De Bezige Bij



FOREIGN RIGHTS GUIDE

Frankfurt Book Fair 2026
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POETRY

How Many Cows Am I Worth?

Lisette Ma Neza



how many cows am I worth?
now

it's true that I've run out of things to say
but to the question
'How many cows am I worth?'

I got little in return
that question hung in the air
the air that was being bombarded

that question hung
at birthday parties and weddings
in bunting and in tears
of people I love

that question about cows and worth

I hid that question
but I kept finding it again

in my underpants
in my sheets

What currency,
is left of a girl?

What price does dad ask for his daughter?

family photo

in my grandmother's blue living room
everyone is still together

we're standing at the front
chicks, kittens, tadpoles
rats and mice

(an image is just a reality within the frame)

when, years later,
we arrive at grandma's again,
my big sister and I
now have eyes with which we can see

that in our photographs,
that in our living room,
there is an elephant

we now have eyes
with which to see that there is an elephant in the family

POETRY
220 pages
November 2026

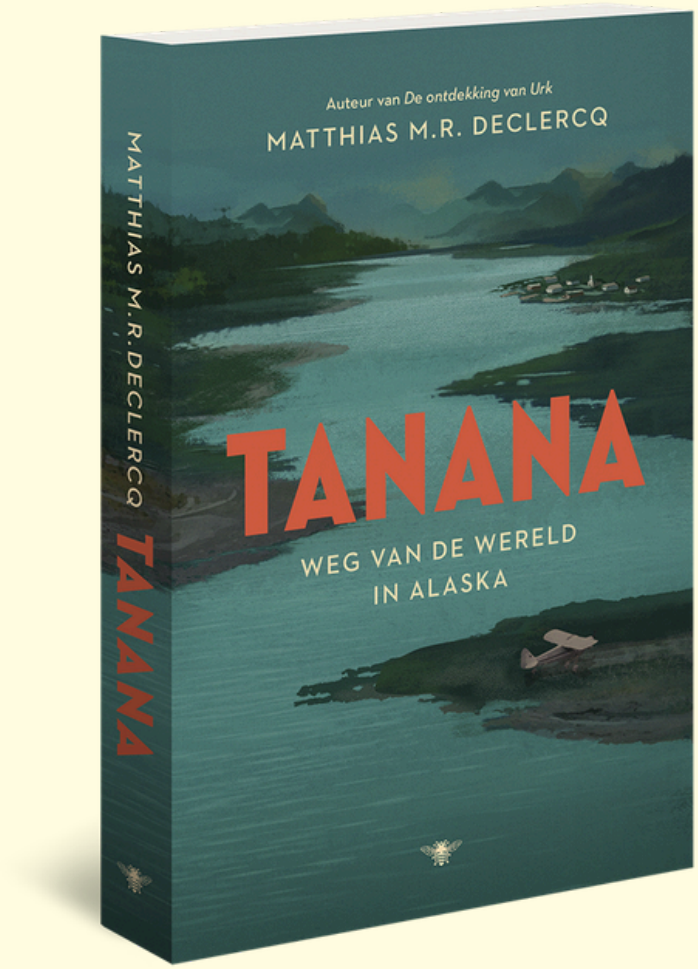
In the poetry of Lisette Ma Neza (b. 1998), story and language are paramount. She usually writes in Dutch or English, but also in Kinyarwanda. Ma Neza's parents fled Rwanda during the genocide in 1994 and settled in the Netherlands. Ma Neza was born four years later. Her parents often took her to the library, instilling in her a deep interest in language and literature. *How many cows am I worth?* marks the first time her work has appeared in book form: an expansive, narrative poetry collection that holds a wealth of stories and experiences.

NEW NON-FICTION

'With Tanana Declercq proves that he is one of those extremely rare authors who can craft a compelling story from any subject they set their sights on.' – de Standaard ★★★★★

Tanana
Away From the World in Alaska
Matthias Declercq

Rights sold: Scribe (World English)



From an early age Matthias Declercq has been fascinated by the idea of the wilderness. He decides to follow a fellow villager from his native region to Alaska, who emigrated there in the 1960s. He ends up in a nondescript village in the geographical heart of this no-man's-land.

There, at the end of the world, he expects to find the true wilderness, a simple life in nature, and encounters the most remarkable characters. From the indigenous Athabaskans to war veterans, elderly hippies to self-proclaimed scientists. A microcosm of free spirits, adventurers and hermits, but also alcoholics and delinquents, all of whom draw sustenance from the overwhelming landscape and the ever-beautiful Yukon River.

Declercq experiences the four seasons in the North and is amazed by the endurance, the destructive urge and the enormous resilience of humanity in this extreme, rapidly changing world.

GEO-POLITICAL NON-FICTION
301 pages
September 2026
English sample

> *I cycle on. Until, suddenly, I hear him? her? behind me and see, emerging from the forest, a black bear. A single clawed swipe, I realise, would line my cheeks like the notebook. Time contracts to a moment that one day I'll surely be able to write pages about or recount at length, but that here, now, doesn't last longer than, what, five seconds? A slow blink in which reality feels more real and the speed of the thoughts racing through my mind seem to give that reality mass, as if I had hold of the Higgs particle. If it's black, fight back. If it's brown, lay down. If it's white, say goodnight.*

NEW NON-FICTION

Kromanti

About the Family That Waited for Us for Centuries

Raoul de Jong



The captivating sequel to *Jaguarman*

In 2020, *Jaguarman* was published, Raoul de Jong's award-winning account of his search for a legendary Surinamese ancestor who was said to be able to transform into a jaguar. The story resonated with readers worldwide. But when the English translation takes him to Ghana, in October 2025, it turns out that his journey has only just begun. A chain of extraordinary coincidences, mysterious encounters and old stories leads him to the village where the Jaguarman was abducted centuries ago. There, Raoul comes face to face with family whose existence he could never have imagined.

MEMOIR/FAMILY HISTORY
88 pages
June 2026
Full English translation

What Concerns Everyone

How Democracy Is Being Dismantled – and How to Revive It

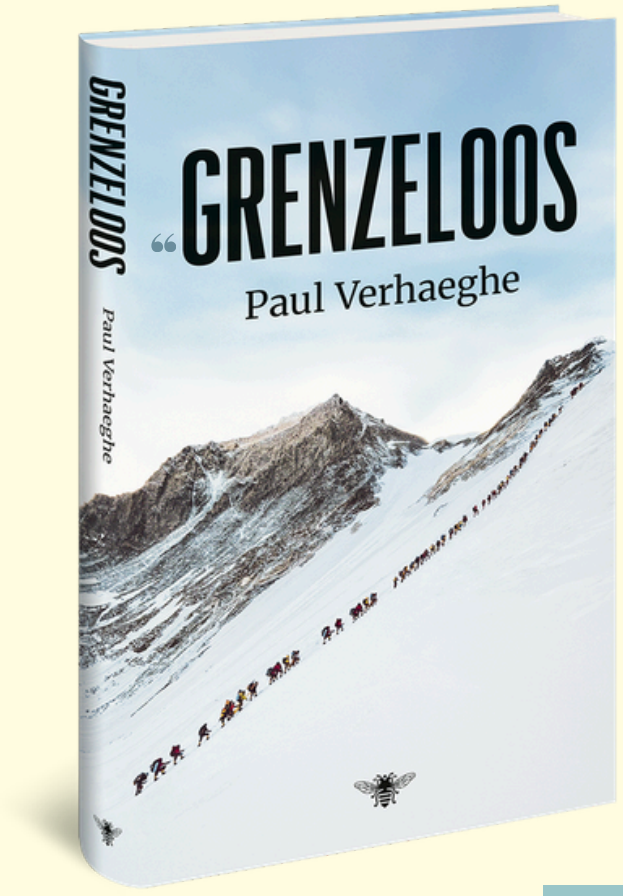
Mark Lievisse Adriaanse

The greatest crisis of our time is the crisis of democracy. This did not begin when Trump and other radical populists appeared on the scene; democracy has been getting weaker for decades. We may go to the polls, but we have lost faith that anything will really change. Lievisse Adriaanse shows how democracy arrived at this dangerous point, and he offers a remedy. Defending the existing system is insufficient. Anyone who wishes to defend democracy must go on the offensive. In this book, the author explores what a better democracy might look like. He argues for a radical democratisation of democracy, granting citizens greater power over politics, the economy and society. Now that democracy is under fire, it is time to make good on its promise: what concerns everyone must be decided by everyone.



CURRENT AFFAIRS/POLITICAL
262 pages
October 2025

NEW NON-FICTION



No Limits

What Is the Price Of No Moderation?

Paul Verhaeghe

In recent years, politicians have placed the emphasis on growth and progress. The desire for more, faster, stronger is, of course, broader and older, and it has brought us so many advantages that it is hard to break away from it. In stark contrast to this, every moral system calls for moderation and limitation. Paul Verhaeghe examines this contradiction, linking it to a law of nature: that growth is always followed by contraction. The extent of our progress has reached the point where automatic braking systems are kicking in. Just think of the sheer volume of cars that causes us to get stuck in traffic jams every day. Should we leave the inevitable moderation to nature, or are we capable of steering it ourselves? And what is the cost of not doing so?

> There is nothing wrong with growth in itself. But there is with always wanting more.
> *'A collective reaction against the system is unfolding, unfortunately in a tragic way.'* – interview De Morgen

Table of content

Movement
- We are walkers (origin)
- Technological progress (expansion)
- Our bodies' expiry date (limitation)

Food
- At last, the land of milk and honey (promise)
- Every success has its price (derailment)
- Enjoy! (desire)

Work
- Why do we work? (transformation)
- From little to much to forever (shift)
- Shop till you drop (cult)

Progress
- Growth (measure)
- What progress? (question)
- Evolution (explanation)

Limits
- Bringing into culture (tradition)
- Conscious limitation (correction)
- Conscious expansion (direction)

PSYCHOLOGY/PHILOSOPHY
215 pages
September 2026
English sample

NEW FICTION



Gustave and Ourselves
Erwin Mortier

A magnificent tale with Gustave Flaubert as its amusing protagonist

In his new novel, Erwin Mortier playfully knocks none other than Gustave Flaubert off his pedestal – not to tear him down but to bring him vividly to life with wit and insight. George Sand, Louise Colet, a rowdy boys' choir and the enigmatic Juliet Herbert serve as his accomplices. They strip the writer down only to dress him back up as a boisterous youth, a loyal friend, a demanding housemate and, above all, an obsessive writer. Mortier gets under the skin of his characters, blending their voices with his and bringing the nineteenth-century master to life – idiosyncratic and dangerously close – thereby creating a world entirely his own.

NOVEL
175 pages
October 2026
English sample

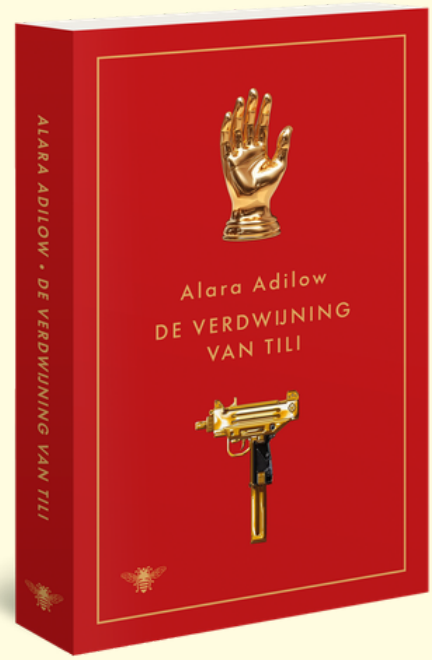
> *You made your way around my apartment, let your gaze glide over the spines of the poetry collections, followed by mine, took a few of them down from the shelf, and opened them without asking for permission. I saw the boyish insecurity behind the bravado you hoped would impress me.*
>
> *"May I be frank?" you asked.*
>
> *"Of course. Tell me what you think, don't be shy."*
>
> *"There is beauty in some of these sentences, but others seem hurried and careless, and a few stoop even to platitudes. I would be less generous with words like 'glory,' for example..."*

The Disappearance of Tili
Alara Adilow

Four lives interwoven in a single night as the city holds its breath

Daniel, a drill rapper from Amsterdam, is unable to grieve for his mother. When Tili, the sex worker he used to visit, disappears without a trace, he becomes entangled in a violent search for her. Margot is also looking for Tili, the woman who left her daughter with her. In a garage in the same city, a group of Marxists is hiding after a failed attempt to kidnap the Prime Minister. And Benjamin can't forgive himself. He left Israel. His family left him. Now he is walking through a city that does not know him.

NOVEL
205 pages
October 2026



NEW FICTION

Passers-by
Tim ’S Jongers

We are not what we are; we are what they have made us



He is at the beginning of a new life but is becoming increasingly entangled in the cynicism of the modern city and a growing loneliness. What starts as an easy escape from reality slowly becomes a tragic replacement for it.
She lived in her provincial town, in the shadow of a society that judged ever more harshly and offered less and less refuge. Her life may have been small, but its consequences were to shape her child’s life forever.

I think it must have been in Year 4 or Year 5 that the boredom became so unbearable that I started fantasizing about sticking my ballpoint pen into my teacher’s eye or cheek. Where I would shove that ballpoint pen depended on my mood that day, which in turn depended on whether or not I’d been given an evening meal the day before.

Against the background of the rise of the radical right and an increasingly unforgiving welfare state, Tim ’S Jongers sketches a dark, comical and schizophrenic portrait of Flanders in the 1980s and 90s – and, at the same time, of our own era. A world where connection is loudly professed but rarely actually lived.

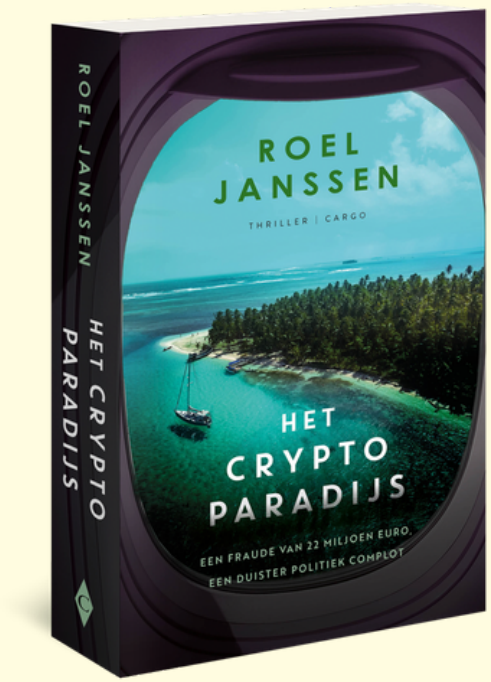
DEBUT NOVEL
191 pages
November 2026
English sample

By the author of *Poverty Explained to People with Money* (2024): 70,000 copies sold.

> *She soon became friends with José, her neighbour from number seventeen, who was even fatter than Fat Staf. José had five children and a drunk of a husband thin enough to pass through a needle's eye. It was a mysterious characteristic of their social circle that the chubbiest women found the slimmest husbands. You might see it as a class-specific fetish.*

COMMERCIAL FICTION/NON-FICTION

The Crypto Paradise
Roel Janssen
The crypto age captured in a thriller



At a renowned law firm, a 22-million-euro fraud has been brought to light. The money has vanished, and the fraudster has committed suicide. Financial specialist Rick Reijnders is tasked with investigating the case before the media catches wind of it. He discovers that the millions have been converted into crystos, the currency of the Trinidad crypto platform. But anonymous forces want to prevent the truth from surfacing. Following a false accusation, the law firm suspends the investigation. Reijnders, however, has nothing to lose, and his search takes him to El Salvador, the first country in the world to introduce bitcoin as an official currency, in 2021. There, he finds himself in a tropical labyrinth of money laundering and crime, where conspiracies are hatched to overthrow democracies.

> *A thriller with bite, and with weighty subject matter. A book that makes you feel it could all really happen.*
> - Financieel Dagblad

CRYPTO-THRILLER
415 pages
May 2026

Real Men ~~Don't~~ Cry
Stan Molemaker
In search of a new masculine compass

When influencer and international model Stan Molemaker was assaulted by a close friend, his sense of shame kept him from talking about it for years. After spiralling into depression as a result, he finally took the step of seeking therapy. This turned out to be a true lifesaver, and it has been Stan's mission ever since to share his story as widely as possible to help others. Because, sadly, talking about mental health remains a taboo for many men. In *Real Men ~~Don't~~ Cry*, Stan candidly shares his own story, set against the current zeitgeist. Why do men find it so hard to talk about their feelings? And what makes the hard-line manosphere so alluring? This book is a plea for men to break through their shame and allow themselves to be vulnerable.



PSYCHOLOGY/MEN'S MENTAL HEALTH
188 pages
October 2026

SUCCESSFUL TITLES: FICTION



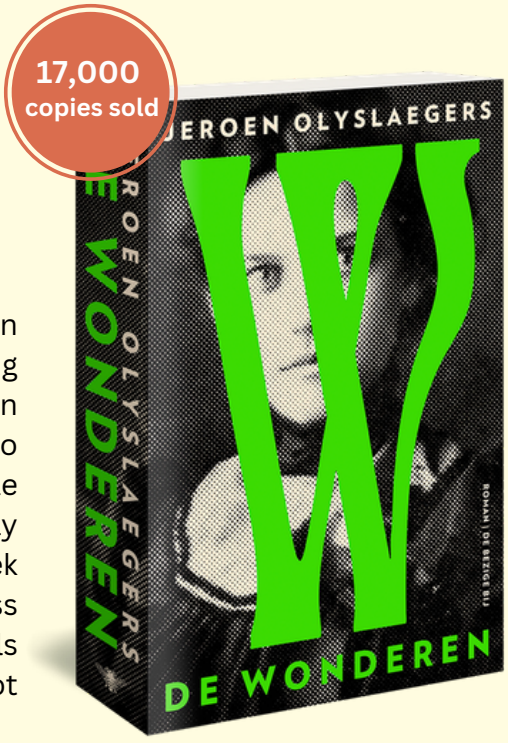
School Years
Ernest van der Kwast

New novel by the author of The Ice-Cream makers

As in *Mama Tandoori*, in which Ernest van der Kwast looked back on his youth, this new novel brings his high-school years hilariously and captivatingly to life. From smooching at the school dance to drinking Apfelkorn in German classes, from stressed-out teachers to sleazy fathers, from first kiss to final exams.
Ashraf, Mohamed, Dave, Erinç and the nameless narrator stand by the heater in the school hall. They drink Capri-Sun, discuss Ms Taconis's legs and search for answers to the big questions in a boy's life.

"School Years *is hilarious, a page turner. Anyone who has ever been to school will recognize themselves in this novel.* – NRC"

NOVEL
256 pages
May, 2026



The Wonders
Jeroen Olyslaegers

Rights sold: Editions Stock (France)

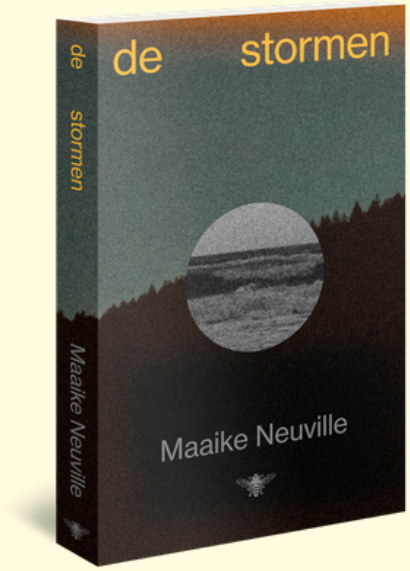
At the end of the nineteenth century, Amandine and her twin brother Ambrose grow up in a prominent Antwerp banking family, shackled by the obedience and convention forced on them by their parents. Amandine is married off to a banker who hopes to make his fortune in the rubber industry, while Ambrose, with all the theatricality of a bohemian, is completely preoccupied with his own self-destruction. Together, they seek escape and freedom in mysterious séances. While the madness of the First World War plays out around them, Amandine tells the story of her resistance to a chaotic world that does not understand her.

"*Jeroen Olyslaegers writes lustfully and passionately about a woman's desire for freedom in times of colonialism and smothering, patriarchal family ties. Olyslaegers is one of those writers who grabs you by the scruff of the neck and drags you through the story with a steady hand, a beautiful novel.* - Trouw"

NOVEL
406 pages
November 2025
English sample

SUCCESSFUL TITLES: FICTION

the storms
Maaike Neuville



A caleidoscopic novel about grief, sexuality and motherhood throughout the ages

Actress Abbie de Lange is preparing to play a part in a historical film based on the life of Therese Mae Smith, an Irish writer from the early twentieth century. This is a role that forces Abbie to confront demons from her own past. During the filming, the lives of Abbie and Therese become mysteriously intertwined.
In *the storms*, motherhood, mourning and sexuality become intertwined. This novel, a dazzling reflection on mental health, the place of female artists in society and wild, untameable nature, gets under your skin like a breathless physical experience. Everyday observations are alternated with deep dives into the inner worlds of two women who seem destined to be united across the centuries.

NOVEL
368 pages
March 2026
English, German sample

> *I want to tell you about the day I lost my mother. Because through the waters that surround us, that dwell within us, we are connected, Grace. You, me, her, and all who breathe our past and our future. There is no end to a mother. Her boundaries fade and become ours. How absurd it suddenly seems to me to follow a single wave with your gaze until it breaks on the rocks and then to cry because it is no longer there.*

Hermit Days
Yanaika Zomer

About uncontrollabe desire, mistakes and hidden grief.

Monk and Meira don't really know each other, but they have been online acquaintances for months. When she buys one of his paintings, their online contact turns into a secret, captivating affair. But Meira is married to Sam, and is the mother of Finn and Ro. She is also the daughter of Suze, who is suffering from early-onset dementia, and she's afraid of what may be lurking in her own DNA. Through her phone, she encounters Monk, who makes everything lighter - until he suddenly passes away, leaving her with a broken heart and a head full of memories.



> *Monk is dead. Since two o'clock this afternoon, I've thrown up once and cried almost nonstop. Screamed. I've felt the bitter air in my chest as I gasp for breath between sobs. There's a stinging layer of salt on my cheeks. My arms hurt. I've screamed and drooled into my pillow. I've muttered his name and now I'm doing math. To keep from going crazy or arousing suspicion among my family, I do sums in my head.*

DEBUT NOVEL
284 pages
March 2026
English sample

SUCCESSFUL TITLES: NON-FICTION



What You Need to Know to Understand the Middle-East

Koert Debeuf

Rights sold: Project N (Slovakia)

Whether it's the conflict between Israel and Palestine, the tensions between Iran and Saudi Arabia, the problems surrounding Turkish membership of the European Union, or wars in Syria and Yemen, the Middle East is in the news almost daily. The situation in the region seems to become more complicated by the day. Why can't someone explain what's going on? That is exactly what Koert Debeuf does in this book. In a concise and accessible style, he explains what you need to know to understand the Middle East.

CURRENT AFFAIRS/ MIDDLE EAST
218 pages
February 2026
Full English translation

> *In 200 pages, Koert Debeuf races through the history of the Middle East. A confrontational overview that prompts reflection on, among other things, Europe's role and the scars it continues to leave in the region.* - Financieel Dagblad

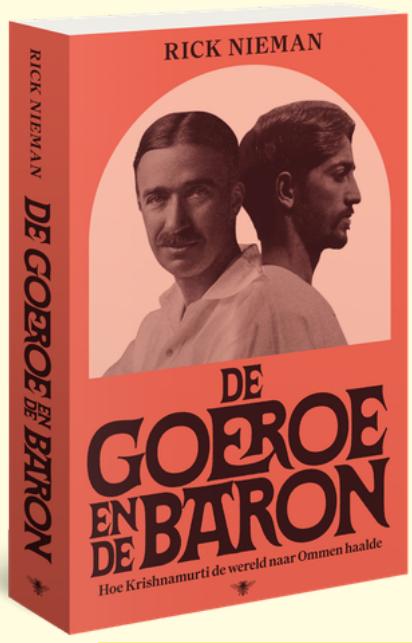
The Guru and the Baron

About the phenomenon Krishnamurti and a friendship

Rick Nieman

Nominated for the Ithaka Prize for the best publication on castles, historic country estates and country houses

In India, the young Krishnamurti is heralded as the new Messiah. Meanwhile, 23-year-old Philip van Pallandt unexpectedly inherits a centuries-old estate near Ommen, a small town in the Netherlands. When he meets Krishnamurti, the two men become friends.
The idealistic Philip donates his estate and castle to Krishnamurti, as a location for his annual 'Star Camp' gatherings. Thousands of visitors, including artists, musicians, architects and journalists, come from all over the world.
Krishnamurti speaks to them by the campfire, and they dare to dream of a future in which everyone is equal – until the summer of 1929, when Krishnamurti suddenly tells them not to follow him any longer.
Rick Nieman follows the trail of the guru and the baron and shows how they influenced each other – and their age. And how their story is still just as relevant as it was a hundred years ago.



BIOGRAPHY/SPIRITUAL HISTORY
400 pages
April 2026
English dossier

SUCCESSFUL TITLES: NON-FICTION

Winner of the Socrates Cup 2026!



Women in Dark Times

Ten Thinkers of Lasting Significance

Alicja Gescinska

Rights sold: Propyläen/Ullstein (Germany), Acantilado (Spain), Fraktura (Croatia), Shobunsha (Japan)

In ten biographical portraits, Alicja Gescinska shows what humankind can learn from these courageous and intelligent women: Rosa Luxemburg, Anna Achmatova, Edith Stein, Hannah Arendt, Martha Gellhorn, Simone Weil, Jeanne Hersch, Etty Hillesum, Barbara Skarga and Judith Shklar.

With words and deeds, they fought against the oppression, the dehumanisation, the urge for destruction that dominated their own era. They were beacons of light in humanity's darkest hours, often paying a high price: from death in a camp to a life in exile.

WOMEN PHILOSOPHERS' HISTORY
432 pages
November 2025
English sample

"*If evil is intrinsic to humankind, then so is goodness. And that is exactly what this book is about. It is an indictment of evil and an ode to the goodness of which humans are capable.* - ***** NRC"

Libris History Prize 2022

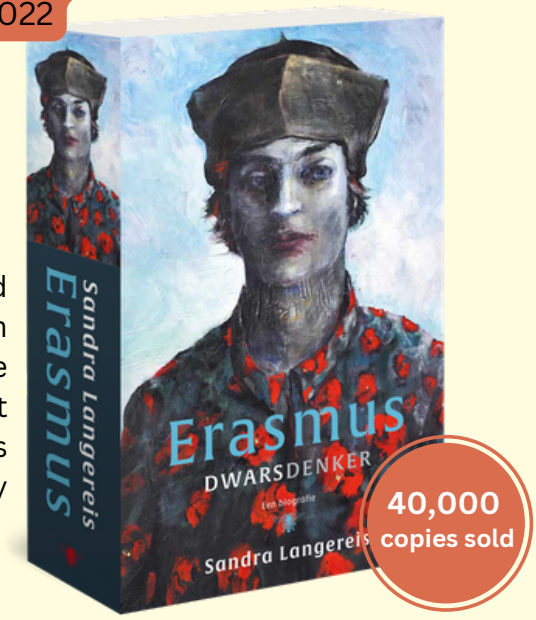
Erasmus

Erasmus the Maverick: a Biography

Sandra Langereis

Rights sold: Propyläen/Ullstein (Germany), Mondadori (Italy)

Erasmus was one of the greatest authors of the Netherlands and Belgium, and indeed all of Europe. He embodies the transition from the Middle Ages to the modern day. Most of Erasmus's life and work has been neglected until now. Langereis is the first biographer to do justice to his life story by closely following his correspondence and describing the genesis of his entire literary legacy.

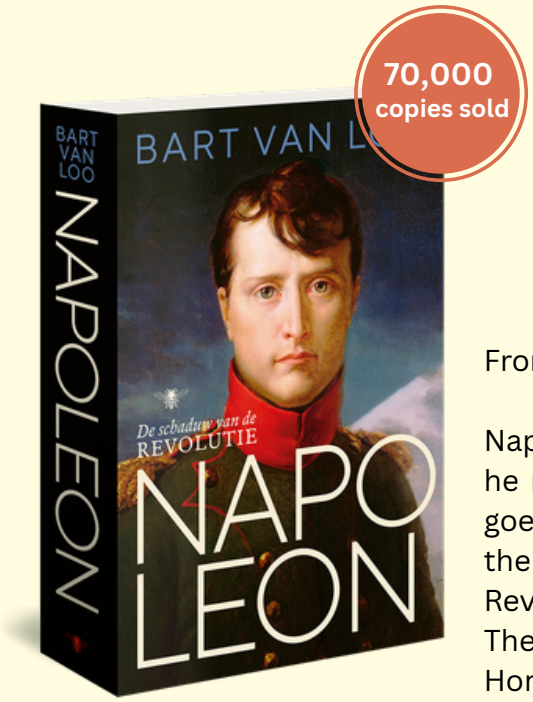


"*A brilliant biography.* – Die Welt.

An impressively spirited biography. - Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung"

BIOGRAPHY
784 pages
March 2021
Full German, Italian

SUCCESSFUL TITLES: NON-FICTION



Napoleon
In the Shadow of the Revolution
Bart van Loo

Rights sold: Flammarion (France), Mondadori (Italy), C.H. Beck (Germany), Head of Zeus/Bloomsbury (World English)

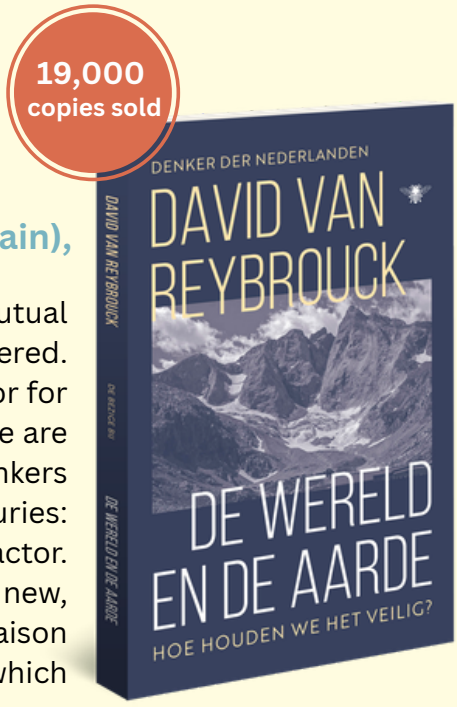
From the international bestselling author of *The Burgundians*

Napoleon is one of the most influential figures in all of history, yet he raises an enormous number of questions. Bart Van Loo (1973) goes searching for the man behind the myth and finds answers in the engrossing and extremely turbulent years of the French Revolution, when the old world gave way and everything changed. The French Revolution and Napoleon: the two most captivating Homeric stories in one sagacious and compelling tale.

BIOGRAPHY
493 pages
November 2019
Full German, Italian

> *A master test of erudition that combines factual veracity with an elegant style, and reads like a novel.* – Le Soir

The World and the Earth
How do We Keep it Safe?
David Van Reybrouck



Rights sold: Actes Sud (France), Suhrkamp (Germany), Fraktura (Croatia), Idee/Feltrinelli (Italy), Endebate (Spain), Natur och Kultur (Sweden)

The biggest security issue of our time is not the world with its mutual conflicts, but the earth that is becoming more and more disordered. For David Van Reybrouck (1971), this spherical model is a metaphor for the global challenges of our time: we must save the Earth – but we are attempting to do so with a form of diplomacy developed by thinkers and politicians such as Richelieu and Metternich in past centuries: world politics, in which ultimately raison d'état is the deciding factor. In view of the impending climate catastrophe, we must invent new, planetary forms of Earth politics that focus on the Earth's raison d'être. Models such as a global climate council, for example, in which Earth citizens selected by lot deliberate on the fate of the planet.

> *The threat to the globe is forcing diplomacy to take a further step in its development: 'planetary diplomacy' is needed; raison d'état must become 'reason of the Earth'. The masterful narrator Reybrouck demonstrates this vividly.* - Frankfurter Allgemeine Sonntagszeitung

CURRENT AFFAIRS/DEMOCRACY
80 pages
April 2025
Full German, French, Italian

'I had a thousand lives, but I lived only one!'

Cees Nooteboom

31 July 1933 – 11 February 2026



© Simone Sassen

'We will miss the friendship, erudition, enthusiasm and individuality of this internationally acclaimed writer.' – Romy van den Nieuwenhof, Director

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Present at the Frankfurt Book Fair

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