

# Cossee Publishers

## Summer Highlights 2017



15 years of independent publishing

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## **Marjolijn van Heemstra** *And His Name Is*

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- “An important novel about the aftermath of WWII specifically, and the past more generally.” – *NRC Handelsblad* \*\*\*\*\*
- By the successful theatre director and literary multi-talent
- Second print-run after two weeks

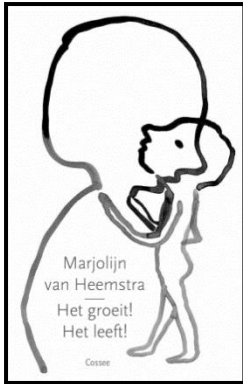
On December 5th, 1946 a bomb is delivered in The Hague, packaged as a Saint Nicholas present. Three ‘bad guys’, collaborators during the Nazi occupation of the Netherlands during WWII, are killed. The brain behind the operation is a great uncle of Marjolijn van Heemstra. In the family the attack is subsequently considered an act of heroism.

On her eighteenth birthday Marjolijn is given the signet ring of the “bomb-nephew” bearing the family crest – with the request to name her first son after him. When she is pregnant years later, she starts a quest to uncover the true story of the Saint Nicholas murders. With her belly the doubts are growing: was the bomb-nephew really a hero or just an ordinary criminal? Marjolijn van Heemstra’s novel is a fascinating page-turner about a myth and about reality, about the good and the bad and about the question what connects a new-born child with its ancestors.

**Marjolijn van Heemstra** (1981) studied religious studies with a specialization in Islamic studies in Amsterdam. She is a successful theatre director of engaged, experimental performances, staged in the Netherlands as well as abroad. As a writer she is a multi-talent, writing poetry and novels as well as columns for the Dutch newspapers *NRC* and *Trouw*.

216 pages, 48,000 words, published in May 2017 by Das Mag Publishers

Promoted by the Dutch Foundation for Literature who also provides a translation grant: [www.letterenfonds.nl/en/grants](http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/grants) | For more information, please contact Stella Rieck: [riek@cossee.com](mailto:riek@cossee.com) or visit [www.cossee.com/foreignrights](http://www.cossee.com/foreignrights)



## **Marjolijn van Heemstra** *It Grows! It Is Alive!*

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- Thoughtful and at the same time hilarious anecdotes about the first two years with child
- A fascinating insight into the adventure that is parenthood, and the moral and philosophical questions behind it

Being a parent is a tremendous experience: it is commonplace, new, mysterious and takes you by surprise. Shortly after the birth of her son, people were asking Marjolijn van Heemstra whether parenthood was more difficult than she had expected. Her answer was no, but infinitely weirder. In *It Grows! It Is Alive!* she describes this new world of napkins, toys, sleeplessness, overwhelming love and fears – without the usual clichés.

Every week we enter a new phase with Marjolijn van Heemstra. From a softly sleeping and babbling baby, her son developed into a decisive toddler. “If I have to describe my son, it really depends which month we are talking about. In november he was sweeter than a marsbar, in december a downright terrorist. Sometimes he sleeps through the whole night, sometimes he is awake until the morning. Sometimes he caresses his duplo, sometimes he is smashing it against the wall. There is only one thing I can be sure about: everytime he recovers from having throughly fallen ill, he will be able to do something new.”

**Marjolijn van Heemstra** (1981) studied religious studies with a specialization in Islamic studies in Amsterdam. She is a successful theatre director of engaged, experimental performances, staged in the Netherlands as well as abroad. As a writer she is a multi-talent, writing poetry and novels as well as columns for the Dutch newspapers *NRC* and *Trouw*.

224 pages, 30,000 words, to be published in August 2017 by Cossee Publishers

Promoted by the Dutch Foundation for Literature who also provides a translation grant: [www.letterenfonds.nl/en/grants](http://www.letterenfonds.nl/en/grants) | For more information, please contact Stella Rieck: [rieck@cossee.com](mailto:rieck@cossee.com) or visit [www.cossee.com/foreignrights](http://www.cossee.com/foreignrights)



## Jan van Mersbergen

### *The Rider*

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- “A **Dutch Western**, with a thrilling, bullet-riddled finale.” – *Volkskrant*\*\*\*\*
- Nominated: **Dutch Booksellers’ Award**
- Third print-run

Her boyfriend is the leader of a gang that terrorises half of the city. Still Sandra feels attracted to him.

Why does she trust him without thinking twice? Why does she negate the welmeant advice of her father?

As danger becomes imminent, she is forced to leave the city to stay with her grandfather. With Sandra on the farm not only two generations, but also the city and the countryside as well as humans and nature are confronted with each other. The connecting factor in van Mersbergen’s sensitive story is the old horse on the meadow. With him the grandfather can share his lot, with him the granddaughter can overcome her insecurities. But the listening ear of the horse that seems to be closing the gap between man and girl, cannot keep reality at a distance. One day Sandra sees the silhouette of her lover in the distance, coming closer.

**Jan van Mersbergen** (1971) made his debut in 2001 with the novel *Bite the Dust*, which was nominated for the Dutch Debutantenprijs. *To the Other Side of the Night* was awarded the BNG Literatuurprijs and nominated for the Libris Literatuurprijs, the AKO Literatuurprijs, and the Gouden Boekenuil. His most recent novel *The Last Escape* received the prestigious F. Bordewijkprijs. Van Mersbergen’s books have been published in Germany, the UK, France, Turkey, Spain, Serbia and Slovenia.

256 pages, 72,000, published in November 2016 by Cossee Publishers

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## **Marijn Sikken**

### ***Exit Ahead***

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- Promising **Dutch debut**
- Winner of the **Write Now! award**

Before long the village will celebrate its centenary. Suddenly the bells of the railway crossing sound almost festive. It promises to be an emotionally charged festivity. Not only for the 18-year-old Eline, who is dating an older man, but also for Alma, mother of a child that will never be able to stand on its own two feet.

Eline has seen all her classmates leave the nest: to work, study, take gap years or travel. She stayed and found a job in the local Books & More Store, where she occasionally keeps an eye on the mentally impaired Michelle. Michelle's mother, Alma, has mixed feelings, seeing the girls get along so well. She catches herself being jealous, even resentful towards Eline. At the same time, friends and family keep urging her to consider a housing facility for her daughter. A mother also has to be able to let go, they say.

Marijn Sikken debuts with a razor-sharp and compassionate sketch of a small community, and shows the reader how small the gap between love and indifference sometimes is.

**Marijn Sikken** (1990) won both the jury and the audience award of the writing contest Write Now! in 2011. She publishes short stories and works as an editor for *De Optimist*. Sikken wrote columns for *Youth-R-Well.com*, an online community for young arthritis patients, and writes for *Literair Nederland*. Additionally, she is active in the Wilhelmina children's hospital in Utrecht, where she deals with patient participation.

256 pages, 50,500 words, published in 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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## **Eva Meijer**

### ***Animal Languages***

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- Rights sold: **German (Matthes & Seitz), French (Presses de la Cité)**
- Nominated: Socrates Beker, award for best Dutch language philosophy book
- Third print-run

Dolphins and parrots call each other by their names. Fork tailed drongos mimic the calls of other animals to scare them away and then steal their dinner. In the songs of many species of birds, and in skin patterns of squids, we find grammatical structures. Bats like to gossip. Most social animals have complex and nuanced ways of communicating with one another and with humans.

In *Animal Languages*, Eva Meijer discusses many examples of recent empirical research. Biologists and ethologists are only beginning to understand the meaning of these signs. Her research presents us with a new perspective on other animals, while also raising philosophical questions. Can we call nonhuman animal communication language? What exactly is language? Can we speak with other animals and if so how? Is human language special or are all languages special in their own ways? After reading *Animal Languages*, you might not be able to speak with all animals, but you will see them in a different light.

**Eva Meijer** (1980) is a philosopher, author, and singer-songwriter. Her debut *The Shiest Animal*, was nominated for the Academica Literatuurprijs, the Gouden Boekenuil, and the Vrouw&Proza Debuutprijs. In 2013, her novel *Adventures in Animal Activism* followed and in 2016 her highly successful novel *The Bird Cottage* was published. Since 2014, Eva Meijer is working on her PhD 'Political Animal Voices' at the University of Amsterdam.

175 pages, 48,000 words, published in 2016 by ISVW Publishers

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## Eva Meijer

### *The Bird Cottage*

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- Rights sold: **German (btb), French (Presses de la Cité), World English (Pushkin Press), Arabic (Kotob Khan)**
- Nominated: BNG and Libris Literatuurprijs
- Fourth print-run

Len Howard (1894-1973) spent the second half of her life in a small, remote house in the English countryside. She wrote two international bestsellers about robins, tits, sparrows, and other birds living in and around her house. Although not originally a biologist, she was a pioneer in the field of animal research. She studied birds on the basis of their trust and observed their character, peculiarities and habits. In the meantime, their mutual appreciation and friendship grew.

What drove Howard to choose for a life outside the well-trodden paths? What do the life stories of robins tell us about our human world? Eva Meijer encountered the research of Howard during her work as a philosopher. *The Bird Cottage* is a book about music, the songs of birds and great tit conventions. It is also a book about resistance, bringing about change and about deciding on what is important.

**Eva Meijer** (1980) is a philosopher, author, and singer-songwriter. Her debut *The Shiest Animal*, was nominated for the Academica Literatuurprijs, the Gouden Boekenuil, and the Vrouw&Proza Debutprijs. In 2013, her novel *Adventures in Animal Activism* followed and in 2016 her highly successful novel *The Bird Cottage* was published. Since 2014, Eva Meijer is working on her PhD ‘Political Animal Voices’ at the University of Amsterdam.

288 pages, 66,000 words, published in 2016 by Cossee Publishers

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## Aleksandr Skorobogatov

### *Cocaine*

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- By the Russian/Flemish best-seller author
- Literary rollercoaster ride in the very best Russian tradition
- “Absolutely one of the most amazing books of 2017.” – *Noordhollands Dagblad*
- Second print-run

The main character of *Cocaine*, the hallucinatory new novel by Aleksandr Skorobogatov, as a writer is trying to make the world a better place through words, but also with the help of a hammer and a gigantic nail. Why? Because, according to Dostojevski, he has to. And also because this world of ours is becoming all too frightening.

Recently abandoned by the love of his life, our protagonist passes his days wandering through the streets of Moscow with nothing but his imagination to keep him going. He fantasises about epic battles in pubs, allots himself the roles of hero or villain in murder cases, and all of a sudden he receives an invitation to travel to Stockholm: he has won the Nobel Peace Prize.

*Cocaine* is a no-holds-barred celebration of the seemingly limitless possibilities of the human imagination. It is a literary rollercoaster ride in the very best Russian tradition. Overwhelmingly funny and serious!

**Aleksandr Skorobogatov** (1963) is considered one of the most original Russian writers of the post-communist era. He has studied in Minsk, Paris and Moscow and now lives in Antwerp. Skorobogatov has written short stories, essays, and eight novels. His work has been published to great acclaim in Russian, Dutch, French, Italian, and Greek, and has received several literary awards.

224 pages, 72,500 words, published in March 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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<http://buitenland.vfl.be/en/52/content/126/translation-grants.html> | For more information, please contact Stella Rieck: [rieck@cossee.com](mailto:rieck@cossee.com) or visit [www.cossee.com/foreignrights](http://www.cossee.com/foreignrights)





## **Josepha Mendels**

### ***Rolien and Ralien***

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- “The first female Bildungsroman, a high point of Dutch LGBT-literature.” – Hanna Bervoets, author
- Second rediscovered classic by Josepha Mendels published by Cossee

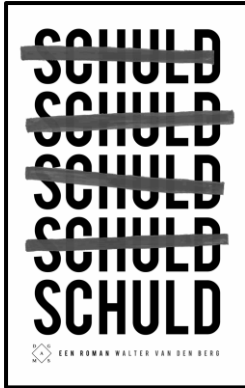
In *Rolien and Ralien* Mendels revisits her own youth. Rolien the youngest of three sisters is not taken seriously by her siblings. She feels left out, and therefore makes up her own playmate Ralien to keep her company, which subsequently comes to take over her life.

In December 1924, when Josepha Mendels begins her flight from occupied France via the Pyrenees, the manuscript of *Rolien and Ralien* is stolen along with her backpack. Luckily, a copy of the book is sent to her, when she finally arrives in England. According to critic Jan Greshoff: “It is an outstanding book, literally filled to the brim with the most exquisite discoveries. And is so stunningly clever that I cannot believe this is a debut.” Greshoff recommended the novel to Querido where it was published in 1947. The press thought it was a “dangerous” book, showing the many layers of an intense female friendship, but did praise its originality. Still today *Rolien and Ralien* is a fascinating coming-of-age novel in a surprisingly modern style.

**Josepha Mendels** (1902 – 1995) grew up in a Jewish Orthodox family. She worked as a governess and after she moved to Paris, she began writing. *Rolien and Ralien* was her debut in 1947. Two years later followed by *I told you so* (sold to Wagenbach, Germany), also republished by Cossee Publishers. For her entire oeuvre Josepha Mendels received the Anna Bijns Prijs for the female voice in literature in 1968.

224 pages, 42,000 words, to be published in August 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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**Walter van den Berg**  
*In Debt*

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- **Film rights sold**
- **20,000** copies sold within a month
- Book of the Month on National TV
- Won: NRC “Best book about Amsterdam”
- Nominated: Libris Literatuurprijs

**“I wish I had written this book.” – Gerbrand Bakker, IMPAC Dublin Literary Award for *The Twin*, Independent Foreign Fiction Prize for *The Detour***

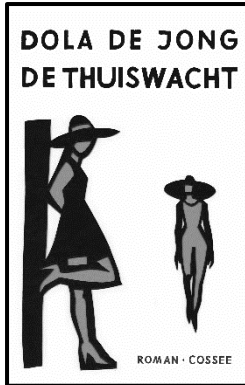
*‘My brother had been out singing the night he killed a man.’* Walter van den Berg tells a story about a suburb of Amsterdam, where men spend their time in snack bars, drive around in old cars and beat their wives.

*In Debt* is about a father, Singing Ron, who tells his son his mother is a bad woman, but ends up in jail for “protecting” all the other women in his life. His son, Kevin, is working to pay off his father’s debts by cleaning stolen laptops. Convinced of the intrinsic badness of all women, he searches the laptops for evidence of cheating. Once he finds something, he puts their dirty home videos online. *In Debt* is a tough book, that gives a voice to people, who normally only communicate with their fists. But under all that hard shell, obviously also sits a soft core.

**Walter van den Berg** (1970) wrote four novels that have received high praise. *In Debt* is his first novel with Das Mag Publishers while his first three books were published by De Bezige Bij.

240 pages, 50,000 words, published in 2016 by Das Mag Publishers

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**Dola de Jong**  
*The Tree and the Vine*

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- Rights sold: **Swedish (Nilsson)**
- Fascinating and timely **rediscovered classic**
- “A very touching, and delicately rendered portrait of a woman” – V.S. Naipaul
- Full English translation available

*The Tree and the Vine* is a novel about love and friendship between two women.

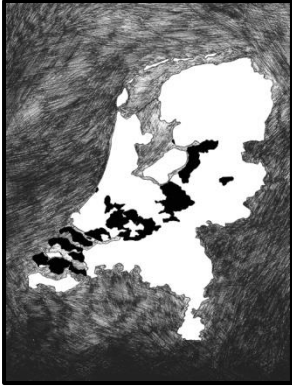
Erica and Bea share an apartment in Amsterdam, but they are completely different. Erica, a reckless young journalist, pursues passionate, yet abusive affairs with various women, while Bea is a shy secretary, who leads a quiet life. The novel is set just before the outbreak of the Second World War. Erica, who believes to be half Jewish, lets the opportunity pass to flee to America. Bea finds that her feelings for her friend are growing stronger – yet denial and shame keep her from recognising her affection.

After the publication of *The Tree and the Vine*, Alice van Nahuys, then publisher at Querido, sent a telegram to Dola de Jong with the message: ‘Don’t answer your fan mail!’, since there was too much of it. A review in *Het Vaderland* made clear: ‘Writing such a portrait is not possible for just anyone. You have to be blessed with a special talent.’

**Dorothea Rosalie de Jong** (Arnhem, 1911 – Laguna Woods/California, 2003) wrote children’s books, novels, and short stories. She decided to flee the Netherlands in 1940 with the tension of war increasing. She wrote *The Field* (translation rights sold to seven countries), which was an instant success and received the Edgar Allen Poe Award for her thriller *The Whirligig of Time* (1964).

244 pages, 40,000 words, published in 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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## Liesbeth Labeur

### *I once was a stranger*

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- Beautifully drawn graphic novel in the tradition of Marjane Satrapi
- Won: Stripschapsprijs, the **Dutch graphic novel award**

*I once was a stranger* depicts a Sunday in the life of Neeltje, a girl from the Dutch province Zeeland, in beautiful black-and-white drawings. The whole that the Protestant Church, Neeltje and her family are forming is beginning to disintegrate in her perception. Her brother has left for the big city. Will he be coming back for the Sunday dinner today?

Sometimes, Neeltje has bizarre dreams about the current turmoil that her community is experiencing. Every Sunday at church her dreams recur, again and again. Even during service her thoughts wander. Will the entire Dutch Bible Belt collapse or will her religious community be saved from its imminent demise?

Liesbeth Labeur illustrates a traditional Calvinist community in stunning imagery – in the tradition of classics like Marjane Satrapi’s *Persepolis* – enabling the reader to come to better understand this world.

**Liesbeth Labeur** (1975) lives and works as an artist in the Dutch province Zeeland. She studied at the Sint Joost Academy in Breda. Pure form and Babylonian confusion of images are central themes of her artistic practice. She has received numerous awards for her work and was nominated for the prestigious Prix de Rome.

128 pages, published in 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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## **Lize Spit** *The Melting*

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- Rights sold: **US/UK, Germany, France, Spain, Norway, Denmark, Czech Republic, Italy, Poland, Arabic world rights and Catalonia**
- **150,000** copies sold to date
- **30 weeks** on the Dutch bestseller list
- Won: **Dutch Booksellers' Award**

**What if you could take revenge on an entire village?** 1988, in the small Flemish village of Bovenmeer. Only three children are born that year, and only one of them is a girl, Eva. Together, the three children try to make the best of the situation, until they reach puberty. Then suddenly their relationships are altered. The boys devise cruel plans and it is up to the timid Eva if she wants to join them or betray their friendship. The option is no option.

Thirteen years after a searing summer in which everything got out of hand, Eva returns to the village with a huge block of ice in the trunk of her car. We gradually learn that she is making the decisions this time. With her debut Lize Spit grabs the reader by the throat from the very first sentence, determined to keep a tight headlock for all 480 pages. Merciless but loving, *The Melting* is a novel that leaves you perplexed.

**Lize Spit** (1988) lives in Brussels. She writes scenarios, prose and poetry, and has a weekly editorial in Belgium's biggest newspaper. Her stories have been published in several literary magazines. Spit also teaches scenario writing. Furthermore, she is working on a feature film and on her second novel.

480 pages, 200,000 words, published in 2016 by Das Mag Publishers

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**Christoph Buchwald**  
*Gute Nacht, Freunde. Germany*  
*in 25 Books.*

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- **15,000** copies sold within two weeks
- Full German translation available
- #5 on the Dutch bestsellers list

**“The book by this inspired publisher is a lot like an intellectual vitamin treatment.” – *De Morgen***

How can you get a vivid and nuanced image of Germany, its people and its culture? Of the country and its history? Goethe, Thomas Mann, Harry Mulisch, Nietzsche, Schubert and Franz Beckenbauer are unanimous: ‘Through books!’. With *Gute Nacht, Freunde* publisher Christoph Buchwald presents his personal selection of twenty-five literary highlights of the last 100 years in a compact overview. Thomas Mann, Arnold Zweig, Franz Kafka, Alfred Döblin, Albert Vigoleis Thelen, Wolfgang Koeppen, Bernhard Schlink, Heinrich Böll, Christa Wolf, Lutz Seiler, Sherko Fatah and Kristine Bilkau. Books that should be on everybody’s nightstand; books that give a multi-faceted insight into the history of the twentieth century in Germany and for which the most important criterion is always the joy of reading.

**Christoph Buchwald** (1951) was born in Germany and is the publisher of Cossee Publishers in the Netherlands. He previously worked at Hanser, Luchterhand and Suhrkamp and is the Dutch publisher of J.M. Coetzee, David Grossman, Bernhard Schlink, and Hans Fallada, and was awarded with a knighthood from the Dutch Queen for his continuous effort to promote Dutch literature in Germany.

192 pages, 35,000 words, published in 2016 by Cossee Publishers

For more information, please contact Stella Rieck: [rieck@cossee.com](mailto:rieck@cossee.com) or visit [www.cossee.com/foreignrights](http://www.cossee.com/foreignrights)

## Recent Sales

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**David Attwell**, *J.M. Coetzee & the Life of Writing*: US (Viking/Penguin), UK (OUP), ANZ (Text), China (Heilongjiang), South Africa (Jacana)

**Gerbrand Bakker**, *The Twin*: sold to 27 countries/languages, US (Archipelago), UK (Harvill/Random House), ANZ (Scribe), German (Suhrkamp), French (Gallimard), Spanish (Rayo Verde), Italian (Iperborea), Brazilian (Radio Lond-res), Chinese (Shanghai 99), (All Prints, Lebanon), film rights (Circe, NL)

**Gerbrand Bakker**, *The Detour*: sold to 17 countries/languages, US (Penguin), UK (Harvill/Random House), ANZ (Scribe), German (Suhrkamp), French (Gall-imard), Spanish (Rayo Verde), Italian (Einaudi), Brazilian (Radio Londres), Chin-ese (Shanghai 99), Arabic (All Prints, Lebanon), film rights (N279 Ent., NL)

**Britta Böhrer**, *The Decision*: World English (Haus, UK), German (Aufbau), French (Stock), Italian (Guanda), Hebrew (Sifriat-Poalim), Danish (Turbine), Greek (Kapon)

**Saskia Goldschmidt**, *The Hormone Factory*: US (The Other Press), UK (Saraband), German (dtv), French (Gallimard), Turkish (Bence), Afrikaans (Protea), Bulgarian (Lettera), film rights (Film Talents, France)

**Bregje Hofstede**, *The Sky Over Paris*: German (C.H. Beck), Danish (Tiderne Skifter/Gyldendal), film rights (Sara Verweij, NL)

**Dola de Jong**, *The Field*: German (Kunstmann), Arabic (Al Kotob Khan), Norwegian (Aschehoug), Swedish (Nilsson), Danish (Turbine), Czech (Pistorius & Olsanská)

**Eva Meijer**, *Animal Languages*: German (Matthes & Seitz), French (Presses de la Cité)

**Eva Meijer**, *The Bird Cottage*: German (btb), French (Presses de la Cité), World English (Pushkin Press), Arabic (Kotob Khan)

**Ida Simons**, *A Foolish Virgin*: sold to 18 countries/languages, World English (MacLehose/Hachette), German (Luchterhand), French (Belfond), Spanish (Alfaguara/Random House), Brazilian (Alfaguara)

**Lize Spit**, *The Melting*: World English (MacMillan), German (S. Fischer), Spanish (Seix Barral), French (Actes Sud), Italian (E/O), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm), Danish (Rosinante), Czech (Host), Polish (Marginesy), Arab world rights (Madarek), Catalan (Ara Llibres) and film rights (Menuet Film, BE)

## Recent Acquisitions & Publications

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- Bette Adriaanse – *Rus Like Everyone Else* (Greene & Heaton, London)
- Kristine Bilkau – *Die Glücklichen* (Luchterhand, Munich)
- Bov Bjerg – *Auerhaus* (Aufbau, Berlin)
- Christophe Boltanski – *La cache* (Éditions Stock, Paris)
- J.M. Coetzee – *The Schooldays of Jesus* (Peter Lampack, New York City)
- Sherko Fatah – *Der letzte Ort* (Luchterhand, Munich)
- David Foenkinos - *Le Mystère Henri Pick* (Gallimard, Paris)
- András Forgách – *No Life Files Remain* (Bence Sárközy & Co., Budapest)
- Jane Gardam – *Old Filth/The Man in the Wooden Hat/Last Friends* (Chatto & Windus, London)
- David Grossman – *Collected Essays* (Deborah Harris Agency, Jerusalem)
- Michael Ignatieff – *Ordinary Virtues. Moral Order in a Divided World* (United Agents, London)
- Husch Josten – *Hier sind Drachen* (Berlin Verlag, Berlin)
- Navid Kermani – *Ungläubiges Staunen/Einbruch der Wirklichkeit* (C.H. Beck, Munich)
- Stefano Mancuso – *Brilliant Green* (Giunti, Florence)
- Francesca Melandri – *Sangue giusto* (Italian Literary Agency, Milan)
- Catherine Poulain – *Le grand marin* (Wandel Cruse, Paris)
- Erich Maria Remarque – *Die Nacht von Lissabon/Arc de Triomphe* (Morphbooks, Zürich)
- Aleksandr Skorobogatov – *Cocaine* (Cossee Publishers, Amsterdam and Regal Hoffmann & Associates LLC, New York)
- Elio Vittorini – *Il garofano rosso* (Mondadori, Milan)

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