

COMMA PRESS
RIGHTS 2016



CONTENTS

Refugee Tales	4
Iraq + 100	5
Diao Dou: Points of Origin	6
Sema Kaygusuz: The Well of Trapped Words / Larissa Boehning: Swallow Summer	7
Adam Marek: The Stone Thrower / Instruction Manual for Swallowing	8
David Constantine: In Another Country	9
David Constantine: The Life-Writer (Novel)	10
David Constantine (other works...)	11
Gregory Norminton: The Ghost Who Bled	12
Atef Abu Saif: The Drone Eats with Me	13
The Book of Gaza	14
Hassan Blasim: The Iraqi Christ	15
Hassan Blasim: The Madman of Freedom Square	16
Spindles / Thought X	17
Science-into-Fiction Series	18
Reading the City series	19
More available from Comma Press...	20

CONTACT

Comma Press is a not-for-profit publishing initiative dedicated to promoting new writing, with an emphasis on the short story from the UK and beyond.



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113 Pollard Street
Manchester
M4 7JA

Refugee Tales

**Edited by David Herd and
Anna Pincus**

Rights Available:
World, All languages

ISBN: 9781910974230
Forthcoming: June 2016

*Refugee
Tales*

Featuring: David Herd, Abdulrazak Gurnah, Avaes Mohammad, Marina Lewycka, Dragan Todorovic, Michael Zand, Stephen Collis, Inua Ellams, Patience Agbabi, Jade Amoli-Jackson, Chris Cleave & Ali Smith.

Offered as a modern day reworking of *The Canterbury Tales*, this book brings together the stories of fourteen real-life refugees whose voyage to the UK has not been a journey of spiritual salvation, rather one of sheer, physical survival.

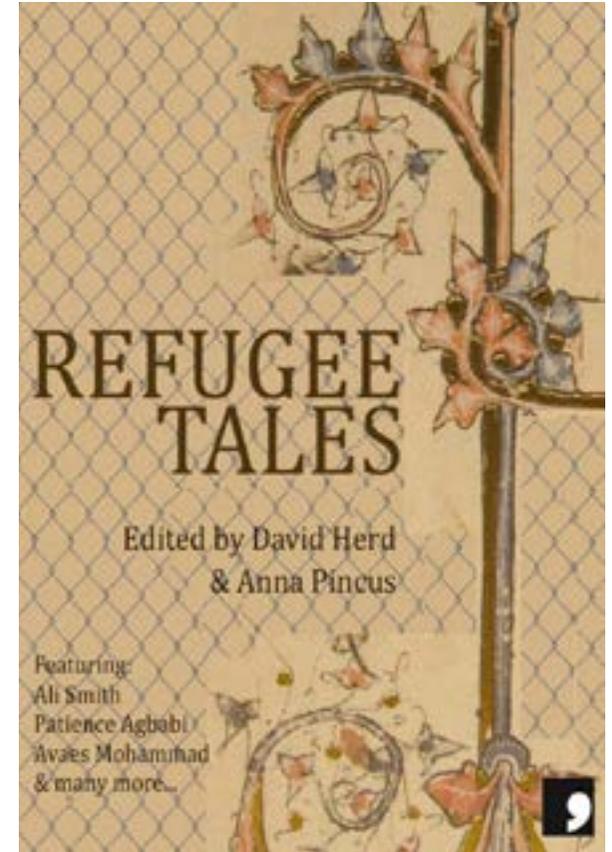
Told by leading novelists and poets (including Ali Smith, Chris Cleave, Marina Lewycka, Patience Agbabi, and Avaes Mohammed), these Tales have been developed in collaboration with refugees, former immigration detainees, and those who work with them. With titles like 'The Detainee's Tale', 'The Appellant's Tale' and 'The Unaccompanied Minor's Tale', each is based on close conversations with the people behind the stories (whose anonymity is reserved for reasons of security), and offers a compelling, shocking and truthful means to seek asylum in the UK.

Featuring Ali Smith- shortlisted for Booker 2014, and winner of Bailey's Prize 2015 for *How To Be Both*.

Taps into current global media interest in plight of refugees in Europe.

Has already had backing of *The Guardian* (who ran the Ali Smith story). Shoo-in for review coverage.

Events will take place next Summer including recreation of pilgrimage to Canterbury.



[PROVISIONAL COVER]

'The telling of stories is an act of profound hospitality. It always has been.'

- Ali Smith

(Her story 'The Detainee's Tale' is available on The [Guardian website](#))

Edited by Hassan Blasim

Rights Available:
World, All languages

ISBN: 9781905583669
Forthcoming: October 2016

**Editor is the winner of the
2014 Independent Foreign
Fiction Prize (now Man
Booker International)**

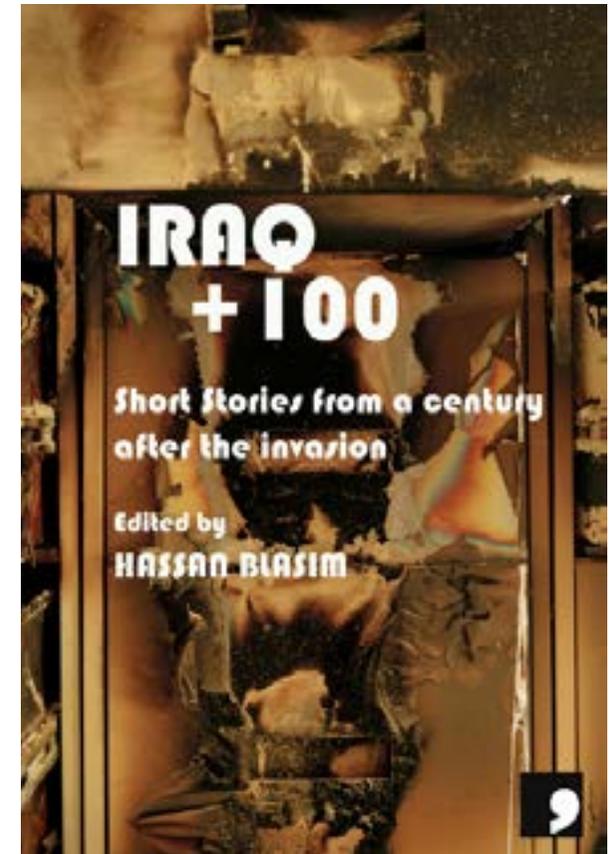
**All stories set in year 2103,
one hundred years after
the 2003 invasion.**

Iraq + 100

Featuring: Ali Bader, Hassan Abdulrazzak, Dhiaa al Jibaly, Ibrahim al-Marashi, Khaled Kaki, and several anonymous contributions

Iraq + 100 poses a question to ten contemporary Iraqi writers: what might your home city look like in the year 2103 – exactly 100 years after the disastrous American and British-led invasion of Iraq? How might that war reach across a century of repair and rebirth, and affect the state of the country – its politics, its religion, its language, its culture – and how might Iraq have finally escaped its chaos, and found its own peace, a hundred years down the line?

Two famous SF writers have previously drawn inspiration from Iraq- HG Wells (*Wings Over the World*), Borges (*Tlön, Uqbar, Orbis, Tertius*)- this time Iraqis map their own fantastical futures. As well as being an exercise in escaping the politics of the present, this anthology is also an opportunity for a hotbed of contemporary Arabic writers to offer its own spin on science fiction and fantasy.



[PROVISIONAL COVER]



Diao Dou

Rights Available:
World, English

ISBN: 9781905583621

Publication: Nov 2015

The first ever translation of Diao Dou's work into English.

Diao Dou is wildly regarded as one of China's leading satirists, praised for his refusal to follow any of the numerous literary trends that often dominate the Chinese literary scene.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Winner of the ninth annual Zhuang Zhongwen Prize for Literature.

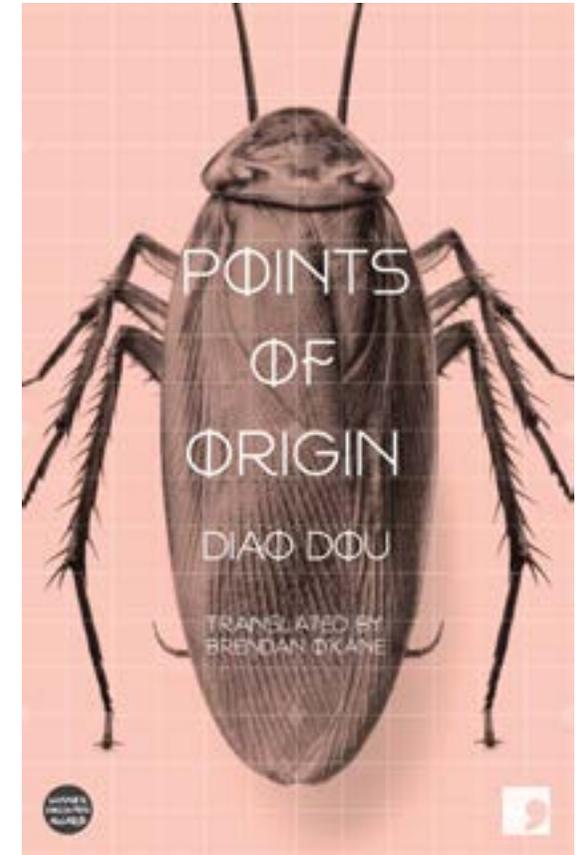
Author of poetry, five novels, five collections of short stories, one collection of essays.

Diao Dou was born in 1960 in Shenyang, Liaoning Province, China. Since graduating from the Beijing Broadcasting Institute in 1983, he has worked as a journalist and latterly as a literary editor. Although his first book was a collection of poetry, Aiqing jishi ('Chronicles of Love', 1992), he is best known as an author of novels and short stories.

Points of Origin

Translated from the Chinese by Brendan O'Kane

Diao Dou's short stories perform a kind of high-wire literary acrobatics; each one executes an immaculate mid-air transition, from closely observed social realism to surrealist parody, and back again. Covering all aspects of modern Chinese life – from the high-minded morals of an emerging middle class, to the vividly remembered hardships of an all-too-recent collectivist past – these stories offer a very particular window into the contemporary Chinese psyche, and show a culture struggling to keep pace with the extraordinary transformations that have befallen it in the space of a single lifetime.



Featured in *The Guardian's*
Best Books of 2015

'Points of Origin is a worthy addition to the still currently patchy mosaic of what constitutes Chinese literature in English translation.'

- Asian Review of Books

Sema Kaygusuz

The Well of Trapped Words

Translated from the Turkish by Maureen Freely



The characters in Sema Kaygusuz's stories often burn with a conviction only they possess.

Blending mysticism and modernity, Kaygusuz's stories demonstrate why she is regarded as one of the most promising writers in Turkey today.

Kaygusuz is a recipient of both the Cevdet-Kudret-Literature Award and the France-Turquie Literary Award. In 2016 she was named laureate of the prestigious German Friedrich Rückert

Rights Available:
World, All languages

ISBN: 9781905583614
Publication: June 2015

'The Well of Trapped Words is a testament to the power of storytelling.'

- 'Book of the Month' for Ann Morgan, author of the blog A Year of Reading the World.

Larissa Boehning

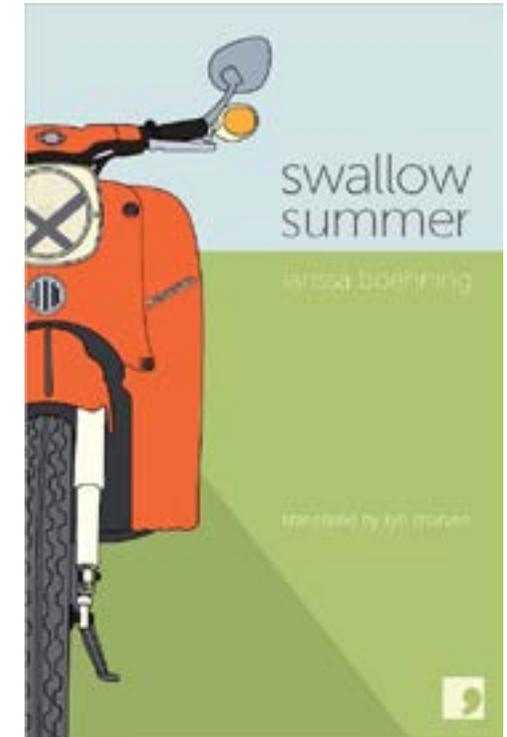
Swallow Summer

Translated from the German by Lyn Marven

The settings in Larissa Boehning's acclaimed debut collection range from the German coast to Berlin, from Tel Aviv to Tucson, Arizona, but their protagonists are often the same kind of characters with the same kinds of concerns: young, unsatisfied, and drifting through life. And while the stories ostensibly revolve around minor events, the real focus is on relationships - burgeoning, failing, unreciprocated or ended.

Winner of Prenzlauer Berg Literature Prize.

Boehning was nominated by The Goethe Institute for the European Literature Prize 2015.



[PROVISIONAL COVER]

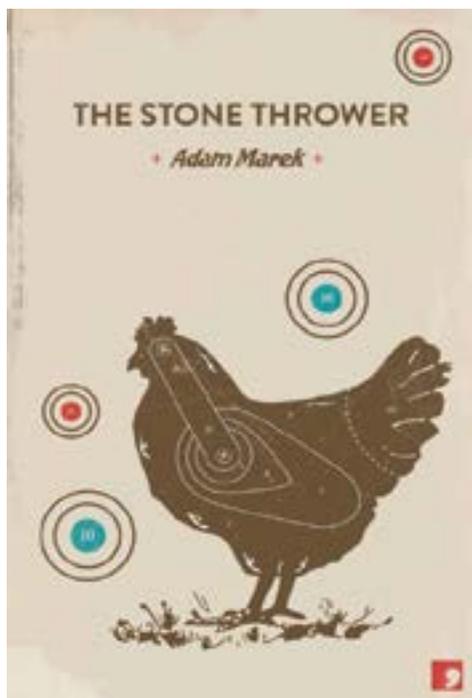
Rights Available:
World, English

ISBN: 9781905583447
Forthcoming: May 2016

Adam Marek

“Early McEwan meets David Cronenberg...Genuine, unsettling talent.”

The Independent



Rights Sold:
ECW (NA)

ISBN: 9781905583508

Publication: 2012

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Stories taken from both collections were featured on BBC Radio 4 Extra. His stories have appeared in many magazines, including: Prospect and The Sunday Times Magazine. He won the 2011 Arts Foundation Short Story Fellowship, and was shortlisted for the inaugural Sunday Times EFG Short Story Award. He was nominated for the Frank O'Connor Prize. Last year he was featured in the Penguin Book of the British Short Story (ed Hensher).



The Stone Thrower | Instruction Manual for Swallowing

Pulsing at the core of Adam Marek's much-anticipated second collection is a single, unifying theme: a parent's instinct to protect a particularly vulnerable child.

‘The Stone Thrower is best viewed as a window on Marek’s distinctive imagination, in which the mundane waltzes with the macabre... this bold young writer is refreshing the form.’

- The Financial Times

‘Adam Marek is one of the best things to have happened to the short story this century. Any day now the word ‘Marekian’ is going to enter the language.’

- Alison MacLeod

Welcome to the surreal, misshapen universe of Adam Marek's first collection; a bestiary of hybrids from the techno-crazed future and mythical past.

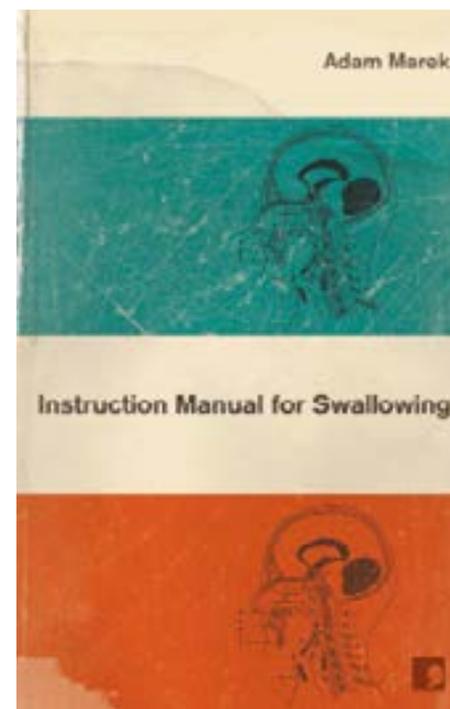
Nominated for the Frank O'Connor Prize.

‘There’s a transgressive thrill to Adam Marek’s debut collection of short stories...’

- The Guardian

‘Marek is terrific at setting an off-kilter mood.’

- The National Post



Rights Sold:
ECW (NA), New Zealand and
Australian Rights

ISBN: 9781905583041

Publication: 2007

David Constantine

In Another Country
Selected Stories**Rights Sold:**

Biblioasis (NA)

Verlag Antje Kunstmann
(German Language)

ISBN: 9781905583768

Publication: Aug 2015

Featuring the story
'In Another Country' that
was made into an
academy-award-nominated
film,
45 YEARS

Features the best stories from his Comma collections, *The Shieling*, *Under the Dam*, and *Tea at the Midland*, as well as the out-of-print *Back at the Spike*.

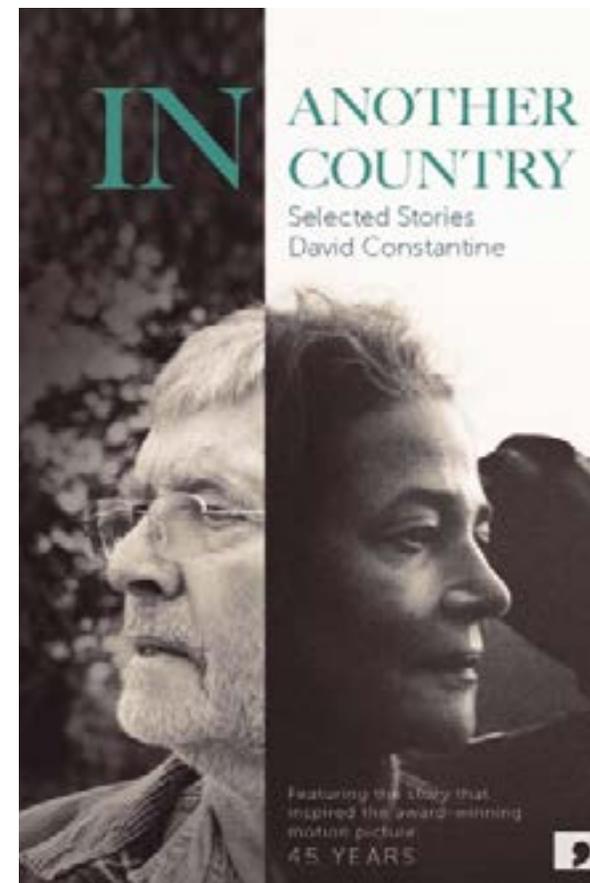
45 YEARS, a feature adaptation of Constantine's short story 'In Another Country', directed by Andrew Haigh (Weekend, HBO's *Looking*), premiered at Berlin Film Festival in 2015 where it won high acclaim, continuing through to win awards at the Edinburgh International Film Festival and many others. Both Charlotte Rampling and Tom Courtenay won Silver Bears for their roles, with Charlotte Rampling receiving a nomination for Best Actress at this year's Oscars.

Winner of Frank O'Connor Short Story Prize 2013 for his collection *Tea at the Midland*.

Winner of BBC National
Short Story Award 2010 for short story 'Tea at the Midland'.

'The most striking stories tend to share motifs while circling secret and unresolved situations' - Michael Caines, TLS

David has had many feature interviews with the UK press, including *the Telegraph* and *BBC Radio*.



PRAISE FOR DAVID CONSTANTINE

'David Constantine is one of Britain's most underrated writers (...) his balance of the lyrical and the sparse echoes John Williams, James Salter and John McGahern'

- Huffington Post

'Flawless and unsettling'

- Boyd Tonkin, *The Independent* (for *Under the Dam*)

David Constantine

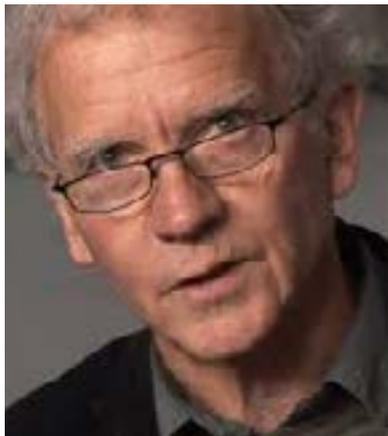
Rights Sold:
Biblioasis (NA)

ISBN: 9781905583744
Publication: Dec 2015

**Long awaited novel
from the master of the
British Short Story**

'Here, (Constantine) has a persistent interest in the discarded pieces of other people's lives that can reawaken one's own past, or open up the incommunicable in the present.'

- Financial Times



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

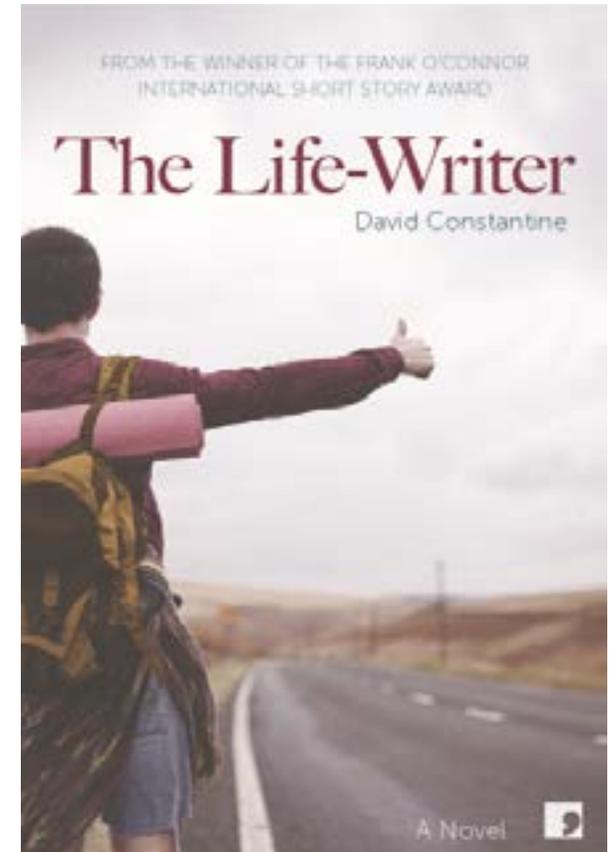
Born in Salford in 1944, David Constantine worked for thirty years as a university teacher of German language and literature. He has published several volumes of poetry. He is a translator of Hölderlin, Brecht, Goethe, Kleist, Michaux and Jaccottet. In 2003 his translation of Hans Magnus Enzensberger's Lighter than Air won the Corneliu M Popescu Prize for European Poetry Translation. He lives in Oxford where, for ten years, he edited Modern Poetry in Translation with his wife Helen.

The Life-Writer

A Novel

Following the death of her husband, a literary biographer resolves to turn her professional skills to the task of piecing together aspects of his life, in particular, a journey he made years before they met – a hitchhike through France that he had tried to tell her about in the last few hours of his life.

David Constantine's passionate tale of grief and rediscovery marks only the second foray into novel writing for an author whose short fiction has won international acclaim. A great work of literature, he reminds us, is never finished, it is 'a living and moving thing, alive in all its parts in every fibre', designed to be inexhaustible and to outlive. As Katrin's journey proves, the lives of those we love are similarly inexhaustible, they keep on offering up new revelations, possessing the people they leave behind, and forever needing to be re-written.



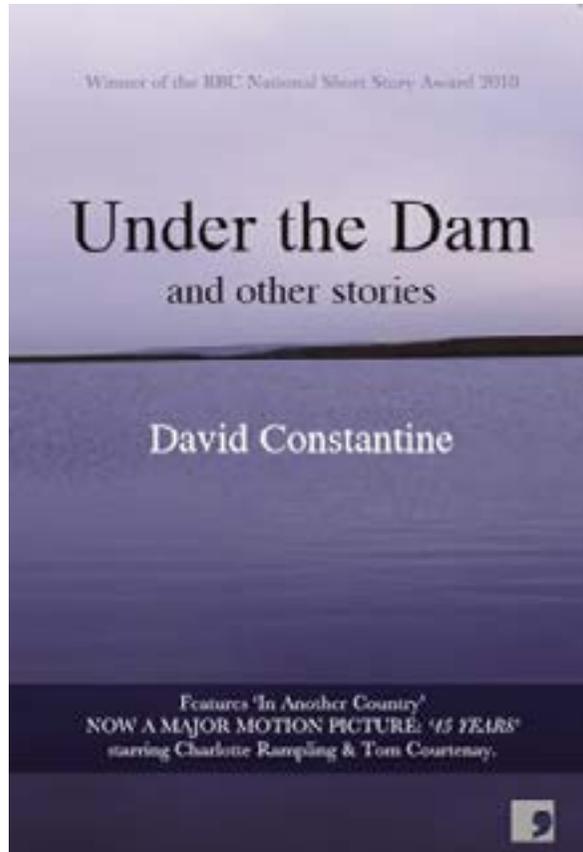
'Constantine's preoccupation with the superior vitality of the past, and past youth in particular, draws out the best in his ardent and profoundly melancholy sensibility.'

- The Guardian

More from David Constantine

*Perhaps the finest of contemporary writers in
this form'* – The Reader

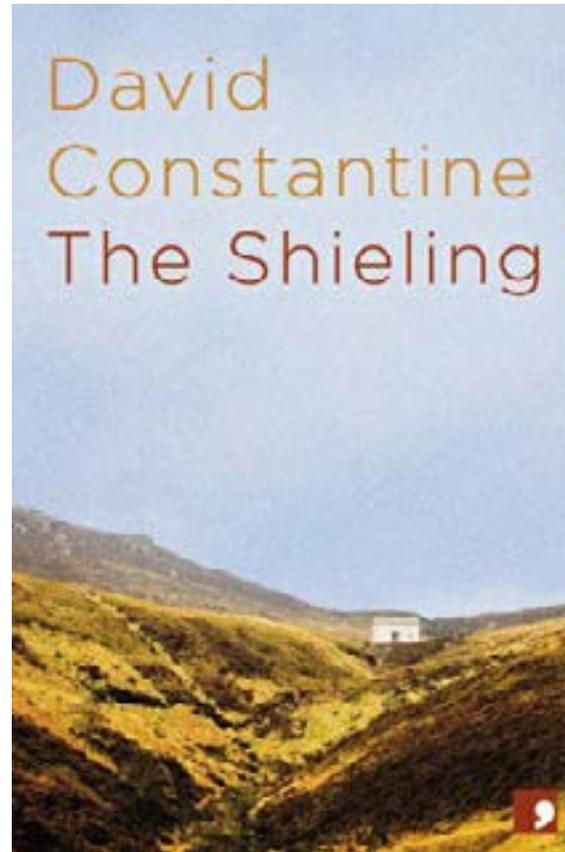
Winner of the Frank
O'Connor International
Short Story Award & The
BBC National Short Story
Award 2014



Under the Dam

Rights Sold: Metic (Turkish)

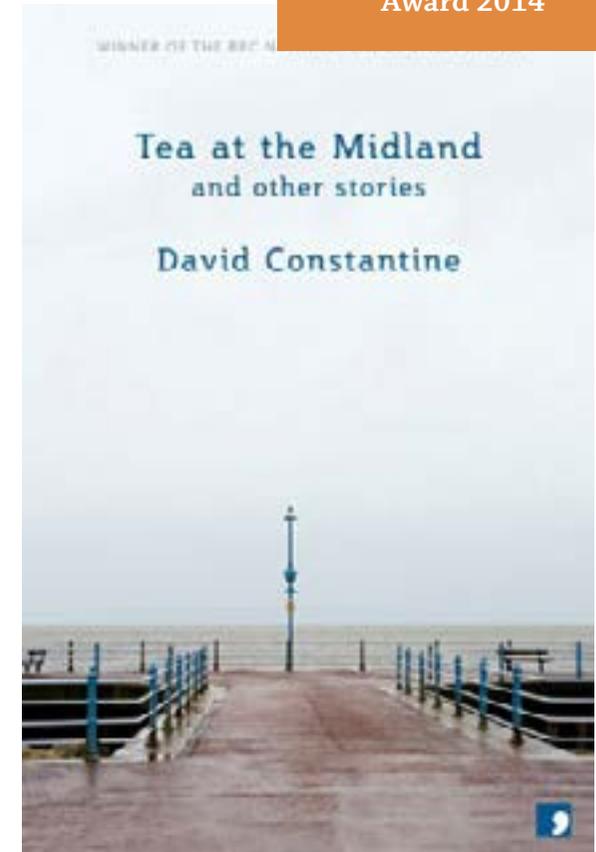
ISBN: 9780954828011
Publication: April 2005



The Shielling

Rights Available: World, all languages

ISBN: 9781905583218
Publication: June 2009



Tea at the Midland

Rights Sold: Notos Kitap (Turkish)

ISBN: 9781905583492
Publication: Aug 2012

Gregory Norminton

The Ghost Who Bled

[PROVISIONAL COVER]

Rights Available:
World, All languages

ISBN: 9781905583560
Forthcoming: June 2016

'His language is some of the most keenly pleasurable that I have read: it foams from the page as delightfully as cold beer on a summer's day.'

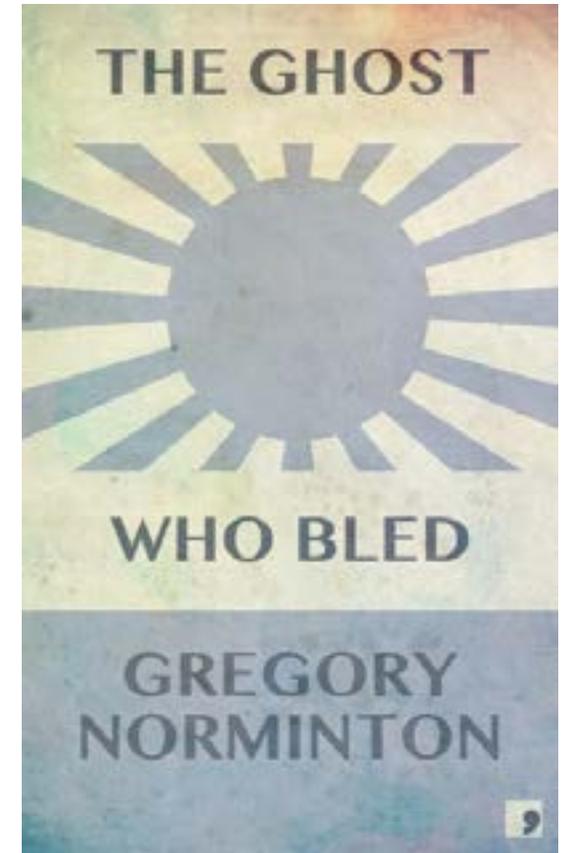
– The Times

The Ghost Who Bled is the short fiction debut from the novelist Gregory Norminton. Norminton's stories find their characters torn between conflicting impulses - between temptation and fortitude, hubris and shame, longing and regret. Spanning centuries and continents, these stories reveal Norminton as a master story-teller of incredible range, as he alights on moments of doubt and duality to draw scalpelsharp insights into human nature.

...In Elizabethan London, Puritan zealots conspire to persecute a playwright by the name of Christopher Marlowe...

...In post-war Japan, a ghost haunts the ruins of Hiroshima, and a home to which he can never return...

...In Cambodia, a woman returns from exile with her American husband, to finally reveal the awkward truth about their relationship.



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Gregory Norminton's novels include *The Ship of Fools* (2002), *Arts and Wonders* (2004), *Ghost Portrait* (2005) and *Serious Things* (2008), all published by Sceptre. His work for radio includes dramatisations of *The Machine Stops* by E.M. Forster and *Utz* by Bruce Chatwin. He is a regular contributor to *The Verb* on BBC Radio 3. His stories have appeared on BBC Radio 4, and in *Prospect*, *Resurgence*, *London Magazine* and *Zembla*. He has also been writer in residence at Magdalene College, Cambridge.

'Witty, intelligent, crunchily written, Norminton's collection is pure reading pleasure.'

- Neel Mukherjee on *The Ghost Who Bled*

'All the doors of the imagination are open to Gregory Norminton, the author of micro-fictions and exuberantly long novels; this collection roves magnificently from one side of the world to the other, bringing together people and their predicaments as only its author can. Read it and be transported, too.'

- Michael Caines, TLS, on the collection

Atef Abu Saif

Rights Sold:

Beacon Press (NA)

Unionsverlag (German Language)

ISBN: 9781905583713

Publication: July 2015

‘Witnessed, lived, and recorded page by page. A searing account of living through the 2014 bombardment of Gaza. We who report it can never capture the true scale of individual and collective suffering. As a Gaza resident, Atef Abu Saif’s diary provides an insight no outsider could ever have achieved.’

– Jon Snow, Channel 4 News



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Atef Abu Saif was born in Jabalia refugee camp in the Gaza Strip in 1973. He holds a Bachelor’s degree from the University of Birzeit and a Master’s degree from the University of Bradford. He received a PhD in Political and Social Science from the European University Institute in Florence. He is the author of five novels, including *A Suspended Life* (2014), which was shortlisted for the 2015 International Prize for Arab Fiction (IPAF). He is the author of two collections of short stories. He is a regular contributor to a number of Palestinian and Arabic newspapers and journals.

The Drone Eats With Me

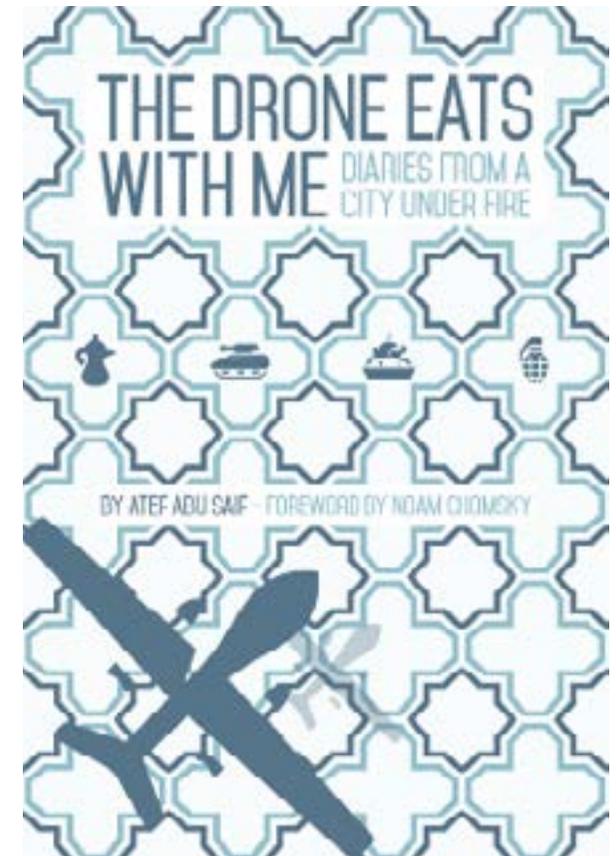
Diaries from a City Under Fire

On 7 July 2014, in an apparent response to the murder of three teenagers, Israel launched a major offensive against the Gaza Strip, lasting 51 days, killing 2145 Palestinians (578 of them children), injuring over 11,000, and demolishing 17,200 homes.

The global outcry at this collective punishment of an already persecuted people was followed by widespread astonishment at the pro-Israeli bias of Western media coverage.

One of the few voices to make it out was that of Atef Abu Saif, a writer and teacher from Jabalia Refugee Camp, whose eye-witness accounts offered a rare window into the conflict for Western readers. Here, Atef’s complete diaries of the war allow us to witness the full extent of last summer’s atrocities from the most humble of perspectives.

SHORTLISTED FOR THE MEMO PALESTINE BOOK AWARDS 2015.



‘In this luminous account of Israel’s 2014 invasion of Gaza, Atef Abu Saif creates a literary equivalent to Goya’s Disasters of War. The Drone Eats with Me deserves to become a modern classic of war literature. But for all the surrealist absurdity of the horrors Abu Saif chronicles, the book pulses throughout with the sublime, mundane and ferocious love for life.’ – Molly Crabapple, author of *Drawing Blood*

‘The Drone Eats with Me is a devastating contemporary war journal. This is what war is like in the 21st century – the voice of a civilian in the onslaught of drone warfare, a voice we have never heard before.’ – Michael Ondaatje, author of *The English Patient* and *Divisadero*

Edited by Atef Abu Saif

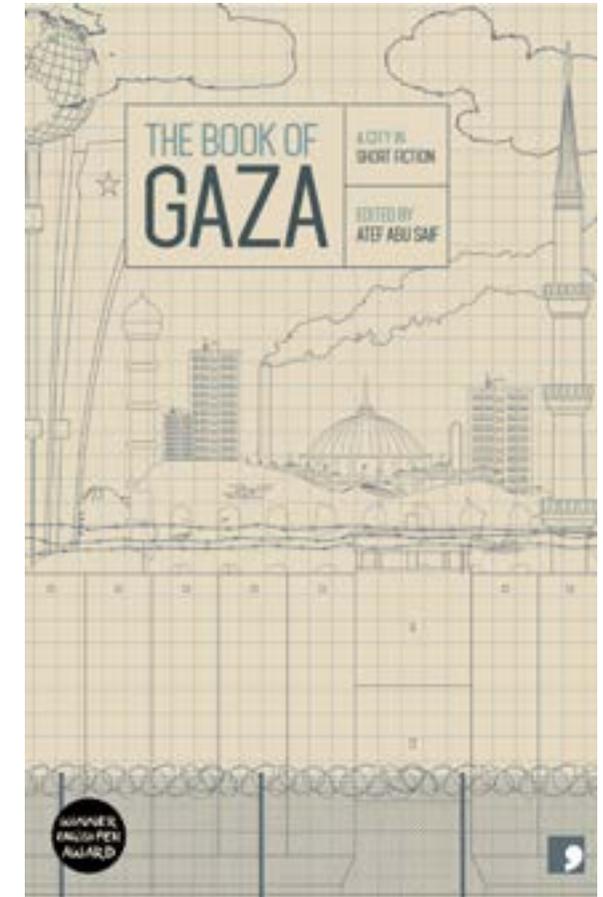
The Book of Gaza

Under the Israeli occupation of the '70s and '80s, writers in Gaza had to go to considerable lengths to ever have a chance of seeing their work in print. Manuscripts were written out longhand, invariably under pseudonyms, and smuggled out of the Strip to Jerusalem, Cairo or Beirut, where they then had to be typed up. Consequently, fiction grew shorter, novels became novellas, and short stories flourished as the city's form of choice. Indeed, to Palestinians elsewhere, Gaza became known as 'the exporter of oranges and short stories'.

This anthology brings together some of the pioneers of the Gazan short story from that era, as well as younger exponents of the form, with ten stories that offer glimpses of life in the Strip that go beyond the global media headlines; stories of anxiety, oppression, and violence, but also of resilience and hope, of what it means to be a Palestinian.

Featuring: Atef Abu Saif, Abdallah Tayeh, Talal Abu Shawish, Mona Abu Sharekh, Najlaa Ataallah, Ghareeb Asqalani, Nayrouz Qarmout, Yusra al Khatib, Asmaa al Ghul & Zaki al 'Ela

Translated from the Arabic by: Tom Aplin, Charis Bredin, Emily Danby, Alexa Firat, Alice Guthrie, Katharine Halls, Sarah Irving, Elisabeth Jaquette, John Peate, Adam Talib, and Max Weiss.



'...a powerful example of Palestinian resilience.'

- The Jordan Times

Part of the 'Reading the City' Series
(see page 19)



Hassan Blasim

Rights Sold:

Finnish (WSOY),
 Spanish (Galactica Guttenberg),
 Danish (Forlaget Vankunsten),
 Swedish (Albert Bonniers).
 Turkish (Aylak Adam).
 German (Verlag Antje Kunstmann),
 Basque (Pasazaite Liburuak)
 Arabic (Almutawassit)
 Croatian (Fraktura)

Corpse Exhibition
 (selected stories)

English US & Can (Penguin US)
 French (Editions de Seuil)
 Icelandic (Forlagid)
 Norwegian (H. Aschehoug)

ISBN: 9781905583522

Publication: April 2013

The Iraqi Christ

Translated from the Arabic by Jonathan Wright

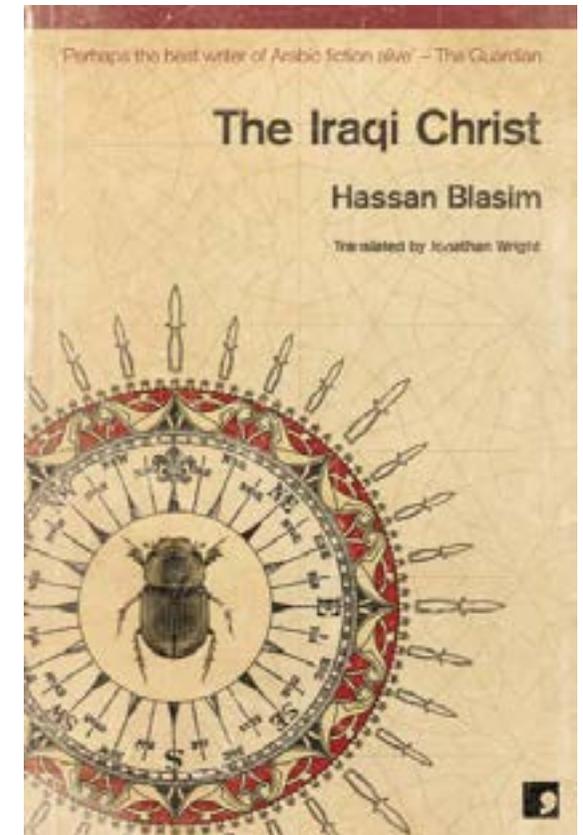
Winner of the 2014
 Independent Foreign Fiction Prize



‘Perhaps the best writer of Arabic fiction alive.’

– The Guardian

From legends of the desert to horrors of the forest, Blasim’s stories blend the fantastic with the everyday, the surreal with the all-too-real. Taking his cues from Kafka, his prose shines a dazzling light into the dark absurdities of Iraq’s recent past and the torments of its countless refugees. The subject of this, his second collection, is primarily trauma and the curious strategies human beings adopt to process it (including, of course, fiction). The result is a masterclass in metaphor – a new kind of story-telling, forged in the crucible of war, and just as shocking.



‘Bolaño-esque in its visceral exuberance, and also Borgesian in its gnomic complexity... a master of metaphor.’ – The Guardian

‘Brilliant and disturbing... bitter, furious and unforgettable.’

– Wall Street Journal

‘Blasim deserves a wider audience, one ready to be shocked and awed by these pitch-black fairytales.’ – The National

‘If a short story could break the heart of a rock, this might just be the one....’ – The New York Times

‘Blasim’s vivid prose reflects the way the fantastic and the ordinary collapse into a Kafkaesque jumble during urban conflict.’

– The Financial Times

‘Required reading for a real taste of life in Iraq.’ – The National
‘An arrestingly vivid picture of the privation and the terrors of life in Iraq.’ – Herald Scotland

Hassan Blasim

Rights Sold:

Italian (Il Sirente)

Arabic (AFAC)

Finnish (WSOY)

Spanish (Galaxia Guttenberg)

Polish (Biuro Literackie)

Turkish (Pan Yayin Cilik)

German (Verlag Antje Kunstmann)

Corpse Exhibition

(selected stories)

English US & Can (Penguin US)

French (Editions de Seuil)

Icelandic (Forlagid)

Bulgarian (TBC)

Japan (Hakasui-sha)

ISBN: 9781905583256

Publication: Dec 2009



ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Hassan Blasim is an Iraqi writer currently based in Finland. Born in Baghdad in 1973, he studied at the city's Academy of Cinematic Arts, where two of his films won the Academy's Festival Award for Best Work in their respective years. In 1998 he left Baghdad for Sulaymaniya (Iraqi Kurdistan), where he continued to make films, including the feature-length Wounded Camera, under a pseudonym fearing for his family back in Baghdad under the Hussein dictatorship. In 2004, after years of travelling as a refugee he settled in Finland.

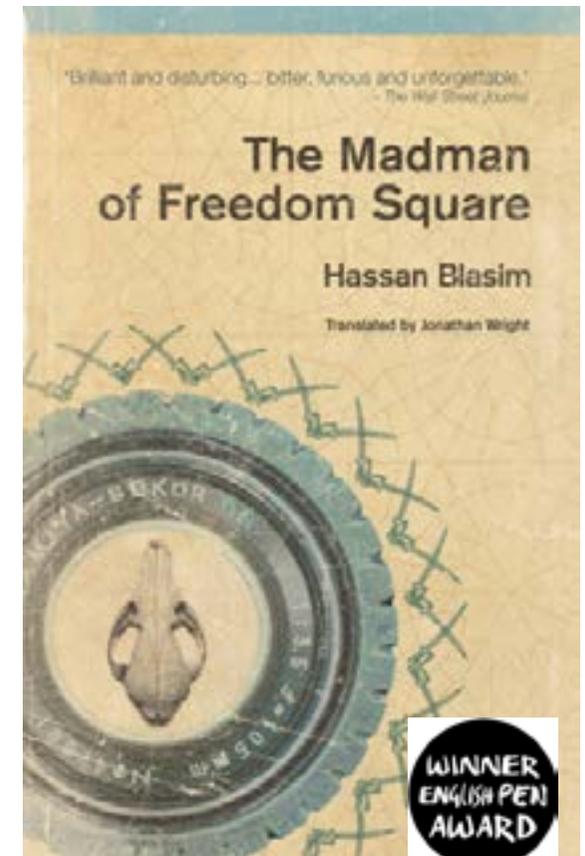
He is the author of two collections with Comma Press, and March 2016 saw the launch of Blasim's first play, The Digital Hats Game, at the Telakka Theatre in Helsinki.

The Madman of Freedom Square

Translated from the Arabic by Jonathan Wright

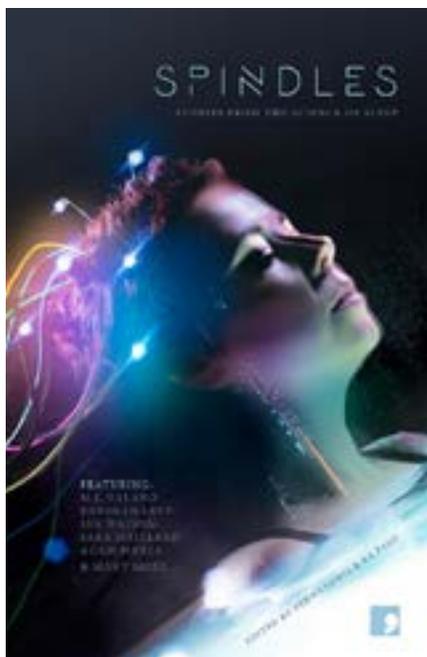
Blasim's stories present an uncompromising view of the West's relationship with Iraq, spanning over twenty years and taking in everything from the Iran-Iraq War through to the Occupation, as well as offering a haunting critique of the post-war refugee experience. Blending allegory with historical realism, and subverting readers' expectations in an unflinching comedy of the macabre, these stories manage to be both phantasmagoric and shockingly real, light in touch yet steeped in personal nightmare.

For all their despair and darkness, though, what lingers more than the haunting images of war, or the insanity of those who would benefit from it, is the spirit of defiance, the indefatigable courage of those few characters keeping faith with what remains of human intelligence.



'Crisp and shocking... Too febrile and macabre to file under reportage, this cruel, funny and unsettling debut has hooks and twists that will lodge in any mind.' - The Guardian

'Blasim moves adeptly between surreal, internalised states of mind and ironic commentary on Islamic extremism and the American invasion... excellent.' - The Metro



Rights Available:
World, All languages

ISBN: 9781905583690
Published: Dec 2015

BBC Focus
#Brainfood
**BOOK OF THE
WEEK**

Supported by
welcometrust

Spindles: Stories from the Science of Sleep

Featuring: M.J. Hyland, Martyn Bedford, Lisa Blower, Annie Clarkson, Claire Dean, Zoe Gilbert, Andy Hedgecock, Ian Watson

Featuring scientific contributions from: Prof Russell G. Foster, Isabel Hutchison, Dr. Simon Kyle, Dr. Paul Reading, Prof Robert Stickgold, Prof Manuel Schabus, Prof Ed Watkins, Prof. Adam Zeman, Dr. Thomas Wehr.

Containing 14 fictional stories about the science of sleep, accompanied by scientific afterwords.

Featuring Man-Booker nominees M.J.Hyland and Deborah Levy. With scientific contributions from the President of the British Sleep Society, Dr Paul Reading; Prof. Robert Stickgold, professor at Harvard-Medical School.

‘These stories offer intelligent and nuanced explorations of some of the ethical and cultural implications of an area of science that has the potential to affect every one of us.’

- New Welsh Review

Thought X: Fictions and Hypotheticals

Featuring: Mary Louise Cookson, Sarah Schofield, Claire Dean, Anneliese Mackintosh, Adam Marek, Ian Watson, Zoe Gilbert, Annie Kirby, Margaret Wilkinson, Sandra Alland, Annie Clarkson, Frank Cottrell Boyce, Adam Roberts & Andy Hedgecock

Anthology of specially-commissioned stories exploring thought experiments (e.g. Schrödinger’s cat) and their use in science to crack fundamental problems.

Featuring 20 leading scientists acting as consultants on the stories, and writing scientific afterwords, bringing the theory featured in the stories to life, including Dr Tim O’Brien (as featured on the BBC’s Star Gazing).

Thought X
Fictions and Hypotheticals



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Part of the
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(see page 18)

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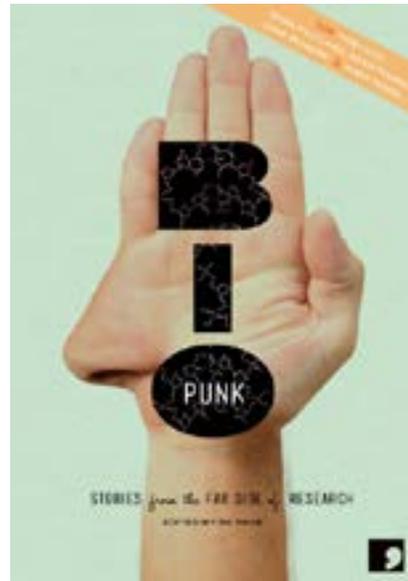
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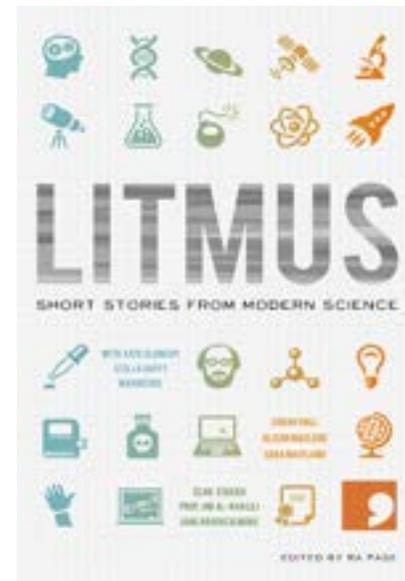
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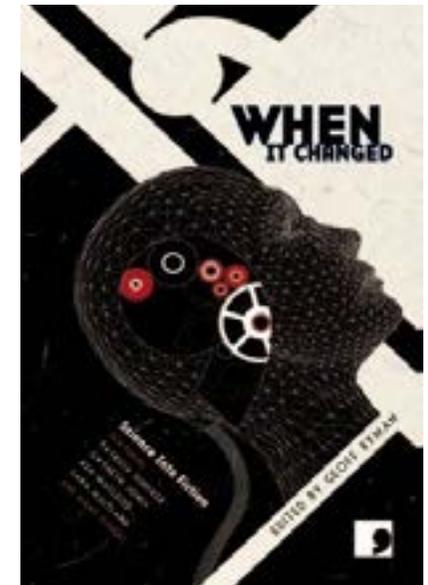
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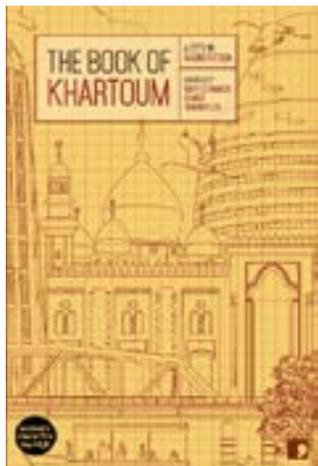
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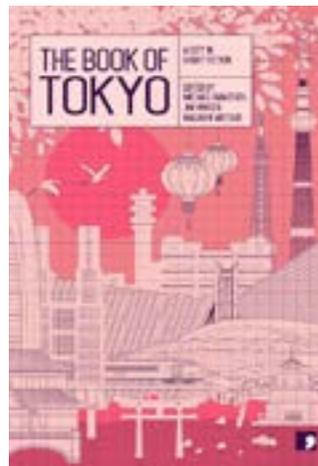
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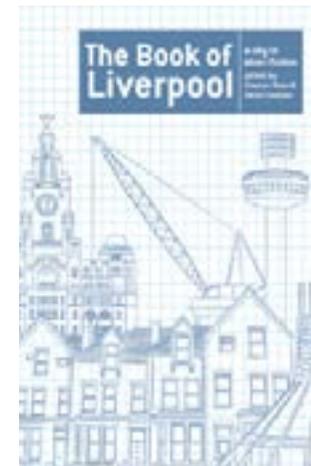
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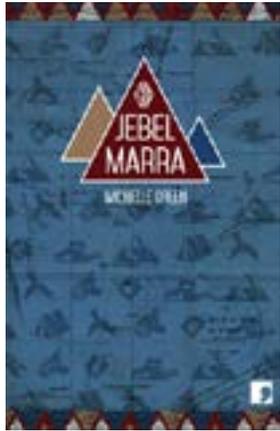
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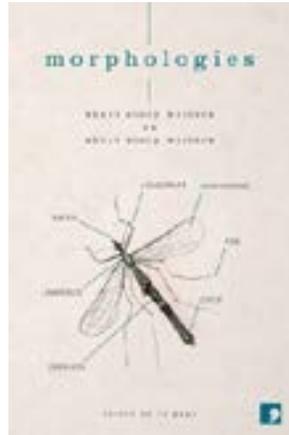


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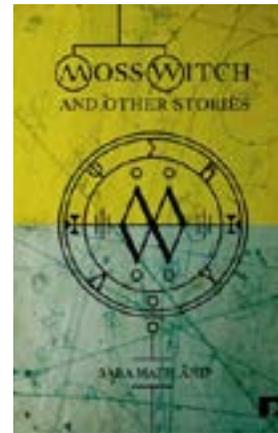


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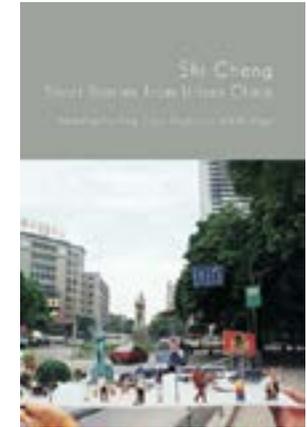


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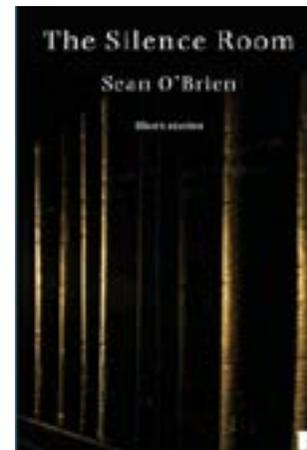


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