

# 12 SWISS BOOKS

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#### 12 SWISS BOOKS

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## EDITORIAL

What you are holding here in your hands is a recommendation. First of all it's a recommendation of books you might like to read but it's also a recommendation of books you might consider for translation into the language of your home country and for which we are prepared to offer financial support. We have selected, on your behalf, twelve books from the broad sweep of contemporary Swiss literature; twelve books, which we at the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia are convinced will captivate readers worldwide. They have been carefully selected by both Swiss and international literature experts, and represent three of Switzerland's official languages. And, for the first time, they include winners of the Swiss Literature Award, awarded by the Federal Office for Culture. We don't presume to suggest these books have anything in common, any common strand or theme to link them. Each stands on its own merits, has its own style, and in form and content each inhabits its own world. Nonetheless, we do feel justified in claiming that, this year, we have a number of outstanding authors whose inspiration for their stories is drawn directly from dramatic and exceptional situations both inside and outside Switzerland itself. One example is Roland Buti's story about the 1976 Swiss Summer heatwave; another is Urs Faes' tale of a Brandenburg Summer in 1935, which deals with Jewish emigration to Palestine; then there's Gertrud Leutenegger's London novel about the unpronounceable Icelandic volcano Eijafjallajökull, which brings everything to a standstill; and Heinz Helle, who evokes *The Reassuring Sound of Exploding Kerosene*; and Andrea Gianinazzi whose story of a raging stormy night ends in disaster. The life of the narrator in Lukas Bärfuss' novel is torn apart as if by lightning when his brother commits suicide. Tim Krohn's *Perfect Mattress* survives the enormous upheavals of the twentieth century much better than the people who lie on it. In all these books unexpected and monumental events are described with full poetic power.

This same power is also revealed through some striking contrasts, as when Philippe Rahmy exposes his traveller-protagonist, who suffers from brittle-bone disease, to the full force of Shanghai's concrete colossus; so also, David Bosc contrasts Gustave Courbet's life of excess with the calm, majestic shores of Lake Geneva. Jürg Schubiger's main character is tipped unceremoniously out of the life he knows – which

is a disaster for those around him but in no way for himself; Andrea Fazioli sets his crime novel in the low-life of Zürich high society. Urs Mannhart spreads his net wide over the interconnected strands of a 1990s Europe shaken by the Balkan War in a novel with the cunningly paradoxical title *Mountaineering in the Lowlands*.

We might almost see *Mountaineering in the Lowlands* as an evocative allusion to the 'famous' cargo crane recently on Zürich's Limmat River, visible for miles around and which for months was an object of joy, fun, or fury to the local Zürich population. A cargo crane in inland Switzerland? On a tiny river, where at most a couple of flat boats, the Regula and the Felix, ply their trade? The Zürich cargo crane is an expression – of what? Perhaps of a city, of a Switzerland, that loves to play on thoughts, words and humour and makes a cunning statement that Switzerland – against all signs to the contrary – is actually striving to open up to the world.

With that in mind, come aboard! Join us!

On behalf of the editorial team,

Angelika Salvisberg (Pro Helvetia, Head of Literature & Society Division)

# KOALA

## KOALA

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“You devour Bärfuss hungrily from his first to his last sentence. *Koala* is a radical story of astonishing power. It poses shrewd questions, it’s grippingly told and is deeply affecting.”  
TIROLER TAGESZEITUNG

LUKAS BÄRFUSS was born in Thun, Switzerland, in 1971. He is one of the most successful dramatists in the German language, and his plays have been performed world-wide. His first novel, *Hundert Tage* (*A Hundred Days*) was highly successful and was nominated for the German and Swiss Book Prizes. It has been translated into 17 languages. *Koala* is on the longlist for the German Book Prize 2014. Lukas Bärfuss lives in Zürich.



PHOTO © Frederic Meyer

The Dramatist and novelist Lukas Bärfuss comes from Thun. At the beginning of the 19th century, the distinguished poet Heinrich von Kleist – who later committed suicide – spent a month there – and Bärfuss is to deliver a lecture about him, in his home town. The occasion gives him the chance – for the first time in many years – to meet his brother: he has spent his whole life in Thun and has hardly ever left this small community. Bärfuss has no idea that this will be the last time the two will meet. Shortly afterwards, his brother also takes his own life. This is the point where Lukas Bärfuss’ novel *Koala* begins, as he remembers that last meeting with his brother. When the author receives the news of his suicide, he is at first dismayed and dumbfounded; but soon, his grief becomes mingled with rage. He searches for an explanation, for possible reasons for his brother’s death; but he comes up against nothing but silence. Even the few friends his brother had are baffled, and he realises how little he really knew about him. Nevertheless, he pursues his investigation and learns that when his brother was in the Scouts, he had the nickname “Koala”. He had kept the nickname into his adult life, and the narrator now sets out to answer the question, why? He gathers information about this strange animal – which has now been driven almost to extinction – and immerses himself in the history of Australia, and particularly in the time, when that continent was still serving as a penal colony for British prisoners. In the process, he discovers the Koala has a real significance: this solitary, idle animal shuns any unnecessary activity and so sets itself apart from our Swiss philosophy of life, based not least on our notions of hard work and ambition. Was the narrator’s brother also a “Koala” in his lifestyle? In this novel, Lukas Bärfuss sets out an impressive debate on the basic questions of human existence.

**TITLE** *Koala*  
**PUBLISHER** Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen  
**PUBLICATION DATE** 2014  
**PAGES** 182  
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**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Stefan Diezmann,  
SDiezmann@wallstein-verlag.de

**KOALA LUKAS BÄRFUSS****German original (p. 5-6)**

Man hatte mich in meine Heimatstadt geladen, damit ich einen Vortrag über einen deutschen Dichter halte, der zweihundert Jahre früher, an einem Tag im November, am Wannsee in Berlin eine Mulde gesucht und danach seiner Freundin Henriette Vogel ins Herz und schließlich sich selbst eine Kugel in den Rachen geschossen hatte. Im Rathaus, einem mächtigen Bau aus dem sechzehnten Jahrhundert, am zentralen Platz gelegen, sollte ich im großen Saal einige Gedanken zu diesem Mann und seinem Werk äußern, und da diese Stadt klein ist und die Gasthäuser früh schließen, es nach dem Vortrag also zu spät sein würde, um noch eine ordentliche Mahlzeit zu finden, setzte man sich schon gegen sechs Uhr abends in ein Lokal am Ufer des Flusses, der jene Stadt in zwei Armen durchschneidet.

Neben den Leuten, die diesen Anlass organisiert hatten, traf eine halbe Stunde später, nachdem das Essen bereits bestellt war, mein Bruder ein und setzte sich zu uns. Ich hatte ihn vor ein paar Wochen angerufen und über meinen Besuch in der alten Heimat informiert, obwohl ich sicher war, dass ihn der Inhalt meines Vortrags, das dunkle, teilweise schwerverständliche Werk eines deutschen Dichters vom Ende des achtzehnten Jahrhunderts, wenig interessieren würde. Wir hatten selten Gelegenheit, uns zu sehen; mein Bruder bewegte sich kaum aus jener Stadt heraus, die ich dreiundzwanzig Jahre früher nicht ganz freiwillig verlassen und seither gemieden hatte. Wir führten verschiedene Leben, außer der Mutter und einigen nicht ausschließlich angenehmen Kindheits- und Jugenderinnerungen teilten wir wenig, und gewöhnlich reichten uns zwei Stunden, um der still empfundenen Verpflichtung, sich als Bruder nicht ganz aus den Augen zu verlieren, Genüge zu tun.

**KOALA LUKAS BÄRFUSS****Excerpt translated by Marc Vincenz**

They had invited me to my hometown to give a lecture on a German poet, who, two hundred years earlier on a day in November, had sought out a hollow along the Wannsee in Berlin and, shortly thereafter put a bullet through his girlfriend, Henrietta Vogel's heart, followed by another through his own throat. In the town hall, an impressive edifice from the sixteenth century on the town's central square, in a large conference hall, I was to voice my thoughts about this man and his works. And since this is a small town and the taverns close early, it was too late to find a solid meal; already towards six o'clock in the evening we were seated in a restaurant on the banks of the river whose two arms cut through the town.

Aside from the people who had organized this event, around half an hour later, after food had already been ordered, my brother arrived and sat down with us. I had called him a couple of weeks earlier and informed him of my visit to our old hometown, despite being sure of the fact that the contents of my lecture – the dark, partially abstruse works of a late eighteenth century German poet – would be of little interest to him. We seldom had the opportunity to see each other; my brother hardly ever left this city, a city that twenty-three years earlier I myself had not entirely willingly departed and since avoided. We lead quite different lives. Except for our mother and our own, not altogether pleasant childhood and adolescent memories, we shared little. More often than not, two hours was sufficient to satisfy those silent obligations not to lose touch with each other as brothers.

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**"Most people don't talk about suicide; others lose all reason in endless internal debate about it. Bärfuss, by contrast, ponders the issue in lengthy parables. The result is an exceptional book, which – without question – we also should ponder." FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG**

# THE MIDDLE OF THE HORIZON

## LE MILIEU DE L'HORIZON

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE French



"It's not the end of the world, rather it's the end of one particular world. Roland Buti tells a masterful story without tears, in an overwhelming and moving novel." LE NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR

ROLAND BUTI was born in Lausanne in 1964. He studied Literature and Literary History and teaches in a grammar school. He published a volume of short stories *Les Âmes Célestes* (Celestial Souls) in 1990, then *Un Nuage sur l'Oeil* (A Cloud over the Eye) in 2004, followed by *Luce et Cécile* in 2007. *Le Milieu de l'Horizon* (The Middle of the Horizon) was nominated for the Prix Médicis in 2013 and awarded the Swiss Literature Award in 2014.



PHOTO © Yvonne Böhler,  
Editions Zoé

In 1976, Switzerland is experiencing an abnormally hot, dry Summer, with recorded temperatures higher than for many years. The government declares a state of emergency, the army and fire services are deployed across the countryside, where farmers are losing their livestock and crops: everything seems to be falling apart. Even the Sutter family are under threat, in their remote farmhouse in the Canton of Vaud, where events are about to take a dramatic turn.

Gus – August, to give him his full name – the narrator of this story, is thirteen years old, and this summer will change many things for him. His father has invested everything he has in a poultry farm, but the heat is rapidly killing off the young chicks. Renovations to the farmhouse have fallen through and his father is slowly retreating into himself. On the other hand, his mother is getting repeated visits from a young woman called Cécile. One day, the two women leave the farmhouse together – as lovers. And Rudy, the mentally handicapped farmhand and pal to Gus, instinctively senses the threat this poses to both the family and the farm.

The impressionable Gus is brutally ripped out of his familiar world. Instead of playing with his beloved pigeons, or reading his comics, he now has to look after the animals, which his parents are neglecting. There's no fodder; Gus has to carry water into the fields, milk the cows – which have been left untended – and he sees an elderly horse die. His pal Rudy is killed when a wooden beam falls on him: Gus is spared nothing. And he not only loses his illusions about life, he also loses his innocence in the arms of a young girl who seduces him. When heavy storms break the heatwave at the end of the summer, the relief is short-lived. This small world, which Roland Buti describes so wonderfully, is put to the test a second time – by floodwater.

TITLE *Le Milieu de l'horizon*  
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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Laure Pécher,  
agence Pierre Astier et associés,  
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## LE MILIEU DE L'HORIZON ROLAND BUTI

### French original (p. 9-10)

C'était au mois de juin de l'année 1976. C'était le début des grandes vacances de mes treize ans. C'était l'année de la sécheresse.

Des wagons-citernes acheminaient de l'eau puisée au fond des lacs vers les villages ; sous un ciel aussi jaune que du papier maïs, les militaires avec leurs camions et leurs motopompes s'occupaient des arrosages de secours pour sauver les plantations qui pouvaient encore l'être. Les autorités avaient activé le plan ORCA.

Il ne pleuvait plus depuis des semaines ; comme il n'avait pas neigé sur les montagnes durant l'hiver, les nappes phréatiques ne s'étaient pas remplies au printemps. Tout était sec en dessous, tout était sec en surface et notre campagne ressemblait à un vieux biscuit dur. Certains disaient que le soleil s'était soudain rapproché de la Terre ; d'autres disaient que la Terre avait changé d'axe et que c'était elle qui, au contraire, était attirée par le soleil. Je pensais que cette chaleur particulière était causée par un astéroïde tombé non loin de chez nous, par un gros corps céleste constitué d'un métal inconnu dégageant des vapeurs toxiques invisibles. Comment expliquer autrement que par des gaz lentement diffusés vers les maisons du village nous empoisonnant à notre insu la modification insidieuse du caractère de maman, sa transformation en une autre personne, la perte de la maîtrise de nos vies au cours de cet été, la fin du monde de mon enfance ?

Depuis quelques jours, Rudy me disait que l'herbe sentait mauvais. Quand je lui avais demandé pourquoi, il m'avait répondu triste et sérieux que c'était parce qu'elle souffrait. Rudy était exactement le genre d'individu capable d'imaginer une végétation qui manifesterait son inconfort par une transpiration malodorante. Dans l'air de notre arrière-cour parsemée de brins d'herbe malingres piétinés par le bétail, il planait une odeur de céleri et de soufre. Le vert terne du lierre agrippé au muret du jardin potager était devenu presque noir. Le soleil chauffait la pierre, froissait ses feuilles, en tordait les tiges ratatinées qui faisaient un dernier effort pour ne pas se détacher de leur branche et basculer dans le sol sablonneux. En m'approchant pour observer les crampons de la plante, pareils à de minuscules poings serrés par le désespoir, je devais bien admettre qu'elle puait.

## THE MIDDLE OF THE HORIZON ROLAND BUTI

### Excerpt translated by Tess Lewis

It was June, 1976. I was thirteen years old and the summer holidays had just begun. It was the year of the drought.

Water carriers brought water pumped from the bottom of the lakes to the villages. Under a sky as yellow as cornhusks, soldiers with trucks and motor-pumps were irrigating those crops that could still be saved. The local authorities had activated the Catastrophic Response Plan. There had been no rain for weeks and because it had not snowed on the mountains that winter, the groundwater had not been replenished in the spring. Everything was dry below ground, everything was dry on the surface and the countryside looked like an old hard biscuit. Some claimed the sun had suddenly moved closer to the earth; others claimed instead that the earth's axis had shifted and it was the one being drawn closer to the sun. Personally, I thought this particular heat wave was caused by an asteroid that had fallen not far from us, a large celestial body made of some unknown metal giving off invisible toxic fumes. What, besides the slow leak of gas into the houses in our village poisoning us unaware, could explain the insidious changes in mother's personality, her transformation into someone else, our loss of control over our own lives that summer, the end of my childhood world?

For several days, Rudy had been telling me the plants smelled bad. When I asked why, he answered in a sad, serious tone that it was because they were suffering. Rudy was exactly the kind of person who would imagine vegetation could show discomfort by emitting an unpleasant smell. An odour of celery and sulphur hovered over our back yard, which was scattered with scrawny blades of grass trampled by the cattle. The dull green of the ivy clinging to the vegetable garden's low wall had turned almost black. The sun heated the stones, curled the ivy's leaves and twisted its shrivelled stems as they made one last effort not to detach from their branch and drop onto the sandy soil. When I approached the ivy to examine its clinging shoots, which looked like tiny fists balled in despair, I had to admit, it stank.

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***"The Middle of the Horizon is a beautiful novel, in which tensions reach an apocalyptically high temperature. A cold bath is recommended after reading this."* LE MATIN DIMANCHE**



# PANIC SPRING

## PANISCHER FRÜHLING

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“More happens in *Panic Spring* than in three comparable novels put together.”  
DIE ZEIT



**GERTRUD LEUTENEGGER** was born in 1948 and brought up in Schwyz, but subsequently lived for several years first in French, then in Italian Switzerland. After many trips to, and sojourns in Florence and Berlin, she spent several years in Japan. Today, she lives in Zürich. She writes novels, short stories and essays; her first novel was *Vorabend (The Evening Before)*, published in 1975. *Panic Spring* is on the short-list for the German Book Prize 2014.

PHOTO © Peter Peitsch,  
peitschphoto.com

Ejafjallajökull: the name of the Icelandic volcano that erupted in 2010, had the whole of Europe literally holding its breath and presented airlines with a formidable problem. Even London was unusually quiet: no planes in the sky, just birds and clouds. In the Spring of this memorable year, a woman in the prime of her life is on her way to London: she is the 'I', the first person narrator, of Gertrud Leutenegger's novel. In her comings and goings along the Thames, she meets a young man from the East End. His face has been partly disfigured, burnt in a fire, and he sells a magazine for the homeless, on London Bridge. She listens to his – Jonathan's – stories; she tells him her stories, stories of happy summer days deep in the heart of Switzerland, stories of her childhood, of her family. Again and again, sparked off by apparently chance perceptions, our narrator reaches back to the summers of her distant childhood, to a wonderful house, to a room with a tapestry on the wall, to the flag room, to encounters with animals, to transient fears and strange happenings – her memories are luminously bright.

The time comes when the volcano goes quiet again, the frantic pace of life returns, the narrator and Jonathan meet once again on London Bridge and start telling each other stories again. Jonathan also has clear and lively memories of his childhood in Cornwall, in Penzance, where he grew up with his grandmother after his father died. Telling stories binds us together: “nothing disappears for ever” is the almost casual message at the end of the novel – but therein, even in the most trivial way, lies a whole raft of storytelling.

**TITLE** Panischer Frühling  
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hardt@suhrkamp.de

**PANISCHER FRÜHLING GERTRUD LEUTENEGGER****German original (p. 7-8)**

An jenem Morgen im April, als auf einmal vollkommene Stille im Luftraum über London herrschte, lief ich zum Trafalgar Square. Der Platz lag noch im Schatten, nur hoch oben auf seiner Säule, in unerreichbarer Einsamkeit, stand Lord Nelson schon im Sonnenlicht. Sein Dreispitz wirkte schwarz vor dem Himmel, der von solcher Bläue war, daß es unglaublich erschien, wie eine Aschewolke dieses isländischen Vulkans den europäischen Luftverkehr lahmgelegt hatte. Alle Geräusche der erwachten Stadt drängten ungehindert und geradezu triumphierend in die Leere empor. Auf den roten Bussen glänzte die Feuchtigkeit des Taus. England war wieder ein Inselreich. Mitten im Menschenstrom eilte ich zur Themse hinunter, im Gedränge vor der Embankment Underground Station war mir flüchtig, als hätte jemand mir gewinkt, aber ich durchquerte ohne Zögern die Halle. Hinaus auf den Quai, zum Fluß! Der blanke Frühlingshimmel warf sogar auf das Wasser, sonst immer bräunlich trüb, eine Illusion von Blau. Es war Ebbe, kaum ein Wellengekräusel, der Schotter am Ufer roch durchdringend nach Meer.

Mit zurückgelegtem Kopf blickte ich forschend in den Luftraum hinauf, in dem nun offenbar diese winzigen Aschepartikelchen trieben, die einen nur wie Dreckstaub, ohne Gestalt und Struktur, die anderen bald spitz wie Nadeln, bald abgerundet, ausgefranst oder gezackt wie Kristalle. Und auf einmal sah ich wieder uns Kinder am Aschermittwoch auf dem Hauptplatz, nach dem Verlassen der Kirche, einander ebenso begriffsstutzig anstarren wie ich jetzt den Himmel, in dem nur die Vögel flogen.

**PANIC SPRING GERTRUD LEUTENEGGER****Excerpt translated by Tess Lewis**

When dead silence suddenly blanketed London's airspace that April morning, I ran to Trafalgar Square. The square still lay in shadow. Only Lord Nelson, inaccessible and alone high atop his column, stood in sunlight. His tricorne hat looked black against a blue sky so clear it was hard to believe a cloud of volcanic ash from Iceland had brought air traffic over Europe to a standstill. The noise of the waking city rose unhindered, triumphant even, into the emptiness above. Dew glistened on the red buses. England was an island kingdom once again. I hurried through the stream of people down to the Thames. Out of the corner of my eye, I thought I saw someone wave at me from the crowd at the entrance of Embankment tube station, but I crossed the hall without slowing. Outside to the quay, down to the river! The empty spring sky cast an illusion of blue on the water, otherwise always a murky brown. It was low tide with barely a ripple on the water and a pungent smell of the sea rose from the rocks on the banks.

My head thrown back, I peered into the sky where floating ash particles were now visible, some looked like simple dust motes, without form or structure, others were sharp like needles, still others were rounded, frayed or jagged like crystals. Suddenly I pictured myself and my childhood friends again, on the main square after church on Ash Wednesday, staring at each other as obtusely as I was now looking into the sky, crossed only by birds.

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**"How to define in words a modern city, how to understand its essence through those words, exaggerating nothing, yet eschewing a pale and misery-ridden realism: *Panic Spring* does all this in exemplary fashion." NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG**

# THE REASSURING SOUND OF EXPLODING KEROSENE

## DER BERUHINGENDE KLANG VON EXPLODIERENDEM KEROSIN

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“Finally, not a novel that oozes references to our crisis-ridden consciousness, but a novel that coolly and clearly describes the crisis of consciousness of our times.” BASLER ZEITUNG



HEINZ HELLE was born in 1978 and studied Philosophy in Munich and New York. He works as an advertising copy-writer. He is a graduate of the Swiss Institute of Literature, in Biel, where he lives. *Der beruhigende Klang von explodierendem Kerosin* (*The Reassuring Sound of Exploding Kerosene*) is his first novel.

PHOTO @ juergen-bauer.com

The pivotal figure in Heinz Helle's first novel – *The Reassuring Sound of Exploding Kerosene* – is an anonymous 'I' – a first-person narrator, who wants to discover, who this 'I' is; who tells this story about himself; about the world around this 'I'; and about his girlfriend, with whom he's been together for some time.

The narrator is studying for his doctorate of philosophy; he comes to New York to spend a semester as a Visiting Scholar at the City University and to give a lecture on Consciousness.

He spends a lot of time moving about the city and is continually checking his thoughts and observations. Does the world about him really exist, or is it just a construct? What is this 'I', that is simultaneously both consciousness and perception, experience itself and the representation of experience? These are questions about identity which countless disciplines have been grappling with for centuries – the 'I'-narrator is well aware of this. “The words in my head don't exist, I tell myself with the words in my head.” His attempt to observe himself through self-observation is bound to fail. His uncertainty brings him no peace: he moves forward, only to fall back, for he is in no position to mould his experiences into a practical philosophical theory. And so, he has to trace everything that happens to him back to hard facts and he has to base everything on strong, unambiguous points of reference. He strives for a kind of ecstatic alienation, he seeks out sexual encounters and turns to heavy drinking. At the same time, he shrinks from everything that is routine, habitual. When his girlfriend comes to visit him in New York, he evokes the time when everything that went on between them was still open, new, touchingly fresh...before the time, when it all became routine – which he knows all too keenly how to describe – and which leads to their mutual alienation and finally to their splitting up. Heinz Helle has created an exceptionally authentic language for his characters, which envelops the painfully absent precision of their lives.

TITLE *Der beruhigende Klang von explodierendem Kerosin*

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## DER BERUHIGENDE KLANG VON EXPLODIERENDEM KEROSIN

HEINZ HELLE

German original (p. 11-12)

Können Sie da was machen?

Über allem der beruhigende Klang von explodierendem Kerosin. Grönland ist grau. Wie viel Orangensaft passt wohl in einen Airbus A310? Die Anziehungskraft der Flugbegleiterinnen muss mit der Erdferne zusammenhängen, in der sie bedienen. Mit der verdrängten Todesnähe. Luft und Lachen aus Plastik.

Als wir uns verabschiedeten, kam warmer Wind aus dem Tunnel. Ich ziehe die Folie vom Plastikhuhn. Es wird schon gut werden, hat sie gesagt. Und noch etwas anderes, aber ich sah nur ihren Mund aufgehen, hinter ihr donnerte die U-Bahn ins Licht, und dann ging ihr Mund wieder zu. Türen sprangen auf, Menschen strömten an uns vorbei, und ich wusste, dass sie es nicht noch einmal sagen würde. Als sich die Maschine auf die Startbahn drehte, fragte ich mich, warum ich gehe. Ich fragte mich, warum ich gehe, als die Turbinen aufheulten und ich in den Sitz gepresst wurde und meinen ganzen Willen aufwenden musste, um mir keinen Feuerball vorzustellen und verglühende Körper und Bergungstrupps, die in schwarze Gesichter ohne Nasen mit freiliegenden schwarzen Zähnen blicken, schweigend, im Schnee. Ich weiß genau, warum ich gehe. Es wird dunkel. Ein Bier wäre schön.

Vielleicht werden sie eines Tages herausfinden, was es bedeutet, *hier* zu sein und *das* zu sehen und *das* dabei zu empfinden. Was es bedeutet, ich zu sein. Sie werden ein bestimmtes Neuronenmuster entdecken, dessen Komplexität und Frequenz so einzigartig sind, so göttlich, so wunderschön, dass die Erklärung seiner Struktur gleichzeitig seinen Gehalt erklären wird. Dann werden sie sagen: Wir wissen, was Bewusstsein ist. Und dann können sie es synthetisieren. Sie werden endlich die Kontrolle bekommen über das Ich. Dann werde ich hingehen zu ihnen und sagen: Ich darf nicht aufhören, sie zu lieben, niemals. Können Sie da was machen?

Das heiße Tuch auf meinem Gesicht ist schon fast wieder kalt. Ich klappe den Tisch zurück, ich stelle meine Rückenlehne senkrecht, ich beginne mit dem Landeanflug auf New York. Die verlogene Ruhe während des kontrollierten Fallens. Ich weiß, dass in einem Strahltriebwerk eigentlich nichts explodiert. Dann Lichter vor Fenstern, an denen ich nicht sitze, und warten und fallen und warten und fallen und ein lauter, erlösender Knall. Ich habe gar keine Angst vor dem Fliegen, denke ich, als wir über die Landebahn rollen. Bis wir die endgültige Parkposition erreicht haben, bleibe ich angeschnallt. Vor meinem Fenster gut ausgeleuchtete, leere Asphaltflächen. Vielleicht war es falsch, zu gehen. Aber ich habe nur dieses Gehirn.

## THE REASSURING SOUND OF EXPLODING KEROSENE

HEINZ HELLE

Excerpt translated by Kári Driscoll

Is that something you can help me with?

Over everything the reassuring sound of exploding kerosene. Greenland is grey. How much orange juice can you fit in an Airbus A310? The air hostesses' attractiveness must be proportionate to the distance from the earth at which they serve. To the suppressed proximity of death. Air and laughter made of plastic.

When we said goodbye, a warm breeze was blowing out of the tunnel. I pull the plastic film off the plastic chicken. It'll all work out, she said. And something else, but I only saw her mouth open, behind her the subway train thundered into the light, and then she closed her mouth again. Doors opened, people streamed past us, and I knew that she was not going to repeat it. As the aeroplane turned onto the runway, I asked myself why I'm leaving. I asked myself why I'm leaving when the engines began to roar and I was pressed into my seat and it took every ounce of will not to imagine a giant fireball and smouldering bodies and rescue personnel staring at blackened faces with no noses and exposed black teeth, in silence, in the snow. I know exactly why I'm leaving. It's getting dark. A beer would be nice.

Perhaps one day they will figure out what it means to be *here* and to see *this* and feel *that*. What it means to be 'me'. They will discover a specific neuronal pattern that is so unique in its complexity and frequency, so divine, so incredibly beautiful, that the explication of its structure will automatically explain its content. Then they will say: we know what consciousness is. And then they will be able to synthesise it. They will finally have gained control over the 'I'. Then I will go to them and say: I mustn't ever stop loving her, ever. Is that something you can help me with?

The hot cloth on my face is already almost cold. I return my tray table and seat back to their full upright positions; I begin my descent into New York. The mendacious calm during controlled falling. I know that nothing really explodes in a jet engine. Then lights outside windows that I'm not sitting at, and waiting and falling and waiting and falling and a loud, salvific thud. I have absolutely no fear of flying, I think, as we roll along the runway. I remain seated with my seat belt fastened until we are parked at the gate. Outside my window, well lit, empty stretches of tarmac. Maybe it was a mistake to leave. But this is the only brain I've got.

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**"Reminding us of Michel Houellebecq with his impassiveness, he writes in careful, sharply-defined prose about existence in all its ill-definedness."  
SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG**



# THE MAN WHO LIVES ON TRAINS – STORIES OF THE RAILS

**L'UOMO CHE VIVE SUI TRENI – RACCONTI FERROVIARI**

GENRE Short Stories, LANGUAGE Italian



Awarded the 2013 Chiara Prize –  
With Distinction

**ANDREA GIANINAZZI** was born in 1952. He studied Philosophy in Bologna and worked as a primary school teacher, magazine editor and scientific associate at the Swiss Department for Health Care and Social Welfare before publishing his first novel *Domani necessariamente* (*It Has To Be Tomorrow*, 2007). He also has to his credit several publications on philosophical matters and articles related to preventive medicine and health care.



PHOTO © Andrea Gianinazzi

Here are eight stories – told as if eight fragments of a single story: the story of a vagrant, who lives on trains and whose own path crosses the paths of many other people. Only the first and the last story are about him: the tale of a deportation train that finishes up on a disused railway line because the war has ended; and the one about his own tragic end on a train he boards quite by chance and on which he becomes aware of the sense of his own existence.

Between these two extremes are the stories of other people: the permanent way inspector, who every week walks through a long tunnel, looking for damage to the track; the retired old man who spends his mornings at the railway station and watches people as they arrive and depart; the woman who goes back to her husband to hammer out the details of their divorce; the train conductor, who is about to retire and on his last shift takes a nostalgic trip on a goods train through the Alps; the student of Logic, who is simply going home from University for the vacation and gets mixed up in an incident involving drugs at the border; and lastly the truck driver who, one night, in the middle of a storm, loses both his vehicle and a colleague.

These 'Stories of the Rails' will envelop readers in a pleasant nostalgia for railways and rail travel – whilst at the same time deeply affecting them through the distressing situations they describe. The rattling and creaking of a bygone technology captures sketches of everyday life and casts an intense light on the life and times of the 20th century.

**TITLE** *L'uomo che vive sui treni – Racconti ferroviari*  
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**L'UOMO CHE VIVE SUI TRENI ANDREA GIANINAZZI****Italian original (p. 13-14)**

Lo sciame

Il binario sembrava morto per davvero: due linee di ferro appoggiate su una massicciata ormai invasa dalle erbacce. Qualche arbusto era riuscito ad attecchire anche fra le traversine e cominciava a rin vigorirsi.

Jean non si era mai preoccupato di sapere né da dove venisse, né dove andasse quel binario: forse una deviazione di una linea secondaria finita nel dimenticatoio. Sì, può darsi che lo avesse anche saputo, ma l'aveva dimenticato. Era lì e basta, sepolto dal verde, come tante cose che l'uomo abbandona al proprio destino.

Quando quel trapezio di terra gli era toccato in eredità, dopo una procedura di spartizione durata anni, il binario era già lì e poteva giurare, questo sì, lo ricordava benissimo, di non averci mai visto un treno.

La guerra era lontana: forse all'estremità di quelle due strisce di ferro, da una parte o dall'altra. Qui non arrivava niente, nemmeno un rumore, uno scoppio, il passaggio di un soldato o di un carro. Niente. Qualche aereo sì, lo si era visto passare, lasciandosi dietro una coda di fumo subito dissoltasi.

Jean era troppo anziano per queste cose; aveva dovuto combattere quell'altra guerra che avevano chiamato dapprima "grande", poi "mondiale". Adesso, con quella in corso, hanno cominciato anche a contarle: la "prima" e, ora, la "seconda", forse anche più grande dell'altra. E non si capisce bene come possa essere "grande" una seconda guerra mondiale. Ci sono state guerre giuste, sante, civili; ora è il momento di quelle grandi. Già, "grandi"! Mai una guerra "stupida". I Francesi hanno definito "drôle" (farsa, strana), la fase inaugurale del conflitto in corso.

Lì, accanto a quel binario, Jean aveva costruito il proprio apiario e ci veniva pressoché tutti i giorni, specialmente adesso, a primavera fatta, che le api cominciavano a darsi da fare sul serio.

Sin dal mese di febbraio aveva però visto sul predellino di volo api cariche di polline, segno che la vita stava riprendendo a pieno regime e la regina aveva già iniziato a deporre le uova. Sul vetro del diaframma già si era formato un leggero velo di umidità. Non aveva ancora aperto tutte le casse, ma sicuramente le api avevano iniziato a occupare i favi più periferici dove c'erano le scorte più abbondanti. L'inverno era stato mite e la neve a fine gennaio se n'era già andata tutta. Nelle settimane successive aveva dovuto aggiungere nuovi telai affinché non mancasse spazio e le api non sciamassero anzitempo.

**THE MAN WHO LIVES ON TRAINS ANDREA GIANINAZZI****Excerpt translated by Simon Knight**

The Swarm

The railway track seemed dead as dead can be: two iron rails laid on a roadbed now invaded by weeds. A few shrubs had also managed to take root between the sleepers and were beginning to thrive.

Jean had never bothered to find out where the track came from, nor where it went: maybe it was the siding of a branch line consigned to oblivion. Well, maybe he had once known but had forgotten. It was just there, buried in greenery, like so many things man abandons to their fate.

When he had inherited that irregular rectangle of land, after legal proceedings that had gone on for years, the track was already there and he could swear, definitely, he remembered quite clearly, that he had never seen a train there.

The war was far away: maybe at the end of those two strips of iron, in one direction or the other. But nothing reached here, not so much as a noise, a gunshot, a passing soldier or a tank. Nothing. A few planes, yes, he had seen them flying over, leaving trails of smoke which immediately dispersed.

Jean was too old for these things; he had been obliged to fight in that other war, the one they had first called "great", then a "world" war. Now, with this latest one, they had begun counting them: the "first" and now the "second", maybe even greater than the other. And it was difficult to see how a second world war could be "great". There had been just wars, holy wars, civil wars; now was the day of great wars. "Great", indeed! Never a "stupid" war. The French had described the opening phase of the present war as "drôle" (phoney, odd).

There, beside the railway track, Jean had set up his apiary and visited it practically every day, especially now spring had arrived and the bees were beginning to get seriously busy.

Since February, though, he had observed bees on the alighting board carrying loads of pollen, a sign that life was again in full swing and the queen had begun her egg-laying. On the glass of the crown board, a slight film of condensation had already formed. He had not yet inspected all the brood chambers, but the bees had certainly begun to occupy the outer combs, where they stored most of their honey. It had been a mild winter and the late-January snow had already melted. In the following weeks, he had had to add new frames, to make sure the bees had plenty of space and were not likely to swarm prematurely.

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**"The train spun round on itself. One end crashed down, as the other reared up. That's in a way what life is like: just one long whirling cartwheel."**

# MOUNTAINEERING IN THE LOWLANDS

## BERGSTEIGEN IM FLACHLAND

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“The imagery he uses is powerful and impressive; it disturbs and lingers long in the mind.” SCHWEIZER RADIO UND FERNSEHEN



URS MANNHART was born in 1975 in Rohrbach; he studied German, English and Philosophy, then worked as a journalist, cycle courier and night watchman. His first novel, *Luchs* (*The Lynx*) appeared in 2004, followed in 2006 by *Die Anomalie des geomagnetischen Feldes südöstlich von Domodossola* (*The Anomaly of the Geomagnetic Field South-East of Domodossola*). As a reporter, Mannhart has worked in many countries, including Hungary, Serbia, Kosovo, Romania, Russia, Belarus, and Ukraine. He lives in Langenthal and Moutier.

PHOTO © Beat Schweizer

Thomas Steinhövel is a freelance reporter, who travels much of the time. His trips take him to Milan and Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan; to northern Norway and southern Spain; to Kosovo, Serbia and to the International Court in the Hague. Wherever he goes, he works hard on the details of his latest story, getting to know people who've been involved in the war in the Balkans. Steinhövel, then, has many a tale to tell, both fair and foul; Urs Mannhart skilfully weaves together the many different storylines in this complex novel.

*Mountaineering in the Lowlands* is a title, which refers in the first instance to a series of photos of mountaineers in full kit on their way through a lowland area. It's Summer and what these men are wearing is something they don't need where they are. The same thing happens to many of the characters in Mannhart's novel: they have the wrong weapons in the wrong place. Even the 35-year old Steinhövel, who criss-crosses Europe and falls hopelessly in love with a Finnish woman, seems from time to time to be in the wrong place. He wants, above all, to research his stories properly, to write soundly-based reports; but the conditions he has to work under are visibly deteriorating. Meanwhile, his editor at the newspaper wants nothing more than entertaining copy, and not too long, either. Steinhövel rejects this, and writes intense, searing stories from a land that spares no-one.

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**BERGSTEIGEN IM FLACHLAND URS MANNHART****German original (p. 27-28)**

Zweiunddreißig sowohl sich gegenseitig wie auch sich selber mit besseren Angeboten übertrumpfende Taxifahrer abwimmelnd, warteten Steinhövel und Gambelli auf einen gewissen Kamran, einen der einschlägigen Agentur gemäß ortskundigen Übersetzer, den Steinhövel gebucht hatte für diese Reportage, in der er berichten wollte über Baku und das Kaspische Meer, über den größten See der Welt, dessen Wasserspiegel in den letzten zwanzig Jahren um fast drei Meter gestiegen war, was sieben Städte und fünfunddreißig Dörfer unter Wasser gesetzt hatte.

Unvermittelt kletterte direkt vor ihnen ein stämmiger Mann mit roten Haaren aus einem prähistorisch anmutenden Mercedes und marschierte stracks auf sie zu; das Gesicht von Sommersprossen übersät, ruhten seine Augen unter dichten Brauen und strahlten, als empfangen er langjährige Freunde.

Bei der Begrüßung stellte sich heraus, dass Kamran weder Deutsch noch Russisch verstand, sondern ausschließlich Azeri sprach. Für die Übersetzung ins Deutsche war die dem Beifahrersitz entsteigende Iryna zuständig, eine groß gewachsene Frau Ende zwanzig mit burschikosem Haarschnitt. Sie war vielleicht nicht das, was man gemeinhin schön nannte, in ihren Augen aber funkelte ein verschmitzter, selbstbewusster Charme, aus dem im Moment des von ihr verlängerten Händedrucks das Gefühl erwachte, mit ihr an einer privaten, nicht unromantischen Kleinverschwörung teilzunehmen. Steinhövel war überzeugt, mit ihr gut zusammenarbeiten zu können, aber er war auch sicher, dass Gerardo Gambelli, der in Bern sehr darunter litt, sich zwischen zwei Frauen entscheiden zu müssen, Mühe haben würde, Irynas Charme zu widerstehen.

Kamran sagte etwas, was sich ungemütlich anhörte.

»Wir müssen aufs Amt«, übersetzte Iryna, und Steinhövel, unsicher, wo er einsteigen sollte, blickte forschend zu Gambelli, der fest entschlossen wirkte, sich die Rückbank mit Iryna teilen zu wollen. »Vorn ist es gefährlich«, sagte Iryna zackig, womit Steinhövel und Gambelli auf die Rückbank verwiesen wurden, deren altes Kunstleder sich anfühlte wie unbenutztes Schmirgelpapier. Kaum hatten sie Platz genommen, zerrte Kamran am Schaltknüppel, trat kraftvoll in die Pedale und reihte den kumpelhaften Wagen ein in den dichten und schnellen Verkehr, in das große Gedröhne. Erst jetzt begriff Steinhövel, dass die Rechnung, die Kamran am Schluss des Auftrags stellen würde, Irynas Arbeiten wegen gewiss doppelt so saftig ausfielen. Das würde weitreichende Sparmaßnahmen erfordern – aber er erinnerte sich an den Vorsatz, sich ganz auf die Gegenwart zu konzentrieren.

**MOUNTAINEERING IN THE LOWLANDS URS MANNHART****Excerpt translated by Vincent Kling**

Fending off thirty-two taxi drivers, all of them outdoing one another as well as themselves with better offers, Steinhövel and Gambelli waited for a certain Kamran, a translator knowledgeable about the area, according to one of the appropriate agencies, whom Steinhövel had engaged for this news story, in which he intended to report about Baku and the Caspian Sea, whose surface had over the past twenty years risen almost three meters, placing seven cities and thirty-five villages under water.

In front of them a burly man with red hair suddenly clambered out of a prehistoric-looking Mercedes and came marching straight up to them; in a face all covered with freckles, his eyes were deep-set under thick brows and beaming as if he were encountering friends of long years' standing.

It turned out when they greeted each other that Kamran understood neither German nor Russian but spoke only Azeri instead. The person responsible for translating into German was Iryna, a tall woman in her late twenties with a boyish haircut, who had climbed out of the passenger seat. She might not have been what is commonly called beautiful, but in her eyes there twinkled an impish, self-confident charm which gave rise to a feeling during the moment of shaking hands with her – she sustained it for a while – of somehow being party with her to a small conspiracy, private and not without a romantic element. Steinhövel was convinced he would be able to work well with her, but he was also certain that Gerardo Gambelli, now keenly suffering in Bern from having to decide between two women, was going to have trouble resisting Iryna's charm. Kamran was saying something that had an off-putting sound.

"We have to go to the office," Iryna translated, and Steinhövel, not sure where he should get in, shot Gambelli a questioning look, who gave the impression of having made a firm decision to share the rear seat with Iryna.

"It's dangerous up front," Iryna said brusquely, as she directed Steinhövel and Gambelli to the rear, whose old imitation leather upholstery felt like unused sandpaper. They had hardly taken their seats when Kamran wrenched the gear shift, worked the pedals forcefully and swung the trusty car into the rapid flow of heavy traffic, into the mighty uproar. Only now did it dawn on Steinhövel that the bill Kamran would present at the end of the job would surely turn out to be twice as hefty thanks to Iryna's services. That would require far-reaching austerity measures – but then he remembered his resolution to concentrate entirely on the present.

**"A major, multi-faceted book of reportage about united Europe – tense and thrilling." NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG**



# FREE WORD – LONDON'S FIRST LITERATURE HOUSE

## AN INTERVIEW WITH THE *FREE WORD* DIRECTOR ROSE FENTON

Rose Fenton OBE is one of Britain's most influential, innovative and international cultural leaders. In 1980 she co-founded LIFT, the world-famous London International Festival of Theatre. Her Curriculum Vitae is impressive. She's initiated several European arts projects and in 2011 became Director of *Free Word*, London's first 'Literature House'. Rosie Goldsmith interviewed Rose Fenton for 12 Swiss Books.

**ROSIE GOLDSMITH:** What is the idea behind *Free Word*? How did *Free Word* come about and why?



**ROSE FENTON:** *Free Word* is an international centre for literature, literacy and free expression that explores and celebrates the transformative power of words to change lives. It opened in 2009 here in Farringdon, an area of London with a tradition of pamphleteering,

dissent and literature, which we are proud to honour in our work.

A lot of Charles Dickens' *Oliver Twist* was set here. He achieved so much with his novels, providing fantastic stories but also getting the nation thinking about its social responsibility. His novels helped pave the way for immense social change. We also believe in the power of stories to create change and the imagination to elicit empathy. *Free Word* is a labyrinth of offices, meeting places, a hall, theatre and café. We are home to six remarkable organisations, such as *English PEN*, which supports international translation and campaigns for the right of everyone to read and write. *The Reading Agency* promotes reading and literacy in our libraries, schools and communities, beyond the educated literati. We also host *Arvon* which runs writing courses up and down the country, in houses left as legacies by writers to help other writers develop their craft. We are an 'umbrella' for six residents, thirty associates and hundreds of writers, translators, publishers and campaigners who use *Free Word* for meetings and events. It is a lively, creative hub; a rich laboratory of ideas. We also run a year-round programme of talks, debates, screenings, music, poetry and parties. But competition for audiences and funding is huge in London. Major venues like the *Southbank Centre*, the *British Library*, *King's Place* and many more offer world-class events every day and we each need to find our place.

**RG:** What is *Free Word's* Unique Selling Point?

**RF:** One example: in 2010, with our partners, we launched *International Translation Day (ITD)* in the UK, as an annual gathering for translators, publishers, booksellers and media to discuss all issues around translation. As you yourself know, compared to other countries, Britain is lamentable in how few books we translate from other languages – about 4%, compared to, say, 50-60% in Germany. There are lots of reasons but our island mentality and arrogance about Anglo-Saxon writing and thinking are reasons for me. 'A novel from Afghanistan?!' people protest: 'We'll surely get confused over the names and geography!' And so on... But what matters at *Free Word* is good story-telling and how literature can provide a window on our world to help understand the world. Our first *International Translations Days* here at *Free Word* were packed. The whole building buzzed with conversations: *How to get more translated books into bookshops; how to promote them; how to help the profession of translator; how to encourage more language-learning in schools; what are the fears*



of publishers in this market? Because publishers will say, 'It's all very well having marvellous stories but there's too much prejudice in the UK, readers are sceptical about translated literature and it's expensive to publish'. Anyway, so great was the appetite for these conversations and workshops that we decided to take a risk and move *ITD* out of our small theatre to bigger venues. Our new partner is the *British Library*. It was great timing for both of us: BL wanted to promote their translation archives and we wanted to amplify the discourse on translation. In 2013 *ITD* took place in the big Conference Centre of the *British Library*. It was full then too! And there were waiting lists! So, contrary to the official discourse, 'nobody is interested in translation', we were overwhelmed with interest. We are now thinking how to extend *ITD* through the year. So we work with university departments and may offer regional variations of *ITD*. *Free Word* is London-based but our role is also to share knowledge and ideas and connect with our regional equivalents, like the *Writers' Centre Norwich*, which has developed a very successful international perspective. Being international is part of our core purpose; *ITD* and our new *European Literature Houses* project are central to that.

**RG: In the rest of Europe *Free Word* would possibly be called a Literature House but formally they don't exist in the UK. To what extent do you model yourself on them?**

RF: *Free Word* was very much inspired by the German Literature House idea which became popular about twenty-five years ago and spread to Austria, Switzerland and France. Then there were interesting Writers' Houses in cities like Moscow or East Berlin or Bucharest and also Translators' Houses, a sort of amalgamation of both. *Fritt Ord* ('free word' in Norwegian!), one of our key sponsors, is a private foundation supporting freedom of expression and free press. It helped found the Literature House in Oslo and needed little persuasion to support us in London, because those paradoxes – of being a world city, yet insular, not having a Literature House yet having a strong tradition of literature – made sense.

**RG: This summer *Free Word* achieved a major coup, something you instigated: you brought together European Literature Houses from the whole of Europe to the UK for the first time. Why did you do it? What did you learn?**

RF: Four years ago in Oslo, *Fritt Ord* hosted a specialist gathering of core Literature Houses mostly from western Europe. It was really important and everybody said they'd like to meet again. London and *Free Word* were suggested. I saw it as a great way to familiarize myself with Literature Houses, to expand the idea to Writers' and Translation Houses and to include a greater diversity of voices from across Europe, as well as to strategic individuals and organisations in the UK. We had forty-two delegates, from Turkey and Georgia to traditional 'houses' like Germany, France and Switzerland. It was ground-breaking. We were catalysts for each other. We found partners to develop European projects. We shared best practice, new ideas and got to know each other.

**RG: It was a closed conference of intense discussion, panels and workshops: what do you think people took away from it?**

RF: It was the most remarkable gathering. It 'stretched' the networks, if you like: stretched them beyond the comfortable Literature House network. It made people think about the relationship between free expression and literature and those hard-fought freedoms in Europe, many now under threat. You had to hear the Hungarians and Georgians talk. And we all

## The challenge

GEOFFREY C. HOWES, PROFESSOR AND TRANSLATOR



An editor of my translation of Jürg Laederach's *Das ganze Leben* wanted changes on the first page, maybe so that readers wouldn't give up after the second paragraph. An

ethico-aesthetic dilemma: either stay faithful to the text or eliminate the resistance to understanding that is a part of it. The first page of *The Whole of Life* is one of the knottiest in a generally challenging book, a warning that this is 'experimental literature'. I made some changes, with misgivings even though I understood the marketing problem. Then the book was published without the revisions after all. And sure enough, the novel's first reviewer said he had never spent so much time reading and re-reading a first page, concluding that he'd been "tricked." Laederach's books have evoked such reactions before. A reviewer of *Passion: Ein Geständnis* (1993) apologizes that his summary is "incoherent and anarchic", but says it is unified compared to the book itself. He does note that Laederach is consistent – consistently indigestible, that is. In this way the Swiss writer Jürg Laederach joins some American "experimental" authors whose critics were likewise irritated. Reviewers variously called William H. Gass's *The Tunnel* (1995) "a monster", a "load of crap", "infuriating and offensive"; but also "beautiful", "complex", and "disturbing". Walter Abish's *Alphabetical Africa* has been called murky and absurd, but also an adventure book marked by knowledge and wit. (It is no coincidence that Laederach has translated Gass and Abish.) A more recent example is David Foster Wallace's *Infinite Jest*, a novel, according to Jay McInerney, with many uninteresting pages, but few uninteresting sentences. Experimental texts challenge not only readers, but translators too. First, there is accuracy. Without the signposts of conventional meaning, it is hard to know whether you're getting it right. Second, one is tempted to translate so that the text makes more 'normal' sense than the original. Third, one worries about

discussed how we integrate, without becoming overtly politicised, how we navigate free speech, how we 'freshen up' the traditional Literature House idea – something the Germans, French and Swiss raised. How also we support writers and engage with wider audiences and the digital development of literature and translation exchange.

**RG: It's a fact that here in Britain we are ahead of the game with digital.**

RF: Our use of social media, and how writers can engage online, shows how digital can be incredibly creative and develop new, more inclusive relationships with audiences, beyond the narrow elites. For all of us at that meeting, I think it shook up our notions of what a Literature House can be and of our role in Europe today at a time when we need to be vigilant.

**RG: What's your own background Rose? How did your ideas develop?**

RF: I am a committed internationalist. My childhood was spent travelling around Eastern Europe in a van, living in forests in Poland, on beaches in Romania, going to a village school in Greece. I was co-director of the *London International Festival of Theatre* for twenty-five years, bringing theatre from all over the world to perform in London and I approached *Free Word* with the same philosophy – smashing through hierarchies, our Anglo-Saxon arrogance, engaging with communities and providing other voices and international perspectives. The paradox of Britain is that we've got this insular mentality but in London we have one of the most diverse populations in the world. 300 languages are spoken here. Half the children in our state schools in London speak English as a second language. And rather than saying this is a terrible problem – as some politicians do – I say let's celebrate it because it means we can be world players, not in the old assertive colonial sense, but through dialogue. If someone lives part of their time here and part of their time in Nigeria and feels equally loyal to both countries that's a huge asset as we forge forward in this complicated world. And that's one of the things that really excites me about working in *Free Word*. The fact that it's an international centre in a country where internationalism can still be viewed with suspicion.

**RG: How difficult is it operating as cultural leader and internationalist in the UK?**

RF: Increasingly difficult! This year's EU elections across Europe proved that there is growing populism, nationalism and xenophobia. Britain has always been a sceptical European and the rise of UKIP, the UK Independence Party, means that mainstream parties are 'borrowing some of their clothes' in order to survive. We live in dangerous times and need to be incredibly vigilant. I think culture, literature and houses of literature and free expression, like *Free Word*, have a very important role to play in keeping the doors open to international ideas and dialogue and actually highlighting the benefit of a world conversation.

**RG: As the Director of *Free Word* what did you personally take from your first conference of European Literature Houses here in London?**

RF: A confirmation of a huge desire to work across borders in Europe and with unheard voices beyond, like Syria and Egypt. Artists and writers long for connections with like-minded organisations to exchange, to feel support and solidarity.

the trust of the reader, who might be thinking that this slog through linguistic no-man's-land might simply reflect incompetent translating. In spite of all these problems of 'difficult' literature, it is important that such texts are a part of international and intercultural dialogues. Pro Helvetia and the Dalkey Archive Press are among the institutions that understand and contribute to this. Just as readers in other languages should get a chance to explore Flann O'Brien or Thomas Pynchon, readers in English should have Jürg Laederach, Erwin Eininger, or Arno Schmidt. As a translator, I can give some advice on how to read 'difficult' texts: translate them. Even if they are in your mother tongue. As George Steiner told us, when you read you are translating anyway, so you might as well do it consciously, taking nothing for granted, toughing out the roughness of the rough spots, resisting understanding too much too soon, and, if you feel tricked, having a good laugh with the writer, at your own expense.

GEOFFREY C. HOWES is a professor of German at Bowling Green State University in Ohio, USA. In addition to his scholarly publications, he has translated texts by Jürg Laederach, Peter Rosei, Robert Musil, Doron Rabinovici, Dieter Sperl, Margret Kreidl, Lucas Cejpek and others.

PHOTO © G.C. Howes

## A Unique Voice

JUANA SALABERT, AUTHOR AND TRANSLATOR



As a novelist, I became acquainted with the Swiss-Romanian author Marius Daniel Popescu in 2009 and, in particu-

lar, with his novel *La Symphonie du loup* (*The Wolf's Symphony*), which I have now translated into Spanish for Nocturna Editions. This was during one of the literary conferences organised by the French writer Patrick Deville in the town of Saint-Nazaire. At the time, I could only skim through Popescu's appealingly titled book, but I remember having been immediately struck by its singular stylistic tone, by the freedom of a fictional approach, which was not in any way subjected to the *diktats*

**RG: Three Swiss Literature Houses, from Geneva, Basel and Zürich, attended the European Literature House gathering: how closely had you worked with the Swiss before? How do you assess your new collaboration?**

RF: Some organisations I'd worked with before, but I met my Swiss colleagues for the first time this Summer. They were great and there's huge potential for us to work together to overcome the clichés and ignorance in the UK about Swiss identity. I call myself an internationalist but I still can't tell you what the Swiss 'voice' is. In the twenty-five years I ran *LIFT* we didn't once host a Swiss theatre company in London, though we often went to Swiss festivals where we'd discover, you know, great Tunisian or Latin American companies. Switzerland is obviously very international. I've never visited their Literature Houses but I've now heard about their wonderful writers' and translators-in-residence centres and such a wide variety of events and festivals. I personally think the Swiss situation is unknown in this country because of its diversity. They have many identities and languages and what was interesting in our discussions is that everything for the Swiss is about translation, which is a great topic for us to explore together, how we negotiate across several languages and cultures. They are a wealthy country, slightly distant from our EU preoccupations, sitting there confidently and comfortably. This may seem unfair but I don't think we engage with one another enough culturally. I think the European Literature House movement is an opportunity to shift perceptions and collaborate on some wonderful projects. At the end of the conference we all agreed we'd like to reconvene in two years' time. Wouldn't it be fantastic if Switzerland hosted it?

PHOTO ROSE FENTON @ Peter Kosminsky

PHOTO BUILDING @ Christian Sinibaldi

of trends or any 'market'. It was when I returned to Spain that I was able to read this novel, teeming with departures and returns, with a multitude of voices, with paths to embark upon for the first time or over again, with upheaval of all kinds and with stories situated beyond the overwhelming weight of History with a capital 'H'. This dizzying, at once Swiss and Romanian book, from which unspoken thoughts are excluded in principle and on the principle of a narrative exhaustiveness that Nathalie Sarraute would surely have appreciated, resembled no other. Published by Éditions José Corti, *La Symphonie du loup* is a Novel-Quest which, above all, should not be placed within the rather vague framework of so-called 'auto-fiction.' It is an intimate epic that takes place in daily life, exuding a rare and poignant tenderness and inhabited by the living and the dead, by parents and children, by landscapes, by memories, and by the desires of the young narrator who has grown up in Ceaușescu's terrifying, dictatorial Romania and who has subsequently married in Switzerland and is the father of two little girls. The novel is *also* a meditation on the value and impact of words devolved into slogans lauding the virtues of King Money, in our Western consumer societies. It is an unusual and tenacious meditation on the 'outside' and 'inside' of our lives, on freedom and the lack of freedom, on personal paths taken amidst crowds, all at ground level in a democratic system, certainly, yet one in which the frivolity and perverse abusiveness of its messages are rarely dealt with in contemporary fiction. This is why, as both a writer and a translator, I felt the urge to translate this courageous book, with its diverse stylistic registers and tonalities, which has been written in French by a Romanian author living in Lausanne. It was a difficult task because, to my mind, translating a literary work means respecting it completely, not betraying its inner music, and 'effacing oneself' behind its rhythms.

JUANA SALABERT is a Spanish writer who was born in Paris. Her novels have won several important prizes. Her latest novel is *La faz de la tierra* (Alianza, 2011). Her Spanish translation of *La symphonie du loup* (*La sinfonia del lobo, Nocturna*, 2013) has won the Mots Passants Prize.

PHOTO @ Irina C. Salabert



# FROM THE LIFE OF A PERFECT MATTRESS

**AUS DEM LEBEN EINER MATRATZE BESTER MACHART**

GENRE Short novel, LANGUAGE German



“A wonderful literary ‘tour de force’, superbly told.” BADISCHE ZEITUNG



TIM KROHN was born in 1965 and is a freelance writer living in Mustair. He writes novels and plays. His novel *Quatemberkinder* has become a cult book in Switzerland; *Vrenelis Gärtli* was top of the Swiss best-seller list for many weeks. His more recent publications are the novel *Ans Meer* (*To the Sea*), published in 2009, and the short story *Der Geist am Berg* (*The Spirit on the Mountain*, 2010).

PHOTO © Katharina Lütcher

Immanuel Wassermann is a Jewish dyestuff manufacturer from Berlin. When he meets Gioia, a young, pretty girl from Sicily, in Locarno, they are both lost the moment they set eyes on each other. It's love at first sight and they get married the next day. They spend their wedding night on a brand-new mattress, which Wassermann is determined to buy from the hotelier, who runs the hotel they're staying in in Swabia – not only because it's unbelievably comfortable, which it is! – but also for Gioia's sake, because there's a little spot of blood on the mattress, which won't come out. In Tim Krohn's story *From the Life of a Perfect Mattress*, this quality product finds uses way beyond the lives of the Wassermanns, whose marriage falls apart after only a short time. In an ingenious and entertaining tale, Krohn makes the mattress the indispensable element in a series of strange events spanning the whole of the 20th century. At one point, it serves as both mattress and temporary home for a poor couple, Rosi and Heinz Stalder, in their emergency accommodation after the Second World War. Years later, Lorenz and Sibylle take the mattress with them in their 'Deux Chevaux', as they make a futile attempt to drive through the Summer snow over the St Gotthard Pass. Via strange detours and by-ways, the mattress fetches up in Italy, first in Rome, then in the sea, where an angler falls into the water and has to swim for his life. And finally, its remains are washed up at Beaulieu-sur-Mer, near Nice – where this delightful, effortlessly told story ends in a most surprising way.

**TITLE** *Aus dem Leben einer Matratze bester Machart*

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**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Anette Kühnel,  
akuehnel@kiwi-verlag.de

# AUS DEM LEBEN EINER MATRATZE BESTER MACHART TIM KROHN

## German original (p. 9-11)

Immanuel Wassermann war zu einer Versammlung von Freigeistern aus ganz Europa auf dem Monte Verità gewesen, nicht so sehr der Versammlung wegen wie der Fahrt dorthin. Der September 1935 war noch sommerlich warm, und er konnte der Versuchung nicht widerstehen, in seinem offenen Isotta-Fraschini von Berlin ins Tessin zu rasen. Die Versammlung selbst blieb ihm nur wegen des Essens und des Weins in Erinnerung, die Reden waren ihm zu düster, als dass er ihnen Aufmerksamkeit hätte schenken wollen. Er zeichnete währenddessen kleine Mädchen, die mit eifrig vorgestreckter Zunge malten, denn auf der Herfahrt hatte er die Idee gehabt, ein solches Mädchen für das neueste Produkt seiner Firma werben zu lassen: »Isabella Wasserfarben – klar, rein, leuchtend«. Von Wasserfarben handelte auch seine eigene kurze Ansprache, in der er flüchtig den »Anstreicher Hitler« erwähnte, um von dort ausgehend für ein Europa in lichten Tönen, für Wagemut und Sorglosigkeit, für eine frisch-fröhliche Ignoranz gegenüber all den Versuchen zu votieren, eine neue Ära der Finsternis und Schwarzmalerei zu beschwören. Der Applaus, den er erhielt, war dürftig, und als er zum Abschluss vorschlug, dass nun doch alle gemeinsam nach Locarno fahren und dort in einem Grotto oder einer Trattoria die mediterrane Leichtigkeit des Orts genießen sollten, mochte ihm keiner folgen.

So fuhr er allein, aß in einer *Osteria del Nonno* mit Blick auf den See und begeisterte sich erst für die Aussicht und die Speisekarte, dann für die Kellnerin, eine junge Sizilianerin mit grünen Augen, schwarzem Haar, fast olivenfarbener Haut und langen, schmalen Gliedern, die so schüchtern wie neugierig war und seiner jugenhaften Art nicht lange widerstand. Sie sprach leidlich deutsch, er auch einige Worte italienisch, und schließlich spazierten sie von Mitternacht bis zum Morgengrauen dem Ufer des Lago Maggiore entlang, denn Gioia war zu wohlerzogen, um mit ihm ein Zimmer zu teilen, aber auch zu verliebt, um ihn zu verlassen.

# FROM THE LIFE OF A PERFECT MATTRESS TIM KROHN

## Excerpt translated by Michael Hofmann

Immanuel Wassermann had gone to a conference of European freethinkers on Monte Verità, not so much because of the freethinkers, as for the drive there. September 1935 was unseasonably warm, and the prospect of running down to the Ticino from Berlin in his open-top Isotta-Fraschini was irresistible. He didn't take in much of the conference except for the food and the wine, the speeches had all been on the gloomy side. As he sat there, he had doodled a series of little girls painting, with their tongues gripped between their teeth in concentration, he was looking for a character to advertise his newest product: "Isabella Watercolours – clear, pure, shining". His own short address had been on the subject as well, because he had made a glancing reference to the housepainter Hitler, and then gone on to plead for a Europe of bright colours, for daring and insouciance, and short shrift to all the efforts to usher in a new dark age of gloom and pessimism. His effort received scant applause, and when he proposed going off to Locarno in a group so that they might enjoy the Mediterranean lightness of the place in some grotto or trattoria, he found no takers. So he drove off by himself, stopped in a place over the lake called *Osteria del Nonno*, and was enthused first by the view, then the menu, and finally the waitress, a young Sicilian girl with green eyes, black hair, olive skin and long slender limbs, who was as curious as she was reserved, and didn't resist his boyish allure for long. She spoke good German, he had some words of Italian, and they had ended up walking along the banks of the Lago Maggiore from midnight to daybreak, because Gioia (that was her name) was too well-bred to share a room with him, and too smitten to let him go.

# A MAGNIFICENT DECEPTION

## UNO SPLENDIDO INGANNO

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE Italian



“A new, authentic narrator of the Italian crime novel is born. But he is Swiss, and is called Andrea Fazioli.” GIANNI BIONDILLO

Guido Moretti is a man of the highest integrity, who has worked all his life as an accountant, first in Italy, then in Switzerland. One day, someone robs the service station where he works. No one is hurt, but Guido alone notices something, a small detail he cannot get out of his mind. Shortly afterwards, he retires. So, is this to be the start of life of monotony? Of just going for walks and playing cards? Not a bit of it. Guido is a man of regular habits and an irreproachable way of life, but he becomes captivated by the beautiful and provocative Vanessa, a professional confidence trickster. Can she really be in love with him? Or is she after something? And if so, what? The backdrop to the story is Zürich, an excessively wealthy and clean city, whose vices are concealed beneath the manicured lawns of well-appointed villas, while the events set in Ascona and Milan highlight the nervous tension between North and South, a tension typical of Italian-speaking Switzerland. Fazioli tells a story of adventure and suspense – in which no one is what they seem. For all their confidence tricks, the fraudsters are perhaps more genuine than the austere citizens who make money, collect original paintings and live in sumptuous residences, in a round of crowded cocktail parties and hushed conversations beside the lake...

**TITLE** Uno splendido inganno  
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 viviana.vuscovich@maurispagnol.it



**ANDREA FAZIOLI** was born in 1978 and lives in Bellinzona. He studied Literature at Zürich University. He works as a journalist for Swiss Television RSI, is a creative writing teacher and prize-winning author. His novels, a mix of crime, suspense and adventure, are mainly set in the Italian-speaking Canton of Ticino in Switzerland. Fazioli's novels have been translated into many languages and have been acclaimed well beyond the borders of his native country.

PHOTO © Daulte, RSI

## UNO SPLENDIDO INGANNO ANDREA FAZIOLI

### Italian original (p. 32-33)

Sulla strada principale stava passando il camion della nettezza urbana. A ogni portone si fermava per raccogliere i sacchi grigi della spazzatura. Sotto la finestra di Vanessa, un uomo con un cane si fermò davanti ai netturbini. Gli uomini sono sempre affascinati dal lavoro, pensò lei. Ne aveva conosciuti parecchi che si rilassavano soltanto così, osservando gente che lavora o parlando di lavoro. L'uomo guardò gli inservienti raccogliere i sacchi e gettarli nel cassone. Poi il camion ripartì e l'uomo sciolse il guinzaglio del cane, lasciandolo libero di scorrazzare in un'aiuola.

Tranne l'uomo e il cane, la strada era deserta. Di lì a poco sarebbe diventato buio: i lampioni erano già accesi e l'occhio faticava a distinguere i colori. Vanessa notò il profilo degli alberi, che spiccava contro il fondale azzurro cupo del cielo. Le piaceva quel momento particolare del giorno. Come si poteva definire? Crepuscolo, forse. I tedeschi avevano una bella espressione: *Abendsehen*. Sguardo serale. Ecco, Vanessa sentiva di avere uno sguardo serale, una sensibilità per le forme e per le sfumature semiavvolte nell'oscurità. Il cane fece i suoi bisogni. Vanessa vide l'uomo estrarre da una tasca del cappotto un sacchetto di plastica e usarlo come guanto per raccogliere gli escrementi. Poi chiuse il sacchetto con un nodo e lo gettò nell'apposito cassonetto ai bordi dell'aiuola.

Fu in quel momento che Vanessa capì.

Quell'aiuola nel tardo pomeriggio, con la luce che scompariva e l'uomo che raccoglieva la cacca del cane, quella strada deserta regalò a Vanessa un'intuizione. Ecco che cosa le mancava: la capacità di rischiare tutto in base a una comprensione profonda della natura umana. Tutte le sue operazioni si basavano sulla psicologia, naturalmente, e sui desideri delle vittime. Ma seguivano schemi risaputi, meccanismi ormai fin troppo collaudati.

Un uomo affidabile. Vanessa doveva trovare un uomo così: uno capace di raccogliere la merda del suo cane in un'aiuola deserta, quasi al buio, quando nessuno lo guarda e potrebbe tirare dritto.

Alla fine, Vanessa lo sapeva bene, nessuno avrebbe raccolto niente.

Questo era l'inganno.

Ma prima ci voleva un uomo affidabile.

## A MAGNIFICENT DECEPTION ANDREA FAZIOLI

### Excerpt translated by Simon Knight

The refuse truck was passing by on the main street. It stopped at every gateway to pick up the grey plastic sacks. Under Vanessa's window, a man with a dog stopped to watch the bin men. Men are always fascinated by work, she thought. She had known several for whom it was their only relaxation, watching people work or talking about work. The man watched the bin men as they picked up the sacks and threw them into the back of the truck. Then the truck moved on and the man let the dog off the lead, leaving it free to root around in a flowerbed.

Apart from the man and his dog, the street was deserted. It would soon be dark: the street lamps were already lit and it was hard to make out colours. Vanessa observed the outline of the trees, silhouetted against the sombre blue of the sky. She liked this time of day. How could you define it? Dusk, maybe. The Germans had a word for it: *Abendsehen*. Evening gaze. Yes, Vanessa felt she had an evening gaze, a sensitivity to shapes and shades of colour half shrouded in darkness.

The dog did its business. Vanessa saw the man take a plastic bag from the pocket of his overcoat and use it like a glove to pick up the dog turds. Then he knotted the bag and deposited it in the bin on the edge of the flowerbed.

It was then that Vanessa understood.

That flowerbed in the late afternoon, with the light fading and the man picking up his dog's poo, the deserted street sparked in Vanessa a flash of intuition. This was what she lacked: the ability to risk everything on the strength of her understanding of human nature. All her operations were based on psychology, of course, and on the victims' cravings. But they followed well-worn patterns, tried-and-tested mechanisms.

A man she could trust. Vanessa needed to find a man like that: one capable of collecting his dog's shit in a deserted flowerbed, almost in the dark, when no one was watching and he could have just walked on.

In the end, as Vanessa knew very well, no one would collect anything.

This was the deception.

But first she needed a man she could trust.

**"A Magnificent Deception is a paradox noir, played on the double string of deceit (true) and of truth (deceitful)." IL CORRIERE DELLA SERA**



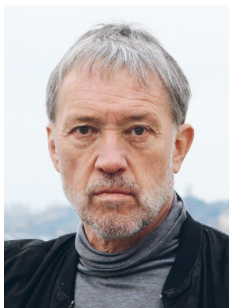
# SUMMER IN BRANDENBURG

## SOMMER IN BRANDENBURG

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



*"Summer in Brandenburg is such a thrilling but thoughtful love story, ...a superb contribution to a new genre of story-telling based on memory, in an age when eye-witness tales are disappearing."*  
DEUTSCHLANDRADIO KULTUR



URS FAES was born in 1947, took German Studies at university and was a teacher in Olten. He now lives and works as a writer in Zürich and San Feliciano, in Umbria. He writes mainly novels and short stories: his last two publications were *Paarbildung* (*Educating Couples*, 2010) and *Paris. Eine Liebe* (*Paris. A Love*, 2012).

PHOTO © Renate Amuat,  
Suhrkamp Verlag

It's Summer, 1938: Lissy Harb and Ron Berend are spending some time in Brandenburg, working on a Jewish agricultural training project in Ahrensdorf, near Trebbin. Ron is from Hamburg, Lissy from Vienna. Along with other young people, they're getting ready to emigrate to Palestine. Once they arrive, they'll be living on a kibbutz, so they have to learn the skills they'll need to survive out there. They're taking courses in agriculture, vegetable farming and joinery; they're learning new languages and are being instructed in Jewish culture and religion.

Urs Faes' carefully researched novel reveals to us a little known aspect of Jewish history. It takes as its starting point a photograph of the lovers, and – underpinned by proven facts – imagines how in those uncertain times, young people might have come together and lived in what were called *Hachschara*, or Jewish training camps in Nazi Germany, at a time of great unrest, fear and also great hope. The Jewish would-be emigrants have lived for a long time in 'enemy territory': the Hitler Youth has a camp in the neighbourhood, there's also an aerodrome nearby. Everyone is fearful, as to whether they'll be able to get out of Germany in good time, and get permission from the British authorities, to travel to the British Mandate in Palestine. Interwoven into this picture of a German Summer, is the love story of Lissy and Ron, who meet in Ahrensdorf, fall in love – and then lose each other again. They wanted to build a life together in Palestine; this novel becomes their touching memorial.

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hardt@suhrkamp.de

**SOMMER IN BRANDENBURG URS FAES****German original (p. 9-10)**

Was war das für eine Stimme, ein Lachen, nicht laut, aber eindringlich, übermütig verspielt, unbekannt, vor allem das: ein Mädchenlachen, das er nie zuvor gehört hatte, ein Klang, der ihm fremd war, kehlig, rau.

Er kannte sie doch alle, die hier waren, seit Monaten, die Mädchen und die Jungen, Chawerot und Chawerim. Er lauschte, hielt die Hand gegen die Sonne, die blendete, Gegenlicht, darüber der Himmel, blau, preußischblau, dieser große Himmel, Frühsommer noch und heiß. Schnell sprang er über die Schattensprenkel auf dem Weg, eilte dem Stall zu, wollte das Tor schließen, dann hinunter zum Sportplatz, für ein paar Ballwürfe in den Korb vor dem Abendbrot.

Vom Brunnen drang noch immer das Lachen herüber, ausgedehnt und breit. Was gab es da zu lachen, vor dem Brunnen. Dahinter schimmerte der Schwanenteich; da sirrten die Libellen, an diesem Spätnachmittag als Drohung über dem Schilf, bläulich durchlässig. Hecken säumten das Ufer, darüber das Grün der hohen Eichen, die den Weg verschatteten, der sandig war und trocken, weil Regen schon seit Tagen ausgeblieben war. Krähen flogen über den hohen Zaun, der das Landgut umgab.

Wir haben Gänse und Hühner, Ziegen, sogar zwei Pferde, hatte er Helma geschrieben, sechs Kühe, die für eine ganze Milchwirtschaft reichen, mit Käse und Quark. Helma hatte gespottet in ihrem Brief, von Sommerlager gesprochen und Pfadfinder-Romantik, die nicht reiche für den Pioniergeist, den es brauche im fremden Land. Was wußte schon Helma. Das Lachen, zu wem gehörte es? Die Stimme, etwas laut für eine Zeit, in der sie gelernt hatten, leise und unauffällig zu sein, kein Aufsehen zu erregen, zu tun, als wären sie nicht da. Und nun lachte da eine, rief hinüber zum Haus, wo die Mädchen waren. Er hielt im Laufen inne, machte ein paar Schritte auf das Gebäude zu, ein Jagdschloßchen aus vergangener Zeit.

Da entdeckte er das Mädchen am Brunnen, das zum Fenster hinaufstrahlte, wo zwei andere sich herauslehnten und mit ausgebreiteten Armen winkten.

**SUMMER IN BRANDENBURG URS FAES****Excerpt translated by Damion Searls**

What kind of voice was this – a laugh, not loud but penetrating, boisterous and playful, a stranger's, most importantly a girl's laugh he had never heard before, with a sound that was new to him, throaty, raw.

But he knew everyone here, had known them for months: the girls and the boys, the haverot and haverim. He listened, holding up his hand to shield his eyes from the blinding sun, the glare, and above it the sky, blue, Prussian blue; this huge sky, early summer and already hot. He leapt quickly over the dappled shadows on the path and hurried to the stall, hoping to shut the gate and go down to the playing field and throw a few balls into the net before dinner.

From the fountain the laugh, broad and ample, still reached him. What was there to laugh about over by the fountain anyway. The swan pond shimmered behind it; the dragonflies buzzed, a threat above the reeds on this late afternoon, bluishly transparent. Hedges lined the riverbanks, with the green of the tall oak trees above them, shading the path that was sandy and dry because it hadn't rained for days. Crows flew over the high fence surrounding the estate.

We have geese and chickens, goats, even two horses, he had written to Helma, six cows, enough for a whole dairy farm, with cheese, curd cheese, quark. Helma's answer had poked fun, talking about summer camp, boy scout fantasies that were not enough for the pioneer spirit needed in a foreign country. What did Helma know.

The laugh, whose was it? The voice, a bit loud for a time in which they had learned to be quiet and unobtrusive, not attract any attention, act as though they were not there. And now here was someone laughing, calling across to the building where the other girls were. He was running but he stopped and took a few steps toward the building, a hunting lodge from bygone times.

There he discovered the girl at the fountain looking up toward a window where two other girls were leaning out and waving with outstretched arms.

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**"Urs Faes' shocking and deeply moving book is packed with such unforgettable characters and intense atmospheric settings that readers experience the same immediacy they'd feel as if they were going through this same formative experience themselves." JÜDISCHE RUNDSCHAU**

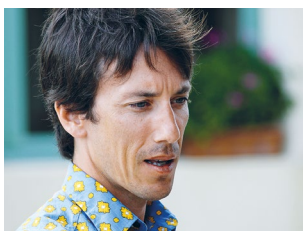
# THE CLEAR FOUNTAIN

**LA CLAIRE FONTAINE**

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE French



“David Bosc has apparently immersed himself in the paintings of Gustave Courbet and created from them his own writer’s palette.” LE TEMPS



DAVID BOSC was born in Carcassonne in 1973 and studied Political Science at the universities of Aix-en-Provence and Siena. He lived in Paris and Warsaw before settling in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he works at Les Éditions Noir sur Blanc. His literary career began with the publication of a series of essays and translations. His first novel *Sang Lié* (*Blood Bond*) came out in 2005, followed in 2009 by *Milo*, which was nominated for both the Prix Dentan and the Prix Amila-Meckert. *La claire fontaine* was awarded the Swiss Literature Award in 2014.

PHOTO © Frédéric Bosc

The French painter Gustave Courbet spent the last four years of his life in exile on the shores of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. He was wanted by the police for the demolition of Napoleon’s Vendôme Column during the Paris Commune – of which he was a member – in the wake of France’s defeat in the Franco-Prussian War. In July 1873, Courbet left his home town of Ornans, along with two of his assistants, and set off on a donkey for exile in Switzerland. He sojourned in the Jura countryside along the way, bathed in cool rivers whenever he could, and eventually, after spending some time in Geneva, made his new home in a studio in La Tour-de-Peilz. Once there, he captured the majesty of Lake Geneva on canvas, in all its colours and moods; exhibited his latest paintings; made love with Juliette, his Piedmontese housekeeper; sang in the village choir; cursed the police, who were pursuing and harrasing him; and drank himself into an exhausted death at the age of 58.

*The Clear Fountain* is a semi-biographical novel, interspersed with original source material from letters and legal and police documents; with brilliant word pictures and a powerfully eloquent musicality. It portrays the final excessive stages of the Realist painter’s life, famous for his scandalizing erotic tableau “The Origin of the World” (1866). The novel stands as an artistic and literary defence of the life of a “self-governing man” – “l’homme qui se gouverne lui-même”.

**TITLE** *La claire fontaine*

**PUBLISHER** Éditions Verdier, Lagrasse

**PUBLICATION DATE** 2013

**PAGES** 116

**ISBN** 978-2-86432-726-4

**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Colette Olive,  
colette.olive@editions-verdier.fr

**LA CLAIRE FONTAINE DAVID BOSCH****French original (p. 31-32)**

Le dimanche 29 mars 1874, Courbet se tient sur la scène d'un théâtre de Genève. Il chante. Il est membre de la chorale de Vevey et il chante sur la scène en s'appliquant. Avec son coffre et sa bedaine, avec sa barbe de sapeur, on l'aurait attendu, on l'aurait cherché au pupitre des basses, or il avait une voix de tête, c'est-à-dire qu'il chantait dans les aigus. Il est donc à cet endroit du chœur où sont ensemble les hommes et les femmes. Partout où il a vécu, même très peu de temps, Courbet s'est mêlé aux sociétés les plus diverses. Il participait. Il s'inscrivait dans les jours de ses semblables en faisant les mêmes choses qu'eux. Il se prêtait aux farces et aux calembredaines, il battait la mesure et fredonnait s'il ne connaissait pas les paroles.

Dans la nuit d'hiver, Courbet tirait la rumeur lourde de son pas jusqu'au sommet de l'escalier de bois. Lorsqu'il atteignait sa chambre, faisait gémir et ployer le squelette du lit, il sentait sa joie mouchée d'un coup comme une chandelle. Dulong était bien sympathique, il ne s'était plaint du tapage que les fois où Courbet avait ramené avec lui sa chanson, mais Courbet en avait assez de n'être pas chez lui. Il entendait reprendre la maîtrise de l'ordre et du désordre : le chambard à pas d'heure, la noce en plein après-midi ou sous la lune rouge, et le silence et le sommeil aux heures où tous les autres grattent, creusent, déballetent, tamponnent, encaissent. Il repensa soudain à ce Charles Baudelaire de vingt-six ans auquel il avait donné à coucher, quelques jours, quelque temps, à Paris, un coin de piaule au fond de l'atelier où il dormait lui-même.

Pour attester de ce séjour du poète, il n'y a qu'un seul témoignage, pas même un témoignage, une assertion d'Émile Gros-Kost, lequel est hâbleur, insoucieux des détails, insoucieux de la vérité, soucieux seulement de ses effets : il gouaille à pleine gueule, celui-là, et traite son sujet par-dessus la jambe. Pourtant, il n'y a rien non plus qui la contredise, cette assertion, la biographie de l'un et de l'autre, le peintre et le poète, ayant assez de flou en 1847 pour accueillir le possible et jusqu'au probable, s'il nous fait plaisir. Puisque Baudelaire venait de se disputer avec sa mère et qu'il la punissait en disparaissant, puisqu'il ne pouvait loger qu'à l'occasion chez Jeanne Duval au 6, rue de la Femme-sans-tête, puisque Courbet ferait son portrait quelques mois plus tard, et qu'on les vit ensemble non loin des barricades de Février, il devient plausible, ce banc, ce coffre recouvert de l'indulgence de deux tapis où d'autres avaient dormi déjà.

**THE CLEAR FOUNTAIN DAVID BOSCH****Excerpt translated by John Taylor**

On Sunday, March 29, 1874, Courbet is standing on the stage of a Geneva theatre. He is singing. He is a member of the Vevey chorus and is applying himself. Because of his paunch and barrel chest, because of his thick beard, one would have expected him to be, sought him out, among the basses; but he had a head voice, which is to say that he sang at a higher pitch. He is thus standing at that place in the chorus where men and women are together. Wherever he lived, even for a short time, Courbet always mixed with the most diverse kinds of company. He took part. He joined in the days of his fellow men by doing the same things they did. He lent himself to pranks and balderdash. If he didn't know the lyrics, he would beat the rhythm and hum along.

On winter nights, Courbet would drag the heavy sound of his footsteps all the way to the top of the wooden staircase. When he reached his room, made the skeletal bed-frame groan and sag, he would feel his joy snuffed out like a candle. Dulong was quite likeable and hadn't complained about the racket except on those occasions when Courbet had brought his singing back with him; but Courbet was fed up with not having his own place. He intended to regain control over order and disorder: kicking up a rumpus whenever he wished, living it up in the middle of the afternoon or under a reddish moon, silence and sleep at those hours when others are scribbling, digging, laying out their wares, stamping forms, collecting cash. He suddenly thought back to that twenty-six-year-old Charles Baudelaire to whom he had given a place to sleep, for a few days, for a while, in Paris, a corner of a bedroom of sorts at the back of the studio where he himself slept.

As proof of the poet's stay, only one account exists, and it's not even an account, rather an assertion made by Émile Gros-Kost, a braggart unconcerned with details, unconcerned with truth, concerned only with the impression he gives: the cocky fellow just spouts it out, dealing with his topic in slipshod fashion. Yet neither does anything contradict his assertion, for the biographies of each man, the artist and the poet, remain vague enough in 1847 to admit the possible and even the probable, if it so pleases us. Since Baudelaire had just quarreled with his mother and had punished her by vanishing, since he could only occasionally be put up at Jeanne Duval's at 6 rue de la Femme-sans-tête, since Courbet would paint his portrait only a few months later, and since they would be seen together not far from the February barricades, this bench, this clothes chest covered indulgently with two rugs where others had already slept, becomes plausible.

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***"The Clear Fountain paints a shimmering portrait of Courbet's time in French Switzerland, at the same time giving us twin views of the landscape of Lake Geneva – in words and pictures." LE COURRIER***

# REINFORCED CONCRETE

## BÉTON ARMÉ

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE French



"These sardonic, sharp-eyed pages are also about crossing essential thresholds in our short lifetimes."  
TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT



PHILIPPE RAHMY was born in Geneva in 1965 and studied Philosophy and Egyptology. He made his literary début with *Mouvement par la fin* (A Portrait of Pain) in 2005, for which he was awarded the Prix des Charmettes / Jean Jacques Rousseau (2006). *Demeure le corps* (May the Body Rest) followed in 2007. In 2014 he received the Prix Michel-Dentan for *Béton armé* (Reinforced Concrete). Philippe Rahmy also produces video-books and writes songs for the rock band 'I Need My Gasoline'.

PHOTO © Yvonne Böhler

"Shanghai is not a city. This is not the word that comes to mind. Nothing comes. Then astonishment at the noise. Noise like the ocean or an engine of war. A tumult, an infinity of perspectives, angles and surfaces amplifying the racket." The man who dedicates himself to that megalomaniac colossus Shanghai in *Reinforced Concrete* – and does so with all his senses, especially his sense of rhythm and the sound of words – is forty years old and severely disabled since birth. He is the author Philippe Rahmy, who was invited there by the Chinese Writers Association. This residency in Shanghai is, for Rahmy – who suffers from brittle-bone disease – the first time he has gone on a journey. "He has never learned to travel." The city reveals itself to him in all its simplicity: "at the pavement edge...is all the banality that flowers on a piece of asphalt." So, observations on everyday scenes, smells, light conditions, alternate with political and philosophical reflections on present-day China. The physically and mentally overwhelming brutality of Chinese daily life forces to the surface similarly powerful scenes and memories from his childhood. Shanghai becomes a picture-puzzle in which the pain of the places he visits brutally comes up against the pain of his disabled childhood. A childhood, in which a traumatic event, the author's birth, is foreshadowed: "That moment is the moment of my death. It is the moment of my birth as a writer. We write in order to silence the beast in ourselves."

**TITLE** Béton armé

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**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Anna Vateva,

[a.vateva@editionslatableronde.fr](mailto:a.vateva@editionslatableronde.fr)



**BÉTON ARMÉ PHILIPPE RAHMY****French original (p. 15-16)**

Shanghai n'est pas une ville. Ce n'est pas ce mot qui vient à l'esprit. Rien ne vient. Puis une stupeur face au bruit. Un bruit d'océan ou de machine de guerre. Un tumulte, un infini de perspectives, d'angles et de surfaces amplifiant le vacarme. Toutes les foules d'Elias Canetti se coupent ici, se heurtent et se multiplient, fuient à l'horizon ou s'enroulent autour des points fixes (kiosques, bouches de métro, abris de bus, passages piétons). Des foules en procession et des foules fermées se pressent dans les parcs. Des foules semi-ouvertes, radiocentriques, chatoyantes, s'écoulent de la rue vers l'intérieur des hypermarchés, flux de chairs et de choses, flux d'essence giclant de vitrine en vitrine, grasses pattes, filoches de doigts, odeurs. L'espace grandit encore. Des foules béantes s'étirent à perte de vue, disséminées le long des voies de chemin de fer ou étirées par les câbles de milliers de grues. Des foules-miroir, enfin, se font face sur les boulevards, étrangement statiques, mastiquées, balançant leurs yeux et leurs cheveux noirs, chacune hypnotisant sa moitié complémentaire. Shanghai est à la fois mangouste et cobra.

La stupeur se dissipe. La ville se dresse. Paysage vertical d'éléments inertes, signes de pouvoir. Paysage horizontal de matières vivantes, expression d'un désir. Mises côte à côte, les parties de cet ensemble forment un décor. Il n'a aucun sens. Je suis abruti par le décalage horaire. Comme la vache qui regarde passer les trains, je ne comprends pas ce que je vois. Je suis fasciné par le mouvement. Au premier plan, des gens se massent sous les arbres. Râblés, ils portent des voiles transparents. Ils vendent des os alignés sur une natte dans la forme approximative d'un squelette. Derrière eux, l'avenue bourdonne. Je les regarde comme Christophe Colomb découvrant des ossements humains sur les plages de Guadeloupe, sans en déduire que les Chinois sont cannibales.

**REINFORCED CONCRETE PHILIPPE RAHMY****Excerpt translated by John Taylor**

Shanghai is not a city. This is not the word that comes to mind. Nothing comes. Then astonishment at the noise. Noise like the ocean or an engine of war. A tumult, an infinity of perspectives, angles and surfaces amplifying the racket. All of Elias Canetti's crowds crisscross here, collide, and multiply, fleeing to the horizon or coiling around fixed points (kiosks, subway entrances, bus shelters, pedestrian passages). Crowds in procession and closed crowds hurry into the parks. Half-open, radiocentric, shimmering crowds flow from the street toward the insides of hypermarkets, a flood of flesh and things, a flood of exhaust fumes spurting from store window to store window, fat paws, traces of fingers, smells. Space continues to grow. Gaping crowds stretch out as far as the eye can see, scattered along railway tracks or drawn by the cables of a thousand cranes. Mirror-crowds, finally, facing each other across the boulevards and strangely static, chewed into, letting their eyes and black hair sway, each hypnotizing its complementary half. Shanghai is both mongoose and cobra.

The astonishment fades. The city rises. A vertical landscape made of inert elements, signs of power. A horizontal landscape made of living matter, expression of a desire. Placed side by side, the parts of this ensemble form a setting. There is no sense to it. I am dazed with jetlag. Like a cow gazing at passing trains, I do not understand what I am seeing. I am fascinated by the movement. In the foreground, people are massing below trees. Stocky, they are wearing transparent veils. They are selling bones lined up more or less like skeletons on mats. Behind them, the avenue is droning. I am staring at them as if I were Christopher Columbus discovering human bones on the beaches of Guadeloupe, though without deducing that the Chinese are cannibals.

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***"Reinforced Concrete isn't a traveller's tale, it's the violent confrontation of sensations – obscene, percussive, fraternal – impressions which force what's hidden to gush to the surface and which metamorphose into a language of imagery both frank and musical." LE TEMPS***

# NO HEAD FOR HEIGHTS

**NICHT SCHWINDELFREI**

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“Jürg Schubiger’s unconventional writing on loss, disappearance and forgetfulness achieves a magical lightness, even when its subjects are complex.” NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG



**JÜRIG SCHUBIGER** was born in 1936 and lives and works as writer in Zürich. He studied German, Psychology and Philosophy. He first worked in his family’s educational publishing house, then in his own psychology practice. His considerable output of books for both children and adults has been awarded many prizes, including the Hans-Christian-Andersen Prize. His more recent books include *Haller und Helen* (2002) and *Die kleine Liebe* (A brief Love) 2008.

PHOTO © Jürg Schubiger

What exactly is going on around him, Paul can’t say, he doesn’t know. He has, though, an undeniable suspicion that something isn’t right: “He was ill, so it was said, or, had been. But it wasn’t like that for him at all. He didn’t have the precise word for this process the troubled people around him called ‘convalescence.’ He added the word ‘contemplative’ or ‘revitalizing’ or ‘re-emerging’.”

It is gradually revealed that Paul von Matt has dropped out of his previous life. He’s not going to work any more, he’s unable to do anything; something has happened. He stumbles through his daily routine, which he could hardly cope with if he hadn’t the help of his wife Marion, and he has to live with the fact that his memory is failing. But then, he suddenly and surprisingly remembers something, which is impossible for him to know in such detail, though it’s now right before his eyes.

Something has shifted in his mind – we aren’t told *what*. Paul himself knows even less, and sometimes doesn’t even know at all, even how to behave. Nonetheless, he who forgets so many things, is not himself forgotten. His brother Theo drops by from time to time, likewise his work colleague Steff – and little by little, from these various elements, there crystallises an idea of the life Paul must once have led.

Jürg Schubiger’s novel *No Head for Heights* tells of this other life. Schubiger is a virtuoso of the subtle shift, the almost unnoticed transition and he sends his protagonist on a precarious journey into the unknown. Even Paul has no idea what awaits him there, because he has lost his memory, he’s forgotten everything. He’s now open to everything and everything is possible. These events are told in a supple yet tense prose, in which all hangs in the balance until the very end.

**TITLE** Nicht schwindelfrei  
**PUBLISHER** Haymon Verlag, Innsbruck  
**PUBLICATION DATE** 2014  
**PAGES** 112  
**ISBN** 978-3-7099-7139-0  
**TRANSLATION RIGHTS** Anna Stock,  
 anna.stock@haymonverlag.at

**NICHT SCHWINDELFREI JÜRGEN SCHUBIGER****German original (p. 5-6)**

Er sei krank, hiess es, oder er sei krank gewesen. Ihm selbst war aber gar nicht so. Für den Vorgang, den die bekümmerten Menschen um ihn Genesung nannten, hatte er kein genaues Wort. Er sagte Besinnung dazu oder Auffrischung, Aufforstung. Es hatte eine Zeit gegeben, da war er vergesslich gewesen, sehr sogar oder grenzenlos, das mochte er nicht mehr leugnen. Marion, seine Frau, hatte ihn zart und zäh begleitet durch Dickichte von Wochen, Monaten hindurch, für alle Betreffenden, für alle Betroffenen zweifellos eine schwierige Zeit. Theo, der ältere Bruder, stand immer zur Verfügung mit Ermunterungen, Prosecco, Gebäck. Pauls Gedächtnis kläre sich Stück für Stück, sagten sie. Und so sagte auch Paul selbst. Allerdings blieb da die Frage: Wo war er auf die Dauer besser ausgerüstet, im Erinnern oder im Vergessen? Nahm die Erinnerung jetzt überhand? Ergriff sie Besitz von ihm?

Du machst Fortschritte, sagte Marion, kurz bevor Paul den Löffel so ungeschickt hielt, dass ihm die Suppe dem kleinen Finger entlang in den Ärmel lief. Solche Pannen gehörten schon nicht mehr zum Alltag. Man rechnete nicht mehr damit.

Tom, der Bub, lachte hihi – wie nur Blonde lachen können, die bleich sind und beim Lachen rotköpfig werden. Er hatte eine empfindliche Haut, die er vor der Sonne schützen musste. Jeden Sommer aber beschaffte er sich einen Sonnenbrand und durfte dann schlechte Laune haben.

Aus Pauls Panne mit der Suppe machte Tom eine Zirkusnummer. Er wiegte den vollen Löffel hin und her, bis die Suppe ihm hurra! vom Ellenbogen tropfte. Marion wandte sich ab. Sie sah müde aus, selbst von hinten, vor allem von hinten. Ein knapper Satz von Paul war hier erforderlich. In Marions Rücken sagte er: Etwas Spass lockert die Familie.

**NO HEAD FOR HEIGHTS JÜRGEN SCHUBIGER****Excerpt translated by Marc Vincenz**

He was ill, so it was said, or, had been. But it wasn't like that for him at all. He didn't have the precise word for this process the troubled people around him called 'convalescence.' He added the word 'contemplative' or 'revitalizing' or 're-emerging'. There had been a time when he was forgetful, very much so, in fact, immeasurably even. He didn't want to deny it any longer. Marion, his wife, had accompanied him gently and tenaciously through the thickets of weeks, months – an undoubtedly difficult period for those affected, for all those concerned. Theo, the elder brother, was always on hand with encouragement, sparkling wine and pastries. Paul's memory would clear up bit by bit, they said. Even Paul himself said so. However, the question remained: in the long run where would he be better equipped? In his memory or in his forgetting? Was memory gaining the upper hand? Was it taking possession of him?

You're making progress, Marion said shortly before Paul held the spoon so awkwardly that the soup dribbled down his little finger and into his sleeve. Blunders such as these no longer belonged to their everyday. One didn't expect these anymore.

Tom, the boy, laughed "hihi" – as only blonde boys (who are fair-skinned and go red in the face when they laugh) can. He always had to protect his sensitive skin from the sun. Every summer somehow he managed to get sunburnt and was forgiven his temper tantrum.

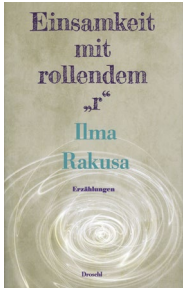
Tom turned Paul's blunder with the soup in to a circus number. He rocked the full spoon back and forth until "hurrah!" the soup was dripping from his elbow. Marion turned away. She looked tired, even from behind – especially from behind. A short statement from Paul was now necessary. Behind her back, he said: A joke or two puts the family at ease.

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**"A beautiful and often sad-funny story which you won't easily forget."**

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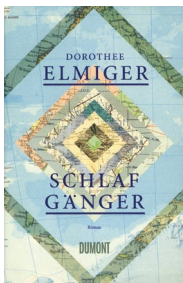
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(LONELINESS WITH A TRILLED "R")  
ILMA RAKUSA

GENRE Novel  
PAGES 158  
PUBLISHER Literaturverlag Droschl,  
Wien 2014  
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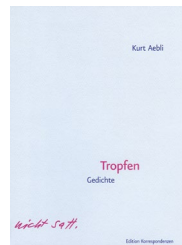
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SIMONE LAPPERT

GENRE Novel  
PAGES 205  
PUBLISHER Walde & Graf bei Metrolit,  
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**SCHLAFGÄNGER**  
(THE BED LODGERS)  
DOROTHEE ELMIGER

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ISBN 978-3-8321-9742-1  
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Judith.Habermas@dumont-buchverlag.de



**TROPFEN**  
(DROPS)  
KURT AEBLI

GENRE Poetry  
PAGES 116  
PUBLISHER Edition Korrespondenzen,  
Wien 2014  
ISBN 978-3-902951-04-5  
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Reto Ziegler,  
edition@korrespondenzen.at



**DIE BELAGERUNG DER WELT**  
(THE WORLD UNDER SIEGE)  
PAUL NIZON

GENRE Journal  
PAGES 352  
PUBLISHER Suhrkamp Verlag, Berlin  
2014  
ISBN 978-3-518-42386-8  
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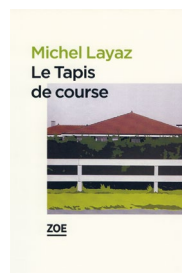
**NE NEIGE-T-IL PAS AUSSI BLANC**  
**CHAQUE HIVER?**  
(DOES IT SNOW THIS WHITE EVERY  
WINTER?)  
SILVIA RICCI LEMPEN

GENRE Novel  
PAGES 216  
PUBLISHER Éditions d'enbas, Lausanne  
2013  
ISBN 978-2-8190-0451-3  
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Jean Richard,  
enbas@bluewin.ch



**J'AIME CE QUI VACILLE**  
(I LOVE THOSE WHO FALTER)  
ROSE-MARIE PAGNARD

GENRE Novel  
PAGES 64  
PUBLISHER Éditions Zoé, Geneva 2013  
ISBN 978-2-88182-883-6  
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Caroline Coutau,  
caroline.coutau@editionszoe.ch



**LE TAPIS DE COURSE**  
(THE TREADMILL)  
MICHEL LAYAZ

GENRE Novel  
PAGES 157  
PUBLISHER Éditions Zoé, Geneva 2013  
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# SWISS LITERATURE AWARDS

presented by the Federal Office of Culture FOC

Urs Allemann, David Bosc, Roland Buti, Rose-Marie Pagnard, Matteo Terzaghi, Urs Widmer and Vera Schindler-Wunderlich are the seven winners of the Swiss Literature Awards for works from the past year. Two Swiss Grand Awards for

Literature as well as a Special Award for Translation were also presented by the Federal Office of Culture for the complete works of Philippe Jaccottet, Paul Nizon and Christoph Ferber. For more information: [www.literaturpreise.ch](http://www.literaturpreise.ch)



**URS ALLEMANN**  
**IN SEPPS WELT. GEDICHTE UND**  
**ÄHNLICHE DINGE**

Vienna, Klever Verlag  
ISBN 978-3-902665-55-3



**VERA SCHINDLER-WUNDERLICH**  
**DIES IST EIN ABSTANDSZIMMER IM**  
**FREIEN. GEDICHTE**

Erstfeld, edition pudelundpinscher  
ISBN 978-3-906061-00-9



**DAVID BOSC**  
**LA CLAIRE FONTAINE**

Lagrasse, Verdier  
ISBN 978-2-86432-726-4



**MATTEO TERZAGHI**  
**UFFICIO PROIEZIONI LUMINOSE**

Macerata, Quodlibet  
ISBN 978-88-7462-536-9



**ROLAND BUTI**  
**LE MILIEU DE L'HORIZON**

Geneva, Zoé  
ISBN 978-2-88182-894-2



**URS WIDMER (†2014)**  
**REISE AN DEN RAND DES UNIVERSUMS**

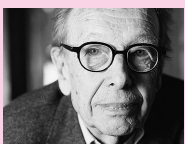
Zürich, Diogenes  
ISBN 978-3-257-06868-9



**ROSE-MARIE PAGNARD**  
**J'AIME CE QUI VACILLE**

Geneva, Zoé  
ISBN 978-2-88182-883-6

## SWISS GRAND AWARDS FOR LITERATURE / SPECIAL AWARD FOR TRANSLATION



**PHILIPPE JACCOTTET**  
born in Moudon (Canton of Vaud) in 1925. His poetry has been translated into more than 20 languages, recently his poetic oeuvre was published in a volume of the renowned Collection de la Pléiade. Philippe Jaccottet lives in Grignan (Drôme, France).



**CHRISTOPH FERBER**  
born in Sachseln (Canton of Obwalden) in 1954, freelance translator for poetry in Italian, Russian, French, Polish, Bulgarian and lecturer at the University of Catania until 2010, lives in Sicily.

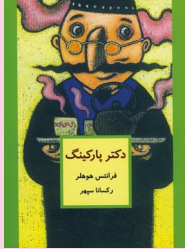
PHOTOS © FOC, Limmat Verlag



**PAUL NIZON**  
born in Bern in 1929, lives in Paris since 1977. Among his best-known publications are *Canto* (1963), *Stolz* (1975), *Das Jahr der Liebe* (1981), *Im Bauch des Wals* (1989) and *Das Fell der Forelle* (2005).

# RECENTLY TRANSLATED SWISS BOOKS

with support from the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia



**DOKTOR PARKING**  
(DOCTOR PARKING)  
FRANZ HOHLER

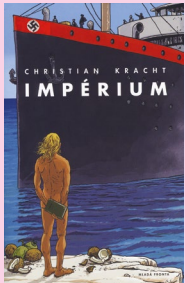
Translated into Farsi by Roxana Sepehr  
for Neyestan Books



**DAS LIED VOM HONIG. EINE KULTUR-  
GESCHICHTE DER BIENEN**

(THE SONG OF HONEY – A CULTURAL  
HISTORY OF THE BEE)  
RALPH DUTLI

Translated into Dutch by Olaf Brennink-  
meijer for Cossee Publishers



**IMPERIUM**  
(IMPERIUM)  
CHRISTIAN KRACHT

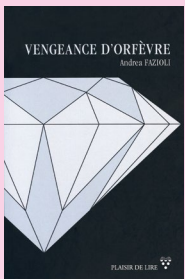
Translated into Czech by Tomáš Dimter  
for Mladá fronta



**L'OGRE ; AVEZ-VOUS DÉJÀ GIFLÉ UN  
RAT ?**

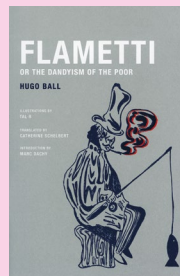
(THE TYRANT; HAVE YOU EVER  
SLAPPED A RAT?)  
JACQUES CHESSEX

Translated into Armenian by  
Aleksandr Topchyan for Lusabats  
Publishing House



**CHI MUORE SI RIVEDE**  
(LONG TIME NO SEE)  
ANDREA FAZIOLI

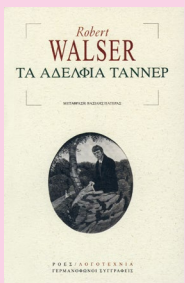
Translated into French by Nicolas  
Bühler for Plaisir de Lire



**FLAMETTI ODER VOM DANDYSMUS  
DER ARMEN**

(FLAMETTI OR THE DANDYISM OF THE  
POOR)  
HUGO BALL

Translated into English by Catherine  
Schelbert for Wakefield Press



**GESCHWISTER TANNER**  
(THE TANNERS)  
ROBERT WALSER

Translated into Greek by Vasileios  
Pateras for Printa Books



**EFINA**  
(EFINA)  
NOËLLE REVAZ

Translated into Italian by Maurizia  
Balmelli for Keller editore