12 SWISS BOOKS

RECOMMENDED FOR TRANSLATION

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12 SWISS BOOKS

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EDITORIAL

12 Swiss Books: our selection of twelve noteworthy works of contemporary literature from Switzerland. With this magazine, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia is launching an annual showcase of literary works which we believe are particularly suited for translation. Pro Helvetia also offers support to the publishers of these works in translation. Switzerland has had four official languages since 1938. But the dilemma over what constitutes 'Swiss literature' is much older. Which literature is considered Swiss? Does Swiss literature exist at all? With this magazine, instead of debating the problems of Swiss identity, we took up another challenge: to select a small selection of books from the country’s abundant literary landscape that we particularly hope will succeed in reaching an international readership. The recommendations of the editorial team are the fruits of a Swiss-British joint venture, combining, we hope, an extensive knowledge of Swiss literature with a British curiosity about the outside world.

Switzerland is the result of a sometimes uneasy alliance between four linguistic regions: German, French, Italian and Romansch. Three of these four languages are also part of larger linguistic and cultural zones that cross national borders. So the Swiss often find themselves at the margins, and this has also shaped their literature.

But perhaps the opposite is true as well: Switzerland is actually a centre, a central meeting point, not only for different languages but for different traditions and tastes, which can inspire new literary ideas. With our selection of 12 Swiss Books, we invite publishers, editors and translators to discover Swiss literature, and to use it as a starting point for further discoveries.

The new works of literature presented here do share one – perhaps surprising – trait: they are all about movement, travel, transit. David Collin’s ‘Les Cercles mémoriaux’ (Memorial Circles) spans half the globe. Alexandre Friederic’s ‘Ogrorog’ is an account of a bicycle tour across France. Hansjörg Schertenleib’s two female protagonists are both on the move, but in opposite directions: one wants to return to Switzerland, the other to leave it. In Ursula Fricker’s novel ‘Außer sich’ (Beside Ourselves), a short weekend-trip turns into a meeting with destiny. Marius Daniel Popescu’s novel ‘Les Couleurs de l’hirondelle’ (The Swallow’s Colours) unfolds in two countries, moving from Romania
to Switzerland, and back again. Irena Brežná’s book 'Die undankbare Fremde' (The Ungrateful Stranger) describes the difficulties experienced after 1968 by a young Czech woman as she tries to adapt to the methodical orderliness of her new country – Switzerland. Popescu and Brežná represent a generation of immigrant authors whose accounts of a ‘different’ Switzerland today take a prominent place in Swiss literature. And finally, in 'Das Kalb vor der Gotthardpost' (The Calf in the Path of the Gotthard Mail Coach), Peter von Matt’s witty and charming essays analyse the current concerns of Switzerland and its authors.

We have chosen twelve new works of Swiss literature, which have particularly delighted us ... so we hope you will enjoy reading these books as much as we have. Further information on Pro Helvetia’s support for translation can also be found in the following pages.

Movement, travel, transit – may these books find their publishers across the world!

Angelika Salvisberg (Pro Helvetia, Head of Literature and Society Division, Zurich)
Rosie Goldsmith (Journalist & Specialist of international literature, London)
Martin Zingg (Literary Critic, Basel)
It is the combination of contemplation and suspense that makes David Collin’s novel so captivating.

LE MATRICULE DES ANGES

Who is this man stranded in the Gobi Desert? What brought him here? The ‘Castaway’ is found by a caravan, and it soon becomes clear that he has forgotten everything. He knows nothing about his past and has no idea why or how he has come to this rather forbidding place. With the help of a shaman he tries to reconstruct his past. He wants to understand who he is and what his previous life was like. How did he become the man he is now?

To do this, he has to travel halfway across the world. Small clues and scraps of memory gradually piece themselves together and help him regain his identity, and with it his name: Elias Alejandro Esquivel. Shen-li, a Chinese photographer, is his companion on this journey. First she takes him to an archaeological excavation site. Later they travel together through Ulan Bator and Shanghai and then all the way to Buenos Aires. Along the way, Shen-li continues to take photos. The captions to the photos become part of the novel – but without the images.

According to his identity papers which eventually turn up, Elias comes from Argentina. There, he is ultimately confronted with the consequences of the military dictatorship of the 1970s. In Buenos Aires, Elias searches for the truth about his life. He becomes an archaeologist of memory: his own.

DAVID COLLIN was born in 1968 and lives in Fribourg. He produces cultural programmes for Espace 2, channel 2 of Switzerland’s French-language public radio. He also organizes literary events and is on the editorial board of the literary journal ‘La Revue de Belles-Lettres’. Since 2011 he has been series editor of ‘Imprescriptible’ for the Geneva publishing house Éditions Métispresses. ‘Les Cercles mémoriaux’ (Memorial Circles, 2012) is his second novel. His first, ‘Train Fantôme’ (Phantom Train), was published by Seuil in 2007.

PHOTO © Mario Del Curto

TITLE Les Cercles mémoriaux
PUBLISHER L’Escampette Éditions,
Poitou-Charentes (F)
PUBLICATION DATE 2012
PAGES 205
ISBN 978-2-35608-040-0
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Sylviane Sambor,
infos@ivre-poitoucharentes.org
Davide Collin has written an enchanting novel of great intelligence and subtle invention, full of astonishing plot twists and studded with literary allusions in the grand tradition of fantastic Argentine adventure novels. — Alberto Manguel
"Why do we dream by night of the things we fear by day?"

In 'Forest of Glass', an old woman and a young woman meet. One is in search of her happier past, while the other flees from a future she fears. The two women could not be more different. Roberta Kienesberger is seventy-two years old and has lost everything. They even took away her dog before putting her in a nursing home. But she resists and runs away. She rescues her dog and begins a journey from Switzerland back to Austria. She wants to return to her parents’ house. She wants to take control of her own life again. In secret, she plans her escape from the nursing home. She buys a small tent, hiking boots, a sleeping bag: everything she needs to return to her birthplace on foot. On the way, she meets fifteen-year-old Ayfer, who was born and raised in Switzerland. Ayfer’s parents have sent her back to Turkey, where she has to work in her uncle’s hotel on the Black Sea. There she is forced to confront the strict religious beliefs of her aunt and uncle. Ayfer, too, plans her escape in advance. “I am like a stone that is alive, she thought, a reptile waiting for the right moment, the moment it can’t afford to miss.” Now she is on her way back to Switzerland. Roberta and Ayfer will briefly cross paths. And they will recognise each other as kindred spirits – in spite of the great difference in their ages.

TITLE Wald aus Glas
PUBLISHER Aufbau-Verlag, Berlin
PUBLICATION DATE 2012
PAGES 285
ISBN 978-3-351-03503-7
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Inka Ihmels, ihmels@aufbau-verlag.de

HANSJÖRG SCHERTENLEIB
was born in 1957. He lives in County Donegal, Ireland, and in Suhr, Canton Aargau, Switzerland. He writes radio plays, drama, poetry, short stories, and novels, and has been a visiting professor at MIT (Boston, USA), and Oxford Brookes University (UK).
His most recent novels are: ‘Der Papierkönig’ (The Paper King, 2003), ‘Der Glückliche’ (The Happy Man, 2005), ‘Das Regenorchester’ (The Rain Orchestra, 2008) and ‘Cowboysommer’ (Cowboy Summer, 2010).
PHOTO © Milena Schlösser

Enjoy an excerpt on the next page!
WALD AUS GLAS HANSJÖRG SCHERTENLEIB

German original (p. 19-21)

Robert Kienesberger stand am Fenster des Bibliotheks-
raums und sah in den Garten hinaus. Die Wolkenbank, die
sich schnell über den Himmel schob, war schiefgeräumt,
das Sonnenlicht, gefiltert durch die Zweige der Bäume,
spritzte in die Fassade mit Flecken, die tanzten, wenn der
Wind auffrischte. Anfangs hatte sie den Bücherdienst so
oft wie möglich übernommen, aber seit sie nie mehr still-
sitzen konnte, hielt sie es kaum aus. Sie begann, die Liste,
in der es nach Essen roch, da sie an die Küche grenzte.

Humbel, ihr Zimmernachbar, saß auf der Parkbank und rede-
te mit sich selbst, wie oft, wenn er sich unbeobachtet fühl-
t. Sie wusste, wovon Humbel redete, schließlich kannte er
nur ein Thema: die Fortpflanzung von Tieren. Die Kieswege
leuchteten in der fahlen Abendsonne, der Himmel war jetzt
leer und weit, und sie trat auf den Gang hinaus und holte den
Wagen herein, auf dem sich die zurückgebrachten Romane
und Bildbände stapelten. Sie war nie eine Leserin gewesen
und hatte sich dafür nur gemeldet, die Bücher alphabetic
in die Regale einzuordnen, weil es eines der Ämter war,
bei denen man alleine war und seine Ruhe hatte. Sie interes-
sierte sich noch immer nicht für Literatur, aber seit sie vor
vier Wochen in ‹Hiob› von Joseph Roth ein gefaltetes Blatt
Papier gefunden hatte, auf dem in sorgfältiger Handschrift
mit Bleistift Worte aufgelistet waren, schlug sie jedes Buch
auf, bevor sie es zurückstellte. Sie hatte damals einen gan-
zigen Nachmittag gebraucht, um die einundzwanzig Worte
der Liste in Joseph Roths Roman zu finden: jedes einzelne Wort
war, verteilt über die 297 Druckseiten, mit Bleistift unter-
strichen gewesen. Sie sammelte die Listen, mittlerweile wa-
ren es acht, in einem Umschlag, aber sie hatte nie ernsthaft
versucht, herauszufinden, wer sie schrieb. Die Handschrift
gefiel ihr, sie war klein und doch großzügig, energisch und
doch elegant.

Es war die Schrift eines Mannes, stellte sie sich vor, eines
gebildeten Mannes, der sich gewöhnt war, Anweisungen zu
erteilen, der seine Bleistifte messerscharf spitzte. Heute
lag die Liste im untersten Buch des Stapels, ‹Die Nacht
von Lissabon› von Erich Maria Remarque. Remarque ‹im
Westen nichts Neues› hatte sie in der Schule gelesen, viele
Jahre war es her, gefallen hatte es ihr nicht. Sie nahm die
Liste aus dem Buch, entfaltete sie aber erst, als sie wieder
zurückkehrte.

It was the writing of a man, she imagined, an educated man,
who was used to giving instructions, who sharpened his
pencil to a knife point. Today the list was in the very bottom
book of the pile, ‘The Night in Lisbon’, by Erich Maria Re-
marque. She had read Remarque’s ‘All Quiet on the Western
Front’ at school many years ago, but hadn’t liked it. She took
the list out of the book, but did not unfold it until she was
sitting at the desk again:

Passagierdampfer / Glaskabine / Indonesien / Obersturm-
bankführer / Girlanden / Lump / Bienengesumm / Monteur-
anzug / Ausreisevisum / Kostbarkeiten / Kanarienvogel /
Mücke

FOREST OF GLASS HANSJÖRG SCHERTENLEIB

Excerpt translated by Martin Chalmers

Robert Kienesberger stood at the window of the library
room and looked out at the garden. The bank of clouds
pushing swiftly across the sky was slate-coloured, the
sunlight, filtered by the branches of the tree, sprinkled the
façade with spots which danced when the wind freshened.
To begin with she had taken on book duty as often as pos-
sible, but now that she was no longer able to sit still, she
could hardly bear being in the library, which smelled of food
because it was beside the kitchen.

Humbel, her neighbour from the next room, was sitting
on the park bench and talking to himself, as so often when he
thought himself unobserved. She knew what Humbel was
talking about, after all he only had one subject: the repro-
duction of animals. The gravel paths were bright in the pale
evening sun, the sky was now big and empty, and she stepped
out into the corridor and pushed in the trolley on which the
returned novels and picture books were stacked up. She
had never been a reader and had only volunteered to put
the books on the shelves in alphabetical order, because it
was one of the little tasks in which one was left alone and
had some peace. She was still not interested in literature,
but ever since, four weeks earlier, she had found a folded
sheet of paper in ‘Job’ by Joseph Roth, on which words were
listed in pencil in careful handwriting, she opened every
book before putting it back. Then it had taken her a whole
afternoon to find the twenty-one words on the list in Joseph
Roth’s novel: every single word, spread over the 297 print-
ed pages, had been underlined in pencil. She collected the
lists, there were eight meanwhile, in an envelope, but she
had never seriously tried to find out who wrote them. She
liked the handwriting, it was small and yet generous, vigor-
ous and yet elegant.

It was the writing of a man, she imagined, an educated man,
who was used to giving instructions, who sharpened his
pencil to a knife point. Today the list was in the very bottom
book of the pile, ‘The Night in Lisbon’, by Erich Maria Re-
marque. She had read Remarque’s ‘All Quiet on the Western
Front’ at school many years ago, but hadn’t liked it. She took
the list out of the book, but did not unfold it until she was
sitting at the desk again:

passenger steamer / glass cabin / Indonesia / SS Senior As-
sault Unit Leader / garlands / scoundrel / bees’ hum / boiler
suit / exit visa / precious objects / canary / mosquito

"We are all going to die, sooner or later. But a cracked vase lasts
the longest."
THE CALF IN THE PATH OF THE GOTTHARD MAIL COACH

Literature and Politics in Switzerland

DAS KALB VOR DER GOTTHARDPOST.
Zur Literatur und Politik der Schweiz

GENRE Essay, LANGUAGE German

"Simply the best book you can read about the state of our nation."

NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG AM SONNTAG

Peter von Matt is a phenomenon: both an academic and an essayist, a writer who masterfully combines precision and readability. When Peter von Matt has something to say, everyone listens. 'Das Kalb vor der Gotthardpost' (The Calf in the path of the Gotthard Mail Coach, 2012) is his most recent collection of essays and articles on literature and politics in Switzerland. Peter von Matt applies his customary subtle analysis to a variety of topics, such as Switzerland and its myths, contemporary language issues, or the treatment of immigrants. He is interested in the contradictions that continue to characterize Swiss politics and Swiss literature. "The combination of conservatism and belief in progress, a Janus-headed forward and backward gaze, is characteristic of Swiss political and literary life."

Switzerland as a country is rife with ambivalence. On the one hand, it barricades itself against the outside world, but on the other hand it is tied tight to the rest of the world and reliant on international exchange. This conflict between retreat and renewal, local and global, has been taken up again and again by Switzerland's major writers, many of whom are profiled in this book: writers such as Gottfried Keller, Robert Walser, Max Frisch and Friedrich Dürrenmatt, but also lesser-known writers such as Adelheid Duvanei, Beat Sterchi and Otto F. Walter. One thing remains clear: Peter von Matt's witty analyses of their work will excite interest in a broad readership far beyond the borders of Switzerland.

TITLE Das Kalb vor der Gotthardpost.
Zur Literatur und Politik der Schweiz
PUBLISHER Hanser, Munich
PUBLICATION DATE 2012
PAGES 368
ISBN 978-3-446-23880-0
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Friederike Barakat, barakat@hanser.de

PETER VON MATT was born in 1937 and lives near Zurich. He studied German, English and Art History in Zurich and London. From 1976 to 2002 he was Professor of German Literature at the University of Zurich. He has published extensively on Swiss literature and its links with politics, history and society, and is a frequent commentator on current affairs.

PHOTO © Annette Pohnert, Hanser Verlag
DADA – eine Miniatur


Dennoch ist DADA ein kulturhistorisches Monument, so einzigartig, schwierig, langweilig, wild und sensationell wie „Finnegan’s Wake“ oder „Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften“. Aber man muss den Zugang suchen. Sympathie allein tut’s nicht.

Das erste „factum brutum“ ist der historische Zeitpunkt. In dem einen Jahr, da alles entsteht, was wir DADA nennen, von März 1916 bis März 1917, spielt sich die Hölle von Verdun ab: 700 000 tote Deutsche und Franzosen; findet die Schlacht an der Somme statt; eine Million Leichen; folgen sich in Italien nacheinander vier Schlachten am Isonzo; stirbt der Kaiser Franz Joseph zu Wien; beginnt der deutsche U-Boot-Krieg gegen alle Schiffe aus England, auch die neutralen; bricht die russische Revolution aus; dankt der Zar ab; lösen die USA ihre diplomatischen Beziehungen mit Deutschland auf und erklären diesem kurz darauf den Krieg. Weltmächte, die sich für unerschütterlich hielten, kollabieren. Mit ihnen stürzen Glaubenswelten ein. Kronen rollten auf dem europäischen Kontinent wie Blechspielzeug. Die Völker beteten alle zum gleichen Gott, er möge doch die völker beteten alle zum gleichen Gott, er möge doch die

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Some like to travel on foot, but Alexandre Friederich prefers his bicycle. In his short, charming novel 'Ogorog' he recounts a cycling tour across France, from the Jura mountains to the Atlantic coast, beginning in a small village in the Department of Ain, southwest of Geneva, and ending in Gers, in the Midi-Pyrénées region of southern France.

The important thing is not the destination, but the journey itself, which takes him through regions that are often wet, noisy, and at times simply unpleasant. It is autumn. The travelling cyclist is en route through open countryside, among animals and nature, often chatting to the people he meets along the way. In the villages, he asks for bread or a place to spend the night, leading to experiences both pleasant and unpleasant. His journey is always full of surprises. Throughout 'Ogorog', Alexandre Friederich shows his talent for detailed observation.

The proximity of nature inspires him to reflect on the urbanisation of the landscape and the steady spread of suburban sprawl, prompted by the changing state of the forest, which he explores on this cycling tour: "I want to see where it is. Whether it is. Each time I find a forest, I will visit it, trespass through it." The forest – which "begins where the city ends, where politics ends" – has always been a place for society’s outsiders, a place of refuge.

ALEXANDRE FRIEDERICH

was born in 1965 in Lausanne. As a diplomat’s son, he was brought up in Helsinki, Madrid, Mexico and Hanoi, as well as in Lausanne. He studied philosophy in Geneva before embarking on various artistic and musical projects. Since 2000 he has devoted himself mainly to writing and cycling. One result of these joint activities was his book 'Trois divagations sur le mont Arto' (Three Rambles On Mount Arto), published in 2006. For 'Ogorog', Alexandre Friederich was jointly awarded the Prix Michel-Dentan in 2011 (together with Doua Loup).

PHOTO © Alexandre Friederich
October – I left my house and set out on my way. When the sky clears in the east, I sniff. I lean my bike against the embankment wall and rinse out my neckerchief, my gloves, my eyes. In Puthiers, a grinder turns, the rain hammers down. A Black Man from the islands steps down from the back of a small truck.

Where are you from?
From Lhôpital.

Lhôpital, higher up, where I live in a house surrounded by fifty-four cords of wood. He and I watch the mud flowing down from Grand-Colombier. The Black Man breathes heavily, the rain drips and the Jura mountains look like a stain. Him, he works in his truck. He's building a wall. He points at it. So that I know who I'm dealing with, he adds, I'm Ubald, I like rocks.

Me, I'm heading to the other side of France, to Aquitaine. Sky's not looking good!

Doesn't matter to me.

Mmh … Me, I'll be going up to there. and he points towards the far edge of the plot of land. Over there, where the wall is heading. Since May, Ubald has been advancing one trowelful at a time, of mortar, of stone. It won't be long. If I make it …

Because there's the hillside.

Ubald gets back to work. He climbs up on his truck, turns on the grinder, puts a stone up to the blade.

Careful!

Holding my hat between my teeth, I cover my ears. a shrill whine.

the stone goes into the blade. and splits. So the disk slows.

In the half hour since I left Lhôpital, I've crossed three villages: Chanay, Etranginaz, Puthiers. There are a hundred more to cross. Next Friday, in a week, I've got a rendezvous in another house, over there, in happy Aquitaine, in Gimbrède. While Ubald places the cut stone into the wall, I cough but am happy. happy to be outside, exposed to the elements.   I cough again and Ubald stops his work. Setting a stone requires concentration. It's ok, I'm done coughing. he reprend. Sets the stone. It grazes the mason's line. Me, I put my gloves back on and look out over the plot of land. I notice a villa fifty metres from the wall. you'd think it were kilometres away.

you see the villa?
Yes.

Small, Ubald says.

He laughs. Then he steps back from the wall and looks at the stone from above, from below, from the side. I told them the wall was too big, but the customer doesn't want to hear it. Look, you see, there he is, in his caravan. He's watching me.
"This man wants something from life. With The Goalie Is Me, the Swiss author Pedro Lenz has written a refreshingly old-fashioned book." DIE ZEIT

The goalkeeper is a young man from a village in the Swiss midlands. He is an indefatigable and gifted storyteller, a true rogue, both naive and crafty. His love for telling stories often gets him into trouble.

In colloquial language, the goalkeeper talks about his everyday life in the 1980s. Following a stint in prison, he tries to regain a foothold in his home village of Schumertal. At first this does not seem difficult, as the village has hardly changed during the year he had to spend in prison for a minor drug offence. His favourite pub is still there, and they still serve his beloved coffee ‘with a shot’.

The goalkeeper finds work, and falls in love with Regula, a waitress. "If you think about it, it’s really strange. You know a woman for years and don’t think anything of it, and suddenly, my God, suddenly she has something." Regula already has a boyfriend, which makes matters more complicated, but she still takes a trip to Spain with the goalkeeper. In spite of all his attempts to keep his life on track, the past still catches up with him. He gradually begins to realise that he was betrayed by so-called friends, who made him the scapegoat for their shady dealing. And yet: "The past is there for a reason. Mine isn’t all good, but at least I can tell it the way I want."

TITLE Der Goalie bin ig (Swiss-German dialect) PUBLISHER Verlag Der gesunde Menschenversand, Lucerne PUBLICATION DATE 2010 PAGES 192 ISBN 978-3-905825-17-6 TRANSLATION RIGHTS Matthias Burki, info@menschensversand.ch

TITLE Der Keeper bin ich (German, translated by Raphael Urweider) PUBLISHER Bilgerverlag, Zurich PUBLICATION DATE 2012 PAGES 171 ISBN 978-3-03762-024-3
It all started long before that, actually. I could just as well make out, though, that it all started that same evening, a few days after they let me out of the Joke.

It happened on a drive to the countryside, to Mecklenburg. Katja and Sebastian, a couple of Berlin architects, were on a long-planned outing to visit friends for the weekend. Katja was behind the wheel. They had recently been wondering whether they wanted to have a child in their forties—but suddenly things take a different turn. First they get stuck because of a traffic accident. Then something terrible happens: Sebastian suffers a stroke. A helicopter flies him to the hospital. He is put in intensive care. Several operations are followed by a long period of uncertainty. Katja, the novel’s first-person narrator, sits at Sebastian’s side and waits for him to come out of his coma. She looks at the machines and the tubes, and when Sebastian finally opens his eyes, she knows he will never again be the man she loved. Sebastian now needs special care.

In this remarkable and skilful novel, Ursula Fricker shows how life can change from one moment to the next. Nothing is the same as before. But the novel also describes deep love. A stroke of fate has forced Katja’s life in a different direction. What remains are the memories of a happy, intense time. Memories that bind her to Sebastian. What remains are existential questions about life, human dignity, and the choices modern medicine offers.

"This is a great novel because it poses the only really important question: what makes us human beings?" FREITAG

URSULA FRICKER was born in 1965 in Schaffhausen and now lives outside Berlin. She was a social worker, actress and newspaper reporter before publishing her first novel ‘Fliehende Wasser’ (Fleeing Waters, 2004) to great acclaim, winning several literary awards. In 2009 she published ‘Das letzte Bild’ (The Last Picture).

PHOTO © Ursula Fricker
I entered the room. I saw something lying in a bed. A mask, almost as white as the sheet. I walked. The long distance from the door to the bed. I saw nothing, only this notion of a face, tubes emerging from the mouth and nose. So unfamiliar, so unfamiliar the hands, as if arranged for a journey from which he would never return. I placed my hand on his. Cool. Quite cool. Bastian. My head was empty, so empty.

What had happened? How many times? Where were we? Something like this couldn’t happen to me, could it? to us. not to my Sebastian. I felt I was still on the highway. Moving faster than a person can stand. Driving into a wall that suddenly shoots up out of nowhere. that wasn’t like us. Who was that in the bed? Was it someone I knew? I didn’t understand. Wessen hand? What was I doing here?

I stroked the hand with no life. that once strong, sinewy, warm hand. I could still feel its touch on my face. Feel the fingertips gliding along my eyebrows, hesitating over my eyelids, stroking over my cheek to my lips. Me seeking his finger with my lips, my eyes closed, taking it into my mouth, the two of us sleeping together. those hands so deft, so tender, so good. lying here now, mute and half dried out. 

no, I said, that’s not him. as if I had to identify a corpse and as if it was entirely up to my testimony whether my husband was alive or not. I turned around to doctor Manke. It’s not him, I said again, aloud, angry. the telephone rang at the same moment. he had to go now, the doctor said, sorry, be brave. he left.

I drew up a chair and sat down. that face waxy pale. eyes closed. Bastian, I said. his name. My voice sounded hoarse, echoed as if desperately seeking the ear to go with that name. Bastian, I said. life goes on, you have to wake up. you have to do some driving too now. Bastian? Jana and Bernd and the children are waiting. the children, yes. there’s something I want to tell you tonight. a nurse came in and sent me out of the room.

they were going to do the coiling now, she said, I couldn’t stay. Did I have a long way home? What a question. If only she knew – my home was just being demolished, all that would remain were shreds of wallpaper, splintered mirrors, misshapen pipes, a pile of rubble.

"What remains is the knowledge of life’s fragility and the certain knowledge of sharing a great love: a love in which virtues such as fidelity and responsibility are of great importance, a love that endures after death." Neue Zürcher Zeitung am Sonntag
GOOD TIMES FOR FOREIGN FICTION?

AN INTERVIEW WITH BOYD TONKIN

Journalist and fellow 'champion' of international literature in the UK, Rosie Goldsmith, interviews Boyd Tonkin, the renowned Literary Editor of the 'Independent' and a founder of the 'Independent Foreign Fiction Prize': How can literature in translation be successful on the British market?

ROSIE GOLDSMITH Is this a good time for foreign fiction in the UK today?

BOYD TONKIN It's a time of possibilities and I am reasonably positive. Clearly the situation for all serious publishing is difficult and will remain so. The impact of the revolution in electronic publishing has only just begun to be felt and will have far-reaching effects on all aspects of literary publishing, including on translations. However, there are some positive developments here. New publishers have shown that the economics of literary publishing allow for new entrants at a relatively small cost and that they can cultivate a readership and extend the remit of what publishers do. So, although the global landscape of publishing is fraught with problems, the options that publishers have for extending their impact in terms of translated literature, I think, are considerable. The situation is not easy, but equally no time for apocalyptic pessimism.

RG How would you describe the attitude of British publishers to translated fiction?

BT It varies, from those relatively few advocates and champions who have always been deeply committed, through to scepticism, indifference and outright hostility. Much of the hostility is not so much a principled antagonism towards translation, it's more a kind of laziness. That's because in order to make a work in translation effective in the British market all sorts of things have to happen, which is not the case in other kinds of fiction: the translation has to be commissioned, it has to be of an adequate quality and it has to be funded. Therefore as a publisher you need to know about things like the translation support available from embassies and cultural institutes. It also has to be marketed in a more intelligent and creative way than with a familiar home-grown name. And the author, in many cases, needs to be present and visible. This creates its own logistical problems, also with publicity, especially if the author is not an English speaker. None of these are insuperable problems but they do require work, effort and forethought on behalf of publishers. And when they are simply looking at the bottom line, when finding, sourcing and selling books, either to make a profit or at least cover their costs, but instead end up in the red, this can act as a disincentive to turn people away from translation. So I think the problems are practical, and problems of the resourcefulness of publishers, rather than any intrinsic resistance in the market itself.

RG How do you think readers regard international fiction today?

BT I usually say – and I hope it’s true – that anyone who wants to read good and thought-provoking books will want to read in translation. People who are resistant to books in translation ‘per se’ are likely to dislike being stretched or challenged in their reading in any way. I think the core audience for translation is the same as the core audience for any intelligent writing. Readership could certainly be expanded, but, equally I don’t think there is any intrinsic opposition to reading in translation. It’s a very, very obvious point, but you only have to look at the extraordinary success of the Nordic crime writers to see that works in translation can penetrate into every corner of the British market.
RG Why then do we read so little in translation? It’s often quoted – vaguely – that ‘only 3 per cent’ of what we read is translated fiction.

BT There are two issues here. First, the question of the sheer number of books being translated and published and their significance as a proportion of fiction output as a whole. Second, the impact and reach of those translated books. My focus is always on making sure that those books we do have in translation reach the widest possible audience. But the question of proportions and percentages is not something I as journalist or advocate of international fiction can directly affect. That is up to publishers. The ‘percentages question’ can be a bit of a fetish: the English-language market is so huge, so diverse and so global that the proportion of translated books within the UK is never going to approach that within continental countries. That is the consequence of the global status of the English language.

RG How can translated fiction reach more people? Is it down to publicity, marketing, media?

BT As everyone in publishing tells you, ‘one size does not fit all’: every possible avenue needs to be addressed. That involves proper marketing, good design, amenable and helpful bookshops and online retailers. It involves media support and interest. It involves, if possible, the presence of authors at readings and festivals. Generally, the creation of a community of interest and of debate, which of course involves things like websites and social media. But still, in order to sell a book from an unfamiliar source, whatever it is, you probably need to hit four or five targets rather than simply one target. It’s not enough to have a good bookshop display or a rave review. But once all those things come together then you can create a kind of synergy or critical mass that makes readers aware that this is a book they might like to explore for themselves.

RG In Britain we have a large number of festivals and prizes for fiction. Increasingly, they feature foreign writers. Does that help?

BT That certainly helps. But I have become vividly aware over the 12 years that I have been involved with The Independent Foreign Fiction Prize that there is a danger that you create a kind of two-tier category of foreign writers. The first category is those able to come to Britain, the US or any other English-speaking country and can promote their work easily as they happen to command fluent English.

Then there are a very large numbers of good writers who don’t, who are thereby slightly disadvantaged in this field of self-promotion. It would be terrible if somehow publishers start to judge the attractiveness of foreign fiction on the basis that the author is able to come and operate as effectively as an English language author in the British market.

RG You are known as a champion of foreign fiction. What is your personal mantra in this regard?

BT My personal mantra is that the novel I am reading in translation should strike me as a work of outstanding literary quality in English, which is not quite the same as saying – as reviewers often do – that ‘I didn’t know I was reading a translation’. I actually don’t mind if I know that I am reading a translation, but I have to feel that the deployment of language is thoughtful, creative and considered – sentence-by-sentence, paragraph-by-paragraph. I don’t have a dogmatic position in ‘the great translators debate’, between ‘the natural-izers’ and ‘the foreign-izers’; those who believe that translation should be invisible, and those who believe the actual toil and process of translation should leave its traces. In practice I think it should vary from work to work depending on the qualities of the original.

On Being Translated

URS WIDMER, AUTHOR

The older I grow, the more I have the feeling when I write that I am not simply creating a new book, but in fact taking part in the great shared adventure of all writers worldwide: writing my share of the Book of the World, the sum total of everything that has been written in the past and is being written by us today. I feel I am part of a tradition that is truly becoming global. When Goethe dreamed of world literature (he was the first to coin the term), it was a touchingly distant utopia, and Weimar a backwater surrounded by turnip fields. But today Goethe’s dream is a near-reality. World literature does exist. That translations also exist considerably encourages my hope of being joined with the world and becoming a part of it. Translations are important to me, but most of the time I am compelled to simply trust my translators. My books have been translated into twenty-eight languages. Of these, I speak one well, one tolerably, and the third, almost. As for the rest: zilch. With my Chinese translations I do not even know which curl of brush-stroke is my name, and which is the title. Even the author’s photo seems to me somewhat Chinese; it could also be a picture of Thomas Hürlimann. The rule is: the smaller the language, the sooner they translate you. Finnish (my very first translation), Montenegrin, Greek, Korean, Hungarian. Even French – which considers itself the only language capable of expressing mind and heart – is not an impossible goal. English, however... I had to wait until I was over seventy to have an English book. Because, in the USA (and in Great Britain and Australia, too) people are content with what they write themselves. In the USA they seem unaware that other languages exist.

As everyone knows, there are no bookshops there, and they say that in the entire American publishing industry there is only one person who can read German at all. The rare bestseller that makes it across the Atlantic (Perfume, The Reader) is bought on faith, blind. I was bought on sight.

The rare bestseller that makes it across the Atlantic (Perfume, The Reader) is bought on faith, blind. I was bought on sight.
A work of fiction that in its original language has a certain transparency, clarity and modesty of style can clearly be properly rendered in an English which has the same qualities and does not draw attention to itself. Equally, something that has a highly personal or idiiosyncratic use of the original language requires a translation that shares those attributes. So I think with translation, as with many other aspects of literature, each case requires its own solution. There is no dogmatic mantra to adopt.

RG Who or what are the various ‘gatekeepers’ of translated fiction?
BT They are many and varied. They start with agents and publishers, who acquire knowledge of books they might want to translate, either directly through attendance at book fairs, or indirectly through the work of ‘scouts’. Also, if they see that a book has been highly successful in its home market that might attract their attention. But I think there is a big problem here, and I am not the first to say it: the (foreign) language skills of British publishers have diminished over the last two generations and they are now more reliant on reports from scouts or on sample translations. These samples are of variable, and sometimes more inferior, quality than used to be the case. This is a very difficult problem to solve, especially if you look beyond a core group of European languages. But my impression is that in the post-War generation there were publishers who could read with confidence in several languages and make their own decisions about translation on that basis. Today that sort of expertise is often outsourced, which creates its own problems as to whether publishers trust their informants and the scouts. This can’t be easily fixed, even if we had more multilingual publishers in Britain who knew French, German, Spanish, Italian, maybe Russian, because there is an entire wealth of literature in other languages needing professional advice. But I do think that it would be an advantage if some people felt they could succeed in publishing on the basis of their knowledge of languages, and that that was seen as a positive advantage, rather than simply an agreeable ‘add-on’.

RG Should foreign publishers focus on promoting specific literary genres?
BT Publishers abroad wanting to sell a particular book or author on the English language market, above all, need to be confident in the quality of the work. It’s not a good idea to ‘second guess’ what you imagine the British or American market would like. There’ve been a number of fairly disastrous translations of major bestsellers which haven’t worked at all. Crime fiction occupies a world of its own – at the moment a world that flourishes mightily and requires less attention. Successful crime novels from wherever will find eager takers in English, I think. But if you look at the broader area of ‘literary fiction’, then I think publishers simply need to be passionate about the book they are selling. Don’t imagine some sort of ‘ideal reader’, because that ideal reader does not exist. The market has to be created for an unknown author and it has to be created on the basis of quality. Just because you see that a particular genre has been successful in Britain or America, and you happen to have a best-selling novel in your language that seems to correspond to that genre, it would be catastrophic to imagine that therefore you can simply feed into that hunger. This is both a problem and a great advantage for people who want to publish fiction in translation in Britain. Every successful book has to create its own category. If you look at the pattern of books that have been successful in translation, all the way from Michel Houellebecq to Carlos Ruiz Zafón, from Umberto Eco to Peter Hoeg to Milan Kundera, these are books that created a space for themselves as unique self-standing contributions to literature, not simply as fresh additions to a pre-existing genre.

My publisher, Seagull Books, is in Kolkata, India, where there is an entire city district devoted exclusively to bookshops. There my works stand, small and thin and full of hope, squeezed in among ten or a hundred thousand paperbacks written in Hindi or one of the other hundred and twenty seven languages spoken in India.

URS WIDMER is one of Switzerland’s best known authors. He has published numerous novels and is also a very successful playwright (‘Top Dogs’), and an essayist. The novels ‘My Mother’s Lover’ (Der Geliebte meiner Mutter) and ‘My Father’s Book’ (Das Buch des Vaters) were recently published by Seagull Books.

PHOTO © Regine Mosimann / Diogenes Verlag

Never let a good crisis go to waste

TESS LEWIS, TRANSLATOR

The glass of translated literature in the English-speaking world is not running over but it is more than half-full. No one needs reminding that the publishing industry is struggling to survive. Yet this crisis also presents an enormous opportunity for the smaller, more nimble, innovative, and less profit-dependent presses to thrive.

Impressive ventures devoted to publishing translations have sprouted up in the past decade: Archipelago Books, Open Letter, and Europa Editions in the US, and Peirene Press, And Other Stories, and Pushkin Press in the UK, to name a few. Larger presses like Dalkey Archive and Seagull Books have begun National Literature Series, publishing several books a year from select countries. Whereas most university presses have reduced the translations on their lists or eliminated them altogether, Yale University Press founded the Margellos World Republic of Letters Series in 2010. In the ebook-only series The New York Review of Books (NYRB) will launch this year, four of the five novels are translations. The key to these presses’ success is their
I am going to put you on the spot and ask you what you know about Swiss literature?

The answer is, probably very little. If you were to ask me who was the Swiss author I have read most consistently I would have to say Jean-Jacques Rousseau. But more recently I have read Robert Walser.

How can the Swiss help us to be less ignorant? (laughs)

They can create a space in which Swiss writers come together and are seen as part of a coherent whole, which is precisely the point of websites, magazines like this and new forms of discussing Swiss literature as an entity. They can make sure Swiss writers attend festivals together in ways in which they can be identified as Swiss. They can make more effort to brand Swiss literature when it is published in translation in Britain. Of course one is aware that Swiss writers might feel they belong more to a transnational space. But in Britain we know all about that – being a state made up of four nations – so I don’t see that as forming an insuperable barrier to creating a stronger collective identity for Swiss literature.

The fact that the Swiss nation comprises French, German, Italian and Romansch – and several dialects – is that an advantage or disadvantage for creating this cohesive identity in the foreign fiction world?

Awhile ago the easy answer would have been to say, it was a drawback because it confuses people’s perceptions and muddies the waters. These days, however, everyone is concerned with the ways nations can contain more than one kind of cultural identity. This is after all a common theme not just in Europe but way beyond Europe. Countries with a long experience of navigating and negotiating multiple identities are becoming more attractive and more interesting on the global scene. Switzerland is a prime example.

Swiss literature is very interested at the moment in ‘immigrant literature’ and ‘literature in dialect’: is this something positive that they can share with the UK market?

It is certainly something that would allow them to communicate with the UK market, where again publishing has been grappling with the presentation of a nation – Britain – which today constitutes not only its own original several cultures and languages, but also many others as well. These motifs within Swiss literature should ease its passage into the British market.

Since you’ve been running ‘The Independent Foreign Fiction Prize’ has a Swiss author ever won?

Unfortunately in my memory a Swiss author has not won. Obviously I hope at some point in the near future that will be rectified.

Through his work as a literary editor and as a judge and founder of Britain’s leading prize for foreign fiction, Boyd Tonkin is considered a leading authority on international fiction in translation in the UK. Since 1996, he has been the Literary Editor of ‘The Independent’, one of the UK’s leading national newspapers. Before that he wrote for ‘The Observer’, was Literary Editor of the ‘New Statesman’ and has also taught literature in higher education. He has judged the ‘Booker Prize’, the ‘David Cohen Prize’, the ‘Commonwealth Writers’ Prize’, and re-founded the famous UK-based ‘Independent Foreign Fiction Prize’ for literature in translation.

ability to develop readerships for their books through social media, blogs, extensive outreach and innovative projects. Dalkey Archive’s annual Best European Fiction anthologies and Open Letter’s yearly Best Translated Book Award draw attention to a large number of otherwise unknown translations. Archipelago, And Other Stories, and Peirene have cultivated devoted subscriber bases. Almost all of these presses have striking, immediately recognizable ‘looks’; they keep their books in print indefinitely; and they leverage interest on the web through blogs and websites like Words Without Borders, The Literary Saloon, Conversational Reading, 3 Percent, and Love German Books. Less than 3% of the books published in the US each year are translations, yet a broader selection of foreign titles is being published than ever before and they are finding dedicated readers. Perhaps ‘success’ for translated literature should be redefined – rather than the number of copies sold or the pervasive exposure of a given writer, a more accurate gauge might be the breadth of titles published and the fact that, despite small print runs, these works are reaching a passionate and growing readership?

What are the prospects for Swiss literature? It is poised to shine as never before. Previously, a few names – Dürenmatt, Frisch – eclipsed all others, who were subsumed into their respective linguistic groups as French or German writers. Now, particularly through the national series. Swiss writing could establish a presence as a distinct and multi-faceted category. Two Swiss authors, Christoph Simon and Richard Weihe, are featured in publishers’ subscription series this year. Seagull is finally bringing Urs Widmer and Jean-Luc Benoziglio to English readers, while Dalkey is introducing Noëlle Revaz, Arno Camenisch, and Giovanni Orelli, and NYRB Markus Werner.

As politicians say: never let a good crisis go to waste.

Translates from French and German. Her translations include works by Peter Handke, Alois Hotschnig, Lukas Bärfuss, Philippe Jacottet, Pascal Bruckner, and Jean-Luc Benoziglio among others.

PHOTO © Chloe Lewis
THE UNGRATEFUL STRANGER

DIE UNDANKBARE FREMDE

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German

“We left our land behind in the familiar darkness and came closer to the glow of the new. How much light there is! called Mother, as if that were proof that we were approaching a radiant future.” That promising future lies in Switzerland, the destination for the narrator and her family.

The heroine of Irena Brežná’s novel ‘Die undankbare Fremde’ (The Ungrateful Stranger) emigrates from Czechoslovakia to Switzerland in 1968 – as did the author herself – leaving behind oppressive years under a dictatorship. In her new surroundings she encounters new freedoms, prosperity and countless comforts, but also confronts a certain incomprehension and unfamiliar rules and regulations.

While the mother delights in everything, the daughter views most things critically. “I felt like an object my mother had placed in a strange house, like an underage bride of a hundred years ago being forced to marry a country as if it were a forbidding old man.” Irena Brežná narrates her protagonist’s story from two different perspectives and on two interwoven timescales. First we have the newly arrived young woman, confused, then we have the trained interpreter, years older and more tolerant, who accompanies asylum seekers to court or hospital. The experiences of these refugees have been far more painful than her own. The Swiss writer Alain Claude Sulzer has called Brežná’s novel “a bitter national education, but ending with a reconciliation”.

“An amusing, spirited and wonderfully biased tale.” DIE ZEIT

IRENA BREŽNÁ was born in 1950 in Czechoslovakia. In 1968 she emigrated to Switzerland, and has lived in Basel ever since. She is a journalist, writer, academic in Slavonic Studies, psychologist and human rights activist. In 2008 she published her autobiographical novel ‘Die beste aller Welten’ (The Best of All Worlds) and in 2010 the novel ‘Schuppenhaut’ (Scaly Skin). She has received numerous awards for her work, including the EMMA journalism award and the Theodor Wolff Prize for her war reporting from Chechnya.

PHOTO © Marian Strauch

Enjoy an excerpt on the next page!
Die ungrateful Stranger

Irena Brežná

Excerpt translated by Katy Derbyshire

We left our land behind in the familiar darkness and came closer to the glow of the new. "How much light there is!" called Mother, as if that were proof that we were approaching a radiant future. The streetlamps didn’t flicker in dull orange like back home, but dazzled like spotlights. Mother was full of emigrant’s delight and didn’t see the swarm of mosquitoes, bugs and moths buzzing around the heads of the streetlamps, sticking to them, thrashing their wings and tiny legs for their lives, until, drawn in by the merciless gleam, they burned and dropped down onto the clean street. And the glaring light of the new ate up the stars as well.

At the barracks, we were interrogated by a captain with several speech defects. He couldn’t roll his r, pronounce neither ž, l’, t’, dž, ň nor ô, and he stressed our name so wrongly that I didn’t recognize myself. He wrote it on a form and took away all its wings and tiny roofs: "You don’t need all that nonsense here."

He erased my round, feminine ending too, gave me the surname of my father and brother. They sat mutely and let my mutilation happen. What was I to do with this bare, masculine name? I shivered.

The captain leaned back, self-satisfied.

"Did you escape to our country because we offer freedom to express your opinion?"

We didn’t know what that meant. Did we have to tell the man our opinions for him to give each of us a bed and a blanket? Saying what you think breeds discord, it makes you lonely, puts you in solitary confinement. The captain waited in vain for our own opinion, then lowered his voice to a suspicious depth.

"What is your faith?"

I feared Mother and Father would conclude a pact with the devil and bring God into it, but they stayed true to their godlessness and said nothing.

Then the man turned to me.

"Woran glaubst du, Mädchen?"

"An eine bessere Welt."

"Dann bist du richtig bei uns. Herzlich willkommen!"

Er winked at me and sealed my fate with a rubber stamp. A haggard woman led us along long corridors. Her pitying gaze swept over me. I looked for the unhappy child her gaze was directed at, but the world was empty.

"Irena Brežná is one of eastern Europe’s most important literary voices, even though she left Slovakia for Switzerland forty years ago and writes in German." SWISS RADIO DRS 1
"A book you just won't want to put down." TIROLER TAGESZEITUNG

MONIQUE SCHWITTER was born in 1972 in Zurich and now lives and works in Hamburg. Between 1993 and 1997 she studied acting and directing at the Mozarteum University of Dramatic Arts in Salzburg and went on to perform in Zurich, Frankfurt and Graz. In 2005 she published her first volume of short stories, 'Wenn's schneit beim Krokodil' (When It Snows at the Crocodile's), for which she was awarded the 2006 Robert Walser Prize for the best literary debut of the year. In 2008 she published her novel "Ohren haben keine Lider" (Ears Have No Lids).

PHOTO © Florian Thiele

'T Vertigo' is the title of one of the stories in Monique Schwitter's collection 'Goldfischgedächtnis' (Goldfish Memory). And you might well become dizzy when you read these unusual short stories. Are they true or not? "Whether this story is true, I don’t know, but I’ve heard it so often, I can’t imagine it wouldn’t be." In the fifteen stories making up this collection, the characters often find themselves on shaky ground. Things are not easy for them: on the contrary. In the end all they want is a secure place in an insecure world. These stories are above all about the struggle to survive. The characters take things to extremes, to where tragedy and comedy, hope and hopelessness, life and death, clash. A man sits in a hotel room and reads and reads, until reading takes over his life and becomes more real than reality. A small boy is shocked when his father grants his Halloween wishes. An actress complains that she remembers all the lines of all the parts she has ever had to learn in her life: “I've forgotten the technique of forgetting my lines!” She is forced to remember everything. Remembering and forgetting are recurring themes in these intricately crafted stories.

TITLE Goldfischgedächtnis
PUBLISHER Literaturverlag Droschl, Graz
PUBLICATION DATE 2011
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ISBN: 978-3-85420-789-4
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Annette Knoch, annette.knoch@droschl.com;
Spanish rights: Monika Mazegger, m.mazegger@manuscrita.eu
GOLDFISCHGEDÄCHTNIS MONIQUE SCHWITTER
German original (p. 81-83)
Er sitzt in Unterhose auf der Bettkante und fächelt sich Luft zu. Seine dunkelbraunen Hände tanzen vor den kleinen hel­len Brüsten, die er so verachtet und stets vor Tageslicht und fremden Blicken unter einem Hemd verbirgt.
Er hat den schweren Acrylvorhang zugezogen, die weißen Sonnenflecken von der Matratze getilgt, und die Nacht­tschlampe angeknipst.
Sein Blick streift das Telefon auf dem Nachttisch, er lässt sich rückwärts auf die Matratze fallen und greift wieder nach dem Buch.
Wie jeden Abend stand Bovet in der offenen Tür und schau­te in die Dunkelheit hinaus. Er atmete tief ein, schloß die Hände zu einem Trichter um den Mund und schleuderte seine Verachtung in die Einsamkeit, die ihn umgab: ‹Bleib bloß alle weg! Mir vom Leib!› Als er die Tür für die Nacht versperren wollte, dachte er an Solange und hielt lächerlich inne. Die plumpe Magd war in seiner Erinnerung die anmu­tige Fee geblieben, zu der er sie als kleiner Junge gemacht hatte. ‹Arthur›, hörte er Solanges Stimme und sah sie das riesige Kissen im Arm wiegen. ‹husch ins Bett!›
Er zwingt sich, Wort für Wort zu lesen, langsam, seine Gier zügelnd; die Worte dröhnen in seinem erhitzten Schädel. ‹Arthur! Mir vom Leib! Hush!›
Er döst ein, träumt von Solange mit dem Riesenkissen, sie sieht aus wie seine Mutter, im Traum, sie schüttelt aus dem Kissen Millionen von Muttermalen auf ihn, sie lächelt feen­haft, ‹hier deine Lebensgeschichte›, ruft sie ihm mit einem Pustekuss zu und winkt adieu.
Er wacht auf, die Lampe sticht, sein Kopf liegt schwer auf dem Buch, er dreht ihn zum Telefon.
Er hebt den Hörer ab und wartet auf den Summtton, legt dann sofort wieder auf, überlegt, ob er bei der Rezeption anrufen und das Zimmermädchen kommen lassen soll, mit einer Flasche Wasser oder einem Kaffee oder beidem, und entscheidet sich dagegen.
Gedankenlos schreibt er mit Kugelschreiber seine Initialen vorne ins Buch, dann betrachtet er die beiden Buchstaben und schüttelt den Kopf.

GOLDFISH MEMORY MONIQUE SCHWITTER
Excerpt translated by Eluned Gramich
He sits on the edge of the bed in his underpants, fanning himself. His dark brown hands dance in front of his fair chest, which he so despises, and which he hides away from the daylight and from strangers’ eyes, under his shirt.
He’s drawn the heavy acrylic curtains, wiping out the white sunspots on the mattress, and switched on the bed­lamp. His gaze passes over the telephone on the bedside table. He falls back on the mattress and reaches for the book again.
Like every evening, Bovet stood in the open doorway and looked out into the darkness. He breathed in deeply, closed his hands like a funnel over his mouth and hurled his revul­sion into the surrounding loneliness: ‘Just stay away! Keep off!’ He thought of Solange as he locked the door for the night, and smiled inwardly. The plump spinster had, in his memory, remained graceful and elfine, just as he’d imagined her as a little boy. ‘Arthur’, he heard Solange’s voice and saw her cradle the huge pillow in her arms, ‘off to bed!’
He forces himself to read it slowly, word for word, restrain­ing his eagerness; the words droning in his hot head.
‘Arthur! Keep away! Shoo!’ He dozes off, dreaming of Solange and her huge pillow. She looks like his mother in the dream; she shakes the pillow and out come millions of moles. She smiles fairy­like, ‘here is your life’s story’, she calls to him and blows a kiss and waves goodbye.
He wakes up, the lamplight blinding him, his head lies heavily on the book. He turns to the phone.
He picks up the receiver and waits for the dial tone, and puts it down immediately, considers whether he should call reception and have the chambermaid come up with a bottle of water or a coffee or both and decides against it.
He turns the tap on, bends and drinks. He holds his head under the water and hears ringing. Does he hear ringing? He turns the tap off jerkily and listens. Water runs into his eyes. The phone stays mute.
He writes his initials in the front of the book with a ballpoint pen, without thinking. Then he looks at the two letters and shakes his head.

"Whoever picks up these stories and believes in the powerful images they create will realize that they touch the very core of our existence."
WIENER ZEITUNG
Pierre Lepori’s novel has an unusual publishing history. ‘Sessualità’ was launched simultaneously in three languages: Italian, French and German. The author did his own translation from Italian to French, and the German translator based her version on the two ‘originals’. In addition, there is a trilingual version that switches between all three languages, depending on which character is speaking.

Olivier has been out of touch for fourteen years. After a severe depression and an ensuing divorce, he moved to Paris. He left his three-year-old son Michele with his sister Laura and asked her to raise the boy. Over time, the nephew becomes like a son to her – until Olivier resurfaces years later and asks to see his child, now a young man. This is the starting point for the novel.

They are due to meet in Geneva. But the two adults want to meet and talk first, before Michele joins them three days later. Laura travels from Zurich with her partner Erika, a well-known theatre director. Erika has written a play called ‘Sexuality’. Just like characters in a play, Olivier and Laura talk and argue – about their shared lives, their hopes, fears and suffering – while Erika watches them very closely.

“This, and this alone, is what I wanted to address: the link between power and sex, between body and bloodline.”

PIERRE LEPORI was born in Lugano in 1968, studied in Siena and Bern, and is now based in Lausanne. He is a writer and translator, and an arts correspondent for the Italian-language Swiss public radio network. He has translated French literature into Italian, including authors Monique Laederach and Gustave Roud. His literary works include: ‘Qualunque sia il nome’ (Whatever the Name, 2003), ‘Vento’ (Wind, 2004) and ‘Grisù’ (2006).

Nel bagno, allo specchio gigante si contrappone un piccolo specchio su un braccio snodabile. Dentro vi trovo la mia faccia deformato, enorme e con gli zigomi rialzati. Non sto a guardare i già molti difetti della pelle, ma sono affascinato da questa lente d'ingrandimento involontaria, dallo sguardo penetrante che qualsiasi deformazione del viso non può che provocare. Nella luce al neon, resto a guardarmi dalla lente d'ingrandimento involontaria, dallo sguardo che oltre ai difetti della pelle riesce anche a mettere in evidenza la mia mia maschera di Ensor. Ho sempre chiuso gli occhi facendo l'amore, spaventato dall'indecenza di quei volti troppo visibili. E questo specchio mi restituisce con mani estremamente curate che mi sfioravano di tanto in tanto, in un modo indiscreto e naturale. Sentivo che aveva aperto gli occhi facendo l'amore, spaventato dall'indecenza di quei volti troppo visibili. E questo specchio mi restituisce una presenza speciale e nonostante la mia completa indifferenza al fascino maschile, non ho potuto che ammirare il modo intrepido e schivo con cui tentava di sedurmi.
He has two eyes and a nose: that's about all the main character reveals about himself in Matthias Zschokke’s novel. He seems unremarkable, but still it's impossible to overlook him. "I will be wearing a coat, sandy-coloured, and in my left hand I will probably be holding a small, sandy-coloured suitcase. I am of average height, have average-length sand-coloured hair, and on my right will be a woman, about a head shorter than me, and whom you might as well picture as sandy-coloured too. We can't miss each other."

Although he works as a court reporter, the man with two eyes has a strong aversion to anything unusual. He clearly prefers things to be normal and ordinary – and it is in that very ordinariness that he discovers the unusual, the beautiful, the sad, and the comical. He finds it everywhere: in a café or on the street, whether he is meeting strangers or acquaintances, whether he is on the move or at home with his wife, whom he met and fell in love with years ago at choir practice.

Funny or tragic? What may at first seem banal, on closer inspection reveals hidden depths of meaning. Both Matthias Zschokke’s novel and his protagonist inhabit the two extremes. In his writing, Zschokke is a master of the twists and turns, placing events and characters under a bright light in which they lose their familiarity and become extraordinary.

"My face should project calm and reliability, so that no one who looks at me will need to ask me anything about myself, inside or out – least of all myself."

They all three knew very well that this wasn’t even a story. But that is how stories begin. And suddenly you are caught up in them, and the blood flows or the little white dresses are ripped. He earned his living as a court reporter and understood that."
What kind of world does Hanna inhabit? She returns to the city she grew up in – and it is no easy return. Her mother, who had summoned her back, is still difficult, but Hanna had expected that. What was so urgent that she had to leave the United States and come back right away? Suddenly her terminally ill mother is in no hurry to see her daughter. So Hanna takes a room in a small boarding house where she and her mother had lived thirty years earlier, and begins to explore the neighbourhood. Walking through the ‘city by the lake’ that clearly refers to Geneva, she meets ghosts from her past. She meets people who were once important to her: friends, lovers, playmates from the old days. People for whom she once risked everything. They have remained here, while she has long been living in New Jersey.

They are all now present: Alma, with whom she once shared so much; Karim, her lover for one unforgettable summer; Marika, the artist for whom she once posed as a model, who no longer recognises her. Why are they all crossing her path? Are these meetings really taking place? It takes a long time for Hanna to realise that she is exploring her own past, thinking about farewells, remembering and forgetting. In the end it is her dying mother, and Hervé, whom she has come to trust, who accompany her on her path to a new life.

"A gripping mix of tenderness and violence, poetry and strangeness, slowness and intensity." LE COURRIER
Quelques semaines avant mon départ pour la ville du bord du lac, j’avais reçu une lettre de ma mère – elle communiquait surtout par lettre manuscrite, une vieille habitude prise au temps où le téléphone coûtait cher et où l’ordinateur n’existait pas – qui m’avait étonnée. Effrayée même. C’était d’ailleurs plutôt un appel à l’aide. Elle me parlait de visiteuses vêtues de noir passant devant la fenêtre de sa chambre entre cinq et sept heures du soir, elle mentionnait des courtiers qui venaient lui faire des offres pour lui racheter sa maison, offres qu’elle ressentait comme une menace d’expropriation comme si, une fois encore, le destin voulait la déloger. Le monde autour d’elle était hostile et dans la maison il y avait des insectes malfaisants remontant de la cave et attaquant la cuisine. Les courtiers, les visiteuses étranges et les insectes représentaient tous un seul et même danger dont j’aurais dû, moi sa fille unique, la protéger. J’avais promis de venir la voir, de mettre de l’ordre dans ses papiers, de chasser les courtiers, d’acheter du Baygon et de discuter avec les visiteuses.

Mais une fois mon billet réservé pour le début des vacances d’été, je l’avais appelée et j’avais appris qu’elle ne pouvait pas me « recevoir » – c’était bien le terme qu’elle avait utilisé – avant le 8 juillet, alors que je m’étais libérée tout exprès pour venir la voir le plus tôt possible. Je la connaissais assez pour savoir qu’elle serait inflexible, car elle était tout simplement « débordée, ma chérie », ce qui voulait dire que toutes sortes d’activités étranges requéraient son temps. Elle avait un rendez-vous chez son ostéopathe, un autre avec un conseiller spirituel dont elle voulait me parler mais j’imaginais déjà qu’elle ne m’en dirait rien ou seulement de manière allusive. Elle était très occupée et presque agacée par ma venue. C’était comme lorsque j’étais enfant, d’innombrables occupations mystérieuses l’empêchaient de me consacrer du temps et elle le regrettait. Elle ne « saurait pas que faire de moi » et préférait que je vienne après ses « obligations ». Je ne cherchais pas à comprendre, c’était ainsi que nous « fonctionnions » – encore un de ces mots qu’elle utilisait pour parler d’elle et de moi, un mot explicitement distancé et dépassionné.

Qu’elle m’avait appelée à l’aide n’était pas en contradiction avec le fait que, maintenant que je m’étais libérée pour venir, je devenais une charge. Il semblait que nous devions toujours « fonctionner » ainsi, elle avoir le dessus et moi être celle dont il fallait, d’une manière ou d’une autre, s’occuper. J’ai pourtant décidé de ne pas changer mes plans, sans lui en parler pour ne pas la contrarier. Pourquoi finalement ne pas passer quelques jours dans cette ville, aller me baigner, dormir longuement, bref me reposer ?

**The Slowness of Dawn Anne Brécart**
Excerpt translated by Tess Lewis

A few weeks before I left for the city on the lake, I had received a letter from my mother – she most often communicated through hand-written letters, an old habit dating from a time before computers and when telephone calls were expensive. It had surprised me. Frightened me, even. Besides, it was obviously a cry for help. She wrote of women dressed in black who passed by her window in the evenings between the hours of five and seven. She mentioned estate agents who came and made offers to buy her house, offers she experienced as threats to dispossess her as if, yet again, fate wanted to evict her. The world around her was hostile and in the house harmful insects were coming up from the cellar and attacking the kitchen. The estate agents, the strange visitors in black, and the insects all represented the same danger from which I, her only daughter, should have protected her. I had promised to come see her, put her papers in order, chase away the estate agents, buy insecticide, and talk to the visitors.

But after I reserved my ticket for the beginning of the summer holiday, I had called her and learned that she could not possibly "receive" me – that was the word she used – before the 8th of July, even though I had cleared my calendar especially so that I could come and see her as soon as possible. I understood her well enough to know that she would be inflexible, since she was simply "overwhelmed, my dear," which meant that all sorts of strange commitments would take up her time. She had an appointment with her osteopath, another with her spiritual advisor about whom she wanted to talk to me, though I knew she would say nothing or make only the vaguest allusions. She was very busy and almost irritated by my arrival. It was the same as when I was a child. Countless mysterious activities prevented her from devoting time to me and she regretted it. She "simply did not know what to do" with me and preferred that I come after she had met her "obligations." I did not try to understand. That is how we "functioned" – again one of those words she used to talk about the two of us, an overtly distanced and dispassionate word.

That she had called me for help did not contradict the fact that, now that I had freed myself to visit her, I had become a burden. It seemed we would always "function" this way, with her having the upper hand and me being the one who, one way or another, needed looking after.

Still, I decided not to change my plans, but did not tell her, so as not to aggravate her. After all, why not spend a few days in this city, going swimming and sleeping late, in short, why not take a rest?

"A book about absence. About all those things that never happened and were never discussed."
The path leads from the morgue to the church, and it is long. The narrator of ‘Les Couleurs de l’hirondelle’ has returned to faraway Romania because his mother has died. Now she is to be buried, but first there are a number of bureaucratic hurdles. The route to the church, where the funeral is to take place, is transformed into a complex, winding path through the narrator’s life so far. We hear not only about his newly deceased mother and his childhood in this (unnamed) country, but also about his daughter. She is eleven years old, born in Lausanne, in the narrator’s new homeland, and so the place she calls home is completely different from the one he grew up in. She is entering the unknown world of puberty and beginning to cast a critical eye on her father.

Popescu’s novel displays a great polyphony of language and form. In his hands, the relatively short route through the town becomes a broad and diverse narrative journey through time. He describes a world of great colour and variety but also of broken fragments. The early years in Romania under Ceauşescu’s dictatorship; a country whose messianic drive into the future actually forced it backwards; and the present as the author writes this book: all this is conjured up here, not in chronological order but in a brilliant rush of storytelling.
LES COULEURS DE L’HIRONDELLE MARIUS DANIEL POPESCU
French original (p. 9-10)
Tu es devant la morgue de l’hôpital de la ville, il y a avec toi ta cousine et ton oncle, vous êtes debout et vous parlez de la morte que vous êtes venus chercher. «Ce jour-là elle n’était pas sortie comme d’habitude, les voisins ne l’avaient pas vue passer lentement dans l’allée en s’aidant de sa canne», tu regardes la camionnette avec laquelle vous avez fait le voyage depuis la campagne, tu regardes son plancher rouillé, tu es les trois à côté de cette voiture que ton oncle a empruntée auprès de l’un de ses amis. «Elle était malade mais elle allait bien avec ses médicaments, parfois elle refusait pendant des semaines de prendre ses pastilles, elle disait que c’étaient le bon Dieu et sa petite-fille qui la gardaient encore sur cette terre.» Vous faites la queue pour prendre votre morte, vous êtes en troisième position devant l’entrée principale de la morgue, tu regardes, une par une, les marches des escaliers en béton que tu dois bientôt monter pour aller chercher la dépouille de ta mère. «Au moins elle n’a pas souffert, elle est morte d’un coup, elle n’a pas eu à traîner des semaines ou des mois comme un légume.» Ta cousine commence à pleurer et tu la prends dans tes bras, tu la serres contre ta poitrine, tu entends ses pleurs, tu sens les spasmes de son corps et, par-dessus sa tête, tu vois le tremor de son corps et, par-dessus sa tête, tu vois le spectre de son âme.«Elle était sa voisine d’en bas qui nous a appelées, elle avait attendu deux jours pour le faire, au début elle croyait que ta mère était en visite chez nous.» Ta cousine pleure et tu la serres dans tes bras, elle dit que ta mère était sa tante préférée, tu as le dos contre la siège de l’hôpital, tu le regardes, tu vois ses gestes, il ouvre la deuxième partie de la porte rouillée, il te sert à traîner des semaines et des mois comme un linge. «C’est sa voisine d’en bas qui nous a appelées, elle avait attendu deux jours pour le faire, au début elle croyait que ta mère était en visite chez nous.» Tu es devant la morgue de l’hôpital de la ville, il y a avec toi ta cousine et ton oncle, vous êtes debout et vous parlez de la morte que vous êtes venus chercher. «Ce jour-là elle n’était pas sortie comme d’habitude, les voisins ne l’avaient pas vue passer lentement dans l’allée en s’aidant de sa canne», tu regardes la camionnette avec laquelle vous avez fait le voyage depuis la campagne, tu regardes son plancher rouillé, tu es les trois à côté de cette voiture que ton oncle a empruntée auprès de l’un de ses amis. «Elle était malade mais elle allait bien avec ses médicaments, parfois elle refusait pendant des semaines de prendre ses pastilles, elle disait que c’étaient le bon Dieu et sa petite-fille qui la gardaient encore sur cette terre.» Vous faites la queue pour prendre votre morte, vous êtes en troisième position devant l’entrée principale de la morgue, tu regardes, une par une, les marches des escaliers en béton que tu dois bientôt monter pour aller chercher la dépouille de ta mère. «Au moins elle n’a pas souffert, elle est morte d’un coup, elle n’a pas eu à traîner des semaines ou des mois comme un légume.» Ta cousine commence à pleurer et tu la prends dans tes bras, tu la serres contre ta poitrine, tu entends ses pleurs, tu sens les spasmes de son corps et, par-dessus sa tête, tu vois le spectre de son âme. «C’est sa voisine d’en bas qui nous a appelées, elle avait attendu deux jours pour le faire, au début elle croyait que ta mère était en visite chez nous.» Tu es devant la morgue de l’hôpital de la ville, il y a avec toi ta cousine et ton oncle, vous êtes debout et vous parlez de la morte que vous êtes venus chercher. «Ce jour-là elle n’était pas sortie comme d’habitude, les voisins ne l’avaient pas vue passer lentement dans l’allée en s’aidant de sa canne», tu regardes la camionnette avec laquelle vous avez fait le voyage depuis la campagne, tu regardes son plancher rouillé, tu es les trois à côté de cette voiture que ton oncle a empruntée auprès de l’un de ses amis. «Elle était malade mais elle allait bien avec ses médicaments, parfois elle refusait pendant des semaines de prendre ses pastilles, elle disait que c’étaient le bon Dieu et sa petite-fille qui la gardaient encore sur cette terre.» Vous faites la queue pour prendre votre morte, vous êtes en troisième position devant l’entrée principale de la morgue, tu regardes, une par une, les marches des escaliers en béton que tu dois bientôt monter pour aller chercher la dépouille de ta mère. «Au moins elle n’a pas souffert, elle est morte d’un coup, elle n’a pas eu à traîner des semaines ou des mois comme un légume.» Ta cousine commence à pleurer et tu la prends dans tes bras, tu la serres contre ta poitrine, tu entends ses pleurs, tu sens les spasmes de son corps et, par-dessus sa tête, tu vois le specter de son âme.

THE SWALLOW’S COLOURS MARIUS DANIEL POPESCU
Excerpt translated by W. Donald Wilson
You are in front of the morgue of the town hospital, your cousin and your uncle are with you, you are standing and talking about the woman whose body you have come to take away. “That day she didn’t go out like she usually did, none of the neighbours saw her going slowly down the driveway, leaning on her stick,” you are looking at the pick-up truck in which you drove in from the country, you look at its rusty floor, the three of you are next to this vehicle that your uncle borrowed from one of his friends. “She was sick but she felt fine on her medications, sometimes she’d refuse to take her pills for weeks, she said it was the good Lord and her granddaughter kept her in this world.” You are queuing up to collect your dead, you are third in line at the main entrance to the morgue, you look, one by one, at the concrete steps you will soon have to climb to fetch your mother’s remains. “At least she didn’t suffer, she died right away, she didn’t have to drag on for weeks or months like a vegetable.” Your cousin starts to cry and you put your arms round her, you hold her against your chest, you hear her sobbing, you feel the tremors run through her body, over her head you watch the hospital gatekeeper open the big rusty double door to let a hearse from the town funeral services drive out: he is wearing worn work-gloves stained with engine-oil, first he lifts the metal latch, then, walking backwards, he drags its left side into the yard, he lifts it over the bumps in the asphalt, he pushes it right up to the side wall of his little gatehouse built of brick. “It was her downstairs neighbour called, she’d waited two days before she died, at first she thought your mother must be visiting at our place.” Your cousin is in tears and you give her a hug, she says your mother was her favourite aunt, you have your back against the right side of the pick-up, you can see the hospital gatekeeper, you look at him, you can see his movements, he opens the other half of the rusty door, you see four dogs come out onto the pavement. “It’s good that you came to bury your mother, there’s people work abroad that don’t come to bury their parents.” The gatekeeper settles the four abandoned dogs alongside his little gatehouse, you think of your mother, you pronounce the word ‘abandoned’ in your mind, you think of children abandoned by their parents, you think of parents abandoned by their children, you think of the thousands of dogs abandoned in your homeland every year, you think of these dogs who find shelter wherever they can, you can feel that your cousin is calming down, she extricates herself from your arms.

Marius Daniel Popescu masterfully grips the reader from the very first line.” CULTURACTIF

"Marius Daniel Popescu masterfully grips the reader from the very first line." CULTURACTIF
8 MORE UNMISSABLE SWISS BOOKS

**Alias oder Das Wahre Leben**
*(Alias or Real Life)*
Felix Philipp Ingold

*Genre: Novel*
*Pages: 290*
*Publisher: Matthes & Seitz, Berlin 2011*
*ISBN: 978-3-88221-553-3*
*Translation Rights: Richard Steiber, rights@matthes-seitz-berlin.de*

**Correspondance des Routes Croisées 1945-1964**
*(Correspondence of Crossed Paths 1945-1964)*
Nicolas Bouvier, Thierry Vernet

*Genre: Correspondence*
*Pages: 1500*
*Publisher: Zoé, Geneva 2010*
*ISBN: 978-2-88182-675-7*
*Translation Rights: Caroline Couteau, info@editionszoe.ch*

**Les Lignes de Ta Paume**
*(Lines of the Hand)*
Douna Loup

*Genre: Novel*
*Pages: 181*
*Publisher: Mercure de France, 2012*
*ISBN: 978-2-7152-313-1*
*Translation Rights: Geneviève Meyer, genevieve.meyer@mercure.fr*

**Aus den Fugen**
*(Fugue State)*
Alain Claude Sulzer

*Genre: Novel*
*Pages: 230*
*Publisher: Galiani Berlin 2012*
*ISBN: 978-3-86971-059-4*
*Translation Rights: Iris Brandt, ibrandt@kiwi-verlag.de*

**Pampa Blues**
*(Pampa Blues)*
Rolf Lappert

*Genre: Young Adult*
*Pages: 253*
*Publisher: Hanser, Munich 2012*
*ISBN: 978-3-446-23895-4*
*Translation Rights: Anne Brans, anne.brans@hanser.de*

**Il Gioco del Mondo**
*(Play of the World)*
Sergej Roic

*Genre: Novel*
*Pages: 142*
*Publisher: Edizione Opera Nuova, Lugano 2012*
*ISBN: 978-88-96992-43-2*
*Translation Rights: Raffaella Castagnola, castagnola@operanuova.com*

**Land Spielen**
*(Back to the Land)*
Daniel Mezger

*Genre: Novel*
*Pages: 318*
*Publisher: Salis Verlag, Zurich 2012*
*ISBN: 978-3-905801-71-2*
*Translation Rights: André Gstettenhofer, ag@salisverlag.com*
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www.new-books-in-german.com
www.literatur.ch
www.werliestwo.ch
### SWISS LITERATURE AGENDA 12/13

#### October 2012

Oct. 10.–14.
**SWISS BOOKS AT FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR**
SBV Stand-Nr.: Halle 4.1, A 106
www.swissbooks.ch
www.asdel.ch
www.buchmesse.de

Oct. 12.–Nov. 10.
Lectures of the five nominees of the Schweizer Buchpreis (SBVV) Frankfurt Book Fair, Zürich, Bern, Hamburg, Wien, Düsseldorf, Berlin, Basel

**NEUSEELÄNDISCHE LITERATURTAGE ZOFINGEN**
www.literaturtagezofingen.ch

**ZÜRICH LIEST**
www.zuerich-liest.ch

**SWISS BOOKS AT PISA BOOK FAIR**
www.editori-sesi.ch
www.pisabookfestival.it

Oct. 27.–Nov. 5.
**SWISS BOOKS AT ALGER BOOK FAIR**
www.asdel.ch
www.sila-14-livre.e-monsite.com

Nov. 9.–11.
**INTERNATIONALES BUCH- UND LITERATURFESTIVAL BUCHBASEL**
Presentation of the Swiss Book Prize (SBVV)
www.buchbasel.ch

Nov. 14.–19.
**SWISS BOOKS AT MONTREAL BOOK FAIR**
www.asdel.ch
www.salondulivremontreal.com

Nov. 15.–18.
**SWISS BOOKS AT VIENNA BOOK FAIR**
www.swissbooks.ch
www.buchwien.at

Nov. 28.–Dez. 2.
Dec. 6.–9.
**SWISS BOOKS AT ROME BOOK FAIR**
www.editori-sesi.ch
www.piuliobripiuberi.it

January 2013

Jan. 25.–27.
**LYRIKFESTIVAL BASEL**

February 2013

Feb. 28.–Mar. 4.
**SWISS BOOKS AT BRUSSELS BOOK FAIR**
www.asdel.ch
www.fib.be

March 2013

Mar. 8.–10.
**LUZERN BUCHT**
www.literaturfest.ch

Mar. 14.–17.
**SWISS BOOKS AT LEIPZIG BOOK FAIR**
www.swissbooks.ch
www.leipziger-buchmesse.de

Mar. 22.–25.
**SWISS BOOKS AT PARIS BOOK FAIR**
www.asdel.ch
www.salondulivreparis.com

Mar. 25.–28.
**SWISS BOOKS AT BOLOGNA BOOK FAIR**
www.swissbooks.ch
www.asdel.ch
www.bolognachildrensbookfair.com

April 2013

Apr. 15.–17.
**SWISS BOOKS AT LONDON BOOK FAIR**
www.swissbooks.ch
www.londonbookfair.co.uk

Apr. 17.–21.
Criminale 2013 in Switzerland (Bern, Thun, Solothurn, Burgdorf)
www.die-criminale.ch

Apr. 24.–29.
**SWISS BOOKS AT ABU DHABI BOOK FAIR**
www.swissbooks.ch
www.adbookfair.com

May 2013

May 1.–5.
**SALON INTERNATIONAL DU LIVRE ET DE LA PRESSE DE GENÈVE**
www.salondulivre.ch

May 4.–12.
**WALSER WELTWEIT**
Translators Meeting Bern, Solothurn

May 10.–12.
**SOLOTHURNER LITERATURTAGE**
Presentation of the Swiss Federal Literary Awards
www.literatur.ch

May 16.–20.
**SWISS BOOKS AT TORINO BOOK FAIR**
www.editori-sesi.ch
www.salondelibro.it

July 2013

July 5.–7.
**INTERNATIONALES LITERATURFESTIVAL LEUKERBAD**
www.literaturfestival.ch

August 2013

**ABSOLUT ZENTRAL, BERN**

September 2013

**BABEL FESTIVAL DI LETTERATURA E TRADUZIONE, BELLINZONA**
www.babelfestival.com

**LE LIVRE SUR LES QUAISS, SALON DES AUTEURS DE MORGES**
www.leslivresurlesquais.ch

**SWISS FOCUS AT VILENICA INTERNATIONAL LITERARY FESTIVAL**
www.vilenica.si

**FRAUENFELDER LIRIKTAGE**

Sept. 6.–8.
**KIBUK, KINDER- UND JUGENDMEDIENFESTIVAL KÖNIZ**
www.kibuk.ch

October 2013

**SWISS BOOKS AT FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR**
www.swissbooks.ch
www.asdel.ch
www.buchmesse.de

November 2013

**NON/FICTION BOOK FAIR MOSCOW. GUEST OF HONOUR SWITZERLAND**
www.asdel.ch
www.swissbooks.ch
www.moscowbookfair.ru/eng
RECENTLY TRANSLATED SWISS BOOKS
with support from the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia

**Rapport aux Bêtes** (With the Animals) 
Noëlle Revaz
Translated into English by W. Donald Wilson for Dalkey Archive Press

**Léon und Louise** (Leon and Louise) 
Alex Capus
Translated into Finnish by Heli Naski for Atena

**Pensées sous les Nuages** (Thoughts Under the Clouds) 
Philippe Jaccottet
Translated into Georgian by David Akriani for Nectar Publishing

**Alle Wege sind offen** (All the Roads Are Open) 
Annemarie Schwarzenbach
Translated into English by Isabel Fargo Cole for Seagull Books

**Albero Genealogico** (Family Tree) 
Piero Bianconi
Translated into Hungarian by Margit Lukácsi for Bookart

**Herz aus Sand** (Heart of Sand) 
Daniel Goetsch
Translated into Chinese by Chen Wei for Shanghai Translation Publishing House

**Seeland** (Lake Country) 
Robert Walser
Translated into Slovenian by Slavo Serc for LUD Šerpa

**Die Karawane am Boden** (Caravan at the Bottom of the Milk Jug) 
Franz Hohler
Translated into Farsi by Ghiasi Naser for Cheshmeh

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