



Literature in Translation

# Book Club Reads

Only a small percentage of titles written in other countries find their way to English and U.S. bookshelves. While titles are published in more places than they have been in the past, there is still a perception that literature in translation is too 'foreign' or 'challenging' to appeal to American readers.

We hope this list of 20 book club titles, arranged by country, inspires you to share a book of translation with your reading group. Each of the titles has information on where a reading group guide can easily be downloaded.

In our hearts, we know that great books, or stories, can resonate with readers of many nationalities. To further inspire you on your journey, we have included words from booksellers about what makes reading global literature meaningful. We hope you'll spread the word and adopt a book of translation for your book club.

**Share a Culture. Be Worldly!**

**Is there any better feeling than a book that whisks you away to another place?** Or speaks a powerful truth to you from another language or another culture? I've always enjoyed bookselling, but it was getting into contemporary international fiction and literature in translation that made me realize bookselling was my passion and my career.

— Devon Dunn, *Book Culture*, New York, NY

**International literature promotes empathy and encourages curiosity, two important values in these challenging times.**

Diverse literature offers the opportunity to share stories about individuals and communities vastly different from our own. We cannot take for granted that these stories will always be accessible. We need to be proactive about finding and promoting international authors. Their stories make our shared humanity richer.

— Lesley Rains, *City of Asylum Bookstore*, Pittsburgh, PA

**Stories have acted like a salve for my experiences that have felt alienating, and like a haven for parts of myself that I cherish.**

I believe all readers deserve this sort of relationship to literature, regardless of nationality or other identities. Furthermore, literature feels like one of the only tools left to inspire empathy or compassion in individuals, oftentimes by immersing a reader in a foreign world with unfamiliar characters. Diverse and international literature has always been, and remains, a conduit for growth, exploration, understanding and joy.

— Ava Bindas, *Common Good Books*, St. Paul, MN

**Our ability to be informed about other cultures and countries is practically unlimited now, and yet, in our country, more are turning inward and seeking isolation from the rest of the world.**

At the same time, the number of readers in the world is shrinking. We, meaning booksellers, writers, publishers and readers, need to share our ideas, to try to turn this tide towards an expanding readership and, as books are knowledge, the global literacy that would truly make this a better world.

— Lyn Roberts, *Square Books*, Oxford, MS

**During my times in Europe and in Africa, I have found treasures within their bookstores, libraries, cultures, and languages.**

Although I do aspire to read in their native languages, to read a book in translation is to discover unknown worlds, connect with different sorts of people, and to truly expand yourself – emotionally, mentally, professionally, intellectually, and personally.

— Jeffery Jordan, *A Room of One's Own*, Madison, WI





**I believe that when a story is truly important to tell, it bridges the gaps of language differences, cultural differences, and economic differences and that it is of the utmost importance to deliver these stories to as wide a public as possible.** The stories we tell each other are what bind us together as a species, it gives us a common platform with which the free exchange of beliefs and ideas can take place.

— *Elijah Heiden, Changing Hands Bookstore, Tempe, AZ*

**By reading books of all genres, all aspects of storytelling, and all worlds, our minds, hearts, and spirits are stimulated beyond comparison!**

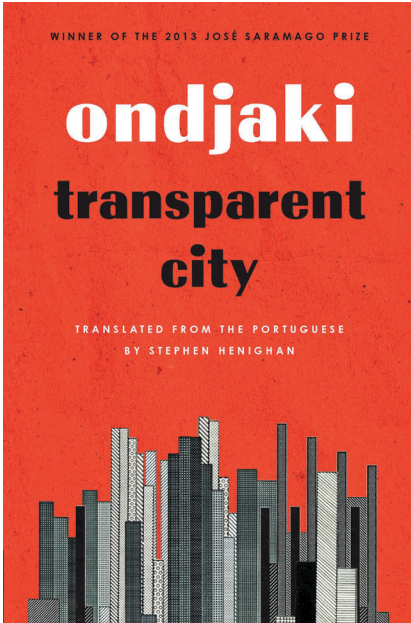
— *Bennard Fajardo, Politics and Prose, Washington, DC*

**We cannot dispel fear without familiarity and discovery.**

— *Elizabeth Neal, Powell's Books, Portland, OR*







## ANGOLA

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### **Transparent City**

*By: Ondjaki*

*Translated by: Stephen Henighan*

A captivating blend of magical realism, scathing political satire, tender comedy, and literary experimentation, *Transparent City* offers a gripping and joyful portrait of urban Africa quite unlike any before yet published in English, and places Ondjaki, indisputably, among the continent's most accomplished writers.

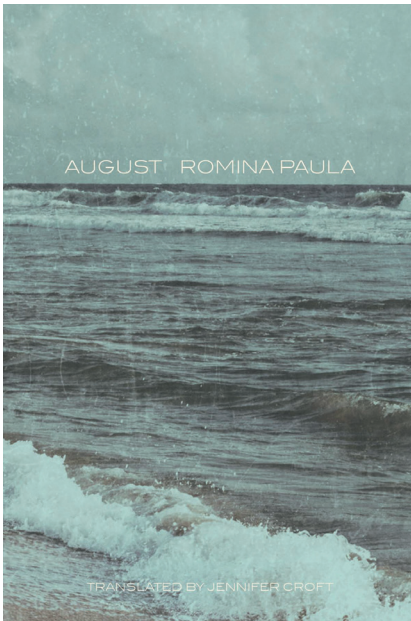
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2rOTLDU>

**Biblioasis**

**97817719614316 | \$15.95**

**Paperback | 400 pages**



## ARGENTINA

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### **August**

*By: Romina Paula*

*Translated by: Jennifer Croft*

Traveling home to rural Patagonia, a young woman grapples with herself as she makes the journey to scatter the ashes of her friend Andrea.

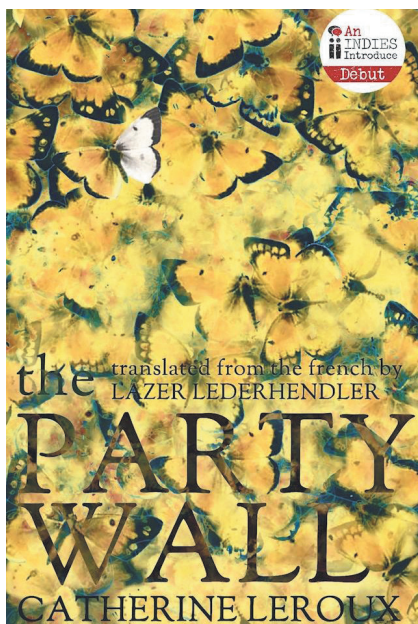
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2KAA7IV>

**Feminist Press**

**9781558614307 | \$16.95**

**Paperback | 224 pages**



## CANADA/QUEBEC

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### **The Party Wall**

*By: Catherine LeRoux*

*Translated by: Lazer Lederhendler*

Siblings separated by time and place are eventually joined together in this stylistically innovative novel.

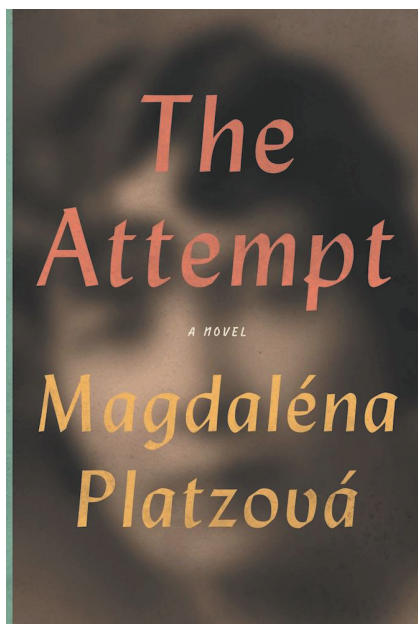
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2lQlaPI>

### **Biblioasis**

**9781771960762 | \$14.95**

**Paperback | 200 pages**



## CZECH REPUBLIC

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### **The Attempt**

*By: Magdaléna Platzová*

*Translated by: Alex Zucker*

When a Czech historian becomes convinced he's the illegitimate great-grandson of an infamous anarchist who attempted an assassination while living in the United States, he travels to New York to investigate. Arriving in Manhattan during the height of the Occupy Wall Street movement, his research takes him further back into the past--from the Pittsburgh home of a nineteenth-century US industrialist to 1920s Europe, where a celebrated anarchist couple is on the run from the law.

Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2wRV8Xu>

### **Bellevue Literary Press**

**9781942658085 | \$16.95**

**Paperback | 224 pages**





## EQUATORIAL GUINEA

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### **La Bastarda**

*By: Trifonia Melibea Obono*

*Translated by: Lawrence Schimel*

This coming-of-age story from Equatorial Guinea chronicles a teenage girl's quest to find out who she is.

Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2Is6K4F>

**Feminist Press**

**9781936932238 | \$15.95**

**Paperback | 120 pages**



## FRANCE

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### **Hell's Gate**

*By: Laurent Gaudé*

*Translated by: Jane Aitken, Emily Boyce*

When his son is killed by gangsters' crossfire on his way to school, Neapolitan taxi driver Matteo is consumed with despair. An encounter with strangers in a cafe raises the possibility of bringing young Pippo back from the dead, if they can locate the entrance to the underworld . . .

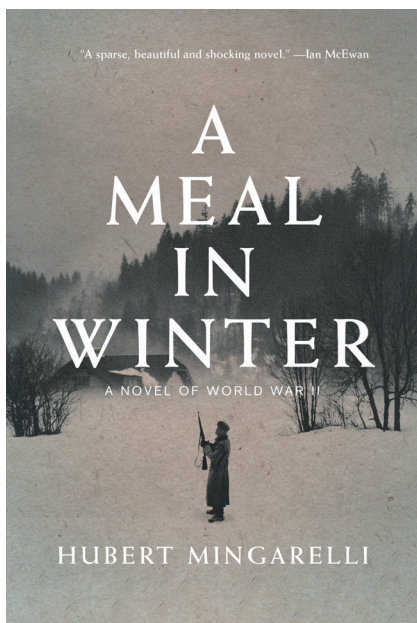
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2L823Pj>

**Gallic Books**

**9781910477328 | \$14.95**

**Paperback | 272 pages**



## FRANCE

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### **Meal in Winter: A Novel of World War II**

*By: Hubert Mingarelli*

*Translated by: Sam Taylor*

Called “masterly and necessary” by the Times Literary Supplement, *A Meal in Winter* recalls the claustrophobia of Roman Polanski’s *The Pianist* and Louis Begley’s *Wartime Lies*. A sleeper hit in the United Kingdom, this is the first novel by the award-winning French novelist Hubert Mingarelli to be translated into English.

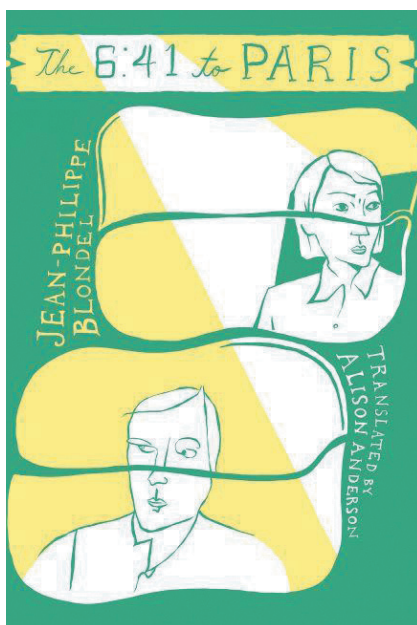
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2rNsyR6>

**The New Press**

**97816209717346 | \$19.95**

**Hardcover | 144 pages**



## FRANCE

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### **The 6:41 to Paris**

*By: Jean-Philippe Blondel*

*Translated by: Alison Anderson*

Brilliant psychological thriller constructed like an intensely intimate theater performance, a high-wire act of emotions on rails.

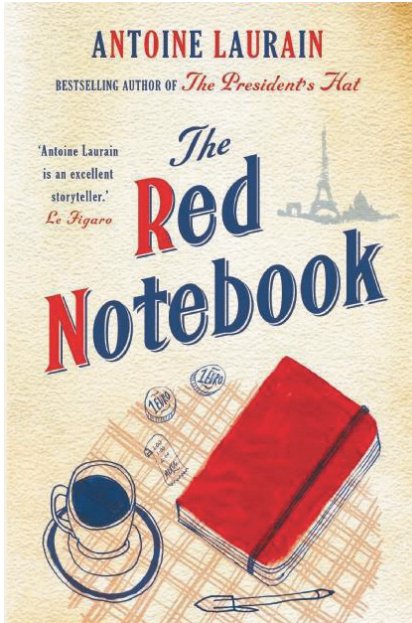
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2KAey5f>

**New Vessel Press**

**9781939931269 | \$14.95**

**Paperback | 146 pages**



## FRANCE

### The Red Notebook

By: *Antonie Laurain*

Translated by: *Jane Aitken, Emily Boyce*

Heroic bookseller Laurent Letellier comes across an abandoned handbag on a Parisian street. There's nothing in the bag to indicate who it belongs to, although there's all sorts of other things in it. Laurent feels a strong impulse to find the owner and tries to puzzle together who she might be from the contents of the bag. Especially a red notebook with her jottings, which really makes him want to meet her. Without even a name to go on, and only a few of her possessions to help him, how is he to find one woman in a city of millions?

Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2lQmjgq>

**Gallic Books**

**9781908313867 | \$14.95**

**Paperback | 240 pages**



## GERMANY

### The Abolition of Species

By: *Dietmar Dath*

Translated by: *Samuel P. Willcocks*

After mankind's near-extinction, a kingdom of animals harnessing biotechnology wages a multi-planetary war against a new form of artificial intelligence.

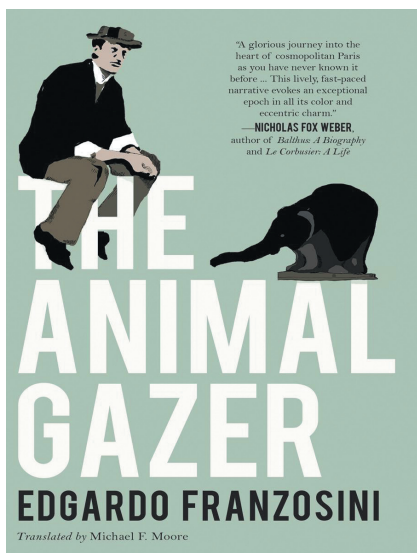
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2wVPbZo>

**Doppelhouse Press**

**9780998777092 | \$18.95**

**Paperback | 384 pages**



## ITALY

### The Animal Gazer

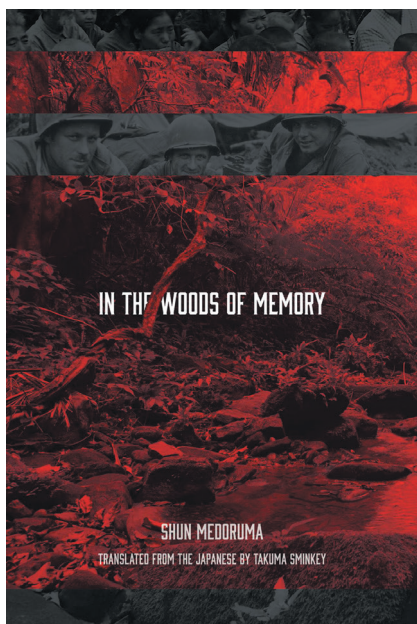
By: Edgardo Franzosini

Translated by: Michael F. Moore

Hypnotic tale of a masterful sculptor increasingly obsessed with zoo animals as he and Europe teetered on brink of WWI.

Reading Group Guide:  
<https://bit.ly/2wO3Q16>

**New Vessel Press**  
**9781939931528 | \$16.95**  
**Paperback | 128 pages**



## JAPAN

### In the Woods of Memory

By: Shun Medoruma

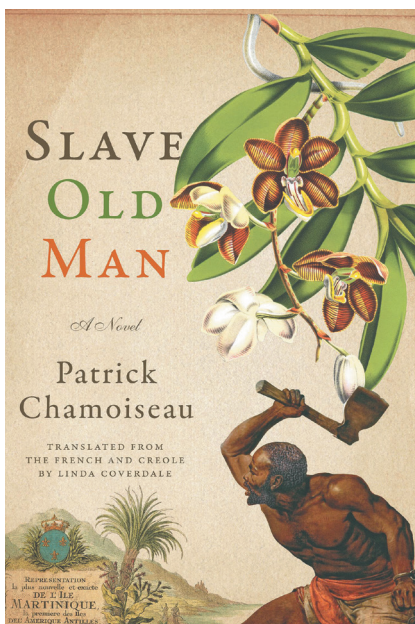
Translated by: Takuma Sminkey

In the Woods of Memory is a powerful, thought-provoking novel that focuses on two incidents during the Battle of Okinawa, 1945: the sexual assault on Sayoko, 17, by four US soldiers and her friend Seiji's attempt at revenge.

Reading Group Guide:  
<https://bit.ly/2lwEYny>

**Stone Bridge Press**  
**9781611720372 | \$16.95**  
**Paperback | 208 pages**





## MARTINIQUE

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### Slave Old Man

*By: Patrick Chamoiseau*

From a Prix Goncourt writer hailed by Milan Kundera as the "heir of Joyce and Kafka," a gripping story of an escaped slave in Martinique and the killer hound that pursues him.

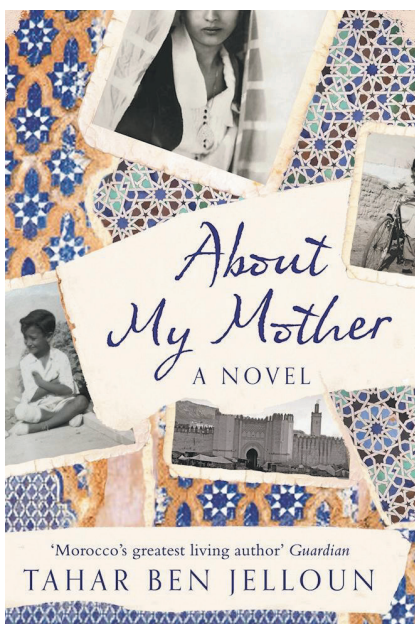
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2lwEYny>

**The New Press**

**9781620972953 | \$19.99**

**Hardcover | 176 pages**



## MOROCCO

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### About My Mother

*By: Tahar Ben Jelloun*

*Translated by: Ros Schwartz, Lulu Norman*

A delicate portrait of a woman's slow and unwinding descent into dementia, *About My Mother* maps out the beautiful, fragile, and complex nature of human experience in prose equally tender and compelling.

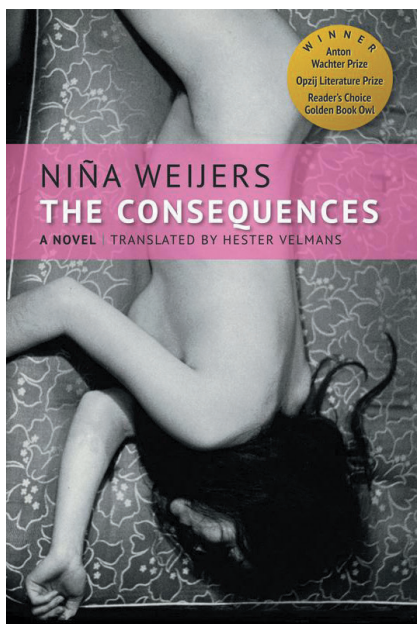
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2wQRLzV>

**Telegram Books**

**9781846592010 | \$16.95**

**Paperback | 288 pages**



## NETHERLANDS

### **The Consequences**

*By: Nina Weijers*

*Translated by: Hester Velmans*

This award-winning, raucous debut novel follows young Minnie Panis, performance artist and existentialist, as she tries to refuse success and fame.

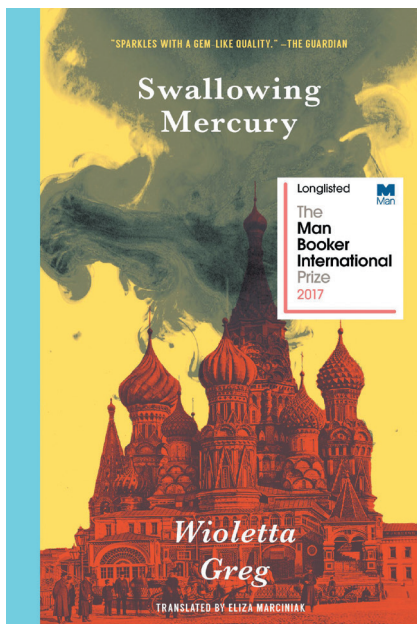
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2L9e9YD>

**Doppelhouse Press**

**9780997818437 | \$14.95**

**Paperback | 272 pages**



## POLAND

### **Swallowing Mercury**

*By: Wioletta Greg*

*Translated by: Eliza Marciniak*

In this celebrated debut from prize-winning poet Wioletta Greg, Wiola looks back on her youth in a close-knit, agricultural community in 1980s Poland. Her memories are precise, intense, distinctive, sensual: a playfulness and whimsy rise up in the gossip of the village women, rumored visits from the Pope, and the locked room in the dressmaker's house, while political unrest and predatory men cast shadows across this bright portrait.

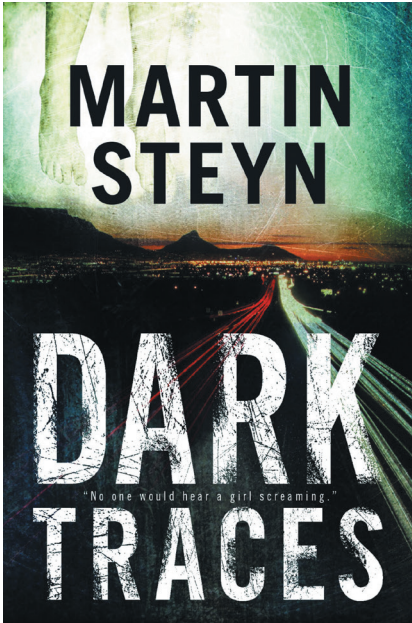
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2lrXq4U>

**Transit Books**

**9781945492044 | \$15.95**

**Paperback | 146 pages**



## SOUTH AFRICA

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### **Dark Traces**

*By: Marin Steyn*

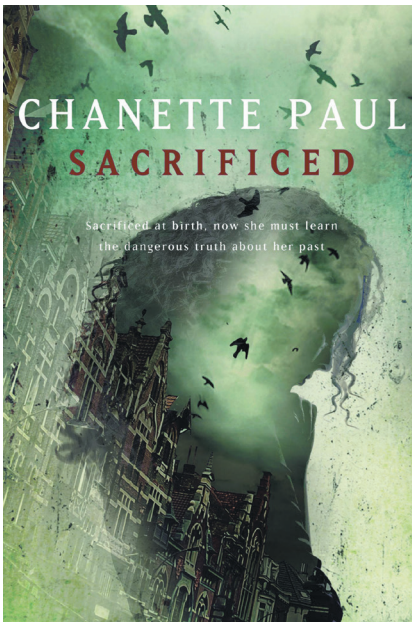
Recently widowed South African Detective Magson seeks serial killer, explores different sides of murder--killing for love, killing for pleasure.

Reading Group Guide:  
<https://bit.ly/2rPEEJP>

**Catalyst Press**

**9781946395016 | \$15.95**

**Paperback | 352 pages**



## SOUTH AFRICA

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### **Sacrificed**

*By: Chanette Paul*

*Translated by: Elsa Silke*

Congo's diamond mines. Belgium's art galleries. South Africa's racist past. Caz's family tree ushers deadly consequences into the present.

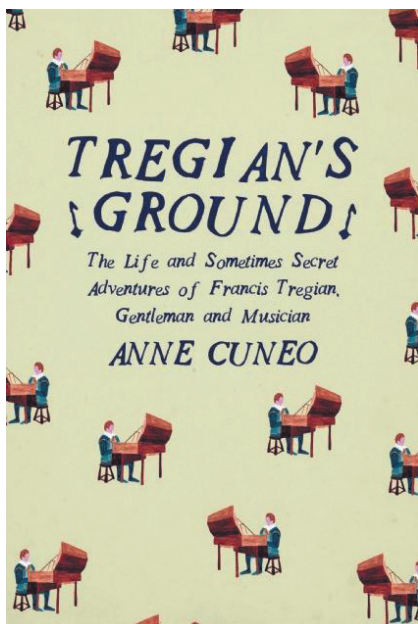
Reading Group Guide:  
<https://bit.ly/2lvMkrw>

**Catalyst Press**

**9781946395009 | \$16.95**

**Paperback | 496 pages**





## SWITZERLAND

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### **Tregian's Ground: The Life and Sometimes Secret Adventures of Francis Tregian, Gentleman and Musician**

*By: Anne Cuneo*

Francis Tregian journeys across Renaissance Europe, where he befriends Shakespeare, swaps scores with William Byrd and Monteverdi, and plays music in the court of Henri IV of France.

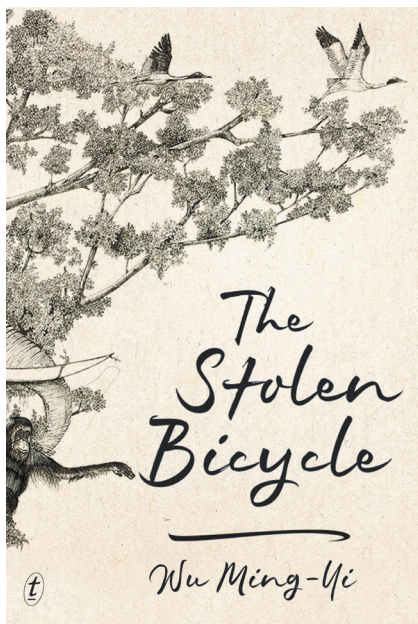
Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2Gqwxix>

### **And Other Stories**

**9781908276544 | \$17.95**

**Paperback | 528 pages**



## TAIWAN

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### **The Stolen Bicycle**

*By: Ming-Yi Wu*

*Translated by: Darryl Sterk*

Longlisted for the 2018 Man Booker International Prize. A writer embarks on an epic quest in search of his missing father's stolen bicycle and soon finds himself ensnared in the strangely intertwined stories of Lin Wang, the oldest elephant who ever lived, the soldiers who fought in the jungles of South-East Asia during World War II, and the secret world of butterfly handicraft makers in Taiwan.

Reading Group Guide:

<https://bit.ly/2lqTXj3>

### **Text Publishing Company**

**9781925498554 | \$15.95**

**Paperback | 416 pages**



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