

# Belletrista

Home | Reviews | [New & Notable](#) | Features | About Us | Contact | Donate |

## New & Notable

Whether you are a seasoned reader of international literature or a reader just venturing out beyond your own literary shores, we know you will find our New and Notable section a book browser's paradise! Reading literature from around the world has a way of opening up one's perspective to create as vast a world within us as there is without. Here are more than **130** new or notable books we hope will bring the world to you. **Remember—depending on what country you are shopping in, these books might be sold under slightly different titles or ISBNs, in different formats or with different covers; or be published in different months. However, the author's name is always likely to be the same!** (a book published in another country may not always be available to your library or local bookstore, but individuals usually can purchase them from the publishers or other online resources)

**In this issue**, because of our delayed publication, we have broadened our selection of books to include those which may have been published anywhere from this past August through February of *next* year. We hope this helps you plan all your winter (or summer, depending on where you live) reading! Enjoy!

[Africa & the Middle East](#) | [European Region](#) | [Asia](#) | [Ireland & the UK](#) | [USA](#) | [Canada](#) | [Latin America & Caribbean](#) | [Australia & The Pacific Islands](#)

## ASIA



### RIVER OF FIRE AND OTHER STORIES

*O Chong-hui*

*Translated from the Korean by Bruce Fulton and Ju-Chan Fulton*

O Chonghui is an immensely accomplished author, having won both the Yi Sang and Tongin awards, Korea's most prestigious prizes for fiction. Translations of her works into Japanese, English, French, and other languages have earned her international acclaim, generating comparisons with Joyce Carol Oates, Alice Munro, and Virginia Woolf.



### THE GODDESS CHRONICLE

*Natsuo Kirino*

*Translated from the Japanese by Rebecca Copeland*

In a place like no other, on an island in the shape of a tear drop, two sisters are born into a family of the oracle. Kamikuu, with creamy skin and almond eyes, is admired far and wide; Namima, small but headstrong, learns to live in her sister's shadow. On her sixth birthday, Kamikuu is presented with a feast of sea-serpent egg soup, sashimi and salted fish, and a string of pure pearls. Kamikuu has been chosen as the

O Chonghui crafts historically-rooted yet timeless tales imagining core human experiences from a female point of view. Together with Pak Wanso (Park Wan-suh), she formed a powerful challenge to the conservative literary establishment in Korea, becoming one of the most astute observers of its society and the place of tradition within it.

These nine stories range from O's first published work in 1968 to one of her last publications in 1994. Her early stories are compact, often chilling accounts of family dysfunction, reflecting the decline of traditional, agrarian economics and the rise of urban, industrial living. Later stories are more expansive, weaving eloquent, occasionally wistful reflections on lost love and tradition together with provocative explorations of sexuality and gender. O makes use of flashbacks, interior monologues, and stream-of-consciousness in her narratives, developing themes of abandonment and loneliness in a carefully cultivated, dispassionate tone. Her nameless narrators stand in for the average individual, struggling to cope with emotional rootlessness and a yearning for permanence in family and society. Arguably the first female Korean fiction writer to follow Virginia Woolf's dictum to do away with the egoless, self-sacrificing "angel in the house," O Chonghui is a crucial figure in the history of modern Korean literature, on par with Kim Sowol, Hwang Sunwon, and Yi T'aejun.

Columbia University Press, hardcover, 9780231160667



**THINNER THAN SKIN**  
*Uzma Aslam Khan*

*Thinner than Skin* is a riveting novel about identity and belonging. It's also a love story: between Nadir, a Pakistani man trying to make his way as a photographer in America, and Farhana, a Pakistani-American woman who wants to return to a country she's never seen. Together Nadir and Farhana journey to Pakistan, accompanied by one of her colleagues—who will join her in studying Pakistan's extraordinary glaciers—and by Nadir's oldest friend. But they are not the only interlopers here: a suspect in a recent bombing has arrived just before them, and the authorities' hunt for him casts a dangerous shadow over their journey. It is here, in this magnificent landscape—where glaciers are born of mating ice—that a chance meeting with a young nomad will change their lives, and the lives of those around them, forever.

next Oracle, while Namima is shocked to discover she must serve the goddess of darkness. So begins an adventure that will take Namima from her first experience of love to the darkness of the underworld. But what happens when she returns to the island for revenge? Natsup Kirino, the queen of Japanese crime fiction, turns her hand to an exquisitely dark tale based on the Japanese myth of Izanami and Izanagi. A fantastical, fabulous tour-de-force, it is a tale as old as the earth about ferocious love and bitter revenge.

Natuso Kirino is a leading figure in the recent boom of female writers of Japanese hard-boiled crime fiction. A prolific writer, she is most famous for her 1998 novel, *Out*, which received the Grand Prix for Crime Fiction, Japan's top mystery award and was a finalist (in translation) for the 2004 Edgar Award. So far, four of her novels have been translated into English: *Out*, *Grotesque*, *Real World* and *What Remains*.

Canongate (Myth Series), hardcover, 9781847673015 (January 2013)



**REVENGE**  
*Yoko Ogawa*

*Translated from the Japanese by Stephen Snyder*

An aspiring writer moves into a new apartment and discovers that her landlady has murdered her husband. Elsewhere, an accomplished surgeon is approached by a cabaret singer, whose beautiful appearance belies the grotesque condition of her heart. And while the surgeon's jealous lover vows to kill him, a violent envy also stirs in the soul of a lonely craftsman. Desire meets with impulse and erupts, attracting the attention of the surgeon's neighbor—who is drawn to a decaying residence that is now home to instruments of human torture. Murderers and mourners, mothers and children, lovers and innocent bystanders—their fates converge in an ominous and darkly beautiful web.

Yoko Ogawa's fiction has appeared in *The New Yorker* and *Harper's Magazine*. Since 1988, she has produced more than twenty works of fiction and nonfiction, which have been published in several countries. Her novel *Hotel Iris* was shortlisted for the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2010.

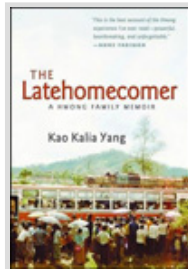
Picador, paperback, 9780312674465; Random House (AUS), ebook, 9781446485002 (February 2013)

**THE BEACH AT GALLE ROAD: STORIES**  
*Joanna Luloff*

*Thinner than Skin* is a haunting tribute to these lands, and to the nomadic life of the indigenous people there, where China encroaches and Pakistanis, Uzbeks, Russians, Chinese, and Afghans all come together to trade. It is a work of piercing beauty and intelligence, and an urgent novel for our times.

Uzma Aslam Khan is the author of three previous novels, including *The Geometry of God*, named one of *Kirkus Reviews* Best Books of 2009. Her fiction and nonfiction have been published around the world. Read an [excerpt](#) of this book in this issue.

Clockroot (US), paperback, 9781566569088 (October); HarperCollins Canada, paperback, 9781443413350 (November)



### **THE LATEHOMECOMER: A HMONG FAMILY MEMOIR**

**Kao Kalia Yang**

In search of a place to call home, thousands of Hmong families made the journey from the war-torn jungles of Laos to the overcrowded refugee camps of Thailand and onward to America. But lacking a written language of their own, the Hmong experience has been primarily recorded by others. Driven to tell her family's story after her grandmother's death, *The Latehomecomer* is Kao Kalia Yang's tribute to the remarkable woman whose spirit held them all together. It is also an eloquent, firsthand account of a people who have worked hard to make their voices heard.

Beginning in the 1970s, as the Hmong were being massacred for their collaboration with the United States during the Vietnam War, Yang recounts the harrowing story of her family's captivity, the daring rescue undertaken by her father and uncles, and their narrow escape into Thailand where Yang was born in the Ban Vinai Refugee Camp. When she was six years old, Yang's family immigrated to America, and she evocatively captures the challenges of adapting to a new place and a new language. Through her words, the dreams, wisdom, and traditions passed down from her grandmother and shared by an entire community have finally found a voice.

Born in a Thai refugee camp in 1980, Kao Kalia Yang immigrated to Minnesota when she was six. Together with her sister, she founded Words Wanted, a company dedicated to helping immigrants with writing, translating, and business services. A graduate of Carleton College and Columbia University, Yang has

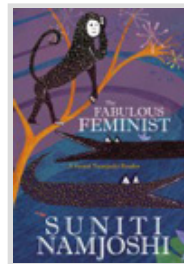


When rumors of civil war between the ruling Sinhalese and the Tamils in the northern sector of Sri Lanka reach those who live in the south, somehow it seems not to be happening in their own country. At least not until Janaki's sister, Lakshmi—now a refugee whose husband has disappeared—comes back to live with her family. And when Sam, an American Peace Corps worker who boards with Janaki's family, falls in love with one of his students, a young girl from the north, he, too, becomes acutely aware of the dangers that exist for anyone who gets drawn into the conflict, however marginally.

Skillfully weaving together the stories of these and other intersecting lives, *The Beach at Galle Road* explores themes of memory and identity amid the consequences of the Sri Lankan civil war. From different points of view, across generations and geographies, it pits the destructive power of war against the resilient power of family, individual will, and the act of storytelling itself.

Joanna Luloff worked as Peace Corps volunteer in Sri Lanka from 1996 to 1998. Her stories have appeared in the *Missouri Review*, *Confrontation*, and *New South*.

Algonquin Books (US), hardcover, 9781565129214 (October)



### **THE FABULOUS FEMINIST**

**Suniti Namjoshi**

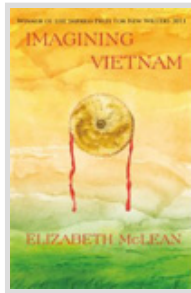
It was on a sabbatical in England in the late 1970s that Suniti Namjoshi discovered feminism—or rather, she discovered that other feminists existed, and many among them shared her thoughts and doubts, her questions and visions. Since then she has been writing—fables, poetry, prose, autobiography, children's stories—about power, about inequality, about oppression, effectively using the power of language and the literary tradition to expose what she finds absurd and unacceptable.

This new collection brings together in one volume a huge range of Namjoshi's writings, starting with her classic collection, *Feminist Fables*, and coming right up to her latest work.

Suniti Namjoshi was born in Mumbai, India. She has worked as an Officer in the Indian Administrative Service and in academic posts in India and Canada. From 1972 to 1988, she taught in the Department of

also recently completed a short film on the Hmong American refugee experience.

Coffee House Press, paperback, 9781566892087



### **IMAGINING VIETNAM**

*Elizabeth McLean*

History explains what happened in the past; *Imagining Vietnam* shows us what it was like to live in past times. Eight memorable stories, spanning ten centuries of Vietnamese history, take us back to the drama and excitement of the past. Elizabeth McLean's characters draw us into vivid personal experiences of times gone by. Dramatic, resonant and beautifully crafted, these stories form a triumphant debut from an author with a superb gift for storytelling.

Impress Books (UK), paperback, 9781907605338 (October)



### **THE BATHING WOMEN**

*Tie Ning*

*Translated from the Chinese*

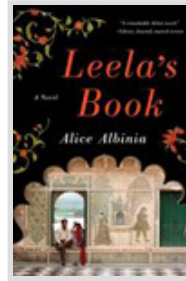
Sisters Tiao and Fan grew up in the shadow of the Cultural Revolution where they witnessed ritual humiliation and suffering. They also witnessed the death of their baby sister in a tragic accident. It was an accident they could have prevented; an accident that will stay with them forever. In the China of the 1990s the sisters lead seemingly successful lives. Tiao is a successful children's publisher but incapable of finding love. Fan has moved to America, desperate to shun her Chinese heritage. Then there is their childhood friend Fei: beautiful, hedonistic and outwardly ambitious. As the women grapple with love, rivalry and past secrets, will they find the freedom and redemption they crave? Spellbinding, unforgettable, and an important chronicle of modern China, *The Bathing Women* is a powerful and beautiful portrait of the strength of female friendship in the face of adversity.

In 2006 Tie Ning was elected president of the Chinese Writers Association, becoming the youngest writer and first woman to be honored in this way. Her works have been translated into numerous languages including German, French and Spanish. *The Bathing Women* is her first work translated into English.

Scribner (US), hardcover, 9781451694840; HarperCollins New Zealand, paperback, 9780007489862 (November)

English at the University of Toronto and now lives and writes in Devon, England.

Spinifex (AUS), paperback, 9781742198217 (November); Zubaan Books, hardcover, 9789381017333 (March 2013)



### **LEELA'S BOOK: A NOVEL**

*Alice Albinia*

In her fiction debut, Alice Albinia weaves a multithreaded epic tale that encompasses divine saga and familial discord and introduces an unforgettable heroine. Leela—alluring, taciturn, haunted—is moving from New York back to Delhi. Worldly and accomplished, she has been in self-imposed exile from India and her family for decades; twenty-two years earlier, her sister was seduced by the egotistical Vyasa, and the fallout from their relationship drove Leela away. Now an eminent Sanskrit scholar, Vyasa is preparing for his son's marriage. But when Leela arrives for the wedding, she disrupts the careful choreography of the weekend, with its myriad attendees and their conflicting desires.

Gleefully presiding over the drama is Ganesh-divine, elephant-headed scribe of the *Mahabharata*, India's great epic. The family may think they have arranged the wedding for their own selfish ends, but according to Ganesh it is he who is directing events—in a bid to save Leela, his beloved heroine, from Vyasa. As the weekend progresses, secret online personas, maternal identities, and poetic authorships are all revealed; boundaries both religious and continental are crossed; and families are ripped apart and brought back together in this vibrant and brilliant celebration of family, love, and storytelling.

W.W. Norton, hardcover, 9780393343939 (January 2013); Vintage (UK), paperback, 9780099548492

