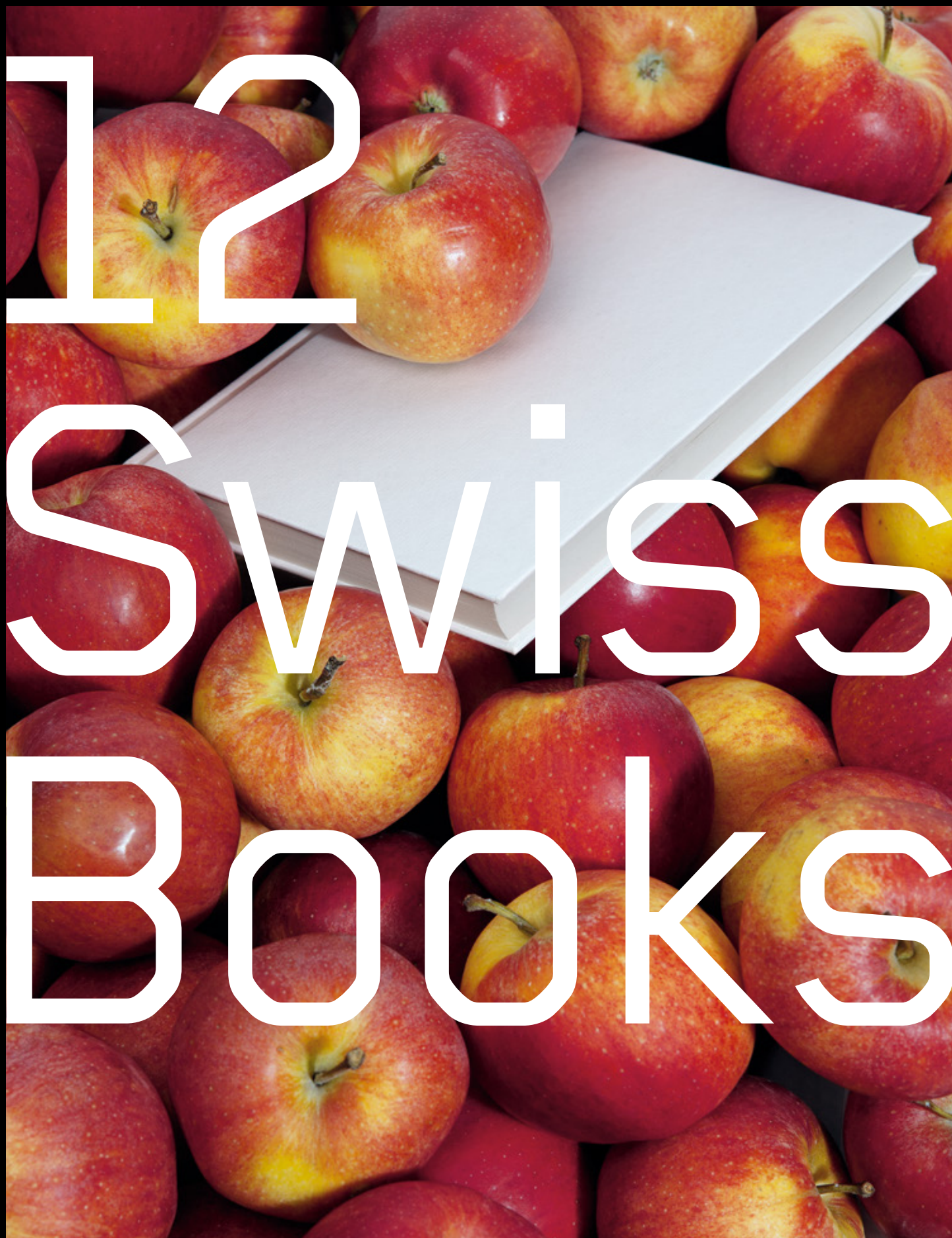


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Dear Friends of Literature, dear Publishers and Translators

Sample translations online
www.12swissbooks.ch



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We are delighted to present you with this year's *12 Swiss Books*, our 7th annual selection of twelve outstanding publications from Swiss writers in German, French and Italian. The themes of the books are as diverse as they are intriguing, dealing with life's big questions: identity, love, death, grief and the simple challenge of coping. In these pages you can read about the long-awaited magnum opus from one of Switzerland's best established authors, as well as promising debuts by no less than six newcomers. We have fictional accounts of historical figures and autobiographical fictions, an anthology of literary works and an account of social division. All in all, a wide range of exceptional literature that we are recommending to you for translation. This year, once again, we have invited some top British translators to assess our selection. All twelve books are introduced and reviewed for you by these translators, who also give their expert opinions on why these books are worthy of translation. Their translated extracts of all twelve can be found on our website www.12swissbooks.ch. In addition, we have a further six 'unmissable' Swiss books to offer you, and the winners of the Swiss Literature Prizes in 2018. Also this year, Pro Helvetia has launched a new series of Swiss-British cultural exchanges, including a focus on Swiss literature and translation in the UK. Our regular contributing editor Rosie Goldsmith introduces this new literary collaboration, entitled "Literally Swiss", by interviewing the famous Swiss author and philosopher who lives in Britain, Alain de Botton.

We hope that our this year's *12 Swiss Books* magazine will entice you and delight you with our overview of the versatile world of Swiss literature. We hope you are inspired to translate and publish these great works. We look forward very much to hearing from you!

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

Farewell, St Kilda

Éric Bulliard

Novel

French

Introduced by Rebecca DeWald

In his first novel, journalist Éric Bulliard takes the reader on a journey to the remote Scottish archipelago of St Kilda, known primarily for the evacuation of its inhabitants in 1930. Life in this desperately difficult outpost of the British Isles, with its harsh environment and poverty, had become so hard for the islanders that they pleaded to be taken to the mainland. The evacuation signified the end of nearly 4000 years of human habitation. Bulliard interweaves the story of the St Kildans with the account of his own visit to these faraway islands, blurring journalistic fact with narrative fiction.

Farewell, St Kilda is a double narrative related in both the past and present tense. Described as a 'novel', Bulliard's text combines the partly fictionalised rendering of the lives and travels of the St Kildans with his own experience of journeying to the remote archipelago. While there are many historical texts about St Kilda, this text differs by portraying the population of St Kilda as more than just victims of an outdated way of life. He conjures up the inhabitants, their discussions about whether or not to evacuate Hirta, the main island, and also imagines earlier St Kildans leaving their home for Canada and Australia in search of gold, and a different life. Some of them returned to their home, which reflects Bulliard's underlying question: what is the strange allure of St Kilda which still persists?

Title

L'adieu à Saint-Kilda

Publisher

Éditions de l'Hèbe, Charmey

Publication date

May 2017

Pages

240

ISBN

978-2-88906-100-6

Translation rights

Jean-Philippe Ayer

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Sample translation

by Rebecca DeWald

12swissbooks.ch/Bulliard





*"And who really remembers St Kilda
and its inhabitants?"*



Éric Bulliard was born in Fribourg in 1970. He studied French Literature and History of Art at the University of Fribourg and works as a journalist and literary critic for the Swiss newspaper *La Gruyère*. *Farewell, St Kilda* is his first work of fiction, for which he received the Prix Édouard Rod in 2017. The publisher Hèbe also commissioned the non-fiction collection *Naissance d'un classique* (*Birth of a Classic*), based on Bulliard's regular features for the Culture section of *La Gruyère*.

Photo: Antoine Vullioud,
La Gruyère

Numerous books, articles, films and documentaries have been made about St Kilda, which testify to the sustained interest in the UK and abroad. Yet Bulliard adds an outsider's perspective: he describes the harsh environment and introduces pauses for reflection on his and other tourists' motivation in exploring the archipelago. In his vivid descriptions of the inhabitants, giving them a voice for the first time, Bulliard combines the historical accounts and mythology around St Kilda that inspired many artists and writers. But by simultaneously reminding the reader of the nitty-gritty reality of life on St Kilda before the evacuation, and the harsh conditions of present-day Hirta for travellers, he avoids any hint of romanticism.

The translator is faced with the same challenge of maintaining that fine balance between empathy with, and even admiration for, a population that survived famines and mass-exodus while maintaining its ancient way of life and avoiding the pitfalls of a false romanticisation of their lives. Research into historical facts, locations and sites, and terminology specific to island and marine life, would also be required of the translator in order to produce a text that enhances the more philosophical and societal aspects of this novel, helping it stand out – as it does in the original – amongst the many works already created about St Kilda and its inhabitants.

In a World of Tat

Rinny Gremaud
Literary Non-Fiction
French

Introduced by Francesca Barrie


Around the world via five of the globe's most colossal shopping malls, from the iconic West Edmonton Mall in Canada, to the new young pretender malls in Beijing, Kuala Lumpur, Dubai and Casablanca, Rinny Gremaud explores five capitalist utopias (or dystopias), temples to globalisation and consumerism, meeting the people who manage them, the people who clean them – and the shoppers who spend their days in them.

In an age where you can order a Starbucks “Caramel Latte Double Espresso Grande” wherever you happen to be on the planet, Gremaud embarks on a very personal journey through these “cities within cities”. She spent a month living in five shopping complexes, where you can eat, sleep, swim and even see a professional mermaid. These malls vie to be the biggest, the busiest, the most spectacular, attracting millions of tourists every year.

Taking an ironic and probing approach to these creations that “anaesthetise the middle classes across the world”, Gremaud starts in the classic West Edmonton Mall, taking in its premium attractions as well as lesser visited, dusty corners. She meets its characters: a woman who frequents the mall every single day of the year, and a Lebanese geologist who relocated his fossil store from the town centre in the 1980s to the Mall. As her journey progresses, Gremaud

Rinny Gremaud was born in Busan in South Korea, in 1977. As a young girl, she and her mother moved to Switzerland, and she now lives in Lausanne and works as a journalist. *In a World of Tat* is her first book.

Photo: Dora Mottaz

A close-up portrait of Rinny Gremaud, a woman with dark hair pulled back, looking slightly upwards and to the left. She has a fair complexion with visible freckles and is wearing a dark, high-necked top. The background is a plain, light color.

“And so designer labels and luxury cosmetics act as lodestars – beacons in a sea of commodities, for those who no longer belong anywhere.”



Title

Un monde en toc

Publisher

Seuil, Paris

Publication date

March 2018

Pages

176

ISBN

978-2-02-139094-0

Translation rights

Martine Heissat

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Sample translation

by Francesca Barrie

12swissbooks.ch/Gremaud



investigates the surrounding communities as well as the malls themselves, and tries to place them in their local context. In Edmonton, the mall acts as a major tourist lure, as well as an annual pilgrimage spot for families flocking from isolated areas to stock up for the year. In Casablanca, the luxury price tags and enforced dress code are deeply at odds with the shanty towns that surround the mall, and even middle-class locals can only afford to window shop.

Gremaud is a clear-eyed and sensitive guide, bringing the journey to life with her own reflections and impressions in evocative, lucid prose. She is quick to highlight the ironies and absurdities she encounters, including the follies and wilful denial of investors and corporate consultants, with their growth strategies – despite unfilled units and the growing threat of online shopping. She doesn't emerge unscathed from her month in these sterile, sometimes soul-eroding spaces. At several points, she is left disconsolate, as the stark realities of global inequality are made visible.

This book would be a pleasure to translate thanks to Gremaud's personal investment in this unusual – somewhat crazy – journey that tells us as much about human nature and the forces of globalisation as the malls themselves.

A Portrait of Lydia

Lukas Hartmann

Novel

German





Introduced by Alan Robinson

It is the beginning of the 1890s. A scandalous report shakes Switzerland's establishment to the core: Lydia Welti-Escher, daughter and heiress of the country's greatest business magnate, has absconded with the painter Karl Stauffer-Bern. *A Portrait of Lydia* imaginatively reconstructs what led up to this adulterous liaison and depicts compellingly how, in its aftermath, the patriarchal ranks closed against her.

Like Edith Wharton's heroines, Lukas Hartmann's Lydia lives in a gilded cage. She is intelligent, takes a passionate interest in the male-dominated world of art and desires to be more than patron or muse. But she is constrained by upper-class conventions, financially under her husband's control and emotionally dependent on Stauffer. Both men, it seems,

Title

Ein Bild von Lydia

Publisher

Diogenes, Zürich

Publication date

March 2018

Pages

368

ISBN

978-3-257-07012-5

Translation rights

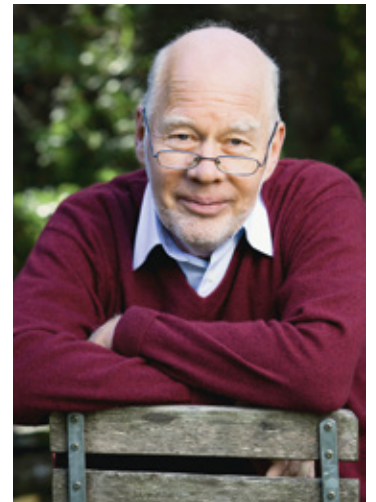
Susanne Bauknecht

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“The death notice had given the wrong day for the funeral, deliberately, Luise suspected, so that only those in the know would have the correct date, for the event was intended to attract as little attention as possible.”

may have designs on her money. Lydia’s father-in-law, a domineering cabinet minister, also intrigues against her: he has her wrongly committed to an asylum and Stauffer imprisoned, on the trumped-up charge of raping a woman incapable of consent. As the plot builds towards its climax, an atmosphere of menace pervades the novel. Lydia’s unstable moods and conflicting impulses are dramatised vividly. The disquieting events are observed from the perspective of Luise, Lydia’s maid, who develops from an inexperienced fifteen-year-old to her mistress’s loyal and trusted companion. This adds subtlety to the narrative, as the reader’s knowledge of the enigmatic Lydia and Karl is limited to what Luise can glean and conjecture. Luise’s prominent role enables Hartmann to contrast life above and below stairs; and, despite the women’s increasing closeness, to contrast Lydia’s deepening gloom with Luise’s brighter prospects.

All of Lukas Hartmann’s bestselling historical novels would lend themselves well to translation. *A Portrait of Lydia* especially seems predestined to appeal to the large audience for neo-Victorian fiction. Hartmann’s fluent, well-crafted sentences are clear but atmospherically evocative, firmly anchored in everyday realism but able to convey symbolic depth. Translators would surely enjoy immersing themselves in this well-researched and richly imagined historical world and bringing it back to life in their own language.



Lukas Hartmann, born in Bern in 1944, studied German literature and psychology. He used to be a teacher and journalist. He now lives near Bern and writes books for both adults and children. His novels place him on the Swiss bestseller list time and again. In 2010 he received the Sir Walter Scott Literature Prize for *Bis ans Ende der Meere (To the End of the Sea)*. For *A Portrait of Lydia* he was awarded the Literary Prize of the canton of Bern in 2018.

Photo: Bernard van Dierendonck

Sample translation
by Alan Robinson
12swissbooks.ch/Hartmann



The Key in the Milk

Alexandre Hmine

Novel

Italian



Title

La chiave nel latte

Publisher

Gabriele Capelli Editore,
Mendrisio

Publication date

April 2018

Pages

208

ISBN

978-88-97308-64-5

Translation rights

Gabriele Capelli
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"I remember the gaudy colours from photographs and postcards, the scent of spice I'd heard about, the rhythms of African drums, the documentaries they show in Europe, and I wonder what strange mirage I'm living in."

Introduced by Ruth Clarke

This coming-of-age novel tells the story of a Moroccan boy growing up in Ticino in Switzerland, where his teenage mother leaves him in the care of an elderly widow, Elvezia. Spanning the period from early childhood to university and the beginning of his teaching career, the un-named protagonist recounts moments from his everyday life with Elvezia and his school friends. He describes his teenage years and growing curiosity about the opposite sex. He also visits his birth mother and stepfamily, where he learns about Muslim customs and his Moroccan heritage. Balancing his two lives, acquiring two passports, feeling the pressure to explain himself to those around him, the boy develops the suspicion that he doesn't really fit in anywhere.

The Key in the Milk is a unique coming-of-age story: beautiful snapshots of childhood and adolescence as an outsider, underpinned by an uncertain sense of identity. The story progresses in fragments, in memories brought to life by the voice of the narrator through childhood toys, religious festivals, football games, tennis practice, teenage crushes and exam failure. All this is interspersed with trips to Casablanca, a city the protagonist visits for the first time at the age of ten and which he instinctively rejects. Hot, bustling Casablanca with its Arab customs seems more foreign to him than his small town in the Ticino mountains. Although Switzerland feels like home, he can't help but



Alexandre Hmine was born in Lugano in 1976. He has worked as a national and regional journalist in Switzerland, and has taught Italian in secondary schools since 2004. His debut novel *The Key in the Milk* won the Studer/Ganz Prize in 2017.

Photo: Andrea Mazzoni

Sample translation

by Ruth Clarke

12swissbooks.ch/Hmine



ponder his identity, raising questions for himself and the reader right through to the final pages: where do any of us come from? Can we truly belong anywhere but in our own memories?

Alexandre Hmine uses brilliantly spare prose to recount his narrator's memories, following his train of thought from one snapshot to the next. Hmine realistically evokes the way we recall the past, as a combination of vivid, minute details, emotions and smells, with gaps, spaces for the things we perhaps didn't realise at the time. Each word is carefully chosen to demonstrate the natural way children absorb different cultures and languages.

Recreating this gentle tone and juggling the mixture of Italian, French, Arabic and Swiss dialect, thoughtfully employed by the author to contextualise his characters, will prove an irresistible puzzle for the translator bringing this delightful voice into another language.

Homecoming

Thomas Hürlimann
Novel
German



“The name links me with my earlier existence, with Senior, with our rubber factory, with my origins.”

Introduced by Jen Calleja

Thomas Hürlimann’s latest novel explores the burden of parental rejection and the impossibility of returning home in this enthralling tale that is part epic, part Bildungsroman. The reader is taken on many journeys with Heinrich Übel Junior, including his mission to find out what happened the night of his car accident, his pursuit of the many mysterious figures appearing in his memory, and his long-awaited return to his father’s factory. In the figure of Übel Junior we find a contemporary Odysseus or Robinson Crusoe on his quest to finally become a man.

Heinrich Übel Junior is a disappointment to his father. He’s a “scrap that has fallen far from the tree” and is kicked out of his job at Übel Senior’s rubber factory. Junior must acquire the title of Doctor – like his father – in order to be able to take over the family business. He enrolls as a visiting student in Zürich and studies across all departments, but can’t decide what to study properly for eighteen years. Once he finally decides to take the university entrance exam, he is stumped by the one-page application form – how could he sum up his life and experience in a page? – and ends up writing his biography many times over. He receives a call asking him to come home after his father has a nervous breakdown and reaches his hometown too late for the last bus, so borrows a car, only to end up in a car accident. He wakes up faraway in Sicily and this is where the novel begins.

Thomas Hürlimann, born 1950 in Zug, Switzerland, studied philosophy in Zürich and Berlin. He has written numerous plays, stories, and novels. His novel *Der große Kater* (*The Day of the Cat*) was adapted for the screen, with Bruno Ganz in the title role. Hürlimann’s work has won him numerous prizes, including the Rauris Literature Prize (1982), the Joseph Breitbach Literature Prize (2001), the Jean Paul Prize (2003), the Thomas Mann Prize (2012), and the Hugo Ball Prize (2014). He is a Corresponding Member of the Bavarian Academy of Fine Arts and a member of the Academy of the Arts, Berlin. His work has been translated into 21 languages. After many years of living in Berlin, he now lives in Switzerland again.

Photo: Jannis Keil

Sample translation

by Jen Calleja

12swissbooks.ch/Huerlimann





Title

Heimkehr

Publisher

Fischer Verlag, Frankfurt/M.

Publication date

August 2018

Pages

522

ISBN

978-3-10-031557-1

Translation rights

Myriam Alfano

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Hürlimann's writing performs an impressive tightrope walk between realism and surrealism and traverses a space where fantasy, desire, procrastination and distraction abound – the reader cannot help but surrender their disbelief and bewilderment during the uncanny encounters Junior has in Sicily and Zürich while trying to piece together what happened to him after the crash. It is also writing about the impossible act of writing a life, with all the complexities and re-evaluations this can throw up.

Übel is on a quest for answers including how and why he ended up in Sicily with a frightening scar running down his newly shaven head, why his father sent him away so abruptly, and whether his beloved mother really drowned all those years ago. Hürlimann's novel is a characteristic exploration of mothers and fathers, sexual desire, memory, boyhood-to-manhood, home, and the past.

Key to translating this novel will be creating the anxious, disorientated and self-aware voice of Junior who tells the story, immersing the reader in his unsettled and frantic mental state. There are some beautiful images that act as moments of pause and reflection in the tumbling prose, and flashes of wordplay and humour, like the whimsical ad-speak of the rubber factory catalogue.

Louis or The Tortoise Ride

Michael Hugentobler

Novel

German

Introduced by Amy Bojang

Michael Hugentobler's debut novel tells in moving detail the fictional tale of Louis de Montesanto, a nineteenth-century globetrotting eccentric, but is based on a real-life adventurer. Born Hans Roth in a small Swiss village and rejected by his family, Louis leaves home as a teenager on a life-long journey. He finds fame with his embellished life story, which becomes a worldwide bestseller. In it he relates his story as the only white person living amongst 'savages' in the Australian outback. He learns the language, attempts to hunt, falls in love with Yamba. Ultimately his failure to understand aboriginal culture has fatal consequences.

The 'true' stories of Louis' life are astonishing: he arrives in Australia, after having been taken in by a Swiss vicar, working as a butler for an English actress in London and Paris, and eventually finding himself on board a governor's ship to Perth. How he then ends up wandering the outback with three aborigines, joining their tribe and fathering a child is nothing short of extraordinary. But the outlandishly tall tales he reports to the press as his life story are wonderfully enjoyable: from riding tortoises and photographing dead souls to finding gigantic nuggets of gold too heavy to carry. He is not one to let the truth get in the way of a good story, and ponders whether the truth is necessary at all, if indeed one version exists. The lengths Louis goes to in his hyperbolic stories show his yearning for freedom



Michael Hugentobler was born in Zürich in 1975. After finishing school in America and Switzerland he worked as a postman and then went travelling for over a decade through Asia and South America to Africa and Oceania. He now lives in Aarau, Switzerland, and is a freelance journalist for various magazines and newspapers. *Louis or The Tortoise Ride* is his first novel.

Photo: Dominic Nahr

Sample translation

by Amy Bojang

12swissbooks.ch/Hugentobler

MICHAEL
HUGENTOBLER



LOUIS
ODER
DER RITT
AUF DER
SCHILDKRÖTE

ROMAN

dtv

Title

Louis oder Der Ritt auf der
Schildkröte

Publisher

dtv, Munich

Publication date

March 2018

Pages

192

ISBN

978-3-423-28152-2

Translation rights

Andrea Seibert

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“The concept of truth seemed to be of secondary importance, banal reality blended with fantasy, and he wondered if the truth was necessary in a story at all.”

from slavery and poverty, and for belonging. His quest for both is a tragic, and perhaps inevitable, failure.

Translating Louis' escapades will be enthralling, but the time he spends living with aborigines will be of particular interest to linguists. It shows the alienation he experiences at slowly acquiring the language and his inability to connect with the culture in order to belong. It is this gap between cultures that translators are constantly trying to bridge in their work. Any translator will relate to this frustrating quest for understanding. Louis fails to integrate and his ignorance causes him to transgress cultural boundaries to the extreme and flee. Sadly, he also proves to be an outsider in European culture. The only real connection he makes is love – maybe not for his wife Yamba, who he allows to be portrayed as an ugly savage in order to sell his story, but certainly for his daughter.

The novel provides insight into how other cultures were perceived in 19th century Europe, as primitive, unknown and threatening; a reminder for us all of how far we should have progressed.

A Family

Pascale Kramer

Novel

French

Title

Une famille

Publisher

Flammarion, Paris

Publication date

March 2018

Pages

192

ISBN

978-2-0814-2795-2

Translation rights

Emma Saudin

foreignrights@flammarion.fr

Sample translation

by Jackie Smith

12swissbooks.ch/Kramer





"Romain was a gentle, peaceful, tender soul. He never showed any sign of the malaise that drove him, some evenings, to drink himself virtually into a coma."



Pascale Kramer was born in Geneva in 1961 and grew up in Lausanne. In 1987 she moved to Paris, where she now runs an advertising agency. She has published fourteen books, including, in 2000, *Les Vivants* (*The Living*), which won the Prix Lipp Suisse, and, in 2009, the multi award-winning *L'implacable brutalité du réveil* (*The Relentless Brutality of Awakening*). In 2017, she received the Swiss Grand Award for Literature for her body of work. Several of her novels have been translated into English and German.

Photo: David Ignaszewski, Koboy, Flammarion

Introduced by Jackie Smith

The traditional middle-class family of this story has a painful wound at its core. To his parents and siblings, the lovable, talented Romain is both an enigma and a self-destructive force, whose years of drinking have led him inexorably to a life of ruin. For his family, life goes on, as his sister Lou prepares to give birth. But Romain has disappeared again, and his loved ones must once more confront the gnawing pain of their failure to help him back from the abyss.

Set in Bordeaux, this novel stands out as a deftly observed and captivating study of the intricacies of parent-child and sibling relationships: a theme of universal appeal. We hear from each member of the family in turn – all, that is, except Romain himself, his voice conspicuously absent, his thoughts and motives impenetrable. The narrative structure allows us an intimate view of the family dynamics, their expectations and disappointments, their conflicts of loyalty, the terrible shame and anguish they share and the individual thoughts they keep to themselves. Their varying accounts both complement and undermine each other, but little by little we piece together a sketchy picture of Romain's life through its recounted episodes: his alcoholic excesses from an early age, his lies, his stealing, his disappearance for eight long years, his life on the streets and the appalling toll this has taken on his body. For the last two years he has been

in a fragile remission, but his family hardly dare harbour any hopes for his future. Too often they have had to suffer the agony of hopes dashed. And now it is happening again: Romain's disappearance can only signal a relapse. And once again, he has unwittingly diverted the family's attention onto himself and cast a shadow over what should be a happy event: the birth of a new family member. His mother, Danielle, has always been tireless in her desperate efforts to help him. She never gives up her faith that, despite his suicidal apathy, all will be well one day. But can someone bent on self-destruction ever be rescued from themselves? What lengths are we prepared to go to for our loved ones? Where are the limits? And at what point do we admit defeat? The questions the story poses make for an engrossing read.

This is a poignant exploration of addiction and the devastation it wreaks, not only on the sufferer but on his nearest and dearest, which will leave no reader unmoved. It is also a novel in which worlds collide. The old ordered world of bourgeois values, embodied by Romain's devoted mother Danielle, her husband Olivier, a recently retired civil servant, and their Catholic younger son Édouard, is uncomfortably confronted by a new, more liberal world in which life starts to lose its structure and chaos looms, the fractured world of Romain, and to some extent his rebellious sister Mathilde.

The author probes her characters' personalities and predicaments with exquisite subtlety and sensitivity in spare, beautifully crafted language that would be a delight to translate. Amid the general sense of tension and dread come fleeting moments of poetic beauty too: glimpses of nature, tender observations of Romain's little niece, Marie. To do justice to the delicacy and lyrical flow of the language would be an inviting challenge for any translator.

Words of Resistance

Mariella Mehr

Prose and Poetry Collection

German

Introduced by Ruth Martin

Mariella Mehr has “little concern for the traditional corset of literary genres”, as the editors’ introduction points out. All her writing mixes poetry and polemic in varying quantities, and even her book reviews are literary gems that stay with you long after reading. Even so, the editors have managed to divide this overview of her work into five broad sections, taking us from Mehr’s first articles in the mid-1970s to recent poems published here for the first time.

The collection is united by the themes of violence and life in the margins of society, which Mariella Mehr explores with great empathy. The book is also a visual delight, enhanced by photographs and colour reproductions of paintings by the author’s favourite artist Meret Oppenheim, an icon of the Swiss women’s movement. There is a huge wealth of writing here, but a personal highlight for me – and a piece that shows the continuing relevance of Mariella Mehr’s writing – is a 1988 lecture from an event entitled *Women Read Men’s Literature*. It may be 30 years old, but her analysis of the misogyny and pornographic tendencies in a typical coming-of-age novel could have been written yesterday.

Mehr’s writing is intense and lyrical; it often crackles with anger and pushes at the limits of the German language. An impressionistic essay that presents a series of childhood memories, for example, recalls “the matron’s metallic

For the writer, journalist and poet Mariella Mehr, the personal is always political. Born into the nomadic Yenish people in 1947, Mehr was the victim of a notorious programme run by the Swiss charity Pro Juventute, which systematically removed Yenish children from their parents and placed them in children’s homes or foster care. Mehr’s major literary work is the so-called *Trilogy of Violence*: 1995 *Daskind (Thechild)*, 1998 *Brandzauber (Magic Fire)*, and 2002 *Angeklagt (Accused)*. She received numerous prizes, amongst others the Prize of the Swiss Schiller Foundation (1996), the ProLitteris Prize for her body of work (2012), the Literary Prize of the canton of Graubünden (2016), and a Recognition Prize of the city of Zürich for her body of work (2017). *Words of Resistance* is a collection of texts that range from poetry to essays and short stories.

Photo: Ayse Yavas

Sample translation

by Ruth Martin

12swissbooks.ch/Mehr





“All the stories, even the fictional ones, spring from my personal experience, and my experiences are almost all unusual.”

voice” and a child’s face is “ravaged by unchildishness”. Any translator would relish the opportunity to recreate these richly poetic images in another language. The wide range of writing makes this a book you will keep coming back to, re-reading and savouring each piece of poetry and prose. In her review of Dora Koster’s autobiography, Mariella Mehr says: “There are books you shouldn’t write about, but live with, laugh with uninhibitedly, cry, rage, curse, vomit with, books that require the same tenderness and care as a new-born infant.” The same might be said of this essential collection of Mehr’s own work.



Title

Widerworte

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352

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Translation rights

Nathalie Widmer

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Anything Could Happen Here

Gianna Molinari

Novel

German

Introduced by Jonathan Blower

After reports of a wolf sighting, the owner of a soon-to-be decommissioned cardboard factory employs extra security. The new night watchwoman takes up residence on site, monitors nocturnal activity, reluctantly sets traps and snares but soon learns about a bank robbery and a corpse in the nearby woods. This much is clear: the wolf is not to blame.

Gianna Molinari's debut novel oscillates, almost levitates. Its language is crystal clear, even childlike at times, but the overall effect is strangely ethereal, unnerving and hard to pin down. The book skips back and forth between loosely interrelated stories and sketches, myth and reportage, fairy tales and photographs: a phantom wolf, fictional islands, a factory in decline, a robbed bank, a man who fell to Earth, false accusations, potentially an asylum seeker. It is up to the reader to supply the possible links between these fragmentary places and characters, to assemble them into a meaningful collage. In that respect the possibilities are endless. Hence the title. This is an ambitious debut that deftly plays with expectations of fact and fiction, disbelief and credulity.

It is also an important reflection on European perceptions of the ongoing refugee crisis. Molinari's central narrative is the real unexplained tragedy of an African man whose body was discovered in woodland in a small town several kilometres east of Zürich airport. It is thought the man

Title
Hier ist noch alles möglich

Publisher
Aufbau Verlag, Berlin

Publication date
July 2018

Pages
192

ISBN
978-3-351-03739-0

Translation rights
Inka Ihmels
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Sample translation
by Jonathan Blower
12swissbooks.ch/Molinari

Nominated
for the German
Book Prize
2018



“There are visible borders at the edge of the woods, between land and water, between light and shade, the walls of my building and the fencing around the factory. These borders are easy to see; others are not.”

was from Mozambique and had stowed away in the landing gear of a European aircraft, though experts say he would have frozen to death long before the undercarriage was lowered over Switzerland. He was never identified.

Told as it is in clean, lucid prose, this tragic but compelling story and its fictional framework will virtually translate themselves. The only potential difficulty will be in reproducing Molinari’s lightness of touch and her childlike attitude toward the unthinkable.



Gianna Molinari was born in Basel in 1988. She studied Literary Writing at the Swiss Literary Institute in Biel and Modern German Literature at the University of Lausanne. She lives in Zürich, where she co-founded the art action group *Literature for World Events* together with Julia Weber, with the aim of helping refugees. In 2012, she received the first prize at the MDR literature contest, in 2017 she was awarded the 3sat Prize at the Ingeborg Bachmann Prize, and in 2018 she received the Robert Walser Prize. *Anything Could Happen Here* is her first novel.

Photo: Christoph Oeschger

Me and Myself

Jens Nielsen

Novel

German



Title

Ich und mein Plural

Publisher

Der gesunde Menschenversand,
Lucerne

Publication date

February 2018

Pages

260

ISBN

978-3-03853-063-3

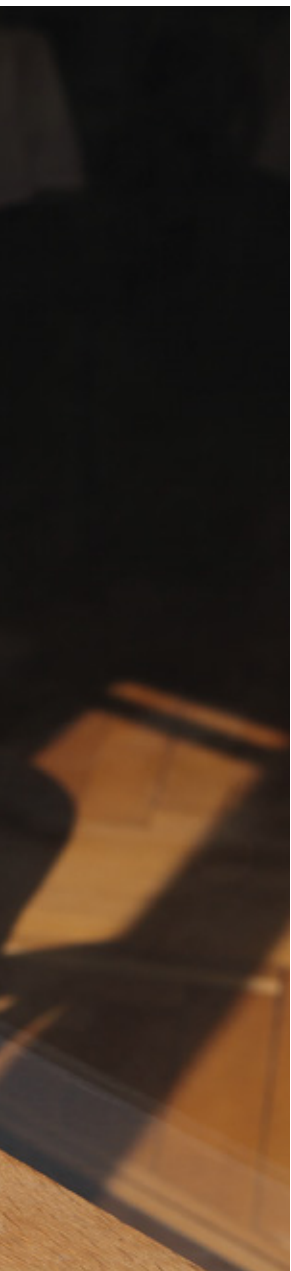
Translation rights

Annette Wolf,
Kossack Literary Agency,
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Introduced by Alan Robinson

The inhabitants of a village disappear into a fountain. Wedding guests drop from hot-air balloons. A flock of birds becomes Argentina. Jens Nielsen evokes a bizarre world of multiple selves and alternative realities, where everything, especially the laws of nature, undergoes transformation. These are tall stories, scripted for performance, animated by the energies of the spoken word.

Jens Nielsen's prose texts grow out of his other work as a playwright, actor and cabaret performer. An earlier book, *Flusspferd im Frauenbad (Hippo in the Women's Pool)*, comprised one-minute texts for radio, recounting surreal fantasies or everyday absurdities. *Me and Myself* develops these quizzical observations into an experimental novel. The narrator's 'confessions' trace his picaresque adventures from childhood to psychological disintegration and physical decay. They begin with his 'leafing through' his existence and remarking, "Occurrences everywhere that are not possible / Or that you still remember / But no longer believe / Or odder still / You just imagined / And then they really did turn out that way". To explain what he means, he launches into a series of verbal improvisations, including waking dreams, elaborate jokes and deadpan accounts of death. Typically, they play variations on a theme, or on a pun. For example, in one episode a pickpocket steals the narrator's opinion; in another, the narrator is a self-appointed Head



*“Somewhat later a monitor lizard crawled along
the roadside / Large birds wheeled above us / And
among a few fir trees / That had stood for ages
at the edge of the village / An elk was hiding /
Do you notice any difference / Asked my mother /
Who was watching me in the rear-view mirror /
I said No”*

of Compartment, having taken up residence alongside the passengers on a sleeper train. Alternating between stand-up comedy and existential anxiety, the narrator invites us to suspend our disbelief while he constructs his castles in the air.

The plural selves that are conjured up are first and foremost speaking voices. A major challenge in translating *Me and Myself* is thus to preserve this performative element, while creating a text which also reads well on the page. Jens Nielsen writes in unpunctuated lines, sometimes leaving phrases unfinished. Irregular rhythms and emphatic shifts in intonation indicate rhetorical pauses. He moves abruptly from the lyrical to the prosaic. Extraordinary, often disturbing matters, are recorded dispassionately. Translators will delight in finding ways to recreate these startling modulations in tone and rhythm and be intrigued by Nielsen’s restless imagination.



Jens Nielsen was born in 1966 in the Swiss city of Aarau. During his training as an actor at the Zürich drama school he began to write. He worked as a theatre in-house writer and as a radio drama producer. He is now a full-time playwright, actor, speaker, performer and author. For his short stories *Flusspferd im Frauenbad* (*Hippo in the Women’s Pool*) he was awarded the Swiss Literature Prize in 2017. His novel *Me and Myself* is also a performance for the stage.

Photo: Corinne Stoll

Sample translation
by Alan Robinson
12swissbooks.ch/Nielsen

One Unfurnished Night

Markus Ramseier

Novel

German

Introduced by Steph Morris

Yana is an interpreter, eking out a living in Moscow. There she meets Swiss CEO and art collector Victor. He sweeps her off her feet and back to Switzerland. But will it work out? Can Yana adjust to Swiss high-society? Do the couple have enough in common? Do they know what they want from life, and will it involve each other? *One Unfurnished Night* is a story of expectations, desire and desperation.

Yana and Vic come from different sides of the tracks. Yana grew up in a tiny bedroom shared with her twin sister in a small Ukrainian town. As an impoverished translator in Moscow, she translates a document for Swiss CEO and art collector Victor who takes her back to Switzerland in a whirlwind romance. Vic grew up in a villa, and inherited money. He is a workaholic aiming for the skies. Vic is constantly expanding his business, buying art, building a high-end gallery, obsessed with his profile. They marry and move into the family villa after Victor's mother dies. Yana discovers she needs fulfilment and quality of life, not status and wealth. Worse: things are not working in the bedroom. Is Victor too stressed, or is there more to it? Does he only need his wife as an interpreter and accessory at functions? The neighbouring woods provide solace for Yana, and there she meets Gian the forester.

Title

In einer unmöblierten Nacht

Publisher

Haymon Verlag, Innsbruck

Publication date

March 2018

Pages

288

ISBN

978-3-7099-3420-3

Translation rights

Eva Ganzer

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“Victor was interested in things which could be sold; the sun could not, but a painting of the sun could.”

Meanwhile Vic has started doing business in Yana’s native country Ukraine, after seeing opportunities when taken to meet her family. He spends increasing amounts of time there, not solely for business reasons. Yana might have been lonely, but she has started inviting the local school-children to the villa each week for language lessons and playtime. She is also spending more time with Gian and an affair begins. At the end of the book Yana gives birth to Gian’s child as Victor is investigated by the tax authorities. He is on the verge of bankruptcy and suicide, but Yana has started afresh and she tells him he must too.

As Yana adjusts to Swiss life, the reader also learns about a wealth of fascinating cultural differences and choice Swiss German expressions. Yana, the linguist, delights in acquiring the local vernacular, and a delightful challenge in translating this book would be to convey this to a foreign readership. As the story grows darker the dialogue between Yana and Victor becomes increasingly bitter. Their frustration and rage must be voiced convincingly, along with Yana’s joy as she discovers true love and passion – the ultimate challenge for any wordsmith.



Markus Ramseier was born in 1955 in Basel. He studied German, English and French Literature at the University of Basel and worked there for several years as an assistant professor. After that, he had various professions: teacher, journalist, editor, museum director and project leader. He publishes on the etymology of field names and has a variety of literary publications. *One Unfurnished Night* is his fifth novel.

Photo: Roger Fiechter

Sample translation
by Steph Morris
12swissbooks.ch/Ramseier



Lichen

Barbara Schibli

Novel

German

Introduced by Alyson Coombes

Barbara Schibli's novel *Lichen* examines the link between identical twins and explores how our childhood experiences have a crucial impact on our identity and on our familial relationships. Identical twins Anna and Leta – a biologist and photographer respectively – each look at the world through their own personal lens, struggling to come to terms with, and to overcome, the gulf that separates them, and to find their own paths in life.

Born in the USA to Swiss parents, eight-year-old twins Anna and Leta return to rural Switzerland with their mother after the collapse of their parents' marriage. Leta, who receives a camera from her father on their departure, becomes instantly obsessed with photography and never lets Anna out of her lens from that moment on. With a camera between them at all times, the twins fail to bond. Anna grows up with an acute feeling of isolation, exacerbated by their mother's psychological problems and failure to recover from her divorce. Feeling she has no real link to her twin sister – apart from the haunting memory of a fight that left one of them physically scarred for life – Anna leaves for Zürich at the first opportunity, devoting herself to the study of lichen. Now she feels adrift, unable to open up to her boyfriend or anyone else, thus not really dealing with her problems. Through sparse dialogue, Barbara Schibli focuses on Anna's loneliness and her struggle to connect with those around

Title

Flechten

Publisher

Dörlemann Verlag, Zürich

Publication date

September 2017

Pages

192

ISBN

978-3-03820-051-2

Translation rights

Sabine Dörlemann

sd@doerlemann.com



Barbara Schibli, born 1975 in Baden, studied German and Italian Literature as well as Journalism. She lives in Zürich and teaches German and Creative Writing at the Grammar School in Baden. *Lichen* was awarded the Studer/Ganz Prize in 2016, as well as the GEDOK Literary Valorization Prize in 2017.

Photo: Johanna Bossart

Sample translation
by Alyson Coombes
12swissbooks.ch/Schibli



her. When she goes to Helsinki on a research trip and finds herself drawn into a friendship with another scientist, Anna realises how isolated she has become, and that she will have to change if she wants to fix this before it is too late. The tension builds as the novel progresses and the story behind the scar is finally revealed, keeping readers engaged to the very end.

Barbara Schibli allows readers to really get inside Anna's head by writing in the first person, telling the story through Anna's thoughts. At times this is frustrating, as she is unable to open up and share what she has been through. However, as Anna's dysfunctional relationship with Leta and her parents is gradually exposed, readers start to understand how she has become who she is, and to root for her survival. The relative lack of dialogue and the focus on Anna means that all the other characters fade into the margins, but we still get to know them through Anna's eyes and their responses to her. The scientific elements – which would require some research by the translator – are very interesting too, and the study of these identical twins is as engaging as it is occasionally disturbing. Overall, this is an extremely thought-provoking and unusual story that tackles some important issues. It would be a delight for any translator to get their teeth into this fascinating and gripping novel.



"Anna. Leta. Annaleta. They scour us for any identifying marks or features. No one uses our names for fear of making a mistake."

Translators' biographies

Francesca Barrie works as an editor at Wellcome Collection in London and has translated two graphic novels from French – *Notes on a Thesis* by Tiphane Rivière, shortlisted for the Translation Association First Translation Prize, and *Freedom Hospital* by Hamid Sulaiman. Her other languages are Italian and Welsh.

Jonathan Blower translates German texts on the visual arts. As translator in residence at Hellerau in Dresden he has recently been working on the writings of Caspar David Friedrich. His co-translation of the selected writings of Swiss curator Harald Szeemann was published by Getty Publications earlier this year.

Amy Bojang is a teacher and translator of German literature. During her MA at the University of Nottingham she specialised in German-language post-dramatic theatre. In 2017 she was selected for *New Books in German's* Emerging Translators Programme and since then has been enjoying working on a variety of translation projects to hone her skills, as well as bringing up her daughter.

Jen Calleja is a writer and literary translator from German based in London. She has translated works by Wim Wenders, Gregor Hens, Kerstin Hensel and Marion Poschmann, and her translation of Swiss author Michelle Steinbeck's debut novel *My Father was a Man on Land and a Whale in the Water* is being published this October. For 2017/18 she was the inaugural Translator in Residence at the British Library.

Ruth Clarke is a translator from Italian, French and Spanish into English. She has translated an eclectic range of work by authors from Benin to Venezuela, including Cristina Caboni's debut novel *The Secret Ways of Perfume*. Ruth is a founding member of The Starling Bureau, a London-based collective of literary translators established to bring top quality books to publishers.

Alyson Coombes studied languages at Royal Holloway and 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 an editor and bilingual translator (English and German) of English, German, French and Spanish with a PhD in Translation Studies from the University of Glasgow. She has published articles on Jorge Luis Borges, Franz Kafka, Virginia Woolf and modernist translations. 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, *No Man's Land* and *12 Swiss Books*.

Steph Morris translates Swiss bestseller Martin Suter as well as a range of publications relating to Pina Bausch. He is also a writer, artist, cyclist and gardener and recently completed a masters degree in writing poetry.

Ruth Martin's recent translations include Michael Köhlmeier's novel *Yiza* and Volker Weidermann's *Dreamers: When the Writers Took Power*. She is co-chair of the Translators Association of the Society of Authors, and helps to run the Emerging Translators Network, a forum for early-career literary translators.

Alan Robinson is Professor of English at the University of St Gallen and has published widely on British and North American literature and on German and German Swiss authors. He was recently selected to take part in the *New Books in German* Emerging Translators Programme.

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 has translated several titles including *Pope Francis* by Marie Duhamel and *The Panama Papers* by B. Obermayer & F. Obermaier (a co-translation). Her translation of an extract from Hans Platzgumer's novel *Am Rand (On the Edge)* was published in *Structo* magazine last year.

Alain de Botton is quite literally Swiss!

Rosie Goldsmith interviews Alain de Botton

Literally Swiss is an exciting new concept showcasing and promoting Swiss writers in the UK. Devised by journalist Rosie Goldsmith on behalf of Pro Helvetia, it was launched in 2017 in London with guest of honour Alain de Botton. Alain was born in Switzerland, went to school in England, then studied in Cambridge, London and Harvard. He published his first book *Essays in Love* in 1993 aged 23, and his career as a bestselling writer and public philosopher began. Alain's been writing and teaching about the philosophy of everyday life for 25 years, from love to work, travel to religion, founding the pioneering School of Life in London ten years ago. Alain de Botton tells Rosie Goldsmith how his Swiss heritage influences his life and writing.

Rosie Goldsmith: You are one of 35,000 Swiss citizens living in the UK. But most people here don't know you are Swiss. Do you hide your Swissness?

Alain de Botton: No, I'm immensely proud. A proud patriot. But my relationship with Switzerland is complicated. I lived there until I was twelve, grew up speaking French in German-speaking Zürich and had a polyglot upbringing. When I was eight I went to boarding school in England, commuting from Zürich to London. The work of many psychotherapists is still unpicking that! As a child in England I longed for home. Switzerland is therefore for me enveloped in powerful sentimentality, and love. But a child's love. The love I have for Switzerland is that of an eight-year-old boy. It's not focused on Switzerland's economy or its politics, but on memories of Zweifel paprika crisps, Thomy mustard and Sugus sweets. It's sensory, not intellectual.

You live in the UK, so how does Switzerland feature in your life?

For me Switzerland offers an imaginative escape from some of the tensions of British life. The UK always seems to be riven by conflicts around class, without much middle, only extremes. Growing up I found this distressing, frightening. Switzerland became for me a model of a bourgeois society happy in itself, a civilization that defends ordinary life and the values of the middle class – a derided term in the UK, but in Switzerland the norm. I find this exotic and compelling.

Which language do you dream in or are you fully anglicised?

I don't dream in any language. I do though dream *of* Switzerland. Zürich airport comes up a lot in my psychotherapy as the site of unimaginable pain,

that of an eight-year-old boy leaving home for three months. The airport is literally the moment I am ripped away. When I land at Zürich Airport it is like coming home.

Which Swiss languages do you speak?

I still speak French, the language of my childhood, and it's no coincidence that when I was in my twenties I was reading only French books and wrote a book on Proust, *How Proust Can Change Your Life*, about the power of literature to change our lives. It's all about nostalgia for childhood in a way. German though is quite literally my mother's tongue – she is from St Gallen. But I only discovered German at school in England. I'm not a good German speaker but I love it and find it a playful language to speak. It has a beautifully articulated construction. Many philosophers have been German, so it's useful to me. Let me read you this piece I wrote about the philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche:

"Most philosophers have had little interest in travelling... It is the mind, not the body that counts. Fortunately, there is one glorious exception to this consensus; Friedrich Nietzsche, the greatest traveller in the history of philosophy – a man who not only lived in a variety of countries, but was also convinced that where you are, what hotel you stay in and what the temperature is like, has a profound influence on how happy you can be. Aside from the seaside, it was the Swiss mountains that Nietzsche loved... He was – both in a practical and spiritual sense – of the mountains. Having taken citizenship in April 1869, Nietzsche may be considered Switzerland's most famous philosopher... From the age of thirty-five onwards, he began spending all his summers in the Swiss Alps, in the small village of Sils-Maria, 1,800 metres above sea level in the Engadine region of south-eastern Switzerland... Nietzsche spent seven summers in Sils-Maria in a rented room in a chalet with views onto pine trees and mountains. There he wrote all or substantial portions of *The Gay Science*, *Thus Spoke Zarathustra*, *Beyond Good and Evil*, *On the Genealogy of Morals* and *Twilight of the Idols*. He would rise at five in the morning, and work until midday, then take walks up the huge peaks that necklace the village, Piz Corvatsch, Piz Lagrev, Piz de la Margna, jagged and raw mountains that look as if they had only recently thrust through the earth's crust under atrocious tectonic pressures. In the evening, alone in his room, he would eat a few slices of ham, an egg and a roll and go to bed early... Today, inevitably, there is a museum in the village. For a few francs, one is invited to visit the philosopher's bedroom... Yet to understand why Nietzsche felt there to be such an affinity between his philosophy and the mountains, it may be best to skirt the room and visit instead one of Sils-Maria's many sports shops in order to acquire walking boots, a rucksack, a water bottle, gloves, a compass and a pick axe. A hike up Piz Corvatsch, one of his favourite mountains, a few kilometres from Nietzsche's house, will explain better than any museum the spirit of his philosophy. Bluntly summarised, this philosophy suggested that we can only be happy if we accept that we first have to suffer a lot; it's a lesson exemplified by mountain climbing, Nietzsche's favourite sport." (Abridged extract reprinted with the kind permission of AdB)



Do you have a home in Switzerland?

No longer, but one of the things I miss most is the architecture. I grew up in a very nice, but brutalist 60s concrete building in Zürich, the kind you see all over Switzerland. So solid a bomb wouldn't blow it up; and so different from the Victorian architecture which still dominates British life. I hated the rattling Victorian windows, the general feeling that one was living in the 19th century. So I thought that if I can ever afford it I want to live in a Swiss house in England. A few years ago my wife and I found a plot of land and built a house. Again here's something for psychotherapists to unpick: the whole house is decked out in Swiss design! The door handles, windows, carpets; everything is Swiss in that house.

Do you have a cuckoo clock?

No, it's not that kind of Switzerland. It's a Switzerland of Max Bill, of modernism, of the heroic Swiss architects of the 50s who redesigned how we should live. I'm part of an organisation called Living Architecture and we invited Swiss architect Peter Zumthor and other architects to build houses around the UK which people can rent and experience what it is like to live in outstanding modern design. Our environment influences our happiness.

You also started up the School of Life here in the UK. You have brought philosophy into our homes and onto our TV screens. It is a great gift. Do you think any of that comes from your Swiss background?

Yes. Here's another bit about my early life: I have a beloved mother, but I also had a nanny, a real heroine of mine. She came from a little village in central Switzerland. I still go and see her every summer. She is 87 now. My parents were very intellectual but this uneducated woman with her native common sense is very close to my heart. A friend of mine once said, you are trying to write books for your father and for your nanny, aren't you? And I thought that's absolutely right! If both my father and my nanny could understand my work, that's OK. The School of Life is about developing emotional intelligence in everyday life and tackling life's big questions. I am more proud of this than anything. This autumn we hold a conference in my home city Zürich. So, to conclude I'd like to read you my story about Zürich.

Alain de Botton was born in Zürich, Switzerland in 1969 and now lives in London. He is a writer of essayistic books that have been described as a 'philosophy of everyday life.' He's written on love, travel, architecture and literature. His books have been bestsellers in 30 countries. Alain also started and helps to run a school in London called The School of Life, dedicated to a new vision of education. Alain's latest book, published in April 2016, is titled *The Course of Love*.

Photo: Mathias Marx

"Zürich is exotic. We normally associate the word 'exotic' with camels and pyramids. But perhaps anything different and desirable deserves the word. What I find most exotic about the city is how gloriously boring everything is. No one is being killed by random gunshots, the streets are quiet, the parks are tidy, and, as everyone says (though you don't see people trying), it is generally so clean you could eat your lunch off the pavement. What most appeals to me about Zürich is the image of what is entailed in leading an 'ordinary' life there. To lead an ordinary life in London is generally not an enviable proposition: 'ordinary' hospitals, schools, housing estates, or restaurants are nearly always disappointing. There are, of course, great examples, but they are only for the very wealthy. London is not a bourgeois

city. It's a city of the rich and of the poor. People are happy to be ordinary in Zürich... In Switzerland's largest city, the urge to own a car and avoid sharing a bus or train with strangers loses some of the urgency it may have in Los Angeles or London, thanks to Zürich's superlative tram network – clean, safe, warm, and edifying in its punctuality and technical prowess... This commitment to the 'exalted ordinary' continues in architecture. Zürich has very few iconic buildings. The museums and the opera house are sedate. Nothing is flashy. And yet this is a city with some of the best architecture in the world; ordinary buildings have to them a quality and thoughtfulness at the level of design that in other places would be accorded only to the icons. Visitors will notice beautiful detailing in the window tracery and concrete finish of schools and railway stations. There are parking lots that should be winning prizes, and primary-school buildings that display world-beating approaches to the innovative use of timber and brick. For a rent that would buy you a dilapidated one-room box in New York, you can live like a merchant prince in a brand-new apartment building. Zürich's distinctive lesson to the world lies in its ability to remind us of how truly imaginative and humane it can be to ask of a city that it be nothing other than boring and bourgeois." (Abridged extract reprinted with the kind permission of AdB)

Thank you Alain for sharing your thoughts and readings on Switzerland and for helping us launch *Literally Swiss*. Final question: Roger Federer or Andy Murray?

Roger Federer of course! But also the Swiss national football team. My young son and I are avid supporters and travel the world to support them!

Alain de Botton was guest of honour at the launch event for *Literally Swiss* at The Tabernacle Arts Centre in London. You can see the videos and read the blogs here: www.eurolitnetwork.com/literally-swiss-2

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Rosie Goldsmith: With both my BBC Journalism and *European Literature Network* hats on, as a linguist and long-term UK collaborator with *12 Swiss Books* and Pro Helvetia, I was asked to be Swiss Literary Consultant on the new *Pro Helvetia Swiss-UK Cultural Exchange and Export Programme*. *Literally Swiss* was created to give Swiss literature in the UK a 'face' and a more prominent and prestigious public profile. The aim is to provide more support to writers, publishers, agents, translators, cultural institutes, arts organisations, media, festival directors and event programmers, who might be interested in Swiss writing in English and developing projects for 2018 and beyond. We hope for more events, more books, more innovation and more cross-cultural projects. We are also trying to attract British writers and performers connected to Switzerland, as well as Swiss writers living in the UK. We are planning festival appearances, networking meetings, workshops, podcasts, films and a special Swiss edition of *The Riveter*.

Information on Translation Funding

Translation support
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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

For detailed information on the application procedure, please see the guidelines on our website:
www.prohelvetia.ch/en/translation-funding-and-support

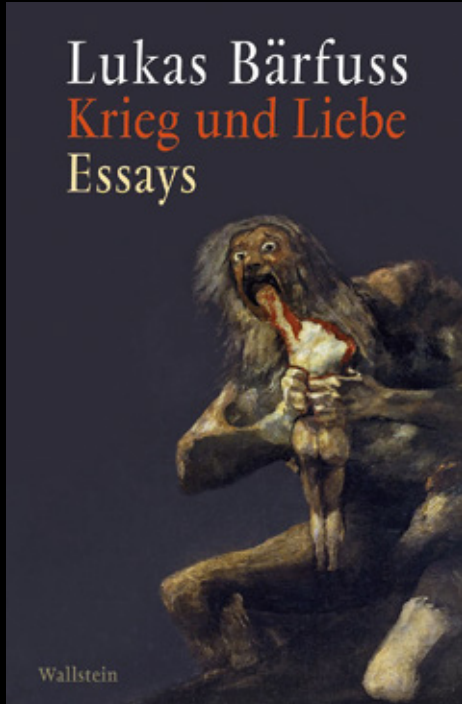
Please contact us if you have any further questions. We look forward to receiving your application.

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, welcoming all language combinations. 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.

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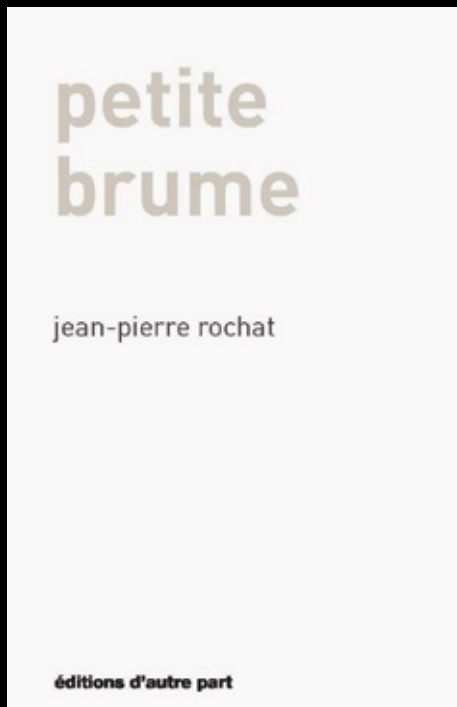
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4



6

Nominated
for the German
Book Prize
2018

1

Krieg und Liebe War and Love

Author [Lukas Bärfuss](#)

Genre Essays

Pages 288

Publisher Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen 2018

ISBN 978-3-8353-3241-6

Translation rights Lynn van Leewen,

Ivanleewen@wallstein-verlag.de

These essays by Lukas Bärfuss are a real event: sharply observed, pointed, strongly worded.

Whether reflecting on major themes of political or historical importance, or quite practical questions that affect ordinary people, Bärfuss is a writer and thinker of European stature.

He manages to deal with complicated matters in such a way that his clever lines of argument are easy to follow. Lukas Bärfuss shows that there are no questions, big or small, of which he cannot reveal the major connections and ethical dimensions and make them clearly apparent.

2

Retour dans l'Est Going Back East

Author [Isabelle Flükiger](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 232

Publisher Faim de Siècle, Fribourg 2017

ISBN 978-2-940422-59-3

Translation rights Charly Veuthey,

contact@faimdesiecle.ch

In this novel, the author goes to Bucharest in search of her mother's past.

Together, they discover the country her mother's family came from. As the journey progresses, her mother's entire life is revealed, along with that of her ancestors. We are taken right into the heart of Ceaușescu's Romania, but the focus is on the fate of the Romanian Jews. Flükiger also tells the story of her grand-parents, who eventually chose exile in Israel. *Going Back East* is a magnificent family saga and a superb book, which the daughter offers to her mother. It is carried along on Flükiger's precision of language and the inimitable style, which has already brought her such success.

3

Là-bas, août est un mois d'automne Down There, August Is Already Autumn

Author [Bruno Pellegrino](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 224

Publisher Editions Zoé, Chêne-Bourg 2018

ISBN 978-2-88927-507-6

Translation rights Caroline Couteau,
info@editionszoe.ch

Here is a book in praise of the slow pace of life; a novel about a brother and sister who've always lived under the same roof. Madeleine smokes cigars, runs the house, and, above all else, protects her brother. Gustave, for his part, doggedly chronicles the world and the things disappearing from it. He writes about the farming community and how it's changing its rituals, its tools and, with them, nature itself.

Bruno Pellegrino's talent is to encapsulate the very essence of this brother-sister relationship and the cocoon they've woven in the hollow of their environment, poised between self-sufficiency and symbiosis. The inspiration for this novel is a free adaptation of the lives of the poet Gustave Roud and his sister Madeleine.

4

Petite brume A Little Mist

Author [Jean-Pierre Rochat](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 116

Publisher Éditions d'autre part,

Geneva 2017

ISBN 978-2-940518-46-3

Translation rights Pascal Rebetez,

Jasmine Liardet, info@dautrepart.ch

A contemporary tragedy: in just one day, in his own farmyard, a farmer's life collapses. Everything he possesses, all his livestock is auctioned off. A world crumbles, told in the passionate, authentic and carnal language of Jean-Pierre Rochat. This novel is a distress call, a cry for help for the world of farming.

5

Wildern Poaching

Author [Raphael Urweider](#)

Genre Poems

Pages 106

Publisher Hanser, Munich 2018

ISBN 978-3-446-25825-9

Translation rights Friederike Barakat,

friederike.barakat@hanser.de

In Urweider's latest volume of poetry, he's the angry young man turned mature poet. His poems observe how objects interlock: "we eat fish that stink of paraffin and / cook with paraffin that stinks of fish". In similarly jaunty but astute vein, he dissects the world of plants: "what is the singularity of a snap / compared to the togetherness of a twig / branched boughs are never alone / a branch alone is only wood". Ten years after the appearance of his last excellent volumes of poetry, we welcome back a poet, as full of surprises as ever.

6

Eine dieser Nächte One of Those Nights

Author [Christina Viragh](#)

Genre Novel

Pages 496

Publisher Dörlemann Verlag,

Zürich 2018

ISBN 978-3-03820-056-7

Translation rights Sabine Dörlemann,

sd@doerlemann.com

It's one of those nights, where you've just got to keep on talking. That, at least, is how it seems to Bill, who's sitting beside Emma on a flight from Bangkok to Zürich. He is truly getting on her nerves. He thunders on about his life, what he's done – and not only to Emma, but to all the other passengers who are forced to listen to him.

In spite of themselves, all of them are sucked into his tales, into the fantasies he evokes. All these stories whirl together in a carousel of unexpected connections and analogies, out of which emerges a strange and secretive central focus. For Bill conjures up powerfully eloquent people, places and odd characters. The 12 hours of this night flight develop a dangerous charm – and not everyone is affected in the same way.

Swiss Literature Awards



Fabiano Alborghetti



Dumenic Andry



Michael Fehr



Baptiste Gaillard



Yael Inokai



Friederike Kretzen



Jérôme Meizoz



Yla Margrit von Dach



Anna Felder

Swiss Literature Awards presented by the Federal Office of Culture FOC

Every year, the Federal Office of 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 Award for Literature honours a personality who stands out through their exceptional dedication to Swiss literature. In addition, every other year there's a Special Award for Translation, awarded to an outstanding translator. For more information visit www.literaturpreise.ch

Sample translations of the 2018 laureates' texts can be provided upon request.

Maiser The Corn Man

Author [Fabiano Alborghetti](#)
Genre Verse Novel
Publisher Marcos y Marcos, Milano
ISBN 978-88-7168-793-3
Translation rights Livia Del Pino,
rights@marcosymarcos.com

Sablun Sand

Author [Dumenic Andry](#)
Genre Poetry
Publisher Chasa Editura Rumantscha,
Chur
ISBN 978-3-03845-047-4
Translation rights Anita Capaul,
anita.capaul@chasaeditura.ch

Glanz und Schatten Glitter and Shade

Author [Michael Fehr](#)
Genre Stories
Publisher Der gesunde Menschenversand,
Lucerne
ISBN 978-3-03853-039-8
Translation rights Matthias Burki,
info@menschenversand.ch

Un domaine de corpuscules Among the Corpuscles

Author [Baptiste Gaillard](#)
Genre Poetry
Publisher Hippocampe éditions, Lyon
ISBN 979-10-96911-02-8
Translation rights Gwilherm Perthuis,
hippocampe.editions@gmail.com

Mahlstrom Maelstrom

Author [Yael Inokai](#)
Genre Novel
Publisher Edition Blau im Rotpunktverlag,
Zürich
ISBN 978-3-85869-760-8
Translation rights Daniela Koch,
daniela.koch@rotpunktverlag.ch

Schule der Indienfahrer School of Indian Travellers

Author [Friederike Kretzen](#)
Genre Novel
Publisher Stroemfeld Verlag,
Frankfurt/M. and Basel
ISBN 978-3-86600-272-2
Translation rights Doris Kern,
doriskern@stroemfeld.de

Faire le garçon To Play the Boy

Author [Jérôme Meizoz](#)
Genre Novel
Publisher Éditions Zoé, Chêne-Bourg
ISBN 978-2-88927-391-1
Translation rights Caroline Couteau,
info@editionszoe.ch

Special Award for Translation

With [Yla Margrit von Dach](#) a translator is honoured who after completing her education has devoted her entire life to writing. To date she has translated countless novels, several plays, and volumes of poetry, as well as works of non-fiction, from French into German. Alongside a whole range of authors from France, her translations have contributed to bringing a large number of Swiss-French writers to the attention of German Swiss readers. Amongst these are Sylviane Châtelain, Catherine Colomb, Marie-Claude Dewarrat, Monique Laederach, Janine Massard, Sylviane Roche and Catherine Safonoff. From its very beginning, she has worked regularly with the *Centre de traduction littéraire* in Lausanne, promoting their outlook and experiences in discussions and workshops. Her breadth of work as a translator and her public appearances in Switzerland and in many other countries have helped ensure that literary translation is today valued as a distinct art and skill.

Swiss Grand Award for Literature

[Anna Felder](#) is from Lugano but lives in Aarau; her writing stands out in Swiss literature as a distinct but highly fascinating phenomenon. Since her first and famous book *Tra Dove Piove e Non Piove* in 1972, she has built a corpus of work, which is remarkable for its coherence and originality. Getting into one of her books is not always easy: she avoids familiar, well-trodden paths and her verbal experiments show a preference for leaving things out. She has made an art-form out of ellipsis. Nonetheless, her books have their readers and have become part of the literary tradition of Italian-speaking Switzerland and beyond. So one can easily imagine that this will also be the case with her recently published work *Liquida* (2017), which complements her collected prose writing of the last fifteen years.

“Let’s be honest: what is the original compared to an inspired translation? ... What bliss to be translated!”

Felicitas Hoppe, German writer and Büchner Prize winner,
in: Zaitenklänge: Geschichten aus der Geschichte der
Übersetzung, ed. by Marie Luise Knott et al. (Deutscher
Übersetzerfonds), Berlin 2018.

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