

Annotated Books Received

A SUPPLEMENT TO

Translation Review

Volume 24, No. 1–2, 2019

THE UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT DALLAS

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Annotated Books Received is a supplement of *Translation Review*, a publication of The Center for Translation Studies at The University of Texas at Dallas.

ISSN 0737-4836

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ARABIC:

al-Būshī, Būlus and Ibn Kātib Qaysar. *Revelation 1-3 in Christian Arabic Commentary: John's First Vision and the Letters to the Seven Churches.* Edited and translated by **Stephen J. Davis, T. C. Schmidt, and Shawqi Talia.** New York: Fordham University Press, 2019. 192 pp. Paper. \$25.00. ISBN: 978-0823281831.

This is the first book in the Christian Arabic Texts in Translation series, produced under the editorship of Stephen J. Davis. The series will include works of biblical commentary, theological and ethical issues, saints' lives, sermons, histories, and scientific literature produced by Arabic-speaking Christians living in the medieval Islamic world. *Revelation 1-3* presents English-language excerpts from thirteenth-century commentaries on the Apocalypse of John by two Egyptian authors, Būlus al-Būshī and Ibn Kātib Qaysar, both of whom participated in what has long been recognized as Golden Age of Copto-Arabic literature. The commentaries in this book are some of the only extant commentaries on Revelation from Coptic theologians. Beginning with a scholarly introduction by Davis, this book also includes substantial critical annotations, an extensive bibliography, and subject and biblical indices. Stephen J. Davis is Professor of Religious Studies at Yale University, and has previously published books on religious studies for Yale University Press and Oxford University Press. T. C. Schmidt is a doctoral candidate in Ancient Christianity at Yale University. His research interests focus on the early church, Christian persecution, and the general history of the eastern churches in the Middle Ages. Shawqi Talia is lecturer in Semitic Languages at Catholic University of America, and University Teaching Fellow, Katholisch-Theologische Fakultät, University of Munster, Germany. He has published works on Syriac, Neo-Aramaic, and Garshuni texts, and Medieval Islamic studies.

Antoon, Sinan. *The Book of Collateral Damage.* Translated by **Jonathan Wright.** New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 312 pp. Hardcover. \$24.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-22894-6.

Sinan Antoon's fourth novel follows Nameer, a young Iraqi scholar earning his Ph.D. at Harvard, who is hired by filmmakers to help document the devastation of the 2003 invasion of Iraq. When Nameer ventures to an area of Baghdad famed for its bookshops, he meets Wadood, an eccentric antiquarian bookseller attempting to catalog everything destroyed in the war—objects, sites, books, manuscripts, flora and fauna, and human beings. Entrusted with Wadood's catalog, Nameer finds life in post-9/11 New York movingly intertwined with fragments from his homeland's past and present. He is diagnosed with PTSD but refuses the bourgeois psychological approach to his condition. The narrative result is a collage of episodes of magical-realistic fiction that describe the wreckage and devastation of war and the power of memory. *Sinan Antoon* is a poet, novelist, translator, and scholar. He was born and raised in Baghdad where he finished a B.A in English at Baghdad University in 1990. He went to the United States after the 1991 Gulf War and obtained a doctorate in Arabic Literature from Harvard in 2006. Sinan returned to his native Baghdad in 2003 to co-produce and co-direct a documentary film about Iraq under occupation entitled *About Baghdad*. Antoon is an Associate Professor at New York University's Gallatin School. The translator, Jonathan Wright, was born in Andover, Hampshire, and spent his childhood in Canada, Malaysia, Hong Kong, and Germany before studying Arabic, Turkish, and Islamic civilization at Oxford. Wright joined the Reuters news agency in 1980 and has lived and worked in the Middle East for most of the last three decades. From 1998 to 2003, he was based in Washington, DC, covering U.S. foreign policy for Reuters. Wright's awards include the 2013 and 2016 Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation, and the 2014 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize.

Sharafeddine, Fatima and Samar Mahfouz Barraji. *Ghady & Rawan*. Translated by **Sawad Hussain and M. Lynx Qualey**. Austin: Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Texas at Austin, 2019. 125 pp. Paper. \$16.95. ISBN 978-1-4773-1852-2.

Ghady, a Lebanese teenager, travels every summer with his family from their home in Brussels to Beirut. Here he gets to spend all his time with Rawan, his female best friend, enjoying their freedom from school. When he returns to Belgium, he and **Rawan** keep in touch through email. Through this correspondence, readers learn about the daily ups and downs of their lives in Beirut and Brussels. Their stories, told in alternating chapters, examine issues pertinent to adolescents everywhere: bullying, peer pressure, racial discrimination, conflicts with parents. Fatima Sharafeddine is a writer of books for young adults. She has recently won the Etisalat Award for the best YA book of 2017 and the Bologna Ragazzi New Horizons Award in 2016. She lives in Beirut and Brussels. Samar Mahfouz Barraji is a writer and editor of young adult books, and has translated 90 children's books from French, English, and Italian into Arabic. Sawad Hussain, Arabic translator and litterateur, reviews contemporary fiction by women. Marcia Lynx Qualey is a freelance cultural journalist for *World Literature Today*, *The Guardian*, *The Believer*, as well as other publications. She also writes a blog, *Arabic Literature in English*.

Wannous, Sa'dallah. *Sentence to Hope: A Sa'dallah Wannous Reader*. Translated by **Robert Myers and Nada Saab**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 464 pp. Hardcover. \$38.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-22134-3.

Sentence to Hope is an introduction to work of Syrian playwright, essayist, and cultural critic Sa'dallah Wannous (1941–1997), widely considered one of the best Arab playwrights in the second half of the twentieth century. This book is the first English-language collection to bring together his major plays and essays. After an introduction by the translators, the first section features four complete plays, including *An Evening's Entertainment for the Fifth of June*, a scathing indictment of the duplicity of Arab leaders during the 1967 War. The second section underscores the intellectual and societal contexts that shaped Wannous into an astute theatrical and cultural critic. His writings offer shrewd diagnoses of the ills of Arab society and the essential role of theater in ameliorating them. These essays include "It All Begins with the Audience" which summarizes Wannous' concept of theater, and "Thirst for Dialogue" which outlines his vision of the theater as an instrument that will help "repair the fissures and mend the factionalisms that have torn apart the body of our community." Sa'dallah Wannous studied journalism in Cairo and later held the directorship of the Music and Theater Administration of Syria. In the late 1960s he traveled to Paris where he studied theater. In 1996, he was selected by UNESCO to present that year's address to the world theater community during its celebration of International Theater Day. This was the first selection of an Arab writer since the organization started this tradition in 1963. Translator Robert Myers is the author of over fifteen plays and has translated and adapted over half a dozen major contemporary plays from Arabic with Nada Saab. He holds a Ph.D. from Yale University and is currently director of the Center for American Studies at the American University of Beirut. His colleague, Nada Saab, also holds a Ph.D. from Yale and her domain of research focuses on modern Arabic drama. She is a professor of Arabic Studies at Lebanese American University.

Radical Love: Teachings from the Islamic Mystical Tradition. Translated and edited by **Omid Safi**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 336 pp. Paper. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-24861-6.

Radical Love is an anthology of 200 poems and aphorisms focusing mainly on Sufi poetry. The volume is organized into four thematic sections: God of Love, Path of Love, Lover and Beloved, and Beloved Community. Omid Safi offers readers passages from the Qur'an, sayings from the Prophet Muhammad (Hadith), the poetry of 'Attar, Hafez, Kharaqani, and especially the Sufi mystic Mawlana Jalāl ad Dīn Muhammad Balkhi (known as Rumi in the West). Rumi's love poems have been favorites of Sufi musicians for centuries, and the Sufi community that traces itself to him are known in the West as the Whirling Dervishes. For the millions of readers of Rumi's works, the poems by key medieval mystics included in this collection reveal the Arabic and Persian traditions that produced him. Omid Safi's introduction includes brief biographies of the major figures in this anthology, with an emphasis on each writer's distinctive contributions to the discourse of human and divine love. Safi's aim is a translation that will "convey something of the fire and spirit of the original, while preserving the symbols and references." Safi is a professor of Islamic studies at Duke University and the past chairman for the Study of Islam at the American Academy of Religion. His earlier books include *Memories of Muhammad: Why the Prophet Matters* (2010) and *Cambridge Companion to American Islam* (2013).

ARMENIAN:

Grig (Grigor Shashikyan). *Jesus' Cat: Stories*. Translated by **Nazareth Seferian**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 138 pp. Paper. \$19.99. ISBN: 978-1-912894-36-9.

Jesus' Cat is the first book by this young prose writer. The twenty stories included in this collection reveal, on the one hand, a unique writing style, and on the other, an original perspective on the world and people. The title story, for example, features a misfit boy who acquires a "Jesus cat," a purported breed named for its ability to avoid drowning by walking on water. Despite the skepticism and ridicule voiced by the unnamed narrator and his school friends, the animal and the boy become catalysts (no pun intended) for a lesson on forgiveness. Grig was born in Yerevan, Armenia in 1991 and received his M.A. from the Faculty of Armenian Philology at Yerevan State University. His first collection of short stories (*Jesus' Cat*) was published in 2015. In the same year the book was awarded a youth prize by the President of the Republic of Armenia. Grig is currently pursuing a Ph.D. at Yerevan State University. The translator, Nazareth Seferian, grew up in India and returned to his homeland of Armenia in 1998. His love for languages led him to literary translation in 2011, and his published works include the English version of Gurgen Khanjyan's novel *Yenok's Eye*.

Khodikyan, Karine. *The Door Was Open: Short Stories*. Translated by **Nazareth Seferian**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 112 pp. Paper. \$21.99. ISBN: 978-1-912894-48-2

This collection, published with the support of the Ministry of Culture of the Republic of Armenia, contains thirteen short, episodic stories that can be described as intellectual fiction for women. While exploring the darker aspects of the female experience, Khodikyan uses several recurring themes in these ambiguous, mysterious tales: death, dreams, communication difficulties between men and women, the stranglehold of the past on the present. Almost all her themes, rather than those that commonly focus on romantic, domestic, or familial concerns, portray a more somber and discomfiting examination of the female experience. Karine

Khodikyan is an acclaimed playwright, screenwriter, fiction writer, and journalist. She was the Deputy Minister of Culture and is currently the host of a show on Public Television. Her short stories and plays have won numerous awards, including the 2015 Stories Without Borders International Drama Competition (Germany). Translator Nazareth Seferian grew up in India and moved to his homeland of Armenia in 1998, where he has been living ever since. His university education has not been specific to translation studies, but his love for languages led him to this work in 2001. He began literary translations in 2011 and his published works include the English version of Gurgen Khanjyan's novel *Yenok's Eye*.

CHINESE:

Anonymous. *Cathay: A Critical Edition*. Translation by **Ezra Pound**. Edited by Timothy Billings. New York: Fordham University Press, 2019. 364 pp. Cloth. \$34.95. ISBN: 9780823281060.

Ezra Loomis Pound (1885-1972), one of the most influential and controversial figures in modern literature, was born in the mining town of Hailey, Idaho. He attended Hamilton College and the University of Pennsylvania, where he studied various languages, and taught briefly at Wabash College in Indiana before sailing for England in 1908. He wrote *Cathay* in 1915, but after World War I he moved to Italy where he became increasingly sympathetic to Fascism. From this time onwards, his poetry output consisted almost entirely on his extended poem *The Cantos*, which was unfinished at his death. The *Pisan Cantos* (1948) are the most famous section, recording his incarceration in Pisa by the American forces at the end of World War II, while waiting to stand trial for treason. Found unfit to plead at his trial in 1948, he was committed to St Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington D. C. In 1958 he was released; he returned to Italy where he spent the rest of his life. This fully annotated critical edition of *Cathay* contains Pound's free-verse translations based on word-for-word "cribs" left by the Orientalist Ernest Fenollosa. Because Pound knew no Chinese, the poems in *Cathay* are seen less as strict translations and more as new pieces in their own right. The book also includes annotated texts and manuscript materials for fifteen other Chinese poems, as well as his translation from Old English of "The Seafarer" and an important essay by Pound on Chinese poetry. Featuring substantial and important critical pieces by Timothy Billings, Christopher Bush, and Haun Saussy, this edition brings together all the Chinese and Old English poems it claims to translate. Extensive annotations help trace the iterations of meanings across languages and help make the process of translation visible even for readers with no knowledge of Chinese.

Cheng Yi. *The Yi River Commentary on the Book of Changes*. Translated by **L. Michael Harrington**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 576 pp. Hardcover. \$85.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-218070-7.

This book is a translation of a key commentary on the *Book of Changes*, or *Yijing* (*I Ching*), perhaps the most broadly influential text of classical China. The *Yijing* first appeared as a divination text in Zhou-dynasty China (ca. 1045-256 bce) and later became a work of cosmology, philosophy, and political theory as commentators supplied it with new meanings. The commentary of Cheng Yi (1033-1107) turned the original text into a coherent work of political theory, and Zhu Xi (1130-1200) drew on Cheng Yi's thought in his systemizing efforts. When Zhu Xi's teachings were codified as state orthodoxy in 1313, both men's commentaries

became standard interpretations until the abolition of the civil service examination system in the twentieth century. This translation also includes a brief introduction by translator L. Michael Harrington and Robin R. Wang (Loyola Marymount University), as well as a glossary and extensive notes. Cheng Yi was a Chinese philosopher, politician, essayist, and writer of the Song Dynasty who influenced the development of the rationalist school of Neo-Confucianism. After passing his civil service examinations, he served briefly as imperial tutor (1069–70), but his stern conception of morality soon alienated many of those around him, and he resigned. For most of his life he declined high office. Harrington, Associate Professor of Philosophy, Duquesne University, received his Ph.D. from Boston College. He is currently at work on a monograph on Cheng Yi, and his book *On the Divine Names: The Thirteenth-Century Textbook Edition* is forthcoming from Peeters Publishers (Leuven).

Pai, Hsien-yung. *Taipei People*. Translated by the author and **Patia Yasin**. Hong Kong: Chinese University Press, 2019. 392 pp. Paper. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-9-88237-006-7.

Taipei People is a collection of fourteen short stories which were written in the late 1960s. The Chinese edition was published in 1971 and the English edition was published in 1982 by the Indiana University Press under the title *Wandering in the Garden, Waking from a Dream: Tales of Taipei Characters*. Pai Hsien-yung came to Taiwan with his family in 1949 after they were forced to leave their country after the Chinese Civil War. As a first-generation writer from the mainland in Taiwan, Pai experienced firsthand the difficulties of the millions of Chinese who struggled to survive and retain their dignity in their new environment. His characters mirror the individual struggles of these emigres as he describes their situations with a mix of mourning and nostalgia. (One critic described the characters in this collection as falling into three categories: those who live completely in the past, those who manage to retain memories of their past while accepting the present, and those who have cut themselves entirely from their past.) Pai is among the most important writers in contemporary Chinese and world literatures. He is generally considered among the greatest living stylists of Chinese fiction. Educated in Taiwan and the United States, he currently lives in Santa Barbara, CA. Patia Yasin is a translator of traditional Chinese and Japanese folk lyrics and modern Turkish poetry. Yasin holds a Ph.D. from Wesleyan University.

Ssu-ma Ch'ien. *The Grand Scribe's Records, Volume XI: The Memoirs of Han China, Part V*. Translated by **Guilia Baccini, Maddalena Barengi, Stephen Durrant, Kathrin Leese-Messing, Clara Luhn, William H. Nienhauser, Jr., Jakob Pöllath, Edward L. Shaughnessy, and Hans van Ess**. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019. 360 pp. Hardcover. \$60.00. ISBN: 978-0-253-04610-9

Ssu-Ma Ch'ien (145-ca. 86 BC) was an official at the court of the Han Emperor Wu and was involved in the compilation of a mammoth project that resulted in this history, which came to be known as *The Grand Scribe's Records*. Volume XI presents the final memoirs of the history, continuing the series of collective biographies with seven prosopographies that identify and relate groups of people within a particular historical context—Han China, in this instance. These include such groups as the ruthless officials, the wandering gallants, the artful favorites, those who discern auspicious days, turtle and stalk diviners, and those whose goods increase. Ssu-ma concludes with a history of his family and himself. This edition includes copious footnotes, translator's notes, a bibliography, and appendices on weights and measures and official titles of the Han Dynasty. Translators include the following scholars of Chinese studies:

Giulia Baccini, faculty, Università Ca' Foscari, Venice; Maddalena Barengi, Senior Scientist and Research Assistant, University of Salzburg; Stephen Durrant, Professor Emeritus of Chinese Literature, U of Oregon; Kathrin Leese-Messing, Teaching and Research Assistant, University of Zurich; Clara Luhn, Ph.D., Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich; Jakob Pöllath, Research Assistant, Ludwig-Maximilians-Universität, Munich; Edward L. Shaughnessy, Professor of Early Chinese Studies, University of Chicago; Hans van Ess, Chair in sinology, Ludwig-Maximilians University, Munich; and William H Nienhauser, Jr., Professor of Classical Chinese Literature and editor of six volumes of *The Grand Scribe's Records*, University of Wisconsin-Madison.

Wang, Anyi. *Fu Ping*. Translated by **Howard Goldblatt**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 296 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-0-231-19323-8.

Set during the turbulence of the 1960s Cultural Revolution, this is a novel about Fu Ping, an orphaned country girl who agrees to an arranged marriage while in her late teens. She leaves the country and goes to Shanghai, where she lives with Nainai, a housemaid and grandmother of Fu Ping's husband-to-be. Fu Ping helps the older woman with domestic chores, learning the skills that will be expected of her as a new wife. Soon, however, Fu Ping explores the residential lanes and courtyards behind Shanghai's busy streets. The backdrop of the city unfolds through the stories of Nainai and other blue-collar workers as Fu Ping weaves herself into the daily routines of neighbors and colleagues. The longer she lives in the city, the more she sees herself as an individual responsible for her own fate, leading her to reconsider her impending marriage. Wang Anyi grew up in Shanghai during the 1950s but was unable to attend university. She worked as a musician during the 1970s and started to write in her spare time, later becoming a professional editor and author. Her books in English include *The Song of Everlasting Sorrow*, a finalist for the Man Booker International Prize. Her translator, Howard Goldblatt, previously translated another of Wang's works, *Lapse of Time*, a novel about another strong Shanghai woman. Goldblatt is a Guggenheim Fellow and an internationally renowned translator of Chinese fiction, including the novels of Mo Yan, the 2012 winner of the Nobel Prize for Literature.

CZECH:

Brabcová, Zuzana. *Aviaries: A Novel*. Translated by **Tereza Novická**. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2019. 132 pp. Paper. \$16.00. ISBN: 978-80-86264-51-6.

The death of Václav Havel in 2011 provides the opening for this novella, completed shortly before the author's death in 2015. Her prose melds a kaleidoscope of contemporary news reports, flights of hallucination, wordplay, and metaphoric association to describe the life of a woman navigating a city indifferent to those living on the margins. Interactions with other residents of Prague—perhaps figments of her imagination—have reached a point where fantasy and reality merge, and the dark vision of the present-day city becomes a blend of the bizarre and the grotesque. Zuzana Brabcová (1959-2016), the daughter of two literary historians, was born in Prague. After completing her schooling, she worked in the University Library in Prague, in a hospital and as a cleaner. She later became an editor, working for several publishing houses. Her first novel *Daleko od stromu (Far from the Tree)* was first published in a Samizdat edition in 1984. It received the Jiří Orten Award in 1997. Brabcová was awarded the Magnesia Litera prize for fiction in 2013 for her novel *Stropy*. The translator, Tereza Novická, was born in California to Czech parents who fled the communist regime. She grew up in San Francisco

before moving to the Czech Republic in 2000, ultimately graduating from Charles University in Prague with a BA and MA. She has translated a number of Czech and Slovak poets into English, including Vítěslav Nezval's *The Absolute Gravedigger* which won a Heim/PEN Translation Fund Grant in 2015.

Kolář, Jiří. *A User's Manual*. Translated by **Ryan Scott**. Prague: Twisted Spoon Press, 2019. 142 pp. Hardcover. \$24.00. ISBN: 978-80-86264-54-7.

Jiří Kolář (1914-2002) was both a poet and a visual artist who came from a working-class family in Protivín, Bohemia. He moved to Prague in 1945 where he worked as a writer and editor before he ran afoul of the Communists when they came to power in 1948. He was not allowed to publish, and he was arrested and jailed for several months in 1952 when the police found one of his manuscripts that was critical of the regime. He started writing experimental poetry in the 1960s, creating new forms which blurred the lines between the literary and the visual; this ultimately led to works such as *Návod k upotřebení (A User's Manual)*, published in 1969. The poems are paired with 52 collages by Kolář (on facing pages) based on a major event for each week of 1967. The poems take the form of Communist officialese, but at the same time offer readers an opportunity to create their own poetics by performing actions per the given directions. The collages are composed of image cutouts, newspaper clippings, letter fragments, announcements, documents, musical notations, and reports that form concrete patterns or outlines of figures which underscore the events of the year. Text and image portray the fragmentation of the world around him, and by the 1970s Kolář's visual work was being exhibited throughout Europe. As a result, the government refused to allow him to return home. From 1980 on he lived in Paris, but frequently visited Prague after the Velvet Revolution in 1989, spending his final years in that city. The original Czech text is included at the end of this edition, along with notes by the translator Ryan Scott. A native of Australia, Scott is a writer and translator now based in the Czech Republic. His poetry, prose, and translations have appeared in a number of publications, including *Disquieting Muse Quarterly*, *Overland Express*, and *New England Review*.

DANISH:

Nielsen, Carsten René. *Forty-One Objects: Prose Poems*. Translated by **David Keplinger**. Fayetteville, NY: The Bitter Oleander Press, 2019. 104 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-0-9993279-4-4.

The prose poem has a well-established tradition running from Arthur Rimbaud to Gertrude Stein, and to more contemporary poets like Charles Simic and James Tate. There have been two previous collections of Nielsen's prose poems published in English, both translated by David Keplinger. This third volume shares the same Surrealistic influences, and echoes of Magritte abound: a sneezing trumpet, a dress floating in mid-air, an angel in the act of shaving, sardines in evening gowns, and Schubert complaining about tax returns. In his introduction, Keplinger attributes some of Nielsen's spare Surrealistic images to the poet's hometown of Aarhus, "a Jutlandish city that prides itself on its removal from the urban center." In keeping with this concept of conservative minimalism, Nielsen has "stripped [his prose poems] of ornamentation, ostentation, and over-experimentation." In this edition, the original Danish poems are printed on the facing pages. Carsten René Nielsen is the author of ten books of poetry; his first, published in 1989, won the Michael Strunge Poetry Prize. His poetry has been published in Germany, Italy, the Netherlands, Scotland, India, Canada, and the United

States. He has won several fellowships from the Danish State Foundation for the Arts. Translator David Keplinger is the author of five books of poetry. The most recent, *Another City*, was awarded the University of North Texas Rilke Prize. He has also won the T.S. Eliot Prize, the Cavafy Prize, and two NEA fellowships. He currently teaches at American University in Washington, D.C.

FRENCH:

Damas, Geneviève. *If You Cross the River*. Translated by **Jody Gladding**. Minneapolis: Milkweed Editions, 2019. 152 pp. Paper. \$16.00. ISBN: 978-1-57131-120-7.

A modern fable about family secrets, mourning, loneliness, and the power of words, this is a tale about François, an illiterate teenager in a small village whose only confidante is a piglet named Hyménée. By day he tends the family farm animals; by night he manages the household chores. His father and two brothers are brutish and uncommunicative, his third brother committed suicide, and his beloved older sister crossed the river in defiance of their father and never returned. Still, François can't help but wonder about the wider world and his place in it. Eventually his curiosity motivates him to seek reading lessons from a kind local priest in hopes of learning about his sister, the brother who died, and the mother he never met. As he begins his lessons, he slowly perceives an awareness of impending danger as he starts to unlock the true story his past. Geneviève Damas is a Belgian actress, playwright, and novelist. After completing a law degree, she turned to theater. She has acted, directed, and written award-winning plays for both children and adults. *If You Cross the River* is her debut novel; it won Belgium's Prix Victor Rossel and the Prix des Cinq Continents de la Francophonie. Translator Jody Gladding graduated from Franklin & Marshall College and Cornell University. She teaches in the Writing Program at Vermont College and is the author of four collections of poetry. She has translated thirty books from French, and her translation of Pierre Michon's *Small Lives* received the 2009 French-American Foundation Translation Prize.

Despentes, Virginie. *Vernon Subutex 1*. Translated by **Frank Wynne**. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019. 352 pp. Paper. \$16.00. ISBN: 978-0-374-28324-7.

Vernon Subutex, the novel's title character, is the legendary owner of a famous record shop in Paris that was forced to close by the advent of the internet and the decline of CD and vinyl sales. Subutex, broke and homeless, finally resigns himself to life as a Paris panhandler. A throwaway comment he once made on Facebook, however, leads the public to realize that he owns VHS tapes recorded by a famous dead rock musician. These last recordings may be confessions, lyrics, a suicide note or the rock star's last will and testament. A crowd of wild characters are soon hot on Subutex's trail in pursuit of the tapes, but Subutex is none the wiser. This novel is the first of Despentes's trilogy to be published by Farrar, Straus, and Giroux. Despentes is a writer and filmmaker, and previously worked as a maid, sex worker, and rock journalist. She is the author of more than fifteen other works, and her Subutex trilogy was short-listed for the Man Booker International Prize. Frank Wynne has translated the works of many authors, including Michel Houellebecq, Frédéric Beigbeder, and Ahmadou Kourouma. He won the International Dublin Literary Award with Houellebecq for *The Elementary Particles*.

Mabanckou, Alain. *The Negro Grandsons of Vercingetorix.* Translated by **Bill Johnston.** Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2019. 203 pp. Paper. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-0-253-04388-7.

Set in the imaginary African country of Vietongo, this novel follows Hortense Lloki, a young mother from the nation's north living as an outsider in her husband's southern homeland. When quarrels break out between rival leaders and the ethnic groups they represent, violence erupts throughout the country. Hortense's husband Kimbembé joins a southern militia led by **Vercingetorix** and quickly becomes violent and abusive, prompting her to flee to the port city of Pointe-Rouge. In a series of notebooks, Hortense begins to record her own story as well as the chaotic events, culminating in a series of outlandish actions perpetrated by the warring groups—the Anacondas and the Romans from the north who have seized power against Vercingetorix. Her colorful, digressive memories provide the bulk of the novel. Chiefly written in the safety of a friendly villager's home, Hortense recounts her childhood and education in the country's north; her courtship and eventual marriage to Kimbembé, their departure to Vietongo's south and her life and friendships there. The titular Vercingetorix is only a prominent character towards the end of the novel. As Hortense learns, he only tells his followers half the Vercingetorix story, strategically omitting that historical warrior's tragic end at the hands of the Romans. Alain Mabanckou is a Franco-Congolese author and Professor of French and Francophone Studies at the University of California, Los Angeles. He is the recipient of numerous literary prizes, including the Grand Prix Littéraire de l'Afrique Noire and the Grand Prix de Littérature Henri Gal from the Académie Française for his life's work. Translator Bill Johnston was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship for Poetry (Translation), the PEN Translation Prize, and the Found in Translation Prize. He teaches literary translation at Indiana University.

Malte, Marcus. *The Boy.* Translated by **Emma Ramadan** and **Tom Roberge.** Brooklyn: Restless Books, 2019. 480 pp. Paper. \$22.99. ISBN: 978-1-63206-171-3.

In 1908 a 14-year-old boy is found wandering the forested countryside in southern France after his mother dies. He has no name, he does not speak, and the people in a nearby small farming hamlet fear that the half-wild child is a werewolf. The boy is befriended by a mentally challenged man in the village, then later by a circus strongman who takes him to Paris where he falls in love with an older woman. Eventually the boy becomes a soldier, arriving on the front line during the Battle of the Somme and witnessing its attendant horrors. Is the boy a symbol of Romantic innocence in an "enlightened" society or an angel of death on the battlefield? In any case, the story of his travels examines the wonder, brutality, absurdity, and magic of what it is to be human. Marcus Malte was born in a small city on the French Mediterranean coast and majored in film studies. He later wrote short stories, followed by a series of novels and detective stories in the 1990s. His most recent book *Le Garçon* (*The Boy*) won the Femina Literary Prize in 2016. *The Boy* is his first novel to be translated into English. Emma Ramadan is a literary translator based in Providence, RI. She earned her Master's degree in Cultural Translation at the American University of Paris, and is the recipient of a PEN/Heim grant and a Fulbright fellowship for her translation work. Her translator colleague, Tom Roberge, learned French as a Peace Corps volunteer in Madagascar and was formerly the Deputy Director of Albertine Books, a French language bookstore in New York.

Manchette, Jean-Patrick. *Nada*. Translated by **Donald Nicholson-Smith**. Introduction by Luc Sante. New York: New York Review of Books, 2019. 179 pp. Paper. \$15.95. ISBN: 978-1-68137-317-1.

At various times a screenwriter, critic, translator, and novelist, Jean-Patrick Manchette (1942-1995), was politically left-leaning as reflected in his crime noir novels. By depicting politically engaged and socially radical characters in violent situations, he pioneered a new genre of French novel: *néo-polar*. *Nada*, published in 1972, was Manchette's fourth novel and first big hit. Told in Manchette's signature noir style, the thriller follows a group of far-left extremists in the throes of disillusionment after the 1968 uprisings. *Nada*—the name of the gang—decides to further its revolutionary goals by kidnapping the U. S. ambassador. The professional revolutionaries in the group are Diaz, an anarchist orphaned by the Spanish Civil War, and Épaulard, a former member of the Communist Resistance during the German Occupation. Other members include their resident intellectual and author of the *Nada* manifesto, a terminal drunk, a waiter, and a young woman with a convenient hideaway house in the country. The inevitable internecine scrapping, the penchant for bloodshed, the undetermined demands of the group, and the ensuing takedown of *Nada* by the police provide Manchette scope to explore political ideology by way of the crime novel, a genre that he called "great moral literature." Donald Nicholson-Smith, born in England and a longtime resident of New York, has previously translated four Manchette novels, including *The Mad and the Bad* which won the 28th Annual Translation Prize of the French-American Foundation in 2014.

Mréjen, Valérie. *Black Forest*. Translated by **Katie Shireen Assef**. Los Angeles: Phoneme Media, 2019. 73 pp. Paper. \$16.00. ISBN: 978-1-944700-90-4.

An unnamed man decides he has lived long enough and hangs himself. Two young siblings drown in the pool near their family's vacation villa. A woman is murdered by a mentally deranged student. A motorcyclist speeds down a highway, loses his balance, and is hit by a truck. A young mother leaves her baby alone for a brief instant and returns to find him drowned in a few centimeters of water. Death is the link that binds the many anonymous characters in this novel, the short dark vignettes intertwined with a daughter's memories of her long-dead mother. Objective descriptions and a detached voice explore death's twisted path through the lives it touches. Valérie Mréjen is a writer, filmmaker, and mixed media artist. She has written five novels and has exhibited widely, including in a solo retrospective at the Jeu de Paume gallery in Paris. Mréjen's first feature-length film, *En ville*, was a Director's Fortnight selection at the Cannes Film Festival in 2011. Katie Shireen Assef is a literary translator living between Los Angeles and Arles, France. *Black Forest* is her first full-length translation.

Olmi, Véronique. *Bakhita: A Novel of the Saint of Sudan*. Translated by Adriana Hunter. New York: Other Press. 384 pp. Hardcover. \$27.99. ISBN: 978-15905-1-977-6.

Véronique Olmi recreates the true story of Mother Josephine Bakhita (1868-1947), a former Sudanese slave who became a Catholic nun and dedicated her life to the poor. Known as the Saint of Sudan, she was canonized by Pope John Paul II in 2000. Bakhita was seven years old when she was snatched by slave-raiders from her Sudanese village. In a cruel twist of irony, they gave her the name she would carry for the rest of her life: Bakhita, "the Lucky One" in Arabic. (She never replaced it because she couldn't remember her real name or that of her village and family.) Over the course of this novel, she is sold, resold, and subjected to abuse,

degradation, and terror. At age thirteen she is bought by a well-meaning Italian diplomat in Khartoum who takes her to Italy and gives her to friends as a servant. In 1890, after a high-profile trial, her Sudanese slave status is declared void in Italy. Later she is baptized, and after entering the order of the Canossian Sisters, she commits herself to service with total dedication. Olmi's novel brings the reader closer to Bakhita's will to live and her ability to turn toward the pain of others rather than herself. Throughout the turmoil of two World Wars and the fascist reign of Mussolini, she courageously continues to devote her life to poor and orphaned children. Bakhita died loved and respected in 1947, but this is not the end of the novel. Instead Olmi briefly recounts the stories of two women, one Italian, the other Brazilian. Both were slated to have a leg amputated. Each prayed to Bakhita to intercede and each was healed, providing evidence of the miracles required for her canonization. Véronique Olmi (born 1962) is a French actress, playwright, and novelist. She won the Prix Alain-Fournier emerging artist award for her 2001 novella *Bord de Mer* and in 2011 she won the Prix des Maisons de la Presse for *Cet été-là*. Adriana Hunter studied French and Drama at the University of London, and has translated more than fifty books, including Hervé Le Tellier's *Eléctrico W*, winner of the French-American Foundation's 2013 Translation Prize in Fiction. She previously translated Olmi's *Bord de Mer* into English.

GERMAN:

Stamm, Peter. *The Sweet Indifference of the World*. Translated by **Michael Hofmann**. New York: Other Press, 2019. 144 pp. Paper. \$14.99. ISBN: 978-159051-979-0.

"Please come to Skogskyrkogården tomorrow at two. I have a story to tell you." The story Christoph tells Lena, an actress he has never met, is about a woman he loved years ago. The woman was named Magdalena, and she too was an actress. Same looks, same name, same profession: just a coincidence? And as it happens, Lena has a boyfriend named Chris, who, like Christoph, is also a writer. Is it possible that Lena and Chris are living the same lives as Magdalena and Christoph, but fifteen years later? Peter Stamm explores this classic doppelgänger theme as the tale of the dual couples becomes a meditation on how memory and imagination can distort reality. Despite the distinctions and variations between the parallel lives, what unfolds is "...like having a play put on by several directors. The scenes look different, even the words can be changed or cut, but the action follows its unvarying course." Stamm is a Swiss writer of short stories, plays, and novels. He worked as an accountant and an intern at a psychiatric clinic, and later lived for a time in New York, Paris, and Scandinavia before he settled down in 1990 as a writer and freelance journalist in Zurich. He was short-listed for the Man Booker International prize in 2013, and in 2014 he won the prestigious Friedrich Hölderlin Prize. All of Stamm's writings that have been translated to English have been done by Michael Hofmann. Hofmann, a poet as well as translator, was born in Germany and educated in England. His translations have won many prizes, including the PEN/Book-of-the-Month Club Translation Prize, the Helen and Kurt Wolff Translator's Prize and the Oxford-Weidenfeld Translation Prize.

Wörtche, Thomas. Editor. *Berlin Noir*. Translation by **Lucy Jones**. Brooklyn: Akashic Books. 2019. 256 pp. Paper \$15.95. ISBN: 978-1-61775-632-0.

The editors of the ninety volumes in the Akashic Noir Series identify local authors and ask them to write original stories to celebrate the sinister side of their cities. Each book comprises all new stories, each one set in a distinct neighborhood or location within the respective city. Wörtche selects stories from writers who do not necessarily follow the usual patterns of crime fiction, but regard noir as a license to write as they wish. They present a prism through which the nature of the city is viewed. "What's left," says Wörtche in his introduction, "is history. It is omnipresent in Berlin at every turn; the city is saturated in a history full of blood, violence, and death." The thirteen stories in this collection are all set in 21st-century Berlin and deal with such contemporary social themes as immigrants and gentrification. Translator Lucy Jones was born in England and has lived in Berlin since 1998. She studied German and Film with W. G. Sebald at the University of East Anglia and received an MA in Applied Linguistics from the University of Surrey. Her translations include works by Annemarie Schwarzenbach, Silke Scheuermann, and Brigitte Reimann. In 2008 she founded Transfiction, a collective of translators in Berlin. She also writes book reviews and hosts a reading event series called The Fiction Canteen for writers and translators in Berlin.

GREEK:

Ganás, Michális. *A Greek Ballad: Selected Poems*. Translated by **David Connolly** and **Joshua Barley**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 328 pp. Hardcover. \$38.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-23334-6.

Michális Ganás was born in 1944, just in time to experience the privations of the German occupation and the bitter fighting of the Greek Civil War (1946-1949). In retreat to the East, the Communist faction took entire villages with them, including most of the Ganás family. They were carried off to Albania, then Poland, then Hungary where they spent several years in exile before the Red Cross repatriated them to Greece. Michális Ganás now lives in Athens and his poems often reflect a strongly autobiographical bent. *A Greek Ballad* contains seventy-eight works from seven of his previous collections. The selections include poems ranging in length from two lines to several pages, prose poems, references to folklore and mythology, and excerpts in Greek from the *Bible* (Revelation), Matthew Arnold ("Dover Beach"), and T.S. Eliot (*The Hollow Men*). The selections are infused with striking and original imagery and a universal sense of loss brought about by Ganás's life story. Ganás' works are presented in the original Greek, in en face format with English translations by David Connolly and Joshua Barley. Connolly was born in Sheffield, England and lived in Greece before retiring from the Aristotle University of Thessaloníki as Professor of Translation Studies. He has translated over forty books by contemporary Greek authors. Joshua Barley, who also wrote the introduction to *A Greek Ballad*, was born in Cambridge, England and was educated at Oxford and King's College, London. He is a translator of Greek literature and a writer, based in Athens.

HEBREW:

Ben-Naftali, Michal. *The Teacher*. Translated by **Daniella Zamir**. Rochester, NY: Open Letter Press, University of Rochester, 2019. 184 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-948830-07-2.

This fictional biography traces the story Elsa Weiss, a withdrawn and detached high school teacher who commits suicide by jumping off the roof of her Tel Aviv apartment. Thirty years later the narrator of the novel, one of her students, decides to find out more about the mysterious but respected teacher. The narrator explores the impact of survivor's guilt as she tracks the remnants of Elsa's past and discovers the vestiges of a Holocaust survivor who did her utmost to leave behind no trace. A writer, translator, and editor, Michal Ben-Naftali was born in Tel Aviv in 1963. In addition to writing many articles on literature and philosophy, she has published a novella, a memoir, and a collection of essays. Her novel, *The Teacher*, won the 2016 Sapir Prize. Daniella Zamir lives in Tel-Aviv, where she works as a literary translator. She obtained her bachelor's degree in literature from Tel Aviv University, and her master's degree in creative writing from City University in London.

Job: A New Translation. Translated by **Edward L. Greenstein**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 206 pp. Hardcover. \$26.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-16234-9.

This version of one of the major works of biblical literature follows the same three-part structure as earlier translations: a prose prologue, followed by a discourses and responses in poetry, and a prose epilogue. Greenstein's headnotes to each section clarify the characters' speeches and make them sound more like actual discussions. This translation is different from previous versions in other ways as well: one of the more noteworthy of Greenstein's choices is to avoid using the word "God." Using *EI* or *Eloah* or *YHWH* does "not imply the deity's goodness but rather his power." Other versions of the story put Job in an attitude of contrition and repentance. Greenstein's Job, however, stays vinegary to the end. "I have heard you," he tells God in his last response, "and now my eye has seen you. That is why I am fed up." But whether God is good or merely powerful is the unanswered question for Greenstein as well as the other translators of the Book of Job. Extensive notes provide ample justifications for Greenstein's various translation decisions. These include citing previous mistranslations, transmission errors, and some major reshuffling. Greenstein is professor emeritus of Bible at Bar-Ilan University. A native of Lynbrook, New York, he earned a Ph.D. from Columbia University. Among his academic awards are a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities and a John Simon Guggenheim Memorial Fellowship.

HUNGARIAN:

Borbély, Szilárd. *Final Matters: Selected Poems, 2004-2010*. Translated by **Ottolie Mulzet**. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2019. 200 pp. Paper. \$19.95. ISBN: 978-0-691-18243-8.

Szilárd Borbély (1963-2014) was a Hungarian novelist, literary scholar, and winner of the prestigious Attila József Prize. He was also one of the most important poets to emerge in post-1989 Hungary, utilizing themes that predominantly dealt with subjects such as grief, memory, and trauma. *Final Matters*, written shortly before he committed suicide, has been described as a monument to Borbély's mother, who was brutally murdered in her bed by thugs who broke into her home on the night before Christmas Eve, 1999. *Final Matters* doesn't address her murder

directly; instead, Borbély employs allegorical language—he drew his inspiration for the first section from central European Baroque folk poetry about Christ and the Virgin Mary. In the second section he turns to the myth of Amor and Psyche to explore questions of physicality and immateriality. In the third section, he reworks another part of Hungarian religious-poetic culture: the legends and parables of the Hungarian-speaking Hassidic Jews from Hungary's rural northeast. Through these sections, which he calls "Sequences," he enables the three great western traditions—Judaism, Christianity, and the world of the ancient Greeks—to confront each other. In doing so, they all cause the others to be seen in a completely different light. The original Hungarian text is set on pages with facing English translations; the book also features an afterword by the translator Otilie Mulzet that places the poems in literary, historical, and biographical context. Mulzet is a literary translator of Hungarian poetry and prose whose work has been recognized with several major literary awards including the Best Translated Book Award in 2014. Her previous translation of Szilárd Borbély's *Berlin-Hamlet* was short-listed for the National Translation Prize in 2017. She lives in Prague, where she worked as the English-language editor of the internet journal of the Hungarian Cultural Centre. Her translations appear regularly in *Hungarian Literature Online*.

ICELANDIC:

Pálsdóttir, Sigrún. *History. A Mess.* Translated by **Lytton Smith**. Rochester, NY: Open Letter Press, 2019. 158 pp. Paper. \$13.95. ISBN: 978-1-940953-98-4.

An unnamed protagonist is slogging along on her dissertation—a diary that focuses on a 17th-century British artist known only as S. B. Suddenly, in a blinding flash, she thinks she's discovered ground-breaking evidence that S.B. was a woman, making her the earliest known professional female artist in England. This discovery will change the narrator's academic career as well as her life. . . until, on the brink of publication, she realizes two diary pages were stuck together and the entry she failed to read disproves her theory. Suddenly her ground-breaking revelation is thrown into doubt. When she realizes what this means for her future, she goes to great lengths to hide her mistake, and in doing so almost loses her tenuous grasp on sanity. This complex novel pivots from a critique of the constraints and pressures of modern scholarship to a dark portrait of a fragile psyche at the center of a psychological horror story. Sigrún Pálsdóttir completed a Ph.D. in the History of Ideas at Oxford in 2001, after which she was a research fellow and lecturer at the University of Iceland. She worked as the editor of *Saga*, the principal peer-reviewed journal for Icelandic history, from 2008 to 2016. Her previous books include the historical biography *Thora. A Bishop's Daughter* and *Uncertain Seas*, a story of a young couple and their three children who were killed when sailing from New York to Iceland aboard a ship torpedoed by a German submarine in 1944. Sigrún's work has been nominated for the Icelandic Literary Prize, Icelandic Women's Literature Prize, Hagþenkir Non-fiction Prize, and the DV Culture Prize. The translator, Lytton Smith, earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University and is also a poet and professor at SUNY Genesco. He was a 2019 NEA Literature Translation Fellow and is the translator of ten novels/memoirs from Icelandic.

IRISH:

Ó Cadhain, Máirtín. *The Dregs of the Day*. Translated by **Alan Titley**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 160 pp. Paper. \$13.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-24277-5.

The final published work by Máirtín Ó Cadhain, this novella (or short story—"writers are never too bothered about the minutiae of these genre wars," says the translator in his introduction) follows a widower as he attempts to plan his wife's funeral arrangements without money, direction, or whiskey. Thrown into a desert of unknowing, he is unsure where to turn or what to do. In a meditation on regret, possibilities, maybes, and avoidances, the author portrays—with black humor sprinkled throughout—a man hopelessly watching as people go about their lives around him. The book, a rumination on psychic loss and puzzlement, illustrates Ó Cadhain's conviction that tragedy and comedy are inextricably connected. Born to poor Irish-speaking farmers in Galway, Ó Cadhain (1906-1970) escaped a hardscrabble life to become a grade-school teacher. An avowed socialist, he fought for the language rights of Irish speakers; he joined the I.R.A. and was removed from his teaching post for his activism; and he was interned at a prison camp for political dissidents during WWII. In 1969 he became professor of Irish at Trinity College, Dublin. He wrote novels, short stories, and essays, and is considered one of the most prominent Irish language writers of the 20th century. His translator, Alan Titley, is emeritus professor of Modern Irish at University College Cork, and has written novels, short stories, poems, and plays. He previously translated Ó Cadhain's novel *The Dirty Dust* (2015).

ITALIAN:

Calasso, Roberto. *The Unnamable Present*. Translated by **Richard Dixon**. New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019. 193 pp. Hardcover. \$26.00. ISBN: 978-0-374-27947-9.

The Unnamable Present, the ninth book in Calasso's multivolume work in progress, propels us into the twenty-first century and offers a key to what is happening around us. "Tourists and Terrorists," the first of the book's three parts, argues that we live in a world that has done away with religious belief and moral clarity and are trying to escape shallowness, confusion, and *ennui* by embracing virtual reality and the digital world. The second part, "The Vienna Gas Company," continues in the same vein, but unwinds chronologically, beginning in 1933 when Hitler became Chancellor, and ending in 1945 with the fall of Berlin. The title comes from a letter written by Walter Benjamin in 1939: "The consumption of gas by the Jewish population brought losses for the [Vienna] Gas Company, because despite being the biggest consumers they did not pay their bills. The Jews preferred to use the gas for the purpose of suicide." The third part of the book, "The Sighting of the Towers," is a two-page recounting of a dream of Charles Baudelaire, one of those dreams "that make you never want to sleep again." Baudelaire described his nightmare vision on an undated single sheet of paper that remained unpublished for more than a hundred years. He is trapped in an immense tower where "a column gives way and the two extremities move.... I never managed to get out. I live forever in a building that's about to collapse, a building infected by a secret disease." This presentiment, Calasso notes, corresponds exactly to our present day, "but with one single addition: the towers were two—and were twins." Roberto Calasso is the publisher of Adelphi Edizioni in Milan. He has written many book-length essays which have been translated into most European languages and is the editor of Kafka's *The Zürau Aphorisms*. His many honors include the Viareggio Prize, the Bagutta Prize, and the Prix Formentor. *The Unnamable Present* is the fourth of Calasso's books translated by Richard Dixon. Dixon lives and works in Italy, and his

other translations from the Italian include *The Prague Cemetery* and *Numero Zero* by Umberto Eco.

Gardini, Nicola. *Long Live Latin: The Pleasures of a Useless Language.* Translated by **Todd Portnowitz.** New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 2019. 256 pp. Hardcover. \$26.00. ISBN: 978-0-374-28452-7.

From the novelist and Oxford professor Nicola Gardini comes a personal look at the Latin language: its history, its authors, its essential role in education, and its enduring impact on modern life—whether we call it "dead" or not. Calling his book both an ode and an essay, Gardini defends Latin from those who consider the subject superfluous. He is especially drawn to Latin's poetic qualities and frequently comments on the musicality of the language with its figures of sound as well as its metaphors. His text considers the form, style, purpose, influence, and themes found in the works of familiar Latin authors such as Cicero, Caesar, Lucretius, Virgil, and Horace. He quotes liberally from their works and offers his own translations while noting the rhetorical devices and figurative language appearing in the original Latin. Gardini doesn't present his material in chronological order as it would in a history of Latin literature; instead he shows his writers in media res, in what he calls "linguistic instances," as examples of what Latin has gained at a certain moment and handed down to its and still living tradition. Why study Latin? Gardini believes that Latin is the antidote for the modern age, which seems transfixed by the spontaneous, the easy, and the ephemeral. Latin, he argues, combines truth and beauty with the timelessness of art. People should study Latin for all the reasons people should read literature. Gardini, born and educated in Milan, received a Ph.D. in Comparative Literature from New York University. He has taught poetic translation, Renaissance and the classical legacy, and 19th- and 20th- century poetry. He is also a painter, novelist, and poet. His translator, Todd Portnowitz, lives and works in New York City. He holds an MA in Italian Literature from the University of Wisconsin-Madison. He is the translator of the poetry collections *Midnight in Spoleto* by Paolo Valesio and *Go Tell It to the Emperor* by Pierluigi Cappello. He received the Academy of American Poets Raiziss/de Palchi Fellowship in 2015.

JAPANESE:

Bashō, Matsuo and **Geoffrey Wilkinson.** *Going to the Pine: Four Essays on Bashō.* Franksbridge, Powys, Wales: Geoffrey M. Wilkinson. 60 pp. Paper. \$9.99. ISBN: 978-1-9160622-0-7.

This collection of essays considers the Japanese poet Matsuo Bashō (1644-1694) from four different perspectives. It begins by likening Bashō and Keats as travelers, open to all experience in order to achieve true poetry. In the second essay Wilkinson examines how perceptions of Bashō's famous "frog" haiku have changed over time. The third essay uses Bashō's "cicada" haiku to explore issues of language and interpretation, while the final essay uses Bashō's haiku to explore larger philosophical questions. Implicitly the four essays are linked by Bashō's injunction to "Go to the pine to learn about the pine." For the haiku, Wilkinson provides the Japanese text, followed by the romanji transliteration, and finally his English translation. Haiku was perfected during the Edo period (17th century–1868) and Bashō is recognized as the greatest master of haiku, revered for his sensitivity and profundity. His poetry is internationally renowned; and in Japan, many of his poems are reproduced on monuments and traditional sites. Geoffrey Wilkinson (born 1953) is an independent essayist and translator of Japanese poetry. He lives in Wales. He is the author of *Certainty, That Thing of Indefinite*

Approximation: A Quest Through Lives and Literatures (Bright Pen Books, 2012). His work has appeared in a number of journals, including *The Keats-Shelley Review*, *Comparative & Continental Philosophy*, *Frogpond* (Haiku Society of America), and *Ribbons* (Tanka Society of America).

Kimura Yūsuke. *Sacred Cesium Ground and Isa's Deluge: Two Novellas of Japan's 3/11 Disaster.* Translated by **Doug Slaymaker.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 160 pp. Paper. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-0-231-18943-9.

In these two novellas, Kimura Yūsuke explores human and animal life in northern Japan after the March 11, 2011 "Triple Disaster"— earthquake, tsunami, and Fukushima nuclear meltdown. In *Sacred Cesium Ground*, a woman leaves an abusive husband in Tokyo and travels to volunteer at a cattle farm known as the "Fortress of Hope," tending irradiated animals abandoned after the reactor meltdown. (The location is based on an actual ranch whose owner, disregarding decrees to evacuate the area and slaughter the irradiated livestock, teams up with volunteers to tackle the monumental task of caring for hundreds of cattle.) The story's portrayal of those who stubbornly care for animals despite the danger speaks to the sense of futility and meaningfulness in the wake of traumatic events. *Isa's Deluge* takes place in a seaside town still recovering from the tsunami. Shōji, an unemployed Tokyo editor, returns for a high school reunion and becomes reacquainted with his family—particularly his uncle Isa, a crotchety old patriarch who draws on old tales of floods that have plagued the region to fashion himself as the father of the tsunami. Together these two novellas present often-unheard voices of one of Japan's peripheral regions and their anger toward the government for mishandling the disasters. Kimura Yūsuke (b. 1970) lived near Fukushima, Japan, before moving to Tokyo for university studies. His "Seagull Treehouse" (2009) won the 33rd Subaru Prize. "Isa's Deluge" was a finalist for the Mishima Yukio Prize, and "Sacred Cesium Ground" was a finalist for the Noma Literary Prize. *Sacred Cesium Ground and Isa's Deluge* are the first of his works to be translated into English. The translator of the two novellas, Doug Slaymaker, includes an afterword that explains the sociopolitical context of the "Triple Disaster," as well as the challenges of translating the local dialect into English. He is a professor of Japanese at the University of Kentucky, and has previously translated Hideo Kurukawa's *Horses, Horses, in the End the Light Remains Pure*.

LATIN:

Augustine of Hippo. *Against the Academics: St Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues, Volume 1.* Translated by **Michael P. Foley.** New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 352 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-23855-6.

In early November, 386 A.D., Augustine and two of his pupils, Trygetius and Licentius, engaged in a philosophical disputation about the history and teachings of academic skepticism, which Augustine was both sympathetic to and critical of. This exploration serves as a fitting launching point for a knowledge of God and the soul, the overall subject of the Cassiciacum tetralogy. *Against the Academics* is the first of four works written by Augustine after his conversion to Christianity, and he wrote the Cassiciacum dialogues in such a way that the teachings of one are clarified or modified by another. The Cassiciacum dialogues therefore function as a kind of spiritual exercise for readers; and Augustine fittingly begins his tetralogy by

arguing that intellectual, moral, and religious conversion can only begin with a rejection of academic skepticism. In addition to his translation, Foley provides generous scholarship in the form of general and specific introductions, a translation key, a chronology, a glossary of names, and an extensive bibliography. He holds a Ph.D. in systematic theology from Boston College and is currently Associate Professor of Patristics at Baylor University. Foley is the author of several books, including *On the Happy Life: St. Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues, Volume 2*.

Augustine of Hippo. *Cassiciacum Dialogues. Volume 1: Against the Academics; Volume 2: On the Happy Life.* Translated by **Thomas P. Foley**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. (Volume 1) 352 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-28556; (Volume 2) 232 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-030023858-7.

In November, 386 A.D., Augustine was living at a friend's villa in Cassiciacum, outside Milan. He was accompanied by family members (his mother Monica, his brother Navigius, his son Adeodatus, his cousins Rusticus and Lartidianus) and two of his pupils (Tygetius and Licentius). He engaged his two pupils in a philosophical disputation about the history and teachings of academic skepticism, which Augustine was sympathetic to and critical of. This exploration serves as a launching point for his ideas on the knowledge of God and the soul, the overall subject of the Cassiciacum tetralogy. *Against the Academics* is the first of four works written by Augustine in such a way that the teachings of one are clarified or modified by another. The dialogues therefore function as a spiritual exercise for readers, and Augustine fittingly begins his tetralogy by arguing that conversion can only begin with a rejection of academic skepticism. A few days later, on his 32nd birthday (the Ides—the 13th—of November), Augustine invited his family members to join him and his pupils in another philosophical discussion. This time the topic centered on the question of happiness, and the result was *On the Happy Life*. Augustine added a novelty to this conversation by including his mother Monica as an active participant in the discussions, a fitting inclusion considering that Monica was the oldest and most experienced Christian in the group. The Cassiciacum dialogues are the earliest of Augustine's writings after his conversion, and whether their fundamental structure is literary or historical, they have influenced prominent thinkers from Boethius to Bernard Lonergan. In addition to his translation, Thomas Foley provides general and specific introductions, a translation key, a chronology, a glossary of names, copious notes, and an extensive bibliography. Foley holds a Ph.D. in systemic theology from Boston College and is currently Associate Professor of Patristics at Baylor University.

Augustine of Hippo. *On the Happy Life: St. Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues, Volume 2.* Translated by **Michael P. Foley**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 232 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-030023858-7.

On his 32nd birthday (the Ides—the 13th—of November, 386 A.D.), Augustine was living at a friend's villa in Cassiciacum, outside Milan. After a light lunch he invited some family members (his mother Monica, his brother Navigius, his son Adeodatus, his cousins Rusticus and Lartidianus) and two of his pupils (Trygetius and Licentius) to a discussion in the style of ancient philosophers. The topic centered on the question of happiness and the result was *De beata vita*, one of the Cassiciacum Dialogues, the earliest of Augustine's writings. Augustine added a novelty to this philosophical conversation by introducing a woman, his own mother, as an active participant in the discussions, a fitting inclusion considering that Monica was the oldest and most experienced Christian in the group. Augustine praises her for her philosophical zeal and for having a "mind utterly attentive to God." This is an echo of translator Michael Foley's

summary of *The Happy Life*: "...an elaborate gloss on the most famous line in the *Confessions*, that our hearts are restless until they rest in God." In addition to his translation, Foley provides generous scholarship in the form of an introduction, a translation key, a chronology, a glossary of names, copious notes, and a bibliography. Foley received his Ph.D. from Boston College and is associate professor of patristics at Baylor University. He is the author of several books, including *Against the Academics: St. Augustine's Cassiciacum Dialogues, Volume 1*.

PERSIAN:

Nafisi, Azar. *That Other World: Nabokov and the Puzzle of Exile*. Translated by **Lotfali Khonji**. New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 376 pp. Hardcover. \$30.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-15883-0.

According to the author, *That Other World*, together with *Reading Lolita in Tehran* and *The Republic of Imagination* create "a sort of trilogy." In this particular book, Nafisi presents seven essays that provide a sweeping overview of Nabokov's major works. Nafisi's first-hand encounters mirror Nabokov's experiences of physical, linguistic, and recollective exile. Nabokov, more than **other** authors she read and taught, spoke to the "deep traumatic and anguished existence" that pervaded life under a repressive dictatorship. This cross between a first-person narrative and an academic study underscores her "faith in the critical and almost magical power of literature." Nafisi was born and raised in Tehran, Iran. She received a Ph.D. from the University of Oklahoma and taught English literature at Tehran University. Nafisi left Iran in 1997 and moved to the United States, where she wrote *Reading Lolita in Tehran*. She became an American citizen in 2008. In 2009 *Reading Lolita in Tehran* was named as one of the "100 Best Books of the Decade" by *The Times* (London). She has been awarded honorary doctorates from Mt. Holyoke College (2012), Seton Hall University (2010), Goucher College (2009), and Bard College (2007). Between 1997 and 2017, Nafisi was a Fellow at the Foreign Policy Institute of Johns Hopkins University's School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS) in Washington, DC. She was recently named a Georgetown University/Walsh School of Foreign Service 2018-2019 Centennial Fellow. The translator, Lotfali Khonji, was born in Bahrain, educated in Tehran, and studied mathematics at Birmingham University. From 1968 to 1999, he worked as a producer and broadcaster at BBC's World Service, Persian Section. He has translated many works, including Edward Said's *Orientalism* (into Persian) and Abbas Maroufis *Symphony of the Dead* (into English).

POLISH:

Czyżewski, Tytus. *A Burglar of the Better Sort: Poems, Dramatic Works, Theoretical Writings*. Translated by **Charles S. Kraszewski**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 343pp. Paper. \$56.31. ISBN: 978-1-912894-54-3.

In addition to being a painter, Tytus Czyżewski was also an accomplished playwright, poet, and theoretician. Unlike many of his Polish literary contemporaries, however, he was essentially apolitical. He was an author devoted above all to the craft of literary expression, creating "art for art's sake," and not as a didactic national service. This collection contains the entirety of his surviving literary output, beginning with his play "The Death of the Faun" (1907). It is his poetry, however, that is most arresting. His words were not constrained by any rules of

syntax, logic, or grammar, and he was a bold experimenter with typography as a means of expression. (In his poem "Perception," for example, he turns a stanza ninety degrees to create an impression of falling rain.) As a painter, he was a Colorist highly influenced by Cézanne and El Greco; as a literary figure, he was an avant-garde poet and major representative of Futurism who exerted a marked influence on many Polish artists. Translator Charles Kraszewski (Ph.D., comparative literature, Penn State University) also provides extensive textual notes and a bibliography. Kraszewski has previously translated Adam Mickiewicz's *Forefathers' Eve* and *Sonnets* into English for Glagoslav Publications. He has also translated into Polish the poetry of T. S. Eliot, Robinson Jeffers, and Lawrence Ferlinghetti. He is the recipient of the 2103 Prize for the Propagation of Polish Culture. A professor at King's College, Wilkes Barre, PA, Kraszewski is also a member of the Union of Polish Writers Abroad and of the Association of Polish Writers.

PORTUGUESE:

Constantine, Helen. Editor. *Lisbon Tales*. Translated by **Amanda Hopkinson**. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2019. 221 pp. Paper. \$17.95. ISBN: 978-0-19-880107-8.

Oxford University Press continues its "City Tales" series which aims to evoke the history and culture of a city through the selected short writings of that nation's authors. Lisbon offers ample scope for such a collection, considering that its long history ranges from the Greeks and Phoenicians, to the Romans and Moors, to Napoleon, to the 20th-century dictator Salazar and beyond. Presented chronologically, this collection begins with writings by the celebrated 19th-century novelist Eça de Queiroz and continues to the 21st-century musician, blogger, and novelist Kalaf Angelo. Other authors in this collection include Fernando Pessoa, José Saramago, and Teolinda Gersão. Often reflecting the persecution and exile suffered by writers under Salazar's long dictatorship, these fourteen short stories (and excerpts from diaries and longer works) present a variety of perspectives on Lisbon from the points of view of its most celebrated authors. Maps, photographs, and biographical sketches round out this literary portrait of Portugal's capital. Born in England and educated at Oxford, translator Amanda Hopkinson was a visiting professor at the Centre for Translation and Interpretation Studies at Manchester University, and at the Centre of Creative Writing, Translation and Publishing at City University, London. From 2004 to 2012 she was the Director of the British Centre for Literary Translation at the University of East Anglia. She is best known for her English versions of contemporary Spanish, Portuguese, and French authors. She has previously translated works by José Saramago, Isabel Allende, Dominique Manotti, and Paulo Coelho.

Reis, João. *The Translator's Bride*. Translated by the author. Rochester, NY: Open Letter Press, 2019. 117 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-940953-95-3.

This comic novella is narrated by a nameless translator in a nameless city whose wife, Helena, has left him and has no plans to return. He sits in a streetcar, pining for his lost love and complaining to his fellow passengers. The complaints continue for two days, and the narrator's rambling thoughts take the form of vicious assessments of everyone he encounters, contrasting vividly with his faux cheerful conversations. Obsessive thoughts pervade the translator's mind as he walks around the unnamed city, trying to figure out how to put his life back together—his publisher won't pay him for his work, he lost his hat on the streetcar, his living conditions are grim, and he can't find way to buy a house for Helena and lure her home. João Reis's direct translation of his work from Portuguese to English adds an element of personal irony to the

narrator's comic yet melancholic ramblings. Reis, born in 1985, is a Portuguese writer and literary translator of Scandinavian languages. He studied philosophy and has lived in Portugal, Norway, Sweden, and the United Kingdom, having worked in occupations ranging from book publisher to kitchen chef. *The Translator's Bride* is his first novel translated into English; it was published in Portuguese in 2015. His latest novel, *A Devastação do Silêncio*, is longlisted for the Prémio Oceanos.

ROMANIAN:

Ursu, Liliana. *Clay and Star: Selected Poems of Liliana Ursu.* Translated by **Mihaela Moscaliuc.** Wilkes-Barre, PA: Etruscan Press, 2019. 96 pp. Paper. \$17.00. ISBN: 978-0-9997534-3-0.

This is Liliana Ursu's thirteenth book of poetry and her sixth volume to be translated into English. Many of the fifty-one works in this collection reflect her worldwide travels and provide the backdrop for her short (one to two pages) poems: Sweden, Greece, California, Massachusetts, Kentucky, and Pennsylvania. But the country most often in her mind's eye and in these poems is her native Romania: Bucharest, Şuşag, Văratec, and especially Sibiu, where she was born. (It seems, despite her journeys, she remains nostalgic for her native city.) Many of the poems in this collection display what her translator describes as "an unabashed poetics of spirituality," so Ursu's poetic locales such as Thomas Merton's Abbey of Gethsemani, the island of Patmos, and the Văratec Monastery while not particularly remarkable, connect vast territories and turn them into spaces of spiritual connections. Ursu's first book in English, *The Sky Behind the Forest* (1997), was shortlisted for Oxford's Weidenfeld Prize, and *Lightwall* (2009) was a finalist for the PEN USA Literary Award in Translation. She is the recipient of two Fulbright grants and has been awarded Romania's rank of Knight of Arts and Literature. Translator Mihaela Moscaliuc has written two books of poetry (*Immigrant Model* and *Father Dirt*) and has translated Carmelia Leontre's *The Hiss of the Viper*. A former Fulbright Scholar, she is associate professor of English at Monmouth University and visiting faculty in the Drew University MFA program in Poetry and Poetry Translation.

RUSSIAN:

Aleshkovsky, Yuz. *Nikolai Nikolaevich and Camouflage: Two Novels.* Translated by **Duffield White;** edited and introduced by Susanne Fusso. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 232 pp. Paper. \$15.95.

Written in the 1970s, these two novellas were first distributed as samizdat, part of Russia's literary underground. They reveal coarse satirical insight into Soviet Cold War dissatisfaction with politics, culture, science, and daily life. The foulmouthed titular narrator of *Nikolai Nikolaevich*, Aleshkovsky's first novel, is an ex-con who gives up pickpocketing when he is offered a lucrative job as a sperm donor for an official laboratory. The lab's research experiments change on the whims of scientists and politicians, causing a grotesque collision of the worlds of science, sex, two-bit criminality, and Communist bureaucracy. The narrator of *Camouflage*, Fedya Milashkin, plays an anti-heroic role in advancing the Soviet cause. In the run-up to the 1980 Olympics, he and a cohort of small-town drunks engage in a state-sponsored cover-up. They are tasked with presenting the USSR as a realm of decay and rampant alcoholism in order to trick CIA satellites passing overhead. Milashkin's camouflage brigade

distracts the spying Americans from the war preparations hidden below ground, where Soviet scientists work out "how to make the bombs smaller and the explosions bigger." Yuz Aleshkovsky was born in 1929 in Siberia and grew up in Moscow. He served in the Soviet navy and was imprisoned from 1950 to 1953 as punishment for the brazen theft of a local Party official's car. He has written children's books, novellas, screenplays, poetry, and songs. In 1980 he was invited to the United States and settled in Middleton, Connecticut where he presently lives and serves as a Visiting Russian Emigre Writer at Wesleyan University. Duffield White, the translator, is professor emeritus of Russian, East European, and Eurasian studies at Wesleyan University. He is also the translator of *Tolstoi in the Sixties* by Boris Eikhenbaum. Susanne Fusso, the editor, is Marcus L. Taft Professor of Modern Languages at Wesleyan University. She is the translator of *Trepanation of the Skull* by Sergey Gandlevsky.

Chudakova, Marietta. *Mikhail Bulgakov: The Life and Times.* Translated by **Huw Davies.** London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 652 pp. Paper. \$27.55. ISBN: 978-1-78437-980-3.

Mikhail Bulgakov (1891–1940) was a Russian writer active in the first half of the 20th century. He is best known for his novel *The Master and Margarita*, published posthumously, which has been called one of the masterpieces of the 20th century. Marietta Chudakova's biography of Bulgakov was first published in 1988 and remains the most authoritative and comprehensive study of the writer's life ever produced. It has received acclaim for the journalistic style in which it is written: the author draws on unpublished manuscripts and early drafts of Bulgakov's novels to bring the writer to life. She also explores archival documents and memoirs written by some of Bulgakov's contemporaries in order to construct a comprehensive and nuanced portrait of the writer and his life and times. Chudkova, born in 1937, received her Ph.D. from Moscow State University. From 1965-1984, she worked at the Manuscripts Department of the USSR State Library where she played an active part in the acquisition of Bulgakov's personal archive. She has written more than 200 publications on 20th-century Russian literature, philology, and literary criticism. Chudkova currently chairs the Bulgakov Foundation. Translator Huw Davies holds an M.A. from Oxford in Modern Languages. He worked for a translation agency in Russia and taught English in Moscow. After returning to the United Kingdom, he became a translator for Glagoslav Publications and has translated ten books for them.

Khemlin, Margarita. *Klotsvog.* Translated by **Lisa C. Hayden.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 245pp. Paper. \$15.95. ISBN 9780231182379.

The first-person narrator of Khemlin's novel is Maya Abramovna Klotsvog, self-centered, garrulous, and thoroughly entertaining as she tells the reader where she came from, who she didn't get along with, and what became of all her husbands and lovers. In addition to being a story about a strikingly vain woman, *Klotsvog* is also a novel about being Jewish in the Soviet Union and the historical trauma of World War II. Although the Holocaust is barely mentioned, the entire narrative is saturated with allusions to it, and Maya's selfishness takes on a slightly different hue when considered against the trauma she survived. Maya's life story flows as a long monologue, told in unfussy language dense with Soviet bureaucratic clichés and matter-of-fact descriptions of Soviet life. Margarita Khemlin (1960-2015) was born in Chernigov, Ukraine, and lived in Moscow. Her works were short-listed for the Russian Booker Prize and the Big Book Prize. Lisa C. Hayden's translations focus on contemporary Russian fiction. She has previously translated short stories by Khemlin, as well as three novels by Eugene Vodolazkin.

Khodasevich, Vladislav. *Necropolis*. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 262 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-0-231-18705-3.

This book is an unconventional literary memoir written by the great Russian poet Vladislav Khodasevich throughout the 1920s and 1930s following the deaths of his subjects. *Necropolis* is also a literary graveyard in which an entire movement, Russian Symbolism, is buried. Recalling figures including Alexander Blok, Sergey Esenin, Fyodor Sologub, and the socialist realist Maxim Gorky, Khodasevich tells the story of how their lives and artworks intertwined. He testifies to the seductive and often devastating power of the Symbolist attempt to turn one's life into a work of art, and how one man was left with the task of memorializing his fellow artists after their deaths. Khodasevich's portraits deal with revolution, disillusionment, emigration, suicide, the vocation of the poet, and the place of the artist in society. Born in Moscow in 1886 to a noble Polish Catholic family, Vladislav Felitsianovich Khodasevich was a major figure in 20th-century Russian poetry as well as an accomplished critic and translator. He left Moscow University after understanding that poetry was his true vocation and was just beginning to find his voice as a poet when the Bolsheviks came to power in 1917. He left for Italy, then Berlin, where most of his poetry was written. He moved to Paris in 1933 and died of cancer in 1939, shortly after the publication of *Necropolis*. Sarah Vitali is a translator who recently received her Ph.D. in Slavic languages and literatures of Harvard University.

Krasheninnikov, Pavel. *The 12 Apostles of Russian Law: Lawyers Who Changed Law, State and Society*. Translation by **Christopher Culver**. London. Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 157 pp. Paper \$21.50. ISBN 978-1-911414-93-3.

Pavel Krasheninnikov is a Russian politician, state official, and professor of law. In addition, he is a deputy in the State Duma and has led the Duma's legislative committee for 18 years. His writings trace the development of law as a system for regulating interpersonal and social relations and as one of the sources of authority. The "apostles" in his latest book begin with Gavriila Derzhavin, a civil servant under Catherine the Great, and later the first minister of justice and attorney-general of the Russian Empire (appointed by Alexander I). Derzhavin influenced other nineteenth- and twentieth-century reformers and scholars who kept the dream of a state ruled by law alive through the revolution, the Bolshevik coup, and the Soviet era. With perestroika, followers of these pre-revolutionary legal thinkers (several of them colleagues of Krasheninnikov) developed the Constitution and the Civil Code of the Russian Federation. Translator Christopher Culver is an alumnus of the University of Helsinki and has translated two non-fiction works (*Andrei Tarkovsky: A Life on the Cross* and *Myths About Russia*), as well as Natalia Gromova's novel *Moscow in the 1930s*.

Loginov, Vladlen. *Vladimir Lenin: How to Become a Leader*. Translated by **Lewis White**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 338 pp. Paper. \$24.90. ISBN: 978-1-78267-061-2.

Lenin scholar Vladlen Loginov has written a detailed account of the young Lenin (or Ulyanov, as he was known during the years covered in this biography). Beginning with the family's origins—Lenin's ancestors were serfs—Loginov traces Lenin's early years and places him in the context of his time. As Loginov puts it, "the circumstances and events of each era did influence actions, did determine the destiny of lives, and did define modes of living just as profoundly as familial heritage." Loginov reveals the source of the future statesman's incredible willpower, his ability to influence people, his drive to succeed, and his leadership qualities. All of these, Loginov asserts, were intrinsic to Lenin's character from a young age. Vladlen Loginov is the director of the Centre for Historical Research, Professor of National and World History at the Russian Academy of Education, and author of over 400 academic works on the 20th century history of Russia. Lewis White is a free-lance translator who has previously translated Evgeny

Karasyuk's *Sberbank: The Rebirth of Russia's Financial Giant* (2015) for Glagoslav Publications.

New Russian Drama: An Anthology (Russian Library Series). Edited by Maksim Hanukai and Susanna Weygandt. **Multiple Translators**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 544 pp. Paper. \$35.00. ISBN: 978-0231-18511-0.

Columbia University Press's Russian Library Series is an expansive selection of Russian literature in English translation, concentrating on works previously unavailable in English and those ripe for new translations. *New Russian Drama*, the most recent work in the series, is a collection containing ten plays that premiered at various Russian venues between 2000 and 2018. The collapse of the Soviet Union in 1991 marked the beginning of turmoil and decline for Russian theater. Educated Russians fled the country, the economy was in free fall, and the theater suddenly faced competition from film and television. To make matters worse, state subsidies for theatrical production, salaries, and infrastructure were wiped out. Out of this chaos New Drama emerged as a result of the efforts of veteran playwrights who encouraged young talent, founded new theaters, established schools for playwriting, and instituted drama festivals. The young dramatists who materialized from this artistic movement startled audiences with hypernaturalistic portrayals of sex and violence, daring use of non-normative language, and thrilling experiments with genre and form. Many of the plays in this anthology address pressing social issues, while others reimagine traditional canons. The texts in this collection reflect the movement's commitment to investigating contemporary reality, confronting traditionalism, and revitalizing Russia's most politicized art form. This anthology also contains copious notes, a chronology, biographical sketches, and an extensive introduction by the editors. Co-editor Maksim Hanukai (who also translated four of the collected dramas) received his Ph.D. from Columbia; he is currently a professor of Russian at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. His fellow-editor Susanna Weygandt received her Ph.D. from Princeton and is an instructor of Russian at Saint Louis University.

Novikov, Dmitry. *A Flame Out at Sea*. Translated by **Christopher Culver**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 232 pp. Paper. \$22.50. ISBN: 978-1-912894-22-2.

When tourists visit the Russian Republic of Karelia for hiking, kayaking, and fishing, they soon discover a land of breathtaking though harsh natural beauty. The characters in Novikov's novel are predominantly people of the Russian North: Pomors, Karelians and Komi. He delves into the character of these northerners, but his priorities involve the area of the White Sea with its shoreline of giant fir trees, boulders, and fast rivers, as well as its medieval churches and abandoned ships. The protagonist goes to this area in search of its present, which unexpectedly proves to be inseparable from its recent past. Novikov's story is about overcoming familial burdens, leaving behind old resentments, quashing one's pride, and turning one's life around. Novikov was born in 1966 in Karelia. He studied medicine briefly at Petrozavodsk State University, spent three years in the navy, and later owned a small sales company. His first book of short stories was published in 2001. His novel *A Flame Out at Sea* appeared in Russia in 2016; it was recognized by a number of literary prizes, including the Russian Booker Prize (2017). He currently lives near Petrozavodsk in a homestead that he built himself. Translator Christopher Culver is an alumnus of the University of Helsinki and has translated several non-fiction works for Glagoslav, including *Andrei Tarkovsky: A Life on the Cross* and *The 12 Apostles of Russian Law*, as well as Natalia Gromova's novel *Moscow in the 1930s*.

Pavlova, Karolina. *A Double Life*. Translated by **Barbara Heldt**. New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 176 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-0-231-19079-4.

An unsung classic of 19th-century Russian literature, *A Double Life* tells the story of Cecily, a privileged, naïve, and romantic young woman who becomes the object of a marriage plot. Cecily's best friend Olga, together with Olga's mother, scheme to marry Cecily to a spineless man of inconsiderable wealth. In doing so, Cecily will no longer be a rival for Olga, who hopes to make a far better match with the wealthy Prince Victor. Cecily is oblivious to the intrigue and carries on her daily high society routine. It's only at night that Cecily's mind becomes unfettered, that her imagination can expand. Each chapter concludes with the end of a day; at each ending, the prose slips neatly into poetry, reflecting the state of Cecily's mind. Karolina Pavlova (1807-1893) combines rich narrative prose that details balls and tea parties with her protagonist's poetic inner irony. Pavlova herself was a wealthy Russian poet and translator who presided over a famous Moscow literary salon. She died in Dresden, after abandoning Russia because of hostile criticism of her poetry and her personal life. (She had filed a legal complaint against her husband after he squandered her fortune on high-stakes gambling.) *A Double Life* is her only novel. The translator, Barbara Heldt, was born in New York, received her undergraduate degree at Wellesley, and studied in Moscow under a Fulbright Scholarship. She received her doctorate from the University of Chicago in 1968. In 1974, she joined the University of British Columbia and became Professor Emerita in 1996. Her books include *Terrible Perfection: Women and Russian Literature*. The Heldt Prize, a literary award in her honor, was established by the Association for Women in Slavic Studies.

Rubina, Dina. *Leonardo's Handwriting*. Translated by **Melanie Moore**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 343 pp. Paper. \$27.50. ISBN: 978-1-912894-45-1.

Rubina's novel is a romantic morality tale, with an unconventional woman at its heart. Nature has given the heroine, Anna, the gift of clairvoyance, and this gift determines her singular fate. The characteristic left-handed mirror handwriting, which in psychology came to be known as "Leonardo's handwriting" (named for the manner in which the Renaissance genius wrote his notes), simply adds to the strangeness of Anna's personality and to the twists and turns of the novel. Is the divine gift of prophecy a blessing or a curse? And how is it possible to withstand the burden of such an astonishing gift? There is another character whose bizarre, platonic yearning for Anna resembles a call from the mirror universe that has entranced and attracted her since childhood. The reader must put together the pieces of this mirror puzzle of personalities and events in a storyline that comes into focus like an image in a misted mirror—bit by bit. Born in Tashkent, Uzbekistan in 1953, Dina Rubina studied music at the Tashkent Conservatory, then had her first stories published in the 1970s. She has received numerous awards (including the Big Book Award in 2007), and is the bestselling author of over 40 titles, including eight novels. She has lived in Israel since 1990. Translator Melanie Moore was educated at Oxford and the University of Bradford. After 25 years as a monitoring journalist with the BBC, she is now a free-lance translator. *Leonardo's Handwriting* is her third Russian-English translation for Glagoslav Publications.

Slavnikova, Olga. *The Man Who Couldn't Die.* Translated by **Marian Schwartz.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 248 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-0-231-18595-0.

In the chaos of early-1990s Russia, the wife and stepdaughter of a paralyzed veteran conceal the Soviet Union's collapse from him in order to keep him—and his pension—alive, until it turns out that the tough old man has other plans. This novel tells the story of how two women try to prolong a life by creating a world that doesn't change, a Soviet Union that never crumbled. To this end, stepdaughter Marina hangs Brezhnev's portrait on the wall, edits the Pravda articles read to him, and uses her media connection to create entire newscasts of events that never happened. Despite all this subterfuge, Nina (wife and mother) discovers that her husband is conspiring as well—to kill himself and put an end to the charade. Slavnikova's novel is a darkly comic vision of the lost Soviet past and the madness of the post-Soviet world. Olga Slavnikova was born in 1957 in Ekaterinburg and graduated from the Ural State University. Her first fiction was published in the late 1980s and she has lived and worked in Moscow since 2001. She was awarded the 2006 Russian Booker Prize for *2017: A Novel*. Translator Marian Schwartz studied Russian at Harvard University, Middlebury Russian School, and Leningrad State University, and received a Master of Arts in Slavic Languages and Literatures from the University of Texas at Austin. She is the recipient of many awards, including two National Endowment for the Arts translation awards, as well as the 2018 Linda Gaboriau Award for Translation from the Banff International Literary Translation Centre.

Tretyakov, Sergei. *I Want a Baby and Other Plays.* Translated by **Robert Leach** and **Stephen Holland.** London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 436 pp. Paper. \$25.50. ISBN: 978-1-912894-30-7.

Collected and published for the first time in English, these seven plays by the Soviet Russian futurist writer, playwright, and poet Sergei Tretyakov (1892-1937) were written between 1923 and 1928. *The World Turned Upside Down* concerns a failed agrarian revolution. *A Wise Man*, originally directed by Sergei Eisenstein, is a clown show set in the Paris of the émigré White Russians. *Are You Listening, Moscow?!* and *Gas Masks* are "agit-melodrama," fierce, fast-moving, and edgy. *Roar, China!* dramatizes an actual incident in the West's oppression of China when a British gunboat captain threatened to blow the city of Wanxien to bits. *I Want a Baby* (two versions are published in this collection) advocated selective breeding for the purposes of political—not racial—purity. It was banned during Tretyakov's lifetime, and was finally produced in Moscow in 1990, even then arousing fierce controversy. Tretyakov was arrested in 1937 and charged with espionage. He had fallen under suspicion because of his contacts with foreign writers, and because the political attitudes he had expressed in the 1920s were no longer tolerated. Sentenced to death in 1937, in a last act of defiance he committed suicide in prison. Translator Robert Leach is an academic and a freelance theatre director. He has been Reader in Drama and Theatre Arts at the University of Birmingham and Senior Lecturer at Edinburgh University. He is currently writing a biography of Tretyakov. His colleague, Stephen Holland, received a B.A. in Russian and Sociology from the University of Birmingham and a M.Phil. in Social Anthropology from Cambridge University. He is currently working on translations of Tretyakov's poetry.

Ulitskaya, Ludmila. *Jacob's Ladder: A Novel.* Translated by **Polly Gannon.** New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux. 542 pp. Hardcover. \$35.00. ISBN: 978-0-374-2936-5.

Nora Ossetsky, a set designer in late-Soviet Moscow, discovers a chest filled with her paternal grandparents' correspondence. Thus begins *Jacob's Ladder*, an ambitious family saga that encompasses six generations and alternates between two plotlines: Nora's and her grandmother Marsuya's. (Marsuya's story takes place in revolutionary Russia and in the

Stalinist Soviet Union.) The interwoven stories of both Nora and Marsuya are set against a backdrop that spans a century of tumultuous Russian and Soviet history, politics, economics, culture, and music. While both women navigate the challenges of complicated personal relationships, the author also reveals how the trauma experienced by one generation as the result of revolution and upheaval shape the lives of their descendants. Ulitskaya was born in the town of Davlekanovo in Bashkiria and grew up in Moscow where she received a degree in genetics from the Moscow State University. Having worked in the field of genetics and biochemistry, Ulitskaya began her literary career by joining the Jewish drama theatre as a literary consultant. She has written plays, film scripts, short stories, and novels, including *The Kukotsky Enigma*, which won the Russian Booker Prize in 2002. In 2014, Ulitskaya was awarded the Austrian State prize for European Literature. Today she divides her time between Moscow and Israel. Polly Gannon is the director of cultural studies at the New York-St. Petersburg Institute of Linguistics, Cognition and Culture. She holds a Ph.D. in Russian Literature and Slavic Linguistics from Cornell University and has taught literature and translation studies. She previously translated Ulitskaya's *The Big Green Tent*. Gannon lives, teaches, and translates in St. Petersburg, Russia.

Zvyagintsev, Alexander. *The Nuremberg Trials*. Translated by **Christopher Culver**. London: Glagoslav Publications, 2019. 425 pp. Paper. \$29.50. ISBN: 978-1-78437-986-5.

Told from the Russian point of view, this novel uses the run-up to the Nuremberg Trials as the backdrop for a byzantine story of intrigue, conspiracy, retribution, vengeance, and romance. Can the Germans be rehabilitated or not? A critical question, and those Allies responsible for the prosecution must untangle the oft-repeated civilian claims that none of them were aware of the death camps and none of them belonged to the Nazi party. Many of the novel's characters are historical figures: the USSR prosecutor Roman Rudenko and his American counterpart Robert Jackson, and the Nazi officials Goering, Ribbentrop, and Hess. In addition, there's also the fictional romance between a Russian counterintelligence officer and an aristocratic émigrée. All these threads are woven into a complex tapestry that outlines the advent of the Iron Curtain and the onset of the Cold War. Alexander Zvyagintsev, a lawyer by training, is best known in Russia as a novelist and screenwriter. Six of Zvyagintsev's novels have been adapted for film and fifteen films have been produced from his scripts. He has also written a biography of Roman Rudenko. His novel *The Nuremberg Trials* was awarded a Special Prize by Literaturnaya Gazeta in 2012. Many of his works have been published abroad and translated into various languages, including French, German, Spanish, Greek, Chinese, Polish, Bulgarian and Latvian. Translator Christopher Culver is an alumnus of the University of Helsinki and has translated several works of nonfiction for Glagoslav, including *Andrei Tarkovsky: A Life on the Cross* and *The 12 Apostles of Russian Law*, as well as Natalia Gromova's novel *Moscow in the 1930s*.

SPANISH:

Chejfec, Sergio. *The Incompletes*. Translated by **Heather Cleary**. Rochester, NY: Open Letter Books, 2019. 180 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 978-1-948830-03-4.

"Now I am going to tell the story of something that happened one night years ago, and the event of the morning and afternoon that followed." This is the innocent beginning of a mysterious travelogue that begins on a pier in Buenos Aires when the unnamed narrator saw his friend Felix off on a voyage decades earlier. Felix eventually arrives in Moscow after sending

back occasional postcards and notes about his travels. The latest of these messages is written on stationary from the seedy Hotel Salgado. From there Felix's story intersects with that of Masha, the hotel's owner. As their stories begin to intertwine, the reader is uneasily reminded of the fact that neither Felix nor Masha is telling the story at all. Much of everything that happens in the book might merely be the imagination of the narrator. It is the narrator who adorns simple correspondence from a friend with drama and mystery, and it begs the question: is the storyteller bound to adhere to the facts? In this short but very complex book, mysteries and clues abound, but there are no answers, only dead ends and new mysteries. Born in Argentina, Sergio Chefec has written novels, essays, short stories, and poetry. He received a Guggenheim Foundation fellowship in 2000, and his novel *The Planets* was a finalist for the 2013 Best Translated Book Award. He currently teaches in the Creative Writing in Spanish Program at NYU. Heather Cleary has previously translated two other books by Chefec: *The Dark* and *The Planets*. She holds an MA in Comparative Literature from NYU and a PhD in Latin American and Iberian Cultures from Columbia University, and currently teaches at Sarah Lawrence College.

Comensal, Jorge. *The Mutations: A Novel.* Translated by **Charlotte Whittle.** New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2019. 184 pp. Cloth \$25.00. ISBN: 978-0374216535.

Ramón Martínez, militant atheist, successful lawyer, and conventional family man, is utterly gobsmacked when cancer of the tongue deprives him of his power and livelihood: speech. After Ramón's pious maid brings him a foul-mouthed parrot as a birthday gift, this filthy bird becomes Ramón's companion, confidant, and unlikely double. Jorge Comensal's first novel is both comic and funereal as it traces the metastasis of Ramón's cancer through his body and through the lives of his family, colleagues, and doctors. In the story of this disease, Comensal dissects the experience of illness and maps the relationships both strengthened and frayed in its wake. Filled with the poetry of regret, rage, and finally, resignation, *The Mutations* offers up a profound and funny cross section of modern Mexico, as well as a bold treatment of a universal reality. Jorge Comensal was born in Mexico in 1987 and is the recipient of scholarships from the Fundación para las Letras Mexicanas and the Fondo Nacional para la Cultura y las Artes. He has been published in such periodicals as *Letras Libres* and *Este País*. Charlotte Whittle's translations and writing have appeared in *The Literary Review*, *Guernica*, the *Los Angeles Times* and elsewhere. She is an editor at Cardboard House Press.

Frésan, Rodrigo. *The Dreamed Part.* Translated by **Will Vanderhyden.** Rochester, NY: Open Letter Press, 2019. 560 pp. Paper. \$18.95. ISBN: 978-1-948830-05-8.

Following on his novel *The Invented Part* (2017), avant-garde Argentinian writer Rodrigo Frésan explores the world of dreams and finds a rich trove for interpretation. He introduces us to The Writer who hasn't written for so long that he's no longer really a writer at all. Instead, he lies awake, imagining and reimagining key moments of his life, spinning out a series of insomniac visions that are both thought-provoking and dreamlike. The books he has written remain, but now all he has to sell are his dreams. This fantasy world is a place of "experiments gone awry," a place where Bono can dream up a Roy Orbison song that never existed and have Orbison show up at his door to claim it. Along with fictional creations such as Penelope, who *does* write, as well as characters from *The Invented Part*, his dream visions include three lunatic sisters (the

Brontës), a genius addicted to butterflies (Nabokov) and an FBI agent addicted to that genius; a looney and lysergic uncle; and of course Shakespeare, John Lennon, Bob Dylan, Sigmund Freud, and Talking Heads. Themes appear, disappear, and reappear; and countless figures from cultural history, high and low and everything in between, roam in and out of this ambitious and unique novel. Rodrigo Frésan is the author of ten works of fiction, including *The Invented Part*, winner of the 2018 Best Translated Book Award. In 2017 he received the Prix Roger Caillois awarded by PEN Club France. Frésan lives and works in Barcelona. The translator, Will Vanderhyden, received an MA in Literary Translation Studies from the University of Rochester. He received NEA and Lannan fellowships to translate Frésan's *The Invented Part*. Frésan's *El fondo del cielo* was also translated into English by Will Vanderhyden and published as *The Bottom of the Sky* in 2018.

Labbé, Carlos. *Spiritual Choreographies*. Translated by **Will Vanderhyden**. Rochester: Open Letter Press, 2019. 132 pp. Paper. \$13.95. ISBN: 978-1-940953-97-7.

This third novel by Chilean novelist and musician Carlos Labbé experiments with narrative voice as the work alternates between the musings of a paraplegic rock musician and the more conventional "corrections" of an unidentified editor. By blinking his eyes and moving his pupils, the musician composes a kind of anti-biography that evokes his childhood in southern Chile while describing the rise and fall of the rock band he grew up to lead. Like the editor, the paraplegic musician is also unnamed, and his impressionistic recollections are followed by the editor's fuller third-person expansions. These "corrections," however, are often as contradictory and digressive as they are explanatory. Even as Labbé makes sure readers won't have a reliable narrative, he uses the twisting storylines to comment on such diverse subjects as colonialism, pop culture, and feminism. Like the protagonist of his novel, Labbé was born and educated in Chile and is also a rock musician. In addition to seven novels, Labbé has also written short stories and screenplays. In 2010 he was named one of *Granta Magazine's* Best Young Spanish Language Novelists. His translator, Will Vanderhyden, received an M.A. in Literary Translation Studies from the University of Rochester. He has previously translated two other novels by Carlos Labbé: *Navidad & Matanza* (2014) and *Loquela* (2015). He received NEA and Lannan fellowships to translate Rodrigo Frésan's novel, *The Invented Part*, which won the 2018 Best Translated Book Award.

Ocampo, Silvina. *Forgotten Journey: Stories*. Translated by **Katie Lateef-Jan** and **Suzanne Jill Levine**. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2019. 134 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 9780872867727.

The first English translation of surrealist Silvina **Ocampo's** debut book (originally published in 1937), this collection features 28 short stories by the Argentinian author. The book takes its title from the story of a girl who struggles to recall the events of her birth in order to remember her identity. Another story follows a friendship between two girls, one poor and one wealthy, who grow up to appear identical to one another, enabling them to trade lives and families. In "Enmity of Things," a young man begins to suspect that his mundane possessions are conspiring against him. In "The Lost Passport," a 14-year-old girl dreams of the fire that sinks her transatlantic ship. Set on the streets of Buenos Aires, in the decaying summer homes of the country's interior, or in the fishing villages along its coast, **Ocampo's** stories detail the landscape that nurtures, haunts, or condemns her characters. Ocampo (1903-1993) was born in Argentina but spent her early life in Paris where she was educated by tutors. Before turning to writing, Ocampo studied painting under Fernand Léger and Giorgio de Chirico. She began her

career as a writer in 1936 and went on to publish thirteen volumes of fiction and poetry. She was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship and Argentina's National Prize for Poetry. Translator Katie Lateef-Jan is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of California, Santa Barbara in Comparative Literature. Her research focuses on twentieth-century Latin American literature, specifically Argentine fantastic fiction. She and her fellow translator Suzanne Jill Levine are co-editors of *Untranslatability Goes Global: The Translator's Dilemma* (2018). Suzanne Jill Levine is an American writer, poet, and literary translator. She earned a Ph.D. from New York University and specializes in translation studies. She was awarded the PEN Center USA's Translation Award in 2012 and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 1997.

Ocampo, Silvina. *The Promise*. Translated by **Suzanne Jill Levine** and **Jessica Powell**. San Francisco: City Lights Publishers, 2019. 114 pp. Paper. \$14.95. ISBN: 9780872867710.

In this, her only novel, Silvina Ocampo (1903-1993) recounts a dying woman's thoughts as she relives the people and places of her life while stranded in the middle of the ocean. Traveling on a transatlantic ship, the unnamed narrator has fallen overboard and is adrift at sea, watching "the ship...calmly moving away." She makes a promise to Saint Rita, "arbiter of the impossible," that if she survives, she will write her life story, "a dictionary of memories." As she drifts, she wonders what she might include in this story, and a repertoire of miracles, threats, and people parade through her mind, revealing the fragility of memory and the illusion of identity. Ocampo worked on this novella during the final 25 years of her life. It was published posthumously in 2011, and the City Lights edition marks its first English-language translation. Ocampo was born in Argentina but spent her early life in Paris where she was educated by tutors. Before turning to writing, Ocampo studied painting under Fernand Léger and Giorgio de Chirico. She began her career as a writer in 1936 and went on to publish thirteen volumes of fiction and poetry. She was awarded a Guggenheim fellowship and Argentina's National Prize for Poetry. Translator Suzanne Jill Levine is an American writer, poet, literary translator, and scholar. She earned a Ph.D. from New York University and specializes in translation studies. Some of her best-known translations include works by Borges and Puig. She was awarded the PEN Center USA's Translation Award in 2012 and a John Simon Guggenheim Fellowship in 1997. Her fellow translator, Jessica Powell, has published dozens of literary translations by Latin American writers. She was the recipient of a 2011 National Endowment for the Arts Translation Fellowship in support of her translation of Antonio Benítez Rojo's novel *Women in Battle Dress*, which was a finalist for the PEN Center USA Literary Award for Translation.

Ribeyro, Julio Ramón. *The Word of the Speechless: Selected Stories*. Translated by **Katherine Silver**. New York: New York Review of Books, 2019. 272 pp. Paper. \$16.95. ISBN: 9781681373232.

Born in Lima, Julio Ramón Ribeyro (1929-1994) studied literature and law at the Universidad Católica, but immigrated to Paris in 1960 where he eventually worked as a journalist for France Presse. He later became the cultural attaché at the Peruvian Embassy in Paris and was appointed Peru's ambassador to UNESCO. Although he published works in many genres (novels, essays, plays, diaries, and letters), he is best known for his short stories. *The Word of the Speechless* is a selection of these stories gathered from his nine collections published over a 40-year period. Although Europe is occasionally the backdrop for some of his works, most often Peru (and Lima in particular) is the focus of many of the stories gathered here. As a chronicler of 20th-century Lima, Ribeyro often portrays an individual middle-class character reluctantly trying to find a place in an urban antidemocratic society. The characters (usually a single male) often tend to end up with their hopes disappointed and their aspirations unfulfilled. But despite the apparent bleakness, Ribeyro's work is also mildly comic, due in part

to the author's sense of irony. **Katherine Silver** has translated more than thirty books, mostly of literature from the Americas. She has received numerous awards and prizes, including three National Endowment for the Arts translation fellowships. She was recently translator-in-residence at the University of Iowa and was the former director of the Banff International Literary Translation Centre. She lives in Berkeley, California.

Sánchez-Blake, Elvira. *Spiral of Silence: A Novel.* Translated by **Lorena Terando.** Evanston: Northwestern University Press, 2019. 272 pp. Paper \$18.95. ISBN: 978-0-8101-3916-9.

Sánchez-Blake's novel breaks thirty-year silences about the traumatizing impact of Colombia's civil war, and centers on the experiences of three women who move through hopelessness, loss, and grief during this volatile era in Latin American history. A multigenerational epic, the story opens in the early 1980s, as peace and amnesty agreements spark optimism and hope. Told from three points of view, the novel chronicles Norma, a privileged, upper-class woman who is married to an army general; Maria Teresa (Mariate), a young rebel and mother; and Amparo, a woman who comes of age at this critical moment in her country's history. Three women, three different lives—each contends with the consequences of war and violence on her life; each is empowered through community-building and working for change. Elvira Sánchez-Blake earned a Ph.D. from Cornell University and is currently an associate professor of Spanish in the Department of Romance and Classical Studies at Michigan State University. Her research interests include Latin American literature, media and cultural studies, gender, testimonial narrative, and theater. She has written short stories, poetry, and plays; *Spiral of Silence* is her first novel. Her translator, Lorena Terando, holds a Ph.D. from SUNY Binghamton and is an associate professor of translation and interpreting studies, and chair of the Translation and Interpreting Studies Department at the University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee. She is a leading critical translation scholar, focusing on witnessing in translation, trauma studies, and the work of Latin American women novelists.

Toscana, David. *The Enlightened Army.* Translated by **David William Foster.** Austin: University of Texas Press, 2019. 232 pp. Paper. \$19.95. ISBN: 978-1-4773-1777-8.

Ignacio Matus is a public school history teacher in Monterrey, Mexico who gets fired because of his political rantings about Mexico's repeated humiliations at the hands of the United States. Not only did the U.S. steal a large swath of the country in the Mexican American War, it also denied Matus a bronze medal in the 1924 Olympics. (It seems that Matus wasn't an official competitor and staged his own parallel race through the streets of Monterrey.) Fed up with these injustices, Matus decides to seek vindication by reconquering Texas for Mexico. His call for an invading army, however, is answered only by a few friends and a handful of students who call themselves *los iluminados* ("the enlightened ones). Matus marches his army of visionaries a few steps across the Rio Grande and directs the conquest of the Alamo (a two-story house). The showdown between good and evil is about to begin, but the quest is as worthy of Don Quixote as it is doomed. A native of Monterrey, Mexico, David Toscana worked as an engineer before he began his literary career in the 1990s. He is the author of several novels, three of which have been translated into English. *The Last Reader* was shortlisted for the Rómulo Gallegos International Novel Prize and *The Enlightened Army* won the Casa de las Américas Prize. Toscana currently lives in Poland and Portugal. Translator David William Foster received a Ph.D. from the University of Washington. He is Regents' Professor of Spanish and Women and Gender Studies at Arizona State University, where he also leads the Brazilian Studies Program. He has written extensively on Latin American literature, theater, and cinema, and has translated many literary works.

Vázquez Paz, Johanny. *I Offer My Heart as a Target/Ofrezco Mi Corazón Como Una Diana.* Translated by **Lawrence Schimel.** Brooklyn: Akashic Books, 2019. 96 pp. Paper. \$15.95. ISBN: 978-1-61775-763-1.

This bilingual collection of poems (in Spanish with facing English translations) centers on conflicts created by the body, memory, and history. In the first part of the book, the poet identifies herself as a survivor, her body a war-ravaged battleground. Yet for all her pain, she has lived to tell her tale and emerges strained but triumphant. In part two, Paz examines the effects of displacement as her hold on her personal history and the Spanish language is challenged, compromised by the pressures of assimilation in the English-speaking United States. Her poems describe a victory over issues that have defeated many others. *I Offer My Heart* is the winner of the National Poetry Series' Paz Prize for Poetry. Born and raised in Puerto Rico, Johanny Vázquez Paz holds a bachelor's degree from Indiana State University and a masters' degree from the University of Illinois at Chicago. Currently she is a professor of Spanish at Harold Washington College in Chicago. Her translator, Lawrence Schimel, is an American science fiction writer, translator, and anthologist. He was born in New York and received his B.A. in Literature from Yale University. Schimel is a member of the National Book Critics Circle and the Academy of American Poets.

TIBETAN:

Döndrup, Tsering. *The Handsome Monk and Other Stories.* Translated by **Christopher Peacock.** New York: Columbia University Press, 2019. 216 pp. Paper. \$20.00. ISBN: 978-0-23119-023-7.

Using sparse yet vivid language, Tsering Döndrup presents fifteen stories from across his career that feature hypocritical lamas, crooked officials, violent conflicts, and loyal yaks. His Tibetan nomads find themselves in scenarios that are at once strange and familiar, satirical yet poignant. The stories are set in the fictional region of Tsezchung where Döndrup's characters live their lives against the striking backdrop of Tibet's natural landscape and go about their daily business to the rhythms of Tibetan religious life. Döndrup confronts pressing issues: the corruption of religious institutions; the indignities and injustices of Chinese rule; poverty and social ills such as gambling and alcoholism; and the hardships of a group struggling to maintain its identity. Döndrup's description of Tibetan society is neither romanticized nor idealized; neither is it nightmarish nor backward. It has many problems, be sure, but his exploration of them is thoughtful and concerned, not polemical. His tales pay tribute to the resilience of Tibetan culture. Tsering Döndrup was born in 1961 in Qinghai, China. He has published numerous collections of short fiction and four full-length novels. His work has been translated into several languages, and he is the recipient of Tibetan, Mongolian, and nationwide literary prizes in China. Translator Christopher Peacock is a graduate of the School of Oriental and African Studies (University of London) and a doctoral candidate at Columbia University, where he specializes in modern Chinese literature.

TURKISH:

Sönmez, Burhan. *Labyrinth: A Novel.* Translated by **Ümit Hussein.** New York: Other Press, 2019. 192. Paper. \$15.99. ISBN: 978-1-59051-098-8.

Waking up in a hospital, blues singer Boratin is completely befuddled. He has no idea where he is, who he is, or what his life was like before he awakened. He is told that he tried to commit suicide by jumping off the Bosphorus Bridge in Istanbul, but instead was left with a broken rib and a memory wiped completely clean of all personal information. The novel follows Boratin as he tries to rediscover himself—from how he likes his coffee to whose heart he has broken. Trying to rebuild his life proves difficult when friends and family know more about him than he does, and hearing snippets of his past with no context of where they fit is more frustrating than having nothing. He even wonders if it would be better to leave his past behind: if the old memories come back, so too might the same desperate feelings that led to his suicide attempt. What happens to a life when everything that makes up a person—his memories, opinions, and thoughts—is stripped away? This is the dilemma Boratin confronts as he struggles to move forward in an unfamiliar life and a stranger's body. Born in Turkey, Burhan Sönmez worked as a lawyer before moving to Britain as a political exile. He has written for various newspapers, including *The Guardian*, *Der Spiegel*, and *La Repubblica*, and lectures in Literature and the Novel at the METU (Middle East Technical University). He now divides his time between Istanbul and Cambridge, England. *Labyrinth* is his fourth novel. The translator, **Ümit Hussein**, of Turkish-Cypriot origin, was born and raised in London, where she grew up speaking both Turkish and English. She holds an MA in Literary Translation from the University of East Anglia. Her translation of Sönmez's third novel, *Istanbul Istanbul*, received the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Literature Prize in 2018. She lived and worked in Japan, Portugal, and France before settling in Seville, Spain, where she is now based.

UKRAINIAN:

Zhadan, Serhiy. *What We Live For, What We Die For: Selected Poems.* Translated by **Virlana Tkacz** and **Wanda Phipps.** New Haven: Yale University Press, 2019. 150 pp. Paper. \$18.00. ISBN: 978-0-300-22336-1.

This collection contains 51 poems published between 2001 and 2015. Many of the works have previously been published in anthologies, journals, and websites; a list of their first appearances is included at the end of the book. Reflecting life in post-independence Ukraine, these narrative poems feature portraits of life on war torn and poverty-ravaged streets where children tally the number of local deaths, where mothers live with low expectations, and where romance is a remote memory. Despite the grimness, Zhadan is adept at capturing everyday detail: "Everyone can find something, if they only look carefully," he declares. He leaves readers with a sense of hope, knowing that the will of a people "will never let it be / like it was before." Zhadan was born in Ukraine and graduated from the National Pedagogical University in 1996. He then spent three years as a graduate student of philology and taught Ukrainian and world literature from 2000 to 2004. Since then he has worked as an internationally known freelance writer. He has published twelve books of poetry and seven novels, and has won many literary awards, including the Jan Michalski Prize for Literature and BBC Ukrainian's Book of the Decade award. He is also front man for the band Zhadan and the Dogs. The translation team of Virlana Tkacz and Wanda Phipps has worked together since 1989. Their work has appeared in

numerous American literary journals and anthologies. Together they have received the Agni Translation Prize, seven NYSCA translation grants and The National Theatre Translation Fund Award for their work on the verse drama *Forest Song*. This current translation of Zhadan's poetry was nominated for a PEN Poetry Translation Award.

UZBEK:

Ismailov, Hamid. *Gaia: Queen of Ants*. Translated by **Shelley Fairweather-Vega**. Syracuse: Syracuse University Press, 2019. 224 pp. Paper. \$19.95. ISBN: 978-0-8156-1115-8.

Hamid Ismailov's novel is a dark parable of power, corruption, fraud, and deception. Ismailov depicts a clash of civilizations as he follows the lives of three Central Asian expatriates living in England. Domrul is a young Turk with vague and painful memories of ethnic strife in the Uzbekistan of his childhood. His Irish girlfriend Emer struggles with her own adolescent trauma from growing up in war-torn Bosnia. Domrul is the caretaker for Gaia, the eighty-year-old powerful wife of a Soviet party boss with a mysterious past. One of Ismailov's few novels written in Uzbek, *Gaia* offers a rare portrait of a complex and little-known part of the world. Although the plot is centered on corruption and ethnic conflict, it is punctuated with Sufi philosophy and religious gullibility. The characters grapple with questions of faith, power, sex, and family set against a Central Asian backdrop in the twenty-first century. Hamid Ismail is an Uzbek novelist and poet who was forced to flee Uzbekistan in 1992 due to what the state dubbed "unacceptable democratic tendencies." He came to the United Kingdom and worked for the BBC World Service for twenty-five years. His first Uzbek novel to appear in English, *The Devil's Dance*, won the 2019 European Bank for Reconstruction and Development Literature Prize. Shelley Fairweather-Vega is a professional translator who lives in Seattle, Washington. She holds degrees in international relations from Johns Hopkins University and in Russian, East European, and Central Asian Studies from the University of Washington. She previously translated Ismailov's novel *Of Strangers and Bees*.

TRANSLATION THEORY:

Đurovičová, Nataša, Patrice Petro, and Lorena Terando, eds. *At Translation's Edge*. New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2019. 218 pp. Paper. \$29.95. ISBN: 978-0-9788-0333-6.

Since the 1970s, the field of Translation Studies has entered into dialogue with an array of other disciplines, sustaining a close but contentious relationship with literary translation. *At Translation's Edge* expands this interdisciplinary dialogue by taking up questions of translation across sub-fields and within disciplines, including film and media studies, comparative literature, history, and education among others. For the contributors of this volume, translation is understood in its most expansive, transdisciplinary sense: translation as exchange, migration, and mobility, including cross-cultural communication and media circulation. Whether exploring the Universal Declaration of Human Rights or silent film intertitles, this collection brings together the work of scholars aiming to address the edges of Translation Studies while engaging with major and minor languages, colonial and post-colonial studies, and theories of globalization and empire. Nataša Đurovičová is the house editor of the International Writing Program at the University of Iowa where she publishes *91st Meridian*, the program's online journal. She is also co-editor of *World Cinemas, Transnational Perspectives*. Patrice Petro is a professor of film and media studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, where she also serves as

presidential chair in media studies. She is the author, editor, and co-editor of twelve books, including *After Capitalism: Horizons of Finance, Culture, and Citizenship*. Lorena Terando is an associate professor of translation and interpreting studies at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. She is the translator of Elvira Sánchez Blake's *Spiral of Silence (Espiral de silencios)*.

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