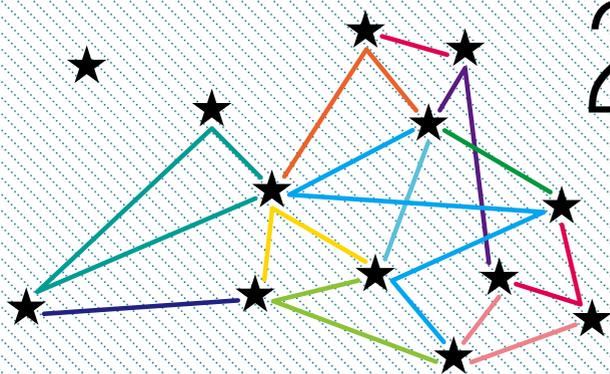


# Finnegan's List 2016





The **European Society of Authors** – created in the spring of 2008 – is a network open to all authors, publishers, translators, readers and cultural actors who wish to participate in the creation of an intellectual community in a multilingual and multicultural Europe.

Placing translation at the heart of our projects and thoughts, we favor an approach that takes on differences in terms of sharing and dialogue. Since October 2011, the European Society of Authors has proposed an annual list of under-translated or forgotten works called **Finnegan's List** – the personal choices of a committee of 10 eminent authors from different countries.

Each writer selects three titles that make up the committee's "elective affinities". With this project, the European Society of Authors strives to revive a literary canon encompassing all languages spoken and written in Europe and beyond.

Each author has explained his or her reasons for choosing the books they have in brief articles.

Excerpts of these texts can be found in this brochure but we also invite you to visit our website, [www.seua.org](http://www.seua.org), to discover all of them and to find out more about Finnegan's List and our other projects.

Since May 2013, Finnegan's List has been part of a Europe-wide initiative for the promotion and translation of forgotten modern classics:

### **Schwob – The World's Best Unknown Books.**

Potential Schwob titles, recommended by the Finnegan's List jury members, are identified by the pink Schwob stamp .

We invite you to visit the multilingual Schwob website at [schwob-books.eu](http://schwob-books.eu) to find out more about the project and to leave your own suggestions.

If you wish to participate, to contribute or to support our projects, please write us at: [contact@seua.org](mailto:contact@seua.org).

# Finnegan's List by László F. Földényi



There is something magical about translation. Sometimes it seems to have even a whiff of the fraudulent about it. I felt this especially strongly when years ago I was translating the letters of Heinrich von Kleist into Hungarian. Sitting at my desk I sometimes had the feeling that an invisible Kleist was by my elbow desperately trying to protest: "that's not what I meant!", and: "you have missed the point!", and: "that's not at all what I'm trying to say!", and: "what a curious choice of words! Unheard of language, letters never seen!" Of course, he spoke not a word of Hungarian and watched helplessly as I exchanged his words for strange, new strings of letters and replaced them with words of Hungarian. And how much more upset he would have been had he suspected what kind of syntactic shackles I was imposing on his incomparable sentences!

And yet, in the end, something came forth in Hungarian. What is more, an enthusiastic Hungarian audience for Kleist came into being. Kleist who knew no Hungarian, and Hungarian readers who knew no German, found each other. But where? My instinct would be to say: in language. But no, this would not be quite true: he wrote not a word of the Hungarian text, and not a word of his German appeared in the Hungarian publication. So where, then, did they meet? In Literature, of which language is of course the medium – the mother tongue of the writer in question – but which has another well-spring also: the Spirit, untrammelled by a specific language and needing no passport to move from one to another.

The myth of the Tower of Babel is still with us today. The building of the tower came to a halt at the time and the undertaking fell through. It never reached unto heaven; moreover, its builders were obliged to scatter to the four corners of the earth. To cap it all, they lost the language that they had shared until then. The One language splintered into many. Interpreters were needed for people to understand

each other, and translators, to inform them of what others elsewhere were thinking and, soon, writing down.

According to the myth, the fragmentation into languages was the result of divine judgement. Yet not even this judgement could make people forget that once they had a common tongue – that they had a common plan to take possession of the very heavens. The memory of this lives on to this day: for example, in the desire for mutual understanding, wherein there lurks the desire to encompass the *Whole*, or in the awareness that in spite of all our differences we can exchange our thoughts, indeed, we can even make others' thoughts our own. The God of the Bible succeeded in scattering people; but He could not prevent them from trying to find each other. Translators are among those who can help them in this task; they are the ones with whose help another Tower of Babel is being continuously constructed. Not, as then, of stone, bricks and pitch, but of words that differ from each other, yet are none the less bearers of kindred thoughts.

Finnegan's List is the scaffolding of a new Tower of Babel of this kind. It knows that languages can be very different and, indeed, isolated; but equally it knows there is passage across: not just into other languages but into the world of thought, into the world of the Spirit – which is very much *One* and *one* that is shared. There is in our time hardly a task more important than to nurture this, for we are witnessing daily how it is under threat of destruction from every quarter.

# Finnegan's List 2016



## Sinan Antoon

Sinan Antoon (born in 1967) is a writer, translator and scholar from Iraq. He studied at the University of Baghdad and completed his studies in the United States with a Ph.D. from Harvard University in Arabic and Islamic Studies. His essays and scholarly works have appeared in numerous major journals and publications. Antoon is the co-founder and co-editor of the e-zine *Jadaliyya*. He has published two collections of poetry in Arabic and one in English. His novels have been translated into several languages. For his second novel *The Corpse Washer*, which he translated himself into English, he was awarded the 2014 Saif Ghobash Banipal Prize for Arabic Literary Translation. His translations from and into the Arabic include works by Mahmoud Darwish and Toni Morrison. Sinan Antoon lives and teaches in New York.

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## Sinan Antoon recommends

 **Abdelrahman Munif**, قصة حبّ مجوسية (A Magian Love Story), Beirut: al-Mu'assasah al-'Arabiyyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 1974.

No translations.

 **Badr Shakir al-Sayyab**, أنشودة المطر (Rain Song), Beirut: Dar Shi'r, 1960.

Selected poems translated into English, French, German, Italian and Spanish.

 **Ghaib Tu'ma Farman**, النخلة والجيران (The Palm Tree and the Neighbors), Sidon: al-Maktaba al-'Asriyya, 1965.

No translations.



### Maylis de Kerangal

Maylis de Kerangal (born in 1967) is a French author. After studying history, philosophy and ethnology in Paris, she worked for the publisher Gallimard. Her first book, *Je marche sous un ciel de traîne*, came out in 2000, followed by several other works. In 2010, her novel *Birth of a Bridge* was awarded the Prix Médicis and the Franz Hessel prize. Her novel *Mend the Living/The Heart: A Novel* (2014), an intimate look at the realities and philosophical questions around organ donations, is her biggest success to date. The book has received ten French literary prizes and has been translated into a number of languages. It will soon be adapted for the cinema. Maylis de Kerangal is a member of the literary collective Inculte.

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### Maylis de Kerangal recommends

**Olivia Rosenthal**, *Mécanismes de survie en milieu hostile* (Survival Mechanisms in a Hostile World), Paris: Éditions Verticales, 2014.

Rights sold for the German translation.

**Joy Sorman**, *La peau de l'ours* (Bear's Hide), Paris: Gallimard, 2014.

Translated into Italian.

**Marie-Hélène Lafon**, *Les Pays* (The Lands), Paris: Buchet/Chastel, 2012.

No translations.



### Iris Hanika

Iris Hanika (born in 1962) is a German writer who has lived in Berlin since 1979. After studying comparative literature, she published her first work in 1992, *Katharina oder Die Existenzverpflichtung*. She then worked as a freelancer for the *Berlin Pages*, a supplement of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung* and from 2000-2008 wrote articles for the magazine *Merkur*. Iris Hanika has published several novels over the past few years. The best-known of these are *Treffen sich zwei* (2008, shortlisted for the German Book Prize), *Das Eigentliche* (2010), for which she was awarded the European Union Prize for Literature, and *Wie der Müll geordnet wird* (2015). Her works are translated into several languages. During a period of her life, Iris Hanika maintained a strong interest in Russian language and culture, and made regular trips to Russia.

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### Iris Hanika recommends

-  **Leonid Ivanovich Dobychin**, *Город ЭН* (The Town of N), several editions, 1935.  
Translated into Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Macedonian, Spanish and Polish.
-  **Leonid Ivanovich Dobychin**, *Шуркина родня* (Shurka's Relations), several editions, 1935/1936.  
Translated into French and German.
-  **Leonid Ivanovich Dobychin**, *Short stories*, several editions.  
Selected stories translated into English, French and German.



### **Jeton Neziraj**

Jeton Neziraj (born in 1977) is a playwright from Kosovo. He studied Theatre at the University of Prishtina and was the artistic director of the National Theatre of Kosovo. He now works as the director of Qendra Multimedia ([www.qendra.org](http://www.qendra.org)), a theatre production company based in Prishtina/Kosovo. He has written over 20 plays that have been staged, translated and performed throughout Europe and the United States (examples include *Peer Gynt from Kosovo*, *The Demolition of the Eiffel Tower*, *War in Times of Love*, *Speckled Blue Eyes* and *Liza is Sleeping*). Jeton Neziraj also writes articles on cultural and political issues for a number of newspapers and runs theatre workshops at various universities and festivals.

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### **Jeton Neziraj recommends**

**Visar Zhiti**, *Rrugët e ferrit* (The Paths of Hell), Tirana: Onufri, 2001.

No translations.

**Musa Ramadani**, *Antiprocioni* (Antiprocession), Prishtina: Gjon Buzuku, 1997.

Translated into English (without publisher).

**Xhevdet Bajraj**, *Copa ime e qiellit/ Mi cachito de cielo* (My Piece of Sky), Prishtina: Koha, 2015.

No translations.



### Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl (born in 1978) is a poet, writer and translator from Iceland. He has lived throughout Northern Europe as well as in Germany and in Vietnam, and has worked various jobs. He was a founding member of the Icelandic avant-garde poetry collective Nýhil, and since his debut in 2002 has been best known for his poetry collections. The collections, which Norðdahl performs, are part sound-poetry and part multi-media. For his novel *Illska* (2012) he was awarded the Icelandic Literary Prize, the Book Merchant's Prize and the French prize Transfuge. His poetry and novels have been translated into several languages.

Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl has translated over a dozen books into Icelandic, including a selection of Allen Ginsberg's poetry and Jonathan Lethem's novel *Motherless Brooklyn*, for which he won the Icelandic Translators Award.

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### Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl recommends

**Hermann Stefánsson**, *Algleymi* (Oblivion), Reykjavík: Bjartur, 2008.

Translated into German.

**Ragna Sigurðardóttir**, *Borg* (City), Reykjavík: Forlagið Publishing, 1993.

No translations.

**Kristín Eiríksdóttir**, *Hvítfeld*, Reykjavík: Forlagið Publishing, 2012.

No translations.



### Fabio Pusterla

Fabio Pusterla (born in 1957) is a poet, essayist, literary critic and translator from Switzerland who writes in Italian. He studied literature at the University of Pavia and teaches at high school and university in Lugano. His first collection of poetry, *Concessione all'inverno*, was published in 1985 and received the Montale and Schiller prizes. Several other publications followed in the next years, among others *Pietra sangue* (1999, Schiller prize) and *Le terre emerse. Poesie scelte 1985-2008*, published by Einaudi in 2009. Fabio Pusterla has translated several works by Philippe Jaccottet and S. Corinna Bille into Italian. His own work has been translated into several languages; he is considered one of the major Swiss poets and his work has received important literary prizes.

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### Fabio Pusterla recommends

-  **Tommaso Landolfi**, *Dialogo dei massimi sistemi* (Stories), Florence: Parenti, 1937.  
Translated into English.
-  **Giorgio Orelli**, *Sinopie* (Poems), Milan: Mondadori, 1977.  
Various poems translated into English, French, German and Serbian.
-  **Federico Hindermann**, *Poesie 1978-2001*, Verona: Stamperia Valdonega, 2002.  
Several poems translated into German.



### Ivana Sajko

Ivana Sajko (born in 1975) is a Croatian author, director and playwright. She graduated in dramaturgy at the Academy of Drama Arts, after which she obtained a M.Sc. in Humanistic Science at the Faculty of Philosophy, both in Zagreb. Since 1996, Ivana Sajko has been a member of the editorial board of *Frakcija* (International Magazine for Contemporary Performing Arts) and a co-founder of the theatre group BADco. Her plays have been staged, translated and performed throughout the world: among many others are *Woman Bomb*, *Europa*, and *Rose is a rose is a rose is a rose*. Sajko's novel *Rio Bar*, published in 2006, has been translated into several languages. She has received numerous grants and awards for her oeuvre, including the Croatian National Award (Marin Držić).

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### Ivana Sajko recommends

**Goran Ferčec**, *Ovdje neće biti čuda* (There Will Be No Miracles Here), Zagreb: Fraktura, 2011.

Rights sold for the Macedonian translation.

**Marko Pogačar**, *Predmeti* (Objects), Zagreb: Algoritam, 2009.

Translated into German (selected poems), Macedonian and Slovene.



**Miroslav Krleža**, *Tri drame* (Three Plays), Zagreb: Zora, 1955.

*U logoru* translated into German and Hungarian; *Putovanje u Vučjak* translated into Czech, German and Hungarian; *Golgota* translated into Albanian, Czech, German, Hungarian and Slovene.



### Anton Shammas

A Palestinian writer and translator of Arabic, Hebrew and English, Anton Shammas was born in northern Palestine in 1950. His publications include a novel, two collections of poems and a book for children in Hebrew, a collection of poems in Arabic, and many articles, essays and translations in the three languages. He has translated from and into Arabic, Hebrew and English, writers such as Beckett, Pinter, Albee, Fugard, Emile Habiby, and Dario Fo. His novel *Arabesques* (1986) was chosen by the *New York Times Book Review* upon its American publication as one of the best seven fiction works of 1988, and has since been translated into eight languages. He is a Professor of Comparative Literature and Near Eastern Studies at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. He is currently working on a collection of essays in English called *Blind Spots and Other Essays on Translation*.

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### Anton Shammas recommends

**Iman Mersal**, حتى أتخلى عن فكرة البيوت (Until I Give Up the Idea of Home), Cairo: Dar Sharqiyat, 2013.

No translations.

**Rabee Jaber**, دروز بلغراد (The Druze of Belgrade), Beirut: Dār al-Ādāb lil-Nashr wa-al-Tawzī‘, 2011.

Translated into French, Polish and Spanish.

**Salim Barakat**, دلشاد (Delshad), Beirut: al-Mu’assasah al-‘Arabīyah lil-Dirāsāt wa-al-Nashr, 2003.

No translations.



### Ersi Sotiropoulos

Ersi Sotiropoulos (born in 1953) is one of the most well-known Greek writers. After studying philosophy and cultural anthropology in Italy, she worked for the Greek embassy in Rome. Her first novel was published in 1982, followed by several other novels and a poetry and short story collection (*Landscape with Dog and Other Stories*). For her novel *Zigzag through the Bitter-Orange Trees* she received, among other distinctions, the Greek State Prize for Literature. Her work has been translated into several languages and she has received numerous awards and grants for her oeuvre. Ersi Sotiropoulos also writes screenplays as well as columns for a Greek newspaper.

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### Ersi Sotiropoulos recommends

**Kay Cicellis**, *Ο Χορός των ωρών* (The Dance of the Hours), Athens: Agra Publications, 1998.

Several stories translated into English.

 **James Hanley**, *A Dream Journey*, New York: Horizon Press, 1976.

No translations.

 **Mihail Mitsakis**, *Complete Short Stories*, several editions (published posthumously).

Several stories translated into French.



### Enrique Vila-Matas

Enrique Vila-Matas was born in 1948 in Barcelona. He studied law and journalism and became a columnist for the magazine *Fotogramas*. In 1970 he directed two short films and his first novel, *Mujer en el espejo contemplando el paisaje*, came out in 1973. Since then he has published an extensive and eclectic corpus of fiction and non-fiction with titles such as *The Illogic of Kassel*, *A Brief History of Portable Literature*, *Dublineseque*, *Never Any End to Paris* and *Bartleby & Co*. His work has been translated into thirty languages. Vila-Matas has received numerous awards for his oeuvre including the French Knight of the Legion of Honor, the Herralde prize, Prix Médicis étranger, and the Premio Nacional de la Crítica. In 2015 he received the FIL Literary Award in Romance Languages. Enrique Vila-Matas lives in Barcelona; he is a founding member of the Order of Finnegans.

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### Enrique Vila-Matas recommends

-  **Alberto Savinio**, *Maupassant e "l'Altro"* (Maupassant and "the Other"), Rome: 1944.  
Translated into French, German and Spanish.
-  **Josep Maria de Sagarra**, *La ruta blava. Viatge a les mars del Sud* (The Blue Road), Barcelona: Editorial Selecta, 1964 (first publication in Spanish in 1942).  
Translated into Spanish.
-  **Augusto Monterroso**, *Movimiento perpetuo* (Perpetual Motion), Mexico: Joaquín Mortiz, 1972.  
Translated into Catalan, Dutch, English, French, German, Hebrew, Italian and Romanian.

# The authors of the Finnegan's List committee on the books they recommend

## Sinan Antoon

A powerful novella about a visceral and destructive infatuation. While most of **Abdelrahman Munif's** later works were concerned with the interplay of history and politics and how they shape individual and collective lives, *A Magian Love Story* is focused on individual passion and pain, and is written in a poetic language.

**Badr Shakir al-Sayyab** was the pioneer of modern Arabic poetry. He staged a revolt against the form and content of the traditional *qasida* and changed it irrevocably. His experiments with meter and the new themes he introduced are crystallized in this collection.

A milestone in the development of prose fiction in Iraq in the 20<sup>th</sup> century. *The Palm Tree and the Neighbors* by **Ghaib Tu'ma Farman** is a tightly structured and masterfully written novel set in the poorer quarters of Baghdad in the middle of the last century. It is a vivid portrayal of a society on the cusp of change.

## Maylis de Kerangal

**Olivia Rosenthal's** body of work takes on many literary forms – novel, short story, theatre, live performance – and incorporates into fiction documentary material from the fields of science, philosophy, and the investigative report. Her latest novel, *Mécanismes de survie en milieu hostile*, delves into the passage from life to death and articulates the experience of loss and grieving in a text which is at once a thriller, a metaphysical scavenger hunt and a story of emancipation. This powerful and lovely novel also explores what it is to write, and shows that “in fictionalizing the world, all we've done is try to recover the things that have taken place but that we have forgotten.”

**Joy Sorman's** novel gives voice to a man stuck inside an animal's body. The narrator, born to a coupling of a woman and a bear, tells the poignant story of his

life among mankind. It is a life of violence and escape, lived between exhibition and isolation; it is a life of solitude, “the solitude of the strong.” Sorman’s latest works have been heavily documentary – she deals with architecture in *Gros œuvre* and butchery in *Comme une bête* – but this novel is based in popular legend and touches upon the worlds of fantasy, of monstrosity, and of tragedy. Lovely and troubling, the book may also be read as a testament to the power of fiction: exploring the boundary between humanity and bestiality, it places the reader in a place that only literature can.

A young girl, Claire, leaves her home, the Cantal region of France, to go and study in Paris. Little by little, she finds another home, just as organic: writing. “My true land,” declares the author, **Marie-Hélène Lafon**. *Les pays*, which is stretched between two worlds, holding two worlds within it without ever excluding one of them, retraces the coming of age of its protagonist. Lafon’s language, which is as marvelous here as in any of her other novels (*L’annonce*, 2009, or *Joseph*, 2014), invents a lyricism which is at once supple and rough. Its link to earth, to matter and the elements give it its poetic energy and its raw, sensorial, embodied power.

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### Iris Hanika

For some time now, whenever I have been asked if I have any good reading tips, I always say: Yes, I have one: **Leonid Ivanovich Dobychin!** There are three books: the novels *The Town of N* and *Shurka’s Relations*, as well as a collection of stories. “Precision and brevity – these are the two virtues of prose,” wrote Pushkin, and when one considers this, one recognizes these qualities not only in Turgenev and Chekhov, but also in Tolstoy (very plainly in *War and Peace!*). It’s only in Dostoevsky that we don’t find them – he’s another matter altogether.

In terms of Pushkin’s claim, Dobychin is the greatest master of them all – the very, very greatest, unbeatable, unattainable. Unfathomable. For he took precision to extremes (comparable to Flaubert in his attempts to find *le mot juste*), and on occasion even sacrificed grammatical correctness for brevity and rhythm. In addition, Dobychin’s life story is the craziest of the many crazy, tragic stories of Russian writers in the early years of the Soviet Union: after his novel *The Town of*

N was thoroughly trashed by the Leningrad Writers' Union as a prime example of "formalism," he disappeared. The judgment of the Writers' Union was tantamount to a death sentence – a career death sentence for certain, but he also had to fear for life and limb. Dobychin nevertheless escaped the sentence: after that evening in March 1936, he was never seen again. Because no body was ever found, there is reason to hope that he did not take his own life, but rather, as he wrote in his good-bye note, simply set off on a long journey. That means there is also reason to hope that someday more of his writings will turn up. That would be wonderful. The only known photo of Dobychin shows him resembling the drawn self-portrait of Daniil Kharms; their bearing is similar. Those were tough times. So: these are the three books I would like to recommend. Translating them would take guts.

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### **Jeton Neziraj**

**Visar Zhiti** is undoubtedly one of the best Albanian poets. In 1973, he compiled a collection of poems called *Rapsodia e jetës së trëdafilave* (Rhapsody of Life of Roses). This was in the times of the fourth Plenum of the Central Committee of the Labour Party (Communist Party) in which the dictator Enver Hoxha started a cruel campaign against youth who liked Western culture. The young poet suddenly became one of the political victims of a dictatorship striving to frighten Albanian intellectuals. Zhiti was arrested on November 8, 1979 and sent to prison, where he stayed for eight years. His book of memories from his time in prison, *Rrugët e ferrit* (The Paths of Hell) was published in Tirana in 2001. Through stories of characters and specific moments from prison, *Rrugët e ferrit* discloses horrible events from the Communist dictatorship. The book mixes factual, documentary and artistic elements, painting the dark picture of an era of savage violence when human beings and intellectuals were targeted as enemies. Zhiti says of his book that it is "a novel, with real characters and events that I wish were not real, but I did not make up anything, I only chose among my experiences. But writing about them felt like being in yet another prison..."

In Kosovo, **Musa Ramadani** is considered an avant-garde writer. He wrote poems, stories, novels and plays. His novel *Antiprocesioni*, published in 1997, is

a postmodern work dealing mainly with philosophical and theological issues. The author is fascinating when it comes to his knowledge in different fields, but especially thrilling is the way he articulates that knowledge in this novel. Hermetic by nature, short and full of erudition, the novel is a product of immense skill.

**Xhevdet Bajraj** is a poet and a translator from Kosovo who has lived in Mexico since 1999. He writes in Albanian and in Spanish. I would like to recommend his latest book of poems, *Copa ime e qiellit*, recently published in Albanian and Spanish. Reading Bajraj, one has the impression of being personally spoken to. This kind of closeness is a result of Bajraj's sincere writing. His poems are like lullabies for adults; they make us dream about things like longing, flowers, the motherland, dreams, war, and solitude. And then we can have a sound night's sleep, happy to have lived one more day in this hostile world.

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### Eiríkur Örn Norðdahl

*Algleymi* by **Hermann Stefánsson** is a book which, in a strangely pleasing way, obliterates the mind of the reader – leaving them as boggled and dazed as the main protagonist, Guðjón Ólafsson, who one day wakes up and remembers nothing of his life, then proceeds to relearn it all. His journey leads us through some of humanity's major discoveries, epistemological conundrums and into the CERN particle accelerator itself. The novel is at once a dead-pan parody, a high-risk sci-fi novel, a kind of post-metafiction, and a philosophical treatise on memory and meaning. Despite its high-flying ways it never loses its grip and never ceases to be what all good books should be: an attempt at filling in the holes of what it means to be human.

*Borg* by **Ragna Sigurðardóttir** has been said to resemble a city in its structure, complete with advertisements, repetitious wordscapes, textual cul-de-sacs and bricks upon bricks of meaning. Centering around a strange kind of love triangle between city girl Úlla, poet-turned-ad-writer Logi, and country girl Vaka – a love story the author claimed was the “most unoriginal imaginable” – in a city which is simultaneously tiny little Reykjavík and something greater, bigger, more universal, complete with Roman ruins and a global history; the novel is realistic and

fantastic, historical and futuristic, desolate and vibrant, a poetic ode to the spirit of man and a rigorous defense of materialist romanticism.

*Hvítfeld* by **Kristín Eiríksdóttir** is as much a portrait of the Icelandic national psyche as it is of its protagonist, Jenna Hvítfeld, an Icelandic former gymnastics star living in Austin, Texas, who lies and deceives with alternating ease and neurosis. Jenna Hvítfeld's identity is as malleable as that of her small, remote nation, known for wealth, justice and an elfish sense for international public relations – as long as nobody asks the wrong questions. Jenna's friends in Austin see her according to her whims: faced with their ignorance of her, Jenna can reinvent herself as pained or victorious, sinful or virtuous. The same goes for her oblivious family in Iceland, who know nothing about her life in America except what they're told. *Hvítfeld* is a novel that will leave you with a lump in your throat, a knot in your stomach, but somehow you will still be thankful for it, for packed in Jenna's web of dense lies is an unnerving amount of truth.

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### Fabio Pusterla

**Tommaso Landolfi** was one of the foremost Italian writers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He was an outstanding poet; he translated marvellously some of the most prominent Russian modern authors; most importantly he wrote a work of fiction that was limpid and elusive, and where puns never excluded a certain depth of thought. Despite his extraordinary importance and many recent reprints and new editions, Landolfi is almost unknown to Italian readers; even if his works have already been translated in Europe, I think that he's not remembered as he should be. Many years ago, when I was very young, I went to listen to the lecture of a great Italian poet, Vittorio Sereni; it struck me that when I asked him about Rimbaud, he said that the only Italian writer with a close affinity with Rimbaud was Tommaso Landolfi.

**Giorgio Orelli** is one of the most important Italian poets of the second half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. He lived in Italian-speaking Switzerland and he was closely linked to the foremost contemporary poets and literary critics. He translated Goethe and Mallarmé and he devoted himself to verbal criticism, a refined method of interpretation which he applied to almost all the great Italian classics, from Dante

to Montale. His poetry is extremely valuable. Among his (not numerous) poetry collections I chose the one that is the most significant to me: *Sinopie*, published in 1977. In this book, Giorgio Orelli's verbal art faces and clashes with a burning reality: harsh poems, sublime poems, poems of commitment and poems of intimacy coexist in a collection that is polysemic, sophisticated and cosy at the same time. Giorgio Orelli's works should all be read and meditated on, especially by young authors.

**Federico Hindermann** was born in Piedmont, went to school in Pisa, and soon after moved to German-speaking Switzerland where he played an important cultural role as a professor of Romance Philology, a publisher and a translator. This location, together with his shy and modest nature, gave him no visibility: his poetry is little known either in Italy, where it belongs culturally and linguistically, or in Switzerland, where it was actually composed. Federico Hindermann is nevertheless a great poet who can be considered an important "overshadowed master".

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### Ivana Sajko

Although best known for his dramaturgy work and for his plays in which he deals with the dismantled roles of intellectuals and workers, **Goran Ferčec** is an author with an inclination toward long, profound, detailed and dense prose. *There Will Be No Miracles Here* is his first novel. Bender, the hero of the novel, a man uncomfortable in his environment, in his body and in his gay sexuality, is travelling to visit his father and the village from which he fled during the war. He sees himself amidst the forgotten ruins of the village and with his father, who seems even bigger and more indestructible than before. Ferčec writes his novel in stubborn present tense and with a careful analysis of every image, which makes it an extraordinary piece of visual art.

**Marko Pogačar** publishes poetry, prose, essays and literary criticism. *Objects* is his third book of poetry. It is divided into three parts: *Prepoznavanje predmeta* (Recognition of Objects), *Jezero* (The Lake) and *Kako je griješio Kant* (As Mistakes Kant). Bold and exciting, the poems in the book continue the battle against machines of Fascism, capitalism, politics and faith, and with the referential

possibilities of language itself. "Objects have an advantage over people", says Pogačar, "because they are the silent majority", and this makes the object the philosophical core of a palpable world that carries a cacophony of voices, discourses, histories and desires.

Three plays written between 1918 and 1923 by eminent Croatian author **Miroslav Krleža**, *U logoru* (In the Camp), *Putovanje u Vučjak* (Journey to Vučjak) and *Golgota* (Golgotha), are extensive theater pieces that still carry some structural elements of Expressionism though they are written as sociological and political studies of their time. All three texts clearly state Krleža's leftist and pacifist spirit as well as his exceptional polemical intellectual strength to depict the collapse of humanism, the political chaos of war and post-war Europe, and the backwardness of the Croatian province.

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### **Anton Shammas**

With the publication of her second collection of poems, *A Dark Alley Suitable for Dance Lessons*, **Iman Mersal** has established herself as one of the most unique, refreshingly subtle and intriguing voices in modern Arabic poetry. Against the backdrop of a poetic scene dominated mainly by the rhetoric and poetics of the leading male poets of the Arab world with their grand gestures and large-scale itineraries, Mersal's has been a very low-keyed and minor voice, totally oblivious to the tyrannical heritage of the Arab poetic past. Her fifth and most recent collection has a section entitled "the side-roads of life," which seems to capture the essence of her project: leaving the Main Road of collective loyalties, and following the personal, the intimate, and the mundane. A selection from Mersal's poetry, *These Are Not Oranges, My Love*, was published in 2008 (Sheep Meadow). Her poems have been translated into numerous languages, including Spanish, French, Italian, Hebrew and Hindi.

**Rabee Jaber** is one of the most talented, prolific, original, yet underrated Arabic novelists. Jaber's novels have over the years brought to Arab readers "news from elsewhere," as Walter Benjamin described the task of the storyteller. His subjects include, among many others, the Beirut of the American Protestant Missionaries

in the 19<sup>th</sup> century, Belgrade of the 1860s, and America of the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. *The Druze of Belgrade*, winner of the 2012 Arabic Booker Prize, tells the heart-wrenching story of Hanna, a boiled-eggs vendor who, one early morning in 1860, leaves his young wife and new-born girl, and near the port of Beirut finds himself dragged into a ship to replace a missing convict. Early that year, a civil war between the Maronite peasants and Druze landlords had broken out in Mount Lebanon, and the French authorities decided to punish hundreds of young Druze men, who were accused of taking part in the atrocities, by sending them to exile in Belgrade onboard that ship. Hanna makes his way back home on foot after sixteen years in the Serbian prison.

**Salim Barakat** is a Kurdish-Syrian novelist and poet whose masterly Arabic style has brought back to the modern Arabic language the grandeur of its classical past in a totally unprecedented manner. In this regard, and even though five of his novels have been translated into French, he is probably one of the most difficult writers to translate, especially into English. Yet, I can hardly think of any Arab novelist who's worth the effort and the challenge more than this astonishing writer. This is one of the reasons for my choice of his 2003 masterpiece, *Delshad*, for this List: it's about that elusive, arduous, impossible "task of the translator." Set against the strangulation of the Kurdish language and identity by the modern Syrian state, the novel tells the tragic story of Delshad, who is commissioned by a Kurdish prince to translate for him a book from Syriac into Kurdish, *The Compendium of the Reckoning of the Unknown*, for which he has to learn the Syriac language. Delshad is so entranced by the wonders and challenges of translation that he turns the two volumes of the original into fifty-two Kurdish volumes. Over forty years of meticulous rendering culminate in a Syrian police officer cruelly shooting through the volumes to test the velocity of his bullet. It's a brilliant foreshadowing of what's been happening in Syria in recent years.

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### **Ersi Sotiropoulos**

**Kay Cicellis**, born in Marseilles to Greek parents and educated in English, is a characteristic example of a writer of the diaspora. She lived in England, Pakistan,

and Nigeria before settling in Greece and wrote in English for almost her entire career. *The Dance of the Hours* was her last book, and the only one she wrote in Greek. The stories in the collection often make us feel as if we are watching a show in the shadow puppet theater, whose ending is inevitable. The prose is spare, tight, carefully wrought, anti-sentimental, free of melodramatic climaxes. Kay Cicellis uses absence, innuendo, and transformation – or rather a slow, almost imperceptible distortion – to create a situation in which the reader, who occupies a position very close to the plot and characters, since everything begins from a realistic starting point, is also and at the same time kept outside, offered an invisible gaze that allows her to feel the ethereal fear that pervades all of the stories. Thanks to the impeccable internal rhythm that charges these gems of fiction, they remain with us, in us, for a long while after we close the book.

**James Hanley** is one of the great underappreciated writers of the twentieth century. Of Irish extraction, he grew up in Liverpool, lived for many years in Wales, wandered, had a number of different jobs, including sailing in the merchant marine, before devoting himself to writing. Today his work appears to have been almost entirely forgotten.

*A Dream Journey* is an explosive novel that combines a violent expressive power with an unmatched stylistic inventiveness. It's wartime, London is being bombed, and in a claustrophobic building with class antagonisms heating up on all floors, Lena and Clem are fighting their own unequal war. Both of them are dedicated to the same goal, entirely, bitterly devoted to Clem's art – a devotion that forms the deepest substratum of their relationship. But their effort is moot under the pressure of the circumstances, in which the artistic gesture is revealed to be useless and futile, as the great drama presses asphyxiatingly from the outside, trapping and intensifying their own minor, private drama.

A remarkable prose writer, unaligned with and unrecognized by any literary movements, **Mihail Mitsakis** never managed to publish a book of his work during his lifetime. As he himself said, "I have failure in my blood." Marked by disappointments, eccentric, and unbalanced, Mitsakis was driven to a psychiatric institution for the first time at age 28. He was admitted once more and died confined there. An unconventional writer, very modern for his age, with a passion for details, he wrote stories in which the tale or the plot is not particularly

important. In them, he charts with his unusual sense of humor the alienation and estrangement that characterize city life. In a mixed, complex, musical language, free in its syntax and with a structure that seems to follow a series of chiaroscuro alternations, Mitsakis manages to represent in a unique way an intolerant, imperfect society, one pervaded by ethnic stereotypes and resting complacently on its misconceptions.

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### Enrique Vila-Matas

*Maupassant e "l'Altro"*, written by **Alberto Savinio** in 1944, is an essay-digression. Savinio uses the pretext of writing a biography of Maupassant to speak about everything, though the French writer remains his central axis and main character throughout. He mixes genres and plays with the conventions of footnotes.

*Maupassant e "l'Altro"* certainly predates narrative essay and essayistic narration, which postmodernism invented. This is one of my favorite books. It's one of the five that I've enjoyed more than any I've read in my life. And it's nowhere to be found.

*La ruta blava* (The Blue Road) contains the best prose writing by Catalan writer **Josep Maria de Sagarra**. It is a delightful, intelligent book and would be a success if it were translated into other European languages. In it, Sagarra tells the story of his honeymoon to the South Seas, a place whose very name seems bound to the idea of happiness. Sagarra would be a discovery for readers who may not yet know him for his *Vida privada*.

The essay as a reflection on literature dominates in *Perpetual Motion*, written by Honduran-born Guatemalan author **Augusto Monterroso** in 1972, even if, as its title suggests, the book continually oscillates among distinct genres. Already in the prologue, the author says: "the essay is a story that seeks poetry." The theme of flies is a fundamental presence, as is that of literature. This is a terrific book, pitifully little known.

To read all texts at full length, please visit our website [www.seua.org](http://www.seua.org).

The European Society of Authors would like to thank all former Finnegans List committee members, whose proposals we continue to put forth.

We would like to remind readers of the authors proposed by the past five Finnegans List committees.

### **Finnegan's List 2011**

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### **Finnegan's List 2012**

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### **Finnegan's List 2013**

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Gadi Taub, Hila Blum | **Tariq Ali:** Eka Kurniawan, Andreas Embiricos, Saadat Hasan Manto | **Oksana Zabuzhko:** Lesya Ukrainka, Mykola Kulish, Yury Dombrovsky | **Arnon Grunberg:** Marek Hłasko, Frans Kellendonk, Otto Weininger | **Georgi Gospodinov:** Vera Mutafchieva, Ivan Teoflov, Ani Ilkov | **Gabriela Adameşteanu:** Camil Petrescu, Jan Koneffke, Lidia Jorge | **Jaroslav Rudiš:** Jiří Hájíček, Gregor Sander, Dora Čechova

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“There’s no doubt we need poetry now more than ever. We need it in order to recover sensitivity, the consciousness of our threatened humanity and our capacity to pursue one of humankind’s most beautiful dreams: liberty, an uncompromising hold on the real, openness to the shared world and the quest for essence.”

Mahmoud Darwish

In 2016, we celebrate the six-year anniversary of the Finnegans List – our polyphonic, multilingual adventure putting forward the personal choices of authors from different countries and different languages of expression. Thanks to the generosity and precious council of our participating authors, we have been able to compile a remarkably varied and cosmopolitan literary selection. Translating these books as much as possible into other languages requires great patience, as the majority of the recommendations need time to cross their boundaries – not just linguistic, but also geographical, cultural, and temporal ones, and there are many reasons for this. Translation as a place of meeting and sharing diversity is at the heart of the Finnegans project. Above all, we want to thank the authors who have given their time to the project. This brochure contains a list of all jury members from past years along with their recommendations.

In addition, we would like to express our gratitude to all of the partners, institutions and foundations which have supported us for several years. They are, namely: the Allianz Kulturstiftung, Fondation Jan Michalski, Pro Helvetia and the Schwob network, and our partners from And Other Stories publishing house.

“Let difference sneak in and take the place of conflict,” said Roland Barthes. This quote illustrates for us, now more than ever, the necessity of a project such as the Finnegans List. Shall it live on!

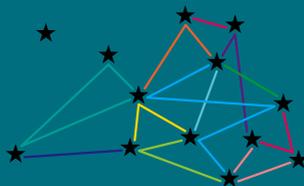
Katrin Thomaneck  
Finnegans List editor

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