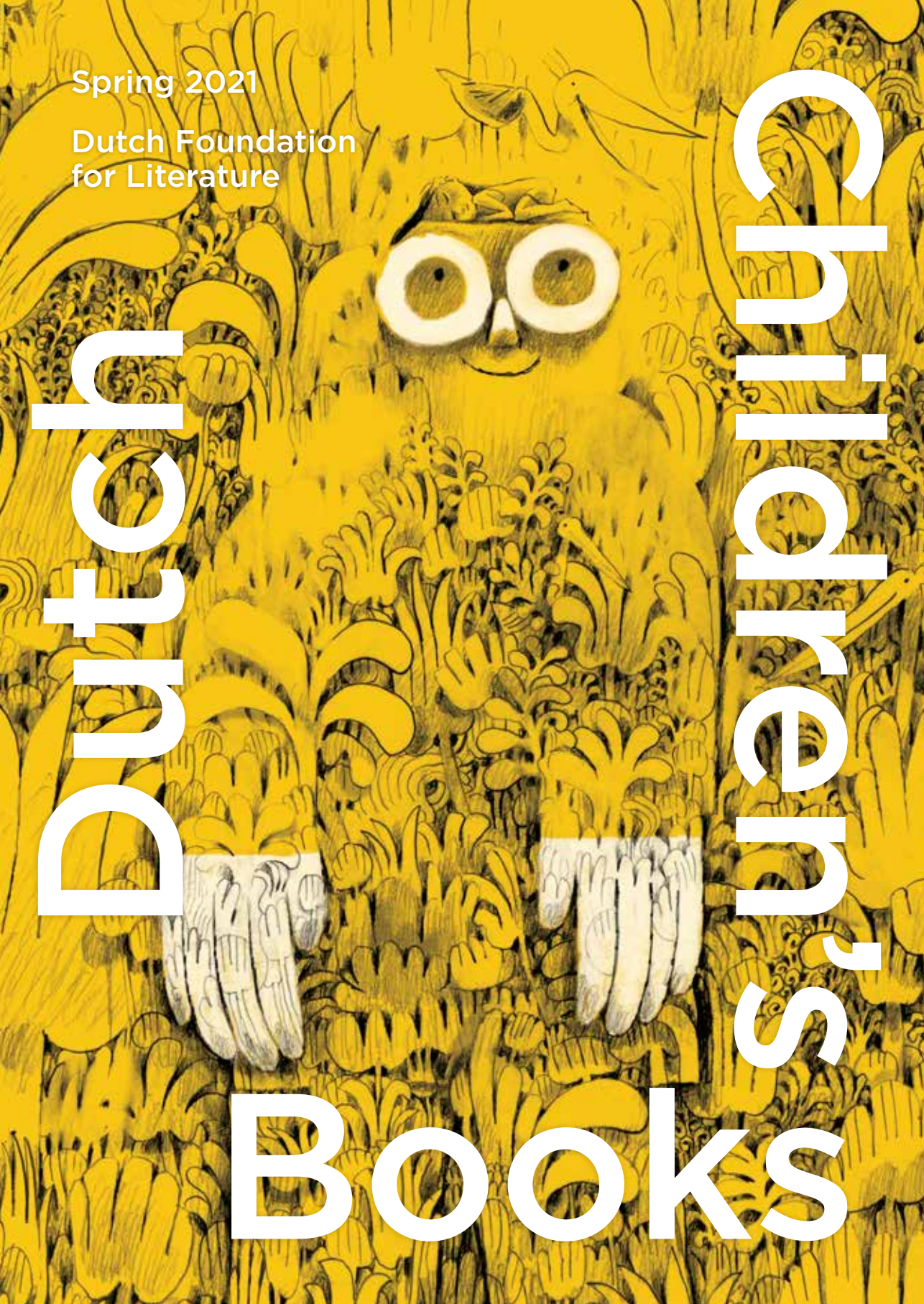


Spring 2021

Dutch Foundation
for Literature

Dutch Children's Books



New beginnings

Mark Janssen, the illustrator we asked to create the cover image for this newly designed version of our children's books brochure, puts it so well: *Wake up! Spring is here. Look forward to new beginnings.*

So much has changed for all of us over the course of the past year. Old structures are changing, we're discovering new ways of communication and – often with no choice because of strict lockdowns – rediscovering our close environments and coming to appreciate elements of our lives that we sometimes took for granted. Now that a year without book fairs has passed and vaccines have given us some hope of travelling again in the near future, this feels like the right moment for a new beginning. So we're reaching out to you in this new brochure with a selection of the best children's books from the Netherlands published in 2020. For now, by post and online, but hopefully soon we can discuss them in person.

The selection was made by a team of children's book critics from national newspapers. It includes Mark Janssen's haunting black and white illustrations, the captivating concertina book *Animals on the Move*, the hilarious picture book *But First I Caught a Monster*, as well as highly acclaimed non-fiction about art and nature, middle-grade fiction full of the sensitivity, lightness and humour that is characteristic of Dutch children's books, and three 10+ fiction titles ranging from raw and historical to exceptionally literary. Finally, in line with the international interest in classics, we present two remarkable retellings of familiar stories, *The Jungle Book* and Nils Holgersson's travels.

Please enjoy browsing through these titles and do contact us for more information on these, or any other, Dutch children's books. And don't forget that we're always happy to provide financial support for high-quality translations.

Agnes Vogt
a.vogt@letterenfonds.nl

Always Nearby

Mark Janssen



Altijd dichtbij
32 pages / 33.7 x 22 cm

Rights

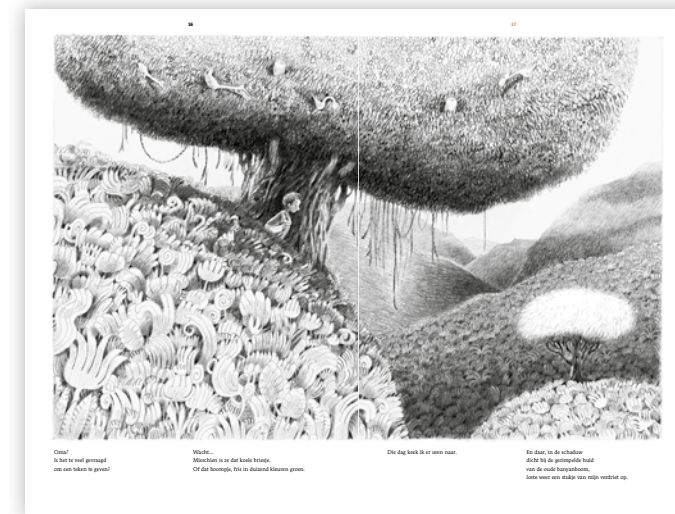
Lemniscat
Robin van der Gaag
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English (Lemniscat Ltd)

Mark Janssen

(b. 1974) has illustrated around 450 books for Dutch, Belgian and Chinese publishers. In 2016, he created his own first picture book. Many of his books have already found their way abroad and have been translated into multiple languages.



'It makes your mouth water.'

Trouw

The little boy Babu looks for signs from his grandmother, who has passed away. She told him that she would always be near to him, even after her death. Is Grandma in that cool breeze, in the river or in a tree? Babu slowly realises that Grandma is everywhere and that 'little pieces of the dearest face of all' can be found in lots of places. As he moves through his grief, he can start to get on with his life, going to school and playing with his friends.

Always Nearby tells an evocative and tranquil story about bereavement, in which life slowly regains colour. Illustrator Mark Janssen took inspiration for this picture book from his trips to Nepal, as can be seen in his pictures of temples, souvenir shops and, above all, the expanses of nature. The pictures were made entirely with black pencil and are striking in their detail and subtlety. The variation in shades of grey creates an almost mystical atmosphere. Reviewers have described the illustrations as 'fabulously beautiful' and 'staggeringly precise'.

5+

Spring 2021

Animals on the Move

Pieter van den Heuvel



De verhuisdieren
28 pages / 28.6 x 22 cm
Sample translation available

Rights
Gottmer
Mara Joustra
m.joustra@gottmer.nl

All rights available

Pieter van den Heuvel
Animals on the Move is Pieter van den Heuvel's children's book debut. His detailed illustrations guarantee hours of viewing pleasure. Critics have called him 'the discoverer of the year'.

'It's a party, this book.'

Jaappleest.nl

Animals on the Move is four metres long. The pictures can be looked at individually but they open up to reveal a long procession of animals on their way to a new house with all their belongings. For this debut, Pieter van den Heuvel has chosen a concertina form, and the result is a picture book that is both spectacular and original.

The animals take a leisurely stroll from a countryside setting to an urban area. The threat of the monstrous foot in the drily comical conclusion places a nice exclamation mark at the end of the story. There's something amusing about each of the animals, drawn in dark pencil coloured with water-colour. A giraffe in spotty boots is carrying a cat in its mouth. A moose has a piano on its back – and a sloth has fallen asleep on top of the piano. The rhyming sentences swirl across the pages. This spectacle is a delight for the eyes.

3+

Dutch Children's Books

2

But First I Caught a Monster

Tjibbe Veldkamp & Kees de Boer



Maar eerst ving ik een monster
32 pages / 33.5 x 25 cm

Rights
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Robin van der Gaag
foreignrights@lemniscat.nl

Rights sold
English (Lemniscaat Ltd)

Tjibbe Veldkamp
(b. 1962) writes beautiful books for a range of age groups, from the very youngest readers to young adults.

Kees de Boer
(b. 1965) is an illustrator and cartoonist for magazines and has been illustrating children's books since 1996.

4+

'A funny, inventive, dazzling picture book.'

Trouw

'This is a short story,' is the first sentence of a surprising and innovative read-aloud picture book in which writer Tjibbe Veldkamp uses the age-old technique of accumulation to create an ingenious tale that just gets funnier and funnier. It's about a boy and a bedtime story, so it works best if it's read aloud. 'This story is about you,' says the narrator. 'You went to sleep. And then the story was over.' The boy protests: 'Yes, but first I caught a monster.'

And that's what happens in this picture book, over and over again. To make bedtime last longer, all kinds of new monsters pop into the boy's imagination – and into this book. They become increasingly spectacular and scary-looking, as Kees de Boer really goes to town in his exuberant, cartoonish style. The joke is rounded off when the boy decides to stop, and we suddenly arrive at the end – or is it a new beginning?

Spring 2021

3

awards

The Netherlands' major awards for children's books in 2020

Woutertje Pieterse Prize



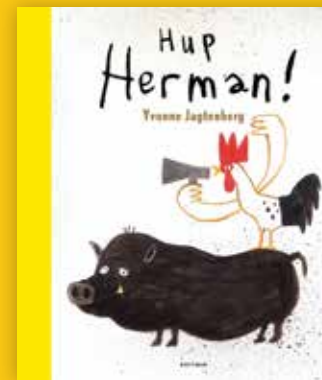
Uit elkaar
Bette Westera & Sylvia Weve
(Gottmer)

Gouden Griffel



Uit elkaar
Bette Westera & Sylvia Weve
(Gottmer)

Gouden Penseel



Hup Herman!
Yvonne Jagtenberg
(Gottmer)

Dioraphte Literatour Prize from 15 years up



Nicolas en de verdwijning van de wereld
Anne Eekhout
(De Arbeiderspers)

Zilveren Griffels



De man met de zee groene ogen
Koos Meinderts & Sanne te Loo
(Hoogland & Van Klaveren)



Tijger
Jan Jutte
(Lemniscaat)



Dit is geen Cobra
Bette Westera & Sylvia Weve
(Samsara)



Bizar
Sjoerd Kuyper
(Hoogland & Van Klaveren)



Het geheime boek van Sinterklaas
Floortje Zwigman & Sassafras De Bruyn
(Uitgeverij Rubinstein)



Naar de overkant
Wouter Klootwijk & Enzo Pérès-Labourdette
(Leopold)



Het werkstuk - of hoe ik verdween in de jungle
Simon van der Geest
(Querido)



Niemand ziet het
Dolf Verroen
(Leopold)



Toen het oorlog was, 1939-1945
Annemiek de Groot, Roos Jans, Juul Lelieveld, Liesbeth Rosendaal & Irene Goede
(Gottmer)



Wat je moet doen als je over een nijlpaard struikelt
Edward van de Vendel & Martijn van der Linden
(Querido)

Zilveren Penselen



De vuurzeevlieg - en andere dierenverhalen
Toon Tellegen & Carll Cneut
(Querido)



Uit elkaar
Bette Westera & Sylvia Weve
(Gottmer)



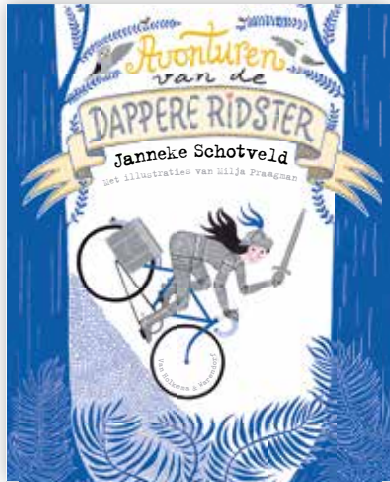
Wat je moet doen als je over een nijlpaard struikelt
Edward van de Vendel & Martijn van der Linden
(Querido)



Nadir en Zenith in de wereld van Escher
Wouter van Reek
(Leopold)

The Adventures of the Brave Ms Knight

Janneke Schotveld
& Milja Praagman



Avonturen van de dappere ridster
90 pages / 21x26 cm

Rights

Van Holkema & Warendorf
Merith van de Hoek
merith.vandehoek@
unieboekspectrum.nl

All rights available

What has gone wrong since the Brothers Grimm wrote down all those funny and violent orally transmitted folk stories? Who exactly decided that you have to be a 'proper' writer in order to write such stories? The best tales come about naturally at the bedside and are passed on by mums and dads and grandmas and grandpas, weaving together events of the day and things they've heard elsewhere to create nonsense stories that aren't really nonsensical at all.

Luckily, there are writers who have elevated exactly this free, almost improvisational style to an art form. Janneke Schotveld is such a writer. In this read-aloud story, something incredible happens on just about every page. A statue of a famous writer from the past steps down from his pedestal to see if anyone is still reading his books. He's not happy with the answer. The baker is so in love that he hides in a tree. He doesn't feel brave enough to face Abdul, the bike repair man.

The stories are modern and medieval, contemporary and timeless, all mixed up together. The brave Ms Knight has a sword and a mobile phone. When a lion escapes, she tells the modern-day police officer: 'First talk and then shoot. When will you guys ever learn?' Then she spits on the ground and disappears on her trusty steed, which is, of course, a bike. And it's off to the next story.

Something incredible happens on just about every page in these contagiously humorous read-aloud stories

This book of stories is nicely written and packed with great wordplay and fun allusions. Every sentence sings. And best of all, just like her hero, this author means business. She doesn't mess about, but has gone ahead and written a whole collection, all at once.

As the title shows, the writer does, of course, have a message. The casual, completely natural way in which she conveys this message ensures that she gets it across to the reader. Her contagious, contemporary humour always has the upper hand. This is Janneke Schotveld, writer of great tales and exciting adventures, at her best.

'Schotveld plays a wonderfully relaxed game with all conceivable conventions.'

NRC Handelsblad

'It's difficult to match the perfection of Annie M.G. Schmidt's fairy tales, but Janneke Schotveld has managed to do so.'

de Volkskrant

Photo: Keke Keukelaar



Janneke Schotveld (b. 1974) started her career as a teacher, including for remedial classes, and became hugely popular with her *Superjuffie* (Super Miss) series. In interviews, she occasionally mentioned that she'd really like to write something different after all those stories about the animal-saving teacher with superpowers. It's worked out well for her. Over the past three years, she's written three collections of contemporary fairy tales in quick succession. Schotveld won the Hotze de Roos Prize for her debut, *Villa Fien*, has been selected by the Children's Jury twice and received a commendation from the Griffel Jury.



Milja Praagman (b. 1971) is a celebrated illustrator and writer, whose fresh and distinctive graphic style results in colourful and naive pictures. She has won numerous awards, including a Zilveren Penseel for *Omdat ik je zo graag zie* (2016) and the Prentenboek van het jaar (2013) for *Nog 100 nachtjes slapen*. Her texts reveal a subtle sense of humour, which also appeals to the parents who are reading them out loud.

6+

The Prince's Desire

Marco Kunst & Marieke Nelissen



Het verlangen van de prins
240 pages/16.5x23 cm

Rights
Gottmer
Mara Joustra
m.joustra@gottmer.nl

All rights available

A three-master called *The Prince's Desire* has been sailing the world's oceans for three hundred years. The crew is searching for the Indonesian island of Prince Adi. Because he is the only one who can break the curse.

Anyone who goes on board the ship and dreams about the prince is struck by the curse and can never leave. All the crewmembers want to do is to get away from the ship, but they're doomed to one another's company.

The protagonist is an orphan boy, Lode, who doesn't escape the curse but deals with the situation in his own creative way. He realises that the prince played a role in his parents' death and holds the key to the ship's problem. This adventure sails towards an inevitable climax, taking interesting detours along the way.

This is an exciting and sophisticated tale with appealing and colourful characters, including the 'word man', the freckle-faced girl Tulip, Tyman, who's in a wheelchair and plays the trumpet beautifully, and the exasperated captain. The moral of the story is that there's no need to go in search of ultimate, everlasting happiness; it usually proves to be a short-lived illusion.

The richness and variety of the evocative language used by Kunst is remarkable, with songs, poems and flowery made-up words.

Classic adventure story full of wild seas, foaming waves and striking characters

The colourful illustrations by Marieke Nelissen support the power of Kunst's imagination.

The Prince's Desire is a captivating and layered story packed with mystery and secrets. It's an exciting adventure book that's been unanimously hailed by the press as the highpoint of Marco Kunst's writing career to date.

'The writer combines the modern world with a fairy-tale universe, making it sometimes feel contemporary and at other times classic.'

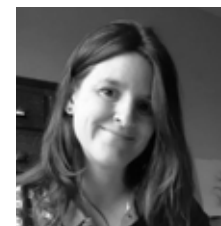
Trouw

Photo: Chris van Houts



Marco Kunst (b. 1966) studied philosophy and worked as a philosophy teacher at an art school. He lives in Amsterdam with his wife and daughter and has been a full-time writer since 2010. His body of work includes books for all ages in a range of genres, including history, science fiction, fantasy and fairy tales. Kunst says that he writes 'because stories give the world sense, colour and meaning'. He received the Charlotte Köhler Stipendium in 2007, a prize for promising early-career authors. Kunst has won numerous literary awards and his work has been compared to that of Roald Dahl and the Dutch master storyteller Paul Biegel.

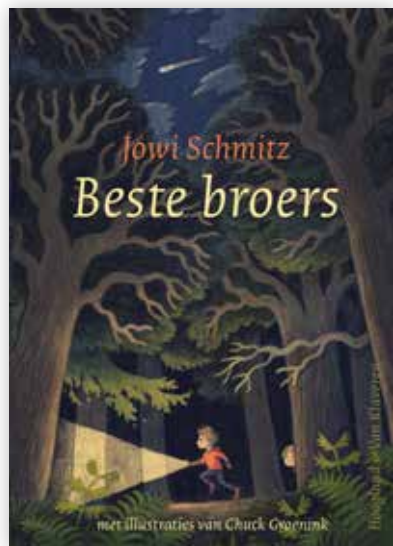
Photo: Marieke Nelissen



Marieke Nelissen (b. 1975) made her breakthrough in 2015 and has since become a sought-after graphic designer and illustrator of children's books. She works with various techniques and materials, from water-colour and gouache to ink and pencil. Nelissen has illustrated many Dutch children's books, including a lot of work by Marco Kunst.

Best Brothers

Jowi Schmitz
& Chuck Groenink



Beste broers
228 pages / 21.4 x 15.6 cm
Sample translation available

Rights
Hoogland & Van Klaveren
Elaine Michon
elaine@elami-agency.com

All rights available

Raf (8) has moved from the city with his mum and dad and his little brother Robbie (5) to go and live on his grandma and grandpa's farm. Jowi Schmitz endearingly depicts Raf as a boy with a nervous disposition: "Raf is the biggest scaredy-cat in the school," someone once wrote on the board in our classroom. Cees thought it was particularly funny that I was too scared to wipe it off.'

For a boy like that, big changes are no fun: a new house, a new school, and his mum and dad are arguing too. His dad's recently lost his job and is doing a course called 'Know What You Want', and his mum's busy with her new job, so Raf and his brother are left in their grandparents' care. But when Grandma ends up in hospital, they're on their own and Raf has to be brave, or rather, 'be scared, but do it anyway'.

The book is calmly built up and written in balanced, evocative language. When the boys are walking towards the woods in the semi-darkness: 'It's as if we're not moving, but the woods are gliding towards us. Like a black wave of needles and tree trunks.'

These authentic characters come to life in a very believable way. From the sporty dad, who's full of energy but has no direction in life, to the grandfather of very few words, who 'only smiles inside', and restless Robbie, who likes to eat the grass wherever he goes and 'says it tastes green'.

A warm, wise book about being stubborn, conquering your fears and learning about the meaning of family

Raf isn't the only one who grows because of his experiences (he finally overcomes his fears: 'Like a bird flying away, out of my tummy'). The boys' mum also realises that she's not around enough, their dad discovers a new passion, and Grandpa has to accept that he can't always make things turn out the way he wants them to. That's a nicely quirky detail of this book: the old man is building a tower out in the woods so that he and Grandma can climb to the top of it to watch a comet. Her illness throws a spanner in the works, but Grandpa stubbornly persists. This leads to a cinematic scene in this warm, wise book about a family.

'A heart-warming book (...) Grandpa's love for his wife is described in a particularly touching way. A book that young readers won't be quick to put down.'

Friesch Dagblad

Photo: Kika Booy



Jowi Schmitz (b. 1972) works as a theatre critic for the Dutch newspaper *Trouw*, has contributed to a number of short-story collections and had already written two books for adults before making her debut as a children's writer with *Ik heet Olivia en daar kan ik ook niks aan doen*, which has been translated into English and German. She won the major Literatour Prize in 2017 for her YA novel *Weg*.



Chuck Groenink (b. 1982) graduated from the Institute of Visual Arts in Kampen 2004 and won the Fiep Westendorp Prize for promising young illustrators at the age of 25. He now lives in Portland, Oregon, and works internationally as an illustrator.

8+

Notes for Pelle

Marlies Slegers & Linde Faas



Briefjes voor Pelle
232 pages / 21.8 x 14.7 cm
Sample translation available

Rights
Luitingh-Sijthoff
Irina Fomichev
irina@sharedstories.nl

Rights sold
German (Dressler Verlag)

'It sometimes seemed like there was less and less air in the house every day,' says 12-year-old Pelle about the claustrophobic atmosphere since his dad passed away a year ago. He wonders when grief actually comes to an end. His dad used to say his mum's eyes were the colour of the Aegean Sea, but 'over the past year, Mum had cried the entire Aegean empty'. But then she gives Pelle a shoebox full of notes from his dad. Every week he gets to open one and do whatever the note says.

Notes for Pelle is a moving and engaging portrait of a boy who is slowly overcoming his grief, and a story about the love between fathers and sons.

Pelle is highly gifted and has an exceptionally good memory for encyclopaedia facts. Since his dad passed away, this talent has become a survival strategy. Whenever the grief threatens to overwhelm him, he thinks about facts that don't make him cry. The wonderful way he manages to stop his tears actually makes the reader feel the emotions all the more, without the book becoming overly sentimental, and also lends colour to Pelle's character.

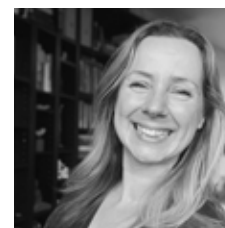
The contents of his dad's notes vary: from a link to a video in which he teaches Pelle how to shave (sniff!) to the instruction that he should take his mum out for a meal. In this way, even after his death, he helps Pelle and his mum to pick up their lives again and to meet new people.

A comforting book about a boy who receives notes from his dead father

Slegers writes in a style that is entertaining, authentic and evocative. This, for example, is how Pelle's mum expresses her fragile state of mind: 'I feel a bit like a soap bubble – and I don't want to burst again.' The comforting message of this beautiful book is that grief doesn't disappear, but you grow around it.

'Slegers finds a disarming way to bring up all of the factual, practical aspects of dying, death and burial without the story ever becoming flat or heartless – on the contrary.'

Het Parool

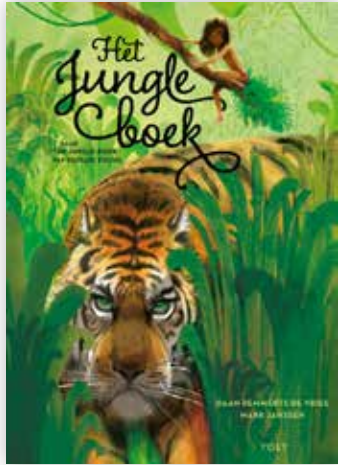


Marlies Slegers (b. 1965) lived in Indonesia for ten years in her youth. She became a full-time children's writer after her son was born and has written more than 25 books. Slegers is best known for popular series such as 'Hockeyteam De Sterren' and 'I ♥ Liv' and for cool teen books about subjects such as sexting and binge drinking. In *Notes for Pelle*, she successfully takes a very different tack.



Linde Faas (b. 1985) works as an animator, artist and illustrator. Faas has illustrated many books by different authors, both Dutch and international. In 2018 she published her own first picture book *Ik neem je mee* (Come with me), followed by *De jongen en de walvis* (The boy and the whale) in 2019. She lives in Northern Norway, where she finds her inspiration in the wild nature of the Arctic north.

8+



Het Jungleboek
144 pages / 26.2 x 18.7 cm

Rights

Volt
Luciënne van der Leije
l.van.der.leije@
singeluitgeverijen.nl

All rights available

The highly acclaimed author/illustrator Daan Remmerts de Vries (b. 1962) is not only a creator of original books that merge fantasy and reality, but also a masterful reteller of stories. This year has seen the publication of the impressive *Helden: de mooiste Griekse mythen herverteld* (Heroes: The Most Beautiful Greek Myths Retold), illustrated by Sebastiaan van Doninck.

The Jungle Book

Rudyard Kipling,
Daan Remmerts de
Vries & Mark Janssen

Nils Holgersson and Mowgli – they're part of a series of legendary characters that many people know and love. The red-capped elf who crosses Sweden on the back of a tame gander and the man cub dressed in a red loincloth are icons. The pair ultimately owe their immortality to the sense of adventure and the imaginative language of Rudyard Kipling and Selma Lagerlöf, as seen once again in these beautiful new adaptations of *The Jungle Book* (1894) and *The Wonderful Adventures of Nils* (1906).

Taking 'forget the films that have been made of *The Jungle Book*' as his guideline, Daan Remmerts de Vries has written a sparkling text without detracting from the soul of Kipling's familiar story about a human child who is brought up by a pair of wolves and by his friends, Baloo the bear and Bagheera the black panther. The spirited illustrations by Mark Janssen, who has created truly convincing animal portraits, particularly of the killer tiger Shere Khan, evoke a real sense of the jungle.

Bette Westera has taken on Lagerlöf's Swedish classic. Like her fellow author Remmerts de Vries, she writes smoothly and skilfully, while maintaining the fairy-tale atmosphere of the magical journey of the badly behaved Nils, who has been transformed into a 'tomte'. Martijn van der Linden's realistic

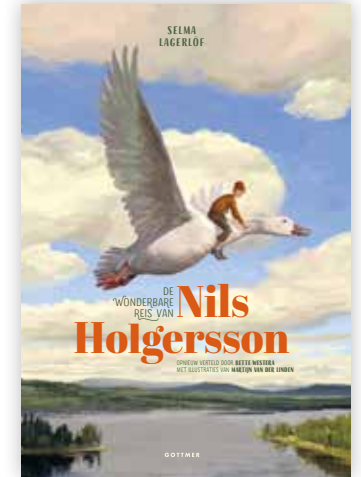
The Wonderful Adventure of Nils Holgersson

Selma Lagerlöf, Bette
Westera & Martijn van
der Linden

landscape pictures and close-ups of Nils and main characters such as Martin the goose and Smirre the fox cleverly take the place of the lengthy descriptions omitted by Westera.

Both adaptations have correctly sensed that the original stories are in essence about two growing children who, because they live with animals, are confronted with the beauty, harshness and freedom of nature, and the universal question of what it means to be human. Mowgli, for example, discovers early on that humans are 'shaky and helpless', but Bagheera tells him that 'they can still do terrible things'. How do you deal with that? Nils, too, who often misses 'his familiar life as a human child', learns from Akka, the leader of the geese, that being human comes with great responsibility and that respect for life and nature among his fellow humans cannot be taken for granted.

Westera's Nils and Remmerts de Vries's Mowgli are touchingly believable and human. This makes their exciting adventures unforgettable.



De wonderbare reis van Nils Holgersson
368 pages / 15 x 22 cm

Rights

Gottmer
Mara Joustra
m.joustra@gottmer.nl

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Bette Westera (b. 1958) is one of the Netherlands' top poets for children. Together with illustrator Sylvia Weve, she created the poetry collections *Doodgewoon* (2014) and *Uit elkaar* (2019), which were showered with prizes. Westera has also written many adaptations of classic stories. For *The Wonderful Adventure of Nils Holgersson*, she worked for the first time with the amazing artistic all-rounder Martijn van der Linden (1979).

8+

Dutch Children's Books

14

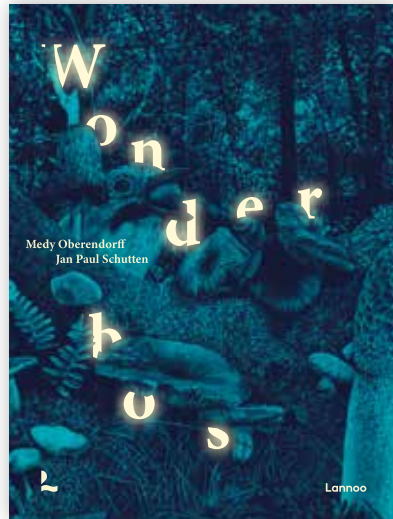
Spring 2021

6+

15

A Forest of Wonders

Jan Paul Schutten
& Medy Oberendorff



Wonderbos
76 pages / 24 x 32 cm
Sample translation available

Rights

Lannoo Publishers
Liesbeth De Bruyne
liesbeth.debruyne@lannoo.be

Rights sold

German (Gerstenberg Verlag),
Japanese (Kagaku-Dojin)

Bright yellow letters glow out from a dark wood that is captured in a deep midnight blue. The mysterious cover of *A Forest of Wonders* beautifully matches the contents of this non-fiction book, which can be seen as a declaration of love to nature, and is supported by Medy Oberendorff's hyper-realistic illustrations.

Oberendorff has used pencil to create large, almost photographic pictures, with backgrounds that are made up of shades of grey and contrasts between light and dark. All kinds of animals turn out to be hiding among the leaves, combining the educational element with the playfulness of a look-and-find book. The illustrations are meticulous in their design and reveal a loving craftsmanship; the spores of a mushroom, the minute details of a frog's body, the reflection of snowy trees in a pool – all depicted in a naturalistic way and with great precision.

Each spread is accompanied by an entertaining text by Jan Paul Schutten about the cycle of nature, about parasites that are parasites of other parasites and about the deadly beauty of the forest. Those pages are followed in turn by spreads in which individual elements of the forest are highlighted in further detail, in words and pictures, this time in colour, which Oberendorff added digitally to the analogue pictures.

This way of working results in a photorealism that bears a resemblance to the work of the

The secrets of the forest in words – and particularly in pictures

English illustrator Ben Rothery, although his habitat is the African savanna and Oberendorff has opted for the nature of the Low Countries. The colour illustrations create a cheerful rhythm in the book, but would the reader have missed them if they weren't there? Used in the right way, black and white can be just as evocative as colour, as this book convincingly demonstrates.

'A wonderful book.'

Trouw

'Black and white is the new colour.'

Het Parool

Photo: Toon Veijs



Jan Paul Schutten (b. 1970) is one of the Netherlands' most celebrated writers of non-fiction for children. His work, in which the emphasis is on history, nature and science, has twice been awarded the Gouden Griffel for the best children's book of the year. His book about evolution, *Het raadsel van alles wat leeft* (published in English as *The Mystery of Life*), has been an international success. From 2015 to 2017, Schutten was the Dutch Children's Book Ambassador, during which time he focused on the importance of non-fiction in promoting reading and literacy.

Photo: Nadine Stijns



Medy Oberendorff (b. 1975) studied at the Academie voor Beeldende Kunsten Maastricht. She has had four children's books published to date, which reveal her love for everything that lives; in her sophisticated and detailed depiction of animals and plants, she shows the beauty of nature. Oberendorff received a Vlag & Wimpel for her illustrations in *Het wonderlijke insectenboek* (Lannoo) from the Penseeljury in 2018.

What is Art?

Ted van Lieshout



Wat is kunst?
144 pages / 27.8 x 21.2 cm

Rights
Leopold
Sophie Mulder
sophie.mulder@wpgmedia.nl

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It takes some courage to make a book with the title *What Is Art?* Isn't art too wide-ranging for a simple definition? And yet the multi-talented Ted van Lieshout has taken on this challenge – and with great success. In a playful and imaginative way, he unravels the mystery of art in this visually stunning book. Or is it a conceptual work of art?

Actually, there's no single genre label that fits this book. It most closely resembles a frame narrative, with the frame formed by a fictional dialogue between Van Lieshout and a teenage girl who wanders into the book to ask the question 'What Is Art?' for a school project. Running in parallel to this dialogue is a variety of art-historical anecdotes. Every spread opens with the dialogue, which is like a colourful graphic game of questions and answers. Highlighted words in the dialogue form a link to the discussion of art alongside the text.

The jokey tone and the authentic communication between the writer, who presents himself as the provocative teacher and artist, and the girl who just really wants to get her school project finished, lend the frame story an entertaining tension. The girl clearly finds Van Lieshout's initial answer ('art originates in boredom') unacceptable: 'I'm not going to get a pass mark for that,' she flashes back at him. So the writer invites her to visit an imaginary uninhabited island. First she learns how to survive. Then, driven by boredom, she begins to brighten up

A sparkling ode to art – and a feast for the eyes

her lonely world. She builds sandcastles, sends messages in bottles and makes decorative coconut cups. 'Now not only do you know what art is,' the writer says, 'but you've become an artist yourself.'

The reader effortlessly follows Van Lieshout in his playful thought experiment. He writes vividly, and his rich selection of illustrations is exciting. The strips of seascape, for instance, stimulate the reader's curiosity, neatly separating the blocks of dialogue from the artistic anecdotes while also creating an island atmosphere. The pictures in the message-in-a-bottle intermezzos, which extend across pages, are another appealing element.

Finally, Van Lieshout reveals why art is so important. He does this masterfully, aided by a few cigar tins and jars of pasta. Anyone who wants to find out what this has to do with the meaning of art should read this delightful book.

“Knowledge makes your mind understand; art makes your mind expand.” This book does both, for children and for adults.’

Trouw

‘Of all the books he has devoted to art education, this is the pinnacle. Intelligent, varied, rich, sharp, accessible, witty.’

de Volkskrant

Photo: Ben Kleyn



As well as a highly acclaimed writer, illustrator and designer, Ted van Lieshout (b. 1955) is a gifted museum guide. His three-part *Papieren Museum* series (Paper Museum, 2002–2008), in which he playfully introduces the world of art, is highly regarded. While those books fall under the heading of non-fiction, the same does not apply to *What Is Art?*, in which fiction and non-fiction combine. He has previously devised new forms of poetry, including block poems and visual sonnets, and 2018 saw the publication of his graphic spectacle *Ze gaan er met je neus vandoor*. In 2009, Van Lieshout received the prestigious Theo Thijssen Prize for his oeuvre.

Matey

Pieter Koolwijk
& Linde Faas



Gozert
256 pages / 14.3 x 21.5 cm

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The man who runs the scrapyard just outside the village is a troll, the teacher is a witch and the nursery owner is a kidnapper. No one realises, though, except for Ties and his invisible friend, Matey. Luckily, Matey is also a superhero. They're the only ones who can save the world – so that's what they do. They just have to accept that no one understands them and that angry neighbours keep phoning Ties's parents or banging on the front door almost every day.

Books about imaginary friends are usually cheerful stories, in which the reader gets the impression that having such a friend in your life is mostly great fun and it's more or less an essential part of the average childhood. But it's not that simple for Ties.

When Ties plays cards with his mum and dad, the fairy-tale figures in his hands start to complain that all the shuffling is making them feel sick. To save them, Ties knocks the cards out of his dad's hands. When that kind of behaviour becomes increasingly frequent and Ties kicks his teacher, his parents start to worry.

That's what makes *Matey* different from other books on this popular topic. The author cleverly keeps Ties's world separate from the world of the adults around him: the reader can believe both of the stories. Ties is sent to Hopeful House to help him get over his supposed delusions; he sees it as a castle with giants as guards – and he has the time of his life.

A surprising and quirky book about an imaginary friend, in which the reader will never know if the friend was imaginary

Until, that is, he makes friends with a girl who's been living there for a while and he realises that, if he ever wants to go home, he might have to say goodbye to Matey. But the superhero, who's both irritating and endearing, isn't going to leave without a fight. The surprising conclusion leaves a gloriously open ending – happy or heartrending?

'Koolwijk seems to stand up for the original minds who are not given enough leeway in our society. Just as Ties appears to be doing the same, Koolwijk gives his best book to date a very surprising twist.'

Trouw

Photo: Eveien Drenthen



Pieter Koolwijk (b. 1974) first started writing for his football club's newsletter, with reports about games that had never happened. He had been writing short, imaginative stories for adults for some time, but his real breakthrough came with his first children's book, *Vlo en Stiekel*, in 2011. In his stories, he stands up for vulnerable children with active imaginations. Roald Dahl has always been his favourite writer, as can be seen in his books, which are bizarre, a bit twisted, but above all hilarious.



Linde Faas (b. 1985) works as an animator, artist and illustrator. Faas has illustrated many books by different authors, both Dutch and international. In 2018 she published her own first picture book *Ik neem je mee* (Come with me), followed by *De jongen en de walvis* (The boy and the whale) in 2019. She lives in Northern Norway, where she finds her inspiration in the wild nature of the Arctic north.

King Solomon's Daughter

Selma Noort



Koningskind
264 pages/14.8x21.5 cm
Sample translation available

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For *King Solomon's Daughter*, Selma Noort has revisited the Old Testament story about the wise King Solomon, who was asked to make a judgment in a case of two women who both claimed to be the mother of the same baby – whereupon Solomon ordered that the child should be cut in two.

In this captivating novel, Noort interweaves the Bible story with the tale of Zissel, the daughter of Lydia and King Solomon. The king in this book is not only wise but also cruel and lecherous. On his travels throughout the land, he assaults young women, left, right and centre, including Lydia. He subjects his people to a strict system of taxation and enslaves young men to build temples and palaces for him. Noort sketches a far more nuanced portrait of the man who, in the Bible, is mainly praised for his wisdom.

Halfway through the book, when Lydia gives birth to a second child, by another man, the existing story and Noort's imagination come together in an ingenious way: Zissel's half-brother becomes the baby that Solomon will threaten to cut in two with his sword. In the Bible, it was two prostitutes who each claimed to be the mother of the infant. Noort's story is given a deeper layer because one of the two women was raped by the king, and his illegitimate daughter is the witness of King Solomon's judgment.

A captivating novel that tells the famous Bible story from a very different perspective

When writing her book, Noort travelled to Israel, Jordan and the Palestinian territories, and her research is reflected in the atmospheric descriptions of the landscape. The most beautiful stories are the ones that survive best, she writes in her afterword, but the suffering of ordinary people is soon forgotten. By choosing not King Solomon but his illegitimate daughter as her protagonist, Noort turns the spotlight fully on an ordinary girl, creating a beautiful story herself. *King Solomon's Daughter* is a book with psychologically well-rounded characters and a thrilling, chilling plot.

'King Solomon's Daughter has the atmosphere of a historical novel and a fairy tale.'

Trouw

'A story that is equally disturbing and atmospheric.'

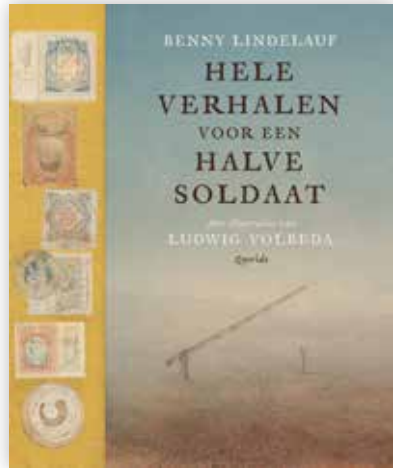
Jaapleest.nl



Selma Noort (b. 1960) was still training to be a nursery-school teacher when she made her debut in 1980. She has since written dozens of books, including read-aloud books for pre-schoolers, graded books for early readers and historical YA novels. Her book *De zee kwam door de brievenbus* (The Sea Came Through the Letterbox, about the disastrous flood of 1953) won a Vlag en Wimpel award and the Thea Beckman Prize for the best historical children's book in 2016. Her previous work has won two Zilveren Griffel awards. With her considered, straightforward language, Noort reaches a wide audience.

Whole Stories for a Half Soldier

Benny Lindelauf
& Ludwig Volbeda



Hele verhalen voor een halve soldaat
388 pages / 19.5 x 16.3 cm

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German (Jacoby & Stuart)

Six brothers are called up to go to war. They pass a border guard who demands a donation for the peace effort from each of the brothers. The brothers own nothing, but they do have stories to tell. This is a constant in Lindelauf's work: in his award-winning masterpiece *De hemel van Heivisj*, it's also stories that save the characters when nothing else remains. In *Whole Stories for a Half Soldier*, the brothers try to keep the war at bay by telling stories. 'There's no better medicine for the horrors of this world than the horrors of the imagination,' a character observes in the story of the Fifth-Eldest Brother.

There's also another reason why the brothers are so passionate about telling stories, a reason that remains hidden from the reader for a long time and which is connected to the Youngest Brother. Readers of Lindelauf's previous novel *Hoe Tortot zijn visserhart verloor* (published in English as *Tortot, the Cold Fish Who Lost His World and Found His Heart*) will recognise him as Half-George, the young deserter in the gherkin barrel who lost his legs on the battlefield. *Whole Stories for a Half Soldier* is the prequel to that anti-war parable, although the book also stands alone. In this new frame story, Lindelauf performs at the peak of his stylistic skill; his evocative language sparkles and glows. The stories, set in an unspecified past and coated with a delicious layer of cruelty, couple strange events with a sublime realism. A baker cooks orphans in his pies, a mother

'A stunning frame narrative about storytelling as a survival strategy.'
– NRC Handelsblad

sells her tiny daughter ('as delicate as a piece of lacework, her head would fit inside a ladle'), a boy is so beautiful that the people in his village would like to murder him – the horror is casually incorporated in stunningly beautiful prose that is reminiscent of the magic realism of Patrick Süskind and Gabriel García Márquez. Ludwig Volbeda, who also illustrated *Tortot*, has completed this masterful book with his melancholic pictures of desolate desert landscapes in faded colours.

'In his new book, *Whole Stories for Half a Soldier*, Benny Lindelauf shows himself to be a master storyteller.'

Trouw

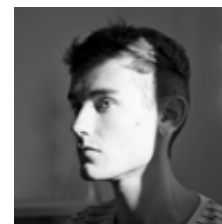
'No book could be more fitting in this current time of missing our families.'

de Standaard

Photo: Koos Breukel



Benny Lindelauf (b. 1964) made his debut as a children's writer in 1998. He has grown to become one of the most original voices in the Dutch-speaking countries. With his award-winning books *Negen open armen* (published in English as *Nine Open Arms*, 2004) and its companion, *Fing's War* (2010), he wrote his way into a lofty position in the pantheon of children's literature. *Tortot* (2016) revealed a new side of Lindelauf's talent: not psychological YA prose, but magic realism, a path he continues along in *Whole Stories for a Half Soldier*.



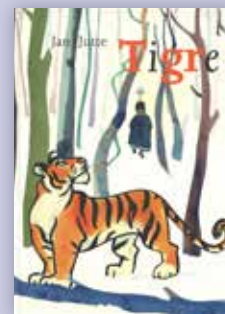
Ludwig Volbeda (b. 1990) made his debut with his delicate pen drawings for *Tortot* and was immediately recognised as an exceptional talent. In 2018, he won the Gouden Penseel award for the year's best illustrated children's book for *Fabeldieren*, written by Floortje Zwigman.

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



I giardini di Arid
Paul Biegel

Italian translation by Valentina Freschi for La Nuova Frontiera, 2020.
Original title: *De tuinen van Dorr*, published by Holland, 1969.



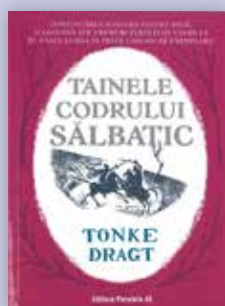
Tigre
Jan Jutte

French translation by Inge Elferink for Les Éditions des Éléphants, 2020.
Original title: *Tijger*, published by Lemniscaat, 2019.



Winter in Wartime
Jan Terlouw

English translation by Laura Watkinson for New York Review of Books, 2020.
Original title: *Oorlogswinter*, published by Lemniscaat, 1972.



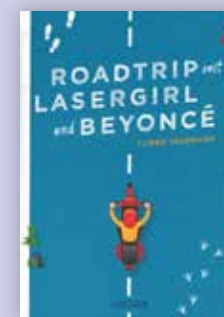
Tainele codrului sălbatic
Tonke Dragt

Romanian translation by Irina Vasilachi-Anton and Alexa Stoicescu for Paralela 45, 2020.
Original title: *Geheimen van het Wilde Woud*, published by Leopold, 1965.



Madelief - Un cervello di maccheroni
Guus Kuijer

Italian translation by Valentina Freschi for CameloZampa, 2020.
Original title: *Een hoofd vol macaroni*, published by Querido, 1979.



Roadtrip mit Lasergirl und Beyoncé
Tjibbe Veldkamp

German translation by Andrea Kluitmann for Carlsen, 2020.
Original title: *Katvis*, published by Querido, 2018.



Var jeg bare...
Mies van Hout

Norwegian translation by Finn Valgermo for Fortellerforlaget, 2020.
Original title: *Was ik maar...*, published by Hoogland & Van Klaveren, 2020.



[Dni na ostrove]
Gideon Samson

Russian translation by Irina Leek-Trofimova for Polyandria, 2020.
Original title: *Eilanddagen*, published by Leopold, 2016.



[(Doodgewoon)]
Bette Westera & Sylvia Weve

Chinese translation by Shinan Liu for TB Publishing Limited, 2020.
Original title: *Doodgewoon*, published by Gottmer, 2014.



[Tôi Đã Tình Cờ Viết Một Cuốn Sách Như Thế Nào]
Annet Huizing

Vietnamese translation for Kim Dong Publishing House, 2020.
Original title: *Hoe ik per ongeluk een boek schreef*, published by Lemniscaat, 2014.



Los animales por dentro. Radiografías del mundo animal
Jan Paul Schutten & Arie van 't Riet

Spanish translation by Gonzalo Fernández Gómez for Siruela, 2020.
Original title: *Binnenstebinnen*, published by Gottmer, 2017.



[Oide, Alaska!]
Anna Woltz

Japanese translation by Etsuko Nozaka for Froebel-kan, 2020.
Original title: *Alaska*, published by Querido, 2016.

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For more information please visit www.letterenfonds.nl or contact children's books specialist Agnes Vogt, a.vogt@letterenfonds.nl.

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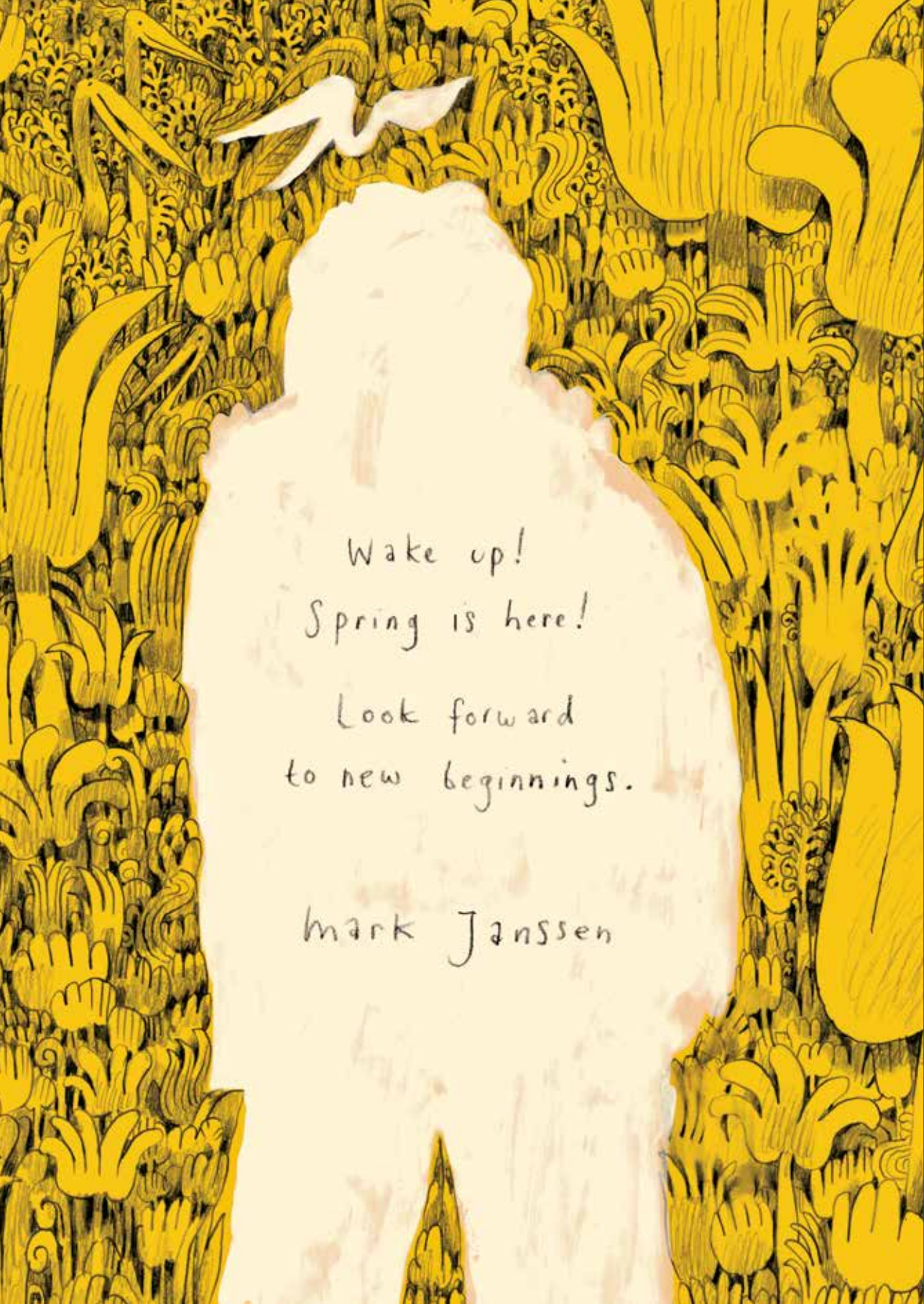
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Spring 2021



Wake up!
Spring is here!

Look forward
to new beginnings.

mark Janssen