



WINTER 2022

Olga Ravn

The Employees

A workplace novel of the 22nd century

- Translated from the Danish by Martin Aitken
- Cover design by Joan Wong

Shortlisted for the International Booker prize, *The Employees* reshuffles a sci-fi voyage into a riotously original existential nightmare

Funny and doom-drenched, *The Employees* chronicles the fate of the Six-Thousand Ship. The human and humanoid crew members complain about their daily tasks in a series of staff reports and memos. When the ship takes on a number of strange objects from the planet New Discovery, the crew becomes strangely and deeply attached to them, even as tensions boil toward mutiny, especially among the humanoids.

Olga Ravn's prose is chilling, crackling, exhilarating, and foreboding. *The Employees* probes into what makes us human, while delivering a hilariously stinging critique of life governed by the logic of productivity.

"*The Employees* is not only a disconcertingly quotidian space opera; it's also an audacious satire of corporate language and the late-capitalist workplace, and a winningly abstracted investigation into what it means to be human."

—JUSTINE JORDAN, *THE GUARDIAN*

"Everything I'm looking for in a novel. I was obsessed from the first page to the last. A strange, beautiful, deeply intelligent and provocative investigation into humanity. *The Employees* is an alarmingly brilliant work of art."

—MAX PORTER

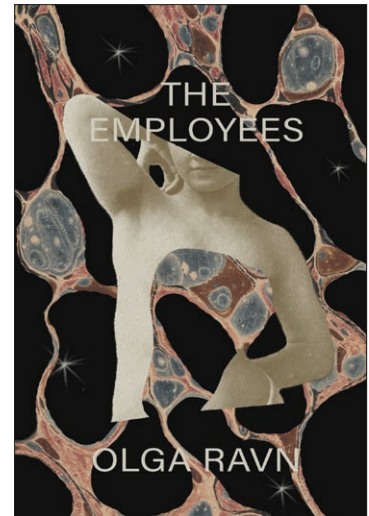
"Beautiful, sinister, gripping. A tantalizing puzzle you can never quite solve. All the reviews say that the novel is, ultimately, about what it means to be human. What makes it exceptional, however, is the way it explores the richness and strangeness of being non-human." **—MARK HADDON**

"What might result if Ursula K. Le Guin and Nell Zink had a baby?"

—TANK MAGAZINE

OLGA RAVN (born 1986) is a Danish novelist and poet. Her debut poetry collection / *Devour Myself Like Heather* appeared to critical acclaim in 2012. Alongside Johanne Lykke Holm she ran the feminist performance group and writing school Hekseskolen from 2015 to 2019. In collaboration with Danish publisher Gyldendal, she edited a selection of Tove Ditlevsen's texts and books that relaunched Ditlevsen readership worldwide.

MARTIN AITKEN has translated numerous novels from Danish and Norwegian, including works by Karl Ove Knausgaard, Peter Høeg, Ida Jessen, and Kim Leine.



CLOTH

FICTION

FEBRUARY

4½ x 7¼ "

144pp

ISBN

978-0-8112-3135-0

EBK

978-0-8112-3136-7

48 CQ

TERRITORY A

US \$19.95

Stevie Smith

Novel on Yellow Paper

• Cover design by Rodrigo Corral

The eccentric landmark novel by the legendary English poet Stevie Smith: “a rare bird, a Maltese falcon” (*The New Yorker*)

I am a forward-thinking girl, and don't stay where I am. 'Left right, be bright.'

Pompey Casmilus, Stevie Smith's loquacious alter ego, works as a secretary and writes down on yellow office paper this wickedly amusing novel. “Dear Reader,” she addresses us politely in the whirlwind of her opinions on death, sex, anti-Semitism, art, Greek tragedy, friendship, marriage, Nazism, gossip, and the suburbs. But most of all Pompey talks about love.

When Smith first tried to get her poems published in 1935, she was told by a publisher to “go away and write a novel!” *Novel on Yellow Paper*, the happy result of this advice, made its author an instant celebrity and was acclaimed as “a curious, amusing, provocative and very serious piece of work” (*The London Times Literary Supplement*, 1936).

“A more individual talent than Stevie Smith's you don't get. Her pre-war novel *Novel on Yellow Paper* is an unforgettable work that has nevertheless needed to be rediscovered several times since the day it was first greeted, correctly, as a masterpiece.” **—CLIVE JAMES, *THE NEW YORKER***

“She is a writer of astonishing skill, range, comedy, and depth of feeling; she is inimitable, strange, and utterly original.”
—HERMIONE LEE, *THE NEW YORK REVIEW OF BOOKS*

“I am a desperate Stevie Smith addict.” **—SYLVIA PLATH**

“Unique and cheerfully gruesome.” **—ROBERT LOWELL**

STEVIE SMITH (1902–1971) was born in Hull, England, but when she was three she moved with her parents and sister to Avondale Road in Palmers Green. Here she stayed for over sixty years, after her parents' death living with her beloved “Lion Aunt.” She was the author of three novels and a dozen collections of poetry. Although baptized Florence Margaret Smith, she was nicknamed Stevie after Steve Donoghue the jockey.



PBK	NDP 1520
FICTION	FEBRUARY
5 x 8"	160pp
ISBN	978-0-8112-3167-1
48 CQ	TERRITORY X
US \$17.95	

Stevie Smith

All the Poems

• Edited by Will May

The essential edition of one of modern poetry's most distinctive voices: all Stevie Smith's flabbergasting poems, now in paperback

Stevie Smith is among the most popular British poets of the twentieth century. Her poem "Not Waving but Drowning" has been widely anthologized, and her life was celebrated in the classic movie *Stevie*. This new and updated edition includes hundreds of works from her thirty-five-year career. In addition to the poems and illustrations from all her published volumes, the Smith scholar Will May discovered never-before-published verses and provides fascinating details about their provenance. Satirical, mischievous, teasing, disarming, Stevie Smith's poems take readers from comedy to tragedy and back again, while her line drawings are by turns unsettling and beguiling.

"That sense of the uncanny, the unheimlich or the peculiar, the grip of childhood terrors, the chance—perhaps our greatest fear—of never being known, the intimacy of wickedness, they are all here, in these poems."

—**CYNTHIA ZARIN, *THE NEW YORKER***

"A landmark volume brimming with wit, surprises, sardonic pleasures, and abiding compassion." —**DONNA SEAMAN, *BOOKLIST (STARRED REVIEW)***

"A poet who deserves a place, among her fellow modernists, as one of the best, silly-serious, funny-sad, mock mock-heroic poets of our time."

—**ANGELA LEIGHTON, *THE TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT***

"Smith's great gift is to sit on our shoulder like a feisty bird that's traveled a long distance, has been half starved on the way, and hopes your map will be different from hers." —**BARBARA BERMAN, *THE RUMPUS***

"Those crazy about this wonderful and strange poet will obviously want Will May's splendid *All the Poems*." —**MICHAEL DIRDA, *THE WASHINGTON POST***

"She is a great poet because almost half a century after her death, her poems are more startling and bizarre than those of many poets who deliberately set out, as one suspects Smith never did, to be startling and bizarre."

—**DAVID ORR, *THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW***



PBK **NDP 1521**

POETRY **FEBRUARY**

5 x 8" **848pp**

ISBN **978-0-8112-3166-4**

EBK **978-0-8112-2381-2**

24 CQ **TERRITORY D**

US \$29.95

Jessica Au

Cold Enough for Snow

• Cover design by Janet Hansen

Winner of the inaugural Novel Prize, an elegant and subtle exploration of the mysteries of our relationships to others

When she was growing up, she said that she had never thought of herself in isolation, but rather as inextricably linked to others. Nowadays, she said, people were hungry to know everything, thinking that they could understand it all, as if enlightenment were just around the corner. But, she said, in fact there was no control, and understanding would not lessen any pain. The best we could do in this life was to pass through it, like smoke through the branches, suffering, until we either reached a state of nothingness, or else suffered elsewhere.

A mother and daughter travel from abroad to meet in Tokyo: they walk along the canals through the autumn evenings, escape the typhoon rains, share meals in small cafes and restaurants, and visit galleries to see some of the city's most radical modern art. All the while, they talk: about the weather, horoscopes, clothes, and objects, about family, distance, and memory. But uncertainties abound. Who is really speaking here—is it only the daughter? And what is the real reason behind this elliptical, perhaps even spectral journey? At once a careful reckoning and an elegy, *Cold Enough for Snow* questions whether any of us speak a common language, which dimensions can contain love, and what claim we have to truly know another's inner world.

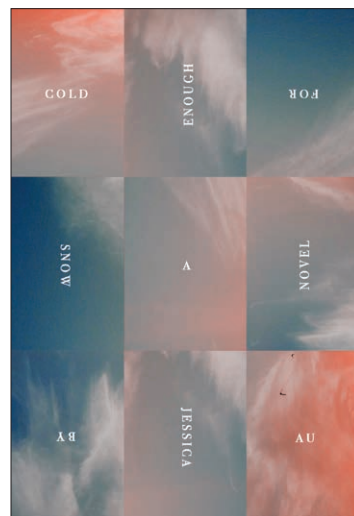
Selected from more than 1,500 entries, *Cold Enough for Snow* won the Novel Prize, a new, biennial award offered by New Directions, Fitzcarraldo Editions (UK), and Giramondo (Australia), for any novel written in English that explores and expands the possibilities of the form.

"Au's writing ebbs along effortlessly and poetically." **—THE AUSTRALIAN**

"Jessica Au is a new talent to be watched."

—ROMY ASH, AUSTRALIAN BOOK REVIEW

JESSICA AU is a writer based in Melbourne, Australia. *Cold Enough for Snow* will be published by New Directions, Fitzcarraldo Editions, and Giramondo, and is already set to be translated into twelve languages.



PBK **NDP 1522**

FICTION **FEBRUARY**

5 x 7" **144pp**

ISBN **978-0-8112-3155-8**

EBK **978-0-8112-3156-5**

48 CQ **TERRITORY A**

US \$15.95

Yoko Tawada

Scattered All Over the Earth

- Translated from the Japanese by Margaret Mitsutani
- Cover design by John Gall

A mind-expanding, cheerfully dystopian new novel by Yoko Tawada, winner of the National Book Award

Welcome to the not-too-distant future: Japan, having vanished from the face of the earth, is now remembered as “the land of sushi.” Hiruko, its former citizen and a climate refugee herself, has a job teaching immigrant children in Denmark with her invented language Panska (Pan-Scandinavian): “homemade language. no country to stay in. three countries I experienced. insufficient space in brain. so made new language. homemade language.”

As she searches for anyone who can still speak her mother tongue, Hiruko soon makes new friends. Her troupe travels to France, encountering an umami cooking competition; a dead whale; an ultra-nationalist named Breivik; unrequited love; Kakuzo robots; red herrings; uranium; an Andalusian matador. Episodic and mesmerizing scenes flash vividly along, and soon they’re all next off to Stockholm.

With its intrepid band of companions, *Scattered All Over the Earth* (the first novel of a trilogy) may bring to mind *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland* or a surreal *Wind in the Willows*, but really is just another sui generis Yoko Tawada masterwork.

“Magnificently strange.”

–RIVKA GALCHEN, *NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE*

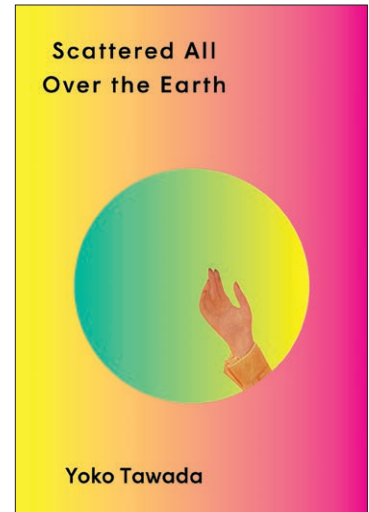
“Tawada’s strange, exquisite book toys with ideas of language, identity, and what it means to own someone else’s story or one’s own.”

–THE NEW YORKER

“Wonderful—what is truly affecting is Tawada’s language, which jumps off the page and practically sings.” –JUAN VIDAL, *NPR*

YOKO TAWADA was born in Tokyo in 1960, moved to Hamburg when she was twenty-two, and then to Berlin in 2006. She writes in both Japanese and German and has received the Akutagawa, Lessing, Kleist, Noma, Adelbert von Chamisso and Tanizaki prizes as well as the Goethe Medal. In 2018 her novel *The Emissary* won the National Book Award.

MARGARET MITSUTANI is a translator of Yoko Tawada (sharing her National Book Award) and Kenzaburo Oe (Japan’s 1994 Nobel Prize laureate).



PBK **NDP 1523**

FICTION **MARCH**

5 x 8" **256pp**

ISBN **978-0-8112-2928-9**

EBK **978-0-8112-2929-6**

48 CQ **TERRITORY A**

US \$16.95

ALSO BY YOKO TAWADA:

THE EMISSARY
978-0-8112-2762-9 • \$14.95

MEMOIRS OF A POLAR BEAR
978-0-8112-2578-6 • \$16.95

Phoebe Giannisi

Cicada

- Translated from the Greek by Brian Sneedan
- Cover design by Pablo Delcan

The celebrated Greek poet Phoebe Giannisi explores connections between language, life, and the natural world

By one of Greece's foremost contemporary poets, *Cicada* is Phoebe Giannisi's second collection in English. The cicada signifies metamorphosis in this breathtaking, lyrical book, which evokes the spirits of Archilochus, Plato, Empedocles, and Heraclitus. As the translator Brian Sneedan remarks: "The 'I' in Giannisi's poetry is never static, never a fixed point, but part of a process of rebodilying the ambient." Yet, despite the fluid, mythic nature of Giannisi's poems, they are also exquisitely rooted in the everyday: the sea heard through a window, the murmur of a distant mechanical crane, a damp wind, a photo of John and Yoko. Giannisi is a poet internationally known for her idiosyncratic eco-poetics, as well as her poetic multimedia works and performances, and most of all for her brilliant vision glowing at the borders of language, voice, place, and memory.

"Giannisi is unquestionably herself within a vanguard of Greek poets for whom self-awareness and honesty have become second nature." **—SHON ARIEHLERER, *WORLD LITERATURE TODAY***

"Sneedan is a meticulous translator and a poet in his own right. He brings Phoebe Giannisi's work to life with immediacy and conviction." **—EDMUND KEELEY**

"Giannisi's work glitters with such fragments: minimal, direct, and dense with loss." **—MAX SYDNEY SMITH, *REVIEW31***

PHOEBE GIANNISI was born in Athens in 1964 and is the author of seven books of poetry, including *Homerica* (chosen by Anne Carson as a favorite book of 2017 in the *Paris Review*). She is professor of architecture and cultural studies at the University of Thessaly.

BRIAN SNEEDAN is author of the poetry collection *Last City*. He is program coordinator of translation studies at the University of Connecticut and is managing and senior editor of World Poetry Books.



PBK **NDP 1524**

POETRY **MARCH**

5 x 8" **128pp**

ISBN **978-0-8112-3023-0**

EBK **978-0-8112-3024-7**

48 CQ **TERRITORY W**

US \$16.95

Fernanda Melchor

Paradais

- Translated from the Spanish by Sophie Hughes
- Cover design by Oliver Munday

Author of the acclaimed novel *Hurricane Season*, Fernanda Melchor leads us into a different kind of hell: paradise

Inside a luxury housing complex, two misfit teenagers sneak around and get drunk. Franco Andrade, lonely, overweight, and addicted to porn, obsessively fantasizes about seducing his neighbor—an attractive married woman and mother—while Polo dreams about quitting his grueling job as a gardener within the gated community and fleeing his overbearing mother and their narco-controlled village. Each facing the impossibility of getting what he thinks he deserves, Franco and Polo hatch a mindless and macabre scheme.

Written in a chilling torrent of prose by one of our most thrilling new writers, *Paradais* explores the explosive fragility of Mexican society—with its racist, classist, hyperviolent tendencies—and how the myths, desires, and hardships of teenagers can tear life apart at the seams.

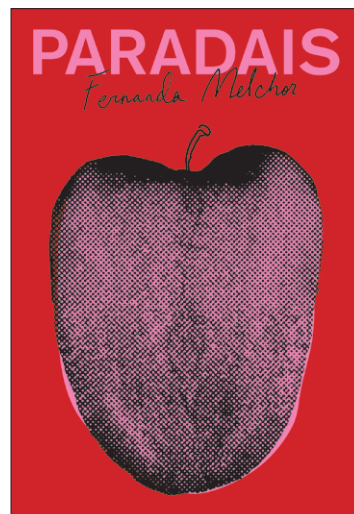
“Fernanda Melchor explores violence and inequity in this brutal novel. She does it with dazzling technical prowess, a perfect pitch for orality, and a neurosurgeon’s precision for cruelty. *Paradais* is a short inexorable descent into Hell.” **–MARIANA ENRÍQUEZ**

“Melchor evokes the stories of Flannery O’Connor, or, more recently, Marlon James’s *A Brief History of Seven Killings*. Impressive.” **–JULIAN LUCAS, THE NEW YORK TIMES**

“Fernanda Melchor has a powerful voice, and by powerful I mean unsparing, devastating, the voice of someone who writes with rage and has the skill to pull it off.” **–SAMANTA SCHWEBLIN**

Born in Veracruz, Mexico, in 1982, **FERNANDA MELCHOR** is “one of Mexico’s most exciting new voices” (*The Guardian*). Her novel *Hurricane Season* was short-listed for the International Booker Prize, longlisted for the National Book Award, and was a New York Times Notable Book.

SOPHIE HUGHES has also translated José Revueltas and Enrique Vila-Matas for New Directions. She was shortlisted for the 2019 and 2020 International Booker Prize.



CLOTH

FICTION MARCH

5 x 8" 128pp

ISBN 978-0-8112-3132-9

EBK 978-0-8112-3133-6

48 CQ TERRITORY A

US \$19.95

ALSO BY FERNANDA MELCHOR:

HURRICANE SEASON
978-0-8112-3073-5 • \$16.95

Yevgenia Belorusets

Lucky Breaks

- Translated from the Russian by Eugene Ostashevsky
- Cover design by Matt Dorfman

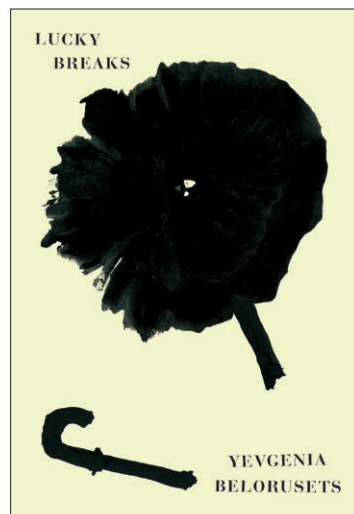
Powerful, off-beat stories about women living in the shadow of the now-frozen, now-thawing war in Ukraine

Out of the impoverished coal regions of Ukraine known as the Donbass, where Russian secret military intervention coexists with banditry and insurgency, the women of Yevgenia Belorusets's captivating collection of stories emerge from the ruins of a war, still being waged on and off, ever since the 2014 Revolution of Dignity. Through a series of unexpected encounters, we are pulled into the ordinary lives of these anonymous women: a florist, a cosmetologist, card players, readers of horoscopes, the unemployed, and a witch who catches newborns with a mitt. One refugee tries unsuccessfully to leave her broken umbrella behind as if it were a sick relative; a private caregiver in a disputed zone saves her elderly charge from the angel of death; a woman sits down on International Women's Day and can no longer stand up; a soldier decides to marry war. Belorusets threads these tales of ebullient survival with a mix of humor, verisimilitude, the undramatic, and a profound Gogolian irony. She also weaves in twenty-three photographs that, in lyrical and historical counterpoint, form their own remarkable visual narrative.

"*Lucky Breaks* is a book in Russian about the war in Ukraine that does not describe combat operations and that forbears to generalize in any way. The protagonists, many of whom are refugees, think of themselves as has-beens. To be, like one of them, a woman formerly from Alchevsk, in the contested Lugansk region, becomes the support structure for a new identity, an identity of which all we know is that it's irreversible: the world will never go back to being what it was. This is the point at which the tender and terrible stories of Yevgenia Belorusets—where bogeyman tales of childhood dress in the language of Jean Genet, and the documentary dilates into the epic—become the history we all have in common." —**MARIA STEPANOVA, *MUSIC & LITERATURE***

YEVGENIA BELORUSETS is a Ukrainian writer, journalist, artist, and photographer who lives between Kyiv and Berlin. Her photographic work calls attention to the more vulnerable sections of Ukrainian society—queer families, out-of-work coal miners, the Roma, people living in the war zone in the East—and was shown in the Ukrainian pavilion at the 56th Venice Biennale. *Lucky Breaks*, her first work of fiction, was given a 2020 HKW International Literature Award in Germany.

EUGENE OSTASHEVSKY is a poet, translator, and scholar. He is the author of *The Pirate Who Does Not Know the Value of Pi* and *The Life and Opinions of DJ Spinoza*. He teaches in the Liberal Studies program at NYU.



PBK NDP 1525

FICTION MARCH

5 x 8" 160pp

ISBN 978-0-8112-2984-5

EBK 978-0-8112-2985-2

48 CQ TERRITORY A

US \$14.95

Juan Emar

Yesterday

- Introduction by *Alejandro Zambra*
- Translated from the Spanish by *Megan McDowell*
- Cover design by *Erik Carter*

For the first time in English, a mind-bending, surreal masterpiece by “the forerunner of them all” (Pablo Neruda)

In the city of San Agustín de Tango, the banal is hard to tell from the bizarre. In a single day, a man is guillotined for preaching the intellectual pleasures of sex; an ostrich in a zoo, reversing roles, devours a lion; and a man, while urinating, goes bungee jumping through time itself—and manages to escape. Or does he? Witness the weird machinery of *Yesterday*, where the Chilean master Juan Emar deploys irony, digression, and giddy repetitions to ratchet up narrative tension again and again and again, in this thrilling whirlwind of the ecstatically unexpected—all wed to the happiest marriage of any novel, ever.

Born in Chile at the tail end of the nineteenth century, Juan Emar was largely overlooked during his lifetime, and lived in self-imposed exile from the literary circles of his day. A cult of Emarians, however, always persisted, and after several rediscoveries in the Spanish-speaking world, he is finally getting his international due with the English-language debut of *Yesterday*, deftly translated by Megan McDowell. Emar’s work offers unique and delirious pleasures, and will be an epiphany to anglophone readers.

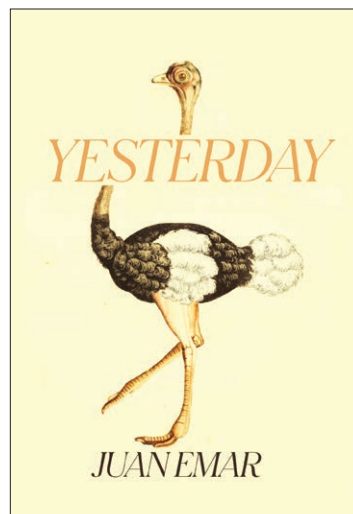
“Emar has no precedents, and no equals.” —**CÉSAR AIRA**

“Juan Emar, ahead of his time, was no doubt writing for readers of the future, and it’s as arrogant as it is exciting to suppose that those readers of the future are us.” —**ALEJANDRO ZAMBRA**

“Juan Emar, the Chilean writer who bears a marked resemblance to the monument to the unknown soldier.” —**ROBERTO BOLAÑO**

JUAN EMAR is the pen name of Chilean writer, painter, and art critic Álvaro Yáñez Bianchi. Born in Chile in 1893, he was a strong advocate of the artistic avant-garde of the 1920s and 30s, and his critical writings helped revolutionize the art scene in his country. Under-appreciated in his time, he is now considered to be one of the most important 20th-century Latin American writers.

MEGAN McDOWELL lives in Santiago, Chile. She has translated many of the most important contemporary Spanish language authors, including Alejandro Zambra, Samanta Schwebelin, Mariana Enriquez, and Lina Meruane. She has been nominated four times for the International Booker Prize, and was the recipient of a 2020 Award in Literature from the American Academy of Arts and Letters.



PBK	NDP 1526
FICTION	APRIL
5 x 8"	144pp
ISBN	978-0-8112-3157-2
EBK	978-0-8112-3158-9
48 CQ	TERRITORY A
US \$14.95	

Peter Weiss

The Shadow of the Coachman's Body

- Translated from the German and with an introduction by Rosmarie Waldrop
- Collages by the author
- Cover design by Jamie Keenan

A meticulously observed and macabre tale of hell on earth from the revolutionary German author of the famous play *Marat/Sade*

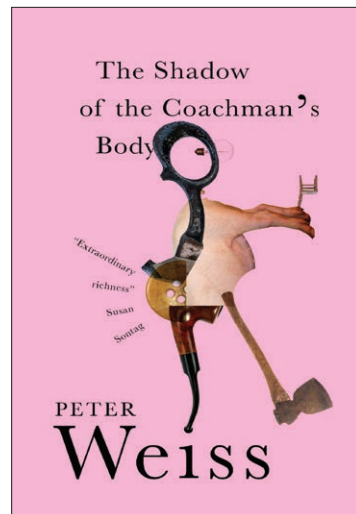
Peter Weiss's first prose work, *The Shadow of the Coachman's Body*, was unanimously praised as an original and perfect work of art by critics when it appeared in 1960. Here, in poet Rosmarie Waldrop's stunning translation, Weiss arranges a dark, vividly alive comedy of inert objects in a dismal boarding house—stones, buttons, hooks, needles, chairs, newspapers in an outhouse, clinking tin cups, celestial orbs, sewing machines, an overwound windup music box—which have oblique characters' shadows as their supporting cast. Described by Weiss as a "micro-novel," *The Shadow of the Coachman's Body* can be obscene, trivial and brutal, and yet it is also peculiarly intimate and offers endless possibilities—like a telescope and kaleidoscope rolled into one.

"Peter Weiss has, of course, achieved international celebrity through his plays and dramatic documentaries. But in the long run it may well be that his earlier prose writings will be recognized as his finest work." **—GEORGE STEINER**

"Exhilaratingly strange, compelling, and original." **—BOOKFORUM**

PETER WEISS (1916–1982) was a German playwright, dramatist, visual artist, filmmaker, and novelist. His works include *The Aesthetics of Resistance* and *The Shadow of the Coachman's Body*. He is best known in the US for his play *Marat/Sade*: Peter Brook's production received the Tony Award for Best Play in 1966. His documentary drama *The Investigation*, which recreates the trial of Auschwitz concentration camp guards, was produced on American television in the 1960s. He was awarded the Georg Büchner Prize after his death in 1982.

ROSMARIE WALDROP, born in Germany in 1935, is the author of several books of poetry, fiction, and essays, and a noted translator of French and German poetry. Her most recent books are *The Nick of Time*, *Gap Gardening: Selected Poems* (winner of the Los Angeles Book Prize), and *Driven to Abstraction*. She is a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and is a Chevalier of the Ordre des Arts et des Lettres. For fifty-six years, she and her husband Keith Waldrop ran one of the country's most vibrant experimental poetry presses, Burning Deck, in Providence, Rhode Island.



PBK NDP 1527

FICTION APRIL

4½ x 7¼" 80pp

ISBN 978-0-8112-3161-9

EBK 978-0-8112-3162-6

48 CQ TERRITORY W

US \$12.95

Peter Weiss

Conversation of the Three Wayfarers

- Translated from the German by E. B. Garside
- Introduction by John Keene
- Cover design by Jamie Keenan

This fast-moving, tightly wound, and gleefully dark novella contains an entire universe in miniature

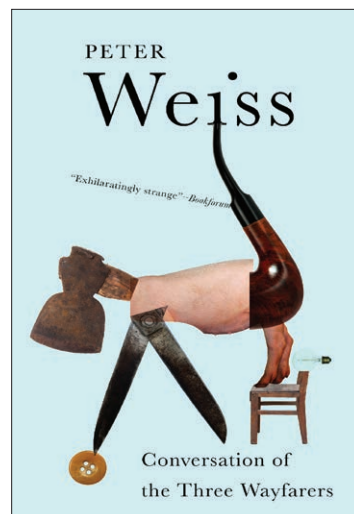
Conversation of the Three Wayfarers is a tale overheard, rather than told directly. Abel, Babel, and Cabel, the wayfarers, carry on a three-sided monologue, each reporting curious incidents—the effect is of three capers rolled into one: a steeplechase performed on a floating pontoon. But are they really three distinct individuals? Why do their lives blend in such a fantastic manner?

Weiss's strikingly original prose has an impossibly contained quality, with each sentence doing a perfect double-double backflip before neatly landing. This essential rediscovered work, from the masterful and acclaimed German modernist Peter Weiss, will be a delightful discovery for readers of Kafka, Musil, and Gombrowicz.

"Staggering ambition! Extraordinary richness!" **—SUSAN SONTAG**

"Peter Weiss embarks on his literary work and enters purgatory. All his work is designed as a visit to the dead." **—W. G. SEBALD**

"Weiss remains among the most important postwar German authors no one's read." **—SLATE**



PBK NDP 1528

FICTION APRIL

4½ x 7¼" 80pp

ISBN 978-0-8112-3163-3

EBK 978-0-8112-3164-0

48 CQ TERRITORY W

US \$12.95

E. B. GARSIDE was a German translator and the author of *The Man From Brazil*.

JOHN KEENE is a former member of the Dark Room Writers Collective, a graduate fellow of Cave Canem, and the recipient of many awards and fellowships—including a MacArthur Genius Award, the Windham-Campbell Prize, and the Whiting Foundation Prize for fiction. Keene teaches at Rutgers.

Jean Cocteau

Letter to the Americans

- Translated from the French by Alex Wermer-Colan
- Cover design by Rodrigo Corral

Like Alexis de Tocqueville a century earlier, Jean Cocteau offers a powerful reminder to Americans of their own potential—and issues

In 1949, Jean Cocteau spent twenty days in New York, and began composing on the plane ride home this essay filled with the vivid impressions of his trip. With his unmistakable prose and graceful wit, he compares and contrasts French and American culture: the different values they place on art, literature, liberty, psychology, and dreams. Cocteau sees the incredibly buoyant hopes in America's promise, while at the same time warning of the many ills that the nation will have to confront—its hypocrisy, sexism, racism, and hegemonic aspirations—in order to realize this potential. Never before translated into English, *Letter to the Americans* remains as timely and urgent as when it was first published in France over seventy years ago.

"The lasting feeling that his work leaves is one of happiness; not of course in the sense that it excludes suffering, but because, in it, nothing is rejected, resented, or regretted." **–W. H. AUDEN**

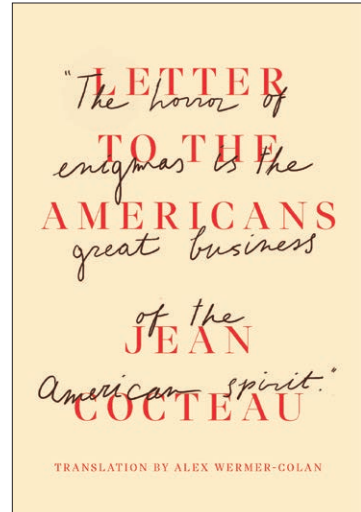
"One of the master craftsmen." **–TENNESSEE WILLIAMS**

"A man to whom every great line of poetry was a sunrise, every sunset the foundation of the Heavenly City." **–EDITH WHARTON**

"That is how Jean Cocteau's work seems to us, like a light, aerial, stormy civilization hanging from the heavy heart of our own. The very person of the poet adds to it, thin, knotted, silvery as olive trees" **–JEAN GENET**

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ALEX WERMER-COLAN is a writer, editor, dramaturg, and translator living in Philadelphia. His work has appeared in such publications as *The Los Angeles Review of Books*, *PAJ: A Journal of Performance and Art*, *Twentieth Century Literature*, *The Yearbook of Comparative Literature*, *The Conversant*, Indiana University Press, and *Lost & Found: The CUNY Poetics Document Initiative*.



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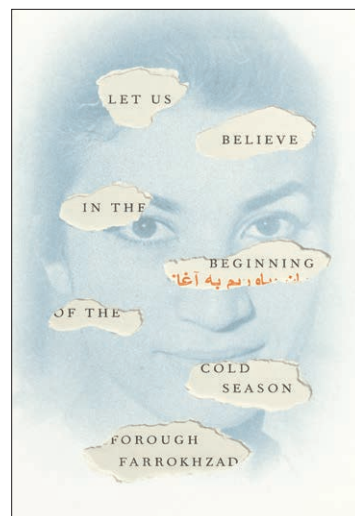
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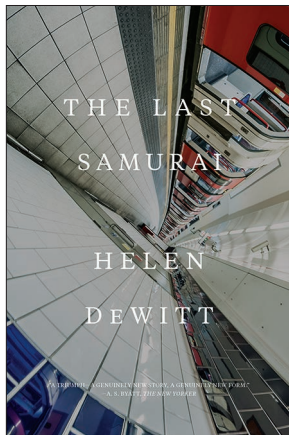
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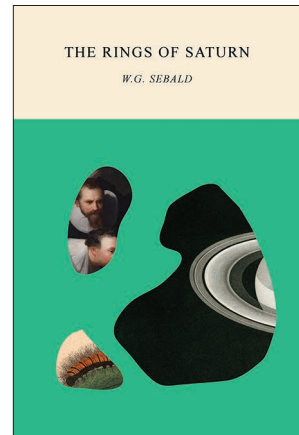
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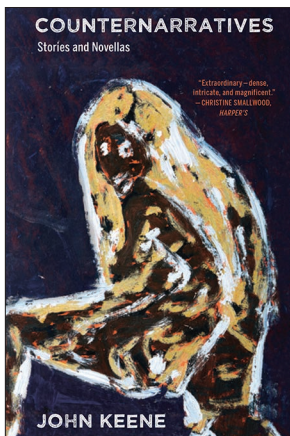
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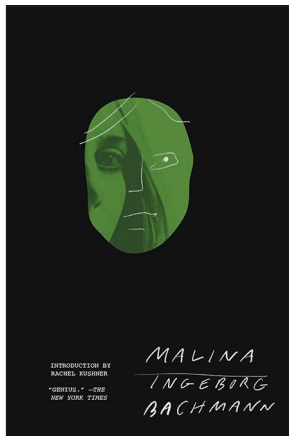
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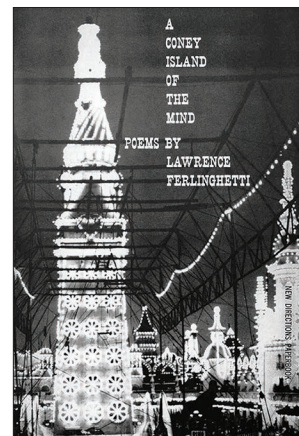
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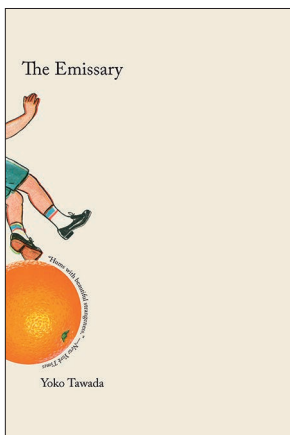
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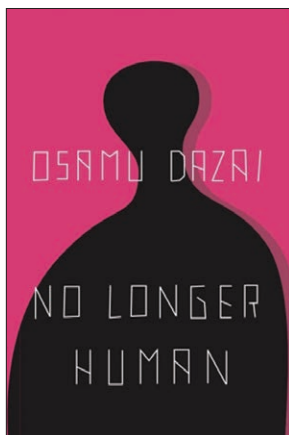
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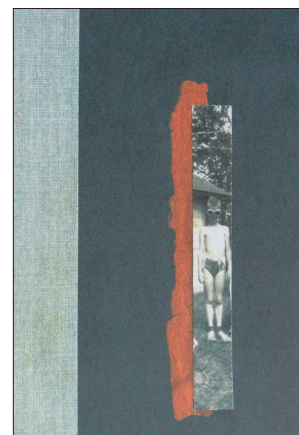
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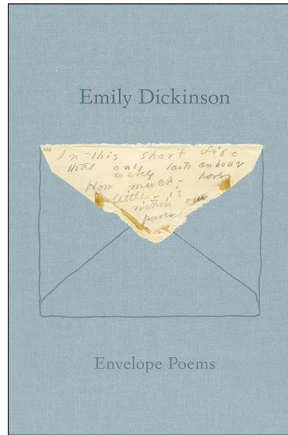


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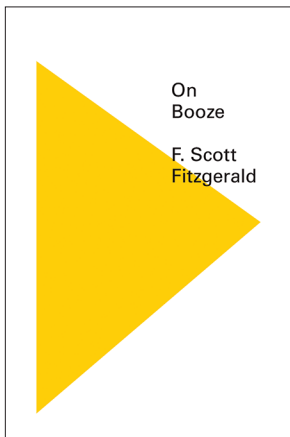
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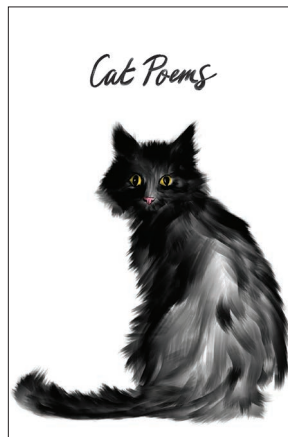
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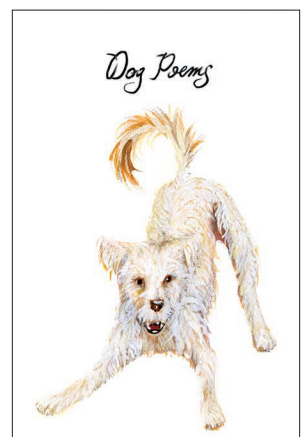
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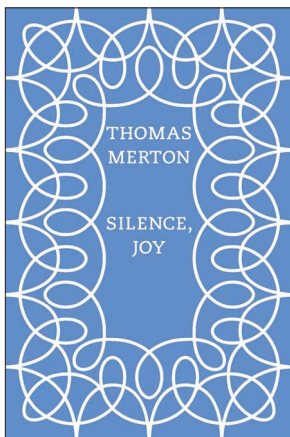
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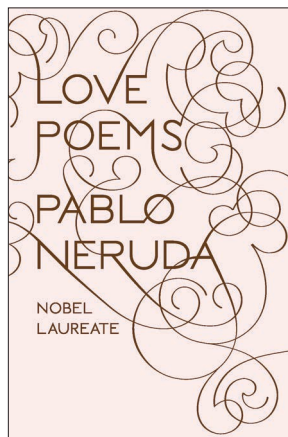
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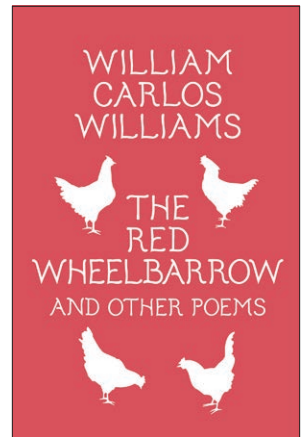
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