

12 SWISS BOOKS

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IMPRESSUM

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EDITORIAL

“12 Swiss Books” – twelve special books by contemporary Swiss authors, which we recommend for translation. In 2013, for the second year, the Swiss Arts Council Pro Helvetia has selected those books we feel are particularly worthy of being translated and for which we are prepared to offer financial support.

It’s well known that Switzerland is a land where languages meet and mix: four regions, four languages; German, French, Italian and Rhaeto-Romance. And three of the four are just a small part of much wider-spread languages and cultures. So we Swiss exist ‘on the fringes and frontiers’ – and this frontier mentality also shapes our literature.

With our choice of “12 Swiss Books” and our quest to discover new horizons, we would like to invite you, the publishers, editors and translators, to form your own impressions of our authors. We believe the diversity of the writing will surprise you.

You will find here books in all four languages. It won’t surprise you that some of them have to do with mountains! We Swiss welcome people from all over the world, who come just to climb and walk in our mountains.

In his essay *Hunting Ibex in the Cavrein*, Leo Tuor, a writer from the Rhaeto-Romantic region in the Swiss canton of Graubünden, leads us through the wild Bündner Alps, where they hunt the ibex living in the remotest reaches of the mountains. By contrast, Roman Graf, in *Downfall*, sends the hero and his girlfriend on a mountain trek, which turns out to be unexpectedly challenging and tests their love to its limits.

The unexpected can also happen to those who leave Switzerland. In Felix Phillip Ingold’s novel *Another Life for John Potocki*, the hero’s adventures seem to range at will across the world, knowing no frontiers; whilst Carole Allamand’s first book *The Grizzly Bear’s Pen* is a journey across the whole of North America. Alex Capus, in *The Forger, the Spy and the Bomb-Maker* casts his three characters on a journey through the turbulent history of the last century; Ralph Dutli, on the other hand, relates the last days of the legendary painter Chaim Soutine as he travels clandestinely from the Loire Valley to Paris, in *Soutine’s Last Journey*.

But even the most ordinary of circumstances can produce high drama, as Nicolas Couchepin reveals in his novel *The Mensch Family*. The Mensches are, at the outset, just a normal family; but the very opposite

turns out to be the case! Tommaso Soldini is a writer from the Italian canton of Ticino: in *One by One*, a group of young people find themselves out of their usual surroundings, and in several cases, out of their depth, when they travel to Morocco. Changed circumstances are also the subject of Jonas Lüscher's novella, *The Barbarians' Spring*. As a sudden financial crisis overwhelms them, a party of supposedly well-mannered revellers sheds the veneer of civilisation and turns into a pack of predators. Pascale Kramer's novel *Gloria* is set on the fringes of society, whilst Lisa Elsässer's collection of short stories, *Fire is a Strange Thing*, illuminates those everyday events, which change people's lives forever. Last but by no means least, Michael Fehr has written *On the Verge of Salvation* with the subtitle *Seventeen Sentences*, and this unusual work does indeed only contain seventeen sentences, long sentences, composed in the manner of a musical theme and variations.

So, here are twelve newly published books, books which we believe in and are excited by; we hope our enthusiasm will also inspire you. Pro Helvetia can support your interest and your work. Happy reading! It's all here, to be discovered in the following pages!

Angelika Salvisberg (Pro Helvetia, Head of Literature & Society Division)

Rosie Goldsmith (Journalist & Specialist in international literature, London)

Martin Zingg (Literary Critic, Basel)

SOUTINE'S LAST JOURNEY

SOUTINES LETZTE FAHRT

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“A daring novel...Ralph Dutli risks his all and succeeds.” NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG



RALPH DUTLI, born in 1954, is a freelance author, essayist, poet and translator, who lives in Heidelberg, Germany. He studied Romance Languages and Literature and Russian Studies in Zürich and Paris. He is the editor of the complete works of Osip Mandelstam and is the author of Mandelstam's biography *Meine Zeit, mein Tier (My Time, My Pet)*. *Soutines letzte Fahrt (Soutine's Last Journey)* is his first novel.

PHOTO © Olivier Dutli

On August 6th, 1943, Chaim Soutine is travelling from Chinon, on the river Loire, to occupied Paris, hidden in a hearse. Soutine, the Jewish-Belarussian painter and contemporary of Chagall, Modigliani and Picasso, is gravely ill. He urgently needs an operation for a stomach ulcer, but the journey is taking much too long, 24 hours, because of the need to make detours round German army checkpoints.

A blizzard of intense and often bizarre images flash before the eyes of the persecuted artist in his morphine-induced delirium...sometimes historical, sometimes fictional, these episodes tell the story of Soutine's childhood in Smilovichy, near Minsk; his first steps as a painter in Vilnius; and his unshakeable determination to go to Paris, the centre of the art world. The novel portrays his improbable friendship with Modigliani, his sudden success as an artist and the end of his golden years in Paris.

But Soutine – who believes in the power of milk as his only medicine – is journeying through a 'white paradise', at once both a clinic and a prison, in which he experiences a series of remarkable meetings and events. A mysterious 'god in a white cloak' declares him cured, but forbids him ever again to paint. For an artist, though, a paradise without painting is without value. And so he starts secretly to paint – and is ready to pay whatever the price may be. *Soutine's Last Journey* is a novel about childhood, illness and art, about the pain of exile in Paris, the powerlessness of the written word and the overwhelming power of imagery.

TITLE Soutines letzte Fahrt
PUBLISHER Wallstein Verlag, Göttingen
PUBLICATION DATE 2013
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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Stefan Diezmann,
 sdiezmann@wallstein-verlag.de

SOUTINES LETZTE FAHRT RALPH DUTLI**German original (p. 206-207)**

Er liegt in seinem blendend weißen Bett und denkt tatsächlich an das Wort Glück, das sich scheinbar so völlig fremd fühlt in seinem Leben. Wirklich dieses Wort? Muss es sein? Ein ähnliches vielleicht, aber es gibt kein ähnliches. Als der unglücklichste Maler von Montparnasse zu gelten, war ein solider Schutzschirm. Die Aura des Unglücks bewahrt den Menschen vor der Zudringlichkeit der Welt. Der Unglückliche wird großzügig in Ruhe gelassen. Er wird unberührbar, verstehen Sie? Wie ein zu starker Körpergeruch schützt ihn das prächtige Vorurteil. Der unglückliche Soutine! Der ganze Montparnasse seufzt. Entsetzliche Kindheit, bestürzende Armut, zerstörerischer Hass auf die eigenen Bilder, zermürbende Magengeschwüre, eingefleischte Schüchternheit, absolute Verlorenheit. Und schließlich setzen ihm die Besatzer und ihre Gehilfen nach. Versteckt in einem Leichenwagen!

Oder er war der Vorletzte auf der Skala des Elends, wie immer: der zehnte von elf. Der Maler der heillosen Menschheit, sagten sie, der Erniedrigten und Gedeimigten, sagten sie, des Hungers, sagten sie, der gemarterten Tiere. Die gekreuzigten Truthähne, die aufgehängten Hasen, denen man das Fell schon abgezogen hat oder gleich abziehen wird – alles immer er selber, sagten sie. Wahrscheinlich haben sie ihn auch noch für das blutübergossene Ochsenengerippe gehalten.

Der farbig schillernde Tod hat ihn zum Augenzeugen berufen. Der Tod will nicht unsichtbar sterben. Der Tod ist Triumph, und er hat ein herrliches Gefieder! Das Huhn mit dem blauen Hals, die dunklen Masern der Wachtel. Der Tod war anspruchsvoll, er wollte sich farbig malen lassen. Das Unglück, ja, aber in einem verwirrenden, keuchenden Jubel der Netzhaut. Sie haben ihn übersehen. Er war unsichtbar. Und wollte es bleiben.

Andrée, eine malende Trabantin des Planeten Montparnasse, hat ihn einmal direkt gefragt mit ihrer hellen Stimme, sie war die einzige, die es je wagte:

Sind Sie sehr unglücklich gewesen, Soutine?

Er war verblüfft über die Frage, verstand sie erst nicht. Aber er erinnert sich noch im Leichenwagen und in den Laken des weißen Paradieses an seine Antwort:

Nein! Ich bin immer ein glücklicher Mensch gewesen!

Und sie behauptet, sein Gesicht habe vor stolzer Freude gestrahlt.

SOUTINE'S LAST JOURNEY RALPH DUTLI**Excerpt translated by Vincent Kling**

He's lying in his dazzlingly white bed and in actual fact thinking about the word happiness; it seems to feel so totally strange in his life. This word, really? Does it have to be? One that's similar to it, perhaps, but there is none similar to it. Being considered the most unhappy painter in Montparnasse was a solid protective shield. The aura of unhappiness would spare a person the world's intrusiveness. The unhappy one is bountifully left in peace. He becomes unassailable, do you understand? That splendid prejudice protects him like a body odour grown too strong. Unhappy Soutine! All of Montparnasse sighs. Terrible childhood, crushing poverty, destructive hatred of his own pictures, crippling stomach ulcers, incurable shyness, absolute isolation. And finally the occupying forces and their henchmen are in pursuit of him. Hidden in a hearse!

Or he was second-last on the scale of misery, as he always was: the tenth of eleven. The painter of hopeless humanity, they said, of the degraded and humiliated, they said, of hunger, they said, of tortured animals. The crucified turkeys, the rabbits hanging by the neck with their skin already removed or about to be removed – all of it he himself, they said. They probably even thought he was also the ox skeleton with blood poured all over it.

Death, shimmering so brightly, had called him to be an eyewitness. Death doesn't want to die unseen. Death is triumph, and it has glorious plumage! The hen with the blue neck, the quail's dark veins. Death was exacting; it wanted to be painted in many colors. Unhappiness, to be sure, but in a bewildering, surging jubilation of the retina. Him they had overlooked. He was invisible. And wanted to remain that way.

Andrée, a satellite of the planet Montparnasse who painted, once questioned him directly in her clear voice. She was the only one who'd ever dared:

Have you been very unhappy, Soutine?

He was amazed by the question, not even understanding it at first. But he still remembers what he answered in the hearse and in the sheets of white heaven:

No, I've always been a happy man!

And she claims his face beamed with pride and joy.

"If, after reading this passionate novel, we look at Soutine's paintings, we realise how precisely, yet subtly and imaginatively Dutli understands their secrets." FRANKFURTER ALLGEMEINE ZEITUNG

GLORIA

GLORIA

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE French



“Pascale Kramer has that special gift of being able to put into words things that are hardly ever spoken about.”

LE MONDE

PASCALE KRAMER was born in Geneva, Switzerland, in 1961 and now lives in Paris. She has so far published nine novels, amongst them *Les Vivants* (*The Living*, Calmann-Lévy, 2000), *L'implacable brutalité du réveil* (*The Relentless Brutality of Awakening*, Mercure de France, 2005), and, more recently, *Un homme ébranlé* (*A Man Shaken*, Mercure de France 2011).



PHOTO David Ignaszewski / Koboy © Flammarion

When Michel receives a phone call from Gloria, asking him to go and see her, he knows he should say ‘no’: he shouldn’t go. Gloria belongs to his past, he was involved with her years before. He knew her at that time in his life, when he was still married and was working in an advice centre that she occasionally visited, when she was hanging out on the streets. In the meantime, Michel has been sacked by the advice centre: they said at first it was because he was being too sympathetic to clients; then he was accused of having inappropriate relationships with children. In spite of this, Michel goes to see Gloria, who is now living with her three year-old daughter. Gloria is still the childish woman he knew back then: pigheaded and intellectually lazy. But she has matured in the intervening years. So will she thank him for the support he gave her all that time ago?

Her attitude towards her daughter, Naïs, very soon begins to worry Michel. He had advised her to keep her child, though her own adoptive parents would have preferred an abortion. And so, within a few months, they become involved again in the same way as before, in the same complicated relationship they had in former times: who is helping whom? Which of them is really reliant on the other? Who has the dominant role?

As always in Pascale Kramer’s books, children are central to the story. They shed light on so many issues: the cracks and rifts of life. In *Gloria*, Pascale Kramer deals with the ambivalent feelings that mark out human relationships.

TITLE Gloria
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 fgiry@flammarion.fr

GLORIA PASCALE KRAMER**French original (p. 7-8)**

Il était encore tôt pour un dimanche, il avait cessé de neiger. La fine pellicule tombée pendant la nuit commençait à se ronger d'eau au bord des trottoirs ; une femme recouverte d'un vieil anorak et portant deux sacs en plastique à carreaux y imprimait la trace de ses pieds nus débordant de babouches argent. Michel se gara à l'angle du boulevard et la regarda s'éloigner en écoutant la fin des infos. Il tenta d'enfiler ses gants que les pluies de la veille avaient durcis comme des coques de papier mâché puis les reposa. Derrière lui, un camion de la voirie approchait en brassant une épaisse gadoue de neige et de gravillons. Michel attendit qu'il soit passé pour s'extirper de la voiture.

Des deux côtés de la rue étaient alignés les mêmes immeubles construits en U autour d'une esplanade de plates-bandes et béton que fermaient de grandes grilles. Ils n'étaient pas si mal avec leurs espèces d'encorbellements de fenêtres blanches suspendues à la brique. Michel savait que c'était une erreur de venir, mais il n'osa pas rebrousser chemin, se doutant que Gloria pouvait déjà l'apercevoir. Son appel avait ravivé tant de douleurs enfouies. Il se souvenait pourtant parfaitement lui avoir laissé son numéro, c'était en hiver également, le jour de son départ du centre d'accueil dont il avait été licencié après des années sans incidents. Naïs avait à peine quelques semaines ; Gloria la lui avait amenée en fin de matinée, il était en train de vider son bureau de ses affaires personnelles, parmi lesquelles une mosaïque de photos offerte trois mois plus tôt pour son cinquantième anniversaire. Gloria avait ri de sa surprise en la voyant apparaître à la porte. Son corps n'avait encore rien perdu de sa rondeur miraculeuse. Elle avait enveloppé Naïs d'une étole blanche d'où émergeait à peine le petit visage olive aux yeux miclos mouillés de sommeil. Michel venait d'être en quelque sorte démis de sa simple légitimité à se trouver en présence des femmes accueillies. Que la confiance de Gloria n'ait pas encore été atteinte par le scandale l'avait décontenancé ; il s'était bien gardé de l'informer lui-même des déviances dont on l'accusait. Pendant longtemps, il s'était même demandé si elle avait compris ou su, ce jour-là, qu'il partait.

GLORIA PASCALE KRAMER**Excerpt translated by Tess Lewis**

It was still early for a Sunday. The snow had stopped falling. Along the edges of the pavement, water began eating away at the thin dusting that had fallen during the night. A woman in an old anorak carrying two plaid plastic bags left outlines of her bare feet where they overflowed her silver colored babouche slippers. Michel parked at the corner of the boulevard and watched her walk off as he listened to the end of the news. He tried to slip on his gloves, soaked in the previous day's rain and now as stiff as two shells of papier-mâché, then put them back down. A refuse truck approached from behind, spreading a thick sludge of snow and gravel. Michel waited for it to pass before climbing out of his car.

Both sides of the street were lined with similar buildings, constructed in a U around a concrete esplanade decorated with a few flowerbeds and enclosed by a large gate. They were not that bad with white oriel windows encased in brick. Michel knew it was a mistake to come but didn't dare turn back, suspecting Gloria might have already seen him. Her phone call had revived so much buried suffering. Still, he distinctly remembered giving her his number. It had been winter then, too, on the day he left the shelter from which he'd been fired after working for years without a single incident. Naïs was only a few weeks old; Gloria had brought her in late that morning. He was clearing his desk of personal items, among them a photo collage he'd received three months earlier as a gift for his fiftieth birthday. Gloria had laughed at his surprise when she appeared in the doorway. Her body had lost none of its miraculous roundness. She had wrapped Naïs in a white shawl from which her small, olive face and sleep-drenched, half-closed eyes barely emerged. Michel had, in a fashion, just compromised the basic legitimacy of his coming into contact with the women at the shelter. He'd been disconcerted by the fact that the scandal hadn't yet shaken Gloria's confidence in him. He had consciously not informed her of the charges against him. He even wondered for a long time after if she had known or understood that day that he was leaving.

"Gloria is a novel for today, a novel which encompasses more than one world (...)." LE TEMPS

ANOTHER LIFE FOR JOHN POTOCKI

NOCH EIN LEBEN FÜR JOHN POTOCKI

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“Why not a wrecked landing? Why not a ship that runs aground, founders and sinks? A bit of adventure, a bit of romance, a classic shipwreck!”

FELIX PHILIPP INGOLD lives and works as a writer, journalist and translator in Zürich and in Romainmôtier, in the canton of Vaud, Switzerland. He was nominated for the Swiss Book Prize for his novel *Alias oder das wahre Leben* (*Alias or the True Life*, Matthes & Seitz, Berlin, 2011), for which he won the Schiller Prize 2012, awarded by the Swiss Schiller Foundation.



PHOTO © privat

“No matter where he’s coming from, because he has all the necessary papers, Potocki can go as he pleases, without let or hindrance: for example, he can sail into any one of the Maghreb ports that are so heavily guarded by the local military or merchant marine...go ashore, find quarters, change money, plan his next voyage, buy provisions, sign on porters and scouts and so forth.” Potocki could do it all. Potocki? Jan Nepomucem Count Potocki (1761 - 1815) was considered during his lifetime to be one of the richest men in Europe. He travelled the world, and left behind a milestone of European literary history, his book *The Saragossa Manuscript*. In *Another Life for John Potocki*, Felix Philipp Ingold follows the trail of this legendary Polish nobleman and playfully, fancifully, effortlessly, weaves in biographical detail. Malta, London, Africa, Asia, St Petersburg; encounters with chess-automata, a talking ape, glittering parties, wherever he goes...and then the end of his life, about which there are many conflicting accounts. However it happened, it was a life-story made to be told.

Ingold creates a fascinating and wide-ranging drama from the many episodes of Potocki’s ‘real’ life, and draws on countless historical and fictional characters to create the cast of his ‘other’ life. This story-biography is based partly on Ingold’s own fantasies and experiences, but also on his independent research, typical of his approach to all the characters he writes about.

TITLE Noch ein Leben für John Potocki
PUBLISHER Matthes & Seitz Verlag, Berlin
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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Richard Stoiber,
 rights@matthes-seitz-berlin.de

NOCH EIN LEBEN FÜR JOHN POTOCKI FELIX PHILIPP INGOLD**German original (p. 130-131)**

Als ich nach dem Schiffbruch von der rollenden Flut ins seichte Küstengewässer getrieben wurde, sah ich weit vor mir am Strand ein unförmiges Riesending liegen ... lag da ein Riesentier, so etwas wie ein Urwal oder ein Urelfant, ein königsblau phosphoreszierender Fleischberg, an dem sich ein Dutzend Menschlein zu schaffen machten, um ihre Neugier zu stillen oder ihren Hunger.

Men und Schen hieben mit Macheten, Spitzhacken und Spießern aller Art so erbarmungslos auf den gewaltigen Kadaver ein, als wäre er lebendig ... als wäre er eine Bedrohung für die menschliche Zivilisation oder noch schlimmer (da es den Begriff der Zivilisation damals noch gar nicht gab) eine Bedrohung für uns alle, für das Menschengeschlecht schlechthin. Beim Herantreiben und dann beim Kriechen und Waten zum Sandstrand hin vernahm ich immer deutlicher das Geschrei, ohne noch unterscheiden zu können zwischen *Ah!* und *Och!* und *Ptschchu!* War's eine Triumph-, eine Opferszene? War's eine Beschwörung oder ein kollektiver Fluch?

Erst als die allmählich zur Lebensgröße erwachsenden Menschen mich vom Strand her bemerkten, ließen sie von dem Leichenberg ab und stürzten mir mit ihrem Schlachtgerät entgegen. Dass sie mich retten würden, war in diesem Augenblick meiner Lebensgeschichte weniger wahrscheinlich, als dass sie in mir einen feindlichen Eindringling vermuteten, den es vom Ufer fernzuhalten galt.

Kreischend liefen sie auf mich zu ... sie rannten vom Festland in die flache Brandung, ließen dabei ihre Stöcke und Harken und Spieße fallen oder warfen sie weg, bei jedem ihrer Sprünge spritzte nach allen Seiten das Wasser auf, einer nach dem andern stürzte sich auf mich, gemeinsam hoben sie mich ins dämmerige Licht, als wollten sie einen verlorenen Sohn begrüßen ... als müssten sie einen Sieger feiern.

Die heftige, fast schon gewalthafte Herzlichkeit dieser finsternen Leute erschreckte mich ... erschreckte mich mehr, als wenn sie mich, was ich erwartet hatte, als feindlichen Eindringling abgewehrt ... wenn sie mich ins Meer zurückgetrieben hätten. Man ist das, wofür die andern einen halten, dachte ich bei mir und durfte es vielleicht sogar hoffen. Wenn's denn die Anderen in meinem Fall nur voreingenommen und hartnäckig genug tun! Bei den Anderen, dachte ich noch, kann es sich eigentlich nur um Menschen handeln, der Andere, denke ich noch heute, ist nie nicht der andere *Mensch*.

ANOTHER LIFE FOR JOHN POTOCKI FELIX PHILIPP INGOLD**Excerpt translated by Damion Searls**

After the shipwreck, when the rolling waves carried me into the shallow coastal waters, I saw a gigantic formless thing lying far away on the beach...a giant animal, like a prehistoric whale or elephant – a royal-blue, phosphorescent mountain of flesh, with a dozen tiny people busying themselves about it, trying to satisfy their curiosity or their hunger.

One and all raised their machetes, axes, and spears of all kinds into position against the mighty body, as ferociously as if it were alive...a threat to human civilization, or (since the concept of civilization did not exist at that time) something even worse, a threat to us all, to the human race as such. As the waves brought me closer, and then as I waded and crawled to the sandy beach, I could more and more clearly hear their screams, though without being able to tell the difference between *Ah!* and *Arrgh!* and *Aiiii!* Was it a scene of triumph or a sacrifice? Collective incantation or exorcism?

The people gradually grew to life-size and only when they noticed me from the shore did they stop what they were doing with the mountainous corpse and rush with their weapons at me. The idea that they might want to save me seemed, at that moment in my life story, less plausible than that they saw me as an enemy invader, to be kept away from the shore at all costs.

They ran toward me, shrieking...they threw themselves from dry land into the shallow surf, letting their sticks and spears and rakes fall to the ground or throwing them aside, and every one of their leaps made a splash of water spray up in all directions. One after another they rushed toward me, and together they lifted me up into the dusky light as though welcoming back a prodigal son...as though they had to honour a victorious hero.

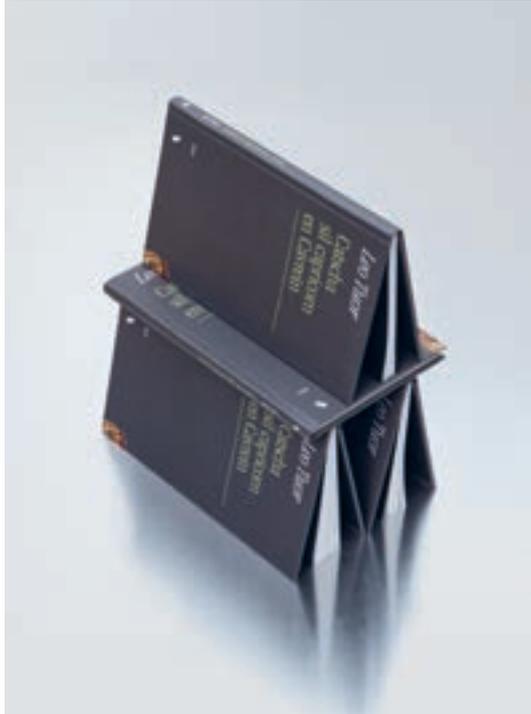
The fierce, almost violent good-will of these sinister people shocked me more than it would have if they had done what I had expected: fought me off as an enemy invader, driven me back into the sea. Man is what others see him as, I thought to myself, and perhaps I could even hope it was true. If only the others can be partial enough toward me and act doggedly enough in my case! These others, I still thought, could only be people; an other, I still think today, is never not an other *person*.

"Ingold always reflects his own literary life in both his real and fictional characters." NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG

HUNTING IBEX IN THE CAVREIN

CATSCHA SIL CAPRICORN EN CAVREIN

GENRE Essay, LANGUAGE Rhaeto-Romanic



“Hunting is like life itself. It’s hardly begun when it’s over.”



LEO TUOR was born in 1959 in Rabius in the Swiss canton of Graubünden (Grisons). He writes in Rhaeto-Romanic, a language only spoken by a few tens of thousands of people in the more remote parts of Switzerland. His main work is the Sursilvan Trilogy (Sursilvan is the Rhaeto-Romanic variant spoken in the Surselva area straddling the Italian-Swiss border): *Giacumbert Nau* (1988), *Onna Maria Tumera* (2002), and *Settembrini* (2006).

PHOTO © Yvonne Boehler

“If you want to know everything, every last detail, about a valley, everything about a mountain and its slopes, its rocks, its screes, outcrops and peaks, its ravines, chasms and crannies, then you should go hunting ibex in the high Alps.”

Hunting ibex is regarded as the supreme speciality of the Bündner Oberland, the high alps of the canton of Graubünden; and especially so – because it’s so demanding – in the Val Cavrein, a wild side valley off the Val Russein. In this essay, the Rhaeto-Romanic writer Leo Tuor leads us into a world where vigilance and patience are the watchwords...a world where only one thing is certain: that man, the hunter, must wait and wait. And wait, until – maybe – an ibex comes by. And wait, until the moment arrives when he has the animal in his sights. Tuor is a passionate reader of the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein: he even reads philosophy when he’s out hunting and always keeps a copy of Wittgenstein’s legendary work *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* with him...for even hunters encounter things, which are hard to understand and difficult to put into words without help and explanation. And the very process of waiting creates insights, which are otherwise hard to come by. Leo Tuor tells us how hunting is one means to understanding our fellow men. And that a hunter must also be a storyteller. Wittgenstein said: “If a lion could speak, we couldn’t understand him.” Neither could we understand the ibex, if he could speak, writes Tuor. But his essay does give us some idea how a hunter feels, as he moves in on the King of the Alps, the ibex.

TITLE Catscha sil capricorn en Cavrein
PUBLISHER Chasa Editura Rumantscha, Chur
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TRANSLATION RIGHTS Leo Tuor,
 leo.tuor@bluwin.ch

CATSCHA SIL CAPRICORN EN CAVREIN LEO TUOR**Rhaeto-Romanic original (p. 53-54)**

Arrivaus sut ils tgauns-camel sil sumfil e vesel da tshella vart giuaden: Quatertschien meters agradgiu, la Val Pintga. Cheu sas emblidar dad ir davosvi e sittar capricorns. Denter la crappa – sin 2700 meters sur mar – cuchegia ina flur margrita sin mei. Jeu sesel sper ella in tec davos aura, pacheteschel ora e magliel zatgei en quei vent malemper-neivel. Aschi en quei liug sur plirs glatschers, probabel aunc in tec suls tgaustgaun, ei il pader staus igl emprem da settember 1824, las larmas els eglis, per persecuitar cul spectiv l'emprema ascensiu dil Tödi tras Placi Curschellas ed Augustin Biscuolm, ils umens ch'el veva mess sin via e tarmess sil cuolm: *Nächst dem Fußglätscher westlich stiegen sie über die Mitte der Felsen des Bergs hinauf, lenkten zur Linken, um dessen westlichen beschneiten Rücken zu erreichen und so gelangten sie auf den Berggipfel um 11 Uhr.*

Jeu bettel butteglia, victualias e restis, rasai ora entuorn la margrita, puspei el sacados e fetsch vinavon dad ir engiu ella crappera, nua ch'il pader ha giu glatscher suttapeis. Cul fest diagonal ella costa dil cuolm va ei a scursalond tut agradgiu, scultschanond calzers, dalla morena vi, dil garver neu, nezegiond ora mintga toc neiv per saver ir en palas e schanegiar la schanuglia.

Duei ir engiu, ni empruar dad ir agradvi e da dar da maun seniester entuorn il Tgietschen? Lu enconuschel, sch'jeu dun buca en tiers, silmeins la geografia per in'otra gada. Bien. Agradvi diesch minutas, lu dalla greppa si, encounter la cufla. Sin tuts quater dad in pèr bauns vi, la buis, il fest traso denter comba enta peis. Ei sedecida definitivamein da never. Zacher giavel, cheu pos jeu buca anavos pli, sch'ei setschenta. Secavilgieschel sur la spatla dil cuolm neu, epi vegn in vonn cun crappa grossa. Cheu vegn jeu ad entupar pusmaun Tutanchamun. Suentar la gonda arrival jeu forsa vi ch'jeu vesel vi il Plat, e sch'jeu hai cletg ein ei leu e maglian. Naven da quei punct stuess'ins puder giu la Val Gronda, cun tener circa la lingia dalla tegia da Russein Sura. Tuttenina sundel sin ina spatla davos in crap, dado il Plat. Catschel ora il tgau. Cufla el nas, cufla el dies. Saltinan las minas ensi ed engiu. Sulet il pigniel da Nadal maunca. Il Plat ei scauas.

HUNTING IBEX IN THE CAVREIN LEO TUOR**Excerpt translated from German into English by Vincent Kling**

Having ascended to the ridge under the 'camel-dogs', I can look down onto the other side: four hundred metres directly below the Val Pintga. So you can forget making your way around the mountain to shoot ibex. Among the rocks – 2700 metres up – an alpine daisy is looking at me. I sit down beside it, hunker down, unwrap some food and in this unwelcoming wind eat whatever it is. It was on just about this spot, above several glaciers, and in all likelihood also slightly above the dogs' heads, that Father Spescha stood on September 1, 1824, with tears in his eyes, as he observed through his binoculars the Tödi scaled for the first time, by Placi Curschellas and Augustin Biscuolm, the two men he'd sent out onto the mountain: *Next to the glacier at the foot of the mountain the men climbed upward in a westerly direction over the middle of the mountain boulders, then turned left so as to make their way to the opposite side, covered with snow from the west; in this way they reached the peak at 11 o'clock.*

I toss back into my pack the bottle, the food and the clothes that were spread out all around the alpine daisy and make haste to climb back down into the stone desert where the reverend father still had the glacier under his feet. With my alpenstock diagonal to the flank I can glide downwards at a steep slope, which is pretty hard on my boots as I skid here and there over moraines and beds of scree and turn every patch of snow to use by sliding across it so I can spare my knees.

Should I give up or try going straight up and going around the Cuolm Tgietschen from the left side? If I don't run across any animals I'll at least know the terrain for some other time. Good. Straight ahead for ten minutes, then climb the boulders up to the snow squall. Along a few rock strips on all fours, the weapon, the alpenstock between my legs constantly in the way. Now it's starting to snow really hard. Damn, I won't be able to turn back if the snow settles in. I climb upwards along the mountain shoulder, then comes a hollow with large rocks. Here is where I'll meet 'Tutankhamun'-Ibex the day after tomorrow. After the scree bed I might be able to make my way far enough to look out onto the plateau, and if I'm lucky, they'll be there grazing. From that point I ought to be able to make my way down into the Val Gronda if I just pretty much follow a beeline to the Alpine hut at Russein Sura. Suddenly I'm on a shoulder behind a rock, on the other side of the plateau. I keep my head out forward. Snow squall in my nose, snow squall on my neck. Snowflakes are whirling upwards and downwards. All that's missing is the Christmas tree. The plateau is swept clean.

“If you have the courage to go into these bleak valleys, then go. You will meet new people and fantastic animals.”

THE BARBARIANS' SPRING

FRÜHLING DER BARBAREN

GENRE Novella, LANGUAGE German



“This novella is a cracking debut – a big, fun read.” TAGES-ANZEIGER

JONAS LÜSCHER was born in 1976 in Switzerland and now lives in Munich. He trained as a primary school teacher in Bern before spending some years working in the German film industry. He then studied at the College of Philosophy, in Munich. He is currently working on his doctorate at the Swiss Federal Institute of Technology. *Frühling der Barbaren* (*The Barbarians' Spring*) is his debut as a literary author.



PHOTO © Lüscher

Preising is a Swiss factory owner, in his mid-50s and somewhat lazy. He's on a business trip, staying in a luxurious oasis hotel in Tunisia, the 'Thousand and One Nights Resort', where he watches the lavish preparations for a wedding. Rich young Englishmen from London's financial sector have invited friends and family to a huge, riotous celebration. "Young people in their late 20s and early 30s...noisy and self-confident...slim and in the peak of condition." But even as this extravaganza is taking place, there are signs of a growing economic crisis, which will end in catastrophe. Sterling collapses, shortly afterwards the UK goes bankrupt, with unforeseeable consequences, which also affect Tunisia. The morning after the luxury wedding, all their credit cards are cancelled and the horde of pampered hotel guests suddenly becomes a leper colony. They can't have breakfast, they can't even take a shower. The elegant resort turns into a battlefield. Even Preising isn't spared. As a Swiss citizen, he escapes the worst effects of the developing financial crisis; but he has to witness just how thin is the veneer of civilisation. He learns his own personal lesson in globalisation, because his company has a project running in Tunisia. Preising ends up in a clinic; "People" he declares, "People turn into animals when it comes to losing their life-savings."

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jennifer.royston@beck.de

FRÜHLING DER BARBAREN JONAS LÜSCHER**German original (p. 20-22)**

Die Wüste an sich ist vielleicht die Landschaft, die mir am meisten entspricht. Die Leere, die Weite, die schnurgerade Straße, auf der wir dahinschossen. Sowie wir das hügelige Hinterland hinter uns ließen und vor uns die ersten Ausläufer der mächtigen Sandwüste liegen hatten, ließ auch ich alles hinter mir, den Lärm der Stadt, die unablässig schmeichelnden Reden Slim Malouchs, das immer sorgenvolle Gesicht Prodanovics.

Jäh rissen mich die toten Kamele aus meiner kontemplativen Betrachtung der vorbeiziehenden Dünen. Die Szenerie, die sich uns keine dreißig Meter entfernt bot, schien uns allen für einen Moment die Sprache zu verschlagen und veranlasste unseren Fahrer, scharf abzubremesen und den Wagen zum Stehen zu bringen. Ein silbernes Monstrum von einem Reisebus mit Seitenspiegeln, die wie Elefantenothen beidseitig auf die Fahrbahn hinausragten, stand regungslos, die Wüstensonne reflektierend, auf dem dunklen Asphaltband. Zehn, vielleicht fünfzehn Kamele lagen, teils einzeln, teils zu einem wilden Haufen aus knochigen Gliedern und erschlaferten Höckern um den stehenden Bus ausgebreitet. Ihre verdrehten Häuse, aus denen jede Kraft gewichen war, boten einen obszönen Anblick. Eines der Tiere hatte sich buchstäblich um die eng stehenden doppelten Vorderachsen des Busses gewickelt. Der Hals, unnatürlich lang gedehnt, hing schlaff über dem heißen Gummi des mächtigen Reifens, die Zunge fiel zwischen den entblößten gelben Zähnen aus dem Maul, ein Bein ragte steif zwischen Rad und Karosserie in den Himmel, den schwierigen Fuß in einem spitzen Winkel abgeknickt. Der Leib, eingeklemmt zwischen den beiden Rädern, hatte dem Druck nicht standgehalten, und die Eingeweide ergossen sich auf die Straße. Ein kleiner Menschaufmarsch hatte sich rings um die leblosen Leiber versammelt. Die Stimmung war mehr als nur angespannt. Ein paar Soldaten im Tarnfleck mit grünen Barett versuchten, fünf oder sechs aufgebrachte Beduinen, von denen einige ebenfalls Waffen trugen, zu beruhigen. Hinter den Soldaten, schwitzend und mit einer klaffenden Platzwunde auf der Stirn, stand im hellblauen Kurzarmhemd der Fahrer des Reisebusses, der seinerseits lauthals die Kameltreiber beschimpfte. Hinter den spiegelnden Scheiben des Reisebusses ließen sich schemenhaft die Gesichter zahlreicher Touristen ausmachen, die teils blass und mit offenem Mund auf die Szenerie starrten, teils ihre Gesichter an die Scheibe drängten und möglichst viel des Schlamassels auf ihre Speicherkarten zu bannen versuchten, damit sich die Geschichte daheim illustrieren ließ.

THE BARBARIANS' SPRING JONAS LÜSCHER**Excerpt translated by Tom Morrison**

The desert per se is the landscape that perhaps suits me best. The emptiness, the vastness, the arrow-straight road we went racing along. As soon as we left the hilly hinterland behind us and saw the mighty desert stretch out in front of us, I too left everything behind, the noise of the town, the incessant flattery of Slim Malouch, the ever-anxious face of Prodanovic.

The dead camels roused me abruptly from my contemplation of the dunes flying past. The scene we saw less than thirty metres ahead seemed to silence us momentarily as the driver braked sharply and brought the vehicle to a stop. A silver monster of a coach stood on the black ribbon of asphalt, reflecting the desert sun, its side-mirrors sticking out into the road like elephant's ears. Ten, maybe fifteen, camels were spread about the stationary bus, some lying there on their own, others enmeshed in a ferocious tangle of bony limbs and flaccid humps. The sight of their twisted necks with all the strength drained out of them was obscene. One of the beasts had literally wrapped itself round the twin front axle of the bus. Its unnaturally elongated neck dangled over the hot rubber of the giant tyre, tongue lolling from its mouth between bared yellow teeth, one stiff leg projecting heavenwards between the wheel and the body, its calloused foot bent at a sharp angle. The pressure had proved too much for the beast's body, which was wedged between the two wheels, and intestines were dribbling out onto the road.

A small crowd had gathered round the lifeless bodies. The mood was more than tense. A few green-bereted soldiers in camouflage were trying to calm down five or six agitated Bedouins, several of whom sported weapons likewise. Behind the soldiers stood the driver of the coach, sweating, dressed in a blue short-sleeved shirt, a gaping wound on his forehead, and he was subjecting the camel drivers to a loud stream of invective. Behind the mirrored windows of the bus tourists' faces were visible in outline, some pale and open-mouthed as they stared at the scene, others pressing their faces up to the panes and trying to capture on their memory cards as much of the fiasco as possible so they could provide pictures when telling the story to the folks back home.

“We must admire Jonas Lüscher for tackling such a red-hot topic in just 130 pages: this is an object lesson in just how insubstantial is the gloss of civilisation.” SÜDDEUTSCHE ZEITUNG

FIRE IS A STRANGE THING

FEUER IST EINE SELTSAME SACHE

GENRE Short Stories, LANGUAGE German



“Lisa Elsässer reveals herself as a sensitive, alert observer of everyday life (...).”
NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG AM SONNTAG



LISA ELSÄSSER was born in 1951 in Bürglen in the Swiss canton of Uri. She has trained in various professions, amongst others as a librarian and a bookseller. She has achieved a number of distinctions in her literary work; her most recent publications are *Die Finten der Liebe* (*Love's Deceptions*, short stories, 2011) and *Da war doch was* (*There Really Was Something There*, poems, 2013).

PHOTO © Helen Bauer-Rigendinger

“Fire is a strange thing” was written on a piece of paper left by a man on a woman’s kitchen table. And because it wasn’t just any woman, but of all people his wife’s friend, the charged atmosphere this creates could soon become dangerous.

It develops into a love affair...but not a simple one: “After that night, we parted at a traffic lights; it was early morning and they were just flashing on amber. Red or green would have only one meaning, I said. He laid his finger against my lips.”

A man, who was once a handsome man, is admitted to hospital as an emergency – and the night nurse, who has to care for him, is suddenly confronted with her past.

In another of Elsässer’s stories, two women land in an old people’s home: they’ve forgotten that they are mother and daughter. Or there’s this tale: a visit to a dying aunt leads us into a world both familiar and unfamiliar: “Emma, whispered the aunt. That was my mother’s name. I only ever called her ‘mother’, the name Emma alienated me. Emma, or mother, sat down at her bedside.”

Lisa Elsässer’s short stories are taken from life – and life doesn’t always turn out successfully. Whether in a cramped room in a farmhouse in the Schächental or at a desk down on the plains, whether in a cemetery or in Italy, ghosts and hidden dangers lurk. And these force out memories, drag the unsaid and the repressed into the light. Lisa Elsässer’s blunt and individualistic prose crystallises the two great themes of literature: life and death.

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daniela.koch@rotpunktverlag.ch

FEUER IST EINE SELTSAME SACHE LISA ELSÄSSER**German original (p. 43-45)**

Der erste Liebesbrief

Josef kam aus anderm Haus. Das war weiter nicht schlimm. Reihenhäuser waren nie mein Ding, und dass Josef und ich ganz ähnliche Bewohner von sehr unterschiedlichen Häusern waren, war nicht mehr als recht.

Josef hatte eine blonde Mutter, meine war grau. Josefs Mutter trug kurze Röcke und fuhr einen Mercedes. Was mir an meiner Mutter gefiel, war, dass sie ihre Beine nicht zeigte. Sie trug immer wadenlange Jupes oder Kleider. Josefs Vater ging trotz der kurzen Röcke seiner Frau fremd. Mein Vater kam nicht mal auf die Idee, Mutters Rocklänge zu kritisieren, geschweige denn, irgendwelchen schönen Beinen hinterherzurennen. Er wusste auch nicht, dass ich verliebt war in Josef. Heftig verliebt. Auch Mutter wusste das nicht. Nur Josefs Mutter muss es gewusst haben, dass auch Josef, ihr Sohn, verliebt war. Wahrscheinlich hat sie den ersten und einzigen von mir an Josef geschriebenen Liebesbrief abgefangen. Es war überhaupt mein erster Liebesbrief.

Anders konnte ich mir das Fehlen eines von ihm an mich geschriebenen Liebesbriefs nicht erklären. Wenigstens eine Reaktion, ein Zeichen, dass er ihn erhalten hatte, erwartete ich.

Meine Liebe glühte am Straßenrand. Mittags, auf dem langen Schulweg, mit dem Fahrrad unterwegs, stieg ich kurz vor der Steigung der Straße ab und wartete auf meine Freundin, die schon von der flachen Straße überfordert war und früher als ich das Fahrrad schob.

Josef war mit dem Moped unterwegs. Das Warten auf die Freundin war mir die liebste Zeit, denn regelmäßig fuhr Josef um diese Zeit auf seinem Moped an mir vorbei, lachte, hob seine Hand zum Gruß. Manchmal machte er einen kurzen Schlenker auf mich zu, und es kam mir vor wie ein flüchtiger Kuss, der an meiner Wange vorbeirauschte. Ich war einen Tag lang glücklich, beseelt von seinem Schlenker, seinem Lachen, seinem Gruß, und wusste, dass sich das jeden Tag, bis zu den Sommerferien, wiederholen würde.

Eigentlich wussten nur Josef und ich um unsere Liaison, die am Straßenrand ihren Höhepunkt erreichte. Und wie gesagt, seine Mutter. Statt sich auf ihren fremdgehenden Mann zu konzentrieren, hatte sie den an ihren Augapfel gerichteten Liebesbrief abgefangen (Vermutung). Vielleicht rührte sie der Liebesbrief zu Tränen, vielleicht waren es Tränen über ihren eigenen Liebesverlust, oder sie war zornig über die ganze Welt und duldet nicht, dass Josef sein Herz an ein Mädchen verlor, das Tochter einer Mutter war, die lange Röcke trug, und einen Vater hatte, der nicht des Nächsten Weib beehrte. Über seine Fantasien diesbezüglich spekulierte ich nie. Seine Schönheit sah ich nur auf alten Fotos.

FIRE IS A STRANGE THING LISA ELSÄSSER**Excerpt translated by Katy Derbyshire**

The First Love Letter

Josef came from a different kind of house. That wasn't a problem. I was never a fan of terraced houses, and it was no big deal that Josef and I were rather similar inhabitants of very different houses.

Josef had a mother with blonde hair, mine had grey. Josef's mother wore short skirts and drove a Mercedes. What I liked about my mother was that she never showed her legs. She always wore calf-length skirts or dresses. Josef's father cheated on his wife, despite her short skirts. It didn't even occur to my father to criticise mother's skirt length, let alone to chase after pairs of pretty legs. And he didn't know I was in love with Josef. Head-over-heels in love. Mother didn't know either. Only Josef's mother must have known that Josef, her son, was in love too. She probably intercepted the first and only love letter I wrote to Josef. It was my first ever love letter.

I could find no other explanation for his failure to write a love letter back to me. I expected at least some reaction, a sign that he'd received it.

My love smouldered by the edge of the road. At noon, on the long way to school on my bicycle, I would dismount just before the hill and wait for my friend, for whom even the level road was too much and who began pushing her bicycle earlier than I did.

Josef had a moped. Waiting for my friend was my favourite part of the day, because Josef would regularly drive past me on his moped, laugh, and raise his hand to greet me. Sometimes he'd swerve towards me for a moment, and it seemed to me like a fleeting kiss rushing past my cheek. I'd be happy all day long, filled with bliss by his swerve, his laugh, his wave, and I knew it would all repeat itself every day until the summer holidays.

It was actually only Josef and I who knew about our liaison, which reached its peak by the edge of the road. And his mother, as I said. Instead of concentrating on her cheating husband, she had intercepted the love letter addressed to the apple of her eye (my assumption). Perhaps the love letter moved her to tears, perhaps they were tears over the loss of her own love, or she was angry with the whole world and wouldn't tolerate Josef losing his heart to a girl who was the daughter of a mother who wore long skirts and had a father who didn't covet his neighbour's wife. I never speculated about his fantasies in that direction. I only saw how handsome he was in old photos.

"Is my dream really my own dream? Or am I dreaming only what others want me to dream?"

GLITTERING PRIZES

THE GLITTERING JUDGE: AN INTERVIEW WITH TIM PARKS

Tim Parks is a renowned British author and translator. He's lived for 3 decades in Italy but was in London earlier this year as a judge of the Man Booker International Prize for Fiction. This major prize is awarded every 2 years to a living 'foreign writer' writing in, or translated into, English. The 2013 winner was Lydia Davis from the US but the Swiss novelist Peter Stamm was shortlisted – a first for Switzerland. In London Tim Parks spoke with Rosie Goldsmith.

ROSIE GOLDSMITH Describe the MBIP judging experience.



TIM PARKS Having 5 judges with English as their mother-tongue reading international fiction was a potential problem, but I think we did a wonderful job choosing the final 10 from over 50 writers from vastly different cultures. The winner Lydia Davis is very, very extraordinary. She has reinvented what it means to write short pieces. Yes, she's American and writes in English, but it's hard to get consensus on translated books because they always come from 'somewhere else', intersecting with our culture in a way we have to work at. If a book's written first in English, then the material gets inside us more quickly. It was simply less likely that a translated book would win.

RG What does a Prize like this tell us about the status of international literature?

TP We live in interesting times. Everything is changing. Very few writers today are public figures or deeply engaged in society. If you think back to Grass, Böll and Sartre, they were intimately engaged in a fierce local and national debate, and that gave their writing an intensity. That is pretty much over now. Today the only social standing a writer has is how many copies he sells or if he wins prizes. We are losing out as a result because we are losing this intensity of engagement with language and society. Why does a book have to sell a million copies to be a great book? If somebody writes a wonderful book that really means something to a community, let it be so. Why do we constantly have to imagine that 'the good' is always universal? Or has to be a commercial success? I firmly believe there are wonderful pieces of writing which don't travel. However, we have moved from a period of strong national literatures, where only major works or obviously commercial works were translated, to today where pretty much anything is up for translation. An international literature is being constructed at the expense of a national literature tradition. It is actually changing the way people are writing in their different countries. Countries which had a strong literary tradition are still producing ambitious writers but have no market, or such a small market, or a market so completely invaded by international fiction that the notion of being a writer, writing for a community, becomes meaningless.

RG This prize is ambitious – it covers an author's whole body of work and a huge global sweep of cultures – including Switzerland!

TP We all recognized that Peter Stamm is a very serious author. His books are very quiet and austere, not located in any particular place.



They are not necessarily very 'Swiss'. He ploughs a small territory and does that perfectly. The novel *Seven Years* is fantastic, a fascinating take on the split between mind and body, the middle-class career path and a sort of animal sexuality. It's about fear - not having the right job, social status - and a more atavistic fear of "not having somebody next to me who would die for me". *On a Day Like This* is even more extraordinary: again it's about managing the fear of the humdrum. Stamm does not feel the need for a major plot or a final showdown.

RG Peter Stamm has a wonderful translator, Michael Hofmann. And like most of us, you are reading the translation.

TP Stamm is translatable in a way that many other writers who put more into their texts are not. Beckett started writing in French because it forced him to be simple. Stamm's native language is a Swiss dialect but he writes in German, which is a literary construct for him. This helps him to be lean. One of the things clearly happening in this period of globalization is that we are getting a lot more writers writing in very lean styles.

RG One theory I've heard is that some writers are deliberately writing books that are easier to translate, in a more 'global' style.

TP It's not a theory; it's happening. Kazuo Ishiguro already said in the 80s: "I write my books in that style because I feel it's very translatable." This is also a problem when judging an international prize. Remember we are judging it in English, and not pretending - like the Nobel Prize - that we are taking in all the languages of the whole world. This means we are only considering books that already exist in the international space. Maybe there are wonderful books in China as yet un-translated, but we are not looking at them. So in this creation of an international tradition today writers are influencing each other across countries more immediately than in the past but at the expense of the local situation.

RG If we focus specifically on translation into English, are the US and UK markets very different?

TP They operate a lot together, frankly, because one way of paying for the translation is to get a co-edition with an English or American publisher. The overlap is huge. If a German author is published in the USA he will probably be published in the UK. But a lot less gets translated in the UK and US than in Europe. In Italy, translations amount to about 50% of titles, but probably 70% of sales. How good is that for the national literature? I don't know. It depends how much is being read. And what. A lot of translated literature is detective fiction and 90% of people stay reading detective novels. It is not a gateway to more translated literature.

RG The issue is how little the English market is reading and publishing in translation. Today it's still only about 4.5 percent of all fiction.

TP Let's get this clear and this is much more interesting than the usual shrill protests: the UK publishes an extravagant number of titles, many more than the USA. Percentages may be small but the markets are big. We are talking about thousands of titles - certainly more foreign literature than anybody could read in any year. So is it too little? I don't think so. Whether they are getting the right books, is another question. Good authors are published and hardly read at all. Peter Stamm is fortunate to come from a small country, where he stood out fairly rapidly. It is much more difficult to stand out in the UK or US.

PHOTO © Basso Cannarsa

Was a bird a bird?

DOROTHEE ELMIGER, AUTHOR



In January of this year, when I boarded the plane that first left Switzerland and then flew ever eastwards, over Turkey, Iran and Afghanistan hours later, and finally, approaching from the dark Arabian Sea, landed in brightly lit Mumbai, my text had long since arrived in the country, in India; it had gone on ahead of me. What happened to a text when it crossed borders, when it left the continent? Where did it end up? I stepped out of the airport building, hearing and seeing everything predicted to me all at once, the air a warm fug around my head. What meaning did the words have here? What did it mean to speak English in this country, to read a book in English? Was a bird a bird, what happened to the word Fluss, which was present on every page of my book, in its translation - what was it here, a river? (A ship crossed the Hooghly River; on it, pilgrims arrived and commuters left the city; the old professor in Hyderabad said they tell a story here too of a vanished river, like in my book. Sarasvati, I noted down. Using magnets on long strings, our companion told us, the children fish coins out of the river.) What, then, had my text announced here in my absence about the rivers, about the horse (driving past the Maidan, the large, empty field in the middle of Kolkata, I saw a white horse standing there, like in my book), about the fire in the tunnels (outside the building where the publishing house was, a small fire burned by the wayside, as indeed little piles of rubbish smouldered all over the city). Into what space had the text entered? As I moved across India, the text appeared occasionally in its new form and language, with its new tone: in Kolkata, a librarian took me aside and showed me the shelf where it stood. A young woman in New Delhi opened up her bag with a conspiratorial look to show me the book, and on Shyama Prasad Mukherjee Road in Kolkata, I found a whole pile of them. Every individual book was not a copy but a continuation of the text

THE GLITTERING WRITER: AN INTERVIEW WITH PETER STAMM

Peter Stamm is one of Switzerland's most successful writers. Born 50 years ago, he's published journalism, novels, short stories and radio dramas. Renowned for his spare prose and sharp psychological insight, Stamm has won many prizes both at home and abroad. He writes in German but is widely translated. His complete works in English were shortlisted for the prestigious Man Booker International Prize For Fiction 2013. Rosie Goldsmith met Peter Stamm in London.

ROSIE GOLDSMITH You are the first Swiss writer to be shortlisted for the Man Booker International Fiction Prize: how significant is that?



PETER STAMM It's significant for English readers. It takes longer for translated literature to be recognized in Britain. It's so closed in many ways culturally. Britain is not so interested in other countries. It seems to prefer what it produces itself. When I lived in London for half a year I had a feeling that nothing was happening anywhere else in the world.

RG Is it better in the USA?

PS That's hard to say. I have 2 different editors, 2 different publishers, one here, one there. I'm very lucky as they are not typically American or English. But I think the average publisher in the US and UK is not very interested in foreign literature. It's mostly small specialist houses.

RG How important is it for you to be translated into English?

PS I don't sell many books in the UK or US but it is really important for me to have those sales, as literature is about exchange. You miss something if you don't read us. Literature is a kind of communication. If you stop communicating you cut yourself off from a broader outlook.

RG Your work has been translated by one of the greatest translators from German into English, Michael Hofmann. How closely do you work with him?

PS Not that closely. He's such a great translator that he has few questions. I'm friends with him, he is a wonderful person, but he doesn't need me. We each have our own language. With my first book I made the mistake of suggesting lots of things to him. He just ignored them! It was the perfect way to tell me: "look, this is my job, that's yours." I always wanted him to translate all my books because readers become familiar with that voice. In a foreign market the translator is like an actor's voiceover in a synchronized film. When they work well together, why change that voice?

RG What are the main obstacles for foreign writers in the UK and US market?

PS In the US and UK it's not just about the books but the whole culture around the books. You do interviews, you go on TV and so on. Writers are known because they are present in the media. And that's quite difficult for a foreign author. You don't have time to travel abroad all the time to do publicity. Or you don't speak the language.

I had once written, now resting in the hands of the young woman, the librarian, the old woman who spoke of the rivers.

Translated by Katy Derbyshire.

DOROTHEE ELMIGER was born in 1985 and is a freelance writer, living in Switzerland. She studied in Biel, Leipzig and Berlin and is the Editor of the DORF Anthology. Her first novel was published in 2010: *Einladung an die Waghalsigen* (*Invitation to the Bold of Heart*, Dumont Buchverlag), which has won many prizes and been translated into several languages.

PHOTO © Sam Tyson

Robert Walser in the English-speaking world

SUSAN BERNOFSKY, TRANSLATOR



Although Robert Walser was first translated into English as early as 1955, nearly half a century intervened before he began to be considered a canonical author in the English-speaking world. British poet Christopher Middleton was Walser's first translator, publishing a volume of Walser's short prose (*The Walk and Other Stories*, 1957) and the novel *Jakob von Gunten* (1969). These books introduced Walser to literary cognoscenti, as a result of which the influential cultural critic Susan Sontag discovered Walser in the early 1980s, declaring him "a truly wonderful, heart-breaking writer." It is thanks to her that Middleton's book of Walser's stories, now expanded with a few new translations by several other hands, was reprinted in 1982 as *Selected Stories of Robert Walser* by the important New York publishing house Farrar, Straus & Giroux. The book was well-received and well-publicized; there was even a feature about Walser in *Vogue*. And suddenly people in the New York cultural scene knew about Walser. Walser at this point was an "author's author," an insider tip, which is how I first heard of him, inspiring me, as a young

RG It must help that you speak English. Surely it helps in the promotion of foreign literature?

PS Sure, but there are all kinds of creative solutions for writers if you don't speak the language. In China they project the text onto a screen in Chinese and you read in German. Or you have an interpreter. I've had excellent experiences at festivals in Spain, Colombia and Mexico, for example. Perhaps they are more welcoming and creative in countries where they have less access to books and writers! Not many Swiss writers go to Colombia, so I had a really warm welcome, good audiences and discussions. In Russia too they are very interested in literature. And in Germany they are very bookish people. In Germany, or Switzerland, we read and review many books from many countries. We know world literature well. But I don't read a book just because it's from a specific language; it must be an interesting author.

RG What do you believe Swiss literature adds to global literature?

PS I don't believe in national literatures. There is just the author, maybe groups of authors with the same goals, but for me they are international. So I might feel close to a Colombian or Russian author. I don't feel part of Swiss literature specifically. Of course I'm Swiss and I write, but there is no connection between me and most Swiss writers: we all have different goals and write in different styles. I don't write about Switzerland.

RG The Swiss, though, market you as a Swiss writer and are very proud of you.

PS It's like Swiss cheese. Switzerland is a small country. It's nice, I like it. Of course I am part of that country. Writers are used to promote the country but not much money is put into literature in Switzerland. Most writers, even great writers, can't live from writing. With the other arts – painting or music – you can live if you are successful in Switzerland. Which is strange, because the Swiss say that their favourite pastime is reading, so it's a big market. You'd think there'd be more support for Swiss literature if it's so important to people.

RG Do you think you would be more famous if you weren't Swiss?

PS No, it's just different. In the US it's more difficult to become really successful because it's such a big country. But if you are successful in the UK and US you can be a big success! In Switzerland it's probably easier but success is smaller, just like the country.

PHOTO © Gaby Gerster

aspiring writer, to start translating his work. My first translations (the 1990 prose collection *Masquerade and Other Stories* and *The Robber*, in 2000) were enthusiastically reviewed but sold sparingly. It wasn't until the new millennium, when Walser was picked up by the respected New York publishing house New Directions, that sales and reception really began to take off. When New Directions published my translations of Walser's novels *The Assistant (Der Gehülfe)* and *The Tanners (Geschwister Tanner)* in 2007 and 2009, suddenly a new reading public appeared, one made up of a younger generation of poets and writers with a new interest in great modernist literature. And when my translation of *Microscripts* came out in 2010, Walser began to enjoy something like cult status. In this age of blogging and the short form, Walser's experimental, high-modernist short prose appeared aesthetically visionary, and now there were visual artists as well as writers obsessed with his work – particularly because *Microscripts* contained high-quality facsimiles of Walser's fascinating miniature manuscripts. New Directions quickly published three more volumes: *A Little Ramble*, *The Walk*, and *Thirty Poems*, translated by Christopher Middleton. Middleton also translated a new collection of stories, *Speaking to the Rose*, and New York Review Books Classics published two new Walser collections, my translation of *Berlin Stories* and one translated by Damion Searls, *A Schoolboy's Diary*. The Swiss poet Daniele Pantano also published a collection of Walser poems entitled *Oppressive Light*. Walser books can now be found as a matter of course in every well-stocked literary bookstore, he is on the must-read list for most young writers and poets, and I think it is fair to say that his audience in the English-speaking world will continue to grow.

SUSAN BERNOFSKY teaches workshops on Literary Translation at Columbia University, New York. She has translated seven books by the Swiss author Robert Walser. She is currently working on a biography of Walser.

PHOTO © Caroline White

ONE BY ONE

UNO PER UNO

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE Italian



“Soldini’s novel is a courageous attempt to cast the narrative world not just in a single mould, but as a chorus of many, contradictory voices.” NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG



TOMMASO SOLDINI was born in 1974 in Lugano, Switzerland and teaches Italian at the Bellinzona Cantonal Commercial College. He has written two volumes of poetry: *Ribelle di nemico privo* (*Rebel Without an Enemy*, Alla Chiara Fonte, 2004) and *Lato east* (*East Side*, Sottoscala, 2011), as well as a book of short stories *L’animale guida* (*The Animal Guide*, Casagrande, 2009).

PHOTO © Chiasso Letteraria

They grew up in Switzerland in the 1980s and 1990s, in a country that was flourishing; but even so, the characters in *One by One* live a life on the edge of society, a life full of unanswered questions. They all have their own worries, their little obsessions, their lives are all out of joint. They’re unhappy, or at least they’re quite convinced they’re unlucky.

Glauco, Magdalena, Davide, Maura, Esra, Martina and Simone each have their own chapter, in which they discuss their own destiny: they talk about their background, age and character, but it gradually becomes apparent that they’re all very different and nothing seems to link them together. Until one day they happen across a remarkable little text written by one Orfeo Bandini. Bandini, who’s a charlatan, worms his way into the hopeless lives of Soldini’s group and uses his pamphlet to persuade them there’s a way to a better life. And that way leads to Morocco.

In the second part of the novel, the group turns up in Morocco, seeking in the Medina at Essaouira the happiness they never dared believe they’d find. Not all of them come through the experience in the same way: some give up almost straightaway; others hang on right to the end. But they must all, against their will, wrestle with the concepts of love and beauty, hope and madness.

Soldini’s novel revolves around the major themes of life: a person’s history as a component of their identity, as a boundary and a burden; the delicate balance between despair and confidence, between world-weariness and the desire for happiness.

TITLE Uno per Uno

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edizioni@casagrande-online.ch

UNO PER UNO TOMMASO SOLDINI**Italian original (p. 18-19)**

Ma io non sono pazzo. Sono saltuariamente disturbato. E svizzero, nel senso che sono nato nel Mendrisiotto, precisamente a Genestrerio, nella casa di fronte a quella del prete, dall'altra parte della strada. La sua casa la vedevo bene dalla mia finestra, un edificio di sasso con le imposte verdi e un portone che mi sembrava uscito dal Medioevo. Se mi concentro sento lo scalpitio dei cavalli, i risolini delle dame, l'odore dei loro fazzoletti passati nelle parti intime e poi gettati ai piedi del prescelto per la notte. Mio padre non lo ricordo. Mi dicono che abbia vissuto con noi, per qualche mese. In solaio ci sono alcune fotografie della sua gioventù, portava i pantaloni a zampa d'elefante, gli occhiali da miope, una maglietta color grumo di sangue appena invaso dal primo strato di pus. Si fumava una canna in compagnia della mamma, che gli teneva una mano sulla caviglia, stringendola come se fosse il pomo proibito. Ma per tanti anni non ho saputo di avere un padre. Cioè, io credevo che mio papà fosse don Enrico, che mi ero abituato a chiamare padre. Credevo anzi che fosse anche il papà della mia mamma, perché anche lei lo chiamava così. Però poi, quando avevo dodici anni, sono venuti a trovarci i nonni materni da Zurigo e allora ho capito. È che a casa mia non si parlava dei nonni. Quelli del papà erano morti, quelli della mamma arrabbiati. Con la mamma perché l'aveva data al papà. Alla fine la nonna si è beccata un cancro all'utero e allora, prima di schiattare, ha deciso di perdonarla. Siamo andati a pranzo al ristorante, era la terza volta che andavo al ristorante, ho mangiato spaghetti alla Ernesto Hemingway, cioè con caciotta stagionata e pesce spada.

Mi hanno raccontato che la mamma era una bambina molto sveglia, forse troppo. Si nascondeva sotto il letto o dentro l'armadio quando era ora di fare il riposino. Non giocava con le bambole. Non stava attenta quando le leggevano le storie. Non sparecchiava la tavola. Però si fumava le sigarette di nascosto. Mary Long rubate dal pacchetto della nonna.

ONE BY ONE TOMMASO SOLDINI**Excerpt translated by Simon Knight**

But I'm not mad. I have my moments of derangement. And I'm Swiss, in the sense that I was born in the Mendrisio area, Genestrerio to be precise, opposite where the priest lived, on the other side of the street. I could see his house clearly from my window, stone-built with green shutters and a front door that had a medieval look about it. If I concentrate, I can hear the scraping of horses' hoofs, the giggles of the ladies, the odour of their handkerchiefs rubbed over their private parts and thrown at the feet of that night's favoured one. Of my father I have no memories. They tell me he lived with us, for a few months. In the attic there are some photographs of him as a young man, wearing flared trousers, owlsh glasses, a pullover of clotted-blood colour overrun with the first layer of pus. He was smoking a pipe in the company of mother, who had him by the ankle, grasping him as if he were the forbidden apple. But for many years I didn't know I had a father. Or rather, I thought my dad was Don Enrico, whom I'd got used to calling father. In fact I also thought he was my mother's dad, because she called him father, too. But then, when I was twelve, my maternal grandparents came from Zürich on a visit, and then I understood. It was because at home we never spoke of the grandparents. My father's parents were dead, mother's angry. With mother, because she had given herself to my father. In the end, my grandmother got cancer of the womb and, before snuffing it, decided to forgive her. We went out to lunch at a restaurant, the third time I had been to one, and I had spaghetti alla Ernest Hemingway, with strong caciotta cheese and swordfish. They told me mother had been a lively child, maybe excessively so. She would hide under the bed or in the wardrobe when it was time for her nap. She didn't play with dolls. She didn't pay attention when they read her stories. She didn't clear the table. But she smoked cigarettes on the sly. Mary Long's filched from grandmother's packet.

“You have something...an obsession, a vice, an ‘idée fixe’, an anxiety. This anxiety is what holds you back, yet also drives you on, to become the very thing you never wanted to be.”

DOWNFALL

NIEDERGANG

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“As they walked along, André turned to Louise, who was a couple of yards behind him. ‘Do you know why the Swiss climb mountains?’ he joked. ‘It’s so they can escape from their prison.’”



ROMAN GRAF was born in Winterthur in 1978 and trained as a forest ranger. He worked in a number of other jobs, then studied at the Leipzig Institute for Literature. He won numerous prizes for his first novel *Herr Blanc* (*Mr Blanc*) and for a volume of poetry, including the 2009 Mara-Cassens prize and the 2010 Promotion Prize of the Bremen Literature Prize. Roman Graf lives in Berlin.

PHOTO © Stefan Kubli

A young Berlin couple set off on a tour through the Swiss mountains. André and Louise intend to climb high and seem well prepared for their adventure. Yet, the closer they get to the top, the further apart they drift. Roman Graf’s novel plays out the old theme of man’s existential encounter with mountains. Vigour and strength of will, but also the inner turmoil of his hero are reflected in his powerful but poetic writing.

André has planned this trip for months, right down to the last detail. This walking tour is a reminder of the happiest days of his childhood – for him, it’s something he must do. Moreover, he wants to show his girlfriend Louise how beautiful the mountains are. But everything threatens to fall apart. The village is shrouded in mist; persistent drizzle delays their departure. Louise seems listless, André feels thwarted. Eventually they set off, struggling with unfulfilled hopes and growing ill temper. With difficulty, they reach the end of their first stage. The next day, the good weather returns and their enthusiasm for the adventure with it. But the ascent is strenuous, and Louise’s hostility increases with every rock she climbs. Before the final ascent, she abandons her boyfriend. Hurt but proud, André climbs on alone. In his rocky solitude, he reaches his mental and physical limits: he draws energy from his strength of will, from his childhood memories and from dream visions, which suddenly come upon him. His obsession remains to reach the mountain-top and leave everything else behind him. It will prove his undoing.

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gesche.wendebourg@randomhouse.de

NIEDERGANG ROMAN GRAF**German original (p. 131-133)**

Er horchte – nichts.

Nicht einmal leiser Wind, Vögel, das Knistern schmelzenden Schnees. André drückte die Hand auf die harte Schneefläche, bis sie hörbar einbrach, ein kurzes und einsames Geräusch, schon vorbei und vergessen. Er konnte noch viele solcher Geräusche produzieren, nichts vermochten sie zu ändern an der Totenstille.

Er ließ sich davon nicht beeindruckt. Er war allein, allein auf einem fernen, schneebedeckten Planeten, allein im Weltall, so allein, wie ein Mensch nur sein konnte – es gab viele Worte, die solche Zustände beschrieben –, aber er hatte einen Willen. Er verglich sich mit einer verloren gegangenen Ameise, die zäh und ohne Zweifel ihren Weg ging. Vorsichtig, aber entschieden schritt er weiter. Furchtlos drang er tief in das Schneemeer hinein, hievte das eine, dann das andere Bein nach vorn, wieder das eine, das andere, lief wie eine Maschine, der Motor eines Autos, der sich in einem zu hohen Gang abmühte, stotternd, kurz davor, abgewürgt zu werden. Das hatte nichts mehr mit einer normalen Wanderung zu tun, nichts mit der Leichtfüßigkeit eines Marathonlaufs. André erinnerte sich an eine Fernsehsendung, die er als Kind gesehen hatte und in der schwere, muskulöse Männer, von denen in einem Wettkampf der Stärkste gekürt wurde, mehrere Kleinwagen umdrehen mussten: sie liefen zu einem Wagen, fassten mit den Händen nach der Kante des Unterbodens, drehten den Wagen aufs Dach, liefen zum nächsten Wagen ... So tat André seine Schritte, jeder Schritt ein Kleinwagen, zumindest für ihn, schließlich war er kein Herkules.

Er blieb stehen, um zu verschnaufen, zog die Gletscherbrille aus, um für einen Moment die Wirklichkeit zu sehen: stechende Helligkeit! Ohne Gletscherbrille hätte er nach dem Kamin gar nicht weitergehen brauchen, sinnlos wäre es gewesen. Schon jetzt begannen die Augen zu schmerzen, und ihm wurde ganz wirr von all dem Weiß.

Klaglos, fleißig ging er weiter, Stück für Stück, ohne an ein Aufgeben zu denken. Und dann, endlich!, lag nur noch wenige Meter entfernt eine schräge Felsplatte, teilweise von Schnee bestäubt. Gleich erreichte er das Ufer, die Erhebung!

Er schaute auf die Uhr. Über vierzig Minuten waren vergangen. Für die Bewältigung von fünf Metern hatte er jeweils eine Minute gebraucht. So langsam bin ich gar nicht gewesen!, sagte er in Gedanken zu Louise. Das war sein typischer Humor auf Wanderungen, den zu ertragen von seiner Begleitung ebenfalls Humor verlangte.

Zufrieden rieb er die Hände aneinander. Das Schneemeer war geschafft, und er war noch bei Kräften. Aber was türmte sich da vor ihm auf?

DOWNFALL ROMAN GRAF**Excerpt translated by Shaun Whiteside**

He listened – nothing.

Not even quiet wind, birds, the crackle of melting snow. André pressed his hand onto the hard surface of the snow until it broke audibly, a short, lonely sound, already over and forgotten. He could make lots of sounds like that, they could do nothing to change the deadly silence.

He refused to be impressed. He was alone, alone on a distant, snow-covered planet, alone in the universe, as alone as a person could possibly be – there were many words that described such states – but he had a will. He likened himself to a lost ant, stubbornly going its own doubt-free way.

Carefully but resolutely he walked on. He pressed fearlessly deep into the sea of snow, heaved one leg forward, then the other, again the one, the other, walked like a machine, a car engine struggling in too high a gear, sputtering just before it stalls. It no longer had anything to do with a normal hike, nor with the light-footedness of a marathon race. André remembered a television programme he had seen as a child, in which heavy, muscular men, competing to see who was the strongest, had to overturn a number of small cars; they ran to a car, gripped the edge of the underside with their hands, turned the car onto its roof, ran to the next car... That was how André took his steps, every step a small car, at least for him – he wasn't Hercules, after all.

He stopped to get his breath back, took off the glacier goggles to see the reality for a moment: stinging brightness! Without glacier goggles he wouldn't have been able to go any further after the chimney, there would have been no point. His eyes were starting to hurt already, and all the white confused him.

Uncomplaining, steadfast, he walked on, one piece at a time, not thinking of giving up. And then, at last! just a few metres away there was a slab of rock at an angle, part of it dusted with snow. He was about to reach the shore, elation!

He looked at his watch. More than forty minutes had passed. To travel five metres it had taken him a minute each. I was not that slow!, he said to Louise in his thoughts. That was typical of his sense of humour on hikes, which required a sense of humour on the part of his companion as well.

He contentedly rubbed his hands together. He'd made it through the sea of snow, and he still had his strength. But what was that looming in front of him?

“‘Perhaps we’d survive,’ he smiled; ‘it’s not quite vertical. We’d slide down, rather than falling.’ ‘Stop it!’ barked Louise.”

THE GRIZZLY BEAR'S PEN

LA PLUME DE L'OURS

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE French



“With *The Grizzly Bear's Pen*, Carole Allamand has written a first novel of great humour.” LE TEMPS



CAROLE ALLAMAND was born in Geneva in 1967. She has lived for more than twenty years in the USA and has taught French Literature at New Jersey State University for the past thirteen. She has written extensively on French and American authors and has published a book about the writer Marguerite Yourcenar. *La plume de l'ours* (*The Grizzly Bear's Pen*) is her first novel.

PHOTO © Christiane Robin

The Camille Duval case has kept the literary world busy for some fifty years now. No-one has been able to explain why this highly successful Swiss writer emigrated to the USA after the mysterious death of his wife and the unusual move by the Catholic Church in 1948 to censor one of his novels and put it on the Index of banned books. And how was it that, after a twelve years' silence, he was suddenly once again the man of the moment? How did he manage so radically to renew his style? How did he become the literary genius, who changed the novel for all time?

Camille Duval (1901 - 1974) is one of literature's special cases; Carole Courvoisier is a young Swiss literary expert, who wants to find the reason for this. So she sets out on the trail of the mysterious writer. But she has no idea that she's embarking on the craziest quest ever undertaken in the history of literature.

So the heroine of this biographical crime novel finds herself in a 'road movie' that takes her across an unfamiliar and untamed America, in the company of Jasper Felder, a veteran of the Iraq War. Their journey goes from Manhattan to Alaska - where an encounter with a grizzly bear finally brings the longed-for truth to light.

The Grizzly Bear's Pen is a light-hearted tale about a thrilling subject - a tale that runs from the depths of the Hudson River via the remains of the Twin Towers to the world of the Mormon University. And this humorous and satirical novel reveals at the end that research into bears and books will reveal they have a thing or two in common.

TITLE *La plume de l'ours*
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 mkalamboussis@editions-stock.fr

LA PLUME DE L'OURS CAROLE ALLAMAND**French original (p. 15-16)**

La soirée était douce pour une fin de novembre et de longs nuages roses s'effrangeaient au-dessus de Brooklyn. Il était près de cinq heures lorsque Carole Courvoisier parvint à l'angle de Mercer Street et de la 8e Rue. Une clochette pendue à la porte du coffee shop fit lever quelques têtes qui retournèrent aussitôt à leurs romans ou leurs ordinateurs portables. Carole retira son bonnet de laine et parcourut la salle du regard en quête d'une dame blonde lisant le journal. Elle aperçut Betty Glattner dans un fauteuil de cuir, vers la fenêtre.

« Mais pas du tout, je viens d'arriver », fit l'Américaine en reposant le *New York Times* sur une table basse. (La Floride recomptait pour la quatrième fois ses bulletins électoraux.) Carole sortit un calepin de son sac à dos et s'installa face à l'ancienne étudiante de Camille Duval. Elle l'avait retrouvée grâce à une liste de promotions de l'université qui avait accueilli l'écrivain tombé en disgrâce dans son pays natal. La pêche s'était révélée ardue : plus de quarante ans avaient passé, les femmes avaient changé de nom, d'autres – des Robert Wilson, des John Brown – partageaient le leur avec plusieurs centaines d'abonnés, dont la plupart raccrochaient au nez de la chercheuse avant la fin de sa première phrase. Il y eut de faux espoirs : un certain George, domicilié à Chicago, prétendait se souvenir de Camille Duval, qu'il confondait cependant de toute évidence avec un autre professeur. Un dentiste du New Jersey jurait quant à lui avoir été proche du grand écrivain, mais n'en dirait plus que dans l'intimité de sa villa, où il invitait son interlocutrice à le rejoindre le soir même. Ce fut elle qui, cette fois, raccrocha.

Seule Elizabeth Glattner s'était montrée crédible et prête à coopérer. Elle était venue en taxi de l'Upper East Side. D'après les calculs de Carole, elle devait avoir soixante-huit ou soixante-neuf ans, âge que démentaient des joues absolument lisses et des cheveux blonds réunis en queue-de-cheval. Elle parlait un français irréprochable et se réjouissait visiblement de causer de « Camille », qui avait dirigé son mémoire sur Racine dans les années cinquante. Mais surtout, Betty Glattner était enchantée de se retrouver mêlée de si près à l'affaire Duval.

THE GRIZZLY BEAR'S PEN CAROLE ALLAMAND**Excerpt translated by Tess Lewis**

The evening was mild for late November and long swathes of pink clouds frayed in the sky over Brooklyn. It was almost five o'clock when Carole Courvoisier reached the corner of Mercer and East 8th Street. A few heads lifted at the sound of the bell hung on the coffee shop's door but immediately returned to their novels or laptops. Carole took off her wool hat and her eyes swept the room, looking for a blonde woman reading the paper. She noticed Betty Glattner in a leather chair next to the window.

"Not at all, I just got here," the American woman said, setting her copy of *The New York Times* down on a low table. (Florida was re-counting ballots for the fourth time.) Carole took a notebook from her backpack and sat down across from Camille Duval's former student. Carole had found her on a list of graduates from the university that had welcomed the writer after he had been disgraced in his native country. The hunt had been arduous: more than forty years had passed, the women had changed their names, others – the Robert Wilsons or John Browns – shared theirs with several hundred others in the directory, most of whom hung up on Carole before she even finished her first sentence. There were a few false hopes: a certain George in Chicago claimed he remembered Camille Duval but was obviously confusing him with another professor. A dentist in New Jersey swore he'd been a close friend of the famous writer, however, he would only reveal more in the privacy of his suburban home, to which he invited Carole that very evening. She was the one who hung up that time. Elizabeth Glattner was the only one who seemed credible and willing to help. She had come in a taxi from the Upper East Side. According to Carole's calculations, she would be seventy-eight or seventy-nine years old, an age her smooth cheeks and blonde hair pulled back into a ponytail utterly belied. She spoke impeccable French and clearly enjoyed talking about "Camille" who had directed her dissertation on Racine in the 1950s. But most of all, Betty Glattner was delighted to find herself so closely involved in the 'Duval affair'.

"You should know that, in this part of the world, there are no stories without bears."

THE FORGER, THE SPY AND THE BOMB-MAKER

DER FÄLSCHER, DIE SPIONIN UND DER BOMBENBAUER
 GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE German



“Happiness is also being able to live a different dream.”



ALEX CAPUS was born in 1961 in Normandy; he now lives in Olten in northern Switzerland. Since 1994 he has written numerous novels, books of short stories, and much journalism. His latest novels have been published by Hanser: *Léon und Louise* (*Léon and Louise*, 2011) and *Fast ein bisschen Frühling* (*Almost a Bit of Spring*, 2012), as well as a Western *Skidoo* (2012). His books have been translated into fifteen languages.

PHOTO © Marco Grob

The Forger, the Spy and the Bomb-Maker is a novel about three reluctant heroes. First, there's the young man who dreams of world peace and becomes a bomb-maker: Felix Bloch is working in the United States on the development of the atom bomb. He studied atomic physics in Leipzig under Werner Heisenberg and fled to the USA in 1933. Later, he helps Robert Oppenheimer with his work on the bomb at Los Alamos and is awarded the Nobel Prize for Physics in 1952.

Then there's the girl who's determined to become a singer but comes to realise that she just hasn't the talent to make it to the top: Laura d'Oriano is caught up in the maelstrom of history and ends as a spy for the Allies in Italy. She makes contact with the Resistance in France but fails to realise Mussolini's secret services have been watching her ever since she arrived in Italy. She is the only woman to be executed by the Italian fascists during the Second World War.

Finally, there's the art student, who sets out for Troy: Emile Gilliéron travels to the legendary excavation site with the famous researcher, Heinrich Schliemann. He makes drawings of the objects they find, restores them, even makes reproductions of them and, almost by accident, becomes one of the greatest forgers of all time. These three so different individuals only happen upon each other once: in November 1924, at Zürich's main railway station. Felix Bloch is living in the city, the other two are passing through. But their paths remain strangely intertwined.

Alex Capus has researched the careers of his heroes in great depth and he tells their stories with a light and elegant touch – interspersing them with a lot of contemporary detail. There's even a short, easy-to-understand introduction to the world of pre-war atomic physics!

TITLE *Der Fälscher, die Spionin und der Bombenbauer*
PUBLISHER Carl Hanser Verlag, Munich
PUBLICATION DATE 2013
PAGES 288
ISBN 978-3-446-24327-9
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Friederike Barakat,
 friederike.barakat@hanser.de

DER FÄLSCHER, DIE SPIONIN UND DER BOMBENBAUER ALEX CAPUS**German original (p. 7-8)**

Ich mag das Mädchen. Mir gefällt die Vorstellung, dass sie im hintersten Wagen des Orient-Express in der offenen Tür sitzt, während silbern glitzernd der Zürichsee an ihr vorüberzieht. Es könnte Anfang November 1924 sein, an welchem Tag genau, weiß ich nicht. Sie ist dreizehn Jahre alt und ein großgewachsenes, hageres, noch ein wenig ungelinktes Mädchen mit einer kleinen, aber schon tief eingefurchte Zornesfalte über der Nase. Das rechte Knie hat sie angezogen, das linke Bein baumelt über dem Treppchen ins Leere. Sie lehnt am Türrahmen und schaukelt im Rhythmus der Gleise, ihr blondes Haar flattert im Fahrtwind. Gegen die Kälte schützt sie sich mit einer Wolledecke, die sie vor der Brust zusammenhält. Auf dem Zuglaufschild steht «Constantinople-Paris», darüber prangen goldene Messingbuchstaben und das Firmenzeichen mit den königlich-belgischen Löwen.

Mit der rechten Hand raucht sie Zigaretten, die im Wind rasch verglühen. Wo sie herkommt, ist es nichts Ungewöhnliches, dass Kinder rauchen. Zwischen den Zigaretten singt sie Bruchstücke orientalischer Lieder – türkische Wiegenlieder, libanesischen Balladen, ägyptische Liebeslieder. Sie will Sängerin werden wie ihre Mutter, aber eine bessere. Niemals wird sie auf der Bühne ihr Dekolleté und die Waden zu Hilfe nehmen, wie die Mutter das tut, auch wird sie keine rosa Federboa tragen und sich nicht von Typen wie ihrem Vater begleiten lassen, der stets ein Zahnputzglas voll Brandy auf dem Piano stehen hat und jedes Mal, wenn die Mutter ihr Strumpfband herzeigt, augenzwinkernd ein Glissando hinlegt. Eine echte Künstlerin will sie werden. Sie hat ein großes und weites Gefühl in ihrer Brust, dem sie eines Tages Ausdruck verleihen wird. Das weiß sie ganz sicher. Noch ist ihre Stimme dünn und heiser, das weiß sie auch. Sie kann sich selbst kaum hören, wie sie auf ihrem Treppchen sitzt und singt. Der Wind nimmt ihr die Melodien von den Lippen und trägt sie ins Luftgewirbel hinter dem letzten Wagen. Drei Tage ist es her, dass sie in Konstantinopel mit den Eltern und ihren vier Geschwistern in einen blauen Wagen zweiter Klasse gestiegen ist. Seither hat sie viele Stunden in der offenen Tür verbracht. Drinnen im Abteil bei der Familie ist es stickig und laut, und draußen ist es mild für die Jahreszeit. In diesen drei Tagen hat sie auf ihrem Treppchen den Duft bulgarischer Weinberge geschnuppert und die Feldhasen auf den abgemähten Weizenfeldern der Vojvodina gesehen, sie hat den Donauschiffen gewinkt, die mit ihren Schiffshörnern zurückgrüßten, und sie hat in den Vorstädten von Belgrad, Budapest, Bratislava und Wien die rußgeschwärzten Mietskasernen mit ihren trüb erleuchteten Küchenfenstern gesehen, in denen müde Menschen in Unterhemden vor ihren Tellern saßen.

THE FORGER, THE SPY AND THE BOMB-MAKER ALEX CAPUS**Excerpt translated by John Brownjohn**

I like the girl. It pleases me to picture her sitting in the open doorway of the rearmost carriage of the Orient Express with the glittering silver waters of Lake Zürich gliding past her. It could be early November 1924, I don't know the exact date. She's thirteen years old, a tall, thin, rather gawky girl with a small but deeply incised furrow above her nose. Her right leg is drawn up, her left dangling over the step into space. She is leaning against the door frame, swaying to the rhythm of the rails with her fair hair fluttering in the wind. For protection from the cold she holds a woollen blanket over her chest. The notice board on the side of the carriage reads 'Constantinople-Paris', and emblazoned above it are golden brass lettering and the company's emblem with the royal lion of Belgium.

She is using her right hand to smoke cigarettes that quickly smoulder away in the airstream. It's not unusual for children to smoke where she comes from. Between cigarettes she sings snatches of oriental songs – Turkish lullabies, Lebanese ballads, Egyptian love songs. She wants to be a singer like her mother, but a better one. She will never enlist the help of her cleavage and legs on-stage, the way her mother does, nor will she wear a pink feather boa or be accompanied by individuals like her father, who always keeps a tumbler of brandy on top of the piano and winks and performs a glissando whenever her mother shows her garter. She wants to be a genuine artiste. She has a big, expansive feeling in her chest and will some day lend expression to it, she knows that for sure.

Her voice is still thin and hoarse, she knows that too. She can hardly hear herself as she sits on her step and sings. The wind snatches the melodies from her lips and bears them off into the turbulence in the wake of the train.

It is three days since she boarded a blue, second-class carriage in Constantinople with her parents and her four siblings. Since then she has spent many hours sitting in the open doorway. Inside the compartment with her family it's stuffy and noisy, and outside it's mild for the time of year. During those three days on her step she has sniffed the scent of Bulgarian vineyards and watched hares cavorting in the stubbly wheat fields of Vojvodina, waved to Danubian bargemen who responded with a blast on their hooter, and, in the suburbs of Belgrade, Budapest, Bratislava and Vienna, glimpsed weary men in vests sitting in front of their plates in the dimly-lit kitchens of soot-stained tenement buildings.

“Do you know what’s left of science if it just sticks to facts, without any imagination? Not much...nothing, really. Just a load of facts, a load of sterile, lifeless facts.”

ON THE VERGE OF SALVATION

KURZ VOR DER ERLÖSUNG

GENRE Epic Poems, LANGUAGE German



"His lyrical prose carries us along in an irresistible, musical undertow (...)."
NEUE ZÜRCHER ZEITUNG AM SONNTAG



MICHAEL FEHR was born in 1982 and grew up in Muri, near Bern. He studied at the Swiss Institute for Literature and the Bern Arts College, where he gained his Master's degree in Contemporary Arts Practice. In 2013 he won the Bern Cantonal Book Prize. *Kurz vor der Erlösung (On the Verge of Salvation)* is his first work of fiction.

PHOTO © Patrick Savolainen

Seventeen Sentences (Siebzehn Sätze) is the sub-title to Michael Fehr's first book, and in fact this unusual piece of writing does only contain seventeen sentences, long sentences, which are developed in the manner of a musical theme and variations (the word 'Satz' in German can mean both sentence and musical composition). Within this structure we meet diverse groups and individuals, who have only one thing in common: they are all 'on the verge of salvation' and, moreover, all 'at the same point in time'.

Michael Fehr tells a modern Christmas Story, in which the telling is itself the subject. He takes us from one scene to another, to Joseph and Mary, who surprises a farmer in the stable. A male-voice choir strikes up a song in the bar of the inn. A king on his camel follows a shooting star. We meet a music group in a TV studio, a family at their meal, a woman who plays the organ and many more: they are all straining together in hope and anticipation, whilst the cathedral bells in the capital city are already ringing out.

Michael Fehr's *Seventeen Sentences* are moulded, indeed borne along by, an individualistic and extraordinarily daring use of language. It twists and turns, wrestles with itself and with the evanescent nature of story-telling. Patiently, word by word, line by line, Fehr circles round his scenes and characters; again and again, he discovers unusual ways of getting inside his stories, which we seem to know intimately, but which we re-discover here anew.

TITLE *Kurz vor der Erlösung*
PUBLISHER Der gesunde Menschenversand, Lucerne
PUBLICATION DATE 2013
PAGES 144
ISBN 978-3-905825-51-0
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Matthias Burki, info@menschenversand.ch

KURZ VOR DER ERLÖSUNG MICHAEL FEHR**German original (p. 84-85)**

Und zur gleichen Zeit
 nun schon in der Hauptstadt
 in der modernen und darum charakterlosen Neustadt
 indessen nicht weit vom beschaulichen historischen Zentrum
 im Land weiss wie Schnee
 da anscheinend weiss verschneit
 wie verzuckert
 auf das es anscheinend weiterschneite
 also weiterzuckerte
 da glitzerte es
 und da funkelte es
 und darum war es gefällig
 und die Tannenbäume waren militärgrün und agreeabel
 zurechtgestutzt und verzuckert
 und Engel waren da
 weiss wie Licht
 weisses Licht beschien und bestrahlte das Land
 da dumpf und da grell
 das Land erschien und erstrahlte silbern im Licht
 es glitzerte und es funkelte silbern
 alles in allem war breites Licht
 da waren Scheinwerfer
 die dumpfweiss schienen
 und Scheinwerfer
 die grellweiss strahlten
 und weitere
 da waren weitere Tannen
 die es weiterverzuckerte
 da waren Aufnahmegeräte für Bild und Aufnahmegeräte
 für Ton und weitere Instrumente
 alles in allem elektrische Apparate
 da waren Kabel
 die gekräuselt waren
 und Kabel
 die glatt lagen
 und weitere
 da waren weitere Engel
 Engel
 die schienen wie Licht
 und Engel
 die strahlten wie Licht
 und wie verzuckert glitzerten und funkelten
 da es sie anscheinend weiterverschneite
 in diesem anscheinend verschneiten Land
 das im Licht über und über silbern glitzerte und funkelte
 inmitten weiterer Scheinwerfer
 inmitten weiterer Tannen
 inmitten weiterer Kabel
 inmitten weiterer Engel

ON THE VERGE OF SALVATION MICHAEL FEHR**Excerpt translated by Marc Vincenz**

And at the same time
 already in the capital
 in the modern and therefore characterless new town
 where not far from the tranquil historic centre
 in a land white as snow
 since it was apparently snow-covered
 as if sugar-coated
 on which it apparently continued snowing
 therefore continued sugar-coating
 it glittered there
 and it sparkled there
 and that is why it was appealing
 and the fir trees were military green and agreeably
 trimmed and sugar-coated
 and angels were there
 white as light
 white light lit up and beamed across the land
 dull over there and glaring over there
 the land appeared and shone silvery in the light
 it glittered and sparkled silvery
 in short a spreading light
 there were spotlights
 that seemed dull white
 and spotlights
 that beamed glaring white
 and further
 there were further fir trees
 that were further sugar-coated
 there were recording devices for images and recording
 devices for sound and further instruments
 in short electrical apparatus
 there were cables
 that were curled
 and cables
 that lay flat
 and further
 there were further angels
 angels
 that seemed like light
 and angels
 that beamed like light
 and glittered and sparkled as if sugar-coated
 since it apparently went on snowing
 in this apparently snow-covered land
 that glittered silver and sparkled over and over in the light
 amid further spotlights
 amid further fir trees
 amid further cables
 amid further angels

“Michael Fehr’s style has a rhythmic feel, with virtuoso puns. And so this ‘performance poem’ is in the best sense characteristic of him: stubbornly independent.” DER LANDBOTE

THE MENSCH FAMILY

LES MENSCH

GENRE Novel, LANGUAGE French



“The Mensches’ story, with its suggestion of American craziness and excess, was played out on the street, where you perhaps live.”



NICOLAS COUCHEPIN was born in Lausanne in 1960. He worked in education before turning full-time to writing. He has so far published three novels: *Grefferic* (1996) and *Le Sel* (*Salt*, 2000), which appeared under the Zoé imprint. *Les Mensch* (*The Mensch Family*) is his first to be published by Éditions Seuil.

PHOTO © John Foley

The Mensches are a completely ordinary family. They live in an ordinary part of town, worry about the usual things and hope for what everyone hopes for. Theo, the ‘paterfamilias’, is worried about growing old. Muriel, his wife, frets that she isn’t the perfect mother. Marie, their daughter, has discovered that she won’t live forever. And Simon, her younger brother, is mentally handicapped: he longs to be independent, which can’t happen. As the Summer holidays approach, Theo sets about clearing out the basement of the house. His mother used to live there... now, the whole family want to use it. They all have their own reasons for shutting themselves up down there. And they all in their own way insist on why they should live down there. For Theo, it’s become clear that he would rather live a less ordinary life, and he records his feelings in a notebook. Muriel’s notes and lists, on the contrary, reveal her strong desire for normality. And in her ‘dear diary’, Marie records her first tremors of love. Lastly, Simon can only express his needs with the help of the others. And Lucie, their elderly neighbour, watches over all this.

The central characters in this story go on to create a new story, a drama that’s been covered up for many years. And to the family’s own perceptions of this story, there is added a new one: “The post-mortem of a drama...the remarkable story of the Mensch Family”, which is the title of the book written by a certain Nicola Lievo, from which all this is quoted.

TITLE *Les Mensch*
PUBLISHER Éditions du Seuil, Paris
PUBLICATION DATE 2013
PAGES 216
ISBN 978-2-02-106329-5
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Martine Heissat,
 mheissat@seuil.com

LES MENSCH NICOLAS COUCHEPIN**French original (p. 9-10)**

[...] Quand on apprit, par les journaux, ce qu'avait fait la famille Mensch, ce fut l'incrédulité.

Le monde entier – plus précisément, la petite communauté de la banlieue où vivait la famille Mensch – se demanda (avec émoi, incompréhension, et peut-être une condescendance mêlée de crainte obscure) ce qui avait bien pu pousser cette famille à partir ainsi en exil. Pourquoi des gens en apparence normaux s'étaient-ils engagés dans ce voyage excentrique d'où il n'était pas possible de revenir indemne ?

[...] Y avait-il chez les Mensch une forme de fascination pour la mort ? Leur décision téméraire répondait-elle à l'inconscience de la jeunesse ? Était-elle la manifestation d'un irrépressible désir d'effacer le passé, de défaire ce qui avait été fait, d'agir comme si cela n'avait pas été ?

Les Mensch avaient toujours semblé raisonnablement intégrés. Ils n'étaient affligés d'aucune tare scandaleuse, si l'on exceptait l'existence du jeune Simon ; mais, de nos jours, un enfant handicapé n'est plus la cause, à lui seul, de la mise au ban de la société d'une famille tout entière.

Oui, lorsque l'on apprit par les journaux ce que les Mensch avaient fait, les langues allèrent bon train, les hypothèses les plus folles furent avancées.

On ne peut expliquer l'inexplicable. En vérité – et s'il est jamais possible de parler d'une seule vérité –, tout le monde avait tort et tout le monde avait raison. Aucune explication n'est assez complète, mais aucune n'est assez simple non plus.

L'histoire des Mensch, avec ce petit quelque chose d'américain dans sa démesure et sa folie, s'est déroulée dans la rue où vous vivez peut-être. Elle est arrivée près de chez vous. Comme tout le monde, vous avez sans doute plusieurs fois croisé Muriel Mensch, cette femme absolument banale, au tabac du coin (c'est une fumeuse, comme vous). Comme tout le monde, vous avez eu souvent l'occasion de désapprouver le caractère imprévisible de la jeune Marie Mensch, leur fille de seize ans, qui passe son temps à traîner avec un groupe d'ados dont certains sont vos enfants (et un peu des inconnus malgré tout). Comme tout le monde, vous avez silencieusement, et brièvement, compatit – une compassion mêlée d'un soulagement secret, car c'était à lui que cela arrivait, pas à vous – à la blessure bien visible de Théo Mensch essayant d'inculquer à son fils Simon, « l'idiot du quartier », l'art de traverser une rue sans se faire écraser.

Et, comme tout le monde, vous n'avez rien soupçonné.

THE MENSCH FAMILY NICOLAS COUCHEPIN**Excerpt translated by John Taylor**

[...] Everyone was astonished when it became known, through the newspapers, what the Mensch family had done. The whole world – specifically, the small suburban community in which the Mensch family lived – wondered (with emotion, incredulity, and perhaps condescension mixed with obscure fears) what indeed might have driven this family to go into exile in such a way. Why had apparently normal people embarked on this eccentric journey from which it would be impossible to come back unscathed?

[...] Did the Mensch family have a kind of fascination for death? Did their bold decision derive from youthful recklessness? Did it show an irrepressible desire to efface the past, to undo what had been done, to act as if that had not happened?

The Mensch family had always seemed reasonably assimilated. They were afflicted with no scandalous defect, with the exception of the existence of young Simon; but, nowadays, a handicapped child is no longer a sufficient reason for banishing an entire family from society.

Indeed, when it became known, through the newspapers, what the Mensch family had done, tongues started wagging and the wildest conjectures were put forward.

The unexplainable cannot be explained. In truth – if one can ever speak of a single truth – everyone was wrong and everyone was right. No explanation is ever full enough, but neither is an explanation ever simple enough.

The story of the Mensch family, with, in its craziness and outrageousness, something slightly American to it, took place in the street where you perhaps live. It occurred right next to you. Like everyone, you've probably bumped into Muriel Mensch, an absolutely ordinary woman, at the local tobacco shop (she's a smoker like you). Like everyone, you've often had the opportunity to disapprove of the unpredictable nature of young Marie Mensch, their sixteen-year-old daughter, who spends her time hanging out with a group of teenagers some of whom are your own children (and yet partly strangers nonetheless). Like everyone, you've briefly and silently sympathized – a sympathy mixed with a secret feeling of relief, since it happened to him, not you – with the all too visible wound of Théo Mensch trying to inculcate in his son Simon – “the neighborhood idiot” – the art of the crossing a street without being run over.

And like everyone else, you suspected nothing.

“Like all ordinary folk, they also never had the slightest suspicion.”

8 MORE UNMISSABLE SWISS BOOKS



L'ÉCRIVAIN SUISSE ALLEMAND
(THE SWISS GERMAN WRITER)
JEAN-PIERRE ROCHAT

GENRE Novel
PAGES 164
PUBLISHER Éditions d'autre part,
Geneva 2012
ISBN 978-2-940518-00-5
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Pascal Rebetez,
info@dautrepart.ch



ABSCHIED VON SANSIBAR
(GOODBYE TO ZANZIBAR)
LUKAS HARTMANN

GENRE Novel
PAGES 336
PUBLISHER Diogenes Verlag, Zürich 2013
ISBN 978-3-257-06867-2
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Susanne
Bauknecht, bau@diogenes.ch



FRED UND FRANZ
(FRED AND FRANZ)
ARNO CAMENISCH

GENRE Novel
PAGES 80
PUBLISHER Engeler-Verlag, Solothurn 2013
ISBN 978-3-906050-06-5
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Urs Engeler,
urs@engeler.de



LE MINEUR ET LE CANARI
(THE MINER AND THE CANARY)
CATHERINE SAFONOFF

GENRE Novel
PAGES 192
PUBLISHER Éditions Zoé, Geneva 2012
ISBN 978-2-88182-872-0
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Caroline Coutau,
caroline.coutau@editionszoe.ch



DAS LEUCHTEN IN DER FERNE
(A DISTANT GLOW)
LINUS REICHLIN

GENRE Novel
PAGES 320
PUBLISHER Verlag Galiani, Berlin 2013
ISBN 978-3-86971-053-2
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Iris Brandt,
ibrandt@kiwi-verlag.de



UFFICIO PROIEZIONI LUMINOSE
(THE OFFICE OF LUMINOUS IMAGES)
MATTEO TERZAGHI

GENRE Lyrical Essays
PAGES 96
PUBLISHER Quodlibet, Macerata 2013
ISBN 978-88-7462-536-9
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Martina Cardelli,
martinacardelli@quodlibet.it



MONSTER POEMS
(MONSTER POEMS)
NORA GOMRINGER

GENRE Poetry
PAGES 64
PUBLISHER Verlag Voland & Quist,
Dresden and Leipzig 2013
ISBN 978-3-863910-28-0
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Leif Greinus,
greinus@voland-quist.de



DIE LUKE
(THE HATCH)
ANDRI PERL

GENRE Novel
PAGES 224
PUBLISHER Salis Verlag, Zürich 2013
ISBN 978-3-905801-90-3
TRANSLATION RIGHTS Annette Wolf,
annette.wolf@mp-litagency.com

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Angelika Salvisberg
Head of Pro Helvetia's
Literature and Society Division
T +41 44 267 71 26
asalvisberg@prohelvetia.ch

Pro Helvetia
Swiss Arts Council
Hirschengraben 22
CH-8024 Zürich
T +41 44 267 71 71
F +41 44 267 71 06
info@prohelvetia.ch
www.prohelvetia.ch

TRANSLATION HOUSE LOOREN

Since 2005, the Translation House Looren in the Swiss canton of Zürich has been offering professional literary translators from all over the world a place to work and study. All language combinations are welcome. As the first institution of its kind in a country that, with its four national languages, has always been a land of translation, Translation House Looren sees itself primarily as a location for concentrated work. In addition, a programme of events aims to increase the visibility of literary translation and to support its practitioners. Through readings, workshops, and conferences, we offer translators a forum for continuing professional development and for enhancing the public's awareness of their activities.



Übersetzerhaus Looren
CH-8342 Wernetshausen

T +41 43 843 12 43
F +41 43 843 12 44
info@looren.net
www.looren.net

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www.asdel.ch Association Suisse des Diffuseurs, Editeurs et Libraires (ASDEL)
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www.new-books-in-german.com
www.literatur.ch
www.literaturschweiz.ch
www.viceversalitterature.ch (www.viceversaliteratur.ch)
www.werliestwo.ch

SWISS LITERATURE AGENDA 13/14

October 2013

Oct. 09.-13.

SWISS BOOKS AT FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR

www.sbv.ch
www.asdel.ch
www.buchmesse.de

Oct. 18.-20.

BRASILIANISCHE LITERATURTAGE ZOFINGEN

www.literaturtagezofingen.ch

Oct. 24.-27.

ZÜRICH LIEST

www.zuerich-liest.ch

Oct. 25.-27.

BUCHBASEL

Presentation of the Swiss Book Prize (SBVV)
www.buchbasel.ch

Oct. 31.-Nov. 3.

BUCHMESSE OLTEN

www.buchmesse-olten.ch

Oct. 31.-Nov. 9.

SWISS BOOKS AT ALGER BOOK FAIR

www.asdel.ch
www.sila-dz.com

November 2013

Nov. 01.-10.

SWISS BOOKS AT BEIRUT BOOK FAIR

www.asdel.ch
www.salondulivrebeyrouth.org

Nov. 08.-10.

DIS DA LITTERATURA A DOMAT

www.litteraturarumantscha.ch

Nov. 09.-10.

ABRAXAS ZENTRAL-SCHWEIZER KINDER- UND JUGENDLITERATUR-FESTIVAL ZUG

www.abraxas-festival.ch

Nov. 15.-17.

SWISS BOOKS AT PISA BOOK FAIR

www.editori-sesi.ch
www.pisabookfestival.it

Nov. 18.-24.

SWISS BOOKS AT VIENNA BOOK FAIR

www.sbv.ch
www.buchwien.at

Nov. 20.-25.

SWISS BOOKS AT MONTREAL BOOK FAIR

www.asdel.ch
www.salondulivremontréal.com

Nov. 27.-Dec. 01.

NON/FICTION BOOK FAIR MOSCOW. GUEST OF HONOUR SWITZERLAND.

www.asdel.ch
www.sbv.ch
www.moscowbookfair.ru/eng

December 2013

Dec. 05.-08.

SWISS BOOKS AT ROME BOOK FAIR

www.editori-sesi.ch
www.piulibripiuliberi.it

January 2014

Jan. 24.-26. 2014

LYRIKFESTIVAL BASEL

www.lyrikfestival-basel.ch

February 2014

Feb. 20.-24.

SWISS BOOKS AT BRUSSELS BOOK FAIR

www.asdel.ch
www.flb.be

March 2014

Mar. 07.-09.

THUNER LITERATUR-FESTIVAL

www.literaare.ch

Mar. 13.-16.

LEIPZIG BOOK FAIR. GUEST OF HONOUR SWITZERLAND.

www.sbv.ch
www.leipzigiger-buchmesse.de

Mar. 20.-23.

LUZERN BUCHT

www.literaturfest.ch

Mar. 21.-24.

SWISS BOOKS AT PARIS BOOK FAIR

www.asdel.ch
www.salondulivreparis.com

Mar. 24.-27.

SWISS BOOKS AT BOLOGNA CHILDREN'S BOOK FAIR

www.sbv.ch
www.asdel.ch
www.bookfair.bolognafiere.it

ABSOLUT ZENTRAL

www.absolutzentral.ch

April 2014

Apr. 08.-10.

SWISS BOOKS AT LONDON BOOK FAIR

www.sbv.ch
www.londonbookfair.co.uk

Apr. 10.-13.

EVENTI LETTERARI MONTE VERITÀ

http://www.eventiletterari.ch

Apr. 30.-May 04.

SALON DU LIVRE ET DE LA PRESSE DE GENÈVE

www.salondulivre.ch

Apr. 30.-May 05.

SWISS BOOKS AT ABU DHABI BOOK FAIR

www.sbv.ch
www.adbookfair.com

May 2014

May 01.-04.

FESTIVAL INTERNAZIONALE DI LETTERATURA DI CHIASSO

www.chiassoletteraria.ch

May 08.-12.

SWISS BOOKS AT TURIN BOOK FAIR

www.editori-sesi.ch
www.salonelibro.it

May 30.-June 01.

SOLOTHURNER LITERATUR-TAGE

Presentation of the Swiss Federal Literary Awards
www.literatur.ch

July 2014

July 04.-06.

INTERNATIONALES LITERATURFESTIVAL LEUKERBAD

www.literaturfestival.ch

September 2014

Sep. 18.-21.

BABEL FESTIVAL DI LETTERATURA E TRADUZIONE, BELLINZONA

www.babelfestival.com

LE LIVRE SUR LES QUAIS, SALON DES AUTEURS, MORGES

www.lelivresurlesquais.ch

KIBUK KINDER- UND JUGENDMEDIENFESTIVAL KÖNIG

www.kibuk.ch

October 2014

FUREUR DE LIRE, GENÈVE

www.fureurdelire.ch

SWISS BOOKS AT FRANKFURT BOOK FAIR

www.sbv.ch
www.asdel.ch
www.buchmesse.de

Autumn 2014

4+1 ÜBERSETZEN TRADUIRE TRANSLATAR TRADURRE

http://www.chstiftung.ch/ch-reihe/4-1

November 2014

SWISS BOOKS AT NON/FICTION BOOK FAIR MOSCOW

www.asdel.ch
www.moscowbookfair.ru/eng

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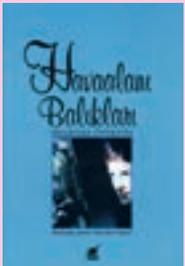
IL SOGNO DI WALACEK
(WALASCHEK'S DREAM)
GIOVANNI ORELLI

Translated into English by Jamie Richards for Dalkey Archive Press



VIERZIG ROSEN
(FORTY ROSES)
THOMAS HÜRLIMANN

Translated into Chinese by Fan Jieping for Shanghai Translation Publishing House



FLUGHAFENFISCHE
(AIRPORT FISH)
ANGELIKA OVERATH

Translated into Turkish by Zehra Aksu Yilmazer for Ayrıntı Yayınları



LA BEAUTÉ SUR LA TERRE
(BEAUTY ON EARTH)
CHARLES-FERDINAND RAMUZ

Translated into Armenian by Alexandr Topchyan for "Lusabats-04 Yotnagir" Publishing House



SHRAPNELS. EN MARGE DE BAGDAD
(SHRAPNEL. ON THE FRINGES OF BAGHDAD)
ELISABETH HOREM

Translated into Arabic by Saïd Farhaan for Editions Ninawa



RAPPORT AUX BÊTES
(WITH THE ANIMALS)
NOËLLE REVAZ

Translated into Italian by Maurizia Balmelli for Keller editore



JAKOB BESCHLIESST ZU LIEBEN
(JACOB DECIDES TO LOVE)
CATALIN DORIAN FLORESCU

Translated into Czech by Jitka Nešporová for Labyrint



LE PLUS GRAND FOOTBALLEUR DE TOUS LES TEMPS
(THE GREATEST SOCCER PLAYER OF ALL TIME)
GERMANO ZULLO

Translated into Korean by Ju Kyoung Kim for Munhak Segye Sa