

DUTCH

The background of the cover is a Dutch landscape painting. It depicts a rural scene with a large, dark, thatched-roof house on the right and a smaller, similar house on the left. A bare, leafless tree stands between the two houses. In the foreground, a person wearing a blue coat and a hat is walking across a field. The field is divided into sections of different colors, including red, green, and yellow, suggesting various crops or perhaps a reflection of light. The overall style is characteristic of 17th-century Dutch painting, with visible brushstrokes and a focus on light and color.

Dutch Foundation
for Literature

London Book Fair
Issue Spring 2025

NON-

FICTION

Dutch Non-Fiction is published by the Dutch Foundation for Literature. The Dutch Foundation for Literature has the task of supporting writers and translators, and of promoting Dutch literature abroad. It invests in the quality and diversity of literature through grants for writers, translators, publishers and festivals, and contributes to the production and distribution of Dutch and Frisian literature at home and abroad. With the support of the Dutch Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, it aims to promote a thriving literary climate, embedded in literary history and attuned to the latest developments in the publishing industry.

Dutch Non-Fiction is distributed to international editors and publishers. Please contact acting non-fiction specialist Leonoor Broeder l.broeder@letterenfonds.nl if you would like to be added to our mailing list or if you wish to know more about our grants, suitable translators or about the books mentioned.

FAQ

Who makes the selection?

Our aim is to showcase the best nonfiction from the Netherlands. Most titles will have been published recently and will have done very well in terms of reviews, sales and awards or nominations. Equally important is the question: 'Does it travel?' We work with an advisory panel, which gives us recommendations and input on new non-fiction.

Do you work with Dutch publishers and agents?

We keep each other informed about interest in titles and rights sales. When we commission a sample translation, we usually share the costs. However, we always make our own decisions, and remain completely independent.

Are all the books in your brochure eligible for a grant?

Yes, they are, with a maximum subsidy of 100% of the translation costs for classics and 70% for non-fiction, based on the actual fee paid by the publisher, and with a maximum of 10,000 euros per translation grant.

Are books that aren't included in your brochure eligible, too?

Yes. Our decision will be based on three criteria: the literary quality of the book, the status of the publishing house and the quality of the translator.

Can you help us find a translator?

Lists of experienced translators are provided by e-mail. If you wish to work with somebody who is not on our list, we require a sample translation of 20 pages and the translator's CV. If the translation is good, the translator will be added to our list. If the translation needs work, we can make suggestions. If the translation is beyond repair, you will be advised to hire somebody who is on our list.

How do we apply for a translation subsidy?

We need copies of the contracts with the rights holders and the translator, plus the application form. You can submit these digitally through our website:

letterenfonds.nl/en/translation-subsidy

Board meetings are held six times a year.

Can we invite a Dutch author for a promotional visit?

If you organise a good programme and offer the author accommodation, we can cover the travel costs:

letterenfonds.nl/en/travel-costs

Introduction

Leonoor Broeder | Acting Non-Fiction specialist

Right now the world feels chaotic, unsafe and awash with dynamics that are hard to interpret. There is political, economic and military turmoil. Good personal, narrative non-fiction offers perspective and reflection and helps us better understand and tolerate reality. The selection presented here from the rich crop of recently-published Dutch non-fiction covers five themes: the historical and contemporary sociopolitical realities of three superpowers: Russia, America and Europe; the ongoing emancipation of women; nature conservation; political ideology; and, finally, art and culture.

Sana Valiulina describes her Russian father's chilling fate as a soldier and POW during World War II and then as a prisoner in the Gulag Archipelago. Sjeng Scheijen has penned an activist, cautiously hopeful book about Russia after Putin. The American-European situation before and during World War II, which shares ominous parallels with the present day, is described by international bestselling author Geert Mak. The books by Jan Luiten van Zanden – an account of the relationship between the

sexes from prehistory to the present – and by Angela Maas and Els Quaegebeur – on the differences in the medical treatment men and women receive – are both eye-openers. The question of how we can best interact with nature is central to Nikki Dekker's book, which deals with what goes on deep under the ground. This question is equally valid for Arita Baaijens: she advocates looking at the world from the point of view of animals, plants, rivers and seas and identifying with them. She gives a voice to the North Sea. Joël Broekaert, meanwhile, asks us to consider the benefits of eating invasive species. Political (morally-engaged) ideology is addressed in Jurrien Hamer's *What Freedom Asks of You* and post-truth community in Wytse Versteeg's *True*. Lex Boon turns the stories of stolen and recovered Van Goghs into an exciting read. While Lieke Marsman's frank, surprising and heartbreaking argument *On Another Planet They Can Save Me*, transcends all themes.

I look forward to discussing this selection and other Dutch non-fiction titles with you at the London Book Fair.

Sana Valiulina

Where All Roads End



Publishing details

Waar alle wegen ophouden
(2024)
306 pages

Publisher

Prometheus

Rights

Lotte de Boer
foreignrights@pbo.nl

A dazzling father-daughter memoir of Soviet times by an award-winning writer

In this beautifully-written memoir, Sana Valiulina interweaves her own childhood experiences with a reconstruction of the dramatic period of her father's life he kept secret. Her Tatar father (1922-1999) was an enigmatic figure, a leonine man with a temper who adored culture but used silence as a shield. He was one of the millions of Soviet men with an ostensibly unheroic World War II story.

Forced into the Red Army's Volga Tatar Battalion at the age of eighteen, he was soon wounded and taken prisoner by the Germans and forced to enlist in their army instead. At the end of the war he escaped and became an interpreter for the Americans, only to be accused of collaboration upon his return to Russia and sent to a forced labour camp for ten years.

Chancing upon a photograph of her father in a Cherbourg museum, a 'small corporal' in German uniform, the author retraces her father's fourteen-year odyssey from western Russia to northern France and, via England, back to his homeland. She visits the location of the labour camp in the Ural mountains and studies military archives. Her father's silence starts to make sense when she considers the limited opportunities and scrutiny of life under the Soviet system and the political propaganda during her own youth. Her father tried to carve out a space for independent thought for his family through culture and foreign radio broadcasts.

A picture of a complex intellectual emerges, before the story takes a surprising turn into wartime espionage and counter-espionage.

- » On the lasting impact of family trauma and the legacies of political oppression
- » Up to 6 million Russian soldiers were taken prisoner by the Germans, 3.5 million died
- » In the late 1930s, Stalin had almost the entire army leadership executed. And once the war had begun, entire regiments were put to death. Retreat was punishable by death
- » Reveals details of the (abandoned) clandestine MAMBA operation involving Russians and Brits

'Sana Valiulina drags us into the past with the speed of an express train thundering along the winding track of history. [...] *Where All Roads End* is true (his)story, styled like a literary novel – a lively narrative structure, an arsenal of rhetorical fire – yet without fictionalisation.'
NRC

'If we want to understand what is happening now on Europe's eastern border and not descend into political provincialism, we will have to delve into the memories of our Eastern European allies. Valiulina's book is rich, human and very timely.'
De Groene Amsterdammer

Sana Valiulina (b.1964 in Tallinn) studied Norwegian language and literature in Moscow and has lived in Amsterdam since 1989. Previous titles include *The Cross* (2000), *From Nowhere with Love* (2002), *Didar and Faruk* (2006, nominated for the Libris Literature Prize), *Hundred Years of Companionship* (2010), the acclaimed *Children of Brezhnev* (2014), *Winter Showers* (2016, winner of the Jan Hanlo Essay Prize), *Grabbing a Wolf by His Ears* (2020) and *Root and Branch* (2021).



© Marion Maksimov

Joël Broekaert

Try a Raccoon

On Termites, Parakeets and Other Invasive Species
We Might Be Better Off Eating



Publishing details

Eet eens een wasbeer. Over termieten, parkieten en andere exoten die we (misschien) beter op kunnen eten (2024)
168 pages

Publisher

Atlas Contact

Rights

Marisca van der Marc
m.vandermarc@schonbach.nl

Sample translation available

Culinary adventurism meets environmental activism

Colonies of Egyptian geese, muskrats, turtles, grey squirrels, crayfish and raccoons have established themselves in northern Europe, after being imported into our ecosystem by human activity. These introduced species affect local biodiversity, driving out vulnerable indigenous species, spreading diseases, devouring crops, grassland, and undermining dikes. At the same time, we raise animals for consumption on an unsustainable scale and usually under inhumane conditions. So what if we learned to eat the trouble-makers instead?

Writing with humour and panache, Joël Broekaert offers us a moral alternative in this fascinating culinary venture. Instead of importing cultivated crayfish from China at enormous cost to the environment, why don't we fish them out of our waterways? And what if we stewed the geese we shoot around airport runways? How can we turn the ecosystem's plant and animal disruptors into tasty dishes?

Broekaert explains the reasons certain animals taste like they do – wild animals, for example, move around more so have less fat and strong dark muscle tissue – and how best to cook them. Cut muscle fibres crosswise in strips if you want tender meat. Blend a knob of cold butter into your crayfish bisque before serving. Pick the tender shoots of Japanese knotweed and cook them like rhubarb. Turn raccoons into German sausage, harvest kelp for wakame, or try out the Belgian recipe for 'water rabbit' (muskrat).

Broekaert shows us how a win-win situation is possible. By eating the invasive exotics, we can restore nature.

- » The Netherlands' most entertaining culinary writer takes us on a tantalising quest for thirteen plants and animals to put on the menu
- » Not an encouragement for illegal poaching but a thought experiment
- » Media-friendly author with lots of experience presenting his ideas in fun ways

'An intriguing search for animals and plants that aren't actually welcome in our natural environment.'

Hollands Glorie Magazine

'The thought-provoking *Try a Raccoon* demonstrates simple opportunities to combine sustainable food choices with the restoration of indigenous nature.'

Bionieuws

Joël Broekaert (b. 1982) is a culinary journalist, writer, and reviewer for *NRC*. He previously wrote for *Vrij Nederland* and also makes television programmes. He is co-presenter of the podcast *Makkelijke eters*, 'Easy Eaters', and a jury member on *Celebrity MasterChef*. In 2022 he toured theatres with a culinary show involving taste experiments. Earlier book publications include *The History of the World in Twelve Beans*, for which German, Spanish and English rights were sold.

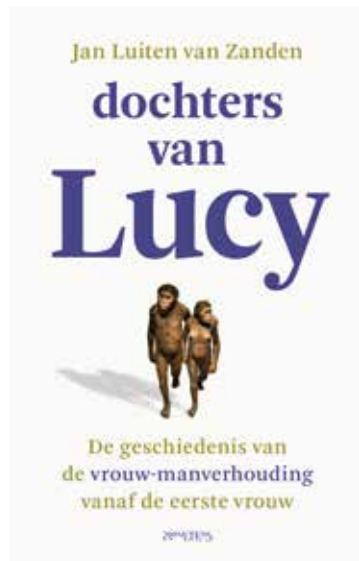


© Martijn de Vré

Jan Luiten van Zanden

Lucy's Daughters

A History of Gender Relations



Publishing details

Dochters van Lucy
De geschiedenis van de vrouw-manverhouding vanaf de eerste vrouw (2024)
192 pages

Publisher
Prometheus

Rights
Lotte de Boer
foreignrights@pbo.nl

A sweeping history of women's agency in Eurasia – in just 165 pages

While some see gender inequality as a natural phenomenon, the history of economics reveals a very different story. Jan Luiten van Zanden's research focuses on the complex interplay between the social status of women and economic development. In this panoramic work, he examines the historical roots of gender inequality throughout Eurasia, and its socio-economic consequences today.

Van Zanden argues that it was only with the rise of sedentary societies in the Middle East and Central Asia that gender inequality first took shape. Civilizations developing on the peripheries, meanwhile, maintained a greater level of gender equality, and the religions which developed in each region either conformed or co-evolved to mirror these pre-existing gender dynamics. Rather than technology, it was women's stronger economic position during the Middle Ages in places like northwestern Europe or Japan that drove economic development and the emergence of democratic political systems. Riding on the prosperity of the industrial revolution, however, the 18th and 19th centuries saw the rise of domesticity and the breadwinner model, confining women largely to the home. It wasn't until the 20th century that women began regaining their place in the workforce. That women 'belong' in the kitchen is then a relatively recent fabrication.

In one sense, Van Zanden provides a much-needed corrective to our picture of economic history by finally including women's agency. However, *Lucy's Daughters* is also about the far-reaching consequences – social, economic, political – of these historical roots. Van Zanden demonstrates that gender inequality is one of the main causes of poverty and political suppression.

- » Extends from the Palaeolithic to the present, from the Middle East to the United Kingdom, from Indonesia to Japan
- » Told from various angles, including religion, art, criminality, even international sport, to paint a panorama of gender relations and gender inequality
- » Nuanced and accessibly written, with an eye for the different kinds of patriarchy throughout time and place

'We know this, but it can't be emphasised enough: the restriction of women's freedoms isn't a natural phenomenon. It isn't the logical consequence of pregnancy or some other biological fact. And the oppressive patriarchy isn't a consequence of agriculture. In a wonderfully concise overview book about prehistoric and historic gender relations, economic historian Jan Luiten van Zanden gives those myths short shrift.'

NRC

'Social inequality between men and women is a phenomenon with a long history. Jan Luiten van Zanden investigates why this relationship differs by culture and how patterns have emerged over time.'

Historisch Nieuwsblad

Jan Luiten van Zanden (b. 1955) is an emeritus professor of global economic history at Utrecht University. His research focuses on major societal questions such as (gender) inequity and the transition to sustainability. His recent books include *The Discovery of Nature: The Development of Biodiversity in the Netherlands from the Ice Age to the 21st Century* (2021) and, with Maarten Prak, *Pioneers of Capitalism: The Netherlands 1000-1800* (2022). He wrote *Lucy's Daughters* with the help of assistant professor Sarah Carmichael.



© Bob Bronshoff

Geert Mak

The Switchman

America-Europe 1933-1945



Publishing details

Wisselwachter
Amerika-Europa 1933-1945
(2025)
600 pages

Publisher

Atlas Contact

Rights

Marijke Nagtegaal
marijke@beerights.com

Rights sold

Siedler Verlag (Germany)

A story of moral courage amid great geopolitical dilemmas with strong resonances today

The Great Depression, the New Deal, the rise of Fascism, the Spanish Civil War, the Second World War – the nineteen-thirties and -forties formed a period of monumental decision-making in the United States and Europe. In *The Switchman*, Geert Mak brings to life the period's great political movements on both continents through the lives of the men and women in the White House during those years.

Central to this portrait is Harry Hopkins, a former social worker in New York's poorest neighbourhoods, Franklin Delano Roosevelt's right-hand man and confidant, and a driving force behind the New Deal and the wartime alliance. Never owning a house, or more than two suits, he worked tirelessly on the period's defining international negotiations. After Hopkins' death just after the war, Winston Churchill wrote, 'He was a true leader of men, and alike in ardour and wisdom in time of crisis, he has rarely been excelled. We shall not see his like again.' Today he is virtually unknown. Mak introduces us to a whole cast of such characters, from the outspoken Eleanor Roosevelt and her friends to the clever all-rounder Missy LeHand, the president's secretary and 'second wife'.

Through individual lives, both unusual and everyday, Mak weaves together a thrilling story about the importance of democratic values and following one's moral compass. Turbulent times require great courage, a call that was answered by Harry Hopkins and those around him. At today's crossroads in questions of democracy, economy and war, it is a call that has once again become all too urgent.

- » One of the Netherlands' most successful non-fiction writers
- » A highly topical account of twentieth-century international politics
- » Mak distils the great movements of history in individual lives recounted with feeling and empathy

'It was only when writing that I noticed how relevant the book actually is. The thirties, Spain, Ukraine, the "arsenal of democracy". I wasn't looking for parallels, they imposed themselves.'

Geert Mak

'In *The Switchman* the parallels with our time are implicit though unavoidable. Thanks to Mak's talent for making deeply human experiences felt, as a reader you are constantly on the edge of your seat. This is absolutely a new highlight within his oeuvre.'

Marcella van der Kruk,
publisher Atlas Contact

Geert Mak (b. 1946) is one of the most lauded non-fiction writers in the Netherlands. His awards include the Leipziger Buchpreis, the Gouden Ganzenveer, the Cultuurfonds oeuvre prize and the NS Publieksprijs. He has written such international bestsellers as *How God Disappeared from Jorwert*, *My Father's Century*, *In Europe*, *Travels Without John*, *The Lives of Jan Six* and *Great Expectations*.



© Vincent Mentzel

Lieke Marsman

On Another Planet They Can Save Me



Publishing details

Op een andere planeet kunnen ze me redden (2025)
200 pages

Publisher

Uitgeverij Pluim

Rights

Peters Fraser + Dunlop Agency
Lisette Verhagen
lverhagen@pfd.co.uk

A moving examination of living with illness, death and hope

In 2017, poet and novelist Lieke Marsman was diagnosed with a rare type of bone cancer. After enduring various rounds of chemo, she was told her illness was terminal. Still, she is continuing with treatment – radiotherapy, immunotherapy, operations. Living for years with death has changed Lieke's worldview, and *On Another Planet They Can Save Me* is a poetic and philosophical exploration of the need to embrace the unknown.

Marsman combines short essays with diary fragments in which she recounts learning of her cancer's recurrence, meetings with harried doctors, an arm amputation and everything that makes life worth living. She has her first religious experience, though it soon becomes clear that this is not about religion per se, but about the severe limits of a pragmatic and rational Western worldview when faced with death. Marsman weaves the arguments of Christian thinkers with quantum physics, and the ideas of Wittgenstein and William James with the stories of Lucian of Samosata and ancient Greek gods. She studies scientists who turned religious, while personally wrestling with loneliness, meaninglessness, and cowardice.

Her intellectual journey transforms into an obsession with UFOs – and the manifold implications for us on earth if life does, in fact, exist somewhere out there. For Marsman, dying with hope, no matter how far-fetched or unrealistic it might be, is still always better than living on without it: 'And in moments when everything here feels unexpectedly hopeless, I'd like to think: On another planet they can save me.'

- » Associative, literary style that mixes essay with intimate experience
- » A frank account about fighting a metastasized cancer – and a moving plea to live
- » A follow-up to the highly-acclaimed *The Following Scan Will Last Five Minutes*

'A haunting, poetic account of an otherworldly journey through the here and now, shadowed by death. But also: a heartfelt call to live and a socially critical essay on the imagination and letting go of old certainties.'

VPRO

Lieke Marsman (b. 1990) is one of the leading recent talents in Dutch literature. Her unique style combines prose, poetry and essay genres. She was the national poet laureate from 2021-2023. Previously translated works include *In My Basket* (2021), *The Following Scan Will Last Five Minutes* (2018), a Poetry Society Book Recommendation, and *The Opposite of a Person* (2017).



© Tom Cornelissen

Sjeng Scheijen

Another Russia

Building Blocks for Peace in Europe after Putin



Publishing details

Een ander Rusland. Bouwstenen voor een vreedzaam Europa ná Poetin (2025)
168 pages

Publisher

Prometheus

Rights

Lotte de Boer
foreignrights@pbo.nl

A nimble dissection of the myths dividing Russia and Europe

Is Russia so unique that we can't understand its people? Putin would like us to think so, and it's why he has to defend against the 'decadent West'. Meanwhile, our own stubborn myths about the enigmatic 'Russian Soul' only confirm his narrative. If we ever hope to see peace in Europe, renowned Russia-expert Sjeng Scheijen argues, we had better look at what we share. After all, one can't win a war of ideas with bombs alone.

In this concise work, Scheijen demonstrates that Russian history is just as complex, varied and dynamic as French or German history, and equally as difficult to sum up in vacuous stereotypes. The Russian people have never been homogenous – far from it – and the country we see today was once very different. The Russian Empire, for example, was a leader in women's rights. In fact, for much of the country's history, it has been far closer to Europe – in cultural, economic, legislative, scientific and religious matters – than either side is willing to admit.

Shining a light on Russia's history also demonstrates something else: today's Russia, with its authoritarian political oppression and belligerent foreign policy, was far from inevitable. With Putin's reign likely to end within the next ten years, Scheijen reminds us that another Russia was and still is possible. Russia will have to come to terms with its Soviet history, particularly under Stalin, but it is up to us to move beyond simplistic framings of 'us' versus 'them' and recognise a rich kindred culture.

- » A powerful argument against mystification, written with a dry humour. In the end, the Russian soul is 'the American Dream in a fur cap'
- » Just after the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia brought in antidiscrimination laws and legalised abortion. It was only with Stalin that rights were limited again

'Sjeng Scheijen calls for breaking out of this self-reinforcing negative spiral – because it makes rapprochement well-nigh impossible.'

Trouw

'168 pages in which prejudices and myths are exploded with a sovereign brilliance, humour, feel for self-mockery, and rock-solid erudition.'

EW Magazine

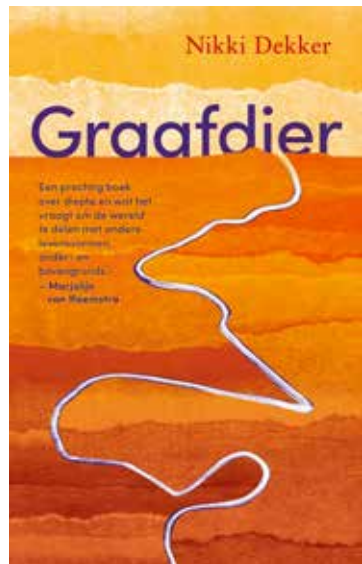
Sjeng Scheijen (b. 1972) is a world-renowned scholar of Slavonic studies. Previously he wrote *Diaghilev: A Life* (2008), a biography of the dance and artistic pioneer Serge Diaghilev, now recognized as a key work on the subject. His book *The Avant-Gardists* (2019), about the artistic revolution in the Russian Empire and Soviet Union between 1917 and 1935, won the Bookspot Literature Prize, the Netherlands' most important non-fiction award. His work has been translated into eight languages including English.



© Hugo Thomassen

Nikki Dekker

Under Our Feet



Publishing details

Graafdier (2024)

216 pages

Publisher

De Bezige Bij

Rights

Marijke Nagtegaal

m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl

An irresistible and playful journey through a unique underground landscape

Most of us have a more accurate picture of the deepest depths of the ocean than we do of the ground beneath our feet. A handful of earth can contain thousands of animal species, metres of fungal threads and billions of bacteria. Soil is also an archive, and digging a kind of time travel. In De Grote Peel, a protected Dutch peatland, Nikki Dekker finds a world of interconnectedness from which we have much to learn, especially for those looking for the 'why' of existence.

Dekker tunnels, back in time past the mole cricket and talking moulds, land consolidation and peat extraction, to now-extinct aurochs (the ancestor of all cattle) and the invention of the clock, by way of the year 0 to when whales and giant sharks swam overhead, all the way down to 300 million years ago. Fascinating stories lead to existential questions. Between each historical layer of soil, Dekker introduces playful philosophical exercises to, for example, 'become friends with creepy crawlies', 'practice being dead', 'enrich your habitat', and 'be what you are'. In our busy screen-oriented world, she explores the healing power of feeling rooted in a landscape and maintaining a sense of natural history's more expansive timescales.

Part investigation, part activity book, part journey through time, *Under Our Feet* is an eye-opening plea to learn about our surroundings, to live alongside other species, and to understand where we come from. In the end, the big question of why we exist is perhaps best understood as an exercise in giving attention to people and planet, wherever that may be.

- » Written in a light-footed literary style that will make you want to get outdoors
- » The author braids her investigative journey with her personal experience in daily life
- » For the readers of Robin Wall Kimmerer, Merlin Sheldrake, Robert Macfarlane and Annie Dillard

'Under Our Feet is full of enchanting facts about soil life and musings about the advance of time, carbon and ecological restoration. Nikki Dekker's amazement is highly contagious.'

de Volkskrant

'A wonderful book about depth and what it takes to share the world with other life forms, under and above ground.'

Marjolijn van Heemstra, author

Nikki Dekker (b. 1989) is a writer and radio producer. Her debut novel *DeepDeepBlue* (2022) was awarded the CCS Crone Stipendium, shortlisted for the Bronzen Uil and longlisted for De Boon. It will be published in German bij Residenz Verlag in 2026 *de Volkskrant* proclaimed her the 'Literary talent of 2023'. She writes columns for *Vroege Vogels* and edits the literary magazine *Tirade*. *Under Our Feet* is her second book.



© Laura Cnossen

Lex Boon

The Stolen Van Goghs

The Story Behind the Sensational Theft of *The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen* and 47 Other Paintings



Publishing details

De gestolen Van Goghs. Het verhaal achter de sensationele diefstal van Lentetuin en 47 andere Van Goghs (2024)
230 pages

Publisher

Meulenhoff

Rights

Marleen Seegers 2 Seas Agency:
marleen.seegers@2seasagency.com

Rights sold

Poland

A thrilling investigation into the world (and underworld) of stolen art

In March 2020, thieves take a sledgehammer to the front door of the Singer Laren Museum. They make off with *The Parsonage Garden in Nuenen in Springtime*, part of a series Van Gogh painted while staying with his parents in 1884. The following afternoon, journalist Lex Boon rushes to the press conference given by the depressed curator, sensing a story. What he uncovers is not just the theft of this particular painting but dozens more.

Boon tries to find out how likely it is that the painting will be recovered. While at first it appears seven of Van Gogh's works are missing from museums all over the world, the Art Loss Register lists sixty missing paintings. His search for answers leads to the stories of twenty Van Gogh heists, from wartime plundering at the site of Operation Market Garden to paintings stolen from the Amsterdam house of a boxer-turned-casino-owner, to the Napolitan mafia, Venezuelan guerillas and a 'drunken sailor' in Paris. What happens to the works?

He seeks contact with former Van Gogh thieves, such as the tram conductor responsible for the theft of twenty paintings from the Van Gogh Museum thirty years ago. Meanwhile, he maintains close contact with two art detectives, arch rivals Arthur Brand and Ben Zuidema, who have differing theories about what happened to the painting stolen from the Singer Laren, and sees the museum director struggling with the dark side of the art world. In the end, *The Parsonage Garden at Nuenen* is returned, in a roundabout manner, thanks to Arthur Brand.

- » Pacy narrative non-fiction that arose out of a lockdown project
- » Back matter includes a chronological catalogue of 48 stolen Van Goghs as well as if and when they were returned
- » Contains intriguing details about displaced art and geopolitics. One stolen Van Gogh is not actually missing but in the Hermitage in St Petersburg, while still officially designated as stolen

'The Stolen Van Goghs is an infectious quest filled with razor-sharp observations.'

de Volkskrant

'Journalist Lex Boon wanted to write about a single art heist but ended up on a lengthy, colourful pursuit of more. The characters in his book appeal even more to the imagination than the vanished paintings do.'

Het Parool

Lex Boon (b. 1983) is a freelance journalist for leading Dutch newspapers. Previous titles include *Pineapple* (2019) which was translated into Italian, *Mr. Kaor Yamamoto* (2020) and a collection of his journalism.



© ThijsBartels

Wytske Versteeg True

On the Art of (Not) Knowing



Publishing details

Waar. Over de kunst van het
(niet) weten (2024)
232 pages

Publisher

Querido

Rights

Sebes & Bisseling Literary
Agency
paul@sebes.nl

A beautifully-written, engaging essay collection on a topical theme

In our 'post-truth' era it is a commonplace to say that the truth has become irrelevant, that facts have given way to opinions. Nevertheless, most people are actually trusting by nature and the belief in a shared truth is what keeps us together as a group, as a society. In these linked literary essays, Wytske Versteeg conducts a personal investigation into truth's mercurial nature.

As it turns out, only a small number of people spread disinformation. Forty percent of the lies about Covid-19 shared in 38 million articles could be tracked back to the then-president of the United States. How do you recognise a liar? How do you determine what is actually true? And what does it take to change your mind? Versteeg examines how truth has been delineated through the ages by writers, thinkers and artists. Already in 1895, the French painter Jean-Léon Gérôme depicted Truth (as a woman) fallen down a well. The American Adrienne Rich compared truth to a carpet whose complex design and underlying knots we don't at first see. Versteeg is clearly at home in this territory and calls on a diverse array of sources from Solzhenitsyn, the Innuits, Christianity, to Lewis Carroll, Jorge Luis Borges, Alice Munro and more.

True is a quest for the art of (not yet) knowing, along the porous boundaries between truth, perception and imagination. It is a dizzying journey that consults scientists and mediums, poets and con artists, artists and liars. Ultimately, the truth turns out to be, above all, a matter of trust.

- » Rave reviews for this book by an already esteemed writer
- » Composed as a series of interlinked musings
- » For the readers of Rachel Cusk, Rebecca Solnit, Emily Ogden

'Versteeg dives into the scientific research on the human psyche and draws liberally from world literature. She leads the reader through classical philosophy and interweaves it with events from her own life. (...) Versteeg's thought process is exciting enough not to want to miss a thing. (...) *True* is not a plea for truth itself, but for a search for it.'

Trouw

'Versteeg challenges the reader to touch and test out [our] shared truth, to butt heads with it. In the end, this investigation together leads to an understanding of the truth that is rich and alive.'

NRC

Wytske Versteeg (b. 1983) previously authored two non-fiction books, *This Is Not a Homeless Person* and *Vanishing Point*, and five novels including *Boy*, *Quarantine* and, in 2022, the acclaimed *Golden Hour*. She has won the Women's Debut Prize, the BNG Bank Literature Prize and the Frans Kellendonk Prize. Her work has been translated into eight languages.



Jurriën Hamer

What Freedom Asks of You

Philosophy for Serious Times



Dutch title

Wat vrijheid van je vraagt.
Filosofie voor een bloedserieuze tijd (2025)
208 pages

Publisher

De Bezige Bij

Rights

Sebes & Bisseling Literary
Agency
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Popular philosophy in defence of a morally-accountable liberalism

Our thoughts on right and wrong are changing rapidly. When philosopher Jurriën Hamer was growing up in the 1990s, long-haul holiday flights were a status symbol, office workers cracked non-PC jokes without a second thought, and the meat on his plate was a matter of course. Today, we've started paying the price for our carelessness. But just when we are realising how much a free society demands of us, demagogues are trying to undermine it.

In this ardent plea for liberalism, Hamer nevertheless puts his finger on the sore spot. The current liberalism, where everyone can think and do what they want inside their own homes, provided they don't harm others, asks little of individuals in exchange for their rights. Hamer explains political philosopher John Rawls' classical liberalism and demonstrates why this is doomed to fail. He contrasts this with a servile liberalism, drawing on nineteenth-century thinker John Stuart Mill, but also Aristotle's ethics of virtue. If we want to preserve our fundamental freedoms, we will have to give up smaller freedoms such as commercial flights and eating meat, and actively work to ensure equal rights for citizens and a more equitable distribution of wealth. The failure of the democratic institutions to enforce equity has led to the illiberalism of today's autocrats.

Anything but pedantic, Hamer argues for moral ambition but also for lenient judgement of others. The solution is to bear together the duties that come with our rights.

- » For fans of the internationally renowned Rutger Bregman and *The School of Life*
- » Up-and-coming young philosopher with a highly accessible style
- » Hamer uses many examples from European, but especially Anglo-Saxon (popular) culture and history

'This book is a provocation, a challenge, a commission for us all. Jurriën Hamer shows that serious philosophy doesn't make life easier, but harder. Read his book at your own risk, because once you have read it you can't un-read it.'

Rutger Bregman

'In *Why Villains Are Unlucky and Heroes Lucky*, philosopher Jurriën Hamer arrives at the same conclusion as brain scientists via a philosophical route, while reasoning that free will doesn't exist. But where disillusionment with such a conclusion would seem obvious, Hamer sees it as the beginning of something beautiful, the basis for a better society.'

Financieel Dagblad

Jurriën Hamer (b.1988) is a philosopher and author of the bestselling book *Why Villains Are Unlucky and Heroes Lucky* which won the Socrates Cup for best Philosophy book in 2022. He studied law and philosophy at Utrecht University, conducted research at the London School of Economics and obtained his PhD with a dissertation on the political meaning of human rights. As an author and speaker, he shows how ideas about justice, guilt and free will influence our lives.



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Arita Baaijens Conversations with the North Sea

In Search of a New Relationship with Nature



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Shared Stories
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Arita Baaijens (b.1956) is an explorer, writer and photographer. She is a member of the Royal Geographical Society, the Explorers Club and the Long Riders Guild. She has over 25 desert expeditions to her credit. Her *Desert Songs* (2008) was translated into English and German. Thames & Hudson's 2013 title *The Modern Explorers* includes a chapter on Baaijens.

A quirky, adventurous book on whether humans and the sea can understand each other. Arita Baaijens researched for the Living Landscapes Foundation how we can move towards a society in which the sea helps us think about its own future, a future in which humans are no longer all-determining.

A desire to dominate land and sea is typically Dutch. Dredging, straightening out everything crooked and scattering wind farms; we do whatever we please without ever asking or thanking the nature we harness. This enslavement has always puzzled Arita Baaijens. On her travels, she saw how other cultures heard the voices of forests, mountains and rivers. So why not here? Baaijens explores what is usually overlooked.

Conversations with the North Sea opens the debate on how we deal with nature and takes the reader into an unknown world where language flows, shrimps solve philosophical problems and the sea comes intimately close.

Akin to Bruno Latour's 'Parliament of Things' concept which argues for viewing the world from the perspective of animals, plants and even things, and identifying with them.

Angela Maas & Els Quaegebeur The Healthcare Gap



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Angela Maas (b. 1956), a pioneer in women's heart health, has been a cardiologist since 1988. She is Professor of Female Cardiology at Radboud Medical Centre in Nijmegen.

Medicine has traditionally been based on the male body, with women as bycatch, but women are not just smaller men. In scientific research, female patients remain alarmingly underrepresented, and today there is still no equality between men and women as patients, despite growing proof of the differences. And female medical professionals themselves still need further emancipation in their roles.

Cardiologist Angela Maas and journalist Els Quaegebeur examine this health gap: Where are the systemic flaws in women's healthcare? What are the misconceptions and prejudices and why are many essential differences neglected? How can we make the current healthcare culture more female-friendly as a matter of urgency?

Angela Maas's successful previous book *A Woman's Heart* was translated into several languages including English and German.

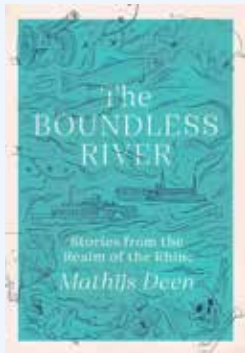


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Els Quaegebeur (b. 1974) is a journalist and columnist. She has written novels and non-fiction.

Recent translations

This is a selection of recently published translations from the Dutch. For more information please go to our online database of translations: letterenfonds.nl/en/translationdatabase1



Mathijs Deen
The Boundless River

The Rhine as a thread connecting millions of years of history.

Dutch title
De grenzeloze rivier

Published in
English by MacLehose Press (2024)

Translated by
Jane Hedley-Prole & Jonathan Reeder

Other translations
German (Knesebeck), Italian (Iperborea)

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m.nagtegaal@debezigebij.nl



Valentijn Hoogenkamp
Antiboy

This short book about outwardly adopting a new, but truer, identity is poignant without ever being sentimental.

Dutch title
Antiboy

Published in
English by Seagull Books (2024)

Translated by
Michele Hutchison

Other translations
Slovenian (Škuc), Spanish (Bunker Books)

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Renata Laqueur
Bergen-Belsenin päiväkirja

A rare and powerful Holocaust testimony written with emotional restraint and a ruthless pen.

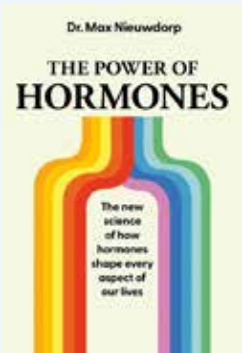
Dutch title
Dagboek uit Bergen-Belsen

Published in
Finnish by Docendo (2025)

Translated by
Merja Sainio

Other translations
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Max Nieuwdorp
The Power of Hormones

A book that sets the record straight on the influence of hormones.

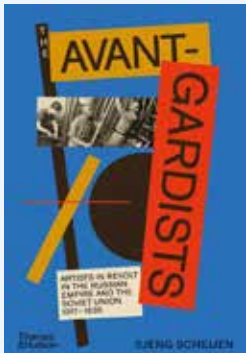
Dutch title
Wij zijn onze hormonen

Published in
English by Simon & Schuster (2024)

Translated by
Alice Tetley-Paul

Other translations
German (Hoffmann und Campe), Hungarian (Typotex), Italian (Codice), Korean (Across Publishing), Norwegian (Spartacus), Polish (Otwarte), Romanian (Univers), Spanish (Siruela)

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Sjeng Scheijen
The Avant-Gardists

A fascinating, narrative biography of the art movement that transformed the modern world.

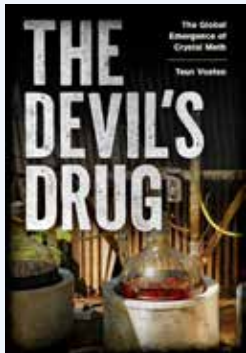
Dutch title
De avant-gardisten

Published in
English by Thames and Hudson (2024)

Translated by
Brent Annable

Other translations
Bulgarian (Janet 45), Czech (Host), Russian (Azbooka-Atticus), Spanish (Akal)

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Teun Voeten
The Devil's Drug

A very detailed and disturbing picture of a drug that is on a rapid international rise.

Dutch title
Drug van de duivel

Published in
English by Rowman & Littlefield (2025)

Translated by
Teun Voeten

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Flowerbeds in Holland,
c. 1883, Vincent van Gogh.
Courtesy National Gallery
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