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Bonjour tout le monde !

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www.12swissbooks.ch



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This year, we're greeting you in French, because it's *Frankfort en français*! The French language is guest of honour at the 2017 Frankfurt Book Fair, and Switzerland is likewise invited to exhibit and participate in the festivities. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to promote books from the French-speaking part of Switzerland, *la Romandie*, where we have – apart from countless remarkable novels, of course – lots of acclaimed comic strip and graphic novel authors, excellent crime fiction, and a flourishing poetry slam scene. So we're sure there's something for all of you to discover in the western part of Switzerland and perhaps our magazine might be the first to open a window onto this world for you! Speaking of 'opening up': you'll find we've wrapped our magazine *à la française*. Open the special cover and inside you'll find information about the 12 authors travelling to Frankfurt this year to represent *la littérature romande*. The quotes we've chosen from their books will, we hope, make you long for more; and you can read how their translators into German approach their work. The French focus continues in the main magazine: our contributing editor Rosie Goldsmith conducted her own survey about the reception of *la littérature romande* in the UK. You can read her interview with translator Frank Wynne on p. 42. We also have an insight into how a French woman felt when she moved to Geneva and started writing about Swiss French literature – how, at the outset, her mother tongue didn't feel that way at all, when she encountered the Swiss version of it! Of course you'll also find our selection of 12 newly published Swiss books, and not just in French, but in German and Italian as well. We've asked British translators to read our choice of books and describe why they think each book is worthy of being translated.

We hope this glimpse into *la Romandie* will arouse your curiosity about French literature from Switzerland – il y a beaucoup à découvrir !

Chaleureusement,

For the editorial team: Angelika Salvisberg (Head of Literature & Society Division, Pro Helvetia) and Eva Stensrud (Editor-in-chief)

Hagard

Lukas Bärfuss

Novel

German

Review by Jonathan Blower

A man catches sight of a beautiful young woman and decides, on the spur of the moment, to follow her. He ends up stalking her across town and all the way to her home. As time passes, his pursuit of her becomes a dangerous obsession, but he can't bring himself to give it up, and becomes oblivious to the consequences of his aberrant behaviour.

Lukas Bärfuss' *Hagard* is a tragi-comic, atmospheric stalker novel with a highly disturbing ending. It recounts the bizarre demise of Philip, a property developer of good standing who, inadvertently, loses control of his normal life. The story begins as he's waiting for a business partner. He has a fleeting glimpse of a beautiful young woman. He doesn't see her face, but is so enchanted by her graceful figure that he decides to follow her through the streets of Zürich. What starts as a game – "if she turns this way, I'll just follow her for a while" – becomes a dangerous obsession. Minutes turn into hours. He stalks her from the city centre into suburbia and back without once seeing her face. Within thirty-six hours he's a changed man. His car has been towed away, he's been beaten up by a cab driver and – to add insult to injury – he's lost one of his shoes. He's had to resort to fare-dodging and theft. The reader is left in the dark, as much as is the anonymous narrator, who struggles to comprehend the motivations of his flawed protagonist, trying to piece together a coherent whole from those fatal thirty-six hours.

Title

Hagard

Publisher

Wallstein, Göttingen

Publication date

February 2017

Pages

174

ISBN

978-3-8353-1840-3

Translation rights

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Lukas Bärfuss, born 1971, is a dramatist, novelist and essayist. His reputation outside Switzerland rests on his many translations: *Koala*, for example, was translated into 17 other languages, and his first novel, *Hundert Tage*, was translated into English by Tess Lewis (*One Hundred Days*, Granta Books, 2012). His play *Die sexuellen Neurosen unserer Eltern* (*The Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents*), which was first performed in English ten years ago, was a great success at the Gate Theatre in London. *Hagard* was nominated for the Leipzig Book Fair Prize.

Photo: Claudia Herzog

The alternation of black episodes and comic moments make this a romp of a stalker novel that would hold any translator's interest to the end.

„And as she peeled away from the crowd, Philip thought he saw her gesture in his direction with her hand or head, a movement that prompted, even compelled him to follow. This can only have been an illusion, for she certainly hadn't noticed him.“



Liquid

Anna Felder
Short stories
Italian

Review by Shaun Whiteside

This collection of snapshots of Swiss life comprises shape shifting fragments of ambiguous narrative and tiny epiphanies. It's boldly experimental, linguistically playful and often elusive, while also succeeding in conjuring up an ironic and sometimes surreal sense of wonder. These stories, almost prose poems, have the sharpness and vigour of a writer highly confident in her art.

In this dazzling collection of short stories, Anna Felder homes in on the tiny details of daily lives, magnifying, probing and recasting until all meaning becomes uncertain. Her theme is liquidity in all its forms, from the literal nature of water, through the extended financial use of the term, to the fluidity of meaning and communication. Narratives here are mercurial and turn suddenly on a word. A train speeding through the Swiss countryside observes its passengers as it passes through Science on its way to Pretence, its passengers in turn observing one another. A child stamps on a fallen chestnut and catches the narrator's eye, uncertain whether it has just broken some unwritten rule. Two speakers at the end of a public discussion use a water bottle as an ashtray: the ashes mingle with the dregs of water at the bottom, half-ash, half-liquid. An Italian couple talk at cross purposes on a day of hail and sunshine. A woman at a reading by the narrator hears a completely different story from

the one the author intended. A woman on a train drinks raspberry syrup – or is it Merlot?

After a career stretching back to the 1960s, Anna Felder's experimental brilliance remains undimmed. The translator of these quietly startling little fragments will face the challenge of reinvention, to set the new text entirely in accord with the permeating theme of liquidity – of richness and flow, of constant shifts and uncertain depths beneath the shimmering, glittering surface.



Anna Felder was born in 1937 in Lugano. She studied at the Faculty of Arts at Zürich University, where she specialised in Romance languages. After spending some time in Paris, she gained her doctorate from Zürich. She taught French and Italian and now works as a writer. One of her major successes is *La disdetta* (1974), a novel which Italo Calvino himself found fascinating.

Photo: Yvonne Böhler

“There’s a thread which runs through her stories, a kind of Chekovian melancholy, as if passed through the hands of Katherine Mansfield, perhaps. Almost nothing of moment happens in these stories: what sustains her prose is a consuming tension concerning the ‘other’, the gestures, the words and the tiniest distinguishing marks that make up a person.” Giovanni Orelli

Anna Felder
LIQUIDA



Edizioni Opera Nuova

Title
Liquida

Publisher
Edizioni Opera Nuova,
Lugano

Publication date
February 2017

Pages
105

ISBN
978-88-96992-18-0

Translation rights
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The Briefer Life of Klaus Halm

Lukas Holliger

Novel

German

Review by Ruth Martin

On paper, Klaus Halm has it all. But then, 'on paper' is the only place this version of Klaus Halm exists: the narrator of this story buys a notebook from the real Halm and begins to write about him. As the story evolves, Halm will come to realise how much he has to lose as the envious narrator slowly begins to insert himself into his life.

The Briefer Life of Klaus Halm is a highly original take on the theme of masculinity in crisis. With its anti-heroes and flawed, uncertain relationships, it will appeal to fans of Ian McEwan as much as it will to those whose tastes tend more towards the unusual and surreal. The book's narrator is a lonely, jobless voyeur, envious of the happy couples he sees as he rides the trams aimlessly around the streets of Basel. Klaus Halm, by contrast, seems to have it all: a wife and baby, his own stationery shop, and some illicit excitement in the shape of a nascent affair with Yvonne, a woman he met on a tram. But is he a real, flesh-and-blood man, or just a figment of an obsessive imagination? In an unsettling world where the line between fact and fiction has somehow been erased, the narrator brings his protagonist to life, and then sets out to take that life from him. As Klaus Halm begins to unravel, the reader is left wondering who is really in charge of his fate.

Title

Das kürzere Leben
des Klaus Halm

Publisher

Zytglogge, Basel

Publication date

March 2017

Pages

300

ISBN

978-3-7296-0949-5

Translation rights

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Lukas Holliger

**DAS
KÜRZERE
LEBEN
DES
KLAUS
HALM**

Roman



ZYTGLOGGE

“A lonely man has only two options. Either he observes himself and talks to himself, or he observes others. Narcissist or voyeur, there’s no third way.”

The naturalistic dialogue of Holliger’s debut novel is a delight to translate. I think the book’s main appeal for a translator lies in his richly visual prose, though. He draws on film conventions, tracking his characters down the riverbank or gazing out from a tower block in a panning shot over the city. And the city of Basel, where the novel is set, is almost a character in its own right. From the mechanical cobbler in the shoe-shop window to the ‘algae-green’ trams that criss-cross the city, the book is dotted with details that bring the urban landscape to life. The realism of the dialogue and the strong visuals also serve to anchor the unreality of the story, making readers feel strangely at home in this disturbing world.



Lukas Holliger is a playwright, born in Basel in 1971. His plays have been performed at the Bremen Theatre, Schauspiel Leipzig and the Paramithias Theatre in Athens, to name but a few. He was awarded the 2013 Audience Prize for Authors at the Essen Drama Festival. He has been translated into Polish and Greek. His first prose publication was in 2015: *Glas im Bauch*.

Photo: Werner Geiger

Indefinite Leave to Remain

Joseph Incardona

Novel

French

Review by Jackie Smith

The narrator looks back on his childhood, as the son of a Swiss mother and Sicilian immigrant father. André struggles with his confused identity and his rootlessness, and only has the macho role model of his father to draw on in the face of the gang violence to which he falls victim. Meanwhile, as he experiences his first sexual longings and encounters, he learns to be a man in more ways than one.

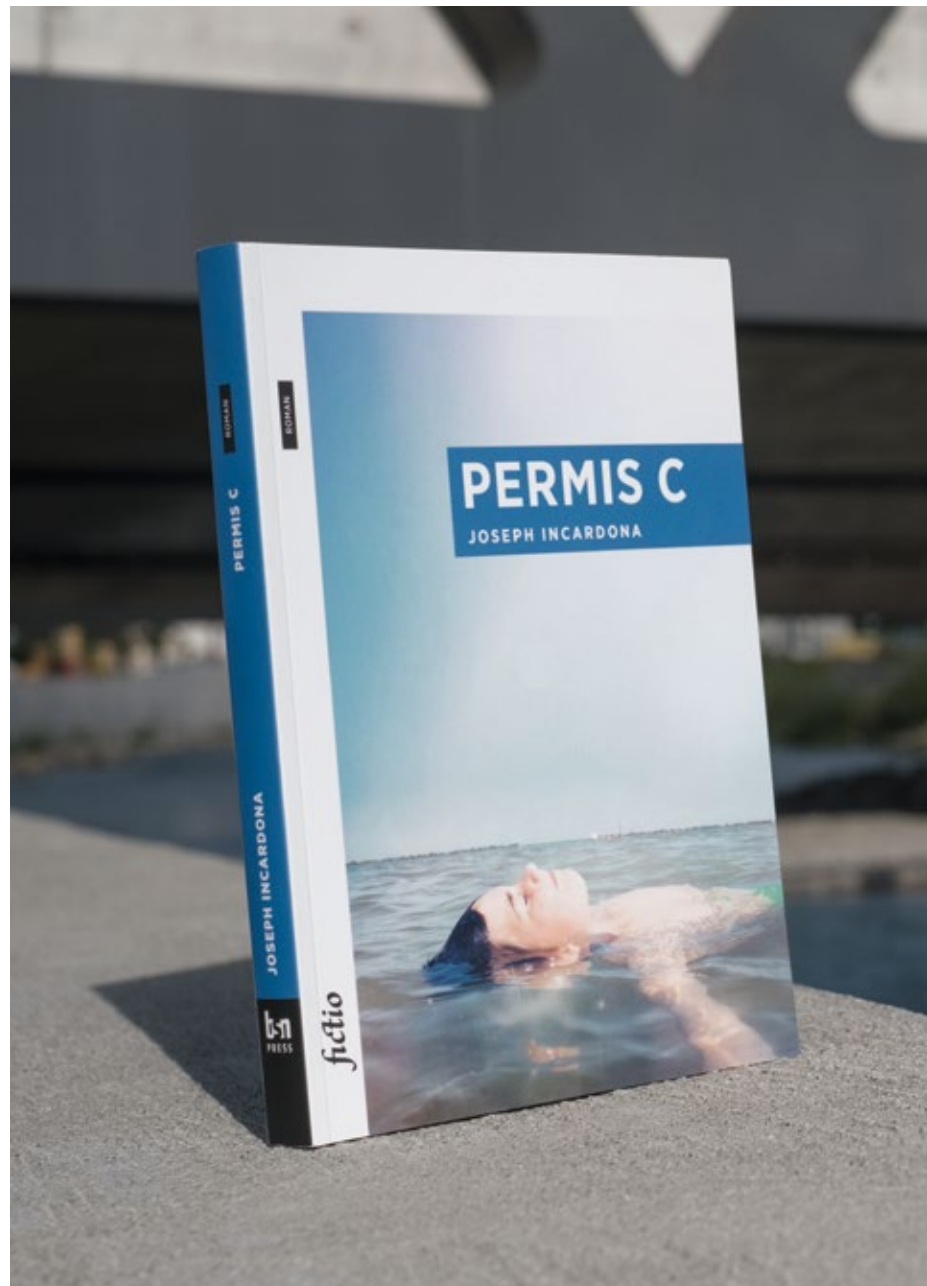
12-year-old André Pastrella is condemned to a nomadic existence as his father moves from one temporary job to another. André struggles with his confused identity, and is shunned and persecuted by his peers, who see him as 'different'. Set in 1978, the story brings an unusual perspective to the highly topical theme of immigration and integration. André's story allows us to experience the ordeals suffered by immigrants struggling to settle in a new country through the eyes of the child. He also goes through emotional turmoil of a different kind, as he experiences his first tentative sexual encounters. This touchingly honest account is lightened by moments of comfort and humour: André's fascination with his schoolteacher's breasts; the timeless natural beauty of Sicily, where he spends an idyllic summer; the precious warmth of friendship. This is a moving personal account which deals with the universal issues of identity, homeland, exile and isolation, male role models and sexual awakening.

On an emotional level, this book is a compelling proposition both for a reader and a translator: one cannot but feel empathy for young André in his isolation and confusion, his rage at the injustice inflicted by his tormentors and the inadequate response of most of the adults around him. The book mirrors the gritty realities of life as an immigrant on an estate where gang violence, prostitution and foul language are part of daily life.



Joseph Incardona is an author, scriptwriter and producer, of mixed Italian and Swiss origin. He has written ten novels, several theatre texts, screenplays and story-boards for comic books. He is both an unconventional personality and a prolific writer, whose influences include not only his mixed Swiss-Italian background, but also *noir* novels and 20th-century American literature.

Photo: Ekko von Schwichow



“Although my father had married a Swiss woman, the countless to-ings and fro-ings between the two countries didn’t exactly help our case as regards obtaining the famous Permit C – the settlement permit that everyone pinned their hopes on, the one you needed to become genuinely integrated in Switzerland.”



Title

Permis C

Publisher

bsn press, Lausanne

Publication date

September 2016

Pages

232

ISBN

978-2-940516-51-3

Translation rights

Giuseppe Merrone

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Fanny Fatale

Pedro Lenz
Novel
Swiss German



Pedro Lenz was born in Langenthal in 1965. He lives in Olten, in the canton of Solothurn and works as a writer and columnist. His first publication, in 2008, was a collection of stories in the Bernese dialect: *Plötzlech hets di am Füdle*. His first novel was *Der Goalie bin ig* (2010), which was made into a film (English version *I Am the Keeper*) and translated into seven languages. Pedro Lenz has already sold the film rights to *Fanny Fatale*.

Photo: Daniel Rihs

Review by Shaun Whiteside

A would-be writer, latecomer to a group of artists and idlers in the small town of Olten, falls head over heels in love with the mysterious and beautiful girl of the title. As he pursues his muse he learns more about himself and his companions, and about the challenges of love and art.

Like a James Kelman character, Jackpot scrapes together his living by betting on football matches and horse-racing; he also fancies himself as a bit of a writer, and has a 'work in progress'. One day, when Jackpot drops in on his artist friend Louis, he bumps into Fanny, Louis' model, and is instantly captivated: she is gorgeous and sophisticated, with enormous eyes. For once, Jackpot seems literally to have hit his own jackpot, for Fanny is unquestionably interested in him too. But not only in him: the bonds of friendship between Jackpot, Louis and another artist, Grunz, are tested to the limit by Fanny's commitment to free love. The two older men are much more experienced in matters of free love than their younger colleague Jackpot. Even so, he is driven by concerns other than just love: for his novel – his 'work in progress' – has for long enough been in his head, and only there, and he needs to complete it. He still needs a publisher ... and he needs money. It's a fantastic advantage that he has a brother who works in pharmaceuticals in Basel and who has the know-how, and the money, to help him. And so, when finally, Fanny is actually in the audience at his book launch, his jackpot prize seems assured. Or, at least, that's what the reader hopes!

Jackpot takes us deep into the artistic milieu of a provincial town, where we fall under the spell of the language with which Lenz imbues his characters: a dialect at once earthy and highly lyrical. He is never at a loss for an original turn of phrase, which more often than not goes to the very heart of what matters: Love, Art and Life.

The fact that the book is written in Bernese dialect will be a challenge for the translator. Lenz's previous translator, Donal McLaughlin, rose brilliantly to this challenge when he turned Lenz's *Der Goalie bin ig* into the Glaswegian

Title

Di schöni Fanny

Publisher

Cosmos, Muri b. Bern

Publication date

September 2016

Pages

184

ISBN

978-3-305-00469-0

Translation rights

Roland Schärer

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Naw Much of a Talker. A lot of fun could be had with a dialect version in any language, since much of the book's impact resides in the language itself – often in apparently incongruous clashes between 'low' dialect and 'high' subject-matter, as when Jackpot and his friend, standing on a bridge, discuss Heraclitus and the impossibility of stepping into the same river twice. But *Fanny Fatale* is more than just a game with dialect, it's a fascinating, tragi-comic glimpse into a milieu seldom explored in contemporary fiction.

What are you going to do now? – I could paint you, for example. Would you have time? – Are you serious, Louis? I mean, I'm just a normal person with no distinguishing features. You can't make art out of me.



Monsieur and Madame Rivaz

Catherine Lovey

Novel

French

Review by Romy Fursland

A young woman, a tour guide on a cruise ship, befriends an elderly couple after they announce politely that they would 'prefer not to' go on the luxury cruise their son has booked for them. They'd rather go to see a film. This old-fashioned modesty creates a turning-point in the young woman's life. The couple's kindness, generosity and appreciation of simple pleasures help her cling onto her own humanity in the face of the demands of modern life.

Monsieur and Madame Rivaz by Catherine Lovey is an acerbically funny novel, and ruthless in its critique of twenty-first-century society and the political and philosophical issues it raises. One young woman's friendship with a kind, elderly couple called Juste and Hermine Rivaz is held up as the antidote to everything she perceives as being wrong with the modern world: corporate greed, rigid state bureaucracy, self-serving attitudes and the impersonal nature of our interactions with other people. One particularly vivid illustration of this is her run-in with the Rivazes' son, an obnoxious man who assumes she has only befriended his parents for financial gain. The very opposite is the case: Monsieur and Madame Rivaz slowly become an anchor in the life of the young woman, who feels lost in her fast-paced world with its multiple choices.

It would be a real treat for any translator to try to capture the narrator's black humour and her many moods: ironic, caustic and idealistic by turns. The characterisation of Juste and Hermine Rivaz is another of the novel's great strengths: two wise and lovable characters, quite unlike anything you find today in the literary mainstream.



Catherine Lovey comes from the canton of Valais. She studied International Relations and Criminology before becoming a journalist, writing on economic and financial affairs. Her first novel was *L'Homme interdit* (2005), followed by *Cinq vivants pour un seul mort* (2008), *Un roman russe et drôle* (2010) and *Monsieur et Madame Rivaz* (2016).

Photo: Yvonne Böhler



“Monsieur and Madame Rivaz have been an unexpected haven, without ever doing anything in particular. And I hope I’ve given them a little bit of happiness in return. Words are still alive when they speak them. When Juste talks about the crags or when Hermine talks about her plants, you can see them – you can even feel the sun lingering on them at the end of the day.”



Title

Monsieur et Madame Rivaz

Publisher

Éditions Zoé, Carouge

Publication date

March 2016

Pages

320

ISBN

978-2-88927-316-4

Translation rights

Laure Pécher,

Agency Astier-Pécher

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Kraft

Jonas Lüscher
Novel
German



Jonas Lüscher was born in Switzerland in 1976, and now lives in Munich. His bestselling novella, *Frühling der Barbaren* (2013, published with Haus Publishing in 2014 as *Barbarian Spring*) was longlisted for the German Book Prize and nominated for the Swiss Book Prize. It has been translated into 15 languages and adapted for the stage. *Kraft* has been ranked first in the February 2017 "SWR Bestenliste", a list of the best fiction chosen by 26 prominent German critics.

Photo: Michael Herdlein



Review by Jen Calleja

German scholar Richard Kraft hopes to answer a literal 'million dollar' question on a 21st century version of Leibniz's Theodicy – why a good God permits the manifestation of evil. Taking time away from home to mull over his answer and to get away from family and marital responsibilities, Kraft ponders his life, and hopes that by writing the winning response – and getting the huge cash prize – he can escape to a better life.

In *Kraft*, Jonas Lüscher unpicks our perceptions of worth and the human condition through one man's struggle with life. Richard Kraft is a distinctly cerebral creature – cold, logical, preoccupied. He was once a promising and ambitious scholar of rhetoric, who is now gradually realising that success – financial, professional and personal – is slipping away from him. In this unhappy state, Kraft receives an invitation to respond to an intellectual challenge: a contest at Stanford University with a prize of a million dollars, offered by a ruthless Silicon Valley internet mogul. So Kraft leaves his wife and twin girls, hoping to find a way back to professional success and his former intellectual brilliance – and to free himself from his family obligations by winning the money. We follow him on his quest to write an eighteen-minute presentation that will update Leibniz's *Theodicy* to explain "why whatever is, is right and why we still can improve it". The reader walks, wanders, crawls, and even nearly drowns with Kraft as he considers his own crumbling existence. With precision, wit and bite, Jonas Lüscher tells the story of a highly intelligent, but self-delusional man and of a powerful elite that is prepared to break every taboo.

The key to the translation of this book is recreating Kraft's thought processes – his knotted ruminations on the neo-liberal age, his nostalgic dips into the past, his overly active mind – in a lucid and engaging way. The translator would need to inhabit Kraft to fully grasp all his theoretical references and his contradictory personality. This is a masterful, well-crafted and ambitious book that shines its spotlight on the age we're living in, and lets us experience a character's inner world in a way that's rare to find.

Title

Kraft

Publisher

C.H. Beck, Munich

Publication date

January 2017

Pages

237


ISBN

978-3-406-70531-1

Translation rights

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"This act of self-empowerment awakens a feeling of boldness in him, and he takes measured steps across the deserted campus. Why not? To be shot by someone running amok around a top university in America didn't seem like the worst possible endpoint to his biography, and, as he thinks about how tricky it would be for his colleagues at the conference on optimism to have to support and explain the notion that everything that exists is good having had one of their number murdered in cold blood a few days previously, he becomes quite excited ..."

JONAS
LÜSCHER

KRAFT

ROMAN

C.H.BECK

Shellshock

Melinda Nadj Abonji

Novel

German

Review by Alyson Coombes

Zoli is an unusual child with a passion for word games and gardening. Determined to turn him into a real man, his parents sign him up for the army. But it's the 1990s, Serbia is at war and Zoli is not cut out for a soldier's life. He is soon forced to return home – and he will never be the same again.

Melinda Nadj Abonji's stunning novel *Shellshock* is an exploration of the impact of war, as well as a celebration of language. Set in the 1990s against the backdrop of the Yugoslav Wars, the story centres around a boy called Zoli, who fell off his father's motorbike and suffered a severe head injury as a child, which had a profound effect on his life. Ever since, he prefers to retreat to his garden, where he tends his flowers and finds solace in his love of words: Zoli loves to make up new words to describe the things he sees and feels. This provides a coping mechanism for him and a way to escape reality. But his peace is shattered when his parents enlist him in the army in the hope of toughening him up. Zoli's struggle to adjust to military life contrasts starkly with his early years, which are enriched by magical flowers and his childish imagination, while his continued love of word games bridges the gap between the two parts of his life. The author uses these word games to show Zoli's response to his changing surroundings and to allow readers to see the world through his eyes. This

Title

Schildkrötensoldat

Publisher

Suhrkamp, Berlin

Publication date

October 2017

Pages

179

ISBN

978-3-518-42759-0

Translation rights

Nora Mercurio

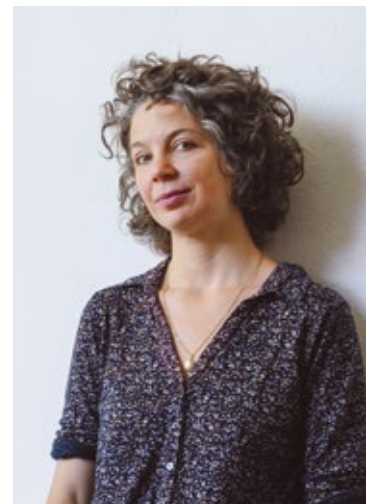
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“It’s true, I could have saved my father, I could have dusted everything with fresh white flour, I could have made his one and only lousy life rise in a light bread dough.”

short but compelling story is not one to race through, but rather to savour at leisure in order to explore its several layers and skilful use of language.

The striking creativity and use of language in *Shellshock* are a treat for any translator. The main feature of the text is the wordplay. There are two distinct narrative voices in the novel, that of Zoli and that of his cousin Anna, who fills in the gaps in the story in a more measured tone. Any translator would relish the opportunity to bring this text into a different language and culture, to play with sentence structure and grammar and employ a rich vocabulary to enhance the contrast between the two voices; and to weave the narrative threads together as the author herself does so expertly. The vivid descriptions of army life and the difficulties faced by those in the barracks add cultural detail to the novel, making it a truly important text to translate.



Melinda Nadj Abonji was born in Becsej, Serbia, in 1968. She and her family moved to Switzerland at the beginning of the 1970s. She lives in Zürich, where she works as a writer and musician. In 2010, her novel *Tauben fliegen auf* (*Fly Away, Pigeon*) won both the German and Swiss Book Prizes.

Photo: Ayse Yavas

All that Glitters ...

Ivan Salamanca

Novel

French

Review by Romy Fursland

A multifaceted account of a young man moving from the city to a village in the mountains. The man is gradually accepted by an older man in the village and falls in love with a young woman, but returns to the city, leaving them behind. Their bond, however, proves too strong to be broken.

The events in this story are evoked with vivid intensity; the characters and the setting feel archetypal, almost timeless. Three narrative strands tell the same story from different perspectives, but the reader needs time to work out how the three voices relate to each other and to piece together the various elements of the story. Each voice has its own distinct viewpoint, and only when they come together as a verbal 'triptych' do they achieve a highly readable and nuanced whole, a truly visceral experience. The outstanding quality of the writing is less in the plot than in its lyrical imagery, with passionate descriptions of nature and of archaic mountain life, where labourers build walls and make tiles. *All That Glitters ...* is all about language: how it sounds and flows, how it evokes images, emotion and atmosphere.

Any translator will cherish the creative potential of working on this novel, on the unusual words and striking images that make this text so distinctive. The text will need to be approached as a prose poem: sound, rhythm, imagery and multiple possible meanings will be central to the translator's



Ivan Salamanca was born in Geneva in 1980 and holds dual Swiss and Italian nationality. He has an Arts degree in Japanese and French from the University of Geneva, in which city he teaches French in a secondary school and passionately pursues his career as a writer.

Photo: Magali Dougados



EN ÉTAT
DE LUIRE
IVAN
SALAMANCA

THÉOXY LITTÉRATURE



decisions. This is a wonderful opportunity for a translator to explore the potential of his or her own language and to craft a translation that functions as a poem in its own right.

*Paul hears a soft,
steady, dull breath, the
power of the current,
resolute, peaceful, and
the last faint traces of
heartbeats in his chest
as his body ceases to
struggle – no longer
suffocating now, he is
borne along, anaesthe-
tised, almost serene,
scudding straight
through the trails of
algae beneath the
opaque light of the sky.*

Title

En état de luire

Publisher

Infolio éditions, Gollion

Publication date

September 2016

Pages

230

ISBN

9782884749572

Translation rights

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Seven Kisses: On Happiness and Unhappiness, Good Luck and Back Luck in Literature

Peter Von Matt

Essay

German



Title

Sieben Küsse: Glück und
Unglück in der Literatur

Publisher

Hanser, Munich

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January 2017

Pages

288

ISBN

978-3-446-25462-6

Translation rights

Friederike Barakat

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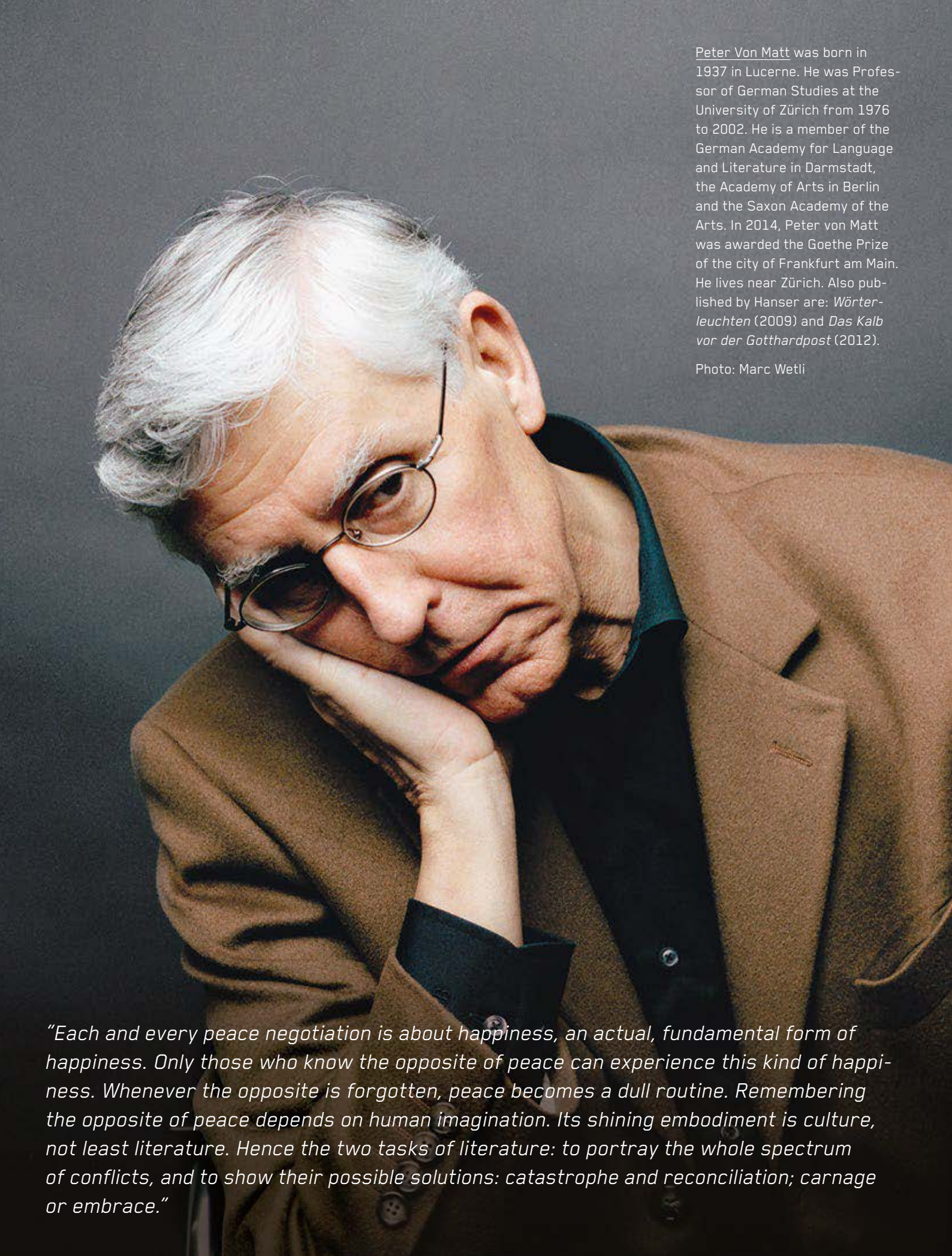
Review by Rebecca DeWald

Peter von Matt employs the image of the single kiss in literature to investigate moments of happiness and unhappiness. In seven chapters on European and American texts, he combines narrative non-fiction and literary theory to delve deeper into questions of humanity and literature.

Seven Kisses is an interpretation of happiness in literature, as embodied in the single kiss. Peter von Matt weaves literary theory into his comparative analysis of texts by Heinrich von Kleist, Virginia Woolf, Anton Chekhov and others, with a different premise guiding each chapter: the human longing for happiness; literature's portrayal of unhappiness; rhythm as a marker of good literature. He ponders, with Pascal, if 'the knowledge of the existence of happiness incurs its opposite', and whether deep happiness necessarily fails if we expect it to last. The author's achievement lies in his ability to wrap these profound questions and their varied portrayal in literature in an elegant prose that never sounds aloof. He strikes a fine balance between a high level of critical analysis, and accessibility for readers unfamiliar with the texts explored in the book.

Upon embarking on the translation of *Seven Kisses*, the translator is faced with a crucial decision: How to render 'Glück' and 'Unglück'? In English, for instance, the German terms have double-meanings, referring both to happiness and unhappiness, as well as good luck and bad luck. The task of translating von Matt's literary study becomes a linguistic and intellectual journey to come to terms with these philosophical concepts – the lucky (or happy) translator may even find more than the right terminology. Von Matt's seamless marriage of form and content adds a creative element to the study's intellectual appeal. Style and rhythm, as discussed in the book, are carefully chosen to match the respective texts. The author thereby emphasises the musicality that readers appreciate in good literature, setting a high bar for the translator to write equally appealing and engaging prose that both aligns with von Matt's style and the stylistics of each of the literary works he discusses.



A close-up portrait of Peter Von Matt, an older man with white hair and glasses, resting his chin on his hand. He is wearing a brown jacket over a dark shirt. The background is a solid dark grey.

Peter Von Matt was born in 1937 in Lucerne. He was Professor of German Studies at the University of Zürich from 1976 to 2002. He is a member of the German Academy for Language and Literature in Darmstadt, the Academy of Arts in Berlin and the Saxon Academy of the Arts. In 2014, Peter von Matt was awarded the Goethe Prize of the city of Frankfurt am Main. He lives near Zürich. Also published by Hanser are: *Wörterleuchten* (2009) and *Das Kalb vor der Gotthardpost* (2012).

Photo: Marc Wetli

"Each and every peace negotiation is about happiness, an actual, fundamental form of happiness. Only those who know the opposite of peace can experience this kind of happiness. Whenever the opposite is forgotten, peace becomes a dull routine. Remembering the opposite of peace depends on human imagination. Its shining embodiment is culture, not least literature. Hence the two tasks of literature: to portray the whole spectrum of conflicts, and to show their possible solutions: catastrophe and reconciliation; carnage or embrace."

Everything's Going to Turn out Fine

Julia Weber

Novel

German

Review by Steph Morris

Anaïs and Bruno live with their mother Maria in a cluttered flat. Maria is not every one's idea of a model parent, but she is loving and creative, and the kids love their environment and their mum. At first playful, the story becomes darker as Maria finally loses her grip on what is real.

Julia Weber has created convincing voices for 13-year-old Anaïs and her maverick mum Maria, who alternately narrate the story. Maria finds it hard to live up to the responsibilities of being a parent – she prefers to have a glass of wine, or go out dancing. She left Anaïs' father, who provided everything – except love. She moved into a flat she fills with random pictures and junk, which the kids find entertaining, but which don't impress Peter, the boy Anaïs likes. When Anaïs finally tries to ask Peter out, she catches him kissing another boy. As Maria succumbs to mental illness and goes missing, the kids are visited increasingly by their tall social worker. But 'the giant' has problems of his own, which he shares with Anaïs in order to gain her trust. His role becomes increasingly fraught. By the end Maria has lost her grip on reality and the children deal with her absence by retreating into fantasy.

To translate this book, you would have to get right inside the characters, and back out again to a safe distance. Then it would be fun to find voices for them in English as distinctive

Julia Weber was born in Moshi, Tanzania, in 1983. Her family moved back to Zürich two years later. She studied Creative Writing at the Swiss Institute for Literature in Biel, from 2009 to 2012. She set up the *Literaturdienst* (a literature on demand pop-up service) – www.literaturdienst.ch – and is co-founder of the Literary action group *Literatur für das, was passiert* (“Literature for World Events”). She lives in Zürich with her husband and child.

Photo: Ayse Yavas



as in the German, a tough job emotionally, but rewarding. Anaïs is a sharp observer, but talks like a little girl, and doesn't understand everything going on around her. Nor does Maria, whose thoughts are scattered. But Anaïs' emotional understanding, and her desires, are thoroughly adult. The book ends as the children's fantasies collide with the outside world; the writing becoming increasingly lyrical and gripping as the pace builds. It would be an exciting challenge to recreate this weaving and interweaving of reality and imagination.

"If we didn't have this flat, I say, we would turn into machines, very slowly, without noticing. We need all these things, with their dust and their meaning; we need it all, the stuffed animals by our bed which protect us, the thousands of drawings of the world."



Title

Immer ist alles schön

Publisher

Limmat Verlag, Zürich

Publication date

March 2017

Pages

256

ISBN

978-3-85791-823-0

Translation rights

Katharina Altas,
Altas Literary Agency
literatur@agenturaltas.ch

Going Round in Circles

Frédéric Zwicker

Novel

German

Review by Amy Bojang

Following the death of his wife, ninety-one-year-old Johannes Kehr has had himself put into a care home, faking dementia, in order to avoid being a burden on his family. He spends his days watching his fellow residents and the care staff, finding some small pleasure in playing tricks on them and sneaking out to go on little adventures. He is essentially waiting to die; that is, until his first love Annemarie appears at his care home and makes him want to escape his self-imposed hiding place.

Going Round in Circles is told from the point of view of Johannes, an elderly care home resident, who is actually faking his dementia and waiting to die, surrounded by emptiness and inactivity. In this debut novel, Frédéric Zwicker draws on his own experiences of working in a care home in order to give a voice to a group of people who are often marginalised in our society. We experience in detail the mundane goings-on in the home as Johannes studies his fellow residents; we learn how sharing their stories is their only hope of creating value and meaning in their lives. He refuses to share his own memories with anyone, but the book is punctuated by his life story, which he reveals by speaking to a photo of his granddaughter, embracing the defining moments of the twentieth century in the process. Everything changes when Annemarie, his first love, moves into the same care home. His romantic

Title

Hier können Sie im Kreis gehen

Publisher

Hanser, Munich

Publication date

August 2016

Pages

160

ISBN

978-3-312-00999-2

Translation rights

Friederike Barakat

friederike.barakat@hanser.de



Frédéric Zwicker was born in 1983 in Lausanne and did his compulsory civilian service, in lieu of military service, in a care home. He studied German and has performed as a poetry slammer; he was a gag writer for Giacobbo/Müller (a Swiss satirical TV programme) and is the lyricist and singer for the band Knuts Koffer. He works as a journalist, blogger and columnist. *Hier können Sie im Kreis gehen* is his first novel.

Photo: Anna-Tina Eberhard

feelings for her come back, as if the two of them hadn't been apart for nearly seventy years. For her sake, he even wonders whether to abandon his subterfuge ...

The book is written in a sparing and leisurely tone; it's funny at times, but also desperately sad as we read about the many tragedies in Johannes' life. Despite the inevitability of the ending for our unusual hero, we are compelled to read on, eager to find out about his past, whether this will cast any light on the reasons for his deception and whether he will finally reveal the truth. His colourful extended metaphors, often based on animals and interesting idiomatic expressions, create a distinctive voice as he reminisces. Light relief is provided not only through his practical jokes, but also by his comical mishearing, where he claims to have heard something completely different that rhymes with the intended meaning. Translating this humour, whilst maintaining rhyme and meaning, would make for some fascinating and creative translation decisions. Johannes may seem to ridicule the residents' desperation to tell their stories to anyone who will listen, but ultimately the poignancy of the novel lies in the fact that his story is shared with us.

Frédéric Zwicker



Hier
können
Sie im Kreis
gehen



Roman

NAGEL & KIMCHE

"All of the memories, childhood, school years, the joy, all of the suffering, the adventures, the love, the tears, the mistakes, the dreams, the whole endlessness, the eternity of their lives, threatens to expire, to disintegrate into meaninglessness, in the whirl of the constantly evolving world and the people in it."

Reviewers' biographies

Jonathan Blower translates German texts on the visual arts. His centennial translation of Heinrich Wölfflin's *Principles of Art History* was published by the Getty Research Institute in 2015. He received a commendation in the Austrian Cultural Forum London Translation Prize 2017. He is currently working on the collected writings of Swiss curator Harald Szeemann.

Amy Bojang is a Norfolk-based translator of German-language literature. During her studies at the University of Nottingham she specialised in German-language post-dramatic theatre and has just been selected by *New Books in German* for the 2017 Emerging Translators Programme, where she translated an excerpt of Huch Josten's novel *Hier sind Drachen* (*Here Be Dragons*). More recently she has been working on a sample translation of Leonie Swann's latest novel *Gray*.

Jen Calleja is a writer and literary translator from German. She has most recently translated books by Gregor Hens, Kerstin Hensel and Wim Wenders, and will next translate Swiss author Michelle Steinbeck's debut novel *Mein Vater war ein Mann an Land und im Wasser ein Walfisch*. She is former acting editor of *New Books in German* and is the inaugural Translator in Residence at the British Library.

Alyson Coombes studied literary translation at the University of East Anglia. She now translates contemporary German-language fiction alongside her editorial role at an independent publishing house, where she focuses on translated fiction. She lives in London.

Rebecca DeWald is a freelance translator of German, French and Spanish with a PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Glasgow. She co-edits the *Glasgow Review of Books* and contributes to PEN Translates, *New Books in German* and the SALSA collective. Some of her literary translations have been published by the Free Word Centre.

Romy Fursland is a translator of drama, poetry and prose from German and French. After studying Modern Languages at Oxford University, she took her MA in Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia. Her translations include *Die neuen Leiden des jungen W.* (*The New Sorrows of Young W.*) by Ulrich Plenzdorf for Pushkin Press. She lives in Norwich.

Ruth Martin's recent translations include Michael Köhlmeier's novels *Zwei Herren am Strand* (*Two Gentlemen on the Beach*) and *Das Mädchen mit dem Fingerhut* (*The Girl with the Thimble*). She also teaches translation at the University of Kent. She is a member of the Translators Association committee, and helps to run the Emerging Translators Network, a forum for early-career literary translators.

Steph Morris' literary translations range from Aichinger to Zaimoglu via Suter, along with work for the Tanztheater Wuppertal, the Pina Bausch Foundation and arts organisations throughout Switzerland, Germany and Austria. He is a poet and artist, has been translator-in-residence at the Europäisches Übersetzer-Kollegium, and poet-in-residence at Bonnington Square and the House of St Barnabas.

Jackie Smith is a literary translator from French and German, and winner of the Austrian Cultural Forum London Translation Prize 2017. A graduate of Cambridge University, she recently won a place on the *New Books in German* Emerging Translators Programme. Her co-translation of the topical bestseller *The Panama Papers* by B. Obermayer and F. Obermaier was published last year.

Shaun Whiteside is a literary translator from German, French, Dutch and Italian. His latest translations include *Blitzed* by Norman Ohler and *Lea* by the Swiss author Pascal Mercier.

French Focus for Frankfurt

The great Frank Wynne on bringing french fiction to the UK

Frank Wynne is a star of French literature – in translation. One of the UK's top translators into English, he has won several awards and publicly champions literary translation. Frank has translated over fifty novels (from French and Spanish), among them works by Michel Houellebecq, Pierre Lemaitre, Patrick Modiano, Claude Lanzmann and Virginie Despentes. Born in Ireland, he fell in love with languages not at school but when he moved to France and later to Central and South America. He began his professional life as a book seller and began by translating French graphic novels. Rosie Goldsmith asked Frank Wynne about the status of French literature in Britain today and his approach to translating it.

Rosie Goldsmith: Do you ever distinguish between different types of French when you translate? Is Swiss French different?

Frank Wynne: There is no such thing as 'translating from French'. The differences (some subtle, others serious and substantive) between the French written in the cities and the banlieues, in Paris and Bordeaux, or in Mauritius, Côte d'Ivoire, Belgium and Switzerland, are such that any translator is invariably working from various iterations of French into various versions of English. Swiss literature, translated from its various languages, has recently been brought into sharp focus by the successes of Joël Dicker, Noëlle Revaz and Peter Stamm, but it would be nice to see more titles in English by writers like Pascal Mercier and Alex Capus. The language and preoccupations of Swiss literature (or any Francophone literature) are inevitably different from literature from Canada, the Maghreb or West Africa or the hexagone. But to differentiate is not to ascribe value. American, Australian, Irish and British literature – to say nothing of Indian and Pakistani literature written in English – are often very different (just try to imagine a British Cormac McCarthy or an American Muriel Spark), but the difference in language and setting is that of geography and culture, it tells me nothing about the experience of reading the book.

Of the novels you've translated were any of them Swiss?

Unfortunately not. Sadly no-one offered me the Joël Dicker or Jacques Chessex, who have been the great successes of recent years – though I would quite literally have hacked off a limb in order to translate Albert Cohen's masterpiece *Belle du Seigneur*, which was not translated into English until 1995, having been originally published in French in 1968!

How would you describe the reception and perception of French fiction in the UK today?

The first two books ever published in the English language in the 15th century by William Caxton, who was printer, publisher, translator – were both translations from the French and since that time French has always led the field in works of “world literature” translated into English. So, what does it mean to be “most favoured language”? In arithmetical terms, according to US-based publisher ‘Three Percent’, French accounted for 93 new titles in 2014, almost twice as many as its closest rivals: German (50) and Spanish (46), and more than the combined titles translated from Arabic, Italian, Russian and Chinese. But even 100 new titles is a drop in the ocean considering that about 150,000 titles are published annually in the UK.

Do we in Britain seek out French literature specifically? Over German, Italian, Portuguese or others?

I think that editors and publishers are perhaps more likely to acquire French titles, in part because more of them are likely to be able to read in French than in other languages, but I do not believe that readers seek out Francophone titles over others. I think readers choose books based on reviews and, more especially, on word of mouth – the success of Michel Houellebecq’s *Atomised*, or Muriel Barbery’s *The Elegance of the Hedgehog*, was driven by the excitement of readers rather than by a particular fascination with French culture. There are perhaps exceptions to this rule – readers of genre fiction, particularly crime fiction, enjoy the *dépaysement* of novels set in foreign countries, whether the Sweden of Henning Mankell or the France of Pierre Lemaitre. That said, it is true that the UK has an ongoing fascination with France and its culture, one based as much on rivalry and rancour as on admiration, and as readers we have a clearer sense of French history and its issues than we do of the cultures of Portugal, say, or Brazil, which makes fiction translated from French somewhat more accessible.

Do we still favour the Classics over contemporary French fiction?

Inevitably. There’s that saying “Politicians, old buildings and prostitutes become respectable with age” and translations enjoy the same fate. The great nineteenth century realist novels of Flaubert, Balzac and Victor Hugo are considered as much a part of “our” heritage as those of Dickens and George Eliot. Readers do not think of them as “foreign” or “difficult”. This is partly their status of acknowledged classics (a dubious status conferred by generations of previous readers), but also stems simply from the fact that, despite modernism, structuralism and post-modernism, many readers are still drawn to “realism”, and more still are drawn to the novels set in a past where moral ambiguity feels less threatening – something that can be seen in the British obsession with period dramas and historical novels.

How good is our knowledge of modern French writers?

Poor and patchy. One of the most important and influential literary authors in France in the past thirty years has been Christine Angot, whose intimate, often claustrophobic autofictions have garnered prizes, glowing reviews and spectacular sales, yet none of her books have ever been translated into English. Much the same might be said of commercial fiction: the top-selling authors in France of 2016 were Guillaume Musso and Françoise Bourdin, with home sales ranging between 700,000 to 1.8 million copies. But while Gallic Books made a valiant attempt to publish Musso here some years ago, he remains almost entirely unknown, while Bourdin has never been translated. Even writers of major international stature can slip through the cracks. For twelve years, I tried to persuade various editors to translate and publish Patrick Modiano, whom I considered one of the finest post-war French writers. It took the announcement by the Nobel Academy in 2014 to catapult Modiano from being what one editor once described as a “fine, rather slight, very French” author towards an English-language readership.

Who are the authors who have ‘broken through’ and why?

Authors ‘break through’ for various reasons: Houellebecq’s *Atomised* sold almost a million copies in the UK because it was controversial, because it challenged the established orthodoxy of the post-war world; Irene Nemirovsky’s *Suite Française* because it offered a compassionate, clear-sighted account of a troubled time; Maylis de Kerangal’s *Mend the Living* because it is a harrowing yet deeply compassionate novel of pain and illness; Kamel Daoud’s *The Meursault Investigation* because it was a timely response to Albert Camus’ *L’Etranger*. If anyone could know in advance which authors or titles would break through, my job (and that of my various editors) would be much easier.

What specifically are the challenges for publishers in bringing French fiction to UK markets?

The self-fulfilling prophecy that French literature is “difficult”. In fact, French literature is as curious and diverse, as good and bad, as trashy and dazzlingly intelligent as fiction emerging from any culture and any language. There is a second problem, a general feature of contemporary publishing: whereas the publishers of the post-war period (George Weidenfeld, André Deutsch, Victor Gollancz) published foreign authors, gradually building a readership over the course of many books – as any editor would do with an English-language author – many editors of translated fiction publish individual books, abandoning an author if the first novel does not sell well. There are, of course, exceptions, and the recent re-emergence of Small Press publishers like Gallic and Les Fugitives (publishing exclusively from French) or Alma, And Other Stories, Pushkin Press and Peirene Press (who favour literature in translation), is gradually beginning to redress this balance.

How should French books be displayed in British bookshops?

With all the other books! The idea of “world literature” as something distinct from English literature is, to my mind, one of the most invidious in Anglo-American publishing. It reminds me of the equally spurious category, “world music”, which includes Ravi Shankar and Ali Farka Touré but somehow not Beethoven and Bach. Literature is a continuum, an essential intertwining of voices and languages: it is impossible to imagine the evolution of English fiction – or French or Russian – without the availability of translations.

Is the decline of language learning in the UK detrimental to the popularity of French literature?

Yes, to an extent. The decline of language learning means that students are less exposed to other cultures and other streams of literature, which adds to the notion of translated fiction being “difficult”, in the way we think of foreign films as “difficult”. And yet, the huge success of novels like *The Dinner* (Dutch), Elena Ferrante’s Neapolitan quartet (Italian) and the novels of Pierre Lemaitre (French) clearly show that, if a reader can be persuaded to pick up a novel, they are interested.

Should we promote/discuss different literatures in translation in country-specific ways or as just good books?

Certain novels demand a special country focus, because they draw on a particular historical or cultural period or trait, but most novels should be discussed in terms of plot, character and language, of passion, emotion and catharsis. It would never occur to us to discuss David Peace’s *Tokyo Year Zero* as a Japanese novel despite its setting, or *Captain Corelli’s Mandolin* as an Italian/Greek novel despite the characters. The nature of human experience is that it is communicable, the nature of fiction is the possibility of fostering empathy and understanding, and the nature of translation to “carry them across”. To quote George Steiner, “Without translation, we would inhabit parishes bordering on silence.”

A Frenchwoman in Geneva

If the idea of understanding Switzerland through its literature seemed a good one, I have to admit straightaway that this was mainly because I felt somewhat lost when I arrived here. This is a country with many identities and doesn't give you much clue as to which is which; and there's nothing to make you feel more disorientated, having decided you know a place well, even intimately, than to discover you can't name its capital city or order a cup of coffee in a pavement café. So, to understand French Switzerland means to read Swiss French. If my obvious starting point was Charles-Ferdinand Ramuz (whose name is pronounced as if the 'z' didn't exist!), a convinced regionalist with his authentic language and his mountains, I didn't hesitate to take the byroads, via Corinna Bille and her husband Maurice Chappaz, Charles Albert Cingria, Edouard Rod, Gustave Roux, Anne Cunéo, and, of course, the towering figure of Yvette Z'Graggen, who gently recalls life in Switzerland and its ambiguous attitudes to wartime neutrality in *Les Années Silencieuses* (*The Years of Silence*). Not to mention what she has to say about the relationship between the Swiss and free speech.



Amandine Glevarec is passionate about literature. She is French but has worked as a bookseller in Switzerland and as editor of the blogspot littérature-romande. She has now returned to France, where she has just set up a new French language website devoted entirely to reading and writing: www.kroniques.com.

Photo: Alain Wicht

But then we come to Jacques Chessex, who, with a stroke of his finely sharpened pen in his novel about parental tyranny, *A Father's Love* (*L'Ogre*), demolished all our certainties. Such anger, in a protestant community? And how it conquered Paris, to win him the *Prix Goncourt*, a Swiss first! Chessex marked a watershed. And this brings us to today, where there's a new generation of writers, who are open to the world and its ways – what does it matter what colour passport you have? – and their need to speak out breaks down any barriers. Douna Loup, Noëlle Revaz, Max Lobe, Lolvé Tillmanns, Joseph Incardona, Nicolas Verdan, Quentin Mouron, Laure Mi Hyun Croset, Elisa Shua Dusapin, Antoine Jaquier, Thomas Sandoz, Michael Perruchoud, Florian Eglin, Nicolas Feuz, Marc Voltenauer – a kaleidoscope of writers from an unjustly overlooked country, the quality of whose literary output can no longer be denied.

Information

Pro Helvetia's support for translation

The Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia awards grants for translations of contemporary literary works from Switzerland, with an eye to promoting cultural and linguistic diversity and helping Swiss authors reach larger audiences, both within the country and around the world.

Pro Helvetia supports the translation of:

- literary works by Swiss authors (fiction and poetry)
- books for children and young adults
- non-fiction books by Swiss authors on cultural and artistic topics relating to Switzerland
- plays by Swiss dramatists (including theatre surtitles)
- samples of up to 15 pages upon request

To help promote Swiss literature in translation, Pro Helvetia also contributes financially to literary tours by Swiss authors and translators of recently translated books.

How to proceed

Applications must be submitted by the licensed publisher. An application must contain the licence and translation contracts, as well as a significant part of the proof-read translation manuscript and the corresponding original text. For detailed information on the application procedure, please see the guidelines on our website: www.prohelvetia.ch/en/translation-funding-and-support

Deadline

We accept applications at any time, but they must be submitted at least three months before the date of printing.

We accept applications exclusively via our online portal www.myprohelvetia.ch.

For translations of Swiss texts into the languages from South-east Europe, Pro Helvetia is a partner of the European Network for Literature and books TRADUKI. All requests involving a translation into Albanian, Bosnian, Bulgarian, Croatian, Macedonian, Montenegrin, Romanian, Serbian and Slovenian should be addressed directly to Traduki at: www.traduki.eu.

Please contact us if you have any further questions. We look forward to receiving your application.

Translation House Looren

Translation House Looren in the Swiss canton of Zürich offers professional literary translators from all over the world a place to work and study. At Translation House Looren all language combinations are welcome. As the first institution of its kind in a country that, with its four national languages, has always been a land of translation, Translation House Looren sees itself primarily as a location for concentrated work. In addition, a programme of events aims to increase the visibility of literary translation and to support its practitioners. Through readings, workshops and conferences, translators are offered a forum for continuing professional development and for enhancing the public's awareness of their activities.

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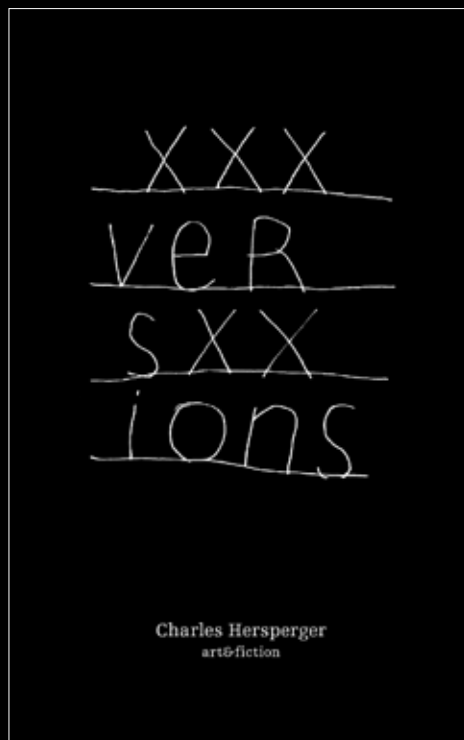
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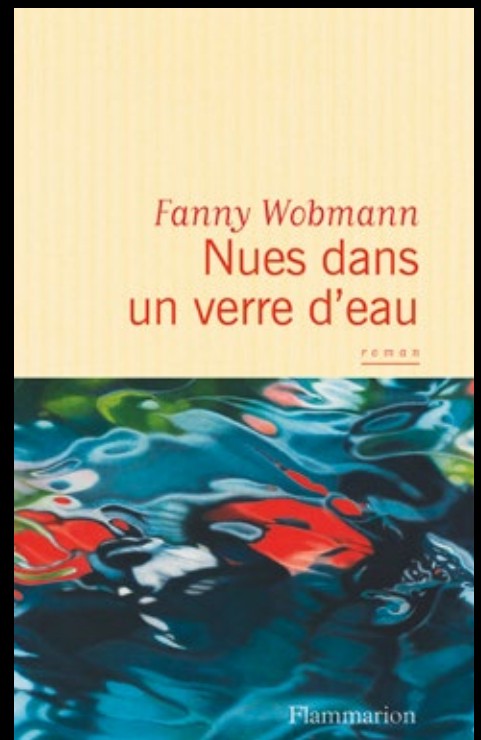
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2



4



6

1

Maiser The Corn Man

Author [Fabiano Alborghetti](#)

Genre Verse Novel

Pages 240

Publisher Marcos y Marcos, Milan 2017

ISBN 9788871687933

Translation rights Livia Del Pino,
rights@marcosymarcos.com

Maiser is written in the unusual format of a verse novel, and tells the story of a family of Italian immigrants to Switzerland. It takes place from the mid-20th century – the 1950s – up to the present day. The poetry develops into a social narrative – the story of one individual but with universal relevance for us all.

2

xxxversxxions xxprofessxxxal

Author [Charles Hersperger](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 100

Publisher art&fiction, Lausanne 2016

ISBN 978-2-940377-96-1

Translation rights Marie-Claire Grossen,
marie-claire.grossen@artfiction.ch

An anthropologist, who has broken with the conventions of academia, is invited to continue his research work, far from home as a member of a supposedly alternative institute. Once there, he meets a controversial activist artist, who turns up occasionally amongst those who frequent the institute, and who is preparing a major exhibition of his recent work. Their meeting rapidly develops into a semi-secret relationship, and becomes an exploration of the human potential created by such chance encounters.

3

Lanz Lance

Author [Flurin Jecker](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 128

Publisher Nagel & Kimche, Zürich 2017

ISBN 978-3-312-01022-6

Translation rights Altas Agency,
Katharina Altas, literatur@agenturaltas.ch

Lance – a 14-year old schoolboy – is tasked with writing a blog for his weekly project. To begin with he resists, but then he launches into an unsparing exposé of his whole life: his parents' separation, the sterility of his childhood in a small village, his problems with growing up ... and, above all, his failure to get together with Lynn, who is the whole reason he signed up for the blogging course in the first place.

4

Fleisch Flesh

Author [Simone Meier](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 256

Publisher Kein & Aber, Zürich 2017

ISBN 978-3-0369-5754-8

Translation rights Lisa Mühlemann,
lmuehlemann@keinundaber.ch

Anna and Max are in their mid-40s; they went to school together and stayed together afterwards out of convenience. But then Anna falls in love for the first time with a woman, 27-year old Lilly. And Max falls for Lilly's housemate, Sue, who, however, will only sleep with him for money. Lilly, for her part, has to deal with her young brother, who is driving their parents and his teacher to despair – though she doesn't give up on Anna. This is a humorous story told with relish, about people struggling to reconcile youth and growing old.

5

Was alles war What there was

Author [Annette Mingels](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 288

Publisher Knaus, Munich 2017

ISBN 978-3-8135-0755-3

Translation rights Gesche Wendebourg,
gesche.wendebourg@randomhouse.de

For her parents, Susa was the child they had long yearned for and so she wanted for nothing. It never bothered her that she was adopted. As a grown woman, though, she feels somewhat curious about her natural mother; but when she gets to know Viola, she remains a stranger to her. But their meeting sets more in motion than she realises. The question as to what constitutes a family takes on a new significance for Susa, especially when she falls in love with Henryk, who brings two daughters with him into their relationship.

6

Nues dans un verre d'eau Naked in a Glass of Water

Author [Fanny Wobmann](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 160

Publisher Flammarion, Paris 2017

ISBN 9782081395527

Translation rights Florence Giry,
fgiry@flammarion.fr

There were two of them, at two moments in time, far removed from real life. One – the grandmother – is gently slipping away in a hospital ward. The other – Laura – is pregnant, and for the time being keeping her pregnancy secret. Remarkably, they find themselves taking the same path and soon wanting the same thing: each other's company. During visiting hours, in spite of their heavy silences and restrained gestures, they win each other over and lay themselves bare. Their story is less about self-disclosure, but more about each of them abandoning some of their modesty in order to offer each other a small but valuable piece of their life.

Swiss Literature Awards



Laurence Boissier



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Annette Hug



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Pascale Kramer

Swiss Literature Awards presented by the Federal Office for Culture FOC

Every year, the Federal Office for Culture awards the Swiss Grand Award for Literature as well as five to seven Swiss Literature Awards. The latter are awarded for literary works that have been published in the previous year, in one of the national languages or in a Swiss dialect. The Swiss Grand Prix for Literature honours a personality who stands out through their exceptional dedication to Swiss literature. In addition, every other year a special prize is awarded, in recognition of exceptional commitment to Swiss literature and to its public promotion. For more information, visit www.literaturpreise.ch.

Sample translations of the 2017 laureates' texts can be provided upon request.

Inventaire des lieux An Inventory of Places

Author Laurence Boissier
Genre Short stories
Publisher Art&fiction, éditions d'artistes, Lausanne
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Special Award for Literary Promotion

Charles Linsmayer was born in Zürich in 1945. From 1977, he has worked across several disciplines, as a journalist and literary historian; he has increasingly specialised in the cultural and literary history of Switzerland. As a publisher, he has edited several major works, including the 30-volume *Frühling der Gegenwart*, which covers the work of 177 Swiss German writers.

Swiss Grand Award for Literature

Pascale Kramer was born in Geneva in 1961 and has published numerous novels, for which she has received many awards. She grew up in Lausanne and spent several years in Zürich before going to Paris in 1987, where she now lives and works. In the thirteen books she has so far published, she concerns herself with the fate of ordinary people. Her literary breakthrough was in 2000 with her fourth novel, *Les vivants (The Living)*, which received the Prix Lipp Suisse and was translated into German in 2003 by Andrea Spingler.

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