



Peirene

Travel the world in your armchair.

'Two-hour books
to be devoured
in a single sitting:
literary cinema
for those fatigued
by film.' TLS

NEW EDITION: FEATURING EXTRACTS &
INTRODUCING OUR 2014 BOOK SERIES

'Inside every fat book is a thin book trying to get out.'

UNKNOWN

Peirene Press is an award-winning boutique publishing house based in London.

It was set up in 2008 by writer Meike Ziervogel. Peirene is committed to first-class world literature and specializes in European novellas. All our books are best-sellers and/or award winners in their own countries. They are beautifully designed paperback editions, using only the best paper from sustainable British sources. Peirene books are affordable, timeless collectors' items.

WINNER OF THE INDEPENDENT PUBLISHERS
GUILD NEWCOMER OF THE YEAR AWARD 2011
2ND PRIZE BRITISH BOOK DESIGN AND PRODUCTION
AWARD 2011 & 2013.

WHY PEIRENE?

Peirene Press takes its name from a Greek nymph who turned into a water spring. The poets of Corinth discovered the Peirene source and, for centuries, they drank its water to receive inspiration. The idea of metamorphosis suits the art of translation beautifully: What starts off as a foreign book turns into an enjoyable English read.

www.peirenepress.com

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*Things Syntactical:
The pain and passion
of a small publisher.*

Throughout this paper you will find excerpts from the Peirene Press blog. It gives a taste of Peirene's world of the novella. This text runs in blue at the bottom of each page.

The Art of the Novella

When I set up Peirene, I knew I wanted to concentrate on publishing contemporary European novellas which had never been translated into English. I love the novella form and believe that many modern novels tend to be over-written. Too much description, too much repetitive dialogue, too much information copied straight from Wikipedia. I, as the reader, feel spoon-fed, sometimes even force-fed. I wonder if I am being deprived of the opportunity to use my imagination.

Let's take the modern Catalan classic, *Stone in a Landslide* - Peirene No 2 - by Maria Barbal, translated into English by Laura McGloughlin and Paul Mitchell. It's a miracle of compression. In a mere 120 pages we get the complete life story of an old woman, covering the entire 20th century. I still remember when I finished reading it. I was amazed how this book covers everything there is to cover in a person's life: love, hate, war, peace, loss, joy, passion, desire, loneliness. How did the author achieve this? Through the narrative voice - simple, almost naïve at times and yet beautifully wise. I often return to this story in my mind, although I read it five years ago.

A novella is a short work of fiction. It is a film for the mind - short enough to read in one sitting, but large enough to provide a satisfying read. A full-length novel often

aims to deliver a complete world view. If you present a villain then you need a police inspector to tell you that this person is a villain and why. The world inside the story must be kept in balance - and sometimes this has the effect of simply confirming the reader's worldview. A novella, on the other hand, prefers to focus on one view or one voice, highlights one feeling, portrays one psychological human trait. It zooms in on one aspect of a story. In doing so, it prompts us, the readers, to fill in the larger picture. It provokes us to think and use our imagination.

For example, in *Beside the Sea* - Peirene No 1 - by Véronique Olmi, translated from French by Adriana Hunter, we see the world entirely through the eyes of a mother who cannot cope. For her the world has become a dark, dangerous place. We believe her and follow her. Nowhere in the story does another character tell us what to make of this woman. We are left to judge for ourselves. The author shows us the protagonist without telling us what to think.

The novella as an art form came before the modern novel. *One Thousand and One Nights*, written in the 10th century, is one of the earliest examples of serialized novellas. Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* (1386-1400) followed suit.

During the Renaissance the novella developed into a literary genre in France and Italy. *The Decameron* (1353) by Giovanni Boccaccio and *The Heptameron* (1559) by the

French Queen, Marguerite de Navarre, stand as two outstanding examples. Then in the late 18th and early 19th centuries the novella became fashionable in Germany. *The Black Spider* (1842) by Jeremias Gotthelf and *Immensee* (1849) by Theodor Storm still make haunting reads today.

There are many examples of great novellas across the years. Many famous films have drawn on novellas, such as *A Christmas Carol* by Charles Dickens, *Heart of Darkness* by Joseph Conrad and *I Am Legend* by Richard Matheson. Moreover, also in Anglo-Saxon writing the novella is making a comeback. In 2012 two beautifully short books were shortlisted for the Booker: *The Lighthouse* by Alison Moore and *Swimming Home* by Deborah Levy. In 2013 Colm Tóibín's *The Testament of Mary* was shortlisted.

For me, reading is a creative act. Literature presents a wonderful tool to analyse and understand ourselves better. A text should serve as a springboard to engage our mind, our intellect, our imagination.

The novella is the perfect form to sharpen and make use of our creative reading skills. At best plot, voice and structure form a complete whole and each of those three aspects supports the other with an intensity made possible by the novella's obligation to focus.

Meike Ziervogel,
FOUNDER AND PUBLISHER OF PEIRENE PRESS



A class act. GUARDIAN

Why Do I Run Peirene?

If I were running Peirene for the sake of running a business, I would have chosen a different product.

A product people need in order to survive. Such as oil or butter.

If I were running Peirene for the sake of publishing books, I'd throw onto the market many more titles. Twenty to thirty annually, at least. Sex, drugs and

violence. In the hope to hit a bestseller.

If I were running Peirene for the sake of saving the Anglo-Saxon reader from insularity, I'd be publishing foreign classics. Short works by known authors, such as Goethe, Flaubert,

Peirene for me is a creative project. A project where I explore a different way of running a company.

Dostoyevsky. Recognizable names and the books sell themselves.

So why do I run Peirene? Peirene for me is a creative project. A project where I explore a different way of running a company. A feminine way. >

SERIES NO 1

FEMALE VOICE: INNER REALITIES

Women who live inside their own heads and clash with outside reality.

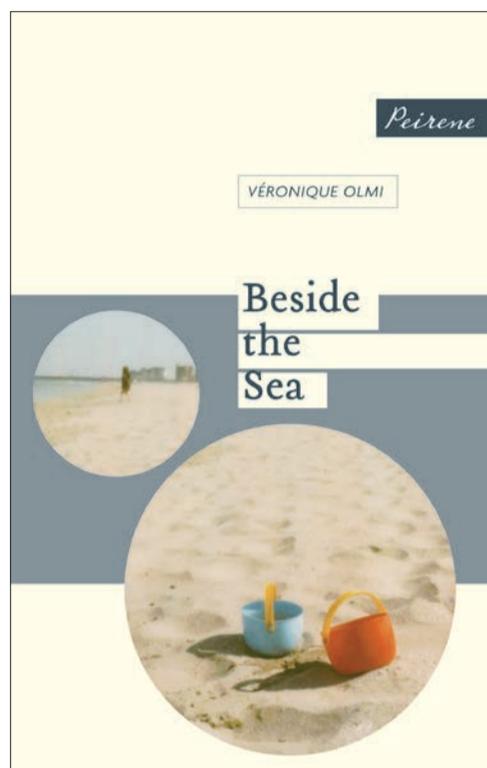
This series includes a story about a French mother who struggles to protect her two sons from the world, a Catalonian woman's life and loves during the Spanish Civil War, and an hour-long walk with a pregnant young German wife in 1943 Rome.

'Chick lit
this ain't!'

THE WOMEN'S ROOM

WINNER OF SCOTT MONCRIEFF PRIZE 2011 FOR BEST ENGLISH TRANSLATION FROM FRENCH
LONGLISTED FOR INDEPENDENT FOREIGN FICTION PRIZE 2011
BOOKTRUST TOP 5 TRANSLATED BOOKS 2010

A mesmerising portrait... it must be read. **GUARDIAN**



PEIRENE TITLE NO 1

Beside the Sea

VÉRONIQUE OLMÍ

Translated from the French by Adriana Hunter.

The controversial French bestseller for the first time available in English.

A single mother takes her two young sons on a trip to the seaside. They stay in a hotel, drink hot chocolate and go to the funfair. She wants to protect them from an uncomprehending and cold world. She knows that it will be the last trip for her boys.

A haunting and thought-provoking story about how a mother's love for her children can be more dangerous than the dark world she is seeking to keep at bay.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

This is the most impressive novel about the relationship between a mother and child that I have read. Véronique Olmi handles an aspect of motherhood that we all too often deny. She depicts a woman's fear of releasing her children into the world.

EXTRACT FROM *BESIDE THE SEA*

We took the bus, the last bus of the evening, so no one would see us. The boys had their tea before we left, I noticed they didn't finish the jar of jam and I thought of that jam left there for nothing, it was a shame, but I'd taught them not to waste stuff and to think of the next day.

Leaving on the bus I think they were happy,

a bit anxious, too, because I hadn't explained anything. I'd brought their jackets in case it rained, it often rains by the sea – that I had told them, at least, they were going to see the sea.

It was Kevin, the little one, who seemed happiest, more inquisitive anyway. But Stan kept giving me suspicious looks like when I just sit in the kitchen and

he watches me, thinking I don't know he's there, barefoot, in his pyjamas, I don't even have the strength to say Don't stay there with nothing on your feet, Stan. Yep, sometimes I sit in the kitchen for hours and I couldn't give a stuff about anything.

Luckily, we didn't have to wait long for the bus and no one saw us leave. >

Quality over quantity. Is product expansion the only way to success? How is success measured when you stay small? Peirene publishes three titles a year, even though by now we probably could publish more. But we won't. I don't want to lose

control of the quality. Because: the three titles form the basis of our work but by no means the end. Private versus public space. Since the Industrial Revolution, private and public space – work and family space – have

increasingly become separated. Is that necessary? The best way? Especially for a woman who has a family? Peirene HQ is situated in our house. We receive total strangers in our front room for the Peirene Salon. Many international authors have

sat in my kitchen. The waiting list for the salon is now double the length of the audience number we can admit. I could find a different venue. But the Salon – traditionally always in a woman's house – would lose its meaning.

Nurturing a community. A play needs an audience. A story needs a reader. A book without a reader is an empty shell. As a publisher I don't want to produce empty cardboard shells. I want to build and sustain a loyal community of readers

in whose minds the stories will come to life. This is why we run pop-up stalls, distribute the Peirene newspaper at tube stations and are delighted by each new subscriber: a community is best built by word of mouth and >

It felt really strange driving away from the city, leaving it for this unknown place, specially as it wasn't the holidays and that's what the boys kept thinking, I know they did. We'd never been away for a holiday, never left the city, and suddenly life felt new, my stomach was in knots, I was thirsty the whole time and everything was irritating, but I did my best, yes really my best, so the kids didn't notice anything. I wanted us to set off totally believing in it.

When the bus turned up we all felt nervous, shy like. We couldn't have felt more uncomfortable going into a luxury cabin on a first-class cruise ship. It was only a noisy old bus with no heating, mind you. Oh yes, it was certainly cold. You got into the thing and it felt like walking into a draught.

I paid our fares with the last big banknote I had, and we went and sat at the back, the boys and me, with our sports bags at our feet, I'd stuffed them full of warm clothes for the kids, there were too many clothes, I know, but it was quite a panic packing those bags, I can't explain it. I wanted to put everything into them, I knew it was pointless, I wanted it to come with us, stuff from home, familiar things, things you recognize as yours straight away. Kevin wanted me to take his toys, too, but I didn't want to, I knew pretty well we wouldn't be playing.

There were a lot of people around us, unbelievable that there are so many people out there, specially so late, where were they all from, were they going to the same place as us, no way of knowing, they looked calm, lost in quiet

thoughts. My kids were full of questions, Is it going to take long? Will it be light when we get there? Things like that, I wasn't sure what to tell them, I felt sick and didn't really want to talk, I definitely didn't want to give other people a chance to listen to us. We were high up in the bus, so cars – which are normally so frightening – were pathetic little contraptions now, we could see the drivers' hands, their legs, their stuff on the passenger seat, see them almost as clearly as if they'd been sitting in their own homes, it made them seem less dangerous, yep, we felt better protected in that bus, even if we were dying of cold.

personal contact.

Reaching beyond the community. A good text should have an effect on us beyond the last page. Like any work of art. It should try to change society for the better – however small such a change may be.

So we support the Maya Centre with 50p of each book sold.

Peirene taught me how to combine business and creative drive. Now I only need to learn how to be patient with my ancient Greek Nymph.

Living With a Star

The Nymph's first ever UK tour kicked off last Wednesday. In a sparkly gold dress with fake eyelashes and long satin

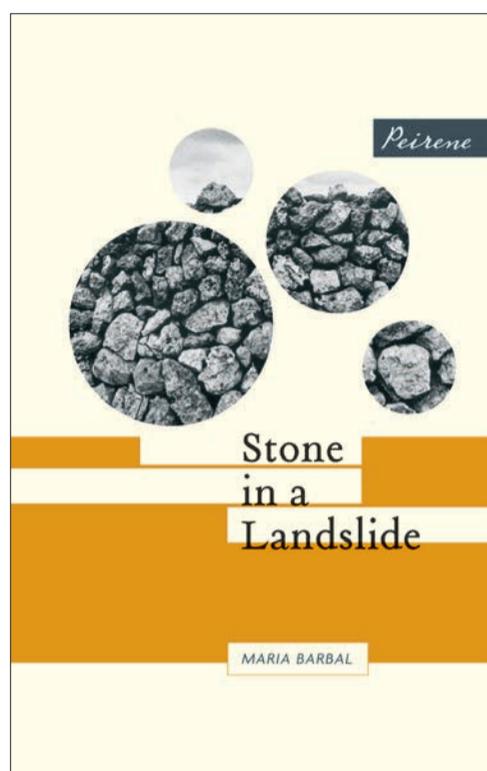
purple elbow gloves she headed for Oxford to throw a Peirene Coffee morning and entertain the audience at our Roaming Store in Gloucester Green market.

Her cosmopolitan chic went down like a treat. Despite pouring rain. We

Her cosmopolitan chic went down like a treat.

sold more books than usual. We distributed more newspapers than expected. More people than anticipated turned up to the coffee morning. And the Oxford Culture Review published an interview. 'I am a national star!' the

Understated power. FINANCIAL TIMES



PEIRENE TITLE NO 2

Stone in a Landslide

MARIA BARBAL

Translated from the Catalan by Laura McGloughlin and Paul Mitchell.

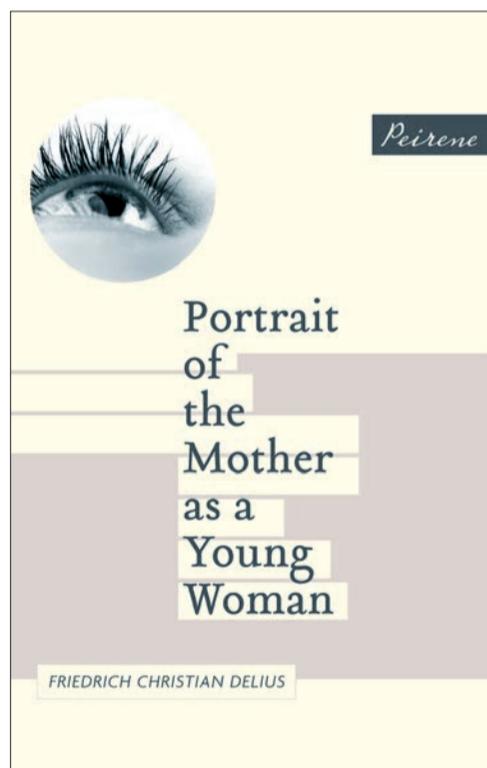
The Catalan modern classic, first published in 1985, now in its 50th edition.

The beginning of the 20th century: 13-year-old Conxa leaves her home village in the Pyrenees to work for her childless aunt. After years of hardship she finds love with Jaume – a love that will be thwarted by the Spanish Civil War. Approaching her own death, Conxa looks back on a life in which she has lost everything except her own indomitable spirit.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
I fell in love with Conxa's narrative voice, its stoic calmness and complete lack of anger and bitterness. It's a timeless voice, down to earth and full of human contradictory nuances. It's the expression of someone who is searching for understanding in a changing world.

GUARDIAN BOOKS OF THE YEAR 2010

A small masterpiece. TIMES LITERARY SUPPLEMENT



PEIRENE TITLE NO 3

Portrait of the Mother as a Young Woman

FRIEDRICHE CHRISTIAN DELIUS

Translated from the German by Jamie Bulloch.

Rome, one January afternoon in 1943. A young German woman is on her way to listen to a Bach concert at the Lutheran church. Innocent and naïve, the war is for her little more than a daydream, until she realizes that her husband might never return.

This is a mesmerizing psychological portrait of the human need to safeguard innocence and integrity at any cost – even at the risk of excluding reality.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
I was simply entranced by the structure of this narrative, a single 105-page long sentence with a beautifully clear rhythm. At the same time it's a compelling and credible description of a 'typical' young German woman during the Nazi era. If we can relate to her we come close to understanding the forces that were shaping an entire generation.

Nymph sighed as she arrived back home. She took a bath and went to bed with earplugs and eye mask. 'I need my beauty sleep,' she informed me. 'I now have an obligation to look good for my audience. They want me glamorous

and young.' Waving a hand into thin air, she beckoned me out of the room. 'Please ensure that no fans disturb me for the next 24 hours.'

Peirene is of course convinced that her successful first gig was her doing and her doing alone.

So let me praise her entourage.

The tour was Maddy's idea. Last spring she approached English PEN and persuaded them to support the tour financially. They, in turn, realized that a tour featuring our coffee

'I am a national star!' the Nymph sighed as she arrived back home. She took a bath and went to bed with earplugs and eye mask.

morning and roaming store is a unique chance to promote the Polish masterpiece, *Chasing the King of Hearts*.

Jen organized the logistics. She established the cities to visit – Oxford, Canterbury, Stratford-upon-Avon. She >

SERIES NO 2

MALE DILEMMA: QUESTS FOR INTIMACY

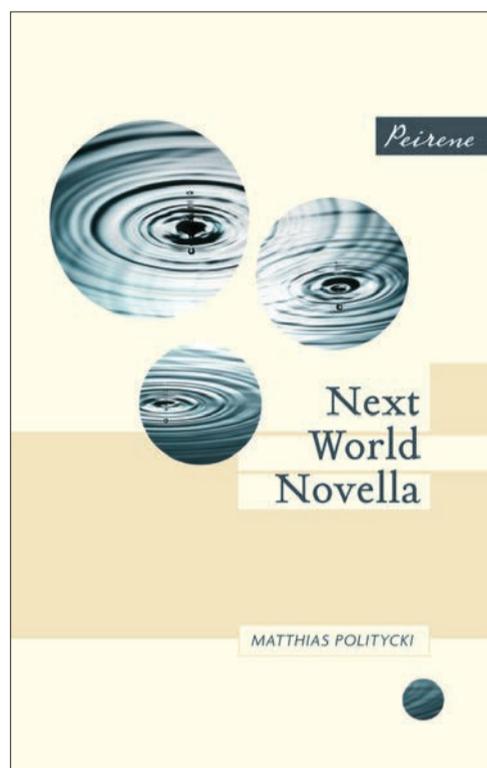
Male authors, male characters: Men and their struggle with intimacy.

This series includes a German story of a man faced with the next world and the shifting sands of the world he is in, a Dutch road trip with a boxer and a family man, and an Austrian collection of Kafkaesque short stories about loss of identity in the modern world.

'Instantly recognisable as a series, the unusual mix of type and graphical elements ensures these books stand out, making this collection worthy of its highly commended status.'

BRITISH BOOK DESIGN AND
PRODUCTION AWARDS 2011

Inventive and deeply affecting. INDEPENDENT



PEIRENE TITLE NO 4

Next World Novella

MATTHIAS POLITYCKI

Translated from the German by Anthea Bell.

Germany's master of wit and irony now for the first time in English.

Hinrich takes his existence at face value. His wife, on the other hand, has always been more interested in the afterlife. Or so it seemed. When she dies of a stroke, Hinrich goes through her papers, only to discover a totally different perspective on their marriage. Thus commences a dazzling intellectual game of shifting realities.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
This novella deals with the weighty subjects of marriage and death in an impressively light manner. Shifting realities evolve with a beautiful sense of irony and wit. It is a tone that allows us to reflect – without judgement – on misunderstandings, contradictory perceptions and the transience of life.

EXTRACT FROM NEXT WORLD NOVELLA

If only it hadn't been for that smell! As if Doro had forgotten to change the water for the flowers, as if their stems had begun to rot overnight, filling the air with the sweet-sour aroma of decay. Schepp noticed it at once, that subtle sense of something Other in the midst of ordinary life, slightly skewing the morning. From the far end of his

room autumn sunlight came flooding in, bathing everything in a golden or russet glow – the chaise longue in the corner was a patch of melting colour. They'd have to open a window to let all that light out later. Schepp stood there, blinking at his world gently flowing around him, a world of stucco moulding and decorative wallpaper,

book-lined walls, chairs with silk covers. Checking the way his hair lay over his bald patch, stroking the back of his head, he told himself that he was a happy man. Not least because of Doro, whose own hair, pinned up, mingled black and silver, he could see above the back of the desk chair. At one side he glimpsed the kimono she liked to wear >

found the appropriate markets for our stall and the cafés for our coffee morning. She turned up at 6am last Wednesday morning at the market in Oxford to set up. Maddy joined her later that day.

We also received fantastic

support from our Oxford fans, among them the writer Dan Holloway, the illustrator Badaude and Peirene subscriber Catherine who tweeted about us and brought their friends. The Nymph was in seventh heaven.

And as for me – I manned Peirene HQ on my own that day, feeling incredibly proud of my team. What a sleek, professional operation. Worthy of a national star.

However, once a show is over, even a star has to return to earth. That's the

...once a show is over, even a star has to return to earth.

part Peirene struggles with most. On Friday she was still in bed. Reading magazines, eating chocolate truffles and occasionally sniffing into a lace cotton handkerchief. Not surprisingly she caught a cold in her sparkly dress out

in the Oxford rain. I let her be. As an exception. Because I want her back on form for our next tour stop, Canterbury this coming Saturday.

when she sat in that chair, editing what he had written the day before. Since the children had left home, she had wanted to resume her career. That had pleased him. Not only did he go to bed late, he also got up late, so if Doro had fallen asleep over her editing, wedged at an awkward angle between the desk and the chair as she was today, he would just shake his head, because he couldn't have put into words all that he felt.

Oddly enough, as regularly as he had found her here before, he had written almost nothing since his operation, so was there anything to be edited? I'm still dreaming, he told himself as he moved quietly across the fishbone-patterned parquet towards the sun and the desk and the big vase standing on the floor with the decaying gladioli

in it, and Doro.

Before he planted a kiss on her neck, stealing up quietly like a man newly in love, a few of the little wooden segments of the parquet creaking slightly, a fly buzzing somewhere (but even that sounded familiar and homely), before he bent over Doro, to the little mole at the base of her throat that he knew so well – any minute now she would wake with a start and look askance at him, half indignant, half affectionate – he suddenly registered a stack of paper on the desk, her reading glasses, a packet of aspirins, a water glass that had been knocked over and a dark mark on the leather inlay of the desktop, with her fountain pen beside it. Once again she had forgotten to put the cap back on it. He was about to pick it up when he remembered, and no, he wasn't dreaming any

more, remembered yesterday evening and the new waitress who had given him such a long, intent smile as he was leaving the bar. Schepp was standing directly behind the chair where Doro sat so still, only the wing of the chair-back kept her from tipping over, and he smiled at this thought for a few seconds. Well, Hinrich, he said to himself, grinning at the place where he thought he detected a last reflection of the night before, you may be sixty-five but the ladies still have time for you. Then he bent over Doro. Once again the smell hit him, an entirely strange smell now, a sweetish aroma mingled with the odour of sweat and urine and – he shrank back, his mouth gaping.

Kitchen Workshop

A few years ago I got stuck on the question: Why do we live in houses? Of course I understand the practical

side of living in buildings. But why and how did our brains ever conceive in the first place of building shelters.

I'm not barmy. Honestly, Peirene is with me on this, by the way. As an ancient Greek Nymph she, too,

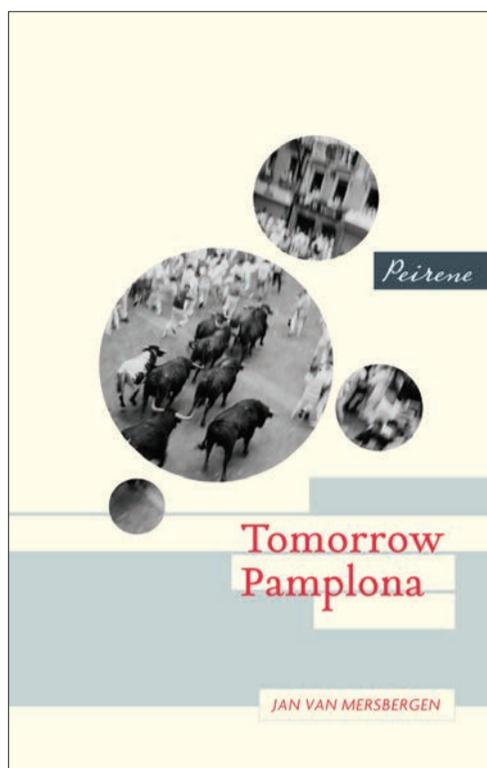
couldn't get her head around buildings. However, she eventually found the answer in a book:

'The archetypal house repeats the architecture of the universe; a ground below, a space between, a vault above, in which there

is an opening corresponding to the solar gateway by which one 'escapes altogether' out of time and space into an unconfined and timeless empyrean. Functional and symbolic values coincide.' (Ananda Coomaraswamy)

The archetypal house repeats the architecture of the universe ; a ground below, a space between, a vault above...

A book that is likely to divide readers, possibly along gender lines. FINANCIAL TIMES



PEIRENE TITLE NO 5

Tomorrow Pamplona

JAN VAN MERSBERGEN

Translated from the Dutch by Laura Watkinson.

A story about anger, aggression and the desire for intimacy by a rising star of modern Dutch literature.

A professional boxer and a family man meet by chance on a journey to the Pamplona Bull Run. The boxer is fleeing an unhappy affair. The father hopes to escape his dull routine. Both know that, eventually, they will have to return to the place each calls 'home'.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

I adore the deceptive simplicity of this story. On the surface, the fast-moving plot, the short sentences, the ordinary words make the text as straightforward as punches in a boxing match. But just as physical conflict stirs deep emotions, so too does this book as it focuses on a single question: How do you choose between flight and fight?

GUARDIAN PAPERBACK OF THE YEAR 2011

Hotschnig's stories have the weird, creepy and ambiguous quality of disturbing dreams. GUARDIAN



PEIRENE TITLE NO 6

Maybe This Time

ALOIS HOTSCHNIG

Translated from the Austrian German by Tess Lewis.

A spellbinding short story collection by one of Austria's most critically acclaimed authors.

A man becomes obsessed with observing his neighbours. A large family gathers for Christmas only to wait for the one member who never turns up. An old woman lures a man into her house, where he finds dolls resembling himself as a boy. Mesmerizing and haunting stories about loss of identity in the modern world.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

I love Kafka and here we have a Kafkaesque sense of alienation - not to mention narrative experiments galore! Outwardly normal events slip into drama before they tip into horror. These oblique stories exert a fascinating hold over the reader.

The quote solved the riddle. Since then I haven't wondered once why we humans live in houses.

This weekend Peirene's first ever novella-writing masterclass took place in true Peirene style: not in an anonymous office but in a

kitchen. In Shelley's kitchen. Shelley is our creative writing tutor.

For two days from 10am to 5pm Shelley and her students gathered around her big kitchen table. They studied our Female Voice series, dissecting the texts in

order to understand how the writers had achieved a unique narrative voice (*Beside the Sea*), conveyed an entire life story of a woman in less than 120pp (*Stone in a Landslide*) and created a real sense of place (*Portrait of the Mother as a*

Peirene's first ever novella-writing masterclass took place in true Peirene style: not in an anonymous office but in a kitchen.

Young Woman). Moreover, they didn't just talk, they also worked hard. They had to write scenes from the perspective of nine-year-old Stan, one of the children in *Beside the Sea*, and had to imagine pursuing Margherita from *Portrait of the* >page 15

from the short story collection *Maybe This Time*,
Peirene No 6, by Alois Hotschnig.
Translated from the Austrian German by Tess Lewis.



I turned off the light and looked out towards the island. I heard someone calling, but I could not see that far in the darkness. After a while, lights flashed in the reeds, and I could finally make out the man whose voice I had been hearing for hours. From his boat, he shone a light into the reeds, where I now saw something white floating back and forth across the water. It always returned to the circle of light, like a person trying to get to shore. In fact, it was just a piece of cloth, perhaps a vest belonging to one of the children I had seen on the island that afternoon. The man kept shining his light on it, but didn't pull it out of the water.

I remembered how they rushed back from the island in their boat, and the minute they set foot on land, they disappeared into their houses without the usual hue and cry that spread through the area whenever they returned.

They made their way from a spit of land through the reeds and out to the island. It always took a while before they could be seen again in the undergrowth, since they had become so adept at disappearing into the landscape. Whether any sound from the island reached me depended on the direction of the wind.

They were a gang of children from the area, not many and not always the same ones. It was hard to say why they were so drawn to the

island. They went there often, almost daily, even though access to the island was prohibited, because of the few protected species that nested there.

They took sticks and poles with them in the boat, and apples, which would end up floating, a few days later, in the water near the reeds.

They played at being hunters in the reeds. With their sticks and poles, they waded in the mud along the shore, and frightened animals shot out of their holes and escaped out over the lake. Then they rowed to the island, and, depending on the wind, either a slapping beat of oars could be heard, or silence. This silence drew me to the window more often than any of their yelling.

When they headed back or were on their way over, they made sure they were safe from prying eyes, and if they realized they were being watched, they waved cheerfully and headed off in another direction. There was no use in taking it personally, since everyone here had sneaked onto the island at one time or another.

The light was still shining in the reeds and the man poked at the water with a hook.

I drew the curtains, knowing perfectly well what there was to see. The man himself had made sure of that. I thought of him often and in dreams I climbed into his boat and he rowed me out to the island. Now he was at it again. A vest floating in the water, a piece of cloth that had got caught in the reeds or an empty boat trapped in the branches by the shore meant that for days, even weeks, it would be impossible to calm him. For years things had been quiet at the lake, even if the quiet was always only temporary, since there were plenty of opportunities

to find things in the water. He had spent those years, growing old, in his boat. He went around the lake for his work, but seemed to be constantly searching in the water, along the shore, in the reeds, on the island. Everyone here thought they knew the real reason for his agitation. And yet, because of his consideration towards the children, many felt he was best left alone.

He supplied the local inns with fish and sold the rest of his catch in the town nearby. During the day he sat in his boat, and in the evenings he slipped along the shore. At night you could find him in the bars near the harbour or, again, in his boat. He was considerate and polite, but still often rowed past without saying hello, only to draw attention to himself at the next opportunity with an enthusiastic wave. This would be followed by an invitation to join him in his boat. He was so friendly that I, especially as a child, could not refuse and we took many excursions, as he called them. While we were together he would tell me all about his work and what he had caught that day and all that he had seen and done day in, day out, throughout the year and in all the years he had spent fishing on this lake. He talked to me, but seemed absent-minded. Then he would suddenly look at me intently and searchingly, but without ever asking about anything in particular. As we approached the island, he always grew nervous and jumpy. He broke out in a sweat, his shirt sodden, his entire body trembling, his eyes fixed on me. Only the oars kept him steady. His trembling gradually subsided and once again his expression became open, relaxed, even friendly. As if he had noticed my shock, he smiled in embarrassment and ruffled my hair.

We turned and rowed back to shore, and yet, as relaxed and open as he appeared to be, he never once took his eyes off me. He seemed to be using me as a means of following his boy's trail, even finding him. I didn't want this and tried to avoid him, but couldn't. Next time he had changed and asked me about school, about my classmates and friends, their likes and dislikes. He wanted to know everything. Occasionally, he managed to convince one or the other of my friends to row out to the island with him, and he would stare at them just as intently, searching for something or maybe just remembering his son, thinking of what he might have looked like now. Whatever the reason, it was as if he had identified and understood something in each of us, so we were glad when our parents forbade us to go near him again.

He almost always had in his boat one of the children who even now and so many years later still made this area feel less safe. He taught them how to fish, something they willingly took up, and in winter he taught them to ice skate. That way he could spend time with them throughout the year. They weren't shy with him, and they trusted him. At least they appeared to. They sat in his boat with their fishing rods and let him help them up when they slipped on the ice. Yet I got the impression they tolerated rather than liked him, because more than once I saw them duck into the reeds and hide when he rowed past. He was, in any case, the inevitable witness of their secret expeditions to the island, or at the very least an accessory, since it is inconceivable that they could have slipped past him unnoticed. So they obviously agreed to sit with him in his boat every now and then to keep him

from telling on them.

He would never have kept quiet about us, though.

On the way out to the island we already had water in the boat, more than usual. The boat didn't belong to any of us, so no one bothered to take care of it. It had been abandoned years before, tied to a tree trunk that rose from the water. On that day the boat rode lower in the water than usual. We rowed out anyway, probably because we had the new kid with us. He had come to our school a few weeks earlier, and we took him with us to the spot where we always landed, an opening in the reeds, a clearing where we tied up. That is where I always picture him, standing there in the reeds, looking at us, wondering what we had planned for him.

All summer long they searched for the boy. They found his bicycle not far from where we had set off.

I have not set foot on the island since then, and since then the boy's father has not left the lake, and I have watched him all the years since.

We never said a word about the incident. Life went on and we still met up, but we no longer went out to the island.

I turned on the light and sat on the bed. The next morning, there were children creeping around the house. The light's on in his room, I heard one say. A moment later they were standing in the doorway and in my room, looking straight at me, bright-eyed and happy. One of them held out a box with a kitten. It had adopted them, they said. They asked for milk for the cat, and when I came back into the room, they were standing at the window. They were looking across the lake over to the island in the reeds.

SERIES NO 3

SMALL EPIC: UNRAVELLING SECRETS

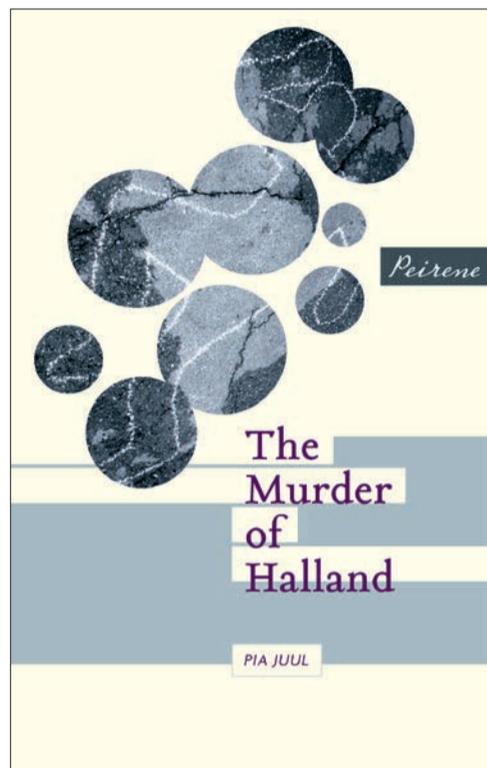
Three stories that rub shoulders with genre fiction.

A Finnish historical family saga, a Danish literary crime story and a Swiss novella about the life of one of the most famous Chinese painters of all time, Bada Shanren.

'One of the joys of picking up a book from Peirene Press is the knowledge that each slim volume offers a very different reading experience.'

PAM NORFOLK, LANCASHIRE EVENING POST

Anything but a standard crime novel. The mystery at its heart is the mystery we are to each other. ECONOMIST



PEIRENE TITLE NO 8

The Murder of Halland

PIA JUUL

Translated from the Danish by Martin Aitken.

Denmark's foremost literary author turns crime fiction on its head.

Bess and Halland live in a small town where everyone knows everyone else. When Halland is found murdered in the main square the police encounter only riddles. For Bess bereavement marks the start of a journey that leads her to a reassessment first of her friends, then of her family.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
If you like crime you won't be disappointed. A murder, a gun, an inspector, suspense. But the story strays far beyond the whodunnit norm. Pia Juul charts the phases of bereavement in beautifully stark language. PS Don't skip the quotes.

EXTRACT FROM *THE MURDER OF HALLAND*

The night before, we sat in the living room. I had a coffee; he drank a beer. We watched a police drama. 'I wouldn't mind looking like her,' I said, referring to the detective, Danish TV's only mature heroine. 'You don't, though, do you?' I looked over at him. Women's faces shrivel; men acquire substance. 'You've acquired substance,' I said. 'Where?' he asked, worried. 'Ha ha

ha,' I laughed mockingly.

'I need to leave at seven tomorrow morning,' he said, and turned off the TV. 'I'll write for a bit.' I hugged him as tight as I could. We kissed. I rubbed my cheek against his stubble. 'Won't be long.'

In my study I tripped over something. I shuffled gingerly to the desk and turned on the lamp. My laptop was in sleep mode. Next to it stood a glass of

tepid water. I swallowed a mouthful before turning to the stereo and inserting a CD. Schumann filled the room. I turned off the CD player. I can only listen to such music if the volume's turned way up, which wouldn't have pleased the neighbours at this late hour.

I switched on the laptop, picked up a book, then put it down again. I clicked open the document that >

Mother through the streets of Rome in 1943. And finally they were provided with the chance for individual tutoring on their own pieces of work.

Peirene and I can't really take credit for this course. We turned up at 4.30 on

It is from this room that one escapes out of time and space.

Sunday afternoon in time for the Prosecco and walked right into a buzzing creative atmosphere.

'I think they had such an inspiring course because it took place in a kitchen,' Peirene mused as we walked home. 'The solar gateway –

the hearth and chimney – were originally in the kitchen. It is from this room that one escapes out of time and space. And that is precisely what a writer needs to do in order to produce great stories.'

I liked her interpretation.

But I know my Nymph just a tiny bit too well. 'You are jealous,' I laughed. 'We could have held the class in our kitchen but my children wouldn't have received any food all weekend long. I do think Shelley offers the students a better 'solar

gateway'.

Peirene pouted before adding, 'She is also a more patient teacher than either of us.'

came up on the screen. I had made the last set of changes two days earlier: just moved some commas, really. I thought of going to bed; perhaps he would still be awake. Feeling cold, I retrieved a jumper from the floor, pulled it over my head and began to read. Then I wrote.

Unusually, I became totally absorbed in my text and lost track of time. Eventually I looked up with an aching back. A grey dawn was breaking. I pushed the chair back and opened the window. A blackbird trilled on the roof of the summer house, greeting the loveliest of spring mornings. But when you haven't slept and your limbs feel stiff and your mind is full and empty all at once, everything seems out of sorts.

I found myself wondering how to describe the colour of the

fjord. Quite unlike me, too. With the sun coming up, the water changed hue with each passing second.

I didn't want to wake Halland; he had to be up soon anyway. After going to the loo, I went back into the living room and collapsed on the sofa under a blanket. When I opened my eyes again, I knew a sound had woken me, but I had no idea what sound. An echo reverberated inside me. I sat up and ran my fingers through my hair the way they do in films. I pulled myself together again and clutched the blanket around my knees. Was I afraid? I don't think so. That would have been psychic, insane almost. Though I remember thinking that something wasn't quite right. Had I merely heard the door closing behind Halland?

I checked the bedroom and noticed the empty bed.

He had gone.

As I stood under the shower, I suddenly realized that I had seen his coat and briefcase in the hall. He hadn't left the house after all. Turning off the water, I called out to him. Nothing. The silence made me anxious. I wrapped the towel around me and moved through the house. I passed the front door and caught sight of someone through the little frosted pane. There he is, about to come in. Then the doorbell rang. 'Just a minute!' I yelled, dashing into the bedroom. I yanked off the towel and pulled on Halland's dressing gown, tying the cord as I went to open the door.

'In the name of the law!' proclaimed the bewildered-looking man on the step. His voice cracking, he raised his hand.

A Creative Spirit & A Pile of Post

'Where are you heading?' I ask the Nymph. It's in the

middle of the afternoon. Peirene is standing at the front door, wearing coat and hat, and a suitcase in hand.

'I'm leaving the country.' She opens the door. I roll my eyes. After all, it's not the first time that she is leaving the country. 'What's

the problem now?,' I enquire and put as much empathy in my voice as possible.

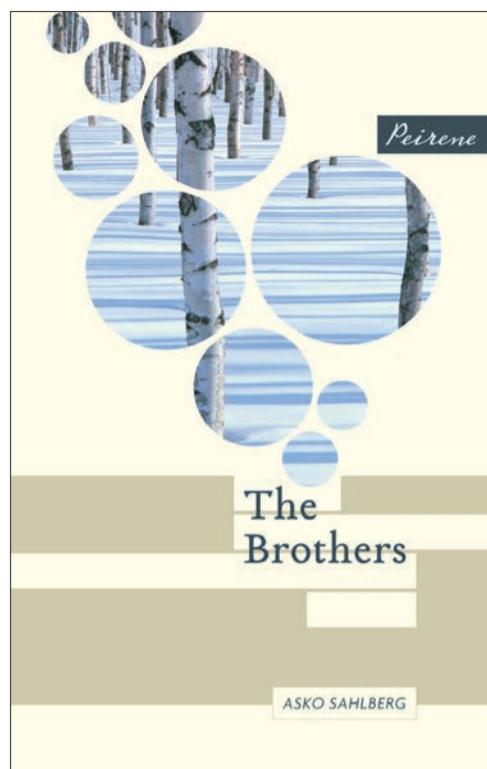
For a moment Peirene hesitates, then she turns around with tears in her eyes and trembling lips. 'I'm a creative spirit and you stifle me.'

With a sigh I sit down at the bottom of the stairs and listen to her complaints.

'You insist that I log every single book we sell. Each month you make me fill out cash-flow charts. Every day I have to update our subscriber spreadsheet and

...tears in her eyes and trembling lips. 'I'm a creative spirit and you stifle me.'

Intensely visual... a brooding, atmospheric, Scandinavian late night movie. INDEPENDENT ON SUNDAY



PEIRENE TITLE NO 7

The Brothers

ASKO SAHLBERG

Translated from the Finnish by Emily Jeremiah and Fleur Jeremiah.

A Shakespearean drama from icy Finland.

Finland, 1809. Henrik and Erik are brothers who fought on opposite sides in the war between Sweden and Russia. With peace declared, they both return to their snowed-in farm. But who is the master?

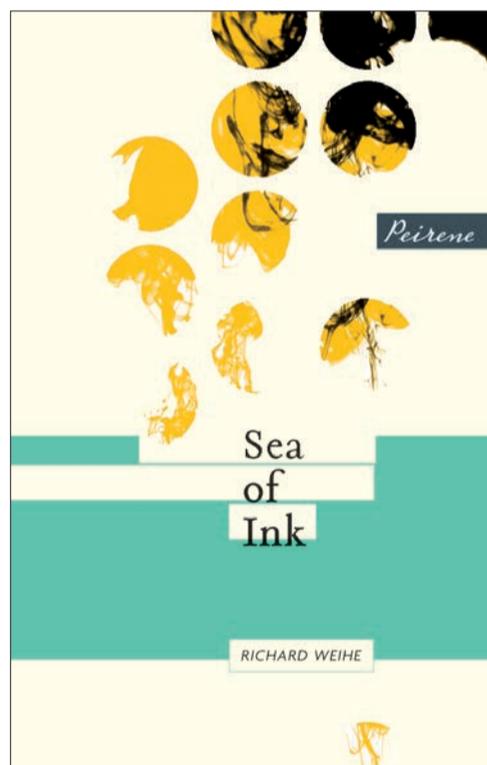
Sexual tensions, old grudges, family secrets: all come to a head in this dark and gripping saga.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

This is a historical novel in miniature form. It deals in dark passions and delivers as many twists as a 500-page epic. And as if that were not enough, each character speaks in a distinct voice. I'm thrilled to be publishing a book that is as Finnish as a forest in winter – but that resembles a work from the American South: William Faulkner's As I Lay Dying.

FOYLES BOOKS OF THE YEAR 2012

Delicate and moving. INDEPENDENT



PEIRENE TITLE NO 9

Sea of Ink

RICHARD WEIHE

Translated from the Swiss German by Jamie Bulloch.

A beautiful novella in 51 short chapters and 11 pictures about the life of Bada Shanren, the most influential Chinese painter of all time.

In 1626, Bada Shanren is born into the Chinese royal family. When the old Ming Dynasty crumbles, he becomes an artist, committed to capturing the essence of nature with a single brushstroke. Then the rulers of the new Qing Dynasty discover his identity and Bada must feign madness to escape.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

Fact and fiction achieve a perfect union in this exquisite novella. A beautiful story about the quiet, determined pursuit of inspiration, this is a charming and uplifting book. After reading it, I looked at the world a little differently.

stuff envelopes and rush to the post office. And worst of all, you are forcing me to respond to emails as quickly and efficiently as possible. So many days go by without achieving anything else. I can't stand it any longer. I am a highly skilled Nymph

with creative powers that should be harnessed to a greater cause.'

She stops and takes a deep breath. I look at her.

'Are you finished?'

'Not quite.' She shakes her head. 'Worst of all: your attitude.'

Peirene is standing at the front door, wearing coat and hat, and a suitcase in hand. 'I'm leaving the country.' She opens the door. I roll my eyes.

'My attitude.' I respond with disbelief – but she's got a point.

My mood hasn't been great. The admin side of publishing can be overwhelming. My gaze falls onto the big pile of unopened post in the

hallway. As I avert my eyes, I hear the phone ring in the office. I ask Peirene to wait and rush upstairs. It's Maddy. She is working from home today writing a couple of funding applications. She needs to know revenue by book for the 2012 tax year. >

SERIES NO 4

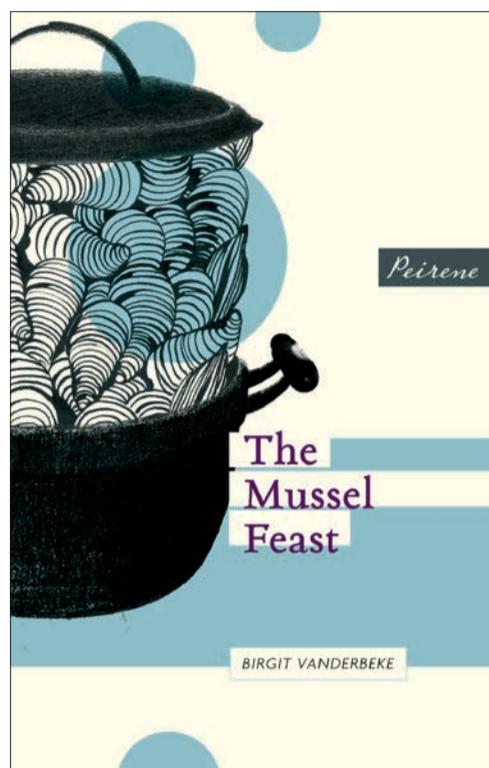
TURNING POINT: REVOLUTIONARY MOMENTS

Three internationally acclaimed female authors depict pivotal historical moments from within a domestic setting.

A German modern classic about the Fall of the Wall, a Finnish postmodern Victorian novel about faith versus knowledge and a Polish love story spanning 60 years from the Warsaw Ghetto to Israel.

'Highbrow
escapism
for the
time-poor.'

METRO



PEIRENE TITLE NO 10

The Mussel Feast

BIRGIT VANDERBEKE

Translated from the German by Jamie Bulloch.

The German book that has shaped an entire generation.

A mother and her two teenage children sit at the dinner table. In the middle stands a large pot of cooked mussels. Why has the father not returned home? As the evening wears on, we glimpse the issues that are tearing this family apart.

'I wrote this book in August 1989, just before the Fall of the Wall. I wanted to understand how revolutions start. It seemed logical to use the figure of a tyrannical father and turn the story into a German family saga.' BIRGIT VANDERBEKE

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
I love this monologue. It's the first Peirene book which made me laugh out loud with tears in my eyes. The author lays bare the contradictory logic of an inflexible mind. This is a poignant yet hilarious narrative with a brilliant ending.

EXTRACT FROM *THE MUSSEL FEAST*

It was neither a sign nor a coincidence that we were going to have mussels that evening. Yes, it was slightly unusual, and afterwards we sometimes spoke of the mussels as a sign, but they definitely weren't; we also said they were a bad omen – that's nonsense too. Nor were the mussels a coincidence. This evening of all evenings, we'd say, we decided to eat mussels.

But it really wasn't like that; you couldn't call it a coincidence. After the event, of course, we tried to interpret our decision as a sign or coincidence, because what came in the wake of our abortive feast was so monumental that none of us have got over it yet. We would always have mussels to celebrate a special occasion, and this was a special occasion, although in a very

different way from what we'd had in mind. Basically, what we'd had in mind when we were planning the mussel feast was pretty insignificant, certainly less important than the immensity and gravity of what actually happened. But you can't call our decision to cook mussels that evening a sign or coincidence.

Mussels were my father's favourite food, although >

I open our spreadsheet, a few clicks and I give her the numbers.

'That was impressive.' Peirene has followed me into the office. I smile at her. 'Well this is exactly why we have to do these tedious admin jobs. Ultimately they

help us run the business efficiently and give us more time to discover new books.' I pause. Then I ask: 'Will you stay?'

For a few seconds she pretends to reflect. 'OK.' She puts down the suitcase and takes off her hat.

'Under one condition though: you deal with this big pile of post, not me.'

Love Is in the Air

As an entrepreneur and small publisher you need many skills. In fact you have to play the all-rounder. From

deal brokering techniques, via editing skills to spreadsheet expertise – you should be perfect and move with ease. Ideally.

It's the art of spreadsheeting that causes ladylike perspiration. Now, don't get me wrong. I pride >

It's the art of spreadsheeting that causes ladylike perspiration

not ours; my brother liked mussels too, whereas my mother and I never cared for them much. I don't care for them much, my mother always said as she bent over the bathtub, alternating between the small kitchen knife and the scrubbing brush, her hands bright red from cleaning mussels under the cold tap; she had to scrape, scrub, brush and rinse several times because my father hated nothing more than grains of sand crunching between his teeth. The sound drove him round the bend. I really don't care for them much, my mother said that afternoon too, blowing on her icy hands. But it was a special occasion and that's why she'd gone and bought four kilos. She thought my father would enjoy a feast of mussels when he returned home from his business trip, because he'd usually had enough of

the fried and grilled lumps of meat he was served up on his trips, and so he would ask Mum to make him some decent food, something home-made at any rate; he never got anything like that in the conference hotels. He was fed up with these conference hotels; they may be comfortable, but they're not cosy, he said. My father hated going away on business trips; he preferred to stay at home with the family, so his return was always a special occasion. It was our custom to have jacket potatoes with quark and linseed oil, sometimes pea soup, too, and because my father had eaten this food as a child, he'd often request it for nostalgic reasons. He never actually asked for mussels since my parents always cooked mussels together. So for Mum to be scrubbing the mussels on her own that

day, her hands bright red under the cold tap, was unusual in itself; it was quite normal, however, for her to say, I don't care for them much. It was what she always said when my parents scrubbed mussels in the bathroom together, taking it in turn to bend over the tub so that neither became too stiff. For a good hour the bathroom would resound with my father's laughter and my mother's squealing and in the past you might have heard them singing the old workers' song 'Come, Brothers, to the sun, to freedom', which they'd learned over there and were forced to sing; 'This is the final struggle' and songs like that, my mother with her soprano voice and my father in his baritone. But later, when we were in the company accommodation, they didn't sing any more.

myself on my own competence. After all, I operate an impressive monthly spreadsheet where I record in detail Peirene's outgoings and earnings. However, once a year around this time, I reach my limits. The royalty

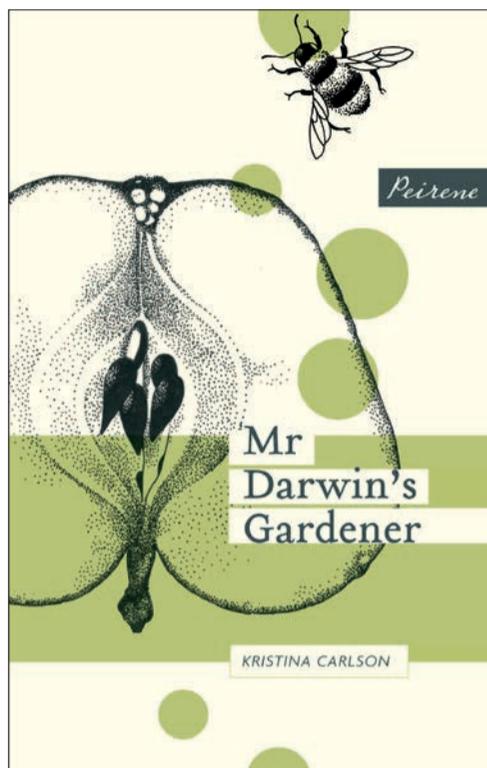
statements are due to foreign publishers, agents and the Peirene authors. Three spreadsheets have to be amalgamated – from our book distributor, ebook distributor and my own spreadsheet with the subscription, stall and

Luckily I have a spreadsheet superman living with me. My husband. He loves them.

website sales. And that's not all. They then have to be divided by individual titles. Frankly, when I set up Peirene, I didn't reckon with this. And once a year I shed bitter tears of frustration. Luckily I have a spreadsheet superman living

with me. My husband. He loves them. And I love him when he helps me with the Peirene royalty statements. But this year there will soon be even more love in the air. Authors will be delighted this week when they receive our statements.

A book of human warmth. GUARDIAN



PEIRENE TITLE NO 11

Mr Darwin's Gardener

KRISTINA CARLSON

Translated from the Finnish by Emily Jeremiah and Fleur Jeremiah.

A postmodern Victorian novel about faith, knowledge and our inner needs.

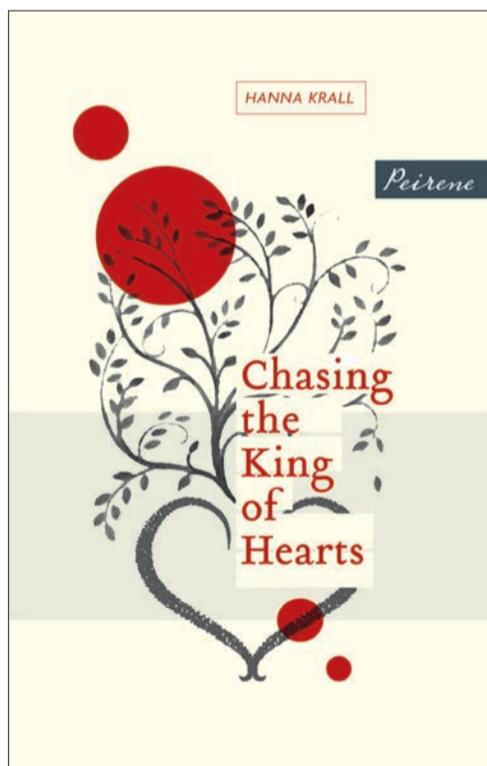
The late 1870s, the Kentish village of Downe. The villagers gather in church one rainy Sunday. Only Thomas Davies stays away. This eccentric loner, father of two and a grief-stricken widower, works as a gardener for the notorious naturalist Charles Darwin. He shuns religion. But now Thomas needs answers. What should he believe in? And why should he continue to live?

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

A stunning, poetic work. Like Dylan Thomas in Under Milk Wood, Carlson evokes the voices of an entire village, and, through them, the spirit of the age. The apparent tensions between science and spirituality, Darwinism and humanism, reach a beautiful, life-affirming resolution.

WINNER ENGLISH PEN AWARD 2013

This strange unsettling novel... is a remarkable find. SUNDAY TIMES



PEIRENE TITLE NO 12

Chasing the King of Hearts

HANNA KRALL

Translated from the Polish by Philip Boehm.

The internationally acclaimed Polish bestseller about the Holocaust. A remarkable true story of love and survival. Now for the first time in English.

The Warsaw Ghetto 1942: When Izolda's husband, Shayek, is imprisoned, she sets out to release him. She changes her name, her hair, her religion. Eventually she is captured and deported to Auschwitz. But even there, she trusts that her love will save them both.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

This is a beautiful love story but also an incredible account of one woman's quest to be heard. Told with astounding simplicity, the book recreates the Holocaust not as an historical event but as a terrifying, shared experience. I am amazed – and honoured – that it was left to Peirene to publish this book for the first time in English.

...muttering that small publishers who can't manage spreadsheets shouldn't even try to deliver weather forecasts.

Payments are coming their way. We've done well in the last year. In fact the spreadsheet shows that each year we are doing a little better. Our brand is working its magic. The Nymph is a rising star. 'Thank you.' Peirene smiles

at me. 'I guess that means a pay rise for me. A rising star can't dress in last year's fashion.'

I pause before answering. I don't like to disappoint. But I have to. 'Paying out royalties makes the authors happy. However, we will

experience a temporary cash flow issue.'

The Nymph pulls a face. 'Anyway,' I continue, trying to cheer her up. 'Judging by the snow and ice outside, spring will be late this year. So no need to rush to buy a summery wardrobe.' The

Nymph leaves the office muttering that small publishers who can't manage spreadsheets shouldn't even try to deliver weather forecasts.

NEW IN 2014

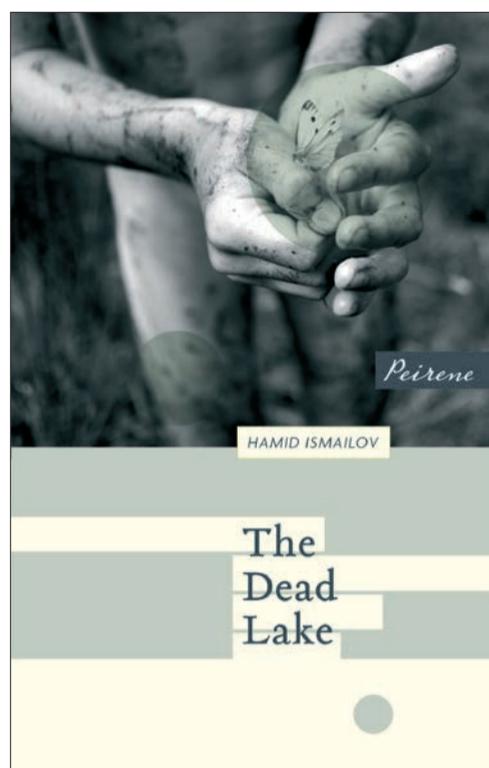
COMING OF AGE: TOWARDS IDENTITY

Our individual struggles to reach maturity in an ever-changing world.

A haunting Russian tale about the environmental legacy of the Cold War, a Norwegian novel about a mother-daughter relationship that will send a chill down your spine and a fascinating portrait of a pre-Gaddafi society on the verge of change.

'An invaluable contribution to our cultural life.'

ANDREW MOTION



PEIRENE TITLE NO 13

The Dead Lake

HAMID ISMAILOV

Translated from the Russian by Andrew Bromfield.

A haunting Russian tale about the environmental legacy of the Cold War.

Yerzhan grows up in a remote part of Kazakhstan where the Soviets test atomic weapons. As a young boy he falls in love with the neighbour's daughter and one evening, to impress her, he dives into a forbidden lake. The radioactive water changes Yerzhan. He will never grow into a man. While the girl he loves becomes a beautiful woman.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:

Like a Grimms' fairy tale, this story transforms an innermost fear into an outward reality. We witness a prepubescent boy's secret terror of not growing up into a man. We also wander in a beautiful, fierce landscape unlike any other we find in Western literature. And by the end of Yerzhan's tale we are awestruck by our human resilience in the face of catastrophic, man-made follies.

EXTRACT FROM *THE DEAD LAKE*

Yerzhan was born at the Kara-Shagan way station of the East Kazakhstan Railway, into the family of his grandfather, Daulet, a trackman, one of those who tap wheels and brake shoes at night and during the day, following a phone call from a dispatcher, go out to switch the points so that some weary old freight train can wait while an express or passenger special like ours

hurtles straight through the junction.

The column for 'Father' in his birth certificate had remained blank, except for a thick stroke of the pen, and the only entry, under 'Mother', was for Kanyshat, Daulet's daughter, who also lived at the way station (which everyone called a 'spot'). The 'spot' consisted of two railway houses. In one lived, in addition to

Yerzhan, his grandfather and mother, his grandmother, Ulbarsyn, and her younger son, Yerzhan's uncle, Kepek. The second way station house was occupied by the family of Grandad Daulet's late-shift partner, Nurpeis, who had fallen under a non-scheduled train: his widow, Granny Sholpan, her son, Shaken, with his city bride, Baichichek, and their >

A Unique Salon

Ben Helfgott was born in 1929 in Poland. He is one of a dwindling band of Holocaust survivors and on

Saturday he was our guest at the Peirene Salon.

He told us about surviving Buchenwald and Theresienstadt concentration camps. He told us how his mother chose to join his eight-year-old sister in front of a firing

squad. He told us about the German women who worked in the labour camp. They talked politely to the starving boys but did not share their bread. He told us how he was separated from his father and how he learnt after his liberation at the

He was young, determined to live and keen to tell his story.

end of the war that his father had been shot only two weeks before. He said: 'My father was my hero.'

He told us how he survived. He was young, determined to live and keen to tell his story. He said: 'They did not break my spirit.' >

daughter, Aisulu. Aisulu was a year younger than Yerzhan.

And that was the entire population of Kara-Shagan, if you didn't count the fifty or so sheep, three donkeys, two camels and the horse, Aigyr, all owned between the two families. There was also the dog, Kaptý. But he lived with Aisulu most of the time, so Yerzhan didn't think of him as his own. Just as he didn't take into account the clutch of dusty chickens with a pair of loud-voiced cocks, since they multiplied and decreased in numbers in such a mysterious fashion that none of the Kara-Shaganites ever knew how many of them there were.

Multiplying in a mysterious fashion is a relevant point here, since in fact no one, except perhaps God, knew how Yerzhan's mother, Kanyshat, became

pregnant with him and by whom. Cursed by her father from that time on, she never spoke a word about it to her 'immaculately conceived' son. And all that Yerzhan knew – from what Granny Ulbarsyn told him – was that at the age of sixteen Kanyshat had run into the steppe after her silk scarf, which had blown off. The steppe wind lured her on, further and deeper, as if teasing her, on and on towards the sunset. And what happened after that was so fantastic that Yerzhan couldn't make any sense of it. The sun was already sinking when suddenly it soared back up into the sky, glowing brightly. A tremor ran through the earth from the horizon. A whistling wind sprang up out of nowhere, then faded away for an instant, only to reverse its direction with a mighty

rush so sudden that the dust of the steppe swirled up to the heavens in a black, hurtling tornado. And when Kanyshat, more dead than alive, discovered that she was at the bottom of a gully, there, standing over her scratched and bloody body, was a creature who looked like an alien from another planet, wearing a spacesuit.

Three months later, when she began to show, Daulet, foaming with rage, brutally beat and cursed her for ever. If Kepek and Shaken hadn't pulled the old man away from his half-dead daughter and dragged him to Granny Sholpan's house, neither Kanyshat nor her son would have been long for this world.

He came to Britain in 1945. He caught up with six years of missed schooling, he studied economics and captained the British Olympic weightlifting teams in 1956 and 1960.

In the question-and-answer session he was asked

whether he 'still found Britain a place of tolerance?' 'Absolutely,' he replied. 'You take things for granted here, but all my fellow survivors honour Britain as tolerant and civilized country.'

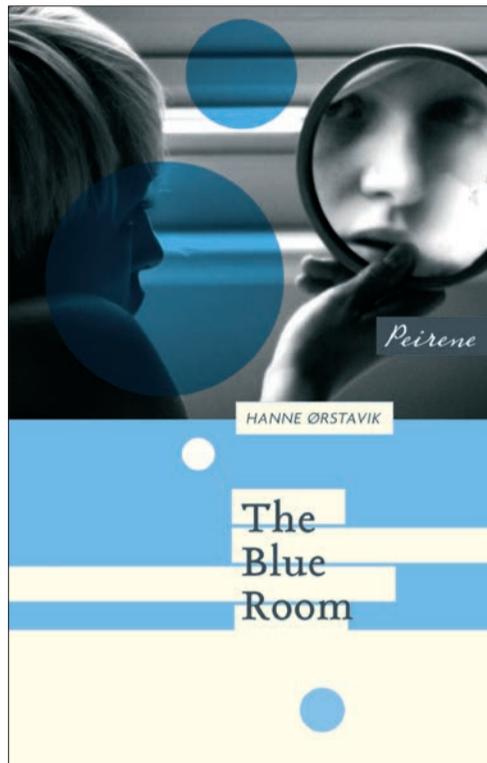
I feel humbled and honoured that Ben has sat in

the Peirene armchair. Watching him tell his story, I realized that he conveyed something invaluable: an insight into human decency, generosity and courage.

I often think about the many novelists, poets, a poet laureate, journalists,

Watching him tell his story, I realized that he conveyed something invaluable: an insight into human decency, generosity and courage.

A book for all daughters... A book that will get under your skin. ELLE



PEIRENE TITLE NO 14

The Blue Room

HANNE ØRSTAVIK

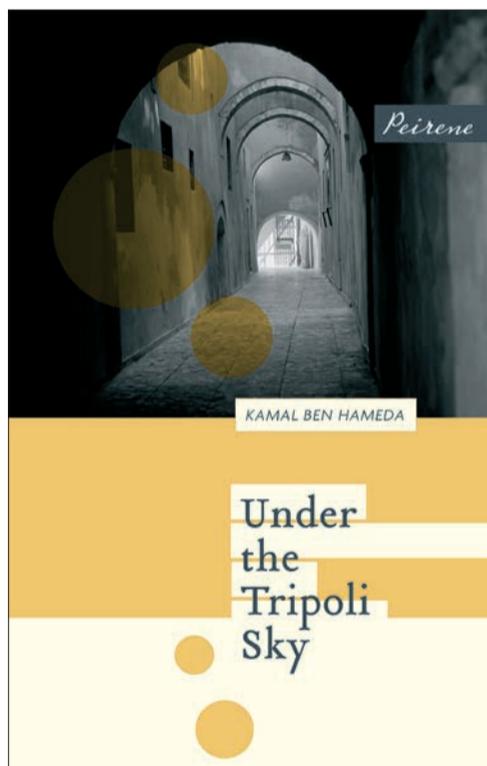
Translated from the Norwegian by Deborah Dawkin.

A novel about a mother-daughter relationship that will send a chill down your spine.

Johanne is a young woman in her twenties who lives with her mother. When she falls in love with Ivar, she finally feels ready to leave home. The couple plan a trip to America. But the morning of her departure, Johanne wakes up to find the door locked. Can she overcome her fears? Will she shout for help? Will she climb out of her seventh floor window?

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
We know that men must separate from their fathers – and many novels have been written on the subject. However, the struggle of women to separate from their mothers is rarely addressed either in our literature or our society. The author depicts the mother brilliantly. She is not a nice woman – all the more reason for her daughter to leave. This is a brilliant and important book.

Neo-realistic characters that could have stepped straight out of a Vittorio De Sica film. CULTURES SUD



PEIRENE TITLE NO 15

Under the Tripoli Sky

KAMAL BEN HAMEDA

Translated from the French by Adriana Hunter

A fascinating portrait of a pre-Gaddafi society on the verge of change.

Tripoli in the 1960s. A sweltering, segregated society. Hadachinou is a lonely boy. His mother shares secrets with her best friend Jamila while his father prays at the mosque. Sneaking through the streets of Tripoli, he listens to the whispered stories of the women. He turns into an invisible witness to their repressed desires while becoming aware of his own.

WHY PEIRENE CHOSE TO PUBLISH THIS BOOK:
This is a fascinating portrait of a closed society. On the surface this quiet vignette of a story could be read as gently nostalgic, but underneath the author reveals the seething tensions of a traditional city coming to terms with our modern world. The book gives us privileged access to a place where men and women live apart and have never learned to respect each other.

translators and academics who have already sat in our front room and what they have brought and shared. Ben has added his own brand of dignity to that distinguished group.

Usually the Peirene Salon discussion lasts an hour.

Yesterday it lasted nearly two. As Ben climbed into the taxi, my husband and I waved goodbye. Then for a moment we stood quietly side by side before we turned back into the house.

Thank you, Ben Helfgott.

PeiShoStoMo

Peirene's Short Story Month

Short fiction, when done well, can be more powerful than any other form of writing; consider Hemingway's famous short story: 'For sale. Baby shoes. Never worn.' Any more detail, and the story would collapse. To celebrate the short form, we invited our readers to submit a 900-word short story.

JUDGES

ISABEL WOLFF is a Sunday Times bestselling author of nine novels. Her latest novel, *Ghostwritten*, is published in March 2014.

OLIVIA HEAL is a writer and translator. She reviews books for the Times Literary Supplement and was shortlisted for The White Review Prize 2012.

MEIKE ZIERVOGEL is the founder and publisher of Peirene Press.

THE WINNER

The Capitalists by David McGrath
Judges' comment: 'A hard-hitting, beautifully written story. It is a huge achievement to create a whole world – a whole moral universe – in 900 words. Both dialogue and description are used skillfully to drive the story along. Concise and impressively taut.'

David McGrath graduated in 2012 having completed an MA in Creative Writing at Goldsmiths University, London. He has won StorySlam at the Royal Festival Hall, a contributor to Liars League and published in winter 2012/13 edition of Wordlegs. He is putting the finishing touches to his first novel entitled Rickshaw. You can follow him on Twitter at @DaveMcgrath1 if you like.

THE CAPITALISTS

They saw an Aboriginal man on the side of the road. He was the first of anything in hours. Vet accelerated and smothered him in red dust.

'No hat,' she roared over the noise of the wind. 'Do the Irish have hat?'

'Yeah, we wear hats all right,' Patsy shouted.

'Four thousand years in the desert and they no have hat. Every civilization have hat 'cept the Aboriginal. Four thousand years and no one invent hat.'

A wallaby jumped on to the road ahead. Vet accelerated, missing it by a hair. She drove on until a sign told them that they were five kilometres from the community. Another sign was beside it.

INDIGENOUS LAND

NO ALCOHOL

NO DRUGS

NO PORNOGRAPHY

PENALTIES OF UP TO 8 YEARS'

IMPRISONMENT

Vet braked. Rubber burned. The engine begged for help.

'OK. Be clown now,' she said. 'Come on, clown. Clown now.'

Vet turned up the volume on the music and blew the horn. The people stood to get a better view of the magical wonder-bus, the Christ on wheels. The kids and dogs chased, shouting questions at Patsy, who danced about on the roof dressed as a clown, hitting himself on the head with an inflatable hammer.

Vet and Patsy ate sandwiches in the back

while the people searched for their bankcards. A stream of kids had been running back and forth from the ATM since the truck had parked. They withdrew cash, pocketed a bit for themselves, then delivered the rest of it back to their parents.

'They don't even know what we're selling yet.'

'Don't matter,' Vet said through a stuffed mouth of sandwich. 'They buy anything.'

'Where do they get money? No one's working.'

'This all Aboriginal land. Government pay rent to them. Miner pay rent. Children allowance, welfare, business grant, dog allowance,' Vet said, and spun her hand in circles to imply the list went on.

A gathering had formed outside the truck, money in hand.

'Should we open or what, like?'

'Wait, Pats, wait.'

People were jostling for position beside the hatch. They began to stamp their feet and clap in unison. Vet climbed up on the roof, where several kids already sat.

'OK, everybody,' she announced. 'Very special day today. We bring you thing from all over world. Amazing thing. OK, Pats, lights and music please.'

Patsy turned on the strobe light and the crazy horn music.

'Action, Pats,' Vet shouted.

Patsy lit the fuse on fireworks at the rear. The early-evening sky blazed up in explosion.

Beach balls, yo-yos, slingshots, stereos and DVDs all went. Novelty T-shirts, tacky jewellery, statues, dolls and prams, low-quality televisions, potato guns – everything at triple the retail price. Then quadruple.

One woman, who had elbowed her way from the back, rested her giant breasts on the counter and threw a hundred dollars in squashed notes at them.

'Just something, eh, give me something,' she said.

Vet spotted Patsy give back change of a fifty to a little boy for a colouring book and crayons.

'Hey,' she said. 'They no care about change. Ask him if he want beach ball and keep change.'

'It's thirty dollars' change.'

'So give him thirty-dollar beach ball.'

The people had gone back to the grass with their purchases. Vet was looking at the stack of novels, the only things left unsold.

'If I ever meet John Grisham I kick him,' she threatened, pointing the screwdriver at Patsy. She finished unscrewing the floor panel, lifted it off and began unpacking boxes of whisky, vodka and rum. Next was a box of pornography, magazines and DVDs, and lastly, two bags of weed. She threw the two bags over at Patsy and told him to break them into ounce bags.

'Eight years,' Patsy said.

'What eight years?'

'Jail. Eight years' jail for bringing this in here.'

'Ounce bags, or I kick you, too.'

Before long, another mob was waving notes at them, this time to the rear of the truck. It bought the booze, weed and porn in ten minutes. A bundle of cash big enough to choke a horse remained. Vet counted it while Patsy poured a drink from a bottle of rum he had stashed away. He offered Vet a glass. Vet took it and looked at it.

'Few year ago I sold bottle of whisky to Aboriginal for sixty dollar,' she said, and sipped from the glass.

'Prices gone up since then,' Patsy said.

'He swapped it with other Aboriginal for the other Aboriginal's daughter. But daughter did not want to be a swap, so man went to house and pulled her by hair to his house. Then cut all her hair. Shave it with razor, you know – bald.'

She sat quiet for a moment and took another sip.

'Next day later, she hang herself from tree.'

Vet shook her head.

'Aboriginal are bad,' she said, and got back to arranging the fifty- and twenty-dollar notes into piles.

Vet braked. Rubber burned. The engine begged for help. The crossroads went away out to the horizon in all directions. Desert every which way. A dingo nosed about on the side of the road, on the turning point back to Darwin where Patsy would have to hitch from.

'You sure, Pats?'

'Yes. It's not right, Vet.'

'Everybody cheat, Pats,' Vet said, and sped off, the passenger door closing by

itself from the force, the truck veering for the dingo.

1st RUNNER UP

Cities of the Plain by David Guest

Judges' comment: 'By using a biblical tale, the author takes huge risks to catch a large story within the net of a very short one. But the gamble pays off. A clever re-telling of Sodom and Gomorrah, this exquisite story feels almost epic in nature. Imaginative use of the Turning-Point theme.'

CITIES OF THE PLAIN

With every step, a memory of the city they were leaving behind: merchant trains passing through market squares, harpists, cafeterias, frescoed temples, street lamps, lemon trees.

'I can't do it,' she said quietly.

Lot sighed, rolled his head and spat on the compacted surface of the road. 'Don't be stupid,' he said.

Her husband had been a different man when he first arrived, back when he was the stranger in town, finding his way around and grateful for a friendly conversation at her fast-food stand. She told him all the secrets: the best places to buy meat and wine, where to get his hair cut, which taverns to avoid.

He in turn talked of his adventures in the south, herding beasts. He wasn't like the soft city types. His skin was browned by years under the bare sun and there was a strength in him, a rhythm to his voice. When he searched through his pockets for loose change, shadows flickered on his forearms.

She showed him the real city, making fun of his country-boy awe at the windmills and clockwork laundries, his prudish disapproval of the young bodies spilling out of nightclubs. He paid for dinner in an expensive restaurant and they watched the crescent moon dividing the sky and he told her that in all the lands between the mountains and the sea, there was not a single woman with her grace and cleverness.

She discovered she was not immune to flattery. For a single parent a little past her prime, men like this didn't show their faces every day. Within the year, they were married.

She was a bit surprised when he took advantage of his newly conferred citizenship to stand in the elections; embarrassed when, taking his place on the council, he began to promote a radical agenda of reform. He argued for changes in the licensing laws and called for bans on prostitution, usury, street parties, gaming tables. He wanted to raise the age of consent and prohibit shopping on every seventh day. He wrote detailed monographs on the wickedness of fornication and expounded on the evils of imported spices.

Then came the meetings with foreigners, visitors appearing at all times of day and night. The invariably clean-shaven young men with pale clothing and glazed expressions would be conducted through to the study, where for hours they

would catalogue the misdemeanours of the citizenry. When she asked to know more about their guests, he reprimanded her. They were messengers, he said, for the law he followed and that was all she needed to know.

She learned more through her daughters, with whom he shared his confidences. They let slip how her new husband was a missionary of sorts, acting on the instructions of a mysterious individual he had never seen, whose name he was not permitted to speak aloud. According to them, this creature lived in orbit, high above the clouds, silently monitoring the affairs of humans from afar and issuing orders via envoys dispatched to the surface.

She began to think about simpler times, back when she sold her hot-pepper flatbreads and pistachio shortcake and tried to make the best of things along with everyone else in the cities of the plain. Just because they liked nice clothing, sexual liberation and complicated financial instruments didn't make them bad people.

Her husband couldn't see that it was only a matter of time before they tired of his sermonizing. Threats were posted through their letter box, abuse shouted in the street and then, at the end of the dry season, a mob surrounded the house, slinging stones at their shutters and daubing slogans on the walls.

Their otherworldly advisers urged them to leave immediately and her husband agreed. Suddenly they were packing bags, scurrying down alleyways, passing checkpoints and border guards and then they were outside, on the wide, bare flatlands.

Her pace slowed to a halt. Her eyes were beginning to water.

'Don't start,' said her husband.

Her throat was dry.

'I can't help it,' she said. 'I've never even been outside the walls before. This is all wrong.'

One of the men swore under his breath and dropped his pack on the ground.

They were all watching now, their faces turned towards her: her husband and her daughters, their husbands, the pallid, androgynous strangers. Beyond them, the south road was a dead-straight line bisecting the plain and, in the distance, the outlines of the boundary stones stood against the dawn.

'Whatever they've done,' she pleaded with her husband, 'whatever you think of them, they're still my people.'

He watched her, his eyes black holes in the night. He pushed his thumbs under the straps of his backpack.

'I knew you'd do something like this,' he said. 'Sooner or later you have to decide which side you are on.' His wife closed her eyes, caught on the turning point of an interior compass.

She saw the city's white walls shining on the edge of the plain, the twisting shapes of its weathervanes, banners flying from its towers. In her body she held the map of its alleyways and terraces, the tracery of culverts and streets; in her hair, the dust of its weaving looms and silver

mines; on her lips, the salt of tears.

Clouds hovered in the east and, high above their heads, the flames of a new age were burning the sky.

2ND RUNNER UP

Norway by Fat Roland

Judges' comment: 'Touching, sharp, original and weird. It is refreshing to see a writer who dares to play with the surreal. Short, simple sentences weave an intriguing landscape made up of dialogue, thoughts, the past and the present.'

Fat Roland is a Manchester Fiction Prize-commended short-story writer. He is one fifth of the Flashtag writing collective and is a music columnist for Electronic Magazine. His new print collection Hey Hey Hey Hey Hey Hey Hey And Other Short Fiction was published in January 2013. www.FatRoland.com

NORWAY

We book a flight to Norway. We arrive in Norway. We dig a hole in the ground and lie face down in the hole.

We lie next to each other in the hole. We hold hands through habit. Our fingers interlock.

I am enjoying my trip to Norway, I say to you but really to the soil because I am facing the soil inside a hole.

A worm tries to burrow into my face. All it finds is cold, irritated human skin, a football field of blotches.

You fancy the football museum, you say. The café sells ice-cream floats and the view of the fjords is amazing. There's a big window, you say, and it is signed in marker pen by all the famous people who have been there.

Why would they sign a window, I think. There's no correlation. I say nothing. I feel your hand tense.

I'm not sure if the soil is cold from cold or cold from wet. I am beginning to have second thoughts about Norway.

It was either here or Switzerland.

In Switzerland, the hotel had building works and we can't abide sound. The east of the building had subsidence, they said over the phone. I thought of their hotel with subsidence. I thought of your grandmother and the way her stroke made her face droop on one side. She was otherwise able-bodied but we brought her meals for months, driving in the rain, arguing, showering her with false smiles when we got there.

We decided on Norway. You took down the photo of me when I had hair and put its drawing pin into a map of Europe. Norway, you said. You sounded satisfied. The pin was in Sweden but I didn't change it.

And now we are face down in a hole, holding hands and thinking about what to do. We are not the kind of people who stick pins into maps, the kind of people with big plans who save for stuff, the kind of people who take years out when they are young and have breakdowns when they are old. We are not that kind of people.

The football museum's too far, I say, and anyway you don't like football. There

must be some galleries.

What do you mean must be some galleries, you say. You tell me I should have looked on the Internet, I should have done research. I am not that kind of person. You're full of shoulds.

I think I have dirt in my eye. I dry-blink until my eyelid smarts.

There must be some galleries, I say. And museums about other things.

How far are they, you say.

How would I know, I think. You're the one with the map.

We thought the hole would be darker. More cosy. Almost serene. It is just a hole. We dug it at the junction of two dirt roads, both lined with blossom and, behind the trees, small houses with cherry-stained decking. We looked inside the windows and we saw cuckoo clocks, and tables laid out for afternoon tea. Intricate teapots. Ornate spoons.

The junction itself is full of nettles. Someone has dumped broken tarmac around the junction to fatten it into a rough circle, a turning point. Car tyres have bedded some of the rubble. The ground is uneven but functional. I imagine taking afternoon tea on this junction.

I stick my tongue into the soil, push a notch into the ground. The bitter soil will sustain me. It is full of nutrients. I feel the phosphorus pulsing through my veins like a magic potion. I am suddenly aware of the muscles beneath my flabby skin. I feel strong, almost invincible. I wonder what I am doing here. With you.

The galleries are not far, I say. My voice sounds impeded and sarcastic.

I want to visit a castle, you say. I want to see the wooden ships, you say. I suspect you are just listing things. Botanical gardens. The ironworks.

It was night on the plane to Norway. I looked at my reflection in the window, my brow, my nose, my chin catching the soft light of the cabin, the rest of my skin in unwrinkled darkness. On the plane to Norway, I thought about the photograph, the one when I had hair, the one you took down to stick the pin into the map. I stood amid the border plants and you kept shaking the camera. You giggled the way you giggled at everything back then. We had just bought our first house. Our lives felt ornate and interesting.

And now we are face down in a hole. Our flesh is irritated and cold and you want to visit a football museum.

I think about the turning point and the uneven ground and our hole and the cars that flattened the rubble and I wonder if I should be here. I fear I may catch something. Weeds may bind us to the ground. I think about a mole tunnelling up through the soil. It nudges my hip with its nose. It burrows into my body. It hollows out my stomach until it breaks through, wet and red, on the other side.

My eyes well up at the thought of us, but it's really at the soil because I am facing the soil inside a hole.

I am beginning to have second thoughts about Norway.

Peirene Roaming Store

Our Roaming Store pops up all across the UK. Jennifer, our Roaming Store manager, is busy planning Roaming Store tours and locations. If you know of a spot - a market, a street, a shop, a cafe - who would love to host our pop-up stall, please contact her at: jennifer.cairns@peirenepress.com



A personal message from Jen:
The Nymph and I have travelled all over London with the Peirene roaming store and our exclusive bibliotherapy prescriptions. We passionately believe that great literature has the power to enrich, illuminate and sometimes even change your life. Browse our list of inspirational reading prescriptions or pop along to the store and we would be delighted to create a bespoke remedy just for you.

We hope to welcome you to the roaming store very soon.
Jen & the Nymph

Jennifer Cairns has been part of the Peirene team since September 2012. When she is not busy with our stalls, she is a freelance writer. Previously she has worked as a nanny, an accounts assistant and a waitress. She always takes jobs that allow her time to write and is currently working on her first novel.

The Fiction Prescription: Bibliotherapy from Peirene

The Love Potion:

Feeling disenchanted by love? Rediscover your spark with these tales of love and passion
Chasing the King of Hearts + Stone in a Landslide

Detox and Purify:

Stressed out? Exhausted? Escape into the sanctuary of a calmer world with *Sea of Ink + Under the Tripoli Sky*

The Colour Wheel:

Is your life in desperate need of some colour? Find poetry again and flood your world with light in *Mr Darwin's Gardener + Portrait of the Mother as a Young Woman*

The Energizer:

Energize your reading experience with these page-turning thrillers
Tomorrow Pamplona + The Murder of Halland + The Brothers

Curiouser and Curiouser:

Stimulate your curiosity and discover secret, inner worlds with
Next World Novella + Maybe This Time

Challenge your mind:

This prescription comes with a warning! A challenging but ultimately rewarding reading experience awaits you in
Beside the Sea + The Blue Room

The Enlightener:

Illuminate far-off worlds and broaden your horizons in
The Dead Lake + Sea of Ink

Winter Warmer:

Curl up in your favourite armchair and let our narrators take you on a journey
The Mussel Feast + Tomorrow Pamplona

Balsana in the Sun:

Let the sunshine in and strike a yoga pose with these enriching stories
Under the Tripoli Sky + Stone in a Landslide

Peirene Salon

Evenings of literature, conversation, dinner and wine.

To find out about our forthcoming Salons and other events, visit : www.peirenepress.com/events



'Reading at the Peirene Salon is a wonderfully unique and intimate experience. It is quite unlike any other venue, a truly independent and literary arena, and one has the sense of being as close to that original idea of artistic and cultural exchange as it is possible in the modern age.' SARAH HALL, AUTHOR

A combination of fringe theatre, psychiatrist's couch, conversazione society and flirtation parlour, the Peirene salon is unlike any other literary gathering. It was intellectually stimulating but full of laughter, argumentative but friendly, seriously focussed on the Novel but without forgetting the Wine.

JOHN WALSH, THE INDEPENDENT

'It was more than an honour to chair a Peirene salon—it was a pleasure. The atmosphere was friendly, relaxed, and intelligent—a testament to the calibre of both the writers I interviewed and the calibre of the audience. And the food and wine were splendid, too. In fact, it was all more like a symposium, in the classical sense, than anything else.'

NICHOLAS LEZARD, AUTHOR & GUARDIAN BOOK CRITIC

The salons have fast become literary London's most enjoyable Europhile event. THE ECONOMIST

'It was a great evening. Great whisky drinking too.'

STELLA KANE, A SALON ATTENDEE

'A hugely enjoyable evening and real confirmation of your commitment and passion for your books.' MARGARET BLUMAN, A SALON ATTENDEE

'Peirene was my first salon (coming, as I do, from Aberdeen) but, despite my trepidation, it was a surprise and a delight. The audience members were young, intelligent and unusually attractive - given what I'm used to on the poetry circuit - and they sat very attentively through my grim repertoire. The whisky afterwards was a cask-strength Bruichladdich and I sipped at that spring like a storm-blown Pegasus, transported to Corinth by way of Islay. (Or the other way round, perhaps.)'

ROBIN ROBERTSON, SCOTTISH POET

Peirene Creative Writing

For more details about the workshop, visit www.peirenepress.com/events/workshop

Explore, create and feed your fiction in our two-day workshops.



'Studying a series of novellas, taking them apart and analysing how they were put together from a writer's point of view was a really useful, even revolutionary way to think about writing.'

ANNEMARIE LOPEZ, SPRING CLASS PARTICIPANT

Following the success of our 2013 workshops, we are delighted to announce our 2014 series.

Weekends of writing and discussion under the guidance of author Shelley Weiner. With their focus on Peirene's award-winning novellas, our creative writing courses will feed your imagination and sharpen your writing skills.

In its distilled form, the novella provides a perfect template in which to explore such essential tools of fiction as characterisation, voice, narrative structure, and setting. You will leave our workshop with inspiration, enhanced writing skills, and the joy of a weekend with like-minded people.

Shelley Weiner is a novelist and short-story writer who has established a reputation as an inspirational creative-writing tutor. She has published five novels and teaches widely for, amongst others, Gold Dust Mentoring Scheme and the Guardian Masterclass programme. www.shelleyweiner.com

Ten Things I Love about Teaching Peirene Creative Writing Workshop *by Shelley Weiner*

- 1 Immersing ourselves into a pool of excellent fictional pieces and, like the most discriminating divers, surfacing with pearls.
- 2 The joy of receiving a group of writers into the sanctuary of my kitchen.
- 3 Feeding them... well.
- 4 Reading together.
- 5 Writing together.
- 6 Thinking and creating together in a home away from home.
- 7 Feeding everyone... again (after all, you need variation and even more nourishment for Day Two).
- 8 Admiring how the writers among us use the Peirene texts to nurture their own writing.
- 9 Seeing the readers among us (and we're all readers at heart!) gain insight and excitement through creative engagement with the novellas.
- 10 Sending another group of positive and motivated writers and readers back into the everyday world, equipped with tools to help them unleash their imagination.

SUPPORT
THE MAYA CENTRE
COUNSELLING FOR WOMEN
50P DONATION
WHEN YOU BUY
A PEIRENE BOOK

Peirene Press is proud to support the Maya Centre



Peirene donates 50p from the sale of each book to the Maya Centre.

The Maya Centre provides free psychodynamic counselling and group psychotherapy for women on low incomes in London. The counselling is offered in many different languages, including Arabic, Turkish and Portuguese. The centre also undertakes educational work on women's mental health issues.

By buying a Peirene book you help the Maya Centre to continue their pioneering services. You can also donate to the Maya Centre via our website: www.peirenepress.com/shop

CORPORATE RESPONSIBILITY

Although the Nymph might still throw tantrums worthy of a toddler, she has in fact turned into a mature young lady.

Peirene is now an established part of the UK publishing world. We choose and produce confidently our core product – the Peirene books. We are continuously developing our product palette, such as events, and our marketing strategies. We provide work and opportunity for an increasing number of people including accountants, translators and authors. And we are recognized as playing an important role in modern cultural life. That's why we receive funding from the Arts Council and international bodies.

Someone once described life to me as a progression 'from learning to earning to returning'. So, Peirene has learned and earned but what about returning?

I started wondering about corporate responsibility. Is it enough for a publishing house to print on environmentally friendly paper to claim 'social responsibility'? We print on acid-free, wood-free paper from FSC mixed-credit sources. These are all good things, I admit, but somehow they don't make me feel proud enough of the Nymph or myself.

Peirene No 1, *Beside the Sea* by Véronique Olmi, will be sent off to the printers tomorrow for its 3rd print run. When the copies come

back, they will all display a blue sticker on the front cover: Support the Maya Centre, 50p donation when you buy this book. And on the final page of the book we explain that the Maya Centre is a London based charity that offers free psychodynamic counselling and group therapy for women on low or no income in different languages.

There are a number of obvious links between the Maya Centre and Peirene. Our focus on translated fiction correlates with The Maya Centre's missions to offer therapy to women in their native language. Peirene believes in building local communities – and so too does the Maya Centre. And finally Peirene's metamorphosis from the weeping Nymph into a sparkling source of inspiration reminds us of psychotherapy's contribution to self-empowerment.

The idea of contacting the Maya Centre and offering Peirene's support came to me as I was running on the Heath. I felt instantaneously happy and alive. However, I knew I couldn't make this decision on my own. I had to mention it to the Nymph. I was a bit worried how she would react, not least because she loves her clothes and make-up.

But I needn't have worried. As soon as I finished sketching out my proposal to her, she got up from her desk and came over to me and planted a huge wet kiss on my forehead.

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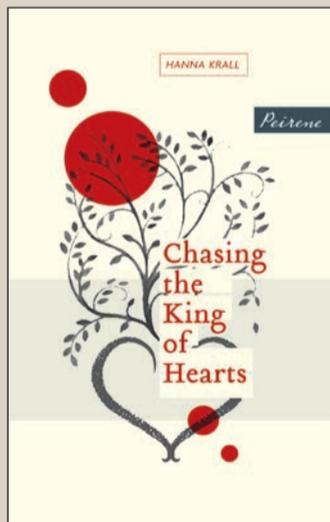
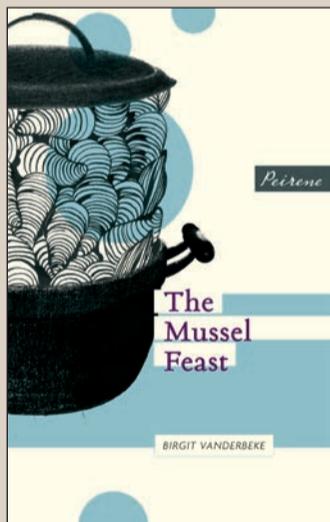
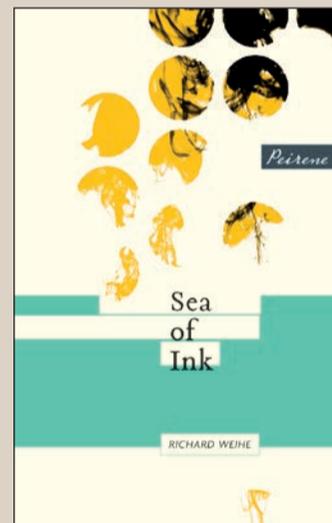
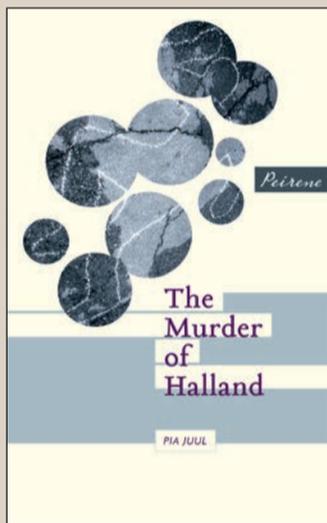
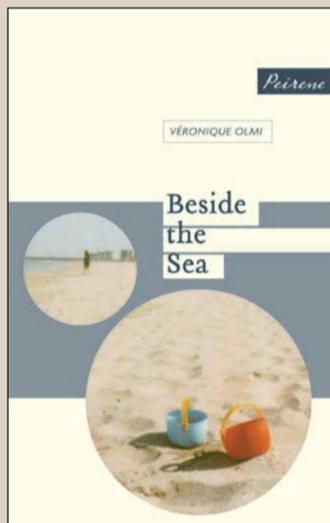
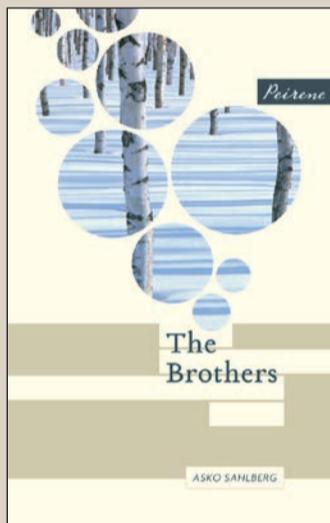
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ANDREW MOTION

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