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John Keene

Counternarratives

 Conjuring slavery and witchcraft, and with bewitching powers all its own, Counternarratives continually spins history—and storytelling—on its head

Ranging from the 17th century to the present and crossing multiple continents, Counternarratives’ novellas and stories draw upon memoirs, newspaper accounts, detective stories, interrogation transcripts, and speculative fiction to create new and strange perspectives on our past and present. In “Rivers,” a free Jim meets up decades later with his former raftmate Huckleberry Finn; “An Outtake” chronicles an escaped slave’s fate in the American Revolution; “On Brazil, or Dénouement” burrows deep into slavery and sorcery in early colonial South America; and in “Blues” the great poets Langston Hughes and Xavier Villaurrutia meet in Depression-era New York and share more than secrets.

PRAISE FOR ANNOTATIONS

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“A masterpiece.” —JEANNIE VANASCO, TIN HOUSE

“Annotations is worthy of the highest recommendation. It is an experimental work that pinpoints a new direction for literary fiction in the 21st century.” —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, selecting ANNOTATIONS as one of the 25 best fiction books of 1995.

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 Whiting Foundation Prize for fiction. Keene teaches at Rutgers.
Nathaniel Mackey

Blue Fasa

A stellar new collection of poems by “the Balanchine of the architecture dance” (The New York Times), and winner of the National Book Award in poetry

Nathaniel Mackey’s sixth collection of poems, Blue Fasa, continues what the New Yorker has described as the “mythological conception” and “descriptive daring” of his two intertwined serial poems—where, however, “no prior knowledge is required” for readers new to this poet’s visionary work. This collection takes its title from two related black musical traditions, a West African griot epic as told by the Fasa, a clan in ancient Ghana, and trumpeter Kenny Dorham’s hard bop classic “Blue Bossa,” influenced by the emergence of Brazilian bossa nova. In two sections Blue Fasa opens with the catch of the heart and the call of romance, as it follows a band of travelers, refugees from history, on their incessant migrations through time, place, and polity, toward renewal.

“Nathaniel Mackey’s poetry ambitiously continues an American bardic line that unfolds from Leaves of Grass to Pound’s Cantos to H.D.’s Trilogy, winds through the whole of Robert Duncan’s work, and extends beyond all of these. Mackey’s own rare combinations create an astonishing and resounding effect: his words go where music goes: a brilliant and major accomplishment.”
—DON SHARE, for the RUTH LILLY POETRY PRIZE CITATION

“Nathaniel Mackey is a poet of ongoingness involved in a kind of spiritualist or cosmic pursuit.”
—EDWARD HIRSH, THE WASHINGTON POST

NATHANIEL MACKEY was born in Miami, Florida, in 1947. He is the author of several books of poetry, fiction, and criticism and has received many awards for his work, including the National Book Award and the Ruth Lilly Poetry Prize from the Poetry Foundation. Mackey is currently the Reynolds Price Professor of English at Duke University.
Anne Carson

Antigonick

Here in paperback is Anne Carson’s stunning translation of Sophokles’s luminous and disturbing tragedy, given entirely fresh language and new life.

Anne Carson has published translations of the ancient Greek poets Sappho, Simonides, Aiskhylos, Sophokles and Euripides. Antigonick is her seminal work. This paperback edition includes a new preface by the author, “Dear Antigone.”

“Anne Carson does more than just update the language and quicken the pacing—she rewrites the play, mines its subtleties, its absurdity and its strangely comic timing and manages to produce a unique text out of a story that goes back much further than the fifth century B.C. when Sophokles wrote his version.” —MICHAEL H. MILLER, THE NEW YORK OBSERVER

“For two decades her work has moved — phrase by phrase, line by line, project by improbable project — in directions that a human brain would never naturally move. The approach has won her awards, accolades, and an electric reputation in the literary world.” —SAM ANDERSON, NEW YORK TIMES MAGAZINE

“She is one of the few writers writing in English that I would read anything she wrote.” —SUSAN SONTAG

ANNE CARSON was born in Canada and teaches ancient Greek for a living.
Nathanael West

The Day of the Locust

Admired by F. Scott Fitzgerald, Dorothy Parker, and Dashiell Hammett, and hailed as one of the “Best 100 English-language novels” by Time magazine, The Day of the Locust continues to influence American writers, artists, and culture. Bob Dylan wrote the classic song “Day of the Locusts” in homage and Matt Groening’s Homer Simpson is named after one of its characters. No novel more perfectly captures the nuttier side of Hollywood. Here the lens is turned on its fringes — actors out of work, film extras with big dreams, and parents lining their children up for small roles. But it’s the bit actress Faye Greener who steals the spotlight with her wildly convoluted dreams of stardom: “I’m going to be a star some day—if I’m not I’ll commit suicide.”

“Los Angeles has been the subject of, and setting for, many fine novels, yet The Day of the Locust still feels like the single best-achieved piece of fiction the city has inspired.” —LOS ANGELES TIMES

“West’s Day of the Locust, a sun-blazed Polaroid of its time, seems permanently oracular.” —JONATHAN LETHEM

“The Amazon West’s humor is of course not at the expense of the victim. It is a horselaugh at a world that is too ugly and bitter to be dealt with in any other way.” —THE NEW YORK TIMES

After publishing three novels, NATHANIEL WEST (1903–1940) moved from New York to Hollywood to write screenplays. The author of Miss Lonelyhearts, A Cool Million, and The Dream Life of Balso Snell, West’s reputation grew after he died in a tragic car accident—he is now widely considered to be one of the great American writers of the 20th century.
Yoel Hoffmann

Moods

Part novel and part memoir, Yoel Hoffmann’s Moods is flooded with feelings about his family, losses, loves, the soul’s hidden powers, old phone books, and life in the Galilee, with its every scent, breeze, notable dog, and odd neighbor. Carrying these shards is a general tenderness accentuated by a new dimension brought along with “that great big pill of Prozac.”

Beautifully translated by Peter Cole, Moods is fiction for lovers of poetry and poetry for lovers of fiction—a small marvel of a book, and with its pockets of joy, a curiously cheerful book by an author who once compared himself to “a praying mantis inclined to melancholy.”

“Hoffmann is not just a good writer but a great one, with the ability to find, in the moment-to-moment dislocation of daily existence, epiphanies of revelatory force... What Hoffmann has achieved is a kind of magic.”

—THE CHICAGO TRIBUNE

“Hoffmann’s is an exile literature in exile from itself: self-conscious, and humorously historicized, yet with none of its homage preserved obviously. In his pages, the oldest of folkish tropes are wryly revivified into a third literature, that of a new and Third East—an undiscovered continent of exotically compelling fictions.”

—JOSHUA COHEN, author of BOOK OF NUMBERS

“Hoffmann writes in a language of miracles.”

—AMERICAN BOOK REVIEW

Yoel Hoffmann—“Israel’s celebrated avant-garde genius” (The Forward)—supplies the magic missing link between the infinitesimal and the infinite

YOEL HOFFMANN, born in 1937 in Romania, is Israel’s foremost experimental novelist: he has written ten novels and been acclaimed as “miraculous” (A. B. Yehoshua), “spectacular” (The New Yorker), “radiant” (World Literature Today), and “stunning” (The New Leader).

The MacArthur Fellow PETER COLE’s newest collection of poems is The Invention of Influence (New Directions, 2014). He divides his time between Jerusalem and New Haven.
A puzzling phone call shatters a writer’s routine. An enigmatic female voice extends a dinner invitation, and it soon becomes clear that this is an invitation to take part in the *documenta*, the legendary exhibition of contemporary art held every five years in Kassel, Germany. The writer’s mission will be to sit down to write every morning in a Chinese restaurant on the outskirts of town, transforming himself into a living art installation. Once in Kassel, the writer is surprised to find himself overcome by good cheer as he strolls through the city, spurred on by the endless supply of energy at the heart of the exhibition. This is his spontaneous, quirky response to art, rising up against pessimism. With humor, profundity, and a sharp eye, Enrique Vila-Matas tells the story of a solitary man, who, roaming the streets amid oddities and wonder, takes it upon himself to translate from a language he does not understand.

“I don’t know Vila-Matas personally, nor am I planning to meet him. I prefer to read him and let his literature pervade me.” —PEDRO ALMÓDOVAR

“An elegant and ironic writer. Vila-Matas is one of Spain’s most distinguished novelists.” —RACHEL NOLAN, THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Enrique Vila-Matas has pioneered one of contemporary literature’s most interesting responses to the great Modernist writers.” —THE PARIS REVIEW

*Spanish literature
* Translated by Anne McLean and Anna Milsom

A literary look at one of Europe’s most acclaimed art exhibitions by a Spanish author “offering strange cerebral satisfactions” (*Village Voice*).

**About the translators:**

**ANNE MCLEAN** lives in Canada and has translated the works of Javier Cercas, Julio Cortázar, Carmen Martín Gaite, Ignacio Padilla, and Evelio Rosero.

**ANNA MILSOM** is Senior Lecturer in Translation at London Metropolitan University and currently lives in Chile. **TOM BUNSTEAD** lives in England and has translated the works of Eduardo Halfon, Yuri Herrera, and Rodrigo Fresán.
Enrique Vila-Matas

A Brief History of Portable Literature

- Spanish literature
- Translated by Tom Bunstead

A reader’s fictional tour of the art and lives of some of the great 20th-century artists and writers

An author (a version of Vila-Matas himself) presents a short “history” of a secret society, the Shandies, who are obsessed with the concept of “portable literature.” The society is entirely imagined, but in this rollicking, intellectually playful book, its members include writers and artists like Marcel Duchamp, Aleister Crowley, Witold Gombrowicz, Federico Garcia Lorca, Man Ray, and Georgia O’Keeffe. The Shandies meet secretly in apartments, hotels, and cafes all over Europe to discuss what great literature really is: brief, not too serious, penetrating the depths of the mysterious. We witness the Shandies having adventures in stationary submarines, underground caverns, African backwaters, and the cultural capitals of Europe.

“Vila-Matas’s work made a tremendous impression on me. I was so fascinated by his humor, the incredible knowledge he has of all kinds of literature, his compassion for writers, and his fearlessness in taking on literary subjects and making that part of what he is writing about.” —PAUL AUSTER

“Arguably Spain’s most significant contemporary literary figure.” —JOANNA SKAVENNA, THE NEW YORKER

“Vila-Matas’s touch is light and whimsical, while his allusions encompass a rogue’s gallery of world literature.” —TIME OUT NEW YORK

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ENRIQUE VILA-MATAS (b. 1948) was raised in Barcelona. He briefly pursued a career in film before turning his attention to literature. Vila-Matas has won the Rómulo Gallegos, the Prix Médicis, the Gregor von Rezzori International Prize, and most recently the Formentor Award (awarded previously to Jorge Luis Borges and Samuel Beckett).
Oreo

A pioneering, dazzling satire about a biracial black girl from Philadelphia searching for her Jewish father in New York City

Oreo is raised by her maternal grandparents in Philadelphia. Her black mother tours with a theatrical troupe, and her Jewish deadbeat dad disappeared when she was an infant, leaving behind a mysterious note that triggers her quest to find him. What ensues is a playful, modernized parody of the classical odyssey of Theseus with a feminist twist, immersed in seventies pop culture, and mixing standard English, black vernacular, and Yiddish with wisecracking aplomb. Oreo, our young hero, navigates the labyrinth of sound studios and brothels and subway tunnels in Manhattan, seeking to claim her birthright while unwittingly experiencing and triggering a mythic journey of self-discovery like no other.

"Oreo is one of the funniest books I've ever read. To convey Oreo's humor effectively, I would have to use the comedic graphs, menus, and quizzes Ross uses in the novel. So instead, I just settle for, 'You have to read this.'"
—MAT JOHNSON, NPR BOOKS

"With its mix of vernacular dialects, bilingual and ethnic humor, inside jokes, neologisms, verbal quirks, and linguistic oddities, Ross's novel dazzles…"
—HARRYETTE MULLEN

"I'm usually very slow to come around to things. It took me two years to 'feel' Wu Tang's first album, even longer to appreciate Basquiat … but I couldn't believe Fran Ross's hilarious 1974 novel Oreo hadn't been on my cultural radar."
—PAUL BEATTY, NEW YORK TIMES

FRAN ROSS (1935–1985) grew up in Philadelphia. She wrote Oreo while working as a proofreader and journalist and then moved to Los Angeles to write for Richard Pryor.

DANZY SENNA is the author of several books, including the award-winning novel Caucasia. HARRYETTE MULLEN, a professor of English at UCLA, is the author of six collections of poetry, most recently Recyclopedia, which won a PEN Beyond Margins Award.
Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi

Mirages of the Mind

- First American publication
- Pakistani literature
- Awarded PEN/Heim translation fund grant
- Translated from the Urdu by Matt Reeck and Aftab Ahmad

A hilarious and nostalgic account of twentieth-century Muslim life on the Indian subcontinent

Basharat and his family are Indian Muslims who have relocated to Pakistan, but who remain deeply steeped in the nostalgia of pre-Partition life in India. Through Mirages of the Mind’s absurd anecdotes and unforgettable biographical sketches—which hide the deeper unease and sorrow of the family’s journey from Kanpur to Karachi—Basharat emerges as a wise fool, and the host of this unique sketch comedy. From humorous scenes in colonial north India, to the heartbeat and homesickness of postcolonial life in Pakistan, Mirages of the Mind forms an authentic portrait of life among South Asia’s Urdu speakers, rendered beautifully into English by Matt Reeck and Aftab Ahmad.

“Humor can be the hardest element to successfully bring into a new language and the translators carry over the singularly elastic wit of Yousufi with considerable aplomb.” —WIRED

“One of Pakistan’s greatest living writers, Yousufi, pens a book that encapsulates the many aspects of living in South Asia—its culture, familial relations, the pain of Partition and the nostalgia among those who witnessed the breakup of the subcontinent—with excellent satire.” —THE EXPRESS TRIBUNE

“I am a confirmed fan. Rarely have I encountered a book which made me laugh so freely, and was such a pleasure to read aloud.” —TIME OUT NEW DELHI

Mushtaq Ahmed Yousufi (b. 1923) is the author of four books and has received the Hilal-i-Imtiaz and the Sitara-i-Imtiaz, two of the most coveted arts awards in Pakistan.

Matt Reeck has published translations and poetry in the United States and India, and is the recipient of a Fulbright and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the PEN Foundation. Aftab Ahmad is Lecturer in Hindi-Urdu at Columbia University.
The recent publication by New Directions of five Lispector novels revealed to legions of new readers her darkness and dazzle. Now, for the first time in English, are all the stories that made her a Brazilian legend: from teenagers coming into awareness of their sexual and artistic powers to humdrum housewives whose lives are shattered by unexpected epiphanies to old people who don’t know what to do with themselves. Clarice’s stories take us through their lives—and ours.

From one of the greatest modern writers, these eighty-six stories, gathered from the nine collections published during Clarice Lispector’s lifetime, follow her from her teens to her deathbed.

“Clarice Lispector had a diamond-hard intelligence, a visionary instinct, and a sense of humor that veered from naïf wonder to wicked comedy.”
–RACHEL KUSHNER, author of THE FLAMETHROWERS

“One of the hidden geniuses of the twentieth century.”
–COLM TÓIBÍN

“The premier Latin American woman prose writer.”
–THE NEW YORK TIMES

CLARICE LISPECTOR (1920–1977) has been called “a genius of character and a literary magician” (Publishers Weekly), “that rare person who looked like Marlene Dietrich and wrote like Virginia Woolf” (Gregory Rabassa), and an “elusive genius” (Megan O’Grady, Vogue).

KATRINA DODSON’s work has appeared in Granta, McSweeney’s, and Two Lines. She holds a PhD in Comparative Literature at the University of California, Berkeley. The author of Why This World: A Biography of Clarice Lispector and the series editor for New Directions’ new Lispector translations, BENJAMIN MOSER recently translated her masterpiece, The Hour of the Star.
Books by Antonio Tabucchi

New Directions is proud to be the publisher of the distinguished Italian novelist Antonio Tabucchi, whose works include The Edge of the Horizon, a story of an "unimportant death," now available for the first time in paperback.

"Ruminative, elegiac and mordantly funny, Mr. Tabucchi’s prose conjures a state between waking and dreaming." —THE NEW YORK TIMES

"Tabucchi has the touch of the true magician, who astonishes us by never trying too hard for his subtle, elusive, and remarkable effects." —SAN FRANCISCO EXAMINER

"His writing is cosmopolitan and sensual." —THE BOSTON REVIEW

ANTONIO TABUCCHI (1943–2012) studied literature and philosophy before taking up writing himself. Over the course of his career he won France’s Prix Medicis, the Italian PEN Prize, and the Aristeion European Literature Prize.

THE EDGE OF THE HORIZON

Antonio Tabucchi is a master of ambiguity and irony, an Italian writer as subtle as Calvino, as inventive as Eco. In this spare yet densely packed cautionary tale, Tabucchi reminds us (in an author’s note) that it is impossible to reach the edge of the horizon, which always recedes before us, but suggests that some people, like the philosopher Spinoza (and his namesake Spino), “carry the horizon with them in their eyes.”

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NEW DIRECTIONS
A Cat, A Man & Two Women

A novella and two short stories reveal Tanizaki at his best and most bizarre

The three pieces in this collection—the novella “A Cat, A Man, and Two Women” and two shorter pieces “The Little Kingdom” and “Professor Rado”—are light-hearted and entertaining variations on one of Tanizaki’s favorite preoccupations: dominance and submission in relationships, complicated even further here by customs, public opinion, and comic grotesqueries.

In the title piece, the bumbling Shozo is caught in the middle of an ongoing struggle between his ex-wife and her younger successor. Shozo would prefer to stay out of it and be peacefully left alone with his elegant tortoiseshell cat Lily, but he keeps getting dragged back into the battles and arguments. The result is an oddball love triangle centered around Lily, the only true object of Shozo’s affections—“one of the finest pieces of literature concerning cats ever written” (Choice).

“Tanizaki’s a really great writer. There’s a humor there that you don’t get in Yukio Mishima. Mishima wouldn’t know a joke if it flew up his nose and died there. But Tanizaki has got this warm ticklishness to his strangeness.”
—DAVID MITCHELL, author of CLOUD ATLAS

“Even his lighter-hearted fictions make us hold our breath, and the endings don’t let us quite exhale.”
—THE NEW YORKER

“A tour de force—catnip.”
—THE NEW YORK TIMES

JUNICHIRO TANIZAKI was born in Tokyo in 1886. He was “the outstanding Japanese novelist of the century” (Edmund White, The New York Times Book Review). His numerous works include The Makioka Sisters, Some Prefer Nettles and In Praise of Shadows.

The winner of the Japan–U.S. Friendship Commission Prize for this translation, PAUL MCCARTHY has also translated Tanizaki’s Childhood Years and The Gourmet Club (with Anthony Chambers).
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