The Governesses

In a large country house shut off from the world by a gated garden, three young governesses responsible for the education of a group of little boys are preparing a party. The governesses, however, seem to spend more time running around in a state of frenzied desire than attending to the children’s education. One of their main activities is lying in wait for any passing stranger, and then throwing themselves on him like drunken Maenads. The rest of the time they drift about in a kind of sated, melancholy calm, spied upon by an old man in the house opposite, who watches their goings-on through a telescope. As they hang paper lanterns and prepare for the ball in their own honor, and in honor of the little boys rolling hoops on the lawn, much is mysterious: one reviewer wrote of the book’s “deceptively simple words and phrasing, the transparency of which works like a mirror reflecting back on the reader.”

Written with the elegance of old French fables, the dark sensuality of Djuna Barnes and the subtle comedy of Robert Walser, this semi-deranged erotic fairy tale introduces American readers to the marvelous Anne Serre.

"A cruel and exhilarating book. Anne Serre’s style is perfectly controlled. Colorful, by turns elegant and violent, it provokes that enchantment borne out of an unbridled imagination." —MARIE CLAIRE

"A delightful sabbath." —LIBÉRATION

“The story, classical in appearance, soon jolts us out of our sleepy ways.”
—LE MONDE
Mary Ann Caws

The Milk Bowl of Feathers: Essential Surrealist Writings

• Key works, with female surrealists back in the picture

An exciting new collection of the essential writings of surrealism, celebrating the mind’s deepest powers

Born at the famous Café Voltaire in Zurich in 1916 from the avant-garde Dada movement, surrealism aimed to free the creative act from rational thought. Max Ernst, André Breton, Tristan Tzara, Paul Éluard, Philippe Soupault, and Louis Aragon created a movement that spread like wildfire to all corners of the globe, inspiring new, groundbreaking poets as well as artists like Joan Miró and René Magritte and cinematic masters such as Antonin Artaud, Luis Buñuel, and Salvador Dali. As the editor, Mary Ann Caws, says, “Essential to surrealist behavior is a constant state of openness, of readiness for whatever occurs, whatever marvelous object we might come across, manifesting itself against the already thought, the already lived.”

Here are the gems of this major, mind-bending aesthetic and political movement: not only works by Aragon, Breton, Dalí, René Char, Man Ray, and Robert Desnos, but also works by key, often overlooked female surrealists—Mina Loy, Alice Paalen, Gisèle Prassinos, Kay Sage, and Elsa von Freytag-Loringhoven. The Milk Bowl of Feathers provides a grand picture of this revolutionary movement that shocked the world.

“Surrealism is destructive, but it destroys only what it considers to be shackles limiting our vision.” —SALVADOR DALÍ

“Every page should explode, either because of its staggering absurdity, the enthusiasm of its principles, or its typography.” —TRISTAN TZARA

MARY ANN CAWS is Distinguished Professor of English, French, and Comparative Literature, and Emerita and Resident Professor at the Graduate School of the City University of New York. She has translated and written on many surrealist writers including André Breton, René Char, Paul Éluard, Salvador Dali, and Pablo Picasso.
The Doctor Stories

• New preface by Dr. Atul Gawande
• Introduction by Dr. Robert Coles
• Afterword by Dr. William Eric Williams

A new edition of some of the best stories ever written about being a doctor: writing as aware and memorable as Chekhov’s.

*The Doctor Stories* collects thirteen of Williams's stories (direct accounts of his experiences as a doctor), six related poems, and a chapter from his autobiography that connects the worlds of medicine and writing, as well as a new preface by Atul Gawande, an introduction by Robert Coles (who put the book together), and a final note by Williams’s son (also a doctor) about his famous father. The writings are remarkably direct and freshly true. As Atul Gawande notes, “Reading these tales, you find yourself in a conversation with Williams about who people really are—who you really are. Williams recognized that, caring for the people of his city, he had a front-row seat to the human condition. His writing makes us see it and hear it and grapple with it in all its complexities. That is his lasting gift.”

“This is powerful but not comfortable reading, in the prose of a poet and the vision of a healer. I wish all doctors would read it.”

—THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“Stories written with the swift, concise, unsentimental exactitude of a great diagnostician who also happened to be a great poet.” —PHILIP GOUREVITCH

“A stunning combination of ease and urgency.” —BOOKLIST

“The Doctor Stories are clinical vignettes at their best and most engaging: dramatic, lively, full of the heroism it takes to be human.”

—THE ATLANTA JOURNAL-CONSTITUTION

“It is ever more apparent that WILLIAM CARLOS WILLIAMS was this century’s major American poet” (*The Chicago Tribune*).


The Pulitzer Prize-winning author of more than eighty books, DR. ROBERT COLES is a child psychologist and professor emeritus at Harvard.

DR. WILLIAM ERIC WILLIAMS took over his father’s practice in Paterson, NJ, and became a beloved pediatrician in his own right.
Taeko Kono

Toddler-Hunting and Other Stories

* Translated from the Japanese by Lucy North

An unforgettable collection of stories from “the most carnally direct and the most lucidly intelligent woman writing in Japan” (Kenzaburo Oe)

Winner of Japan’s top literary prizes (the Akutagawa, the Tanizaki, the Noma, and the Yomiuri), Taeko Kono writes with a strange beauty: her tales are pinpricked with disquieting scenes, her characters all teetering on self-dissolution, especially in the context of their intimate relationships.

In the title story, the protagonist loathes young girls but compulsively buys expensive clothes for little boys so that she can watch them dress and undress. Taeko Kono’s detached gaze at this alarming behavior transfixes the reader: What are we hunting for? And why?

Multiplying perspectives and refracting light from the facing mirrors of fantasy and reality, pain and pleasure, Toddler-Hunting and Other Stories presents a major Japanese writer at her very best.

“A sense of unease permeates this disturbing and exceptional collection of stories centered on unhappy women in postwar Japan.”

—PUBLISHERS WEEKLY

“Reminiscent of Flannery O’Connor’s works, Kono’s stories explore the dark, terrifying side of human nature that manifests itself in antisocial behavior.”

—WORLD LITERATURE TODAY

“Kono’s unspiring gaze penetrates the depths of human nature, and she sets forth what she finds there with absolute precision.” —SHUSAKU ENDO

“Kono’s intimate descriptions of unhappy relationships are not only unexpectedly frank, but often genuinely shocking.” —THE BOSTON REVIEW

Born in Tokyo, TAEKO KONO (1926–2015) was “one of the most significant feminist writers of postwar Japan” (The Japan Times).

LUCY NORTH is a Japanese translator and editor based in the southeast of England.
José Revueltas

The Hole

- Introduction by Álvaro Enrigue
- Translated from the Spanish by Amanda Hopkinson and Sophie Hughes
- Never before in English

A searing classic of twentieth-century Mexican literature, The Hole is dazzling and devastating

Set in a Mexican prison in the late 1960s, The Hole follows three inmates as they attempt to sneak in drugs under the noses of their ape-like guards. Desperate to secure their next fix, they hatch a plan that involves convincing one of their mothers to bring the drugs into the prison. But everything about their plot is doomed from the beginning, doomed to end in violence …

Unfolding in a single paragraph, The Hole is a verbal torrent, a prison inside a prison, and an ominous parable about deformed and wretched institutions creating even more deformed and wretched individuals.

"José Revueltas is the synthesis of the Mexican soul: contradictory, unkempt, inventive, despairing, and shrewd. We love him dearly." —Pablo Neruda

“It is impossible to understand contemporary Latin American literature without Revueltas’s masterpiece, The Hole. Its current invisibility in the English language places works like Roberto Bolaño’s 2666 and César Aira’s political novellas in a bibliographical vacuum." —Valeria Luiselli

"Revueltas undertook an examination of conscience that impresses me for two reasons: for the scrupulous honor with which he carried it out, and for the subtlety and profundity of his analysis." —Octavio Paz

The writer and journalist José Revueltas (1914–1976) was a lifelong political dissident. In the late ‘60s, he spent two and a half years as a prisoner in the infamous Palacio de Lecumberri, a penitentiary near Mexico City. There, in the space of weeks, Revueltas wrote The Hole, using the real prison as the setting for his novella.

Álvaro Enrigue is the author of five novels and three books of short stories. His novel Sudden Death was awarded the prestigious Herralde Prize.

Amanda Hopkinson is a professor of literary translation at City, University of London and has translated over forty books from Spanish, French, and Portuguese.

Sophie Hughes has translated numerous Spanish and Latin American authors. She is currently translating a novel by Fernanda Melchor for New Directions.
On Haiku

Everything you want to know about haiku written by the foremost expert in the field and the “finest translator of contemporary Japanese poetry into American English” (Gary Snyder)

Who doesn’t love haiku? It is not only America’s most popular cultural import from Japan but also our most popular poetic form: instantly recognizable, more mobile than a sonnet, and loved for its simplicity and compression, as well as for its ease of composition. Haiku is an ancient literary form seemingly made for the Twittersphere—Jack Kerouac and Langston Hughes wrote them, Ezra Pound and the Imagists were inspired by them, first-grade students across the country still learn to write them. But what really is a haiku? Where does the form come from? Who were the Japanese poets who originated them? And how has their work been translated into English over the years? The haiku form comes down to us today as a cliché: a three-line poem of 5-7-5 syllables. And yet its story is actually much more colorful and multifaceted. And of course to write a good one can be as difficult as writing a Homeric epic—or it can materialize in an instant of epic inspiration.

In On Haiku, Hiroaki Sato explores the many styles and genres of haiku on both sides of the Pacific, from the classical haiku of Basho, Issa, and Zen monks, to modern haiku about swimsuits and atomic bombs, and to the haiku of famous American writers such as J. D. Salinger and Allen Ginsburg. As if conversing over beers in a favorite pub, Sato explains everything you want to know about the haiku in this endearing and pleasurable book, destined to be a classic.

“The preeminent translator of Japanese poetry in our time—possessed of an unfiltered enthusiasm and spontaneity.”

—AUGUST KLEINZAHLER, LONDON REVIEW OF BOOKS

Hiroaki Sato

Hiroaki Sato was born of Japanese parents in Taiwan in 1942; his family fled back to Japan at the end of WWII, and in 1968 he moved to New York, where he has lived ever since. He is the translator of many volumes of Japanese poetry and literature. The president of the Haiku Society of America from 1979 to 1981, Sato received the PEN Translation Prize and the Japan-U.S. Friendship Commission Translation Prize twice. He is the author of the books Legends of the Samurai, Snow in a Silver Bowl, and One Hundred Frogs, and from 2000 to 2017 wrote the monthly column “View from New York” for the Japan Times. New Directions also publishes his translation of The Iceland by Sakutaro Hagiwara.
T. F. Powys

Unclay

T. F. Powys is a forgotten genius like no other—and Unclay is his masterpiece

First published in 1931, the spellbinding novel Unclay glows with an unworldly light. Death has come to the small village of Dodder to deliver a parchment with the names of two local mortals and the fatal word unclay upon it. When he loses the precious sheet, he is at a loss, and also free of his errand. Hungry to taste the sweet fruits of human life, Mr. John Death, as he is now known, takes a holiday in Dorsetshire and rests from his reaping. The startlingly alive natural world basks in summer loveliness, but the village teems with the old sins (lust, avarice, greed)—as well as some loving-kindness. What unfolds is a witty, earthy, metaphysical, and delicious novel of astonishing beauty and moral force.

“A master stylist and one of the most original of all English storytellers. T. F. Powys’s novels and the powerful Unclay ‘stand up like oaks.’” —TLS

“Very few twentieth-century authors have the knack of writing convincingly of first and last things.” —JOHN GRAY, NEW STATESMAN

“Essentially T. F. Powys’s novels are parables: heretical, scandalous, and mocking, but essentially parables. ‘I believe too much in God,’ he once confessed.” —JORGE LUIS BORGES

“For those who have learned to like him there is no one whose prose work is more prized today than T. F. Powys, an esoteric genius: his books are puzzling, engaging, and illuminating, glowing with a gentle, a half eerie light, humane, ironic and wise. Powys gives pleasure and delight, unique and surprising music.” —THE NEW YORK TIMES (1928)

T. F. Powys (1875–1953), “grimly brilliant” (John Carey, The Sunday Times), a novelist and short-story writer, belonged to a remarkable literary family (John Cowper Powys was his brother). He rarely left home or traveled by car, claimed to love monotony, and “never gave so much as a sunflower-seed for the busy, practical life.”

-7-
Amparo Dávila

The Houseguest and Other Stories

• Translated from the Spanish by Audrey Harris and Matthew Gleeson

The first collection in English of an endlessly surprising master storyteller

Like those of Kafka, Poe, Leonora Carrington, or Shirley Jackson, Amparo Dávila’s stories are terrifying, mesmerizing, and expertly crafted—you’ll finish reading each one gasping for air.

With acute psychological insight, Dávila follows her characters to the limits of desire, paranoia, insomnia, loneliness, and fear. She is a writer obsessed with obsession who makes nightmares come to life through the everyday: loneliness sinks in easily like a razor-sharp knife, some sort of evil lurks in every shadow, delusion takes the form of strange and very real creatures. After reading The Houseguest—her debut collection in English—you’ll wonder how this secret was kept for so long.

“Extraordinary.” —JULIO CORTÁZAR

“Amparo Dávila’s work reveals a short-storyteller equal to the best practitioners of that form in Latin America. The subject matter of her tales is universal. Amparo’s admirable stories, combining the everyday with the fantastic in human experience, give her work an artistic integrity found only in the creations of the Argentine master Jorge Luis Borges.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“The work of Amparo Dávila is unique in Mexican literature. There is no one like her, no one with that introspection and complexity.” —ELENA PONIATOWSKA

AMPARO DÁVILA was born in Mexico in 1928. She has published several collections of short stories and for a time worked as Alfonso Reyes’s secretary. In recent years a massive resurgence of interest has acknowledged her as one of Mexico’s finest masters of the short story. Awarded the Xavier Villaurreitia Prize in 1977, she was honored with the Medalla Bellas Artes in 2015.

A former Mellon Public Scholar, AUDREY HARRIS holds a Ph.D. in Hispanic languages and literatures from the University of California, Los Angeles.

MATTHEW GLEESON is a writer, translator, and co-editor of Writing Across the Landscape: Travel Journals 1960–2010 by Lawrence Ferlinghetti.
In 1506, Michelangelo—a young but already renowned sculptor—is invited by the sultan of Constantinople to design a bridge over the Golden Horn. The sultan has offered, alongside an enormous payment, the promise of immortality, since Leonardo da Vinci’s design was rejected: “You will surpass him in glory if you accept, for you will succeed where he has failed, and you will give the world a monument without equal.”

Michelangelo, after some hesitation, flees Rome and an irritated Pope Julius II—whose commission he leaves unfinished—and arrives in Constantinople for this truly epic project. Once there, he explores the beauty and wonder of the Ottoman Empire, sketching and describing his impressions along the way, and becomes immersed in cloak-and-dagger palace intrigues as he struggles to create what could be his greatest architectural masterwork.

Tell Them of Battles, Kings, and Elephants—constructed from real historical fragments—is a thrilling page-turner about why stories are told, why bridges are built, and how seemingly unmatched pieces, seen from the opposite sides of civilization, can mirror one another.

“All of Énard’s books share the hope of transposing prose into the empyrean of pure sound, where words can never correspond to stable meanings. He’s the composer of a discomposing age.”

—JOSHUA COHEN, THE NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW

“Énard fuses recollection and scholarly digression into a swirling, hypnotic, stream-of-consciousness narration.” —THE WALL STREET JOURNAL

“Necessary—no one else writes like Mathias Énard.” —FRANCINE PROSE
Kim Hyesoon

Autobiography of Death

Kim Hyesoon’s poems “create a seething, imaginative under-and-over-world where myth and politics, the everyday and the fabulous, bleed into each other” (Sean O’Brien, The Independent)

The title section of Kim Hyesoon’s powerful new book, Autobiography of Death, consists of forty-nine poems, each poem representing a single day during which the spirit roams after death before it enters the cycle of reincarnation. The poems not only give voice to those who met unjust deaths during Korea’s violent contemporary history, but also unveil what Kim calls “the structure of death, that we remain living in.” Autobiography of Death, Kim’s most compelling work to date, at once reenacts trauma and narrates death—how we die and how we survive within this cyclical structure. In this sea of mirrors, the plural “you” speaks as a body of multitudes that has been beaten, bombed, and buried many times over by history. The volume concludes on the other side of the mirror with “Face of Rhythm,” a poem about individual pain, illness, and meditation.

“The birdlike Kim weaves a pattern of poems, so strangely compelling and curious, and utterly unlike anything I had heard before.”  –SASHA DUGDALE

“Kim is a singular poet in Korea, just as she is in America, but we can only fully appreciate this when we see that, for her, violence is not the end but a means.”  –BOOKFORUM

“The limits of creativity here are so wide that very quickly we find we’ve fallen through the holes old wars blew open, into something like the endless dreams of millions dead.”  –BLAKE BUTLER, VICE

“The acclaimed Korean feminist poet Kim dizzies readers and seduces them into a surreal realm of corporeality.”  –PUBLISHERS WEEKLY
Inger Christensen

The Condition of Secrecy: Selected Essays

• Translated from the Danish by Susanna Nied

Available now for the first time in English, Inger Christensen’s most insightful essays and poetic prose pieces

The Condition of Secrecy is a poignant collection of essays by Inger Christensen, widely regarded as one of the most influential Scandinavian writers of the twentieth century. As the New York Times proclaims, “Despite the rigorous structure that undergirds her work—or more likely, because of it—Ms. Christensen’s style is lyrical, even playful.” The same could be said of Christensen’s essays. Here, she formulates with electric clarity the basis of her approach to writing, and provides insights into how she composed her poetry. Some essays are autobiographical (with memories of Christensen’s school years during the Nazi occupation of Denmark), and others are political, touching on the Cold War and Chernobyl. The Condition of Secrecy also covers the Ars Poetica of Lu Chi (261–303 CE); William Blake and Isaac Newton; and such topics as randomness as a universal force and the role of the writer as an agent of social change. The Condition of Secrecy confirms that Inger Christensen was “a true singer of the syllables” (C. D. Wright), and “a formalist who makes her own rules, then turns the game around with another rule” (Eliot Weinberger).

“Inger Christensen manages to make wit, passion and questioning, and astonishing design serve each other’s ends as one, and she does it in a way that is utterly her own.” –W. S. MERWIN

“Like Hesiod, Inger Christensen wants to give us an account of what is—of everything that is and how it is said and what we are in the midst of.”

–ANNE CARSON

ALSO BY INGER CHRISTENSEN:

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INGER CHRISTENSEN (1935–2009) was the recipient of many international awards, including the Nordic Authors’ Prize. Her other New Directions books include Alphabet, Azorno, Butterfly Valley, and It.

SUSANNA NIED’s work has appeared in various literary journals and anthologies. Her translation of It won the Harold Morton Landon Translation Award in 2007.
Camilo José Cela

Mazurka for Two Dead Men

• Translated from the Spanish by Patricia Haugaard
• A New York Times Best Book of the Year
• Nobel Prize Laureate

A beautiful, haunting, and brutal novel about the Spanish Civil War

*Mazurka for Two Dead Men*, the culmination of Camilo José Cela’s literary art, opens in 1936 at the beginning of the Spanish Civil War: Lionheart Gamuzo is savagely murdered. In 1939, as the war ends, his brother avenges his death. For both deaths, the blind accordion player plays the same mazurka. Set in backward rural Galicia, Cela’s excellent novel portrays a reign of fools, and works like contrapuntal music, its themes calling and responding, alternately brutal, melancholy, funny, lyrical, and coarse.

“His most mesmerizing fiction, about life during the first four decades of the twentieth century, a life so brutal that the Spanish Civil War, when it occurs, seems a mere continuation of the ordinary. A fiendishly haunting story.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“The definitive novel of how the Spanish Civil War was actually experienced by ordinary people.” —NEWSDAY

“Cela never forgets that the mazurka is a dance. He writes with gusto about that fundamental two-step of human existence: sex and death.”

—LOS ANGELES TIMES

“There is a secret slot for Cela at his best, as one of the great prose stylists, plural, of Spain—a man dangerously like us.”

—ROBERTO BOLAÑO

“Cela is the Goya of Franco’s Spain.” —PAUL WEST


**Patricia Haugaard** lives in Ireland and has translated many Spanish books.
Thomas Merton

Silence, Joy

• Edited by Christopher Wait

An inspiring gift edition of poetry and prose from the world’s favorite monk-poet

In this day of mindless distraction, we’re desperate for reasons to put down our phones and reconnect with our spiritual selves. In time for the bicentennial of Thomas Merton’s death in 1968, Silence, Joy is an invitation to slow down, take a breath, make a space for silence, and open up to joy.

Poet, monk, mystic, and social critic, Thomas Merton is a unique—and uniquely beloved—figure of the twentieth century, and this little rosary brings together his best-loved poems and prose. Drawn from classics like New Seeds of Contemplation and The Way of Chuang Tzu as well as less famous books, the writings in Silence, Joy offer the reader deep, calming stillness, flights of ecstatic praise, steadying words of wisdom, and openhearted laughter. Manna for Merton lovers and a warm embrace for novices, this slim collection is a delightful gift.

“Thomas Merton remains a source of spiritual inspiration and a guide for many people—he opened new horizons for souls and for the Church.”
—POPE FRANCIS

“Thomas Merton really is someone we can look up to. I always consider myself as one of his Buddhist brothers.”
—THE DALAI LAMA

“Merton possessed an extraordinary ability to connect with deep, universal places inside of people.”
—SUE MONK KIDD

“He is an artist, a Zen.”
—THICH NHAT HANH

THOMAS MERTON (1915–1968) is arguably the most influential American Catholic author of the twentieth century. Ordained as a Cistercian monk in 1949, Merton wrote over sixty books of poetry and prose, including his classic autobiography The Seven Storey Mountain, which has sold over a million copies. Merton was a strong supporter of the civil rights movement and an important figure in the dialogue between Eastern and Western religions.
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