



An  
Introduction  
to



Eva Meijer

Cossee International Agency

2023

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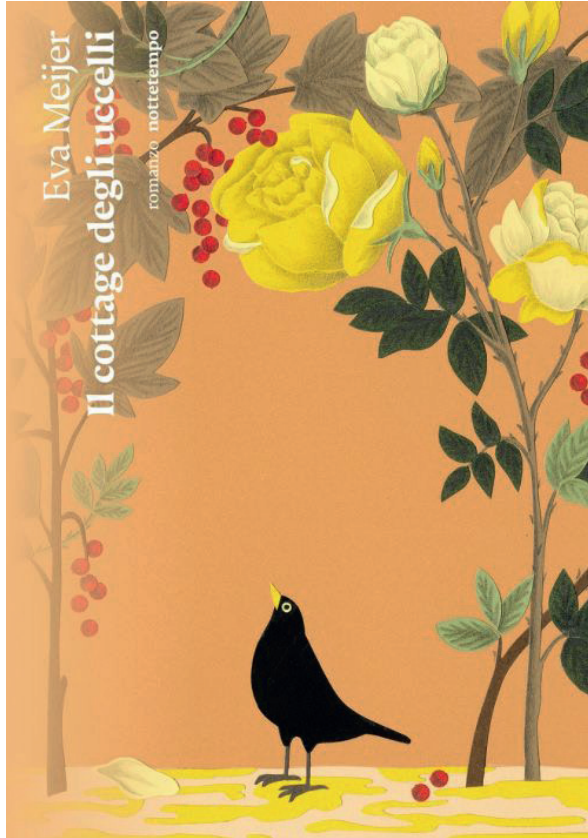
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**Eva Meijer** is a philosopher, visual artist, writer and singer-songwriter. Her fiction and non-fiction has been translated into over twenty languages. Since the publication of her first novel in 2011, her works have been receiving numerous awards, including the Halewijnprijs honouring her oeuvre. Her books have been met enthusiastically by the Dutch but also international press including reviews in *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel* and *The New York Review of Books*. Recurring themes are language including silence, madness, nonhuman animals, and politics. Meijer also works as a postdoctoral researcher at the University of Amsterdam and Wageningen University. She writes essays and columns for *NRC* newspaper, and is a member of the Multispecies Art Collective.

# FICTION



# SEA: NOW

240 pages, 53,000 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2022

**‘According to Eva Meijer, we need new stories about the climate, about the sea, and about our relation to the flora and fauna around us.’ – *De Leesclub van Alles***

The country is flooding; the sea is gaining a kilometre of land every day. The Prime Minister holds a daily press conference, and the Ministry of Defence sends soldiers to the dykes. Conspiracy theorists shout for “Action!” on Twitter. Scientists flock from far and wide to investigate this rare phenomenon. Germany makes sports halls available for its evacuated neighbours. The king leaves the country.

But where can the wild deer go? And what will happen to the Stayers, camping on the roofs of office buildings in the big cities? Once the people have been evacuated and the last seagulls find refuge elsewhere, we follow climate activist Arie, student Willow, and oceanographer Paula van der Steen on their voyage across the new sea and discover how the water fundamentally changes their view of the world.

*Sea: Now* is a novel about the greatest global challenge of our time, about nature that both threatens and nourishes us, and about humans, who must reinvent themselves.

**‘Sea : Now is a poetic, light-footed, and in light of the current crises in the world, an awfully topical document.’**

– *De Telegraaf*



**Rights sold**  
German (btb)

**Nominations**  
Libris Literatuurprijs

**Material**  
English sample available

# FORWARDS

240 pages, 55,000 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2019

**‘Meijer is building a quirky literary oeuvre about ideals and idealists.’ – *Trouw***

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 magnificently shows that all people have different ideas when it comes to putting the concept of freedom to practice and that joint ideals aren’t so easy to implement.’ – *Allesoverboekenschrijvers***



**Rights sold**

German (btb)

**Material**

English sample,  
German translation available

# THE NEW RIVER

296 pages, 61.000 words  
published by Das Mag Publishers in 2020

**‘In 58 short chapters Meijer writes a dreamy, enticing thriller.’ – *Nederlands Dagblad***

Close to the village a river appears out of thin air and keeps changing shape. Scientists believe large-scale forest clearing for soy production is the cause; villagers point to the old gods. English journalist Janet Stone arrives to write an article about the river, but then soy farmer Hugo Frys is murdered.

The killing turns out to be the precursor of a series of uncanny events. Janet begins an investigation, and discovers the land is being assimilated by more than just the river. In this hallucinatory eco-thriller, with elements of Jorge Luis Borges and David Lynch, Eva Meijer creates a world that is very similar to ours; a world to disappear in.

**‘Changing perspective so the human being is no longer at the centre of attention is something Eva Meijer likes doing.’**

– *De Volkskrant*



## Rights sold

German (btb),  
Italian (Nottetempo)

## Nominations

Confituur Boekhandelsprijs and  
BNG Bank Literatuurprijs

## Material

English sample available

# BIRD COTTAGE

288 pages, 63,000 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2019

**‘An entertaining and thought-provoking read.’ – *The Guardian* on the English edition**

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.

Howard knew as a girl that she would not stay in her town of birth in Sussex. The soirées and romantic intrigues of the countryside high society bored her. But in the end she gave up her career as a violinist in London, in order to move to Ditchling in Southern England, where she slowly gained the trust of the many birds surrounding her cottage. Her musical hearing permitted her to differentiate between the nuances in their languages – at least when she was able to keep the mailman and visitors at bay.

*Bird Cottage* is a book about music, the songs of birds and great tit conventions. It is also a book about resistance, and about deciding what is important.

**‘So inspiring and touching that during my reading, for a moment I felt part of a natural, meaningful whole.’ – *NRC***

## Nominations

BNG, Libris and ECI Literatuur prijs; the English edition was nominated for the Vondel Prize for translation and the International Dublin Literary Award



## Rights sold

German (btb), World English (Pushkin Press), French (Presses de la Cité), Polish (Marginesy), Turkish (Nebula), Swedish (Weyer Förlag), simplified Chinese (Guangxi Publishing), Czech (Host), Croatian (Naklada Ljevak), Italian (Nottetempo), Spanish (Atico de los Libros)

**Material** English, French, German translations available



# PEACOCK

256 pages, 64,500 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2013

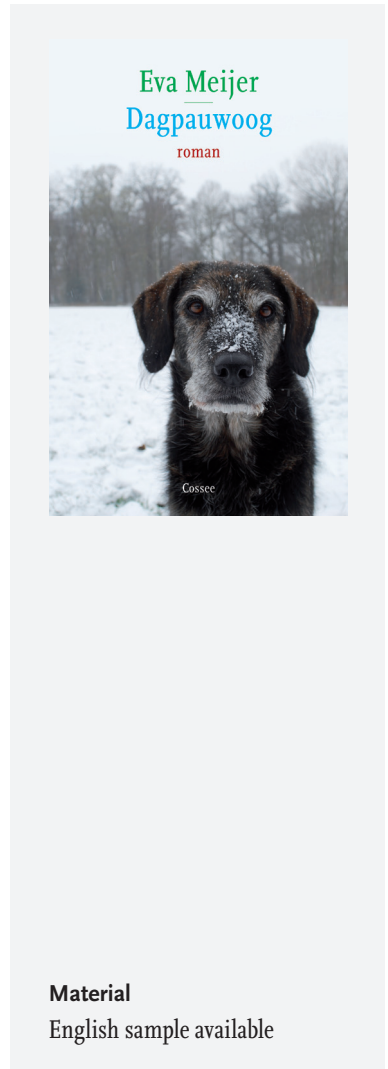
## **‘Veganism meets *Breaking Bad*.’ – *Veganisme Blog***

Iris Peacock moves with her dog Pol to a remote village by the sea. There she meets animal rights activist Marcel, who convinces her little by little of the need to intervene in the way people treat other animals.

Marcel has his own ideas about what needs to be done, taking a certain amount of risk for granted, for himself and others. He makes mailbombs in a shed in his garden. Iris helps him throw them through butchers’ mailboxes at night. At the height of the national attention their resistance generates, the inevitable happens: someone is hurt.

*Peacock* is a novel about people and other animals that is as confrontational as it is tragicomic, about thinking for yourself and wanting to do the right thing in a world where it isn’t always clear what the right things is.

**‘In clear and vivid language, Eva Meijer describes a cautious love story, beautiful reflections on the lives of humans and animals, a couple of unsettling attacks on butchereries, and tragicomic scenes in prison and court.’ – *NRC***



# NON-FICTION

EVA MEIJER



# LANGUAGES

THE SECRET CONVERSATIONS  
OF THE NATURAL WORLD

# POLITICAL SILENCES

128 pages, 22.000 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2022

**‘Meijer elaborates on our current way of speaking and staying silent with intelligence, nuance and conviction.’ – *Bazarow***

Language is central in politics. In the parliament, on social media and in public debate, people argue with words. Who is able to speak, however, is never fixed: in Black Lives Matter, #MeToo and the climate marches, people who originally were silenced demand a voice. Silence can also oppress: sometimes people’s (and other animals’) languages are excluded, sometimes they just aren’t heard.

In her philosophical essay, Eva Meijer maps the different kinds of political silences and shines a new light on discussions about political voice. But silence is also a form of rebellion, or can be a shelter. Listening and being silent are part of every good conversation.

**‘By systematising the meanings of silence, Meijer creates space for a different way of thinking. She writes with sympathy but without melodrama about Black Lives Matter, climate strikers, indigenous peoples, children, about non-human animals’. – *NRC***



**Rights sold**  
Spanish (Katz Editores)

**Material**  
English sample available

# FIREDUNE

88 pages, 19,300 words  
published by Leminiscaat Publishers in 2021

**‘A lighthouse signaling hope for a changing relationship to nature, and with it a better future.’ – *Streven magazine***

Nature is disappearing. Animal species are going extinct, ecosystems are destroyed, the permafrost is melting, our winters become autumns. But what is nature? And isn't thinking about nature as something separate from humanity what causes many of our problems, like the climate crisis and the corona pandemic?

In her essay *Firedune*, Eva Meijer visits the Dutch island of Vlieland for a week. The island ecosystem is under pressure, but there are also parts of her own history there, time that never comes back. With the aid of writers, philosophers, artists, and her dog Doris, Meijer looks for what it is exactly that is disappearing and what we can offer in return.

**‘With her essay, Meijer does not want to make a scientific analysis of what is going wrong. No, her essay is a personal (her dogs have a leading role) and poetic (beautifully written in evocative language) search for what nature means to her and what it means that we are losing nature.’ – *Bazarow***



**Rights sold**

German (Matthes & Seitz)

**Material**

Dutch manuscript available

# THE LIMITS OF MY LANGUAGE

144 pages, 29.000 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2019

**‘On a subject that has in fact been written, sung and talked about extensively, Meijer manages to avoid all clichés. *The Limits of my Language* shows, despite the title, what language is capable of.’ – *Trouw***

In 2016, more than a million people in the Netherlands were using an antidepressant. 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 experiences with depression as a resource for a surprisingly new analysis of the phenomenon.

She explains how people with recurring depressive periods 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 we can sometimes reshape ourselves in conversations with others. The essay is a plea for literally moving on, for going for a run and walking the dogs; a plea for being perseverant.

**‘Sharp analyses of Eva Meijer’s own experiences with depression are interspersed with passages in which, drawing on Wittgenstein, Woolf, Sartre and other thinkers and writers, she philosophises on the idea of suicide, the relationship between creativity and madness, the usefulness of therapy and medication and the comfort of animal companionship.’ – *NRC***



## Rights sold

German (btb), World English (Pushkin Press), Polish (Linia), World Spanish (Katz Editores), Turkish (Kaplumbaa), Norwegian (Flux), Korean (Kachi Publishing)

## Nominations

Bookspot Literatuurprijs

## Material

German, Spanish, and English translations available

# POLITICAL ANIMALS

128 pages, 29,000 words  
published by Cossee Publishers in 2017

**‘An extremely useful philosophical contribution to a debate that will certainly carry on in the future.’ – NRC**

Aristotle wrote that humans are the only political species, because the human race is able to recognize the difference between right and wrong, good and evil. Nowadays, other animals are still excluded from the political landscape, while humans continue to make decisions that will influence their lives. We are still in the process of learning more about their cultures and interior lives, that prove to be more complex than we initially thought. Animals defend and protect themselves against, but also work and live alongside humans: we share our planet and our households.

In *Political Animals*, Eva Meijer discusses how we could live with non-human animals in a different way. Could we possibly start to see them as our fellow citizens, or as a sovereign race? And can we organize a different kind of democracy, which will include a wide variety of species? What is just? And what do they actually want?

**‘*Political Animals* offers the opportunity to temporarily view the world from a completely different perspective. A daring, original, innovative, very well-written and accessible essay.’**

– Trouw



## Rights sold

German (btb)

## Won

Hypathia-prijs for the best philosophical work of the year 2018

## Material

English sample,  
German translation available

# ANIMAL LANGUAGES

174 pages, words 48.000 words  
published by ISVW Publishers in 2016

**‘A fascinating investigation of new forms of co-existence and about ways of dealing with other animals.’ – *Der Spiegel* on the German edition**

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 squid, we find grammatical structures. Bats like to gossip. These animals are no exception: 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, presenting us with a new perspective on other animals, while also raising philosophical questions. Can we call nonhuman animal communication language? What exactly is language? Is human language special, or are all languages special in their own way? After reading *Animal Languages*, you might not be able to speak with all animals, but you will without a doubt see them in a different light.

**‘Full of facts and empirical research *Animal Languages* provides a valuable insight into the complexity of language and communication.’ – *Athenaeum Bookshop***

## Nominations

Socrates Beker for the best Dutch language philosophy book of 2016

## Material

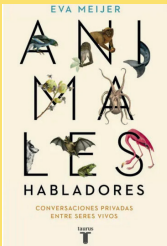
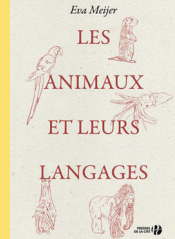
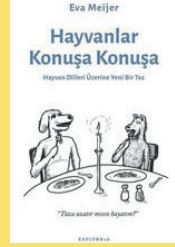
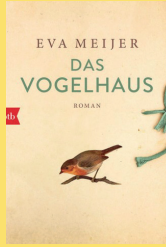
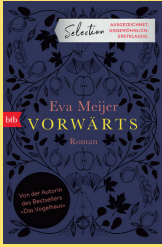
German, English, Spanish, French translations available



## Rights sold

World English (John Murray), German (Matthes&Seitz), French (Presses de la Cité), Polish (Marginesy), Arabic (Dar Oktob), Turkish (Kaplumbaa), Finnish (Art House), Korean (Kachi Publishing), Swedish (Weyler Förlag), Complex Chinese (Ye-Ren), Czech (Grada), Simplified Chinese (Guangxi Publishing), Japanese (Kashiwa Shobo), Italian (Nottetempo), Spanish (Random House Spain), Norwegian (Flux Forlag), Greek (Kastaniotis)

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