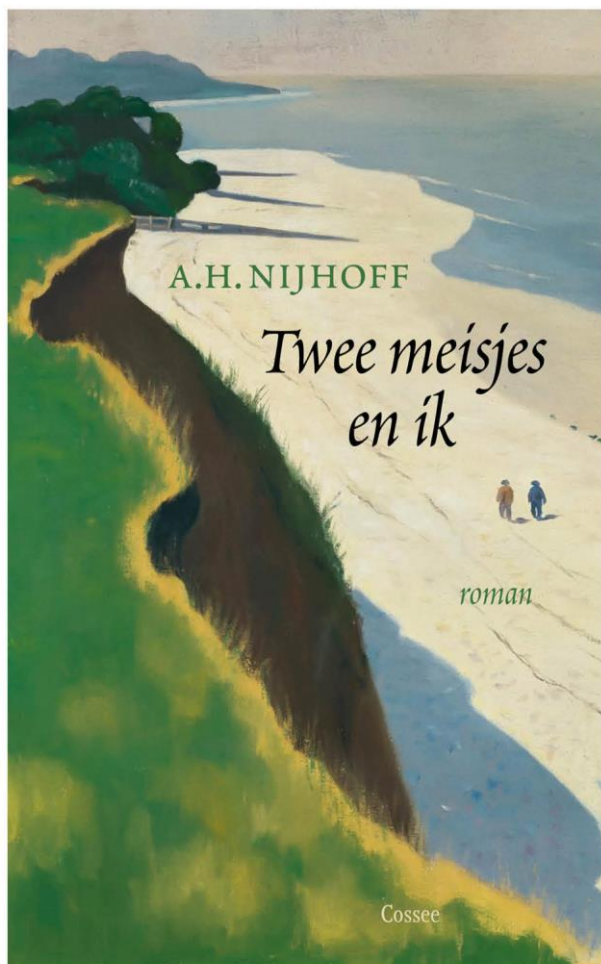


# Cossee Publishers

## Rediscovered Classics



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## Loekie Zvonik

### *Who Was the Hatter?*

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- “The combination of literary ingenuity and Zvonik’s compelling and elegant writing style make *The Hatter* a **surprisingly modern novel.**” – Wout Vlaeminck, author
- **English sample** available

Didier and Hermine experience a short affair while studying at the University of Gent. By coincidence they meet again, twelve years later, to travel together to a congress in Vienna. Their past infatuation turns into an intense friendship, in which Hermine inadvertently becomes Didier’s muse. Didier is a classic romanticist, with a great fascination for the dark side of life, from which even Hermine is not able to save him. In this breathtaking chronicle of a death foretold, Hermine reconstructs the last weeks of his life. In a serene, elegant and subtle style she tries to unravel his motives. In doing so, trying to answer the question **to what extent it is possible to love someone, and to keep one’s distance at the same time.**

*Who Was the Hatter?* was published in 1975. The novel received high praise and was awarded with the VBVB Debuutprijs a year later. A compelling work, which in many ways parallels the dramatic relationship between Sylvia Plath and Ted Hughes.

**Loekie Zvonik** (1935 – 2000) was the pseudonym of Hermine Louise Marie Zvonicek. She wrote three novels and a number of short stories. Zvonik studied German philology in Gent. There she met fellow student Dirk De Witte, who later became a writer who was obsessed with the theme of suicide in literature. In December 1970, De Witte ended his own life.

40,000 words, published in January 2018 by Cossee Publishers

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## Reviews for *Who Was the Hatter* by Loekie Zvonik

“Even if it was entirely fiction *Who Was the Hatter?* would still be a marvel of the literary art, a skillfully interwoven web of citations, references and themes, in a style that is masterful down to the last detail, such as a room smelling of ‘hastily emptied ash trays’. A novel that one would like to cite from endlessly.”

– *De Volkskrant* \*\*\*\*\*

“Zvonik has a clear and subtle style. As a reader, you feel her pain without her having to scream it out. Loekie Zvonik wrote a heartbreaking farewell to a beloved friend, which is still gut-wrenching - even fifty years later.” – *De Standaard* \*\*\*\*

“Zvonik’s prose has a serene and calm touch to it. It is precise but loving. What a sad, but beautiful and well written story, even without knowing the background story.” – *Literair Nederland*

“Zvonik was great, extremely great, even, as the two pages in which she describes her mother’s death in a very sharp and honest manner show.” – *Knack*

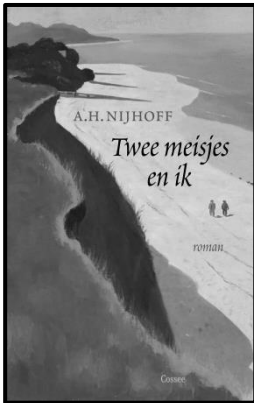
“Zvonik’s novel is the tragic epos of an (anti)hero who tries to involve others in his thoughts of doom, but does not succeed in that. The writer likewise holds up a mirror to today’s readers.” – *Friesch Dagblad*

“With both cool and loving descriptions, filled to the brim with literary references, [Loekie Zvonik] paints the ill-fated course of the relationship [between Hermine and Didier], a chronicle of a death foretold.” – *VPRO Boeken*

“The many quotes from Rilke, the references to Hesse’s *Der Steppenwolf* and Dirk’s/Didier’s imitation of the suicide of Swedish author Stig Dagerman make this novel readable on a higher level. They illustrate Dirk de Witte’s obsession with writers and suicide. Is Dirk de Witte a life that became literature in form of *The Hatter*, or was his life literature which came to life (and death)? Both arguments can be made. What is evident is that this novel, more than forty years after its initial publication, is still able to move its readers.” – *thisishowweweread.com*

“Zvonik writes clearly, atmospherically and with great empathy. She knows exactly how to bring across Didier’s aura of heavy dejection to the reader. This chronicle of a death foretold still grabs its reader by the throat, even 43 years after its first publication.” – *De Morgen* \*\*\*\*1/2

“A beautiful, lovingly written novel.” – Jeroen Brouwers, author



## A.H Nijhoff

### *Two Girls and I*

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- A novel way ahead of its times
- **Controversial yet moving portrait of a relationship**
- **English sample, full Danish translation available**

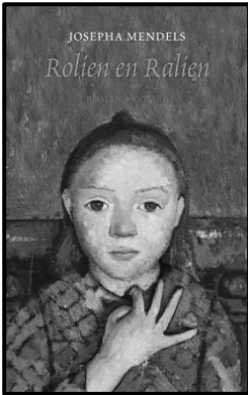
August 1931. The publication of the novel *Two Girls and I* causes some upheaval in the Dutch literary scene. The name Nijhoff, according to the Dutch press, had been disgraced forever. Indeed, the readers are given a lot to digest: two young girls and their relationship with a much older doctor, a Frenchman with a showy young lover, a foul-mouthed colonel, a moody nurse, allusions to a lesbian affair, abortion and drugs. In short, a novel by an author who couldn't care less about the conventions and who wanted to be in charge of her own life, and all this in 1931. The characters encounter each other by coincidence, in a remote town on the Southern coast of England. The décor is a small hotel and a beach house, rocks and rain, green-grey water and a little strip of sand. A.H. Nijhoff observes and analyses the complex development of their relationships. She carefully sketches how throughout the years they meet again, many experiences richer and illusions poorer, ready for new developments.

At its publication, critics had trouble with the inescapable atmosphere of this tough novel, precisely one of the aspects that appeals to contemporary readers.

As a writer, **Netty Nijhoff-Wind** (1897 – 1971), the wife of the famous Dutch poet Martinus Nijhoff, chose the gender-neutral name A.H. Nijhoff. A clear choice, which nonetheless became subject of rumors and speculation. *Two Girls and I* was reissued many times over the years, until in the eighties this once controversial and pioneering novel was more or less forgotten. Lately however, we see a clear revival of interest: the 'Two Girls' are back.

78,000 words, published in April 2018 by Cossee Publishers

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## Josepha Mendels *Rolien and Ralien*

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- **“The first female Bildungsroman, a high point of Dutch LGBT-literature.”** – Hanna Bervoets, author
- “The novel’s extraordinary style makes rediscovering *Rolien en Ralien* completely worth it.” – *De Volkskrant* \*\*\*\*
- **English sample** available

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, who subsequently comes to take over her life.

In December 1942, when Josepha Mendels has to flee from occupied France via the Pyrenees, her backpack including the manuscript of *Rolien and Ralien* is stolen. Luckily, a copy of the text 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 it 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. Today, *Rolien and Ralien* is still a fascinating coming-of-age novel in a surprisingly modern style.

**Josepha Mendels** (1902 – 1995) grew up in a Jewish Orthodox family. She left Holland for Paris and started working as a journalist. *Rolien and Ralien* was her debut in 1947. Followed two years later by *I told you so*, also republished by Cossee Publishers. It is her only novel set in WWII. For her entire oeuvre Josepha Mendels received the Anna Bijns Prijs for the female voice in literature in 1986.

43,000 words, published in 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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## Josepha Mendels *I Told You So*

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- Rights sold: **German (Klaus Wagenbach)**
- **English sample** available
- “Humorous and poetic.” – De Tijd
- **How much to open up oneself for a relationship that is destined to stay temporary?**

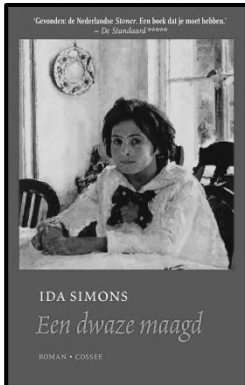
In 1943, the war starts to close in on the Netherlands and hiding is dangerous. Frans and Henriëtte decide to flee to London, where they meet each other by chance. Cut off from their homeland and completely isolated, they jump head first into their new lives, and in what develops into a serious love affair. As a sign of their temporary alliance they give each other new names, one is called Amoebe, the other Goblin. She isn't bothered by his affairs, he is revived by her contagious wilfulness. They create a unique way of living together and the temporary state of their affair makes it even more special. They know this will not last forever. When the war is over, Frans will have to return to his family in the Netherlands.

Mendels shows us the cruel necessity of love during the harshest times. And how love can be a savior when two lost souls are away from their family and homeland. With sharp observations and beautiful sentences, Mendels combines the reality of wartime Holland with a merry London love story, far away from the atrocities. But the atrocities still find their way back into their lives. It is impossible to flee. Even when you are far away.

“Josepha Mendels shows the reader a world where the female voice is leading. And where the men are mostly astonished, thus cleverly reversing gender roles.” – Anna Bijns Prijs jury, 1986

50,000 words, published in 2016 by Cossee Publishers

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## Ida Simons

### *A Foolish Virgin*

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- **Rights sold to 18 countries**, bestseller
- “A powerful and convincing study of how the real victims of death are often the living left behind.” – The Irish Times
- Compared with **John Williams’ Stoner & Jane Austen**
- Full **English translation** available

*A Foolish Virgin* is the story of young girl Gittel, growing up in the Jewish community of Antwerp in the late 1920s and early 1930s. Her parents lead a cat-and-dog life. Her father doesn’t succeed in business and her mother often leaves for Antwerp with her daughter to stay with family for a few weeks. In Antwerp, Gittel is able to surrender completely to her passion for the piano, since nobody in the colourful family is really paying any attention to her. Simons describes the vulnerable relationship between two girls in the middle of the lively Jewish community in an unparalleled manner. Who, wonders Gittel, can be trusted in this world of imposters? Ida Simons has a light, often humorous way of telling the story of the naïve Gittel. Through her voice the reader is able to empathize with her, looking for a safe place in uncertain times and a chaotic world.

“Bravely, this survivor’s novel keeps faith with comedy and refuses retrospective gloom. **It will now reach many readers who have only come across one other first-person narrative of childhood by a Dutch Jewish girl: the diary of Anne Frank.**” – *Financial Times*

**Ida Simons** (Antwerp, 1911 – The Hague, 1960) was a writer and a pianist. She was deported to Westerbork and then to Theresienstadt, along with her family. *A Foolish Virgin* was first published in 1959, and was highly regarded at the time.

47,000 words, published in 2014 by Cossee Publishers

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

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- **Rights sold: Swedish (Nilsson), Czech (Pistorius) and Spanish (Siruela)**
- **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 compelling 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 accepting 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** (1911 – 2003) wrote children’s books, novels, and short stories. She decided to flee from the Netherlands in 1940 with the tension of war increasing. She wrote *The Field*, which was an instant success and received the Edgar Allen Poe Award for her thriller *The Whirligig of Time* (1964).

39,000 words, published in 2017 by Cossee Publishers

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## Dola de Jong

### *The Field*

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- Received outstanding press in the Netherlands as well as abroad
- **Rights sold to seven countries** – as well as receiving an option on film rights
- The Czech edition was nominated for the Magnesia Litera Award for outstanding translated fiction.
- Full **English translation** available

The Dutch couple, Aart and Lies, flees the Netherlands just before the outbreak of the Second World War. On their way South they take in several children who lost their parents during their flight. They end up in Tangier. On a piece of barren ground they try to survive, while the Arabs watch them with pity.

The family lives in poverty and they won't get any help from the consul, because they are not officially refugees, seeing that they left the country before the war started. The wife of the consul occasionally comes by to bring them clothes.

The future does not look bright for them: the children are feeling homesick and the field produces too little. When Aart gets arrested because of a misunderstanding, eighteen-year-old Hans takes matters into his own hands. However, he forgets Tangier is full of Nazi spies and takes great risks. *The Field* masterfully shows the disruptive effect of war on the lives of refugees.

**“Will not easily fade from the mind. Calm and dispassionate, without a touch of ranting, it is a terrific indictment of modern war.”** – *The New York Times*

**“Dola de Jong deserves to be rediscovered. The novel is deeply moving. De Jong draws a breathtaking image of a time, which is still so relevant today, thinking of the treatment of refugees.”** – *De Volkskrant*\*\*\*\*

70,000 words, published in 2015 by Cossee Publishers

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## **Dorinde van Oort** *Woman in the Wings*

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- **Bestselling novel** in both the Netherlands and Germany
- **Full German and English translation** available

When Annetje Beets, born in 1888, dies at the age of almost a hundred, it seems that she has not achieved anything that would justify a biography. She lived in the shadow of people who were more

important and successful than herself.

Annetje's one great love, the young politician P.J. Oud, is already married when their paths cross once more during the First World War. They nevertheless begin an ardent affair. When P.J. Oud becomes a Member of Parliament in 1917, there is no place for her in his life any longer. By default she succumbs to the advances of her ex-lover's father, moving in with him as his 'housekeeper'. When, at the end of the Second World War, father Oud is on his death bed, Annetje's future is his main concern. He persuades his friend, the famous retired singer Christiaan Mansborg, to marry Annetje after his passing. Annetje becomes Mrs Mansborg, but happy she is not.

In *Woman in the Wings*, Dorinde Van Oort tells the incredible story of her great aunt, whose secrets and machinations had a deep impact not only on her own life, but on her whole family's lives. **After reading this book you will never look at your old family photographs in the same way again.**

**Dorinde van Oort** (1946) worked as a translator, a newspaper editor and a journalist before she published her first collection of short stories in 1989. Her novel *Woman in the Wings* first appeared in the Netherlands in 2006 and became a huge success. The translation by DTV made it a bestseller in Germany. In 2010, Van Oort published a biography of her father, Jean Dulieu.

87,000 words, published in 2006 by Cossee Publishers

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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)

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

**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)

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

**Bregje Hofstede**, *The Sky Over Paris*: German (C.H. Beck), Danish (Tiderne Skifter/Gyldendal), Arabic (Dar Oktob), 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)

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

**Eva Meijer**, *Animal Languages*: German (Matthes & Seitz), World English (John Murray), French (Presses de la Cité), Polish (Marginesy), Arabic (Dar Oktob), Turkish (Kapumblaa Books), Finnish (Art House), Korean (Kachi Publishing)

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

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

**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), Arabic (Madarek), Catalan (Ara Llibres), Bulgarian (Janet 45) and film rights (Menuet Film, BE)

## Recent Acquisitions & Publications

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- Kristine Bilkau – *Eine Liebe, in Gedanken* (Lit. Ag. Michael Gaeb, Berlin)
- 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* (Random House, Munich)
- Milena Michiko Flašar – *Herr Katō spielt Familie* (Wagenbach, Berlin)
- 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* (Piper Verlag, Munich)
- Navid Kermani – *Ungläubiges Staunen* (C.H. Beck, Munich)
- Stefano Mancuso – *Brilliant Green & Plant Revolution* (Giunti, Florence)
- Francesca Melandri – *Sangue giusto* (Italian Literary Agency, Milan)
- Pia Pera – *Al giardino ancora non l'ho detto* (Italian Literary Agency, Milan)
- Catherine Poulain – *Le grand marin* (Wandel Cruse, Paris)
- Erich Maria Remarque – *Die Nacht von Lissabon & Arc de Triomphe* (Mohrbooks, Zürich)
- Susanne Schötz – *Die geheime Sprache der Katzen* (Benevento, Salzburg)
- Bernhard Schlink – *Olga* (Diogenes, Zürich)
- Aleksandr Skorobogatov – *Cocaine* (Cossee Publishers, Amsterdam and Regal Hoffmann & Associates LLC, New York)
- Elio Vittorini – *Il garofano rosso* (Mondadori, Milan)
- Barbara Zoeke – *Die Stunde der Spezialisten* (Aufbau, Berlin)

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