

# TRANSIT BOOKS

FALL  
WINTER  
2023



# AT NIGHT HE LIFTS WEIGHTS

Kang Young-sook

TRANSLATED FROM THE KOREAN BY

Janet Hong

A disquieting vision of ecological dystopia in a collection by a major Korean writer.

An artist is plagued by desire for her mysterious double as disease spreads through an uncanny suburban landscape. An elderly woman suspects the old man who lifts weights in her neighborhood playground of being responsible for a spate of murders. While elsewhere, a woman who believes she's been exposed to radioactive radiation inherits a warehouse where those fleeing the city can store their possessions.

Beneath the calm surface of the stories collected here, Kang Young-sook offers a disquieting vision of a society grappling with ecological catastrophe and unplaceable forms of loss.



**KANG YOUNG-SOOK** is the author of four novels, including the award-winning *Rina*, and five short story collections. She often writes about the female grotesque, delving into varying genres as urban noir, fantasy, and ecofiction.

**JANET HONG** is a writer and translator based in Vancouver, Canada. She received the 2018 TA First Translation Prize and the 16th LTI Korea Translation Award for her translation of Han Yujoo's *The Impossible Fairy Tale*, which was also a finalist for both the 2018 PEN Translation Prize and the 2018 National Translation Award.



September 12, 2023

Fiction/Literary

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Agent: Barbara J. Zitwer Agency

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from  
**AT NIGHT HE LIFTS  
WEIGHTS**

The shouts of children woke me in the morning. I opened the front door, but the hallway was quiet. Sunlight streamed in through the windows. It was too cold to open the large living-room window, so I opened the small window above the kitchen sink. Children stood in a ring, staring down at something. Black objects both big and small dotted the frozen paddy fields.

“They’re dead!” the children shouted. “The birds are all dead!”

I squeezed my eyes shut. Dead birds littered the white fields. I put on a sweater and slid the big window open. The cold wind rushed in. There was a black feather stuck in the frame. The second I reached through the open window, it blew in and stuck to my chest.

Why had so many birds died here? It was difficult for someone like me to understand. Truly, I didn’t know a thing; I couldn’t even begin to guess the cause. I had to tell my husband about the dead birds, I had so much to tell him, but he didn’t return. All day I watched the news and ate peanuts. District Y wasn’t the only place to experience mass bird deaths. There were reports of mass bird deaths all over the country. The cause was unclear. Experts speculated that trauma, bad weather, or the noise from local fireworks were to blame.

My husband returned close to midnight. He looked noticeably thinner. I clasped his face in my hands, but he didn’t crack a smile. He’d always brought back news from the outside

# A SHINING

Jon Fosse

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY

Damion Searls

A new novel from National Book Award–finalist Jon Fosse.

A man starts driving without knowing where he is going. He alternates between turning right and left, and ultimately finds himself stuck at the end of a forest road. It soon grows dark and begins to snow. But instead of searching for help, he ventures, foolishly, into the dark forest. Inevitably, the man gets lost, and as he grows cold and tired, he encounters a glowing being amid the obscurity. Strange, haunting and dreamlike, *A Shining* is the latest work of fiction by National Book Award–finalist Jon Fosse, “the Beckett of the twenty-first century” (*Le Monde*).

## Praise for *Septology*

“*Septology* is the only novel I have read that has made me believe in the reality of the divine.”—**Merve Emre**, *The New Yorker*

“An extraordinary seven-novel sequence about an old man’s recursive reckoning with the braided realities of God, art, identity, family life and human life itself... The books feel like the culminating project of an already major career.”  
—**Randy Boyagoda**, *The New York Times*

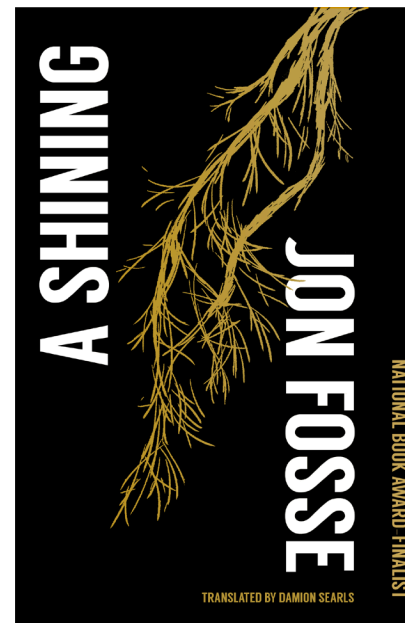
“With *Septology*, Fosse has found a new approach to writing fiction, different from what he has written before and—it is strange to say, as the novel enters its fifth century—different from what has been written before. *Septology* feels new.”—**Wyatt Mason**, *Harper’s Magazine*



© Tom Kolstad/Samlaget

**JON FOSSE** is one of Norway’s most celebrated authors and playwrights. Since his 1983 fiction debut, Fosse has written prose, poetry, essays, short stories, children’s books, and over forty plays, with more than a thousand productions performed and translations into fifty languages.

**DAMION SEARLS** is a translator from German, Norwegian, French, and Dutch and a writer in English. He has translated many classic modern writers, including Proust, Rilke, Nietzsche, Walser, and Ingeborg Bachmann.



October 31, 2023

Fiction/Literary

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Agent: Gina Winje Agency

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from  
**A SHINING**

I had probably never done anything much worse than this, first getting my car stuck and then walking into the forest to look for help, really, what could have made me think I’d be able to find help in the forest, in the dark woods, that thought, no, it was totally wrong even to call it a thought, it was more like an impulse, a sudden idea, something like that, something I just came up with. Nonsense is what it was. Pure foolishness. Stupidity. Pure and utter stupidity.

And I’ve never understood why I do things like this. But probably never in my whole horrible life have I ever done anything like this, and how could I, since I’ve never walked into a forest in late autumn before, and so late in the day, and it’s going to get dark soon, soon I won’t even be able to see where I am, and then, well, then I won’t find anything anywhere, and I won’t be able to find my car again either, no, how stupid can I get, no, this is worse than stupidity, this is, no, I don’t even have a word for it. And now I can really almost not see anything, it’s already gotten so dark here between the trees. And then this snow. And then this cold. Because I’m freezing. Yes, I’m really freezing, I feel colder than I can ever remember feeling before. But if I can just get back to my car then I can start it, turn on the heater, and warm up, get some heat into me as they say. Get some heat into me. Here in the middle of the dark forest. And I’m so tired. I need to rest for a minute. But where can I sit down. There, over there, isn’t that a stone over there. Yes it is, a big round stone in the middle of the forest . . .

# SEPTOLOGY

Jon Fosse

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY

Damion Searls

**NATIONAL BOOK AWARD, FINALIST**

**NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD, FINALIST**

**INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE, FINALIST**

What makes us who we are? And why do we lead one life and not another? Asle, an ageing painter and widower who lives alone on the southwest coast of Norway, is reminiscing about his life. His only friends are his neighbour, Åsleik, a traditional fisherman-farmer, and Beyer, a gallerist who lives in the city. There, in Bjørgvin, lives another Asle, also a painter but lonely and consumed by alcohol. Asle and Asle are doppelgängers—two versions of the same person, two versions of the same life, both grappling with existential questions about death, love, light and shadow, faith and hopelessness. The three volumes of Jon Fosse's *Septology*—*The Other Name*, *I is Another*, and *A New Name*—now collected in paperback, are a transcendent exploration of the human condition, and a radically other reading experience—incantatory, hypnotic, and utterly unique.

## Praise for *Septology*

“An extraordinary seven-novel sequence about an old man's recursive reckoning with the braided realities of God, art, identity, family life and human life itself... The books feel like the culminating project of an already major career.”

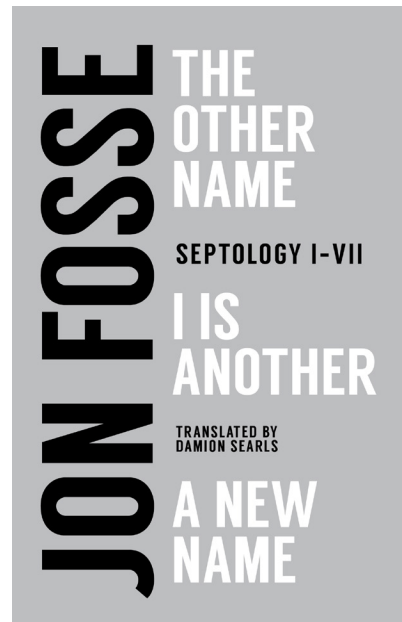
—Randy Boyagoda, *The New York Times*



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**JON FOSSE** is one of Norway's most celebrated authors and playwrights. Since his 1983 fiction debut, Fosse has written prose, poetry, essays, short stories, children's books, and over forty plays, with more than a thousand productions performed and translations into fifty languages.

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October 3, 2023

Fiction/Literary

Paperback

5.5 x 8.5, 672 pages, \$22.95

Rights: North America

Agent: Gina Winje Agency

978-1-945492-75-4 (pb)

## from SEPTOLOGY

And I see myself standing there looking at the two lines crossing in the middle, one brown and one purple, and I see that I've painted the lines slowly, with a lot of thick oil paint, and the paint has run, and where the brown and purple lines cross the colors have blended beautifully and I think that I can't look at this picture anymore, it's been sitting on the easel for a long time now, a couple of weeks maybe, so now I have to either paint over it in white or else put it up in the attic, in the crates where I keep the pictures I don't want to sell, but I've already thought that thought day after day, I think and then I take the stretcher and let go of it again and I realize that I, who have spent my whole life painting, oil paint on canvas, yes, ever since I was a boy, I don't want to paint anymore, ever, all the pleasure I used to take in painting is gone, I think and for a couple of weeks now I haven't painted anything, and I haven't once taken my sketchpad out of the brown leather shoulderbag hanging above the stack of paintings I've set aside, over there between the hall door and the bedroom door, and I think that I want to get rid of this painting and get rid of the easel, the tubes of oil paint, yes, everything, yes, I want to get rid of everything on the table in the main room, everything that has to do with painting in this room that's been both a living room and a painting studio, and that's how it's been since Ales and I moved in here so long ago, so long ago, because it's all just disturbing me now and I need to get rid of it, get it out of here...

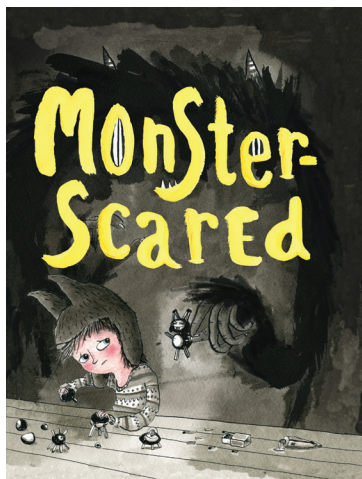


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Founded in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2015, Transit Books publishes a carefully curated list of award-winning literary fiction, narrative nonfiction, essay, and literature for children. Our authors have received or been finalists for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the International Booker Prize, the PEN Translation Prize, and more.

With Transit Children's Editions, we hope to inspire a younger generation to read beyond our borders, to bring joy and wonder, to challenge and excite, with a list that features a diversity of languages, perspectives, and literary approaches of the highest artistic quality.





## MONSTER-SCARED

Betina Birkjær

Illustrated by Zarah Juul

TRANSLATED FROM THE DANISH BY

Katrine Øgaard Jensen

& Orien Longo

**\$18.95 • 978-1-945492-74-7**

**9.5" x 12.75" • 32 pg • HC**

**Ages 3-8**

For anyone who's ever been monster-scared comes a lighthearted book about the dark. About what lives in the attic. And about discovering that monsters are—perhaps—mostly scary in your imagination.

There's a monster living in the attic. Not a loud monster but a quiet one. It's probably making a kid trap. Each night, it grows in the dark. Everyone knows monsters feed on darkness.

This is *Monster-Scared*. With humor and charm, award-winning author Betina Birkjær and illustrator Zarah Juul show us how the things we can't see grow bigger and scarier, how the slightest sound or shadow can send shivers down our back, and how monsters are—perhaps—mostly scary in our imagination.

• **Betina Birkjær is the author of *Coffee, Rabbit, Snowdrop, Lost*, a 2022 Mildred L. Batchelder Honor Book, a finalist for the 2022 Kirkus Prize in Young Readers' Literature, and a USBY Outstanding International Book of 2022.**

SEPTEMBER 2023





## THE TAILOR SHOP AT THE INTERSECTION

Ahn Jaesun

TRANSLATED FROM THE KOREAN BY  
Sora Kim-Russell

**\$18.95 • 978-1-945492-76-1**  
**8" x 9.5" • 48 pg • HC**  
**Ages 4-10**

**A heartwarming story about family, resilience, fashion, and staying true to who you are—told through three generations of tailors in a rapidly changing Seoul.**

When Deokgu opens a brand new tailor shop in town, all of Seoul is skeptical of his modern styles. Who would want to wear such funny-looking suits? But Deokgu remains devoted to his craft, and it's not long before the shop begins to flourish, becoming a beloved fixture in the community.

Written and illustrated by Ahn Jaesun, *The Tailor Shop at the Intersection* follows three generations of tailors weaving themselves and their business into the fabric of their community in a rapidly changing Seoul. Ahn's award-winning illustrations convey with great affection a more complicated story about the pressures that rapid development place on culture, commerce, and local business.

In *The Tailor Shop at the Intersection*, Ahn Jaesun shows how commitment, adaptability, and staying true to yourself help pave the way for success—and how embracing change and honoring tradition can go hand in hand.

**• Bologna Ragazzi Award—Opera Prima, Special Mention**





## HOW DREADFUL!

Claire Lebourg

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY  
Sophie Lewis

**\$18.95 • 978-1-945492-78-5**  
**8" x 9.5" • 32 pg • HC**  
**Ages 3-8**

**What exactly is a piece of art? What is it meant to capture? And how do we find the courage to believe in our work?**

It's the week of her gallery opening and none of Paty's paintings are ready. She asks her friends to pose in her studio, and the outcome is . . . just dreadful. After seeing the way Paty has portrayed them, one after the other, they leave in a huff. Paty wonders whether she should cancel the whole thing. Fortunately, Michou, the gallery owner, forbids it. And Paty is in for a surprise on opening day . . .

What exactly is a piece of art? What is it meant to capture? How do we find the courage to believe in our work? Claire Lebourg's watercolor illustrations convey all the worry and self-doubt that comes with any creative practice and show us that maybe the secret lies in believing in yourself.

FEBRUARY 2024





## LECTURE

Mary Cappello



- *Firecracker Award Finalist*

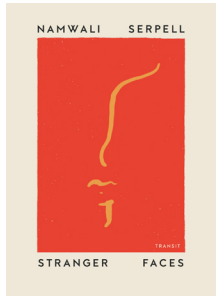
Brimming with energy and erudition, *Lecture* is an attempt to restore the lecture's capacity to wander, question, and excite. Cappello draws on examples from **Virginia Woolf** to **Mary Ruefle**, **Ralph Waldo Emerson** to **James Baldwin**, blending rigorous cultural criticism with personal history to give new life to knowledge's dramatic form.

"[Cappello] at once defends the lecture and calls for holistic and creative improvements to the form."  
—*The Atlantic*

September 2020 | Nonfiction | 136 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-42-6

## STRANGER FACES

Namwali Serpell



- *National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist*

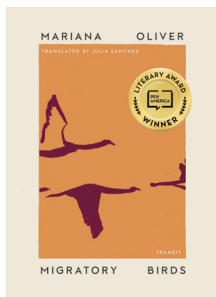
Serpell probes our contemporary mythology of the face in a collection of speculative essays on faces that resist legibility—the disabled face, the racially ambiguous face, the digital face, the face of the dead—imagining a new ethics based on the perverse pleasures we take in the very mutability of faces.

"Wise, warm, witty and dizzyingly wide-ranging."—*The New York Times*

October 2020 | Nonfiction | 192 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-43-3

## MIGRATORY BIRDS

Mariana Oliver



- *PEN Translation Prize Winner*

Mexican essayist Mariana Oliver trains her gaze on migration in its many forms, moving between real cities and other more inaccessible territories: language, memory, pain, desire, and the body. With an abiding curiosity and poetic ease, Oliver presents a brilliant collection of essays that asks us what it means to leave the familiar behind and make the unfamiliar our own.

June 2021 | Nonfiction | 136 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-52-5

## AFTERMATH

Preti Taneja



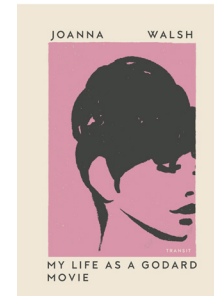
Taneja interrogates the language of terror, trauma and grief, the fictions we believe and the voices we exclude. Contending with the pain of unspeakable loss set against public tragedy, she draws on history, memory, and powerful poetic predecessors to reckon with the systemic nature of atrocity.

"Stunning... [Taneja] turns a critical lens toward the way language shapes violence... Poetic, urgent, and self-reflective."—Publishers Weekly, Starred Review

November 2021 | Nonfiction | 260 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-54-9

## MY LIFE AS A GODARD MOVIE

Joanna Walsh



As Joanna Walsh watches the films of Jean-Luc Godard, she considers beauty and desire in life and art. She is captivated by the Paris of his films and the often porous border between the city presented on screen and the one she inhabited herself.

With cool precision, and in language that shines with aphoristic wit, Walsh has crafted an exquisitely intimate portrait of the way attention to works of art becomes attention to changes in ourselves.

September 2022 | Nonfiction | 104 pgs | NA | 978-1-945492-64-8

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