

# TRANSIT BOOKS



FALL  
WINTER  
2020

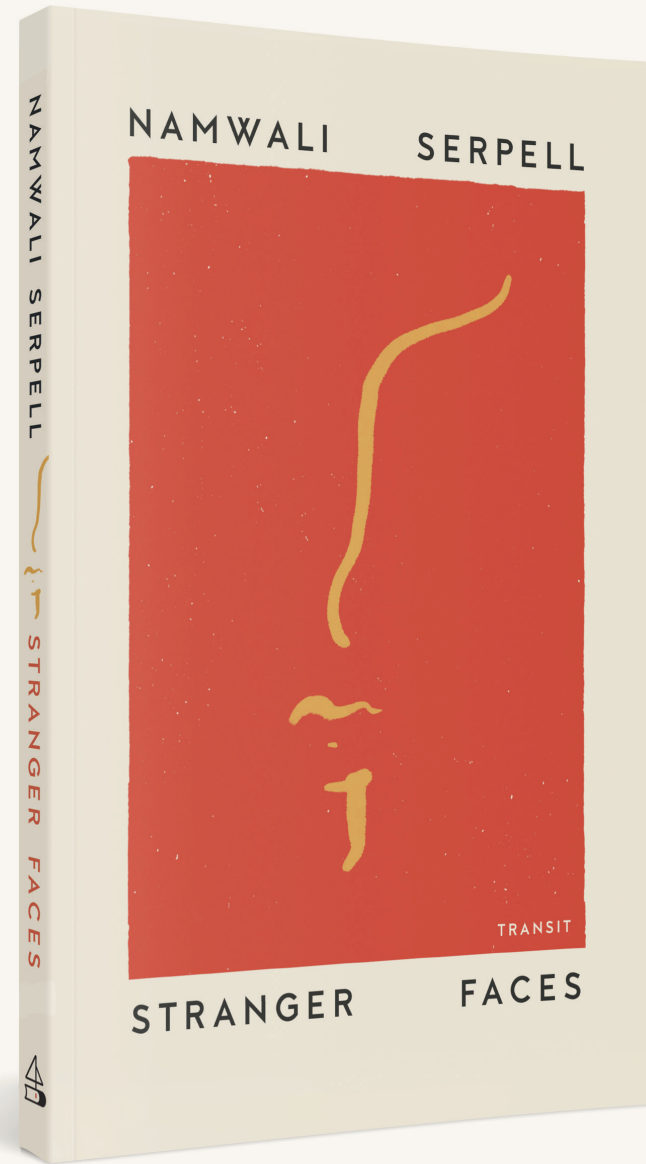
TRANSIT





**LECTURE**

Mary Cappello  
September 8, 2020  
Paperback Original  
9781945492426  
5 x 7 | \$15.95



**STRANGER  
FACES**

Namwali Serpell  
September 29, 2020  
Paperback Original  
9781945492433  
5 x 7 | \$15.95

*boundary-pushing nonfiction in  
slim, handsome editions*

**UNDELIVERED LECTURES**

# LECTURE

Mary Cappello

A song for the forgotten art of the lecture

*In twenty-first century America, there is so much that holds or demands our attention without requiring it. Imagine the lecture as a radical opening.*

Mary Cappello's *Lecture* is a song for the forgotten art of the lecture. Brimming with energy and erudition, it 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 explore the lecture in its many forms—from the aphorism to the note—and give new life to knowledge's dramatic form.

*Praise for Mary Cappello*

"Cappello's fresh inquisitiveness and surprising trains of thought may well remind readers of the ruminative writings of **Adam Phillips** or **Alain de Botton**. An illuminating celebration of enveloping moments of being."

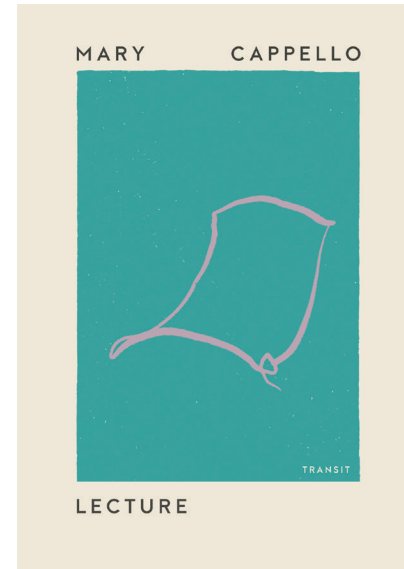
—*Kirkus Review, Starred Review*

"I'm tempted to begin by comparing Mary Cappello to other contemporary literary nonfiction writers who meld memory and lyric impression with intellectual passion...**Rebecca Solnit, Maggie Nelson, Wayne Koestenbaum, bell hooks**—but none of their works really resemble the books that come of Cappello's singular voice and lens."

—*Los Angeles Review of Books*



**MARY CAPPELLO**'s six books of literary nonfiction include a detour on awkwardness; a breast-cancer anti-chronicle; a lyric biography; and the mood fantasia, *Life Breaks In*. A former Guggenheim and Berlin Prize Fellow, she is a professor of English and creative writing at the University of Rhode Island. She lives in Providence, Rhode Island, and Lucerne-in-Maine, Maine.



September 8, 2020

Nonfiction / Literary Criticism

5 x 7, 136 pages, \$15.95

Rights: World

978-1-945492-42-6 (pb)

978-1-945492-46-4 (eb)

from  
**LECTURE**

I want to know if it is possible to re-inhabit what was great and stirring about the lecture when it was a form of art. This requires restoring the lecture's affiliation with the essay, not, in the process, to arrive at a lecture that comes to its point, and does so with dazzling aplomb, but to re-value wandering ways: to distinguish the boredom that lectures characteristically instill from the even-hovering attention they can incite; to court the counterintuition of going on a journey with a wandering guide, then to share what is noticed—the marginal, the ephemeral—precisely because of the way that lecture holds you, as the necessary effect of its hover and drift.

Midway between a sermon and a bedtime story, the lecture is knowledge's dramatic form.

Nonfiction's lost performative: the lecture.

Cousin to the essay, or its precursor: that non-genre that allows for untoward movement, apposition, and assemblage, that is one part conundrum, one part accident, and that fosters a taste for discontinuity.

Now it's possible that no one who has been lectured to would wish to ponder this with me—the lecture as lost and forgotten literary form—because the “to” in the first place would have dispirited him. I mean, nothing about the poor lecturing habits most of us have fallen heir to would make us want to hang around and contemplate what had just happened from the vantage of our seat in the proverbial hall. “To” is just as bad as “at” where the lecture is concerned: in each case, you and I

**UNDELIVERED  
LECTURES**

# STRANGER FACES

Namwali Serpell

Speculative essays on the contemporary mythology of the face

If evolutionary biologists, ethical philosophers, and social media gurus are to be believed, the face is the basis for what we call “humanity.” The face is considered the source of identity, truth, beauty, authenticity, and empathy. It underlies our ideas about what constitutes a human, how we relate emotionally, what is pleasing to the eye, and how we ought to treat each other. But all of this rests on a specific image of the face. We might call it the ideal face.

What about the strange face, the stranger’s face, the face that thwarts recognition? What do we make of the face that rides the line of legibility? In a collection of speculative essays on a few such stranger faces—the disabled face, the racially ambiguous face, the digital face, the face of the dead—Namwali Serpell probes our contemporary mythology of the face. *Stranger Faces* imagines a new ethics based on the perverse pleasures we take in the very mutability of faces.

*Praise for Namwali Serpell*

“Extraordinary, ambitious, evocative . . . *The Old Drift* is an impressive book, ranging skillfully between historical and science fiction, shifting gears between political argument, psychological realism and rich fabulism . . . a dazzling debut, establishing Namwali Serpell as a writer on the world stage.”

—**Salman Rushie**, *The New York Times Book Review*

“This is a dazzling book, as ambitious as any first novel published this decade. It made the skin on the back of my neck prickle.”

—**Dwight Garner**, *The New York Times*



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**NAMWALI SERPELL** was born in Lusaka and lives in San Francisco. Her first novel, *The Old Drift* (Hogarth, 2019), was long listed for the Center for Fiction First Novel Prize, and was named one of the 100 Notable Books of the Year by the *New York Times Book Review*.

She won the 2015 Caine Prize for African Writing, and is a 2020 recipient of the Windham-Campbell Prize. She is associate professor of English at UC Berkeley.



**September 29, 2020**

Nonfiction / Essays

5 x 7, 196 pages, \$15.95

Rights: World

978-1-945492-43-3 (pb)

978-1-945492-47-1 (eb)

from

## STRANGER FACES

Look at me. I know. You can't. Well, I suppose you could search my name online. If we've met before, you could picture me. If we haven't, you could conjure me. Or maybe I'm with you, reading these words to you in some distant future. But let's say you read those familiar words, absent my presence. Look at me. What comes to mind?

For me, this three-word sentence has some assumptions built into it. One is that by me, I mean my face. Why? There is a great deal more to me than my face, which is one of the few parts of me that I can't actually see. When I think or say the words I or me, I rarely picture my own face. So why is the face the seat of identity? What is it about the face—be it from the point of view of biology, neurology, psychology, philosophy, anthropology—that yields that cliché “the eyes are the windows to the soul”? In any case, look at me equals look at my face.

Built into that instruction are also some assumptions about the nature of that face. It's presumably visible, close enough to see, uncovered, recognizable as a face, and impenetrable—we generally don't say look into me or look through me. To look into a face (searchingly) or through it (distractedly) would be either to go too far or not far enough in terms of seeing it. When it comes to dimension, this picture of the corresponds to somewhere roughly between a filmic close-up and a passport photo. It is implicitly a direct view of the front of the head, not a view from the side or of the back. Another strangeness... is

UNDELIVERED  
LECTURES

# POETICS OF WORK

Noémi Lefebvre

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY

Sophie Lewis

As Lyon is consumed by protests, a darkly comic exploration of the push to be employed and the pull to write.

As a state of emergency is declared in Lyon and protesters and police clash in the streets, a poet engages her father and near constant interlocutor in a hilarious and often angry exploration of the push to be employed and the pull to write. She spends her time reading accounts of life under the Third Reich and in Nazi language, investigating her mother's notes on Schiller, smoking, and eating bananas, as her bourgeois father pops in and out of her life, speaking down-to-earth reason as winter gives way to spring. In a new novel by the author of *Blue Self-Portrait*, Noémi Lefebvre presents us with a comic, irreverent reckoning with the hegemony capitalism has on our language through language itself.

"*Blue Self-Portrait* wraps its difficulties in mercurial humor and wordplay, gamely translated from the French by Sophie Lewis. It's inviting enough to read and re-read, and dense enough to provoke different responses each time."—*The Wall Street Journal*

"*Blue Self-Portrait* is inventive and funny—as well as clever—cycling at breakneck speed through the atrocities of the 20th century."—*The Millions*

"*Blue Self-Portrait* may be the antidote to our condition of having too many things on the mind."—**KQED**



Catherine Hélie © Editions Gallimard

**NOÉMI LEFEBVRE** was born in 1964 in Caen, and now lives in Lyon, France. She is the author of four novels, all of which have garnered intense critical success: her debut novel *L'Autoportrait bleu* (2009), *L'état des sentiments à l'âge adulte* (2012), *L'enfance politique* (2015), and *Poétique de l'emploi* (2018).

**SOPHIE LEWIS** is a literary editor and translator from French and Portuguese into English. She has translated Stendhal, Jules Verne, Marcel Aymé, Violette Leduc, Emmanuelle Pagano, and João Gilberto Noll, among others.



February 9, 2021

Fiction/Literary

5.25 x 8, 120 pages, \$15.95

Rights: North America

Agent: Gallimard

978-1-945492-44-0 (pb)

978-1-945492-48-8 (pb)

Other titles by Noémi Lefebvre



from

## MANSOUR'S EYES

The wind was in the north and the planes were circling, the shops were open for the love of everything under the sun, riot police were patrolling four by four and junior officers by threes out in the streets.

There isn't a lot of poetry these days, I said to my father.

I said that like a feeling or perhaps an opinion, not like an idea, not categorically anyway, it was so my father could appreciate the funny side of this new climate within me, and I should admit I was under the influence of books and in the sway of drugs, I'd smoked while reading Klemperer and read Kraus while eating bananas and reread Klemperer while smoking a fair bit more, his diary from start to finish and especially *The Language of the Third Reich*: LTI. With the Klemperer I spent hours fixated on just one moment out of the whole Third Reich, from the start in fact, summed up by a line that I read and reread in order to grasp its magnitude: Some kind of fog has descended which is enveloping everybody.

My father was in his four-wheel drive, seated nobly above the everyday, he was adjusting the rearview to suit his sightline while at the same time conducting a concerto in C-sharp minor, he was also coding the results of sequencing the genome and debating the foundations of value, he was digging the land with peasants in the Ardèche, he was writing his essay on scholastic philosophy, visiting children with cancer, saving people from drowning in the Mediterranean, watching TV in his boxers, giving his universal blood . . .



# I IS ANOTHER: SEPTOLOGY III-V

Jon Fosse

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY

Damion Searls

The second volume of Fosse's International Booker-nominated masterwork.

*I is Another* follows the lives of two men living close to each other on the west coast of Norway. The year is coming to a close and Asle, an aging painter and widower, is reminiscing about his life. He lives alone, his only friends being his neighbor, Åsleik, a bachelor and traditional Norwegian fisherman-farmer, and Beyer, a gallerist who lives in Bjørgvin, a couple hours' drive south of Dylgja, where he lives. There, in Bjørgvin, lives another Asle, also a painter. He and the narrator are doppelgängers—two versions of the same person, two versions of the same life. The second book in Fosse's three-volume *Septology*, *I is Another* calls into question concrete notions around subjectivity and the self. What makes us who we are? And why do we lead one life and not another?

"In *The Other Name's* rhythmic accumulation of words, [there is] something incantatory and self-annihilating—something that feels almost holy."—**Sam Sacks**, *The Wall Street Journal*

"Fosse's portrait of intersecting lives is that rare metaphysical novel that readers will find compulsively readable."—**Publishers Weekly**, *Starred Review*

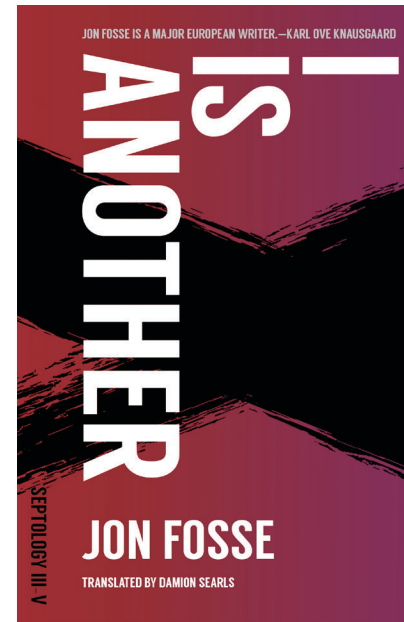
"Fosse's fusing of the commonplace and the existential, together with his dramatic forays into the past, make for a relentlessly consuming work: already *Septology* feels momentous."—**The Guardian**



© 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.



March 2, 2021

Fiction/Literary

5.25 x 8, 320 pages, \$17.95

Rights: North America

Agent: Gina Winje Agency

978-1-945492-45-7 (pb)

978-1-945492-49-5 (eb)

Other titles by Jon Fosse



from  
**I IS ANOTHER**

And I see myself standing and looking at the picture with the two lines, a purple line and a brown line, that cross in the middle and I think that it's cold in the main room, and that it's too early to get up, it doesn't matter what time it is, so why did I get up then? I think, and I turn off the light in the main room and I go back to the little bedroom and I turn off the light there and I lie back down in bed and I tuck the duvet tight around me and Bragi lies down against me and I think well I got a little sleep last night, if not that much, and today is Wednesday and it's still early in the morning, or maybe it's still nighttime? I think, and it was so cold in the main room that I didn't want to get up, I think, and I pet Bragi, rub his back, and then I look into the darkness and I see Asle sitting on the swing outside his front door and he's not swinging, he's just sitting there, and he's thinking he can't figure out anything to do and he swings carefully, slowly back and forth a little and then Mother comes out onto the porch and she's angry and Asle doesn't know why she's so angry

Come here! she says

What's wrong, he says

Get over here, Mother says

Okay, Asle says

and he gets off the swing and goes over to Mother who's standing on the porch and she's looking right at him and he walks up the stairs

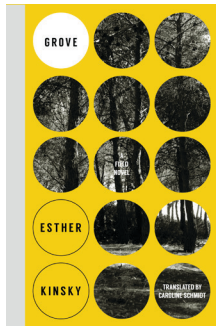
Yes, he says

There you are, she says

and he doesn't understand why Mother's voice is so angry, what's wrong . . .

## GROVE

Esther Kinsky

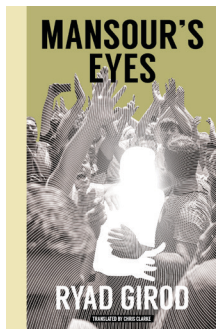


An unnamed narrator, recently bereaved, travels to a small village southeast of Rome. It is winter, and from her temporary residence on a hill between village and cemetery, she embarks on walks and outings, exploring the banal and the sublime with equal dedication and intensity. Seeing, describing, naming the world around her is her way of redefining her place within it. In Kinsky's *Grove*, grief must bear the weight of the world and full of grief the narrator becomes one with the brittle manifestations of the Italian winter.

July 2020 | Fiction | 288 pgs | NA | Suhrkamp | 978-1-945492-38-9

## MANSOUR'S EYES

Ryad Girod



Mansour al-Jazaïri is on his way to his public execution. As his faithful friend Hussein looks on, the crowd calls for his head. *Gassouh! Gassouh!* It is a time when age-old rituals play out amid skyscrapers and are replayed on smartphone screens in the air-conditioned corridors of shopping malls. Set over the course of a single day in the Saudi Arabian capital, *Mansour's Eyes* looks at the post-Arab Spring world as its drive toward modernity threatens to sever its relationship with the ethos of Sufi thought and mysticism.

July 2020 | Fiction | 140 pgs | WE | Editions P.O.L | 978-1-945492-36-5

## THE TREE AND THE VINE

Dola de Jong



When Bea meets Erica at the home of a mutual friend, this chance encounter sets the stage for the story of two women torn between desire and taboo in the years leading up to the Nazi occupation of Amsterdam. First published in 1954, *The Tree and the Vine* was a groundbreaking work in its time for its frank and sensitive depiction of the love between two women, now available in a new translation.

“A sharp and erotic domestic drama... darkened by the looming Nazi occupation.”—*Harper's Magazine*

May 2020 | Fiction | 150 pgs | WE | Cossee | 978-1-945492-34-1

## KINTU

Jennifer Makumbi



• A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 2017

First published in Kenya in 2014 to critical and popular acclaim, *Kintu* is a modern classic, a multilayered narrative that reimagines the history of Uganda through the cursed bloodline of the Kintu clan.

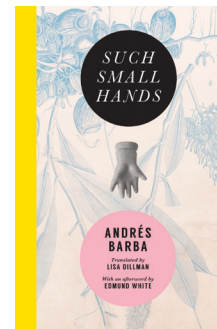
“Magisterial.”—*The New York Review of Books*

“A masterpiece of cultural memory, *Kintu* is elegantly poised on the crossroads of tradition and modernity.”  
—*Publishers Weekly*, *Starred Review*

May 2017 | Fiction | 446 pgs | NA | Antony Harwood | 978-1-945492-01-3

## SUCH SMALL HANDS

Andrés Barba



• A *Guardian* Best Book of 2017

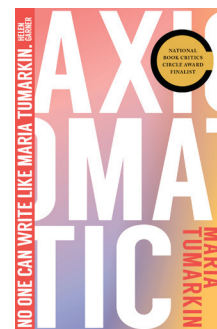
Life changes at the orphanage the day seven-year-old Marina shows up. She is different from the other girls: at once an outcast and object of fascination. As Marina struggles to find her place, she invents a game whose rules are dictated by a haunting violence. Written in hypnotic, lyrical prose, *Such Small Hands* evokes the pain of loss and the hunger for acceptance.

“Barba is intensely alive to the shifting, even Janus-faced nature of strong feeling.”  
—*San Francisco Chronicle*

April 2017 | Fiction | 120 pgs | WE | Cassanovas & Lynch | 978-1-945492-00-6

## AXIOMATIC

Maria Tumarkin



• *National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist*  
• *Winner of the Melbourne Prize for Literature*

Drawing on nine years of research, *Axiomatic* explores the ways we understand the traumas we inherit and the systems that sustain them. With verve, wit, and critical dexterity, Tumarkin asks questions about loss, grief, and how our particular histories inform the people we become in the world.

“These essays will linger in readers’ minds for years after.”—*Publishers Weekly*, *Starred Review*

September 2019 | Nonfiction | 224 pgs | NA | Brow Books | 978-1-945492-29-7

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