



# Cossee International Agency

## Frankfurt Highlights 2019

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## Jonathan Robijn *Tobacco*

‘Robijn is a subtle stylist. He proves to be a master in creating atmospheres.’

– *De Morgen*

**Rights** Earlier work, *Congo Blues*, sold to Marsilio (Italy) and Nautilus (Germany)

**Material** English and Armenian samples

Cigarettes, Jimmy believes, are stylish. For fifty years, he smoked one or two packs of his favourite brand, Davros, each day. After his doctor tells him he has only a few weeks left to live, Jimmy takes a drastic decision: his last breath will be filled with Davros.

Instead of informing his wife and children about his condition, he sets out to complete his mission. He meets the cigarette trader Missirian, and together they travel to Armenia; the homeland of his favourite tobacco. The journey turns into a search for the “good old times”, where you could enjoy life without all modern rules and restrictions. But as his trip drags on, Jimmy realises how much he has neglected his family, and starts to doubt his priorities in life.

**Jonathan Robijn** (1970) studied sociology and psychology, and has worked for Doctors Without Borders ever since. He has published short stories, including *De Brakke Hond*, *Dietsche Warande* and *Belfort*. In 2013, his literary debut *The City and the Time* (*De stad en de tijd*) was published and nominated for the Gouden Boekenuil. His second novel, *Congo Blues*, appeared in 2017 and has been translated into German and Italian.

224 pages, 63.000 words, to be published by Cossee Publishers in January 2020

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## Hanna Bervoets

### *Welcome to the Kingdom of the Sick*

A ground-breaking novel on a topic that has long been ignored in modern literature: chronic illness.

**Rights**      **German (btb)**

Earlier work also sold to Aux Forges de Vulcain (French) and Çalıadam Yayınlar (Turkish)

**Material**    English sample

After a visit to a farm Clay, a forty-something with a good relationship and career as a programmer, develops a fever. He is hospitalised and has to fight for his life. When Clay finally recovers, his fatigue remains, and he is constantly plagued by pains. He is diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. In his obsessive search for a cure, Clay loses everything he holds dear. Until one day he wakes up in the Kingdom of the Sick, an Alice in Wonderland-like fantasy world structured by new rules and inverse logic, where Susan Sontag is his tour guide. Here, Clay befriends Marla; a young, bisexual woman diagnosed with fibromyalgia. Will Sontag eventually show Clay the way out of the Kingdom? Or is he doomed to roam its realms forever?

*Welcome to the Kingdom of the Sick* is not only a novel about being chronically ill, it is also a brutally honest story about what it means to leave behind the life you know, the body that carries you and the person you thought you'd become.

**Hanna Bervoets** (1984) is one of the most highly acclaimed Dutch authors of her generation. Over the past few years, Bervoets received several awards and nominations for her novels and essays. In 2017, Bervoets was awarded the prestigious Frans Kellendonk-prize for her entire body of works. Her earlier novels have been translated into German (btb), French (Aux Forges de Vulcain) and Turkish (Çalıadam Yayınlar) and adapted for film and television.

280 pages, 67.000 words, published by Pluim Publishers in May 2019

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## Saskia de Coster

### *Nightparents*

‘An affectionate novel about a woman that has a child, but still has to become a mother.’

– *De Morgen*

**Rights**      **German (Klett-Cotta/Tropen), Croatian (Hena Com)**

Earlier work, *We and Me*, sold to five languages

**Material**    English sample

Saul is Saskia and Juli’s son. His biological father is Karl, Saskia’s best friend. Saul is one year old when they decide to visit Karl in Canada. Together they travel to the hippie island where his family resides, where the wind of freedom still seems to blow.

They end up in a WiFi-less world, where nature rules and the inhabitants share a painful secret about Karl. Everything in Saskia’s life is put under pressure: her relationship with Juli, her friendship with Karl and her being a writer. And more and more, she struggles with the ties she has with her own son. Is she really a mother, considering she is not a biological mother? Can you learn being a parent? And how does her relationship with her son hold up? Saul is her very own, but then again he isn’t.

**Saskia de Coster** (1976) is the author of an intriguing oeuvre. With the novel *We and Me*, she won the Opzij literary prize, and was nominated for the AKO literary prize and the Gouden Boekenuil. Nearly 50.000 copies were sold. The novel was translated into German (Tropen), English (World Editions), Danish (Turbine), Croatian (Hena Com), and Serbian (Buybooks).

376 pages, 70.000 words, published by Das Mag Publishers in February 2019

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## Eva Meijer

### *Forwards*

‘An entertaining and thought-provoking read.’  
– *The Guardian* on *Bird Cottage*

**Rights**      **German (btb)**  
Earlier work *Animal Languages* was sold to 14 countries, and *Bird Cottage* was sold to 9 countries

**Material**    English sample

In 1921, a group of anarchists leaves Paris to start the commune ‘The green path’. Their aim is to live in harmony with mother earth, follow the principles of nudism and veganism, and for men and women to live as equals. Almost a hundred years later, a student of political philosophy finds an edition of the diary of one of its members, and is immediately compelled by their story.

Sam convinces her partner and two close friends to trade the city for the rural north, and start leading a life off the grid. They come across spiritual fortune seekers and money hungry estate agents, they reach the limits of love and are torn by the anguish of remoteness. Their dreams don’t seem to hold up against the pressures of modern society. One after the other leaves the house. *Forwards* is a book on love and freedom, and about the struggle for the things that really matter.

**Eva Meijer** (1980) is a philosopher and author. In 2016, her highly successful novel *Bird Cottage* was published, which will be translated into nine languages. Followed by *Animal Languages* in 2017, with translation rights sold to fourteen countries. In 2018, Eva Meijer started working on her postdoctoral project at the University of Wageningen. Her most recent essay *The Limits of My Language* (2018) has been published to great critical acclaim.

240 pages, 55.000 words, published by Cossee Publishers in March 2019

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## Bert Wagendorp

### *Ferrara*

‘*Ferrara* is entertaining and catchy. Wagendorp treats the large questions of life in a completely natural way.’

– *Het Parool*

**Rights**      **German (btb), film rights (Keyfilm)**  
Earlier work, *Ventoux*, also sold to Turbine (Danish), Kagge (Norwegian), Libros de Ruta (Spanish), World Editions (World English), and Galaade (French)

**Material**    English sample

Five years after the events in *Ventoux* we meet the friends Bart, Joost, David and André again, now in their fifties. We are in Ferrara, where the Renaissance is still tangible. All four are looking for a new perspective in their lives. But life is not going to be uncomplicated in Ferrara either. Bart’s daughter Anna makes a decision that he is not pleased with (complication 1), a ‘padellone’ in the Po Delta turns out to be more than just an old fishermen’s hut (complication 2), and immortality stays an illusion (complication 3).

A novel about loyalty, fate, humour as a lifeline and the unbreakable bond between father and daughter.

**Bert Wagendorp** (1956) worked as a sports reporter, and correspondent in London. His debut novel *The Prologue* was published in 1995. *Ventoux* followed in 2013, and instantly became a bestseller. *Ventoux* was also turned into a film, directed by the renowned filmmaker Nicole van Kilsdonk. In 2015, Wagendorp wrote his *Father & Daughter* book with his daughter Hannah. Two years later his novel *Masser Brock* was published. Wagendorp has also written columns for *De Volkskrant* since 2006.

256 pages, 64.000 words, published by Pluim Publishers in March 2019

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## Maartje Wortel

### *Dennie Is a Star*

‘Maartje Wortel is endlessly funny and sharp as a razor blade in her new novel *Dennie Is a Star*.’

– *Knack*

**Rights** Earlier work, *Goldfish and Concrete*, sold to Seix Barral (Spanish) and Edizioni Ets (Italian)

**Material** English sample

At the Rietveld Academy, I was taught by Wim Brands. In one of his first lessons, he gave us a few rules.

He said, Don’t try to laugh, because it looks so stupid.

He also said, You have to learn how to steer before you fly off on a tangent.

And he also told us to never write about our cats. Or indeed about any cat.

My characters are always looking for something, for love, for god, or for what binds people together. They always want to know everything, and that gets in the way of their well-being. When you are in love, you have to make statements about your identity, who you are, and who you want to become together. For me that’s difficult and binding. I think that when you let go of all those ideas you will experience reality more deeply. My book is a free fall, something intangible.

**Maartje Wortel** (1982) was kicked out of the School for Journalism because she invented too much in her stories. As a literary writer, she has become one of the most distinctive voices of her generation. She won the prestigious Anton Wachterprijs with her debut *This is your House*. With her latest novel, *Ice Age*, she won the BNG literary prize. Her latest collection of stories, *Something Has to Happen*, was nominated for both the Fintro and the ECI prize.

168 pages, 36.000 words, published by Das Mag Publishers in March 2019

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## **Fleur Pierets**

### *Julian*

‘About an inescapable love and an inescapable death. Free from kitschy sentiment. Very moving.’

– Saskia de Coster, author

**Press** Art project covered in *The New York Times* and *Huffpost*

**Material** English sample

Their tragic story went around the globe: the Belgian artist Fleur Pierets was to marry her partner Julian in all 22 countries where two women legally can. The idea behind the project was to shine a light on equal marriage rights in a positive way. The world press showed great interest. Marina Abramović wished them good luck.

But after their fourth marriage in Paris, Julian was diagnosed with aggressive brain tumours. She died two months later, on January 22<sup>nd</sup> 2018. Fleur was left behind with only one thing to do: write.

The result is the breath-taking *Julian*: as modest as it is glamorous, starring fate in the leading role. A book in which the emotional turmoil of mourning and falling in love are closely intertwined. A love story told through the lives of two extraordinary, inspiring artists. But above all: a commemoration of Julian.

**Fleur Pierets.** Besides writing, Fleur Pierets still actively campaigns for the LGBTQI+ movement. *Julian* is her first book.

344 pages, 72.000 words, published by Das Mag Publishers in September 2019

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## Hans Steketee

### *The Warnow*

‘A book I couldn’t resist. Hans Steketee lets you feel the attractive force of giddy adventure. Reading *The Warnow* feels like embarking in wild waters.’ – Frank Westerman, author

**Author** Journalist for *NRC Handelsblad* on maritime issues, photography, history, and the countryside

**Material** English sample

To go to sea with your friends on your own ship, making music and living with the wind – could life be more beautiful? Arnoud Brinkman did what many people would want to do but wouldn’t dare: risk everything for the dream of freedom. Arnoud, Tirza, Peter, and their young group of friends set out to see the northern lights, but their ramshackle pilot boat never makes it to Norway.

Hans Steketee, *NRC* journalist and sailor, became captivated by the Warnow and its crew when he read a short message about a missing ship in the North Sea in 2013. In the wake of the Warnow he travelled from Schiedam to Scotland and tried to unravel what happened during that crossing. Who was Arnoud? What motivated him? Can you overload a small boat with dreams? Finally, Arnouds longing for the sea also poses the question that every sailor has to face: can love for and fear of the sea exist without each other?

**Hans Steketee** (1959) is an editor at *NRC Handelsblad* and writes about maritime issues, photography, history, and the countryside. Up until 2015, he lived in London with his family as correspondent for the United Kingdom and Ireland. About that period, roughly the Tony Blair years, he wrote *Island Between the Ears* (2006), which was shortlisted for the Bob den Uyl prize, and *British for Beginners* (2015), about his not-always-successful attempts at mastering the social codes of the island folk. Hans received the Herman Wekker prize for journalism about English-speaking countries.

304 pages, 75.000 words, published by Pluim Publishers in September 2019

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## Jelle Brandt Corstius

### *BAM*

‘Heartwrenching. A disarming book.’  
– *De Volkskrant*, on *Hugo’s Ashes*

**Rights** Earlier work, *Hugo’s Ashes*, sold to Don Max (Danish), NoNa (Swedish), and Kotob Khan (Arabic)

**Material** English sample

I think I was about seven years old. On Sunday morning, I got out my favourite book, *De grote geïllustreerde bosatlas* of 1983, to look at the map of Siberia, at that time still situated in the Soviet-Union. There were some cities along the Trans-Siberian express, but the rest of the map was almost empty. Only here and there was a little dot of villages with exotic names like Urgal. What did the houses look like? Weren’t the Urgallians lonely, that far away from everything else? I read that the Soviets were building a new railway, roughly parallel to the Trans-Siberian express. The tracks would be finished in a few years. That meant, to my excitement, that all those remote villages would be reachable by train by the time I finished high school. That’s where I wanted to go when I grew up.

In this unusual trip, Jelle Brandt Corstius describes his travels through Russia following the track of the BAM. The book is Brandt Corstius at his best: bizarre adventures with low lows and high highs. And lots of vodka. A tried and true recipe.

**Jelle Brandt Corstius** (1978) is a writer, Russia connoisseur and developer of TV programmes. His last book, *Hugo’s Ashes*, sold 90.000 copies. It was nominated for the ‘NS Publieks’-prize and will be published in Danish, Swedish and Arabic.

184 pages, 20.000 words, published by Das Mag Publishers in September 2019

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## **Eva Meijer**

### *The Limits of my Language*

‘Meijer manages to avoid all clichés. *The Limits of my Language*, despite the title, shows what language is capable of.’

– *Trouw*

**Rights**      **German (btb), World English (Pushkin), Polish (Linia), Spanish (Katz Editores), Turkish (offer)**

**Material**    English synopsis & short sample

In 2016, more than a million people in the Netherlands were using antidepressants. While a lot has been written about the treatment of depression, its broader meaning has received far less attention. In *The Limits of my Language* Eva Meijer uses her own experience with depression as a resource for a surprisingly new analysis of the phenomenon.

She explains how people with recurring periods of depression come to resemble trees growing crookedly – how not their brain but their soul keeps adapting. She discusses the benefit of therapy, the way in which language gives us shape and how, sometimes, we can reshape ourselves in conversations with others. The essay is a plea for literally moving on, for going for a run and walking the dog; a plea for being perseverant.

**Eva Meijer** (1980) is a philosopher and author. In 2016, her highly successful novel *Bird Cottage* was published. Followed by *Animal Languages* in 2017 with translation rights sold to fourteen countries. Eva Meijer recently concluded her dissertation on ‘political animal voices’ at the University of Amsterdam, which has been published by the New York University Press. In 2018, she started working on a postdoctoral project at the University of Wageningen.

144 pages, 29.000 words, published by Cossee Publishers in January 2019

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## **Albert Willem van Renterghem**

### ***The Miracle Doctor***

**Rinus Spruit (ed.)**

Fascinating insight into medical history at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century.

**Author** Pioneer in the field of psychoanalysis, studied with Freud and Jung, founder of the first institute for psychotherapy in the Netherlands

**Material** Full Dutch text

In *The Miracle Doctor*, the reader follows the rural doctor Van Renterghem (1845 - 1939) along the country roads and dykes, in all weathers, to the sick that he treated in hygienically grim circumstances. A butcher with pain in the chest, a woman with asthma, a man with rheumatoid sciatica: many of his patients are cured with the help of hypnosis, then still a completely unknown treatment method. Suspicion grows amongst colleagues and pharmacists: a doctor who doesn't prescribe any medicine? Motivated by his belief in the power of hypnosis, Van Renterghem travels to Zurich to meet Jung, and visits Freud in Vienna.

*The Miracle Doctor* gives a fascinating insight into the evolution of medical history at the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Van Renterghem realises that apart from a body, his patients also possess a mind, and that new techniques such as hypno- and psychotherapy reap unexpected results. An intriguing memoir of the open-minded pioneer who founded the first institute for psychotherapy in the Netherlands.

**Rinus Spruit** (ed.) (1946) achieved great success with his debut novel *The Thatcher* (2009). His second novel, *Maarten's Perfect World*, was also received with enthusiasm. Both of his novels have been translated into German. In 2018, Rinus Spruit came across the diaries of Van Renterghem in local archives, and decided to edit his fascinating story to make it accessible to the public.

224 pages, 46.000 words, published by Cossee Publishers in September 2019

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## Marianne Philips

### *The Confession*

What starts out as the story of an ambitious young woman turns into a tumultuous fall from grace.

**Rights**      **German (Diogenes)**  
Highlighted in the '10 Books from Holland Brochure'

**Material**    English sample

During two late night sessions Heleen, recently admitted as a patient to a mental institution, tells the night nurse her life story. She is the eldest in a working class household, that steadily fills up with nine other children. Her life is given a new perspective when she decides to spend the night with the well-situated Mr. Groenmans in Hotel Royal. Not long after, he finds her employment in the city as a sales person in an exclusive men's clothing store. Craving success, and wanting so badly to flee her restrictive background, she quickly climbs the social ladder.

Marianne Philips describes a life of riches and humiliation, driven by hatred as much as by love. What starts out as the tale of an ambitious young woman, that all of a sudden has to be a mother to her youngest sibling, turns into a feverish tale of a woman who falls off her self-made pedestal.

**Marianne Philips** (1886 -1951) was a politician and writer, born into a prosperous Jewish family in Amsterdam. Orphaned young, she wasn't able to finish her education, but still managed to work her way up quickly. In 1919, she was elected, as one of the first women ever, as board member for the SDAP. She started publishing in 1929 and went on to write five books and several novella's.

224 pages, 56.000, published by Cossee Publishers in March 2019

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## Henriette Roosenburg

### *The Walls Came Tumbling Down*

‘Henriette Roosenburg’s account of these four courageous young people is a story which will long be remembered – for its picture of human courage and endurance.’

– *The Saturday Review*, 1957

**Classics** Part of the successful rediscovered classics series including authors such as Dola de Jong and Ida Simons

**Material** Full English edition

Towards the end of World War II, Joke, Nel, Dries and Zip are sent from one German camp to another, further and further away from their home country: The Netherlands. But suddenly the rumour of Hitler’s death starts spreading. The next morning an unknown guard opens the doors and a truck with Russian soldiers arrives.

The foursome decides to travel home by boat. Along the way, they’re faced with the aftermath of the war: plundering soldiers, scarce food supplies, and many Germans refusing to offer a place to stay.

How do you start a journey when the roads are blocked? Who can you trust in a country where the Nazi-regime has only just fallen? Resistance warrior Henriette ‘Zip’ Roosenburg was imprisoned during World War II and made her way home through the frontiers. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* is the novel she wrote about her incredible journey. The book became a bestseller in the US right after its publication.

**Henriette Roosenburg** (1916 -1972) was part of the Dutch resistance during World War II. She collected news for the underground press, accompanied people across the border, and helped maintain an escape route for crashed allied pilots. After the war, she emigrated to the United States, where she worked for various news outlets. *The Walls Came Tumbling Down* was her first book.

80.000 words, to be published by Cossee Publishers in 2020

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## Recent Sales

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**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 Londres), Chinese (Shanghai 99), (All Prints) Lebanon, film rights (Circe, NL)

**Saskia Goldschmidt**, *Breaking Ground*: English/UK (Saraband), film rights (Windmill Films, NL)

**Marjolijn van Heemstra**, *And His Name Is*: German (Hoffman & Campe), Italian (Rizzoli), USA (Atria Books), Spanish (Seix Barral), French (Les Escales), Albanian (Ejal), Slovenian (Goga), film rights (Bind Film, NL)

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

**Dola de Jong**, *The Tree and the Vine*: Swedish (Nilsson), Czech (Pistorius & Olsanská), Spanish (Siruela), World English (Transit Books)

**Eva Meijer**, *Animal Languages*: German (Matthes & Seitz), World English (John Murray), French (Presses de la Cité), Polish (Marginesy), Arabic (Dar Oktob), Turkish (Kaplumbaa Books), Finnish (Art House), Korean (Kachi Publishing), Swedish (Weyler Förlag), Complex Chinese (Yeren Publishing House), Czech (Grada), Simplified Chinese (New World Press), Japanese (Kashiwa Shobo), Italian (Nottetempo)

**Eva Meijer**, *Bird Cottage*: Turkish (Nebula), German (btb), French (Presses de la Cité), World English (Pushkin Press), Arabic (Kotob Khan), Polish (Marginesy), Swedish (Weyler Förlag), Simplified Chinese (New World Press), Czech (Host)

**Jonathan Robijn**, *Congo Blues*: Italian (Marsilio), German (Nautilus)

**Aleksandr Skorobogatov**, *Cocaine*: World English (Old Street), Serbian (Dereta), Croatian (Naklada Ljevak), Spanish (Tandaia), Danish (Silkefyret) and Arabic (Here&There)

**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), Arabic (Madarek), Catalan (Ara Llibres), Bulgarian (Janet 45), Hebrew (Tchelet Books), Greek (Metaixmio), Croatian (HenaCom), Hungarian (Jelenkor) and film rights (Savage Film, BE)

## Recent Acquisitions & Publications

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- Christophe Boltanski – *La Cache, Le Guetteur* (Éditions Stock, Paris)
- J.M. Coetzee – *Moral Tales, The Death of Jesus* (Peter Lampack, New York City)
- David Diop – *Frère d'Âme* (So Far So Good Agency, Pau)
- David Foenkinos – *Lennon* (Plon, Paris)
- Ayelet Gundar-Goshen – *The Liar* (Institute for the Translation of Hebrew Literature, Tel Aviv)
- Jane Gardam – *Old Filth Trilogy, Crusoe's Daughter, God on the Rocks* (David Higham, London)
- David Garnett – *Lady into Fox, A Man in the Zoo* (United Agents, London)
- David Grossman – *Nina Knows* (Deborah Harris Agency, Jerusalem)
- Maja Haderlap – *Angel of Oblivion* (Wallstein, Göttingen)
- Michael Ignatieff – *Ordinary Virtues. Moral Order in a Divided World* (United Agents, London)
- Navid Kermani – *Ungläubiges Staunen* (C.H. Beck, Munich)
- Mick Kitson – *Sal* (Canongate, Edinburgh)
- Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi – *Kintu* (Antony Harwood, Oxford)
- Stefano Mancuso – *Brilliant Green, Plant Revolution, Travelling Green, The Nation of Plants* (Giunti, Florence & Laterza, Rome)
- Francesca Melandri – *Sangue Giusto* (Italian Literary Agency, Milan)
- Marco Missirolli – *Fideltà* (Einaudi, Turin)
- Catherine Poulain – *Le Grand Marin, Le Coeur Blanc* (Wandel Cruse, Paris)
- Erich Maria Remarque – *Die Nacht von Lissabon, Arc de Triomphe* (Mohrbooks, Zurich)
- Bernhard Schlink – *Olga* (Diogenes, Zürich)
- Nadia Terranova – *Addio Fantasma* (Einaudi, Torino)
- Miriam Toews – *Women Talking, All my Puny Sorrows* (Wylie Agency, London)
- Bettina Wilpert – *Nichts, was uns passiert* (Verbrecher Verlag, Berlin)
- Barbara Zoeke – *Die Stunde der Spezialisten* (Aufbau, Berlin)

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