

Nov 2021

Welcome

News & Notices

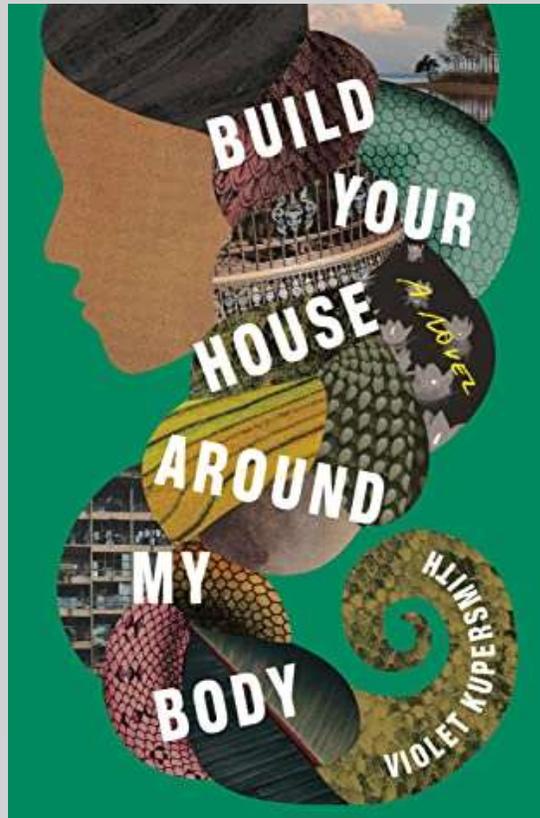
Next meeting & Xmas lunch

Ian Mond:

Year's 13 Best Books of Fannish Interest whether they are marketed as science fiction, fantasy, or horror. Or not.

Chat & close

The 2021 listing is "My top 13, from "really good" to "best" (even the first, #13, is really good)."



#13

Part puzzle, part revenge tale, part ghost story, this kaleidoscopic novel set in Vietnam spins half a century of history and folklore into the story of a missing woman. In 1986, the teenage daughter of a wealthy family gets lost in an abandoned rubber plantation while fleeing her angry father and is forever changed by the experience. In 2009, pressed into a dangerous scheme by a former lover, a woman captures a rare two-headed cobra. And in 2011, a young, unhappy American living in Saigon with her sort-of boyfriend disappears without a trace. Over the course of *Build Your House Around My Body*, the fates of these three women will lock together in an exhilarating series of nested narratives. Spanning over fifty years and barreling toward an unforgettable conclusion, this novel is a fever dream about possessed bodies and possessed lands, a time-traveling, heart-pounding, border-crossing marvel of a novel.

Goodreads

Violet Kupersmith is the author of the novel *Build Your House Around My Body* and the short story collection *The Frangipani Hotel*. She was born in central Pennsylvania in 1989 and later moved with her family to the Philadelphia suburbs. Her father is a white American and her mother is from Da Nang, Vietnam. She previously taught English with the Fulbright Program in the Mekong Delta and was a creative writing fellow at the University of East Anglia. She has lived in Da Lat and Saigon, Vietnam, and currently resides in the U.S.

A literary debut subverting classic sci-fi tropes set in gentrified Chicago, Silicon Valley, and across the vastness of the cosmos. This *Weightless World* follows a revolving cast of characters after alien contact upends their lives.

We are introduced to Sevi, a burned-out music teacher desperate for connection; Ramona, his on-again, off-again computer programmer girlfriend; and Sevi's cello protege Eason, struggling with the closure of his high school; after a mysterious signal arrives from outer space. When the signal--at first seen as a sign of hope--stops as abruptly as it started, they are all forced to reckon with its aftermath.

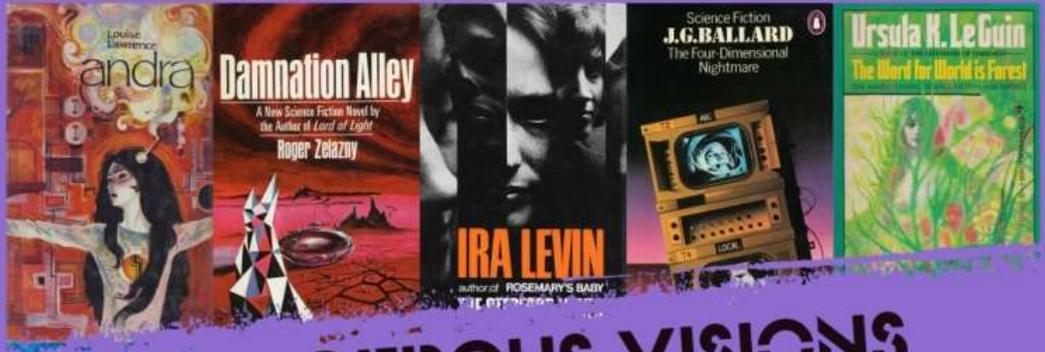
A dazzling deconstruction of science fiction tropes, *This Weightless World* looks to the past for a vision of the future.

Goodreads

Adam Soto is web editor at American Short Fiction. He holds an MFA from the Iowa Writers' Workshop and is a former Michener-Copernicus Foundation Fellow. He lives with his wife in Austin, TX, where he is a teacher and a musician. <https://thebrightertheday.bandcamp.com/>

Introspective, cinematic, and rhythmic, "Allegories," the Brighter the Day's debut EP, is an introduction to this Austin duo's compositional focus on lyric electronica, post-rock, and avant-garde pop. \$7

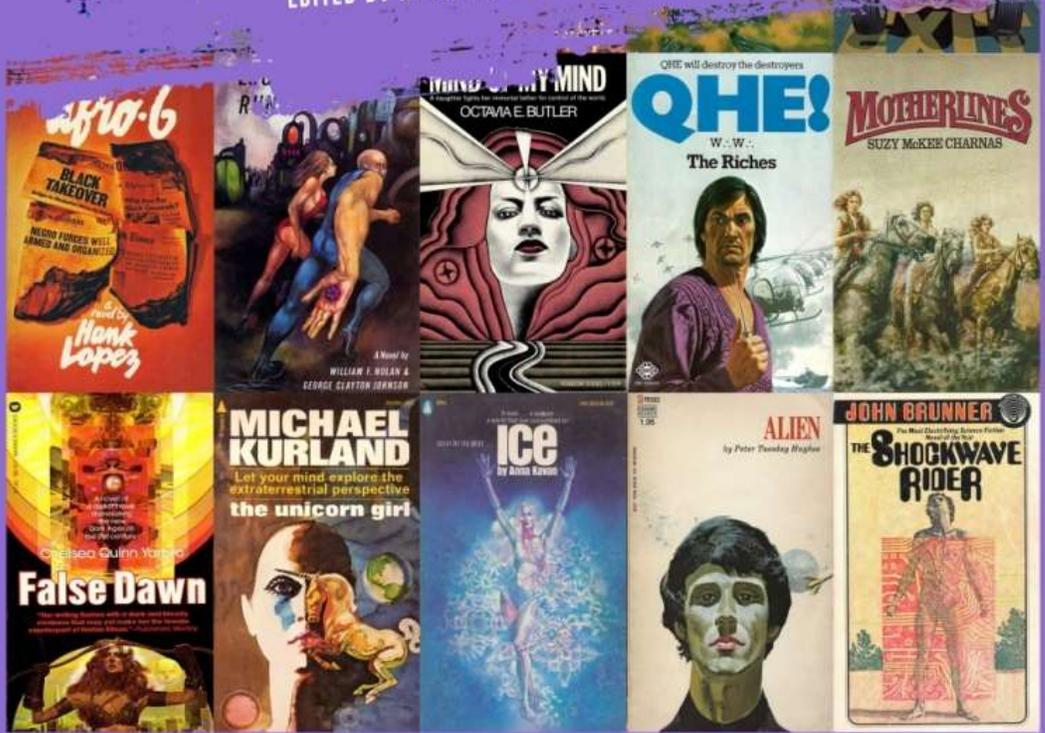




DANGEROUS VISIONS AND NEW WORLDS

Radical Science Fiction, 1950 to 1985

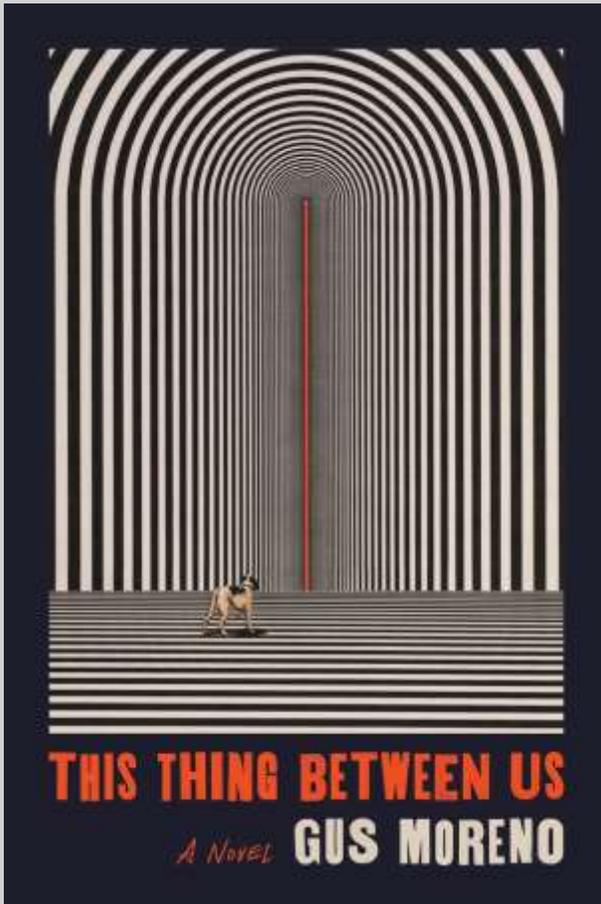
EDITED BY ANDREW NETTE AND IAIN MCINTYRE



Bios – local knowledge!
Nova Mob guest next month December 2021.



In 2018 Melbourne's Andrew Nette and Iain McIntyre Andrew Nette took the study of vintage paperbacks into a new realm of academic analysis and excellence with Girl Gangs, Biker Boys, And Real Cool Cats: Pulp Fiction And Youth Culture, 1950 To 1980, followed by Sticking it to The Man: Revolution And Counterculture In Pulp And Popular Fiction, 1950 to 1980. They dissect pulp and popular fiction during the "Long Sixties", their term for the fact that “many of the key social and political trends associated with the era extended back into the previous decade and didn't fully unfold until the mid-1970s.” Those decades were not only a time of great social and political upheaval but also the heyday of paperback novels.



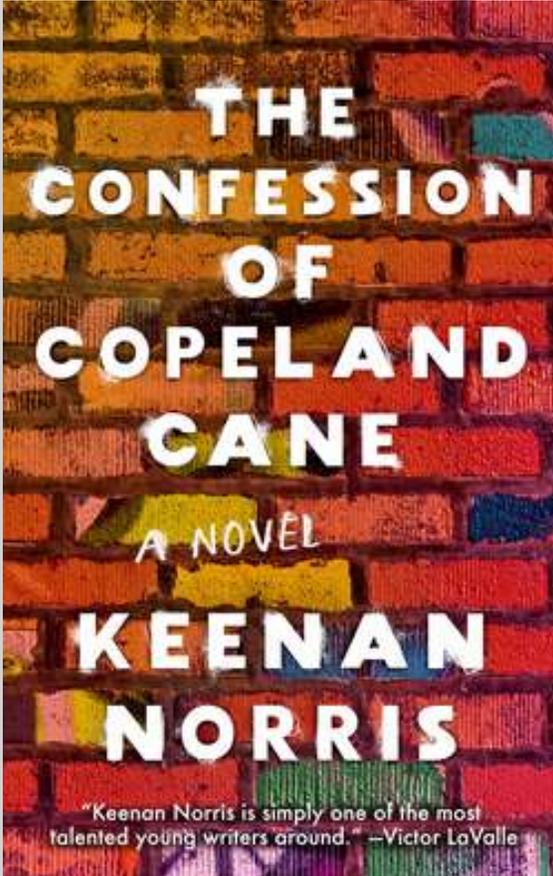
“A widower battles his grief, rage, and the mysterious evil inhabiting his home smart speaker, in this mesmerizing horror thriller from Gus Moreno. It was Vera’s idea to buy the Itza. The “world’s most advanced smart speaker!” The cold spots and scratching in the walls were weird enough, but peculiar packages started showing up at the house—who ordered industrial lye? Then there was the eerie music at odd hours, Thiago waking up to Itza projecting light shows in an empty room. It was funny and strange right up until Vera was killed.

A secluded cabin in Colorado seemed like the perfect place to hole up with his crushing grief. But soon Thiago realizes there is no escape—not from his guilt, not from his simmering rage, and not from the evil hunting him, feeding on his grief, determined to make its way into this world.

A bold, original horror novel about grief, loneliness and the oppressive intimacy of technology, *This Thing Between Us* marks the arrival of a spectacular new talent.”

Macmillan Publishers

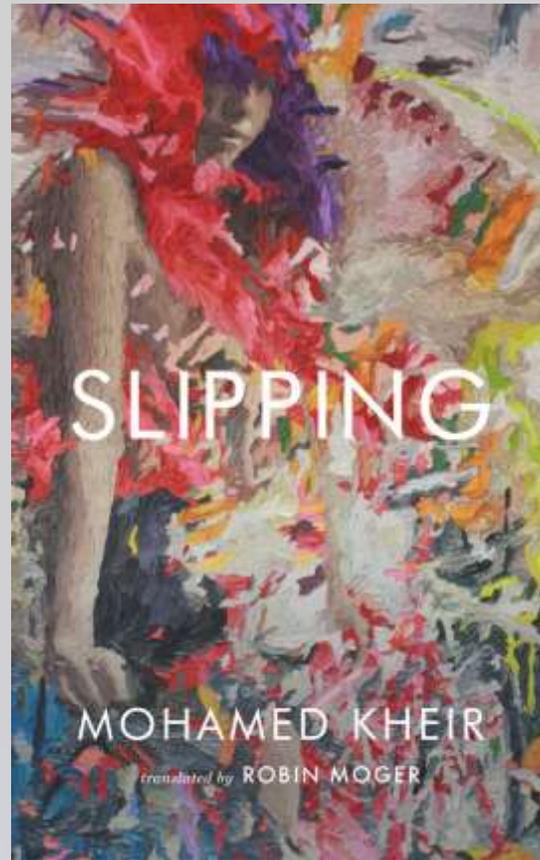
Gus Moreno is the author of *This Thing Between Us*. His stories have appeared in *Aurealis*, *Pseudopod*, *Bluestem Magazine*, and the *Burnt Tongues* anthology. He lives in the suburbs with his wife and dogs, but never think that he's not from Chicago for one second.



“Set in East Oakland in the not-too-distant future, the novel opens with Jacqueline, a young Black student journalist, who is conflicted about whether or not to make a recording of Copeland Cane V.’s confession, who has reached out to her via phone, or advise he turn himself in. Cope is a wanted fugitive, but seems free of the fear Jacqueline experiences from the surveillance state and what’s happened to the media: “At college, my Media Studies professors tell me that the merger of network news with national security has been so subtle and so slow that now that it’s happened, now that it’s in place, its omnipresence escapes notice.” But Cope reminds Jacqueline nothing is safe, and she accepts the risk of making a recording of his story. He begins: “Real talk, Jacq: I only ask that the people hear me all the way out. It won’t jeopardize y’all no kinda way, except maybe in y’all’s feelings.”

Fictionwritersreview.com

Keenan Norris is a novelist, essayist and short story writer. *The Confession of Copeland Cane* is his fifth novel. Keenan was a 2017 Marin Headlands Artist-in-Residence and has garnered a Public Voices fellowship (2020), a Callaloo fellowship (2016) and two Yerba Buena Center for the Arts fellowships (2017, 2015). He serves as a guest editor for the Oxford African-American Studies Center. He is the editor of the *Street Lit* literary criticism anthology. Keenan’s short work has appeared in numerous forums, including the *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *Los Angeles Times*, *LitHub*, *Alta*, *Remezcla*, *popmatters.com* and several anthologies of California literature. He teaches at San Jose State University.



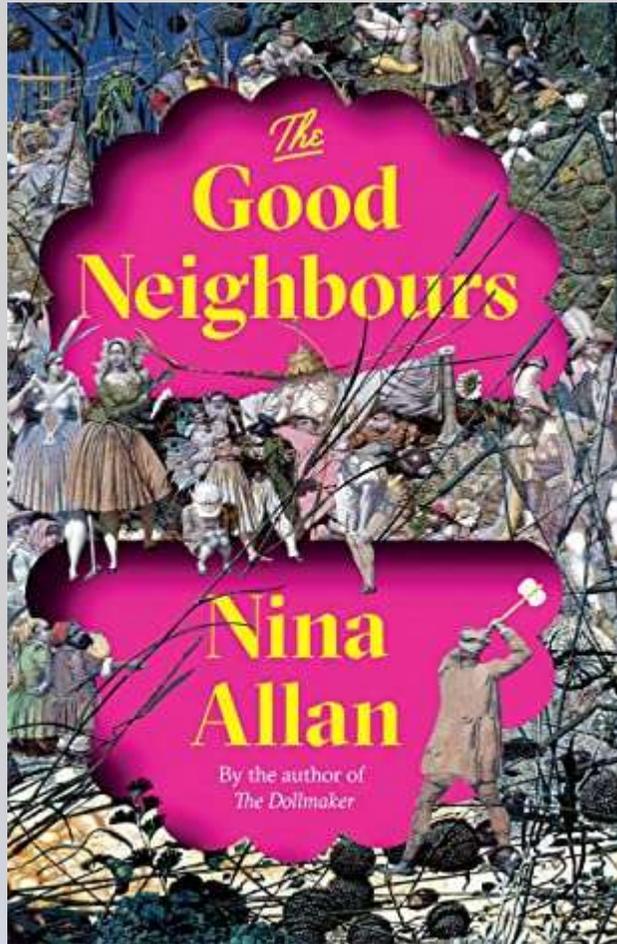
Mohamed Kheir is a novelist, poet, short story writer, journalist, and lyricist. His short story collections *Remsh Al Ein* (2016) and *Afarit Al Radio* (2011) both received The Sawiris Cultural Award, and *Leil Khargi* (2001) was awarded the Egyptian Ministry of Culture Award for poetry. *Slipping* (*Eflat Al Asabea*, Kotob Khan Publishing House, 2018; Two Lines Press, 2021) is his second novel and his first to be translated into English. He lives in Egypt.

Mohamed Kheir's novel "Slipping" is the first of Kheir's novels to be translated into English.

When Seif, journalist who has lost his sense of purpose, is sent on an assignment for the magazine he works for and meets Bahr, a former exile who has taken on a mission to document all of Egypt's miracles and enchanted places. Both men move between neighbourhoods in Cairo, in Alexandria, and the villages in between, and witness things and people that push them to the limits of their reality. As they descend a staircase to the Nile and watch men walk on its waters, the men begin to piece together the tragedies of their lives through the miracles and misfortunes they witness.

Kheir's novel delves into a dreamlike world where the line between reality and dream is blurred. Slipping is about real-life tragedies that unfold in dreams, through revolutions and revelations, carried by heavy and brave hearts..

Arab News

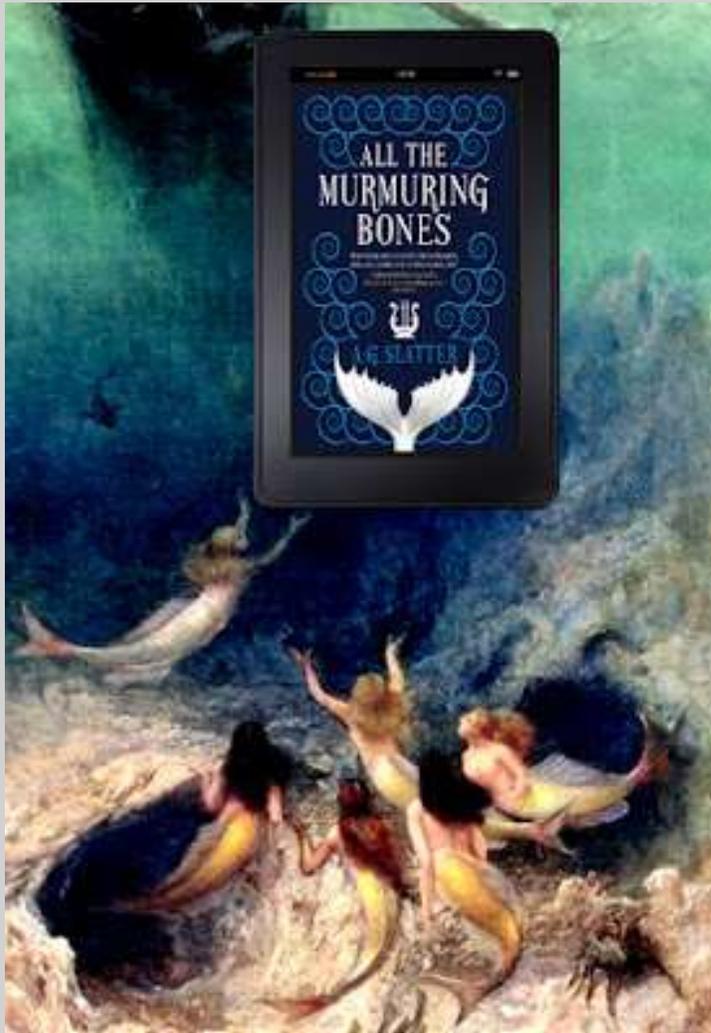


“I’m a science fiction fan, novelist, reviewer and critic. My second novel *The Rift* won the British Science Fiction Award and the *Kitschies Red Tentacle*, and in March 2018 I was named one of the *Guardian’s* 50 Fresh Voices You Should Be Reading Now. My novel *The Dollmaker*, explores issues of difference and the power of creativity and delves deep into dark fairy tales. “

Cath is a photographer who works in a record shop to pay the rent and ekes out her time with her manager Steve. He thinks her photography is detective work, drawing attention to things that would otherwise pass unseen and maybe he's right. Starting work on her new project - photographing murder houses - Cath returns to the island where she grew up. The Isle of Bute is embedded in her identity, including the memory of her childhood friend Shirley Craigie and the devastating familicide of her family by the father, John Craigie. The Craigie house is now occupied by financial analyst Alice Rahman, who has fled London. The strangeness of the situation leads them to reinvestigate the Craigie murder and the curious nature of John Craigie: his hidden obsession with the work of Richard Dadd and the local myths of the fairy folk.

The Good Neighbours is an enquiry into the unknowability of the past and our attempts to make events fit our need to interpret them; the fallibility of recollection; the power of myths in shaping human narratives.

Goodreads

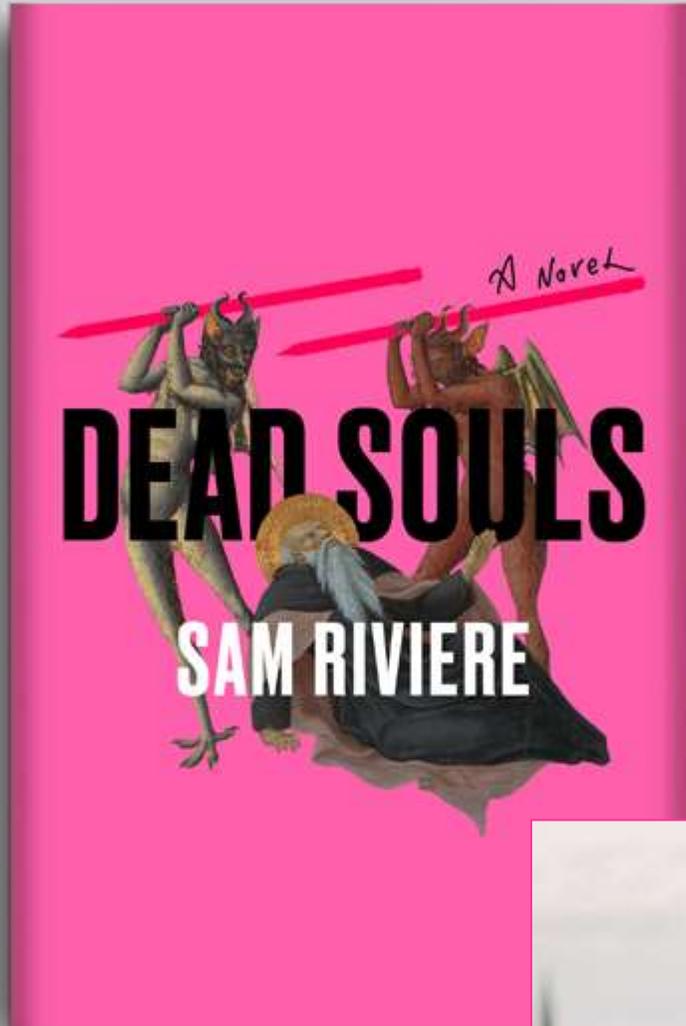


“A mermaid fantasy novel by Angela Slatter, *All the Murmuring Bones* evokes the gothic and spawns dark visions of an ocean underworld. It tells of the secret pact between the O'Malley family and the merfolk: safety for their merchant ships in return for a child of each generation. Danger, magic, sacrifice, evil deeds – an artful depiction of sea-folk as ghoulish sinister forces. This young adult novel comes with more than one mystery to unearth.”

teranga-and-sun.blogspot.com

Angela Slatter has won a World Fantasy Award, a British Fantasy Award, a Ditmar, two Australian Shadows Awards and seven Aurealis Awards. Angela's short stories have appeared in Australian, UK and US Best Of anthologies such as *The Mammoth Book of New Horror*, *The Year's Best Dark Fantasy and Horror*, *The Best Horror of the Year*, *The Year's Best Australian Fantasy and Horror*, and *The Year's Best YA Speculative Fiction*. Her work has been translated into Bulgarian, Chinese, Russian, Italian, Spanish, Japanese, Polish, French and Romanian. She has an MA and a PhD in Creative Writing, with emphasis on fairy tales and mythology. She is a graduate of Clarion South 2009 and the Tin House Summer Writers Workshop 2006, and in 2013 she was awarded one of the inaugural Queensland Writers Fellowships.





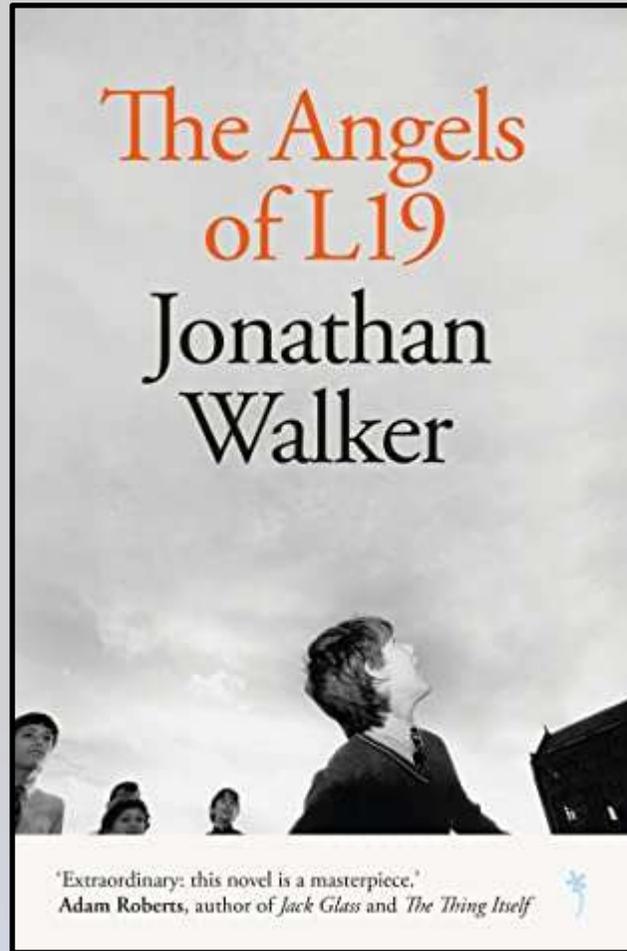
A scandal has shaken the literary world. As the unnamed narrator of *Dead Souls* discovers at a cultural festival in central London, the offender is Solomon Wiese, a poet accused of plagiarism. Later that same evening, at a bar near Waterloo Bridge, our narrator encounters the poet in person, and listens to the story of Wiese's rise and fall, a story that takes the entire night--and the remainder of the novel--to tell.

“it’s a novel about poets, plagiarism, love, technology, feuds and affairs, cancellation and revenge, and how writing really does alter reality.” This “sublime” and “delightfully unhinged” metaphysical mystery disguised as a picaresque romp follows one poet's spectacular fall from grace to ask a vital question: Is everyone a plagiarist?

Catapult Co



Sam Riviere is the author of the poetry books *81 Austerities* for which he won the Forward Prize for Best First Collection, and *Kim Kardashian’s Marriage* as well as numerous limited-edition titles. Born in Norwich, he currently lives in Edinburgh, where he runs the micropublisher *If a Leaf Falls Press*.



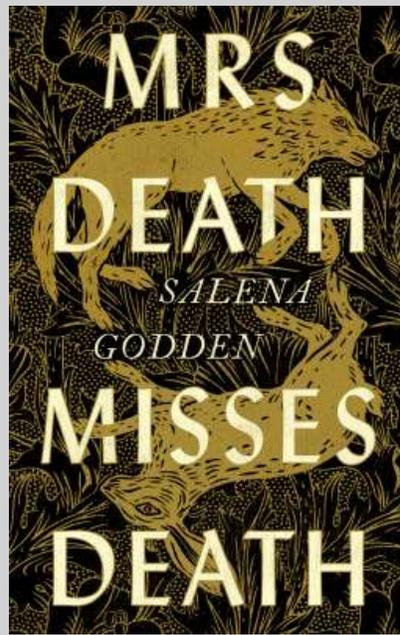
Liverpool, 1984. The teenagers at Garston Chapel are the same as the rest of us: The Smiths, U2, crushes, football, mates. The grimy, low-down politics of the Thatcher era casting deep shadows in this proud and broken city, but the kids have got other things on their minds ... Jesus Christ Our Lord for one. Almost normal kids, then.

But Robert isn't at all normal. Because Robert is visited by angels - if that's what they are. He can't tell a soul about his secret. All anyone can see is his strange behaviour as he desperately seeks to understand what they mean, what they want from him. As Robert's two worlds merge, the real and the visionary intersect with increasing intensity and what is being asked of him becomes terrifyingly clear.

The Angels of L19 is a moving and entirely original story of young lives at the confluence of faith and doubt, angels and demons, life and death. And where redemption is possible, even for those we think might be lost forever.

Goodreads

"I am the author of *The Angels of L19* (Weatherglass Books, 2021), *Five Wounds: An Illuminated Novel* (Allen & Unwin, 2010) and *Pistols! Treason! Murder!: The Rise and Fall of a Master Spy* (Melbourne UP, 2007; Johns Hopkins UP, 2009)."



Salena Godden is an English poet, author, activist, broadcaster, memoirist and essayist. Born in the UK, Salena Godden is of Jamaican-Irish heritage and based in London. Widely anthologised, Salena Godden has published several books. She has also written for BBC TV and radio and has released four studio albums to date.

Introduced to Peter Coyte during a recording session with DJ Delruby, their first collaborative release was an album "Egg Yolk Planet Fried" under the name of Salena Saliva and the PC Collective. They created and produced "Saltpetre Radio", a poetry concept show for CD & radio. The band now performs and records as SaltPeter, with Salena taking over lead vocalist and lyricist duties.

#3

In poet Salena Godden's debut novel, death is personified as a series of black women: one minute she's an old "homeless black beggar woman with knotty natty hair", the next she's a "kind black lady", then she becomes a young, "shimmering" Nina Simone. This allows her to pass through the world incognito, because, as she points out, "there is no human more invisible, more easily talked over, ignored, betrayed and easy to walk past" than a black woman. After an eternity spent shape-shifting among the ranks of the unseen and unheard, she desperately wants to share her stories, and she selects as her amanuensis Wolf Willeford, an east London poet described in gender neutral terms.

Wolf was traumatised as a child after their mother died in a fire with echoes of the recent Grenfell disaster: "My mother died, friends and neighbours died, they were jumping from the windows, trapped in the stairwell, bodies cooked in the lifts. We still don't even know how many lives were lost and how many lives were affected because of that one fire, that one night."

Be warned: this novel is highly allegorical, and more interested in message than plot – it is a kind of latter-day Pilgrim's Progress, which, in spite of the humour, intends to make you squirm.

The Guardian



The near-distant future... Millions of kilometres from Earth...The crew of the Six-Thousand Ship consists of those who were born, and those who were made. Those who will die, and those who will not. When the ship takes on a number of strange objects from the planet New Discovery, the crew is perplexed to find itself becoming deeply attached to them, and human and humanoid employees alike start aching for the same things: warmth and intimacy. Loved ones who have passed. Shopping and child-rearing. Our shared, far-away Earth, which now only persists in memory. Gradually, the crew members come to see their work in a new light, and each employee is compelled to ask themselves whether they can carry on as before – and what it means to be truly living. Structured as a series of witness statements compiled by a workplace commission, Ravn’s crackling prose is chilling, moving, exhilarating, and foreboding.

Wracked by all kinds of longing, *The Employees* probes into what it means to be human, emotionally and ontologically, while simultaneously delivering an overdue critique of a life governed by work and the logic of productivity.

From the book cover

Olga Ravn (b. 1986) is a Danish novelist and poet. Her novel *Celestine* appeared to critical acclaim in 2015. She is also a literary critic and has written for *Politiken* and several other Danish publications. Alongside Johanne Lykke Holm, she runs the feminist performance group and writing school *Hekseskolen*.





Teffi is the pen name of Nadezhda Lokhvitskaya (1872-1952)

Teffi (1872 -1952) was a Russian humourist writer. Teffi was the pseudonym of Nadezhda Alexandrovna Lokhvitskaya, known after her marriage as Nadezhda Alexandrovna Buchinskaya. Together with Arkady Averchenko she was one of the prominent authors of the magazine *Satiricon*. Her year of birth is variously reported in the range 1871–1876, with the most recent findings suggesting May 1872. Teffi's sister Mirra Lokhvitskaya (1869–1905) was a notable Russian poet.

Stories about the occult, folk religions, superstition, and spiritual customs in Russia by one of the most essential 20th-century writers of short fiction and essays. Though best known for her comic and satirical sketches of pre-Revolutionary Russia, Teffi was a writer of great range and human sympathy. At times she had to warn her readers that "those seeking laughter should not turn on me and tear me to pieces if, instead, they find tears - the pearls of my soul." The stories on other-worldly themes in this collection are some of Teffi's finest and most profound, displaying her acute psychological sensitivity beneath her characteristic wit and surface brilliance.

Spanning nearly forty years, from stories Teffi wrote in Moscow to those from her perspective as an emigre in Paris, *Other Worlds* gathers together those stories that share the theme of religious experience, both Russian Orthodox Christianity and Russian folk belief, with its often poetic understanding of spiritual matters.

Thank you

2021 in retrospect:

1. Other Words: Peasants, Pilgrims, Spirits, Saints by Teffi
2. The Employees by Olga Ravn
3. Mrs Death: Misses Death by Salena Godden
4. The Angels of L19 by Jonathan Walker
5. Dead Souls by Sam Rivière
6. All the Murmuring Bones by Angela Slatter
7. The Good Neighbours by Nina Allan
8. Slipping by Mohamed Kheir
9. The Confessions of Copeland Cane by Keenan Norris
10. The Thing Between Us by Gus Moreno
11. Dangerous Visions and New Worlds edited by Andrew Nette and Iain McIntyre
12. This Weightless World by Adam Soto
13. Build Your House Around My Body by Violet Kupersmith

