხი საპნით შემდეგ კი „კრია-კრიათი“ დაემუშავებინა.

*The power was back early in the morning, at about six am. Milla turned on the heaters, and when the apartment became more or less warm, she pulled poor Zemma out of bed to wash the two-week greasy dirt from her head, first with washing soap and then with “Кря-кря” shampoo.*  
 (Translated by Tamar Japaridze)



## GREECE

### Takis Kamylyis Γενικά Συμπτώματα *General Symptoms*

Καστανιώτη/Kastaniotis,  
2021



## BIOGRAPHY

**Takis Kamylyis was born in Nafplion. He started his career as a journalist. From 2010 to 2014 he was general manager of the Athens municipal radio station, Athens 9.84. He has published two novels: *Giants and Beans* and, more recently, *General Symptoms*.**

## SYNOPSIS

All five heroes, in the midst of the pandemic, get caught up in a 'good guy' civil war that breaks out in a neighbourhood in Athens, with all the aftermath: the amortisation of people, motivation and other assets. All five become protagonists of the same murder. A novel of monologues, where everything – even crime and self-sacrifice – is done in the most conventional way: without the will of the perpetrator or with the wrong victim...



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Η αλήθεια είναι ότι δεν έχω μελετήσει το σώμα μου όσο τη γερμανική οικονομία του Μεσοπολέμου. Ίσως γι' αυτό όλα μού φαίνονται πιθανά και την ίδια στιγμή όλα ακυρώνονται από το φόβο μιας άγνωστης συνωμοσίας μέσα μου.

*La vérité, c'est que j'ai mieux étudié l'économie allemande de l'entre-deux-guerres que mon propre corps. C'est sûrement la raison pour laquelle tout me semble probable alors qu'en même temps tout est aboli par la peur d'une conspiration inconnue s'ourdissant en moi.*  
(Traduit par Aude Fondard)







## IRELAND

**Tadhg Mac  
Dhonnagáin**  
**Madame Lazare**  
Barzaz, 2021



### BIOGRAPHY

Tadhg Mac Dhonnagáin writes books, screenplays, songs and works predominantly in Irish (sometimes called Gaelic). He won numerous awards with the Biography of poet and songwriter Antoine Ó Raiftearaí, *Mise Raiftearaí an Fíodóir Focal (I Am Raifterai, the Word-Weaver)* and the song book/CD *Bliain na nAmhrán (The Year of Song)*. His screenwriting credits include the TV drama *Aifric* (Telegael, 2006–2008, for TG4).

### SYNOPSIS

Levana has always been proud of her Jewish heritage and the generations of Jewish women who came before her. One of those women is her grandmother, Hana Lazare, who raised Levana in a traditional Jewish community in Paris. Hana's story is one of struggle: as a child, she fled the Nazi invasion of her northern European homeland, the only member of her family that survived the Shoah. She has never spoken a word about that other life to Levana. But as Hana succumbs to old age and her mind becomes increasingly confused, fragments of memory emerge that surprise and puzzle Levana. As the old woman unknowingly reveals more of her past, Levana finds herself questioning everything her grandmother has ever told her.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Sagart áirid a bhí ann. Sin a deireadh na daoine fásta faoi Father Folan, ach shíl Muraed go raibh sé go hálainn. Dá mbuailfeadh sé bleid chainte ort is tú ag siúl abhaile ón scoil, nó dá gcuirfeadh sé ceist ort sa seomra ranga agus é tagtha isteach ar cuairt, níor airigh tú go raibh sé ag iarraidh a fháil amach an raibh tú dána nó leisciúil nó sleamchúiseach.

*He was an odd priest. That's what the grown-ups said about Father Folan, but Muraed thought he was lovely. If he spoke to you and you walking home from school or if he asked you a question in class when he dropped in for a visit, you never felt he was trying to catch you out or find out if you were lazy or careless with your work.*  
(Translated by Tadhg Mac Dhonnagáin)




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**ITALY**


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**Daniele Mencarelli**  
**Sempre tornare**  
*Always Return*  
 Mondadori, 2021


**BIOGRAPHY**

**Daniele Mencarelli, born in Rome in 1974, is a poet and novelist. His latest collection, published in 2019, is *Tempo Circolare (collected poems 2019–1997)*. His first novel, *La casa degli sguardi*, was published in 2018. *Tutto chiede salvezza*, his second novel, was released in 2020 and won the Strega Giovani Award. *Sempre tornare* is the final part of an ideal autobiographical trilogy that began with *La casa degli sguardi*. He collaborates with newspapers and magazines, writing about culture and society.**

**SYNOPSIS**

It is the summer of 1991. Daniele is 17 and this is his first vacation with friends. A small inconvenience is enough for Daniele to decide to leave the group and continue the journey on foot, alone, from the Riviera Romagnola towards Rome. He will have all sorts of encounters: people worn out by loneliness but still capable of leaps of humanity, others who look over an abyss of madness, people defeated by life, or incurable bullies. He will meet love, in Emma's blue eyes. But above all, Daniele will meet himself, in an intense inner dialogue. He unceasingly interprets and questions everything that happens to him, with the urgency to devour the world typical of a 17-year-old, craving to be able to understand everything – above all, himself.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Una Kadett gialla. Di taxiisti me ne sono capitati parecchi. Ce n'è uno che è una mia presenza fissa, un signore che parte dai Castelli per andare a lavorare a Roma. Non è per cattiveria, ma quando vedo la sua macchina in avvicinamento smetto di fare l'autostop, alcune volte mi levo proprio dalla strada.

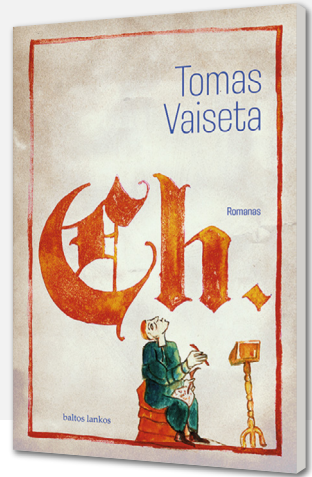
*A yellow Opel Kadett. I've taken rides from plenty of taxi drivers. There's one who's something of a regular presence, a gentleman who leaves the Castelli Romani to go to work in Rome. I'm not trying to be mean, but when I see his car coming, I stop hitchhiking; sometimes I actually walk away from the side of the road.*  
 (Translated by Antony Shugaar)





## LITHUANIA

**Tomas Vaiseta**  
**Ch.**  
 Baltos lankos, 2021



### BIOGRAPHY

Tomas Vaiseta (1984) is a writer, historian and associate professor at the Faculty of History of Vilnius University. He published a collection of short stories, *Paukščių miegas (The Sleep of Birds, 2014)*, and two novels, *Orfėjas, kelionė pirmyn ir atgal (Orpheus: A Journey There and Back, 2016)* and *Ch.* Vaiseta has also written two historical monographs: *Nuobodulio visuomenė (The Society of Boredom, 2014)* and *Vasarnamis (Summerhouse, 2018)*.

### SYNOPSIS

*Ch.* is a novel about the first real theatre, because the performance lasts until the end – until death. Such theatres are said to appear during the darkest years of tribulation to atone for the sins of mankind. Upon entering the stage of the novel, the actors re-enact the story of the torture of Saint Denis, the bishop of Paris, as it was depicted historically accurately in medieval performances: they are being burned, whipped, fed to wild beasts. This story can be read as an elegy of a father mourning his murdered daughter; as an allegory of purgatory, abundant in references to the Bible, Carolingian culture and fiction; as an imposter prophet's warning about the end of European culture; or as an ode to cats who were sent to fight the Devil.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

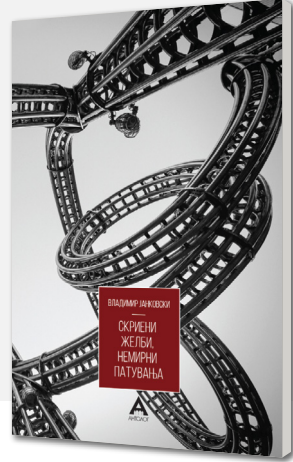
*O kur nubloškė mane, Šarli? Žinote, štai jums dar vienas skirtumas: praktinis skausmas įkalina žmogų viename taške, mylimai, iškamuotai Adelei tas taškas sutapo su juostančiu žemės lopinėliu, į kurį buvo įbestas nedidelis kryželis ir prie jo prikalta skardinė lentelė su mūsų dukrelės vardu,*

*And where was I, Charlie, cast away. You know, here's one more difference for you: practical pain imprisons a person in one point. For my beloved suffering Adele, that point became rooted in that plot of blackened ground that was our daughter's grave. That plot of land where there is a little cross stuck into the ground and a tin board nailed to it with our daughter's name. (Translated by Laima Vince, edited by Saulina Kochanskaite)*



## NORTH MACEDONIA

**Vladimir Jankovski**  
**Скриени желби,**  
**немирни**  
**патувања**  
*Hidden Desires,*  
*Restless Travels*  
 Антолог/Antolog, 2020

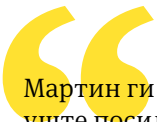


### BIOGRAPHY

**Vladimir Jankovski, born in 1977, graduated in general and comparative literature from the Blaze Koneski Faculty of Philology in Skopje. He worked as an editor and has published three novels: *Hidden Desires, Restless Travels* (2020), *Invisible Loves* (2015) and *Eternal Present Time* (2010).**

### SYNOPSIS

*Hidden Desires, Restless Travels* is a mosaic novel in which the stories of 50 people from different geographical meridians intersect with the stories of the four characters based in Skopje, North Macedonia. The combination of an unbiased camera view and personally coloured storytelling creates an unusual tone, which causes the reader to be left in front of the open door of interpretation. Thematically, the book deals with some of the dominant themes in modern society: the relationship between the real and the virtual; the question of professional success and success in the art world; and the relationship between external achievement and the search for oneself that has one form on the outside and another on the inside.

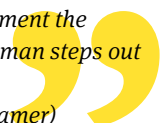


### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Мартин ги подзатвора очите за уште посино да го почувствува мирисот на жената што стои во лифтот пред него. Лифтот треба да одработи уште четири ката. Силно го вдишува мирисот што телото го создава. Во следниот момент вратата на лифтот се отвора, жената динамично зачекорува надвор.

*Martin half closes his eyes to catch the scent of the woman standing in front of him in the elevator more intensely. The elevator has another four floors to descend. He breathes in deeply the scent emanating from her body. The next moment the elevator door opens, the woman steps out briskly.*

*(Translated by Christina Kramer)*





## NORWAY

**Kjersti Anfinnsen**  
**Øyeblikk for evigheten**  
*Moments for Eternity*  
 Kolon forlag, 2021



### BIOGRAPHY

Kjersti Anfinnsen born in 1975, lives in Oslo, where she works as a dentist. She studied creative writing at the Tromsø Academy of Contemporary Art and at the Writing Academy in Bergen. In 2012, she made her debut with the novel *Det var grønt* (*It Was Green*). *De siste kjærtegn* (*The Last Signs of Love*) was published in 2019, followed by the independent sequel *Øyeblikk for evigheten* (*Moments for Eternity*).

### SYNOPSIS

Birgitte Solheim is a cardiologist who has turned 90 years old – so old that most of her friends are dead. Lonely and frail, she spends most of her time in her apartment in Paris. Behind her she has a long career in a male-dominated environment, and she never prioritised having a family of her own. Now she is trying to reconcile with life, while observing people and the world. With wisdom, experience, drive and humour, she does not give up her dream of love. *Moments for Eternity* is a tender, bitter and surprisingly funny novel about loneliness, love and death. Who are you when you're old? Are you just a representative of a certain age?



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

“Vi klamrer oss til hver vår stol slik vi klamrer oss til selve livet. Feilaktig har jeg takket ja til en invitasjon fra Rikshospitalet i Oslo for å motta en utmerkelse. Jeg skylder litt på Javiér, som overtalte meg på sitt sjarmerende vis.

*We cling to our chairs in much the same way that we cling on to life. I, rather stupidly, have accepted an invitation from Oslo University Hospital to receive an award. I blame Javiér in part, he was so charmingly persuasive.*  
 (Translated by Kari Dickson)




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**ROMANIA**


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**Raluca Nagy**  
**Teo de la 16 la 18**  
*Teo from 16 to 18*  
 Nemira, 2021


**BIOGRAPHY**

**Raluca Nagy, born in Cluj-Napoca in 1979, studied economics, anthropology and sociology in Bucharest, Rabat and Brussels. In addition to her academic publications has published fiction in cultural magazines. She published two novels, *Un cal într-o mare de lebede* (*A Horse in a Sea of Swans*) and *Teo de la 16 la 18* (*Teo from 16 to 18*).**

**SYNOPSIS**

After a difficult childhood with several medical problems, Teo begins to understand that she is different. The first theme of the book is reflected directly in the title – a homage to Agnes Varda’s film *Cléo de 5 à 7* – with a cancer diagnosis that changes everything. A second theme, in close relation to the medical one, is spiritual: the novel is a feminist reinterpretation of the Bible, as Teo’s and Jesus’ lives are very similar. A third theme of this book could be the language itself, as the author throws in many different fonts, languages and styles.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

„Așa a început lungul chin al îngurgitării; orice îmi dădeau de mâncare, mă înfrângea după o înghițitură, singura chestie cât de cât suportabilă erau niște prune acre pe care mi le aducea mama, nu știu de unde le lua.

*That’s how the long travail of ingurgitation began; whatever they gave me to eat would defeat me after a single bite, the only things [...] more or less bearable were some sour plums that my mother would bring, I don’t know where she’d get them.*

*(Translated by Monica Cure)*





## SLOVAKIA

**Richard Pupala**  
**Ženy aj muži,**  
**zvieratá**  
*Women as Well as*  
*Men, Animals*

Linden, 2020



### BIOGRAPHY

Richard Pupala studied journalism at Comenius University and scriptwriting at the Academy of Performing Arts in Bratislava. He has freelanced as a scriptwriter and dramaturge with various production and TV companies. He published his first book, *Návštevy (Visits)* in 2014, followed by collections of short stories, *Čierny zošit (The Black Notebook)* in 2017 and *Ženy aj muži, zvieratá (Women as Well as Men, Animals)* in 2020.

### SYNOPSIS

Richard Pupala's latest book focuses mostly on people on the margins of society, outsiders or children from broken families, and the subjective way they come to terms with objectively difficult circumstances. The men, but more often the women and the children are people who are often disadvantaged, under threat or deprived of opportunities for getting ahead in life in the way they would like to. In his latest book, Pupala eschews any literary crutches. Instead, he offers a profound and – in the best sense of the word – realistic and consistently direct Hemingwayesque perspective on the dramatic circumstances of ordinary lives.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

„Však on je normálny psychopat!“  
 Otec ziapal a mama ho tíšila, snažila sa ma brániť, ale tým svojím kunkavým tónom, na facku. Ako keď som ju prichytil nad umývadlom. Vrátil som sa od kanála a šiel hneď do kúpeľne, aby otec nezbadať, aký som zablatený.

*“The kid is a regular psycho!”*

*My dad was shouting as my mum tried to calm him down and protect me, except that she did it in that annoying, yelly-aching voice of hers. Like the time I caught her leaning over the washbasin. I'd been to the canal and when I got home, I headed straight for the bathroom, before Dad noticed that I was covered in mud.*  
 (Translated by Julia Sherwood)




---

**SPAIN**


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**Jacobo Bergareche**
**Los días perfectos**  
*Perfect Days*

 Libros del Asteroide,  
 2021

**SPECIAL MENTION**
**BIOGRAPHY**

Jacobo Bergareche, born in London in 1976, studied literature and writing at Emerson College in Boston. He combines writing with his work as a television producer and scriptwriter. He is the author of a poem collection, *Playas* (2004), the play *Coma* (2015), the children's book series *Aventuras en Bodytown* (2017), an autobiographical novel about his brother's murder, *Estaciones de regreso* (2019), and the novel *Los días perfectos* (Libros del Asteroide, 2021).

**SYNOPSIS**

Luis, a journalist who's tired of his job and his marriage, is planning to attend a conference in Austin, Texas. The trip is merely an alibi to cover his meeting with Camila. But just as he is about to leave, he receives a message from her: 'It's over but we'll always have our memories.' Heartbroken and at a loose end in Austin, he takes refuge in a university archive, where he happens upon the letters William Faulkner wrote to his lover Meta Carpenter. Reading the correspondence helps him to reconstruct his memories of his own love affair and to reflect on his tedious marriage, but also to wonder how one should live to make every day count.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Querida Camila:  
 Me doy cuenta ahora de que durante el último año los momentos de felicidad más recurrentes y reales de mi vida han sido lo que Carmen, mi hija pequeña, llama guerra. Es un breve ritual de pelea simulada que Carmen me exige muchas noches, antes de ir a la cama.

*Dear Camila,  
 I'm realizing now that over the past year, the most real and recurrent moments of happiness in my life have been what Carmen, my youngest, calls war. She often demands this brief ritual of simulated combat before bed.*  
 (Translated by Andrea Rosenberg)





## UKRAINE

**Eugenia Kuznetsova**

### **Спитайте Міечку** **Ask Miechka**

Видавництво Старого  
Лева  
Old Lion Publishing  
House, 2021



## BIOGRAPHY

**Eugenia Kuznetsova is a Ukrainian author, translator and researcher. After graduating from Kyiv National University, she received her PhD in literary analysis in Spain. Nowadays, she works in media research, focusing on conflict-sensitive reporting and countering disinformation. Eugenia has published two books: her first, *Cook in Sorrow* (2020) and *Ask Miechka* (2021).**

## SYNOPSIS

The story of *Ask Miechka* features four generations of women seen over one summer. Two sisters, Mia and Lilia, come to their ‘shelter’ – an old house belonging to their grandmother, where they spent their childhood – in an attempt to put on hold their upcoming life-changing decisions. The old house seems to be frozen in time. Yet the sisters bring it back to life. The house changes, along with the lives of the women who inhabit it as the summer nears its end. In her novel, Eugenia Kuznetsova tells a deeply intimate story about the relations between sisters, mothers and daughters. Vivid dialogues, in which the most sensitive things remain unspoken, but somehow felt, define the atmosphere of the story and highlight the unique ties existing between the generations of women in the family.



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

— Кожна жива істота має право на притулок, — казала Міечка за кермом.  
— На зарослий кущами шелтер, — відказувала її сестра Ліличка.

*“Every living being has the right to shelter,” said Miechka, who was driving.*

*“To a shelter overrun by bushes,” replied her sister Lilichka.*

*(Translated by Reilly Costigan-Humes & Isaac Wheeler)*

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2023

Nominated Authors



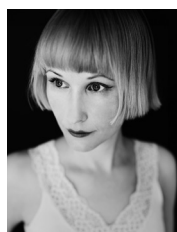
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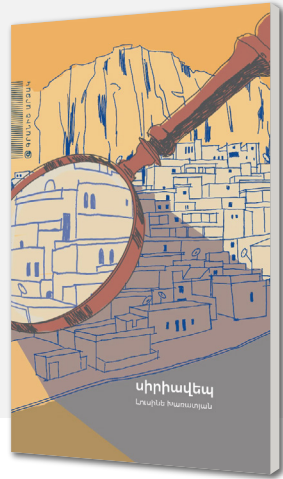


## ARMENIA

**Lusine Kharatyan**

**Սիրիավեպ  
A Syrian Affair**

Granish, 2022



### BIOGRAPHY

**Lusine Kharatyan is a Yerevan-based writer, cultural anthropologist and translator. Her writing is significantly influenced by her anthropological research, fieldwork, and travels. Kharatyan’s first novel ծուռ գիրք (*The Oblique Book*), was published in 2017, followed by a collection of short stories Անմոռուկի փակուղի (*Dead End Forget-me-not*) and her second novel Սիրիավեպ (*A Syrian Affair*) in 2022.**

### SYNOPSIS

Astghik, Ester and Shushan are researchers from Armenia recruited by an American organisation to conduct research on Syrian and Lebanese Armenians. For that purpose, the women have to travel to Syria and then Lebanon, where they will meet and interview local Armenians. Upon their arrival in Syria, they catch the attention of the Syrian Secret Service, the Mukhabarat, who suspect them of being foreign agents spying for Israel and the United States. As they move in time and space, the women encounter different people and their stories. Woven into the main storyline of the novel, each story or encounter is also an autonomous, self-sufficient story in itself, thus creating and recreating a complex and multidimensional reality of the multiple contexts.

“



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

– Խու՛մբ մը ստեղծած են, մեզ էլ հոն զետեղած են,– Դամասկոսի հայկական համայնքի հետ հանդիպման առաջին իսկ օրը մեզ այսպես ներկայացրեց ռուսախոս Էսթերը, որը չզիտես ինչու որոշել էր, որ ինքն արևմտահայերեն զիտի

*“They’ve set up a group and emplaced us there,” this was how Esther—whose first language is Russian but, for some reason, believed that she could speak Western Armenian—introduced us on the very first day at a meeting with Armenian community representatives in Damascus.*  
(Translated by Nazareth Seferian)

”



## CROATIA

**Martina Vidaić**  
**Stjenice**  
*Bedbugs*  
 Naklada Ljevak, 2021



## BIOGRAPHY

Martina Vidaić was born in Zadar in 1986, where completed her studies in Croatian language and literature. In 2011 her first book of poetry *Era gmazova (Era of the Reptiles)* was published. Her collection *Tamni čovjek Birger (Dark Man Birger)* was published in 2016. Her next poetry book, *Mehanika peluda (Pollen Mechanics)*, was published in 2018, followed by her first novel *Anatomija štakora (Anatomy of Rats)* in 2019, a poetry book *Trg, tržnica, nož (Square, Market, Knife)* and her latest novel *Stjenice (Bedbugs)* in 2021.

## SYNOPSIS

A young architect deals with the loss of her partner by writing a letter. The protagonist tells her story while walking around the city and contemplating the ugliness of the streets, meeting unknown people and remembering some situations and details from her previous life. The narrator, with her keen eye and knowledge of human psychology, pictures the details of the surrounding spaces, houses, streets and human characters whose destinies are presented through tiniest detailed excerpts and peculiar life scenes. Like the protagonist, the reader continuously asks questions: how can we face life in all its complexity and how can we arrange the world to avoid things which would hurt us?



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

“Jaja su se kuhala, brojila sam u sebi sekunde. Sto. Sto pedeset. Dvjesto. Kad bi barem, mislila sam, izvadila ta jaja u idućih tridesetak sekundi. Dvjesto dvadeset. Dvjesto dvadeset pet. Dvjesto četrdeset. Kad bi ih izvadila sad, mislila sam, i ona i ja bile bismo spašene.

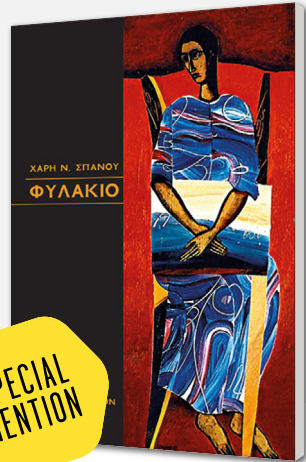
*The eggs boiled and I counted off the seconds to myself. One hundred. One hundred fifty. Two hundred. If only she'd take the eggs out in the next thirty seconds, I thought. Two hundred twenty. Two hundred twenty-five. Two hundred forty. If I were to take them out now, I thought, she and I would be saved.*  
 (Translated by Ellen Elias-Bursac)



## CYPRUS

### Hari N. Spanou Φυλάκιο *The Outpost*

Aegean Publications,  
2022



SPECIAL  
MENTION

### BIOGRAPHY

**Hari was born in Cyprus in 1964 and studied Medicine in Salonica. She now works as a physician in Nicosia. As a teenager, she started writing in Greek in school journals, 'alternative' newspapers and literary magazines. Three books of fiction were published.**

### SYNOPSIS

The storyline unfolds around a person who has been missing since the Turkish invasion of Cyprus in 1974. Nikiforos, a 19-year-old soldier of the national guard is missing in action. Nikiforos himself, as with every other missing person, knows exactly what happened to him and led to his 'disappearance' and death. The background being the present time, which the characters observe, ponder and discuss whilst getting on with their everyday life, we follow Hermes, Julia, Michael, Savvas and Michael. By studying their thoughts and feelings, the hidden connections that link them with Nikiforos are unravelled. When a few bone fragments are identified and matched as being his, things darken and climax.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Το μεσημέρι λοξοδρομώ από τον αυτοκινητόδρομο προς τα ημιορεινά. Σταθμεύω και βγαίνω από το αυτοκίνητο. Βα δίζω για καμιά ώρα με ταχύ βήμα, θαρρείς θέλω να τρυπήσω τη Γη με τις πατούσες μου. Ύστερα πάλι οδηγώ. Ο νους μου τρέχει. Η θάλασσα ίσως να μπορεί να ξεπλύνει για λίγο την Αγωνία. Ιστορίες για αγρίους.

*In the middle of the day, I veer off the highway towards the foothills. I park and get out of the car. I walk for about an hour at a rapid stroll, as if trying to pierce the Earth with the soles of my feet. Afterwards, I drive some more. My mind is going a mile a minute. Perhaps the sea may succeed in washing away the anguish for a while. Quirky stories.*  
(Translated by Patricia Barbeito)



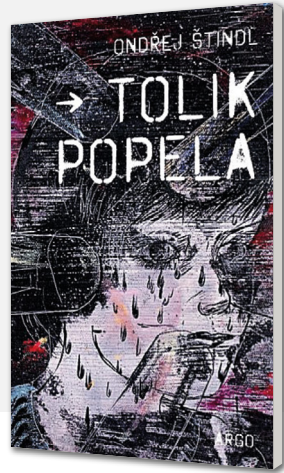

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**CZECHIA**


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**Ondřej Štindl**  
**Tolik popela**  
*So Much Ash*

Argo, 2022


**BIOGRAPHY**

Ondřej Štindl (born in 1966) is a film and music critic, writer, screenwriter and DJ. The film *Pouta (Walking Too Fast)*, based on his script, premiered in 2010. In 2020 he was awarded the Ferdinand Peroutka Prize for his journalistic work. He is the author of the novels *Mondschein* (2012), *K hranici (To the Border, 2016)*, *Až se ti zatočí hlava (Until Your Head Starts Spinning, 2020)* and *Tolik popela (So Much Ash, 2022)*.

**SYNOPSIS**

An ageing writer and translator, the novel's protagonist Kryštof abruptly finds himself at a crossroads when he meets the young leftist intellectual Kristýna, and not long afterwards Kamil, a guru with a strange connection to Kryštof's deceased sister. The emerging pandemic is changing life as he knows it, making the possibility of the world's end more real than ever – in fact, Kryštof might be headed towards a 'personal apocalypse,' plagued by melancholy, the grotesque, intrusive memories and dark forebodings. He becomes a hesitant actor in what is either a story of great revelation or a cruel cosmic joke, or a love story.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Kluk se zastavil uprostřed běhu a mlčky zíral na Kryštofa, rychle dýchal pusou a z nosu se mu pomalu spouštěla nuda. Po cestě od dětského hřiště se zvolna blížila jeho maminka, konverzovala s kamarádkou. Dvě upravené dámy po třicítce v kabátcích pastelových barev a se sladěnými rouškami dodržovaly předepsaný odstup.

*The boy stopped in mid-run and stared silently at Kryštof. He was breathing rapidly through his mouth and a line of snot dripped slowly from his nose. His mother was approaching along the path from the children's playground, chatting with a friend. The two well-groomed ladies in their thirties, wearing pastel-coloured jackets and matching face masks, were maintaining the prescribed distance.*  
 (Translated by Graeme and Suzanne Dibble)





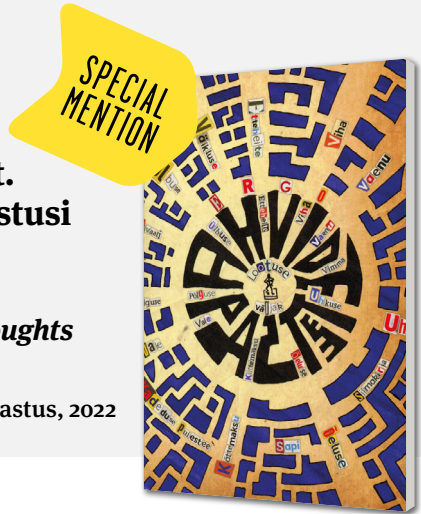
## ESTONIA

Tõnis Tootsen

### Ahvide pasteet. Ühe ahvi mälestusi ja mõtteid

*Pâté of the Apes:  
One primate's thoughts  
and memories*

Kaarnakivi Seltsi Kirjastus, 2022



## BIOGRAPHY

Tõnis Tootsen (1988) is a writer who has focused on translating, editing, design and sound/video editing. He has studied semiotics at Tartu University. Tootsen has published a collection of short stories, *Nukumeister (The Puppet Master, 2012)*, and a monumental handwritten and illustrated novel, *Esimene Päev (The First Day, 2016)*. Tootsen has also recently written and illustrated a poetry collection titled *Uttu (Into the Fog, 2021)*. He currently lives in a forest in southern Estonia.

## SYNOPSIS

*Pâté of the Apes* is the first book written by a monkey. The absurdity of humankind is highlighted in detail. Both the ape's autobiographical experiences and the period during which Estonia was freed of Soviet occupation and endeavoured to restore its status as a free European state are viewed through a funhouse mirror. Human modes of behaviour and societal hierarchies, which can easily be upended in the shifting winds of politics, are put under a microscope. It can similarly be read as a critique of anthropocentrism and a strong blow to the idea that humankind is evolution's crown jewel.



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Mõtlemata hakates – minu esimene mälestus ei olegi emast või isast, vaid hoopis inimestest. Kui ma seda mälu pilti tagantjärele ise maalunud pole – olen seda lugu teiste suust lihtsalt nii palju kordi kuulnud. Sünnipäevadel, sabavõtetel, inimesekssaamis-pühadel ja nii edasi. Isegi siis, kui juba täisahv olin, tuletati muudkui meelde, kui lähedal ma õigupoolest olin.

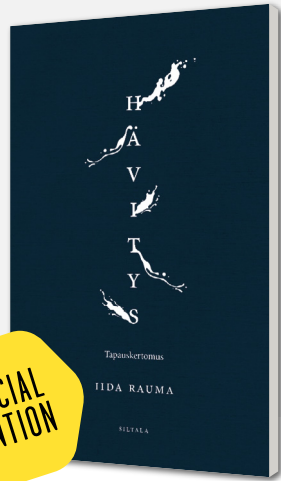
*Thinking back, my first memory isn't of my mother or father, but of humans. That is if I haven't sketched the recollection into my mind later; I've just heard about it so many times from other mouths. On birthdays and Tailster holidays and Manifestation Eve and so forth. Even after growing into a full-fledged ape, I was constantly reminded of how close I'd been regardless.*  
(Translated by Adam Cullen)



## FINLAND

**Iida Rauma**  
**Hävitys:**  
**Tapauskertomus**  
*Destruction: A Case Study*

Siltala Publishing,  
2022



### BIOGRAPHY

Iida Rauma was born in 1984. Her debut novel, *The Book of Disappearances*, was published in 2011 followed by her 2015 novel, *Of Sex and Mathematics*. Rauma has a master's degree in political science with a specialisation in political history.

### SYNOPSIS

Iida Rauma's third novel demonstrates the ability of literature to tell the truth when all other ways of speaking have been denied or condemned as lunacy. While jogging at night, A sees a familiar figure at the city's desolate fringes and realises nothing ends, nothing is over. So begins a breathless, desperate attempt to hunt down and escape the past across the ravaged city of Turku, into the water-damaged classrooms of the 1990s and a darkness for which there are no words but still must be expressed. *Destruction* asks how one can write about oneself if one's own self has been shattered. How can we document the horrors of one's childhood in a culture where adults hate children and want to erase the traces of past wrongs?



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

”Ihmiset luulee et pahin on ku joutuu jonku väkivaltasen hyökkäyksen uhriks”, Ira sanoi ja huojui silmät puoliummessa. ”Et ku joku yrittää hukuttaa, et se ois niinku se grand trauma mut siis musthan se hukuttamisjuttu on aiva ihana.

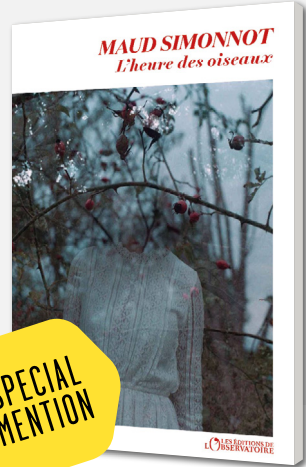
‘People think being the victim of a violent attack is the worst thing ever,’ said Ira and swayed, her eyes half shut. ‘Like, if someone tries to drown you, that would be some kind of massive trauma, but to me the whole drowning thing is wonderful. (Translated by David Hackston)



## FRANCE

### Maud Simonnot L'heure des oiseaux *The Hour of Birds*

Éditions de  
l'Observatoire, 2022



## BIOGRAPHY

Maud Simonnot is a French writer. Her biography of the publisher Robert McAlmon, *La nuit pour adresse* (Gallimard, 2017), has received the Valéry-Larbaud literary prize and was a finalist for the prestigious Medecis literary prize. After *L'Enfant céleste*, Goncourt selection and finalist for the 2020 Goncourt des lycéens, *L'Heure des oiseaux* is her second novel.

## SYNOPSIS

This novel is about the aftermath of the war on children and the abuse of innocent orphans, often the first victims of adult cruelty. The story takes place on Jersey Island in 1959. To avoid the cruelty and sadness of the orphanage, Lily, rejected as being different, draws all her courage from the song of the birds, her ability to re-enchant the world, the strange friendship she shares with a hermit in the 'Forgotten Forest' and the unconditional love she has for a young boy called 'le Petit'. Sixty years later, a young ornithologist travels from France to Jersey to investigate the past of her father, a pianist who also has a passion for birds. The islanders dodge the questions asked by this foreigner about the sordid affair linked to the orphanage: what happened to Lily and to his brother? What's the drama that has been kept secret for so long?



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Le jour où je suis arrivée sur l'île, il neigeait. J'avais rêvé d'azur, de voiliers et de soleils couchants qui brûlent en silence, j'ai débarqué en pleine tempête dans un endroit où personne ne m'attendait.

*The day I come to the island, it is snowing. I have dreamed of azure, of sailboats and setting suns blazing in silence; I disembark in a raging storm someplace nobody has been expecting me.*

(Translated by Jeffrey Zuckerman)





## KOSOVO

**Ag Apolloni**  
**Kësulëkuqja,**  
**përrallë për të**  
**rritur**  
*Little Red Riding*  
*Hood – A fairy tale*  
*for adults*

Bard Books, 2022



## BIOGRAPHY

**Ag Apolloni (1982)** studied dramaturgy at the Faculty of Arts, and literature at the Faculty of Philology, both at the University of Prishtina, where since 2008 he has been working as a professor of literature. In 2012 he earned his PhD in literature. In 2013 he founded the cultural studies journal *Symbol*. He conducted interviews with Jonathan Culler, Linda Hutcheon, Mieke Bal, Stanley Fish, Peter Singer, etc.

## SYNOPSIS

Ag Apolloni's latest novel is a love story between a 40-year-old dramatist and a 20-year-old actress, taking place in Prishtina in 2022. Lorita was chosen to play the role of 'Judita' in a show prepared by the National Theatre, while Max is in a psychological crisis, being unable to write his novel about rapes during the war. He also has a health problem concerning his lungs as a result of COVID-19. Therefore, to get fresh air, he goes to the park, where he meets the actress, who has gone out for a run. They meet in the park, surrounded by trees, Max in black as a sick wolf, Lorita with a red cap as a grown-up *Red Riding Hood*. From that moment, love blossoms between them, and has its ups and downs throughout the novel.



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

GJYSHJA E MBAROI përrallën dhe bëri sikur po më hante. Pastaj unë i thashë: Edhe? Gjyshja tha: Çka edhe? I thashë: Pasi i hëngri, çka ndodhi? Tha: Kurr gjë. I hëngri. U kry. Përralla në shkallë, dukati në ballë. Thashë: Jo, nuk u kry. Tha: U kry, merr vesh! Unë jo, ajo po, unë jo, ajo po.

*"Granny finished the story and pretended to bite me. I begged her to keep on going. And...I said, and she'd go, and what? After the wolf ate them, what happened?"*  
*'Nothing. He ate them. The end,' she said. 'And they all lived happily ever after.'* *'No, that's not all.'* *'It is. Get it through your head!'* *When I would say no, she'd say yes, and it'd go on and on.*  
 (Translated by Suzana Vuljevic)




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**LIECHTENSTEIN**


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**Anna Ospelt**  
**Frühe Pflanzung**  
*Early Planting*  
 Limmat Verlag, 2023


**BIOGRAPHY**

**Anna Ospelt, born in 1987 in Vaduz, Liechtenstein, studied sociology, media and education in Basel. She publishes poetry and short stories in literary magazines and anthologies. For her book *Wurzelstudien*, she received, among others, a scholarship from the Nantesbuch Foundation as part of the German Prize for Nature Writing and the Literary Colloquium Berlin, and was nominated for the Clemens Brentano Prize. In April 2023 her new book, *Early Planting*, was published by Limmat Verlag, Zurich. Anna Ospelt lives in Vaduz.**

**SYNOPSIS**

Plant a seed in the ground, water carefully and wait. Let a child grow in the mother's womb and wait for it to be born. Anna Ospelt describes these elementary processes in her inimitable poetic way. Explorations of the child, the garden, the trees and birds intertwine to form a powerful book about life's beginnings. Ever-present is the social question: What does becoming a mother mean for a woman today, and for her work – in the author's case, her writing? *Early Planting* is a sensitive investigation of parenthood and an idiosyncratic observation of nature.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

“ In unserem Garten sind die Spitzen erster Frühlingsblüher zu sehen.

— Eine Schneedecke legt sich über die Blütenspriese.

— Ich sitze am Fenster und warte, bis E. neben mir aufwacht. Sie ist fünf Tage alt.

*You can see the tips of the first spring flowers in our garden.*

--

*A blanket of snow lies over the flower sprouts.*

--

*I sit at the window and wait until E. wakes up next to me. She's five days old. (Translated by Anne Posten)*



## LUXEMBOURG

**Jeff Schinker**  
**Ma vie sous les tentes**  
*My Life in Tents*  
 Hydre Éditions, 2021



### BIOGRAPHY

Jeff Schinker (1985) is a writer and journalist. He obtained a master's degree in Comparative literature in Paris. Since 2017 he's been working as editor of the cultural pages of the Luxembourg daily newspaper *Tageblatt*. In 2015 Jeff Schinker published *Retrouvailles. Sabotage*, Schinker's second book was published in 2018. Schinker's most recent novel, *Ma vie sous les tentes*, was published in 2021.

### SYNOPSIS

In *Ma vie sous les tentes*, the protagonist sees in the festival life a way of resisting the patterns of modern society. The tents become both a symbol for nomadic life, allowing the protagonist to travel through Europe and experience surprising adventures, and for the book itself, writing being seen as a similarly refuge from personal and societal issues. The novel creates a multi-layered artistic experience by including listening suggestions. Both the story and the language reflect the sense of volatility of a generation more at home in their friendships and the bonds created by music than in the families, villages and cities of their childhood.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Au final, cela s'est payé par une odeur pestilentielle dans ladite automobile puisque, par un effet physiologique que je serais en mal de vous expliquer dans les détails (sans quoi j'aurais pu prévoir la débâcle en question), la tente humide, exposée dans le coffre de la voiture, sur lequel un soleil élançant s'abattait, avait fini par suer et suinter, créant une ambiance tropicale dans le véhicule.

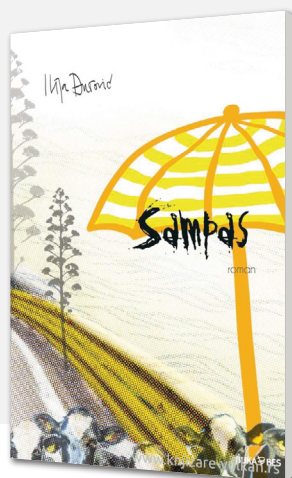
*In the end, the result was a foul odour in the aforementioned automobile because, due to a chemical reaction which I'd be hard pressed to explain in detail (otherwise I could have foreseen this whole debacle), the humid tent, lying loose in the car boot in the blazing heat, had eventually begun to sweat and ooze, creating a tropical microclimate in the vehicle.*

(Translated by Anna Leader)



## MONTENEGRO

**Ilija Đurović**  
**Sampas**  
 Treći Trg, 2021



### BIOGRAPHY

Ilija Đurović (b. 1990) writes prose, poetry, plays and film scripts. His first book of prose, *They do it so beautifully in those great romantic novels*, came out in 2014 under Yellow Turtle Press, a small Montenegrin publishing house he runs. This was followed by *Black Fish* (2016) and the poetry book *Brink* (2018). In 2019 he was co-winner of the Montenegrin theatre award for the best contemporary drama, *Sleepers*. His first novel, *Sampas*, was shortlisted for the 2021 NIN Award (Award for Best Novel of the Year).

### SYNOPSIS

*Sampas* is written in the form of a road novel, where through fragments of a journey we follow the tale of two young people who travel through central and southern Montenegro, where they, as the main characters, illuminate the complexities of their individual fates, but also the collective experience of the spirit of the place and the time in which the story unfolds. Alongside the political references in the novel, '*Sampas*' also works at the level of a love story, where the couple's relationship is explored, and thus the story becomes an exploration of the idea of that relationship, indeed of all relationships.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Ada Bojana je veliki pijesak uz veliku vodu i kad zamišljam nju ne vidim nju, vidim vlažan, močvarni vazduh koji može biti bilo gdje, zbog toga je Ada voda i njeni su komarci moji i njeni i svačiji, idemo rastinjem privučeni ljuljanjem reggaea, pokušaćemo se uplašiti u ono što se roji nad pijeskom, rastafarijanci, rejveri i ostali, ajte, ajte, ne ozuvajte se, jedan od rastafarijanaca pruža nam pivo, (...)

*Ada Bojana is a big sand by a big water, and when I imagine it I don't see it but the dank swampy air that could be anywhere, therefore the Ada is water and its mosquitos belong to me, it and everyone, we made our way through the vegetation, drawn to the swaying reggae, we'd try to beach-bash over to the teeming on the sand, Rastas, ravers and the rest, come on, join in, don't be shy, a Rasta offered us beer, (...)*  
 (Translated by Will Firth)




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**POLAND**


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**Sabina Jakubowska**

**Akuszerki**  
*The Midwives*

Grupa Wydawnicza, 2022


**BIOGRAPHY**

**Sabina Jakubowska has been accompanying women during childbirth as a doula for years. She graduated from the archaeology department. Her debut novel for young people, *Dom na Wschodnia*, received the main prize in the Debut Promoters competition. *Akuszerki* is her first novel for adult readers. The novel may also be adapted to the screen.**

**SYNOPSIS**

Winter of 1885, a village near Krakow. Young Franciszka gives birth to her first child. She is accompanied in childbirth by Regina, the woman who adopted her and a well-known midwife in the area. The difficult experience of the child's death brings the women closer together and allows them to reveal the secrets of Franciszka's origins. At the same time, another baby is born in a nearby mansion. Franciszka is hired as its foster mother. A series of events lead to her starting to help local women with the birth of their children and, thanks to unexpected support, she begins her studies at a midwifery school in Krakow. At first, she is lost, but soon gains confidence. She returns from Krakow to her native village, richer in knowledge about delivery, which collides painfully with the rural realities of poverty and superstition. The First World War breaks out and destroys Franciszka's village. Invariably, even in such times, Franciszka continues her path.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Godzina za godziną mijała. Franciszka przestała krwawić, ale życie z niej uchodziło razem z gorącym potem. Dreszcze nią wstrząsały, zimno wkręcało się w stopy. Babka zdawała się spać, cicho oddychała, tyłem oparta o kraj łóżka.

*The hours passed. Franciszka had stopped bleeding, but the life was draining out of her along with her hot sweat. She was shivering, the cold biting at her feet. Regina seemed to be asleep, breathing softly, her back against the edge of the bed.*

*(Translated by Kate Webster)*








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**SWEDEN**


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**Marit Kapla**  
**Kärlek på Svenska**  
*Love in Swedish*  
 Teg Publishing, 2022


**BIOGRAPHY**

Marit Kapla (1970) is a Swedish author and journalist. She served as Artistic Director of Göteborg Film Festival, as Founder and Program Director of the festival's streaming platform *Draken Film* and was editor-in-chief of cultural journal *Ord & Bild*. In 2019, she debuted with *Osebol*, an extraordinary work based upon interviews with almost all the residents of her home village. Her latest book, *Kärlek på svenska (Love in Swedish)* consists of interviews with people all over Sweden about love, made by documentary filmmaker Staffan Julén for his film with the same title.

**SYNOPSIS**

In *Kärlek på svenska*, individuals of different ages and backgrounds speak of the love in their lives. Each person lives somewhere in Sweden, from Ystad in the south to Karesuando in the north. Their experiences and formulations form the core of this striking lyrical depiction of the terms and conditions of love in our time. The texts are quotations from verbatim interviews made by Staffan Julén for his documentary film, which is also entitled *Love in Swedish*. The reader will meet the 31 individuals one after another, from the oldest to the youngest. The text is laid out like poetry, highlighting all the joy and grief that love brings us.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Det var en sajt på nätet. Asta som är bibliotekarie i Simrishamn sa till mig att jag skulle gå in där. Då hade jag lagt upp min sajt men ingen bild för Simrishamn är inte så stort. Så la jag ut en bild på mig själv i en växtfärgad mössa som jag har stickat. Den var bara ute någon timma och så ryckte jag den. Då lyckades Janne se det och kände igen mig.

*There was this website. Asta the librarian in Simrishamn suggested I look at it. I already had a profile but no photo since Simrishamn's not a big place. So I added a picture of myself in a cap of hand-dyed yarn I had knitted. After just an hour or two I took it down. But Janne had time to see it and recognized me.*  
 (Translated by Linda Schenck)



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# 2024

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## ALBANIA

### Rita Petro **Lindur së prapthi** *Untethered*

Botime Onufri, 2022



### BIOGRAPHY

Rita Petro (Filipi) was born in 1962, in Tirana, Albania. She graduated from the University of Tirana, Literature and Albanian Language and specialised in Ancient Philosophy and Culture at the University of Athens. She was an editor and didactic specialist (1985-2000) at the state-owned publishing house. In 2000, she co-founded Albas Publishing House. She is a co-author of 45 textbooks in the fields of literature and the Albanian language.

### SYNOPSIS

This novel recounts the protagonist's impressions based on memories from early childhood onwards in communist Albania. Called "born backwards" by her family, the girl walks on her hands at first and sees the world from below, making everything seem grand to her. Growing up, she puts her feet on the ground and understands the truths of everyday reality, sparking an inner rebellion. To the left of the character's flat, whose confined space symbolically leads to the closed borders of communist Albania, lies the Orthodox church, now converted into a gymnasium. To its right, the Catholic church, converted into a youth cinema. Further on, the mosque, converted into a company of Communist billboards. In front of the flat, the road with all the embassies. In this topography, an entire city, life, and era move; dreams rise and fall, enemies are invented, crimes committed, forbidden poems read, and unhappy babies conceived.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

– Ti ke lindur anapodha, – më thoshte gjyshja nga ana e babit.  
– Ti ke lindur së prapthi, – më thoshte gjyshja nga ana e mamit.  
– Të gjithë njerëzit, kur lindin, nxjerrin në fillim kokën, ti ke nxjerrë këmbët. Unë e di ç'kam hequr me ty, – thoshte mami.

*"You were born backwards," my grandmother on my father's side used to say to me.*

*"You were born upside down," my grandmother on my mother's side would tell me.*

*"Most babies when they're born come out head first, you came out legs first. I remember the hell I went through giving birth to you," my mother said.*

*(Translated excerpt by Suzana Vuljevic)*

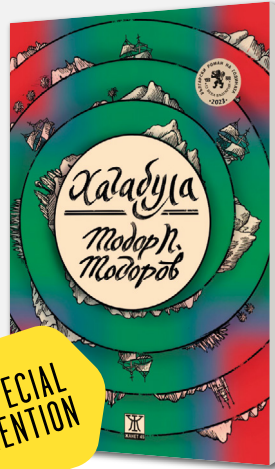


## BULGARIA

**Todor Todorov**

### Хагабула *Hagabula*

Janet, 2022



## BIOGRAPHY

**Todor P. Todorov (1977, Sofia) is a Bulgarian philosopher and fiction writer. He is the author of two collections of short stories and one novel: *Tales for Melancholic Children*, *Always the Night*, and *Hagabula*. His short stories have been translated and published in Germany. In 2023, *Hagabula* received the Bulgarian National Literary Prize Fund for best novel of the year. Since 2001, he has lectured at Sofia University St Kliment Ohridski.**

## SYNOPSIS

*Hagabula* is an alternate utopian history of the West. Set in the early 16th century, it follows Hernan Cortes's expedition to a mystical black mountain, the navel of the Earth, somewhere in the West Atlantic, beyond the "meridian of fear." The protagonists traverse an enchanting, dreamlike reality, which leads them to unpredictable discoveries and an ending of cosmogonic scale. The story takes on the nostalgia for the original forces and meanings of life from an ecological, feminist, and postcolonial perspective. *Hagabula* encompasses magical realism while employing adventurous, mythical, and surrealist narratives. The novel subverts and reverses the factual history of the conquest of the New World, bringing a new understanding of the destiny of Western civilisation with its projects of power and domination over nature and life.



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Кондор се спуска над океана. Едва докосва водата – прохлада, благодат. Всичко свети – крилата и небето, вълните, лумнали в пламъци. Бяло платно блести в синевата. У дома ленен чаршаф повтаря същия рефрен, подушван от вятъра. Две тихи ръце, аромат на сапун и пролет.

*A condor swoops over the ocean. It barely touches the water—serenity, grace. All is aglow—the wings and the sky, and the waves, ablaze in flames. A white sail shines in the azure. At home, a linen sheet repeats the same refrain, blown by the wind. Two quiet hands, the scent of soap and spring. (Translated excerpt by Ekaterina Petrova)*




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**DENMARK**


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**Theis Ørntoft**  
**Jordisk**  
*Worldly*  
 Gyldendal, 2023


**BIOGRAPHY**

**Theis Ørntoft (b. 1984) attended the Danish School of Writing from 2007 to 2009. He made his debut as a writer in 2009 with the poetry collection *Yeah Suiten*, and from then on was recognised as one of the most distinctive voices of his generation. In 2014, Ørntoft published his second poetry collection, the critically acclaimed *Digte 2014*, for which he also received several literary prizes and nominations. His first novel, *Solar*, was published in 2018, and his second, *Jordisk (Worldly)*, in 2023.**

**SYNOPSIS**

Over the course of its 600 pages, the novel follows a trio of siblings, developing into a story about three generations of a family across the years 1967-2036. A sprawling tale of love and work, nature and capitalism, of gold, silver, oil, marble and the slow decline of the West, but above all, of a three-generation family connected across time and space in ways it does not even realize. *Worldly* is an original family portrait that depicts the period between 1967 and the future of 2036. It is a journey from Silkeborg of the 1960s to post-9/11 New York and from there to a self-sufficient society in a future United States stricken by crisis. Ørntoft's contemporary novel tackles the deep forces that bind us to each other, to the Earth and to the universe.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

“ Det siges, at alt i universet forfalder. Det sker langsomt og uundgåeligt, på grund af naturlovene. Hvis ikke man hver dag gør et arbejde for at opretholde en given orden, vil den blive nedbrudt med tiden.

*It is said that everything in the universe decays. Slowly and inevitably, in accordance with the laws of nature. If no effort is made to preserve a given order each day, it will break down over time.*

*(Translated excerpt by Paul Russell Garrett)*






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**GERMANY**


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**Deniz Utlu**  
**Vaters Meer**  
*My Father's Ocean*  
 Suhrkamp Verlag, 2023


**BIOGRAPHY**

Deniz Utlu was born in Hannover in 1983 and studied economics at the Free University of Berlin and Université Paris 1 Panthéon-Sorbonne. His debut novel *Die Ungehaltenen* was published in 2014 and adapted for the stage at the Maxim Gorki Theatre in Berlin in 2015. His second novel, *Gegen Morgen*, was published by Suhrkamp Verlag in 2019. In 2023, he won the Bavarian Book Prize for *Vaters Meer (My Father's Ocean)*. Utlu lives in Berlin.

**SYNOPSIS**

Deniz Utlu manages through a combination of recollection, research, and literary imagination to reconstruct the life and death of a father figure. After emigrating from South Anatolia to Germany, the father found work, started a family, and came to feel at home. Following two strokes, he could only communicate with his eyes. His son summons up the conversation that he might have had with his father, but which barely happened. He reconstructs his origins in a Turkish-Arabic family in Mardin; imagines how his parents met each other, how his father managed to find his feet in a new country, and recounts the complex consequences for the family following the father's illness and loss of speech. On the surface, the novel is concerned with past origins and moving to a new environment, with the experience of being culturally well-rooted or rootless; but on a more abstract level, the novel is about the acquisition and loss of language and the possibility of remembrance.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

„Name ist bedeutungslos, sagte Vater. Ein Name, den ein Beamter seinem Vater, also meinem Großvater, gegeben habe. Vater sagte : Viele Namen aus der Zeit, in der die Türkei die Nachnamen einfuhrte, gehen auf die Launen geistloser Beamter zurück. Auch sind erstaunlich viele Menschen damals offiziell am 1. Januar geboren. Ganz einfach. Name : Stein. Geburtsdatum : 1.1.“

*Our name is meaningless, my father said. A name given to his father, my grandfather, by an official. My father said: Lots of names from when surnames were introduced in Turkey are down to the whims of vapid officials. And an astounding number of people were officially born on 1 January back then. Nice and simple. Name: Stone. Date of birth: 1.1. (Translated excerpt by Katy Derbyshire)*





## HUNGARY

### Panni Puskás Megmenteni bárkit *That Any Might Be Saved*

Magvető, 2023



## BIOGRAPHY

Puskás Panni (b. 1987 in Győr) is a writer and journalist. She lives in Budapest and works as an editor of the Hungarian online literary journal *Revizor*. Her first book was a short story collection entitled *A rezervátum visszafoglalása* (*Reconquering the Reserve*, 2021), shortlisted for several Hungarian prizes for young writers. She won the prestigious Budapest bookshop Authors' Store prize for the best young author's book in 2021.

## SYNOPSIS

Panni Puskás has been hailed by critics as “provocative” and “punk”. Her novel is a set of monologues by three women from Budapest – two of them in their thirties, one in her fifties. They talk to the reader as much as to each other, so that the former gradually realises that though they seem to have nothing in common, they are in fact two sisters and their mother. Panni Puskás has her protagonists struggle to find meaning in their lives, as they try to comprehend, cope with or rebel against challenges posed by Hungary, Europe, and the world today. A batch of inadequate responses to meaningless consumerism, the migration crisis or a severely stressed mother-daughter relationship leave room for a subplot following the story of Santa Lucia, the patron saint of Syracuse.



## ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Ülök a mocskos strandon.  
Körülöttem üvegszilánkok,  
cigarettszikkok  
húgyszagú homokban.  
Vastagon kéne bekennem  
magam naptejvel, hogy ne  
égjen le a vállam. Le kéne  
égnie a vállamnak, hogy  
érezek valami ismerősen  
rosszat. Fúj a szél.  
Szemembe fújja a bűzlő,  
sós homokot. Várom, hogy  
történjen valami.

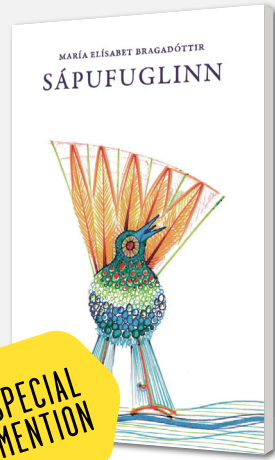
*I'm sitting on the filthy beach.  
Surrounded by shards of  
glass, cigarette butts, the sand  
reeks of urine. I should coat  
myself in sunscreen to keep  
my shoulders from burning.  
My shoulders should burn so  
I feel some kind of familiar  
pain. The wind is blowing.  
It blows stinking, salty sand  
into my eyes. I'm waiting for  
something to happen.*  
(Translated excerpt by Austin  
Wagner)





## ICELAND

**María Elísabet  
Bragadóttir**  
**Sápufuglinn**  
*The Soap Bird*  
Una útgáfuhús, 2022



**SPECIAL  
MENTION**

### BIOGRAPHY

**María Elísabet Bragadóttir (b. 1993) holds a degree in philosophy and has served as a columnist for an Icelandic newspaper and the national radio station. Her debut book, a collection of short stories titled *Room in Another World* was chosen as the “Discovery of the Year” by Iceland’s leading newspaper, *Morgunblaðið*, and voted one of the three best works of fiction of the year by Icelandic booksellers.**

### SYNOPSIS

*The Soap Bird* consists of three stories. *Happy Birthday* follows a single mother in her thirties on a night out, who becomes captivated by a troubled artist. Battling low self-esteem, she grapples with age and unworthiness, revealing self-destructive tendencies intricately woven between the lines. The title story, *The Soap Bird*, is about a 20-year-old barista who falls for Jóhanna, a truck driver and artist. Their romance is tinged with unease towards Jóhanna’s close friend. Amid jealousy and self-doubt, she confronts her sexuality, an aversion to sex, and a fervent yearning for love. In *Dwarf with the Ear*, the narrative explores the life of a teenage Icelandic girl navigating her unique time-travelling lineage. The story blends realism and fantasy to subtly touch on themes of isolation, bullying, depression, and generational trauma. The collection weaves a tapestry of diverse emotions within the human experience, offering a nuanced exploration of relationships, self-discovery, and the intricate emotions of daily life.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Ég var í uppnámi þegar ég keypti sápufluglinn. Sama dag hafði ég komið heim úr vinnunni og Ýr setið við eldhúsborðið gegnt Jóhönnu sem kynnti okkur formlega eins og við hefðum aldrei hist.

*I was in something of a state when I bought the soap bird. Earlier that day, I’d come home from work and Ýr had been sitting at the kitchen table across from Jóhanna, who’d formally introduced the two of us as if we’d never met.*

*(Translated excerpt by Larissa Kyzer)*



## LATVIA

**Daina Tabūna**  
**Raganas**  
*Witches*  
 Ascendum, 2023



### BIOGRAPHY

**Daina Tabūna (b. 1985) is a Latvian writer. She graduated from the Latvian Academy of Culture, specialising in Theatre, Film and TV Drama. Her short story collection *Pirmā reize (The First Time)*, was shortlisted for the Annual Latvian Literary Award 2014 as the best debut of the year. Tabūna's stories have been published in the UK by The Emma Press, bearing the title *The Secret Box*. Her first novel, *Raganas (Witches)*, was published in 2023.**

### SYNOPSIS

Daina Tabūna's debut novel *Witches* focuses on a young woman's search for identity after a painful breakup. Despite her scepticism, Alma turns to esotericism, which includes taking courses with a mysterious priestess. In her dreams, she starts seeing women from different centuries, social misfits who seek solutions to crises (unwanted pregnancy, witch trials, political oppression, depression) in magical rituals. Alma begins researching the history of witchcraft and eventually translates her spiritual experiences and dreams into stories, which become a kind of healing therapy. Gradually, Alma becomes aware of herself, and discovers her voice and power. Themes such as self-acceptance, spirituality, religion, the feminine experience, the relationship with oneself and the world (family, friends, lovers) appear in the novel.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Tuvējā baznīcā dimdina zvanus. Ir kaut kāda advente, laikam otrā – Alma iedomājas, cilādama dažādus traukus. Viņa izlemj par labu stikla bļodai, kurā parasti gatavo salātus. Šorīt viņa tupēs virs tās ar pliku dibenu.

*The bells of a nearby church are tolling. It's an advent Sunday, the second, probably, Alma thinks to herself as she looks through her serveware. She decides on a glass bowl usually used for salads. This morning she's going to crouch over it naked.*

*(Translated excerpt by Kaija Straumanis)*



## MALTA

**Aleks Farrugia**  
**Ir-Re Borg**  
*The King of Malta*  
 SKS, 2022



### BIOGRAPHY

Aleks Farrugia (b. 1978) is an author, historian, and journalist. His debut novel *Grasshopper* (2016) was shortlisted for the National Book Prize. His short story collection, *Għall-Glorja tal-Patrija* (2019), won the prize in that category in 2020, while his second novel *Camerata!* (2021) was also shortlisted. *Ir-Re Borg (The King of Malta)*, published in 2022, is his latest novel. Farrugia is a director at the Culture Directorate and a site manager for Valletta as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

### SYNOPSIS

Mikiel Borg, the grocer known as 'lċ-Chopper', transforms from a village debater to an unlikely political disruptor in Aleks Farrugia's *Ir-Re Borg*. After a trivial incident forces him to face Malta's bureaucracy, Mikiel battles profound depression until a media binge sparks an idea. He launches 'The Monarchical Party of Malta,' challenging the two-party system. Despite initial scepticism, Mikiel wins the election, becoming a populist firebrand. However, a viral video stains his triumph, marking the start of a dramatic downfall. Farrugia's satirical narrative delves into Maltese politics, featuring Machiavellian manoeuvres, the unlikely social ascent of Mikiel's band club drinking buddies, framed against the nuts and bolts of the Maltese electoral campaign and its fallout. Mikiel's flaws mirror those of the nation, adding depth to the tragicomedy and inviting readers to ponder populist movements and the challenges of positive change.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

“Iż-żgħir jibqa’ ż-żgħir u ebd’Alla mhu se jidhol għalih!”

Mikiel Borg, magħruf mar-raħal bħala ċ-Chopper, sabbat idejh fuq il-bank u l-laned tat-tonn taż-żejt triegħdu. Iż-żewġ nisa weqfin quddiemu barmu xofftejhom u xenglu rashom jaqblu miegħu.

“The little man will always be the little man, and no god will ever stand up for him!”

Mikiel Borg, known as Chopper to everyone in the village, slammed his hands down onto the shop counter and the tuna cans trembled. The two women standing in front of him pouted their lips and nodded their heads in agreement.

(Translated excerpt by Kat Storace)



## NETHERLANDS

**Sholeh Rezazadeh**  
**Ik ken een berg  
 die op me wacht**  
*I know a mountain  
 that is waiting for me*  
 Ambo/Anthos, 2023



### BIOGRAPHY

**Sholeh Rezazadeh (1989) came to the Netherlands from Iran in 2015. Three years after her arrival, she signed a contract for her debut novel *The Sky Is Always Purple* (2021) which was awarded the Debut Award of the Society of Dutch Literature 2022 and the Bronzen Uil Readers Award 2021. Her second novel, *I know a mountain that is waiting for me*, was recently published.**

### SYNOPSIS

Aras, the Iranian river that rises high in the mountains, tells the story of a nomadic people camped on its banks. Full of love, but not without jealousy, he observes how the girl Saray becomes a young woman and how a childhood love turns into an adult relationship with Aydin. Among the people on the river is the old carpet weaver who weaves stories, as well as Doeman, who has eyes that seem to be extinguished and yet see what others do not perceive, and Ashik, who sings about everything that pertains to the life of these people: the animals, the mountains and last but not least Aras, the river. A trader seldom comes by to exchange various goods for the wonderful carpets. And once, he brings a woman from a faraway country, who also lives by a river there. In a beautifully poetic style that readers will recognize from her debut novel *The Sky Is Always Purple*, Sholeh Rezazadeh tells the extraordinary story of Saray and the river Aras.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

De klinkende bellen van de geiten en schapen, en mijn brullende water vormen het achtergrondgeluid bij dit verhaal. In elk seizoen bewegen geiten en schapen er hun kop. Dus wanneer je dit verhaal leest, houd dan deze geluiden in je gedachten. En ook de koele wind die er altijd ronddwaalt. Hij tikt met zijn koude vingertoppen zachtjes op je huid en is altijd aanwezig, ook in de hete zomers.

*The tinkling bells of goats and sheep, and my roaring waters, form the background sound to this story. Goats and sheep move around in every season here. So, as you read this story, keep these sounds in your mind, as well as the cool wind that blows through our region, tapping gently on your skin with its cold fingertips, always present, even during the hot summers.*  
 (Translated excerpt by Michele Hutchison)



## PORTUGAL

**Gabriela Ruivo**  
**Lei da gravidade**  
*The Law of Gravity*  
 Porto editora, 2023



### BIOGRAPHY

**Gabriela Ruivo has lived in London since 2004. She won the Prémio LeYa in 2013 for her first novel, *Uma Outra Voz*. She translated *Uncle Tom's Cabin* by Harriet Beecher Stowe from English to Portuguese (Sibila Publicações, 2020). She is the head of AILD Cultural Team in the UK (International Association of Luso Descendants), and a member of Clube das Mulheres Escritoras (Women Writers Club), an initiative aiming to promote the work of contemporary Portuguese female authors.**

### SYNOPSIS

What do an old man in a hospital bed, the author of a bestseller, a restless pre-teen and a two-year-old have in common? What fate awaits Maria Ana and Ana Maria? Can one get rid of an abusive husband and the other of the pain of loss? What about Marinela and Mariana? What about the single mother within them? What about the future, and the past? Time, the great mystery, laughs at us from the other side of the mirror, whose reflection renders back an image of the absurd. Time also perpetuates a pattern of violence, the same story repeated against the reader's hope that the cycle will finally be broken. This novel offers an alternate universe where time is subject to the law of gravity – the driving force that brings together past, present and future, and dissolves the contours of reality. It invites us to explore other worlds inside the concepts of time and space and, ultimately, of literature itself.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Meio-dia.  
 Introduziu a chave na fechadura,  
 a medo. Sabia o que a esperava.  
 Esquecera-se completamente de avisar  
 o marido de que iria para a casa de  
 Maria Ana quando saísse do hospital.  
 Bastava uma mensagem. Mas ela  
 esquecera-se.

*Midday.*  
*Tentatively, she inserted the key into the lock. She knew what awaited her. She had completely forgotten to let her husband know that she was going to stop by Maria Ana's place on her way home from the hospital. A message would have sufficed. But she had forgotten.*  
*(Translated excerpt by Victor Meadowcroft and Andrew McDougall)*





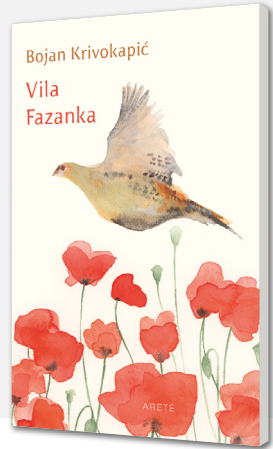

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**SERBIA**


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**Bojan Krivokapić**  
**Vila Fazanka**  
*Villa Fazanka*

Areté, 2023


**BIOGRAPHY**

**Bojan Krivokapić (b. 1985) holds a degree in Comparative Literature from the Faculty of Philosophy in Novi Sad. He has published two novels, *Spring Is on the Road* (2017), and *Villa Fazanka* (2023), a short story collection and two poetry collections. He has received several awards for his short stories and poems throughout the former Yugoslavia. In addition to writing, he teaches creative writing and works as an editor. He lives in Novi Sad, Serbia.**

**SYNOPSIS**

Upon returning from abroad, where she spent almost all of her working and adult life, Ana, the main protagonist of *Villa Fazanka*, buys an apartment in Novi Sad, overlooking the Danube and the Army Veterans' Club. She tries to settle in, but the birds of the past disturb her peace. In August, she goes to the north of the plain, to Villa Fazanka, to look after the house and the dog of her best friend. This marks the beginning of a cluster of stories, encounters, and relationships involving seemingly ordinary but also very unusual characters. *Villa Fazanka*, where coastal and plain ambiances intermingle, is a novel about potential loves and a world where losses do not necessarily drag us to the depths, but open up new realisations and lead us to tranquillity.


**ORIGINAL EXCERPT**

Spuščaju ga s tavana.  
 Mog Mišiku.  
 Gledam njegov isplaženi  
 jezik. Znam da treba  
 da zažmurim, ali to ne  
 činim. Oko mene krici,  
 uzdasi, cvilež. Sve se  
 smuljalo. Kaša.  
 Više nemam brata.

*They brought him down  
 from the attic. My Mišika.  
 I looked at his protruding  
 tongue. I knew I was  
 supposed to close my eyes,  
 but I didn't. Cries, sighs and  
 whining all around me. A  
 churning, chaotic mess.  
 I no longer had a brother.  
 (Translated excerpt by Will  
 Firth)*





## SLOVENIA

### Tina Vrščaj **Na klancu** *On Slope*

Cankarjeva založba,  
2022



SPECIAL  
MENTION

### BIOGRAPHY

**Tina Vrščaj (1987) is an award-winning writer, literary critic, and translator. She graduated from the Faculty of Arts in Ljubljana in 2010 with a degree in Comparative Literature and English. She has translated into Slovenian the novel *The Childhood of Jesus* by Nobel Prize-winning author J.M. Coetzee and the philosophical work *The Economy of Desire* by Daniel Bell Jr.**

### SYNOPSIS

In the remote village of Slope, a young couple, Eva and Gregor, live on a steep hillside with their two young daughters. A country house on the edge of the forest seems at first the ideal place for a young family, but soon Eva finds that living uphill is exhausting, and she dreams of the plain, little by little. The relationship between the partners is also sliding down a steep slope, with the care of their two girls, their daily commitments, and the omnipresence of digital distractions which Eva rejects, they have reached an impasse. The action culminates in the loss of the family's home and the expected arrival of a new family member with Eva's pregnancy. Gregor can no longer bear this burden and disappears for a while, but when he returns it is too late for a solid family future. Gregor's departure forces Eva to shake off her passivity, look for a job and devote herself to actively raising awareness of environmental issues.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

Na Klancu zmeraj piha.  
Eva skuša pognati korenine v to  
zemljo. A zemljo odnaša.  
Včasih ne hodi po tleh, ampak lebdi.  
Če pometa listje pred vhodom, se metla  
ne dotika tal, listje odnaša le zračni  
vrtinec ob zamahu.

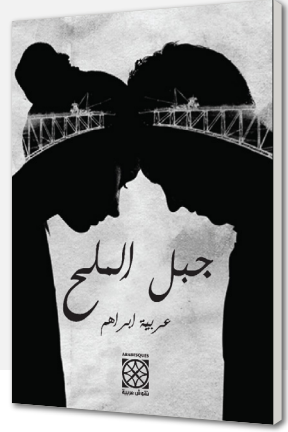
*It's always windy on Slope.  
Eva tries to plant roots in the soil. But the  
wind blows the soil away.  
Sometimes she doesn't walk on the ground  
but hovers above it. When she sweeps the  
leaves in front of the door, the broom doesn't  
touch the floor but moves the leaves with its  
spinning currents of air.*

*(Translated excerpt by Erica Debeljak)*



## TUNISIA

Arbia Braham  
 جبل الملح  
*The Mountain of Salt*  
 Éditions Arabesques,  
 2023



### BIOGRAPHY

Arbia Braham was born in Zouaouin, a small village in northern Tunisia, in 1979. She teaches English at Aousia School and has been fond of writing poetry and novels from a young age, having received the national second prize of young talented writers at the age of 13. *Jabel Al Milh (The Mountain of Salt)*, published in 2023, is her second novel. She dreams of a prosperous Tunisia and a peaceful world where every human being can enjoy freedom and justice.

### SYNOPSIS

This romantic drama is the story of Mariem and Aly, a couple forced to be separated for years before a series of accidental or fated meetings before, during and after the Revolution of December 2010 in Tunisia. The love story goes hand in hand with thrilling events in Tunisia's history. Mariem has been loved and betrayed by many people: Aly, Khaled, Karim and Saber all covet this beautiful and distinguished woman, and their lives are joined by a mystical thread of fate. Mariem struggles against some biased social prejudices as she seeks her freedom as a strong independent woman. She represents the beautiful Tunisia struggling amidst a series of hardships in its recent history. It finishes with an opening window of hope for a better future.



### ORIGINAL EXCERPT

رفعت رأسها عندما شعرت بوجوده و سألته  
 مباشرة :

- إذا كيف هو حال زوجتك ؟؟ هل هي نائمة؟  
 هل أيقظتها و أخبرتها عن الضيفة المفاجأة التي  
 أحضرتها إلى بيتها دون أن تعلمها ؟ أم أنها تعلم  
 ؟ هل هي تعمل معك في الشرطة هي الأخرى  
 ؟ و كيف يمكنها أن تتحملك لولا أنها تشاركك  
 نفس المهنة ؟

*When she realized he was there, she raised her head and started questioning him, "How's your wife? Is she sleeping? Did you wake her up and tell her about the surprise guest that you brought home without letting her know? Or does she know? Is she a police officer like you? How could she stand you, unless she's a cop too?"*

*(Translated excerpt by Miled Faiza and Karen McNeil)*



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