

# Verdier foreign rights

2021-2022

Fiction

Rebecca Gisler .....	4
Hélène Laurain .....	5
Ling Xi .....	6
Michel Jullien .....	7
Emmanuel Venet .....	8
Patrick Autréaux .....	10
Lutz Bassmann.....	11
Pierre Bergounioux .....	12
Romain Bertrand .....	13
David Bosc .....	15
Patrick Boucheron .....	16
Béatrice Commengé .....	17
Jean-Louis Comolli .....	18
Didier Daeninckx .....	19
Michèle Desbordes .....	20
Guka Han .....	22
Samy Langerart .....	23
Christophe Manon .....	24
Jean-Michel Mariou .....	25
Pierre Michon .....	26
Anne Pauly .....	29
Mathieu Riboulet .....	30
Olivier Rolin .....	33
Anne Serre .....	34

## Rebecca Gisler

Rebecca Gisler was born in Zurich in 1991. A graduate of the Institut littéraire suisse and an MA in Creative Writing from Université Paris-8-Saint-Denis, she writes in both French and German. She is also a translator.

### D'ONCLE (About Uncle)

*128 pages, published in August 2021*

*About Uncle* tells the story of an uncle, a man who has been stuck somewhere in his childhood at the ends of the earth for the past fifty years. In the light of extraordinary circumstances, possibly forced confinement, the narrator gets to observe this man closely, with his doubtful hygiene, strange habits, ill health, abnormal build. He is definitely much too small, too fat and too afflicted by a limp for this world. She surveys him from all angles, attempts to solve what looks very much like a mystery, comes up against the brick walls of family forgetfulness, the tiresomeness of an impossible life and an uncertain future. She speculates and hallucinates, a prerequisite when faced with this uncle, who is stubbornly present and a challenge to any kind of conformity. The portrayal of a family and of a new age provides the background for the story. They are eccentric, like all families and all ages. Maybe rather more than that? Readers should beware of hasty conclusions...

In her first novel, Rebecca Gisler adopts the writing style of a fascinated and amused entomologist, aiming to cover a topic that is as strange as it is endlessly intriguing.

#### Reviews

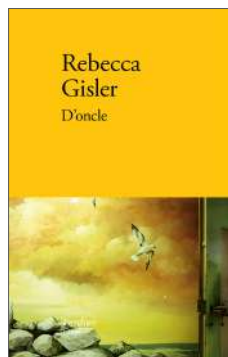
"Gisler urges us to reflect on what it is to be different. The uncle stumbles through life and so does the narrator and her brother, destitute young intellectuals both. They reveal a hidden aspect of society, full of invisible people and square pegs in round holes."

Sylvie Tanette, *Les Inrockuptibles*

"With a rich style combining scientific distance, intimacy and amused fascination, Rebecca Gisler shows how families are bodies whose members build them, together, whatever happens."

Gladys Marivat, *Lire*

"A penetrating novel on disability, family relationships and modern times."  
Florence Bouchy, *Le Monde des livres*



#### First Novel

*Rights sold in  
Germany and  
the Netherlands*

## Hélène Laurain

Hélène Laurain was born in Metz in 1988. She studied political science and Arabic in France and Germany, and creative writing at Université Paris 8. She lives with her family in the east of France and works as a translator (from German to French). Her particular areas of interest are the living world, feminism, motherhood and endeavoring to find ways to speak of our age.

### PARTOUT LE FEU (Fire Everywhere)

*160 pages, published in January 2022*

Laetitia was born three minutes before her twin sister Margaux and thirty-seven minutes before the Chernobyl explosion. Despite her baccalaureate with honors and the following seven years spent in a business school, she does some gig work with the Snowhall at Greater Thermal Spa, much to her parents' chagrin. She lives in The Cave, where she listens to Nick Cave songs and is obsessed by SUVs and the ongoing climate catastrophe. The fact is, Laetitia lives in the Lorraine region, where the French government has decided to bury all the radioactive waste from France, Germany and Luxembourg in a landfill, now there are no colonies left to wreck. With her gang, Moley, Trouble, Thelma and Brian, she orchestrates a spectacular coup, a mere taster for the final inferno.

In this first novel, fast-paced and highly topical, in which speech stands for punctuation, Hélène Laurain draws us into the burning core of modern activism.

#### Reviews

"The form of *Fire Everywhere* restores the cry of urgency of Laetitia, her free verses interspersed with text messages and post-it notes feed an inferno in which the anger of a whole generation pours out, tireless, exemplary. Hélène Laurain has succeeded in finding the rhythm and the voice to carry this profoundly contemporary itinerary, inhabited by a poetry of suffering and fury that continues to haunt us once the book is closed."

Camille Cloarec, *Le Matricule des anges*

"The strength of the words, chanted and aligned like rap lyrics, gives rise to an astonishing poetry, tinged with both humor and despair. The whole in a rhythm which says the urgency."

Henri-Charles Dahlem, *Focus littérature*



#### First Novel

## Ling Xi

Ling Xi left her native China to study at the Ecole supérieure de commerce de Paris. She has worked in finance and has now written and published four books in French.

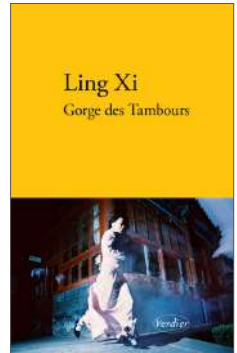
### GORGE DES TAMBOURS (Drum Canyon, China)

*256 pages, published in March 2022*

From 1910 to 2010, there was a small town, located upstream from a major river in China. For the purposes of this book, the river is called W. The tales and writings of some eight narrators investigate in turn the mysterious disappearance of an enigmatic personage, all the while focusing on their own obsessions.

This complex hall of mirrors tells of private tragedies, against the background of a chaotic and tormented century and of a terrifyingly internalized puritanism, under Mao.

The book describes how individuals are conditioned, instinct suppressed and spirits crushed as guilt engulfs them. It also celebrates great loves missed, loyalty to the world's tragic beauty, unsuspected freedom in the silence of the soul amid clamor and brutality, pain in hope, and heroic joy and willpower in the darkest hours of adversity.



## Michel Jullien

Michel Jullien, born in 1962, studied literature and taught at Federal University of Para in Brazil. Back in France, he worked as an art publisher for Hazan and Larousse and went on to specialize in decorative arts. In the margins, he practiced his greatest passion: mountaineering. He climbed hundreds of peaks in the Alps and the Pyrenees, before devoting himself to literature at the age of 45.

### ANDREA DE DOS (Andrea from Behind)

*128 pages, published in January 2022*

An unnamed country in South America is the setting for Michel Jullien's new tale. The author takes his inspiration, very loosely indeed, from a popular religious tradition played out every year, and twists it into a story about a pilgrimage somewhere on the equator.

At the start of the pilgrimage, the faithful make a wish and walk for miles until they reach the procession, where a small, gaily painted wooden statue of a miraculous Madonna stands proudly. Thousands flock there. A rope snakes all along the devotional path, which the faithful must hold with one hand and hang on to without fail. Falling down or dropping the rope, even for a fraction of a second means that the wish will not be granted for another whole year. Andrea and her sister Ezia, both students and both procession candidates join the stream of pilgrims, take the rope, become part of the crowd and are swallowed up in the crush. We watch them over the course of two days, clinging to their wish as they walk in the tropics, towards the Patron Saint.

Jullien shows the underlying state of violence in this South American society, crowd psychology nudging fervor towards riot and solidarity turning into combat, with the result that the pilgrims' elation is liable to boil over, with dire consequences. The writing is both baroque and intense. A succession of wide angles and close-ups sweeps readers right up into the procession. The book portrays a kind of reverse exoticism with its mixture of humor and brutality.

#### Review

"Michel Jullien asserts himself as a writer with very fertile linguistic resources."

Muriel Steinmetz, *L'Humanité*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Intervalles de Loire*, 2020

*L'Île aux troncs*, 2018

*Denise au Ventoux*, 2017

*Yparkho*, 2014

*Au bout des comédies*, 2011

*Compagnies tactiles*, 2009

## Emmanuel Venet

Emmanuel Venet, born in 1959, is a psychiatrist. He lives in Lyon.

### VIRGILE S'EN FOUT (Virgile Could Care Less)

*160 pages, published in February 2022*

The action starts on January 1, 1981 and ends on December 31 of that same year. With forty years of hindsight, the narrator recalls student life in the year 1981. He is hesitant about his love life and the contrasting forms of femininity, which included having the glory and agony of great love revealed to him. He is also hesitant about his country – around the time of François Mitterrand's election – with left-wing utopia on the one hand and the specter of totalitarian communism brandished by the right on the other.

Mingling successive dips into the narrator's memory and his re-reading of the great myths of antiquity, the story paints the core theme with a light brush: the construction of a historical narrative, a paper sanctuary made up of a hotch potch of legends and memories, each more fallacious than the next. It ends with the resulting identity crisis, which our fragile biographical constructs attempt to stabilize: who are we? What do we know about ourselves, beyond the tale we tell ourselves? Can we come together, outside the illusion of language?

#### Review

"91 very short chapters, with ancient myths revisited, thwarted love affairs, medical studies and a book in the making. This is the menu of *Virgil Could Care Less*."

Mathieu Soulas, *Widoobiz*



## Emmanuel Venet

### MARCHER DROIT, TOURNER EN ROND (Walking Straight, Going Round in Circles)

*128 pages, published in August 2016*

The narrator, affected by Asperger syndrome, is madly in love with truth, transparency, scrabble, logic, aerial disasters, and Sophie Sylvestre, an old school friend he hasn't seen in thirty years. Fiercely hostile to the compromises on which relies ordinary sociality, he is obliged to attend his grandmother's funeral and is exasperated by her spurious funeral eulogy. He undertakes to set the record straight by unravelling his family history in an interior monologue. The day of reckoning has come. At the same time, he dreams of experiencing true love with Sophie and of writing a treatise on domestic criminology. Luckily, he also loves being left alone.

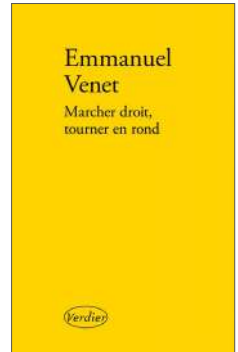
#### Reviews

"A humorous and caustic outlook, telling both a story of lucid loneliness and a moral tale."

Dominique Conil, *Mediapart*

"This very remarkable little novel is a hilarious shoot-out in the vein of Thomas Bernhard, a great outpouring of family secrets."

Éric Chevillard, *Le Monde des Livres*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Manifeste pour une  
psychiatrie artisanale*, 2020

*Rien*, 2013

*Ferdière, psychiatre  
d'Antonin Artaud*, 2006

*Précis de médecine  
imaginaire*, 2005

*Rights sold in Italy*



## Patrick Autr aux

Patrick Autr aux was born in 1968. He quit his job as an ER psychiatrist to dedicate himself to literature. He published three works about the experience of disease, *Dans la vall e des larmes*, *Soigner* (Gallimard) and *Se survivre* (Verdier), as well as a theatrical piece *Le Grand Vivant* (Verdier), produced in 2015 at the festival d'Avignon. In 2017 he published *La Voix  crite* (Verdier), a reflection on medicine and literature. Writer in residence at Boston University in 2018 and 2019, *visiting scholar* at MIT in 2018, he created the seminar *Through a writer's eye*.

### PUSSYBOY

*128 pages, published in March 2021*

In *Pussyboy*, Patrick Autr aux remembers an intense, loose relationship in a lasting yet tenuous affair, after a casual encounter with a man, a fuck buddy but a regular one.

Zacharia turns up when he likes, without much warning, and doesn't always stick to dates. But each appearance triggers an almost automatic re-awakening of desire. The narrator is passive, or is at any rate in a perpetual state of expectation, consciously taking on the clich ed role, in this odd couple, of the sailor's wife.

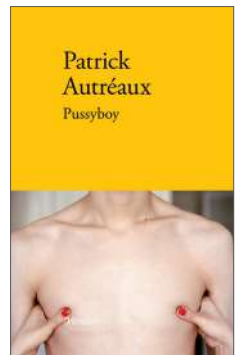
Zacharia plays on another clich e: an Arab man, clothed in the requisite attributes that are cap and waist bag, who dreams of going home, refuses to be penetrated and finds it difficult to accept his sexuality. Sex between the two of them is both intense and harmonious.

The issue here is penetration as will and representation.

#### Reviews

"*Pussyboy* is a powerful and unsettling tale, frank but never crude, and radical in everything it reveals. A fine prose maker has written this book, rolling out a subtle and inventive language, deftly handling the semantics of the sexual act without ever lapsing into either affectation or vulgarity." Guillaume Lecaplain, *Lib eration*

"*Pussyboy* is (...) a book that breathes freedom and joy." Claudine Galea, *Remue.net*



By the same author  
 ditions Verdier

*Quand la parole attend la nuit*, 2019

*La Voix  crite*, 2017

*Le grand vivant*, 2016

*Se survivre*, 2013

## Lutz Bassmann

Lutz Bassmann belongs to a community of imaginary authors invented, championed, and literarily realized by Antoine Volodine, a French writer of Slavic origins born in 1950. Volodine's many celebrated works include the award-winning *Minor Angels*, which blends science fiction, Tibetan myth, a ludic approach to writing, and a profound humanistic idealism.

### BLACK VILLAGE

*208 pages, published in August 2017*

Two men and a woman in rags, Tassili, Goodmann and Myriam, forlorn poets and former members of an Action cell who barely know each other, walk in the darkness following their death. The road is endless and monotonous. They must learn to walk together through darkness and the quirks of time which alternately stretches or shrinks, leading nowhere. In an effort to set temporal landmarks along their journey, they tell stories. They would like those stories to be engraved in their memories and to accompany their progress towards the end. But, whatever their content – hectic adventures, violence, revenge, dreams, criminal missions, fantastic explorations –, they always stop in the heart of the action. Images emerge, colors and anecdotes blaze, but suddenly a mysterious force intervenes and shears ruthlessly the narration. Once again, darkness erases all. As the narrations are interrupted, the novel becomes a chamber of echoes. Tassili, Goodmann and Myriam continue their long walk without knowing whether they will eventually disappear, and whether the extinction will last the time of a snap of fingers, or a thousand years.

#### Reviews

"A collection of a rare intensity, upheld by a staggeringly powerful prose. By breaking the narrative codes and upsetting the genres, it offers, in the midst of disaster itself, a reinvented literature asserting the infinite potential of language."

Hélène Giannecchini, *Art Press*

"*Black Village* is an enigmatic and perfectly composed voyage to the end of night; it spins tales of childhood, love and bereavement that find an echo in the other works of post-exoticism."

Jean-Didier Wagneur, *Libération*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Danse avec Nathan Golshem*,  
2012

*Les aigles puent*, 2010

*Haïkus de prison*, 2008

*Avec les moines-soldats*,  
2008

Rights sold in Italy and the  
United States

## Pierre Bergounioux

Pierre Bergounioux, born in 1949, taught French literature at the Beaux-Arts (school of arts) in Paris. He lives with his family in the Chevreuse valley. A keen entomologist, he also practices sculpture. For his whole work, he won the Great Prize of Literature 2002 awarded by the Société des gens de lettres.

### UNE CHAMBRE EN HOLLANDE (A Room in Holland)

*64 pages, published in October 2008*

In an imaginative tribute to Descartes, Pierre Bergounioux recounts the life of the French philosopher until his writing of the *Discourse on Method*, in the Netherlands, where he had exiled himself. Beyond the biographical narrative, this scholarly and poetic book about the birth of rationalism in Europe opens a broader reflection on the relationships between space, extension and thought, on exile, religion, and language.

#### Reviews

“Pierre Bergounioux takes us on a brief historical survey of Europe, presented as a vertiginous traveling shot from the Roman Empire and the slow Christianization of the Western world, to this room in seventeenth-century Holland, where the dark and free voice of a thinker of a new kind resounds.”

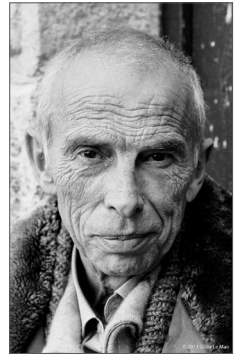
Frédéric Boyer, *Libération*

“In this essay on the history of thought, Pierre Bergounioux [...], whom we deem to be one of the best prose writers of his time, traces with scholarly forcefulness the birth of our contemporary rationality.”

Oriane Jeancourt-Galignani, *Transfuge*

“The author gets us to reach the most common place of Modern Philosophy, the famous *cogito ergo sum* of the *Discourse on the method*, with the same emotion it must have aroused, if not in its author, at least in his contemporary readers.”

Andrés Barba, *El Cultural*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Correspondance, 1981-2017,*  
2018

*Carnet de notes, 2011-2015,*  
2016

*Carnet de notes, 2001-2010,*  
2012

*Carnet de notes, 1991-2000,*  
2007

*Carnet de notes, 1980-1990,*  
2006

*Les Forges de Syam,* 2007

*Back in the sixties,* 2003

*Simplex, magistraux  
et autres antidotes,* 2001

*Un peu de bleu dans  
le paysage,* 2001

*La Ligne,* 1997

*Le Chevron,* 1996

*Le Grand Sylvain,* 1993

*Le Matin des origines,* 1992

Rights sold in Brazil,  
Catalonia, Germany, Italy  
and Spain

## Romain Bertrand

Born in 1974, Romain Bertrand is a research director at the Centre d'études et de recherches internationales and a specialist in modern and contemporary Indonesia. He has written many publications on the issue of European colonial dominance in South East Asia.

### QUI A FAIT LE TOUR DE QUOI ? (Who Discovered What? The Magellan Affair)

*144 pages, published in March 2020*

In five brief chapters, Romain Bertrand invites us to take another look at the Magellan affair and shows us that the Portuguese explorer and his crew played a far less decisive role than history books led us to believe.

We know of course that Magellan left for the Indies via the western route in 1519 and that he did not circumnavigate the globe, as he died two years later on one of the islands in modern day Philippines. It was Basque captain Juan Sebastián Elcano who steered one of his ships past the Cape of Good Hope and returned to Spain in September 1522. We even know that Magellan the “discoverer” had not really launched into this voyage to prove that the Earth was indeed round, but for his own personal gain.

Romain Bertrand narrates these and many other facts, bringing fresh insight into all the protagonists involved in this voyage. Magellan loses much of his stature, to the benefit of the 242 sailors of all nationalities who embarked with him, as well as the inhabitants he met.

The historian is careful to compare well-known sources with Malay chronicles, taking care to examine the tales and words reported, and to look beyond the Europeans' assurances. The identity of the Malay world is partly restored in the process. The book reveals a dense, vibrant and complex world that experienced “globalization” well before the Europeans did.

*Who Discovered What?* borrows from different styles—detective novels, explorers' tales and scholarly conference—to give readers a fresh take on Magellan.



# LITERATURE

## Reviews

“With a brief and cutting tale, which mocks ‘whiny colonialism’, Romain Bertrand aims to breathe life into those who have long been seen as extras in history with more humanity.”

Rémi Noyon, *L’Obs*

“A brief text which brilliantly combines a scientific approach and rigorous historical study with a style that is light in touch and not devoid of humor.”

Jean-Marc Daniel, *L’Express*

“*Who Discovered What?* is the tale of an expedition of course, but it is also an expedition in itself, one in which the author has embarked upon with all the archival and bibliographical rations that his ship could carry. The book contains an impressive amount of research. Some thirty pages at the end book direct the reader to sources old and new, for each salient point. Armed with all this scholarly material, we are swept along on what is a most fascinating journey.”

Frédéric Werst, *En attendant Nadeau*

## David Bosc

David Bosc was born in Southern France in 1973 and studied Political Science at the universities of Aix-en-Provence and Siena. He lived in Paris and Warsaw before settling in Lausanne, Switzerland, where he works as a publisher for Noir sur blanc.

### LA CLAIRE FONTAINE (The Clear Fountain)

*128 pages, published in August 2013*

The French painter Gustave Courbet spent the last four years of his life in exile on the shores of Lake Geneva in Switzerland. He was wanted by the police for the demolition of Napoleon's Vendôme Column during the Paris Commune. In July 1873, he set off on a donkey for exile in Switzerland and made his new home in a studio in La Tour-de-Peilz. There, he captured the majesty of Lake Geneva on canvas, in all its colours and moods; exhibited his latest paintings; made love with Juliette, his Piedmontese housekeeper; sang in the village choir; cursed the police, who were pursuing and harassing him; and drank himself to an exhausted death at the age of 58. *The Clear Fountain* is a semi-biographical novel, interspersed with original source material from letters and legal and police documents; with brilliant word pictures and a powerfully eloquent musicality. It contrasts Gustave Courbet's life of excess with the calm, majestic shores of Lake Geneva.

#### Reviews

"David Bosc has penned one of the best written novels of this literary season. A language full of finesse, sensual, meticulous, precise pervades *The Clear Fountain*."

Pierre Assouline, *La République des livres*

"David Bosc has apparently immersed himself in the paintings of Gustave Courbet and created from them his own writer's palette."

Éléonore Sulser, *Le Temps*

"The Clear Fountain paints a shimmering portrait of Courbet's time in French Switzerland, at the same time giving us twin views of the landscape of Lake Geneva – in words and pictures."

Anne Pitteloud, *Le Courrier*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Relever les déluges*, 2017

*Mourir et puis sauter sur son cheval*, 2016

*La Claire Fontaine* was awarded the Prix Suisse de Littérature, the Prix Marcel Aymé, and the Prix Thyde Monnier by the Société des Gens de lettres

Longlisted for the Prix Goncourt 2013

Rights sold in Italy,  
Poland and Switzerland  
(German language)

## Patrick Boucheron

Patrick Boucheron (born in 1965) is a historian and professor at the Collège de France, specializing in medieval history. He is the author of many works including most recently *Conversations sur l'histoire* (Verdier, 2012) and *Conjurer la peur. Sienne 1338. Essai sur la force politique des images* (Seuil, 2013) translated as *The Power of Images: Siena, 1338* (Polity Books, 2018).



### LÉONARD ET MACHIAVEL (Leonardo and Machiavelli)

*160 pages, published in September 2008*

At the Ducal Palace of Urbino, in late June 1502, Cesare Borgia summoned two of the greatest minds of his time. One was a renowned artist and engineer named Leonardo da Vinci; the other a young and ambitious diplomat, Niccolò Machiavelli. Combining literary fiction and shreds of historical evidence, Patrick Boucheron reconstructs the encounter behind closed doors of two free-minded spirits who witnessed the power and the glory of Renaissance Italy. A powerful reflection on the writing of history.

#### Reviews

"Neither an essay nor a novel, Patrick Boucheron's narrative finds the point of balance between storytelling and history. [...] His *Leonardo and Machiavelli* will satisfy both the scholarly craving for knowledge and the reader's aesthetic enjoyment."

Claire Judde de Larivière, *Le Monde*

"The strength of this dazzling text lies in its discretion. Its erudition is all in nuances, its narrative thread is lace-like. Beyond the conversation lost in the night of Urbino, it is about understanding what it means to be 'contemporaneous' and 'contemporary'."

Pierre Assouline, *Le Magazine littéraire*

"One of the merits of this book is to give us a taste of the *qualità dei tempi*, the deep and brutal shift produced by the «descent» of the French armies from 1494 and the beginning of the «wars of Italy», which obliged to think, write and paint differently." *L'Histoire*

"Patrick Boucheron [...] writes not only history but also a treatise on how to write history. [...] Profound and fascinating, *Leonardo and Machiavelli* is a small masterpiece."

Ana María Vara, *La Nación* (Argentina)

By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Prendre dates, Paris,*  
6 janvier-14 janvier 2015,  
2015, with Mathieu Riboulet

*L'Entretemps. Conversations*  
*sur l'histoire, 2012*

*Rights sold in Germany,*  
*Greece, Italy and Spain*

## Béatrice Commengé

Béatrice Commengé has written several novels. Her experience of dance, libraries and travel has prompted her to revisit, amongst others, Nietzsche, Rilke, Henry Miller, Hölderlin and the city of Alexandria. She has also translated a dozen books by Anais Nin.

### ALGER, RUE DES BANANIERS

*128 pages, published in September 2020*

“Fate had me born on a piece of land whose history could be told in two dates: 1830 and 1962. Like a person, French Algeria was born, died and lived. Fate had me born in the heights of the White City, in a street bearing the pretty name of “Rue des Bananiers”. I had learnt to play and to laugh in its soft light, I had learned about differences. I had liked school at Au Soleil and cinema in the afternoon. I had discovered friendship and cultivated a taste for happiness.”

In retracing a family history that spans four generations, Béatrice Commengé subtly interleaves childhood memories with the history of French Algeria. Drawing on the very palpable spirit of the place, she offers unique depth to the story of a period in time whose past is still very much in our present.

#### Reviews

“(…) Béatrice Commengé weaves into this significant and brief tale personal memories, genealogical studies and History. It runs through her family’s destiny, in one hundred and thirty-two years of conquest and colony.”

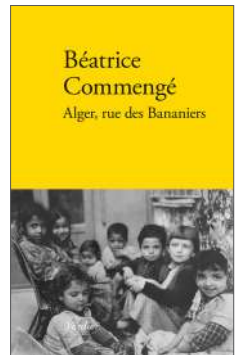
Véronique Rossignol, *Livres hebdo*

“Béatrice Commengé’s narrative style (...) deliberately avoids any form of nostalgia. It is almost an exercise in anthropology, but one of a highly literary kind. The writing is so beautiful that you feel the urge to underline every single sentence.”

Alexandra Schwartzbrod, *Libération*

“A dazzling tale.”

Elisabeth Barillé, *Le Figaro magazine*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Une vie de paysages*, 2016

*La danse de Nietzsche*  
(paperback), 2013

*Alger, rue des Bananiers*  
was awarded the  
Prix Jacques Audiberti  
and the Prix Frontières –  
Léonora Miano



## Jean-Louis Comolli

Jean-Louis Comolli, born in 1941, is a French writer and documentary film director. He was the editor of *Les Cahiers du cinéma* from 1965 to 1973.

### UNE TERRASSE EN ALGÉRIE (A Terrace in Algeria)

*192 pages, published in February 2018*

In this intimate history of the Algerian struggle for independence, Jean-Louis Comolli remembers his youthful years in a country which still belonged to France but in which war would eventually shatter Albert Camus's dream of a free union between the Algerians and the Europeans.

Jean-Louis Comolli brings the colonial psyche to light and captures the film of memories. A film he rewinds while, day after day, his wife Marianne is losing her own memory. Remembrance and amnesia answer each other in a vertiginous dialogue: «Mustn't there be two of us to remember what we have lived together? What sense would there be in remembering alone what was put in common? Or in being alone in forgetting? That which is erased from Marianne's memory, is it not also being erased from mine?»

#### Review

"A terrace in Algeria is interwoven with fragments of inheritance and information that the teenager, garners as a silent witness. In Jean-Louis Comolli, we feel the will to negate nostalgia so that it does not impinge on the analysis."

Claire Devarrieux, *Libération*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Une certaine tendance du cinéma documentaire*, 2021  
*Daech, le cinéma et la mort*, 2016

*Cinéma, mode d'emploi*, 2015

*Corps et cadre*, 2012

*Cinéma contre spectacle*, 2009

*Voir et pouvoir*, 2004

*Une terrasse en Algérie*  
was awarded the  
Prix François Mauriac

## Didier Daeninckx

Didier Daeninckx, born in 1949, has been awarded many literary distinctions (*Grand prix de littérature policière, Prix Goncourt de la Nouvelle, Prix Goncourt du livre de jeunesse...*), and his works have been translated into several languages.

### LE ROMAN NOIR DE L'HISTOIRE (A History of Noir Fiction)

*832 pages, published in October 2019*

Seventy-six short stories, written in the past forty years, make up *A History of Noir Fiction*. They retrace the convulsions of more than a century and a half of contemporary French history.

Ranked by date of the events described, from 1855 to 2030, they describe a startling journey of exploration that begins on a Channel Island, where a poet has found exile, and ends on an interstellar orbit, littered with space conquest debris.

The book's eleven chapters meld into each epoch's great movements. The utopia of the Commune, the mighty crash of falling empires, the refusal to obey, solidarity, a thirst for justice, ever-renewed hope—but also confinement, treachery, shattered dreams, words that are no longer able to speak... The people that inhabit this story are not those whose name history books have recorded or whose statues attract the city's pigeons.

A demonstrator from Mulhouse in 1912, a deserter in 1917, a sportsman in 1936, a Spanish smuggler in 1938, a Belgian Roma fleeing, an illiterate indigenous kid, a Kanak rejected, a blind prostitute, a steelworker scorned, an amnesic prole, a murderous rose seller, a refugee from Calais, they are nobodies.

And in the words of the poet, they are everything.

#### Review

"With *A History of Noir Fiction*, you suddenly realize that remembrance, clearly spelled out in the author's first title, is the underlying theme of hundreds of short stories, often written up from the notes scribbled in exercise books, Zola-style. The author offers a tender and delicate tribute to the lowly and the excluded. There are no affectations or miserabilism here, just acute sensitivity, and no squeamishness. This book portrays a harsh and cruel world that fraternity and solidarity can make bearable, where life thrives on hopes for the future, even in the darkest times." Roger Martin, *L'Humanité*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Cannibale*, suivi de *Le Retour d'Ataï* (paperback), 2015

*Retour à Béziers*, 2014

*Rue des Degrés*, 2010

*Histoire et faux-semblants*, 2007

*Cités perdues*, 2005

*La Mort en dédicace*, 2001

*Le Dernier Guérillero*, 2000

*La Repentie*, 1999

*Le Goût de la vérité*, 1997

Longlisted for the  
Prix Médicis essai.

## Michèle Desbordes

Michèle Desbordes (1940-2006) grew up in Orléans, France. She studied at the Sorbonne and eventually specialised as a book archivist, working in Parisian universities and also as a lecturer in Guadeloupe.

### LA ROBE BLEUE (The Blue Dress)

*160 pages, published in May 2007*

*La Robe bleue* is a compelling fictional portrait of the sculptor Camille Claudel (1864-1943), who spent nearly 30 years of her life locked up in a mental asylum. Years filled with the expectation that her sole visitor, her brother Paul, would come and visit.

Although written in the third person, the narrative convincingly presents the thinking, yearning and suffering of its subject. Michèle Desbordes's prose reaches its point of excellence in relating the calm tragedy of a feminine soul.

#### Reviews

"Free from unnecessary noise, away from the usual interpretative or moral chatter, this admirable story by Michèle Desbordes enables us to hear the vibration of suspended time, to follow the curve of an existence that has been reduced to almost nothing, yet is fully alive and infused with desire."

Patrick Kéchichian, *Le Monde*

"*The Blue Dress* expresses the immobility of time in all its density through the flow of Camille's consciousness, in the same manner as sculpture, in the immobility of stone, perfectly expresses movement, flesh and soul."

Gabrielle Napoli, *La Quinzaine littéraire*

"Desbordes's style is remarkable. [...] Her long, intricate sentences mirror the mental processes governing a misunderstood, mistreated and exceptionally gifted woman."

John Taylor, *Times Literary Supplement*

"With a literary pulse that goes beyond the mere biographical account, Michèle Desbordes reels the tragedy of this artist in *The Blue Dress*. A novel in which tragedy and beauty come together through a woman who sculpted and loved with the same devotion."

Isabel Gonzalez, *El Mundo* (Spain)



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Les Petites Terres*, 2008

*L'Emprise*, 2006

*Un été de glycine*, 2005

*La Demande*, 1999

*L'Habituée*, 1996

Rights sold in Catalonia  
and Sweden

## Michèle Desbordes

### LA DEMANDE (The Request)

*128 pages, published in January 1999*

*La Demande* (translated as *The Maid's Request*), Michèle Desbordes's first novel, was published to enormous critical acclaim. Set in 16th-century France, it tells of an unexpected encounter between an ageing maidservant and an unnamed Italian painter – possibly Leonardo da Vinci. Bidden by the French king to bring him “the certainty of beauty”, the painter is given a servant and a mansion on the banks of the Loire. The unlikely attachment between the two lies in part on an awareness of the imminence of their deaths. The narrative culminates in her asking to continue serving him after she dies, by offering her body for his anatomic sketches.

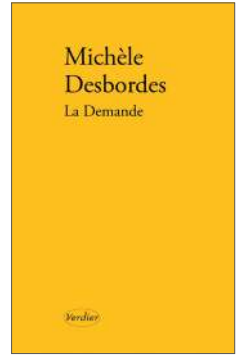
#### Reviews

“Michèle Desbordes does not write about painting, she paints with words and composes this masterly late autumn painting where nothing exists but the beauty and simplicity of gesture and observation, the mute complicity of an encounter at the margins of glory, poverty, and old age.”  
Michèle Gazier, *Télérama*

“Desbordes writes as Dutch genre painters once painted: her novels are still lifes in which people are the objects of contemplation. She is clear-eyed, never nostalgic.”  
Kate Kellaway, *The Guardian*

“Ms Desbordes paints with words. Like the painter of her story, she renders “the invisible” on paper. Her suggestive and poetic writing captures the dense silence of two characters in the autumn of their lives, trying to love and learning to die. And time, punctuated only by the slow change of the seasons, becomes almost palpable: what the servant offers to the artist is time regained.”  
*The Economist*

“Best read like a sampler of meditative poetry, this slim narrative is as much about the seasonal rhythms of life in the river valley as the artist's last thoughts and regrets. Master and servant share little dialogue, just a comfortable acceptance of approaching death. This is a book that leaves the smell of box-hedge and river water lingering in the nostrils.”  
Emma Hagestadt, *The Independent*



Shortlisted for the Prix Goncourt in 1999.

*La Demande* was awarded the Prix Flaïano de littérature étrangère, the Prix du jury Jean Giono and the Prix des auditeurs de la RTBF

*Rights sold in Germany*

## Guka Han

Guka Han was born in 1987 in South Korea. She studied art in Seoul before settling in Paris in 2014. An MA in Creative Writing from Université Paris-8-Saint-Denis, she now writes in French, her adopted language. She is also a translator.

### LE JOUR OÙ LE DÉSSERT EST ENTRÉ DANS LA VILLE

(The Day Desert Entered the City)

*128 pages, published in January 2020*

“No one knows how desert entered the town.” This is how “Luoēs”, an anagram of “Seoul”, starts, the first of the eight short stories contained in this collection. “Luoēs” provides a clue to the oddness that pervades this polyphonic book.

A character rejects the clamor of the world, another urinates “to extinguish the fire outside, in the town”. This one decides to flee but on returning, cannot be sure he simply dreamt it, and that one lives in an abandoned tower, living off the city’s waste. Here, each person—although, appearances aside, could it be the same person?—seems to be living in exile, somewhere between childhood and adulthood. They are (all?) unable to communicate with the world and the beings that surround them and have to rely on an overly acute perception of images, sounds and smells to try and escape from a ghostly future.

#### Reviews

“A wonderful, stylized collection, tapping a well of powerful echoes inside oneself, repeating faintly, but insistently.”

Flore Delain, *En lisant, en écrivant*

“This is a strange little book, an enchanting one, and very much of our times.”

Eleonore Sulser, *Le Temps*

“Magical realism slips into this book, as the author describes a kind of weightlessness inside, in eight short stories. Guka Han sketches people who are affected by a form of second sight that almost makes the world alien to them (...). Delicately crafted, these short stories celebrate the absence of quietude.

Anne Crignon, *L’Obs*



#### First Novel

*Rights sold in  
Japan and Korea*

## Samy Langerært

Samy Langerært was born in 1985. He lives between Paris and Berlin.

### MON TEMPS LIBRE (My Free Time)

*96 pages, published in January 2019*

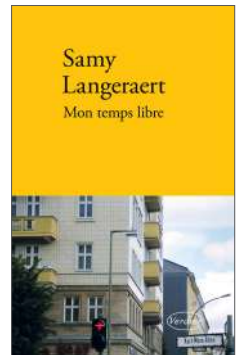
After a romantic breakup, the narrator of *My free time* leaves Paris to settle in Berlin, a city he already knows for having spent a ghostly winter there. Thus begin four seasons of vacancy, of time freed from worldly constraints, which sharpens the perception of the world. The young man experiences a radical strangeness and loneliness, which is also that of a between-two-languages.

Berlin here appears in a new light. Far from the contemporary clichés of a creative and frenetic city, this odyssey in minor confronts us with its meteorology, its flora and fauna, its peripheries, its outcasts and secondary characters.

#### Review

“A motionless journey, away from all the clichés about Berlin, its international youth, hectic life, and convulsive raves, served by an exquisite prose. For a first novel, it’s a nice success, introspective, discreet, muffled, a tad intellectual. And, in the end, we do not really know if the hero ever comes back.”

Jean-Claude Perrier, *Livres hebdo*



#### First Novel

## Christophe Manon

Christophe Manon, born in 1971 in Bordeaux, is the author of more than twenty books. For his work *Extrêmes et lumineux* (Verdier, 2015), he was awarded the Revelation Award by the Société des Gens de lettres. He regularly gives public readings.

### PÂTURE DE VENT (A Chase After Wind)

*112 pages, published in January 2019*

All is vanity and a chase after wind, states the Ecclesiastes. Nothing new under the sun, always the same story, the same drama. Always the stupor of life, death, love, the omnipotence of desire, the dazzle of the moment, the immanence of the present, the joy and helplessness, the greatness and weakness of the human heart.

*Pâture de vent* is a hallucinated love song, a feverish and haunting dance punctuated by luminous flashes and moments of grace. It introduces the figures of the grandfather, the mother, the stillborn baby brother, an exiled Rital ancestor who became president, and many others. The voices of the dead may be heard, singing along with the living, in a modest attempt to render justice to the intensity of events, and perhaps bear witness to faint epiphanies.

#### Reviews

“Christophe Manon constructs a powerful story where the biblical breath stirs a merciless war against life.”

Alain Nicolas, *L'Humanité*

“For Christophe Manon, the act of writing is a tool for protest and a weapon against oblivion. In a feverish and hallucinated prose, *Pâture de vent* explores our intimate relationships with our dead and the lasting traces they imprint on our lives.”

Avril Ventura, *Le Monde des livres*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Extrêmes et lumineux*, 2015

## Jean-Michel Mariou

Jean-Michel Mariou is a journalist and editor.

### POISON D'OR (Golden Poison)

*192 pages, published in April 2021*

For more than a hundred years, men have been extracting gold from the bowels of the earth in the Orbiel Valley north of Carcassonne, in France. Poison has been extracted too: arsenic, without which there would be no gold. Prospectors came from Belgium, Australia and Paris. For their part, laborers, who had often abandoned their villages' vineyards and fields, risked their health and their life for the promise that mining offered. Which is how, from 1890 until the present day, large amounts of poison have contaminated earth and water.

The families we follow throughout the century gather together the victims of history, with its booming call of the great wars and social struggles that overwhelmed them.

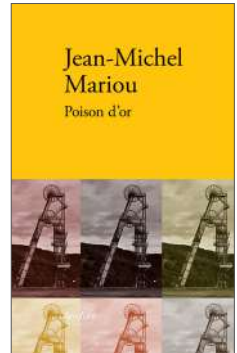
#### Reviews

"In Golden Poison, this truly noir novel, which is neither quite novel nor docufiction, Jean-Michel Mariou has met his challenge. He comes from the line of authors who know how to write of those places we forget ever had poems and history."

Maité Bouyssy, *En attendant Nadeau*

"You need this book."

Roger Martin, *Vie nouvelle*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Le Chauffeur de Juan*, 2019

*Ce besoin d'Espagne*, 2013



## Pierre Michon

Pierre Michon (born in 1945) is an author of high acclaim in France and Europe. He was winner of the Prix France Culture in 1984 for his first book, *Small Lives*, and of the 1996 Prix de la Ville de Paris for his body of work. He lives in France.

*Les Onze* won the Grand Prix du Roman de l'Académie française in 2009. Michon was awarded many literary distinctions for his entire body of work, including the Prix Franz-Kafka in 2019, the Prix Marguerite-Yourcenar in 2015, the Grand Prix de la Société des Gens de Lettres in 2014 and, in Germany, the Petrarca Preis in 2010.

### LA GRANDE BEUNE (The Origin of the World)

*96 pages, published in January 1996*

This spare, unforgettable novel is Pierre Michon's luminous exploration of the mysteries of desire. A young teacher takes his first job in the little town of Castelnaud, on the banks of the Beune River, close to the prehistoric underground site of Lascaux. Lost in a succession of rainy days and sleepless nights, he falls under the spell of a local shopkeeper, a woman of seductive beauty and singular charm. Yvonne. "Everything about her screamed desire... setting something in motion while settling a fingertip to the counter, turning her head slightly, gold earrings brushing her cheek while she watched you or watched nothing at all; this desire was open, like a wound; and she knew it, wore it with valor, with passion." She arouses in the narrator a burning lust and all the variations of an excitement which is expressed through the rhythm of his sentences, carried away like a gallop of reindeer in ancient times, biting or fleeting like the wolf of cave paintings.

#### Reviews

"Yvonne [...] is one of the most attractive female characters I have been given to meet in a literary work in a very long time. In a prose brought by maturity to the climax of carnal precision, of sensual evocations, tender or brutal, Pierre Michon describes a universe of evidences and mysteries, whose poignant and harsh memory is bound to haunt us."

Jorge Semprun, *Le Journal du dimanche*, 18 February 1996

"A haunting, imagistic book, somehow both lush and spare, *The Origin of the World* creates an effect much closer to a bewildering dream than to the sturdy coherence of a realist novel."

Martin Riker, *Wall Street Journal*



*La Grande Beune* was awarded the Prix Louis Guilloux

*Rights sold in Germany, Italy, Turkey, Spain and the United States*

# LITERATURE

"Lust is a common theme in literature, but rarely has it been expressed as poetically and profoundly as it is in prize-winning French author Pierre Michon's sliver of a novel, *The Origin of the World*."

Regan McMahon, *San Francisco Chronicle*, 25 August 2002

## VIE DE JOSEPH ROULIN (Life of Joseph Roulin)

80 pages, published in May 2015

*Vie de Joseph Roulin* takes its title from the postman who sat for Vincent Van Gogh when he briefly lived in Arles in the south of France. As with the lives in *Vies minuscules*, the life of Joseph Roulin is ordinary, in the greater scheme of things. Roulin thus is a rare unbiased witness to the sublime moment of incarnation, of "abstraction made flesh". Through him Michon can approach Van Gogh's art and construct the viewpoint of someone uneducated in matters of art.

### Reviews

"Pierre Michon approaches Van Gogh from the underside of his work, through the eyes of someone who had no understanding of the fine arts but had befriended a poor Dutchman who also happened to be a painter. His short book has a subtle flavor, as amicable and dubious as the bearded postman. Do not miss this small masterpiece."

Monique Pétilion, *Le Monde*

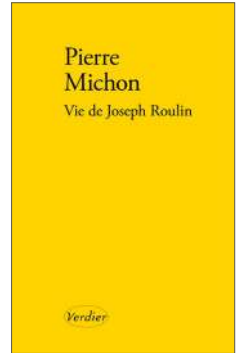
"There is a fervent, possessed quality to Michon's writing that can be only faintly sensed in excerpt. His sentences, which often run on for pages, dart digressively about, much like brushstrokes applied to a canvas, gradually resolving their parts into a cohesive whole."

*The New Yorker*

## LES ONZE (The Eleven)

144 pages, published in October 2009

*The Eleven* depicts the infamous actors of what historian Jules Michelet described as a "secular last supper" through a group portrait of the eleven leaders of the Committee of Public Safety led by Robespierre. The masterpiece, commissioned during the Reign of Terror, is allegedly the work of François-Elie Corentin, an



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*L'Empereur d'Occident*  
(paperback), 2007

*Abbés*, 2002

*Corps du roi*, 2002

*Mythologies d'hiver*, 1997

*Trois auteurs*, 1997

*Le Roi du bois*, 1996

*Maîtres et serviteurs*, 1990

Rights sold in Germany,  
Italy, Spain and the  
United States

# LITERATURE

eighteenth-century painter from a rural background who embodies the transition to modernity. Corentin's work of art and the historical tableau of the French Revolution come to life in dazzling detail as Pierre Michon, blending fact and fiction, offers an astute meditation on the nature of history itself and the artist's role in it.

## Reviews

"An admirable book, genius, completely dazzling and full of dread, dark and brilliant, as if radiating with a black light."

Nathalie Crom, *Télérama*

"Michon describes with such precision, with such force, that you start to think [it] exists."

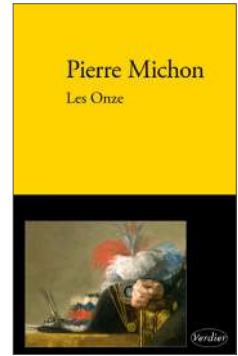
Philippe Lançon, *Libération*

"[Michon's] aesthetic integrity and strict austerity have earned him the adoration of critics and made him worth teaching in every university."

Baptiste Liger, *L'Express*

"Michon's novel is a conspicuous case of literature that plugs the holes left by history. Neither Corentin nor his painting existed, yet by the end of *The Eleven* the reader feels that this imaginary canvas captures the cultural watershed between the 18th and the 19th centuries with a completeness achieved by no actual work of visual art."

*The Quarterly Conversation*



*Les Onze* was awarded the Grand Prix du roman de l'Académie française

*Rights sold in Armenia, Catalonia, Croatia, Galicia, Italy, The Netherlands, Spain, Turkey and the United States*

## Anne Pauly

Born in 1974 in the suburbs of Paris, Anne Pauly lives and works in Paris. *Avant que j'oublie* was awarded the Prix Livre Inter 2020.

### AVANT QUE J'OUBLIE (Before I Forget)

*144 pages, published in August 2019*

On the one hand, there is the one-legged alcoholic colossus, and all that goes with it: domestic violence, irrational behavior, daily drama. A «big dud» according to his daughter, a punk before his time. On the other hand, there is the self-taught reader of Eastern spirituality, with a thwarted artistic sensibility, who every night tenderly kisses the pixelated portrait of his late wife; my father, says his daughter, who alone can see under the appearances of the former. Then there is a suburban house set in a former rural and working-class world. Something has to be done about the house after the death of this frail colossus, this Janus-faced father. From its appalling jumble arises an endless maze of signs and memories as his daughter undertakes a methodical sorting of his belongings. Those collections of haikus, interspersed with maple leaves and sheets of toilet paper as book-marks, what do they say about her father? The daughter herself, the narrator, struggles to find consistency amid such chaos. And then, one day, as if coming from the past and speaking from beyond the grave, a letter arrives, revealing the whole truth about her beloved father whom she resembles so much in spite of the social gap between them.

#### Reviews

"A discreet and sensitive novel, playing on different registers and tone shifts... Anne Pauly takes a cruel and humorous look at the hours and days following the loss of a loved one, injecting the right dose of self-deprecation and anger." Thierry Clermont, *Le Figaro littéraire*

"It is the best discovery of this new literary season: with *Before I forget*, Anne Pauly signs an unusually splendid first novel. This vibrant story delves into the memory of a father for whom his daughter in mourning, between grief and drollery, sets out to build a radiant mausoleum." Johan Faerber, *Diacritik*

"It was the longest mass of all Christendom, writes Anne Pauly with disarming fatalism. Strangely, in *Before I forget*, it's the most farcical details that bring tears to one's eyes, as if grief was tickled by some mischievous little character." Erik Grisel, *Glamour*



#### First Novel

*Avant que j'oublie* was awarded the Prix Livre Inter 2020, Prix Summer, Prix Robert Walser and the Prix envoyé par La Poste

Shortlisted for the Prix Goncourt des Lycéens

Longlisted for the Prix Goncourt, the Prix Wepler and the Prix Femina

*Rights sold in Egypt,  
Germany and Italy*

## Mathieu Riboulet

Mathieu Riboulet (1960-2018) studied cinema and modern literature in Paris and went on to direct several films and documentaries. He leaves behind him a powerful collection of works.

### ENTRE LES DEUX IL N'Y A RIEN (Nothing in Between)

*144 pages, published in August 2015*

The protest movements of the early 1970s in Paris, Rome and Berlin raised the issue of armed and underground struggle. They unbolted a decade of open or latent political violence that would leave dozens of dead, not to mention those who survived but, ghost-like, carried their regrets, their depression or their cynicism into the 1980s. Witness to this decade of rage and hope, the narrator awakens simultaneously to sexual and political consciousness. He partakes in the delights and dejections of politics and desire alongside all those who, from Berlin to Bologna, from Stammheim to Paris, fought the lethal forces which, since the end of WW2, have made Europe the breathless continent we still live in.

#### Reviews

"1967-1978: from the assassination of Berlin student Benno Ohnesorg to the execution of Italian deputy Aldo Moro by the Red Brigades. In between? Ten years of lead, blood and sperm. A decade of bodies falling under bullets or rising with desire; ten years of an erotic frenzy traced by Mathieu Riboulet in this seething, tragic and sublime novel."

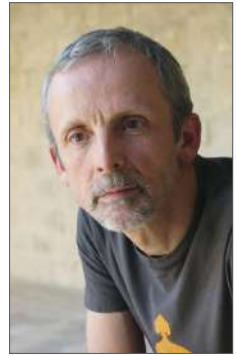
Léonard Billot, *Stylist*

"Reflecting on the political use of violence, whether by revolutionary activists or relentless State repression, this acute and lucid novel describes the awakening of a young man to the sexual and political conscience, as the narrator discovers simultaneously the homosexual desire and the revolutionary struggle."

Michel Abescat, *Télérama*

"An essential and forceful book, which gently closes the door on bloody years and puts things in their right place."

Sophie Joubert, *L'Humanité*



By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Les Portes de Thèbes*, 2020

*Nous campons sur les rives*,  
2018

*Le Regard de la source*  
(paperback), 2017

*Quelqu'un s'approche*  
(paperback), 2016

*Prendre dates, Paris*,  
6 janvier-14 janvier 2015,

2015, avec Patrick  
Boucheron

*Lisières du corps*, 2015

*L'Amant des morts*, 2008

*Rights sold in Germany*

# LITERATURE

## LES ŒUVRES DE MISÉRICORDE (Works of Mercy)

*160 pages, published in August 2012*

To feed the hungry, to give drink to the thirsty, to clothe the naked, to shelter the homeless, to visit the sick, to ransom the captive, to bury the dead – such are the seven corporal works of mercy depicted by Italian painter Caravaggio in the early seventeenth century. Pondering on this set of compassionate acts towards the material welfare of others, Mathieu Riboulet sets out on a sensual voyage from the altarpiece of a church in Naples to the back-rooms of gay Berlin. Haunted by the world wars and the appalling violence men inflict on themselves and on each other, the narrator strives to recover some form of integrity through the body of his German lover. A sensual reflection on twentieth-century history, violence, and art, wandering from Caravaggio to Pina Bausch and Steve McQueen.

### Reviews

"All at once a narrative, an essay, and a meditation, this unclassifiable book pursues a harsh and overwhelming path, with this leitmotiv question: «What shall we do with all the dead, where shall we live, how shall we love one other?"

Michel Abescat, *Télérama*

"Riboulet's greatest strength is to suggest the movement of history through the superposition of bodies, some of which are diaphanous as ideas, others dense as desire. The body has a story, the body becomes history."

Nils C. Ahl, *Le Monde des livres*

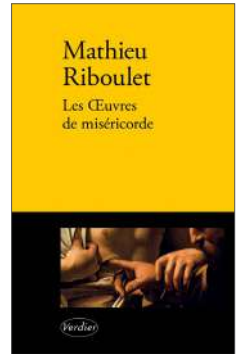
"Constructed on the model of the «breviary», from which its title is borrowed, Riboulet's novel, tense as a bow, carries us away by its significance, its commitment and its stakes."

Igor Capel, *Le Canard enchaîné*

## AVEC BASTIEN (With Bastien)

*128 pages, published in August 2010*

Bastien is a mystery: that of a country boy who dreams of being a woman and makes a career in the porn industry. He shows it all: body, skin, ass, yet he hides what is most important: his story, his



*French Voices Award  
2019-2020*

*Les Œuvres de miséricorde  
was awarded the  
Prix Décembre*

*Rights sold in Germany*

## LITERATURE

life, his soul. The narrator, of whom we know nothing except that he enjoys watching gay porn, will strive to slowly unveil the mystery of the boy on screen.

### Reviews

“The author traces simultaneously the career of his poetic and desperate character, and his own voyeuristic psychology [...] His novel investigates the perspective on the male body from the porn film industry.”

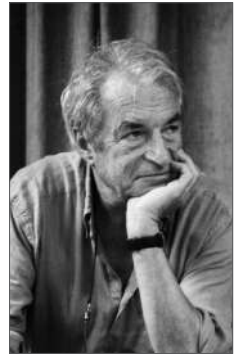
René de Ceccatty, *Le Monde des livres*

“Bastien ignites desire, releases energy, delivers from death, thus embodying the utopia of a world free from its shackles. [...] A masterly novel of contemplation and desire, *With Bastien* is ultimately an act of faith in literature.”

Michel Abescat, *Télérama*

## Olivier Rolin

Olivier Rolin was born in Paris in 1947 and spent his childhood in Senegal. Considered one of France's most distinguished contemporary novelists, he won the Prix Femina for his novel *Port-Sudan*, while his *Tigre en Papier* was nominated for the 2003 Goncourt Prize. Rolin has published both fiction and non-fiction and written for the French daily *Libération* and for the weekly magazine *Nouvel Observateur*. He regularly gives lectures in the U.S. and he participated in the 2008 PEN World Voices Festival.



### VERACRUZ

*128 pages, published in January 2016*

In *Veracruz*, a French teacher is giving a series of disillusioned lectures on Proust. He falls in love with a beautiful woman who eventually fails to show up at their usual appointment and disappears forever. A completely different story then begins. The Frenchman receives four mysterious stories in the mail. Four stories of wretched fates, half-confessed sins and criminal activities carried out without remorse by a defrocked Jesuit, a dodgy trafficker, and a devious Greek. Resentment, thwarted desires, desire for vengeance joggle in their disturbed minds, and bounce in a writing sometimes realistic, sometimes hallucinated. The clamminess of southern Mexico gives this kaleidoscope a stifling density.

By the same author  
éditions Verdier

*Veracruz* (paperback), 2021

*Bric et broc*, 2011

*La Langue*, 2000

*Rights sold in Brazil, Italy  
and the Netherlands*

#### Reviews

"An episodic novel, spiritual and surprising, which fathoms the depths of feelings and probes into the human soul. The reader is carried away by Olivier Rolin's perfect style and chiseled prose."

Laurence Biava, *BSC News*

"Rolin succeeds in giving each of his characters a singular voice without ever losing his own, his unique style that has delighted us for over thirty years and almost as many books."

Jean-Baptiste Harang, *Le Magazine littéraire*



## Anne Serre

Anne Serre, born in 1960, published her first short stories in a number of literary journals (such as *L'Alphée*, *Obsidiane* and the  *NRF*). Her first novel, *Les Gouvernantes*, was published in 1999. The French literary critic Jean-Pierre Richard commented on her prose in *Essais de critique buissonnière* (Gallimard, 1999).

### PETITE TABLE, SOIS MISE ! (Little Table, Set Thyself)

*64 pages, published in August 2012*

The narrator of this short novel recounts her coming of age amid the sexual frolics a bourgeois family in the 1970s. The magic formula inspired from Grimm's tale, which gives its title to this book, turns the kitchen table into an altar of orgasmic ritual. Around the table are the father, who enjoys cross-dressing, the mother, walking around naked, and their three little girls who partake in joyfully incestuous relations. This fairy-tale account justifies all sorts of sexual improprieties as the reader is confronted with an extravaganza that goes way beyond good and evil. The young girl partakes in the voluptuous freedom of her parents and sets out to explore her own taboos.

#### Reviews

"Beyond good and evil, free from any vulgarity or proselytism, Anne Serre achieves the feat of flirting with taboo without ever shocking."  
Marianne Payot, *L'Express*

"Anne Serre has built her novel in the shape of an elegant and disturbing tale, subtly scandalous, as ambiguous and seductive as a painting by Balthus."  
Nathalie Crom, *Télérama*

"Anne Serre intrigues, unsettles, but also seduces. Wonder, ingenuousness and lack of moral judgment draw around the narrative a hallucinated halo."  
Hélène Villovitch, *Elle*



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