

TRANSIT BOOKS

SPRING
SUMMER
2021



THE TOUCH SYSTEM

Alejandra Costamagna

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY

Lisa Dillman

Alienation, belonging, and a woman's 1,000-mile journey across the Andes to visit her dying uncle in Argentina.

Ania receives a request from her father: to visit her dying uncle Agustín in Argentina. In order to fulfill her father's wish, she will undertake a 1,000-mile journey across the Andes from her home in Chile, a journey that will also be an escape from the present and a visit to the borders of memory. Ania's story unfolds alongside encyclopedia entries, etiquette guides, dictations from a typing class, half-faded photos, and letters between continents. An ambitious portrait emerges of alienation and belonging, and of two families and countries separated by a range of mountains. *The Touch System* introduces Alejandra Costamagna as one of the most powerful and subtle writers in contemporary Latin American literature.

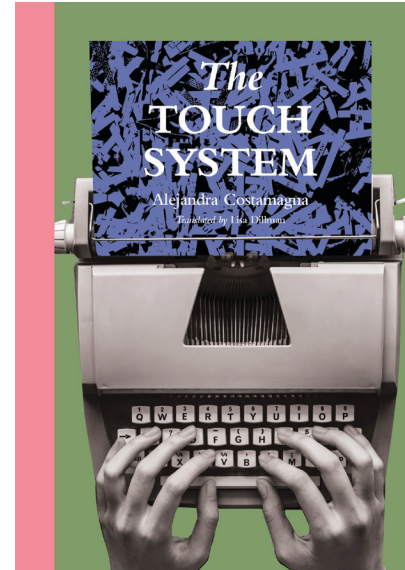
"Alejandra Costamagna's characters embody that semblance of truth that provoke that famous and pleasant confusion; the genuine miracle of literature: what happens when life seems to be inside of the book; when the characters seem so real that for a long and valuable second we become, along with the book that is in our hands, less real."—**Alejandro Zambra**

"*The Touch System* is a novel that condenses the virtues of all Alejandra Costamagna's previous works: a work in between memory and imagination, the question of origins, the recurrence of family and, of course, a stylistic condensation that is distinctive of a great writer."—**El País**



ALEJANDRA COSTAMAGNA was born in Santiago, Chile, in 1970. She is the author of four novels, four collections of short stories, and an anthology of newspaper columns. Her work has been translated into Italian, Korean and French. She lives in Santiago de Chile. This is her first book to appear in English.

LISA DILLMAN is a translator of Portuguese, Spanish, and Catalan. She has translated works by Andrés Barba, Yuri Herrera, and Pilar Quintana, National Book Award-finalist for *The Bitch*.



May 4, 2021

Fiction / Literary

5.25 x 8, 200 pages, \$15.95

Rights: World English

978-1-945492-50-1 (pb)

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"Alejandra Costamagna writes with precise and lethal finesse."

Mariana Enriquez

from

THE TOUCH SYSTEM

At nine o'clock on the dot ring the intercom, announce arrival to the concierge, it's me, my father's daughter (don't mention Javier), take the elevator up, knock three times softly on the door. Out of the corner of her eye, catch the faces they make on seeing them arrive together. Greet Leonora, inquire about her health to be polite. Don't listen to the reply. Seek alliances with the dog off in the corner, a white hair ball on his little blanket-bed. A miniature, practically a mouse, this animal she's walked five times in the past two weeks. A dog that helps her pay the rent. Pet him just to have something to do with her hands, touch his wet nose and let her hands be licked. Relinquish him to some devil-looking grandchild who ruffles the calm and attempts to earn the beast's affection. Retreat to Javier, remote inhabitant from another dimension. Traverse the cloud of smoke and kiss her father before he lights his thousandth cigarette of the day. Hand him his gift, the red silk scarf that he himself requested. Grab a handful of grapes from a bowl on the table, offer them to Javier. Put three grapes in her mouth and hardly even chew them. Think about the grape arbor in Campana, about her and her father cutting down clusters of grapes for their drives back to Chile. Now say she's going to the bathroom, walk into her father's office. Look at the shelves and walls lined with family photos. Search for herself but not appear in any of them. Stepkids, stepfamily: walls inhabited by a foreign genealogy. Offspring with ash-gray eyes and round noses, nothing like her. Not find herself there, not exist...

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Mariana Oliver

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY

Julia Sanches

A sensitive, stunning debut on migration, memory, and language

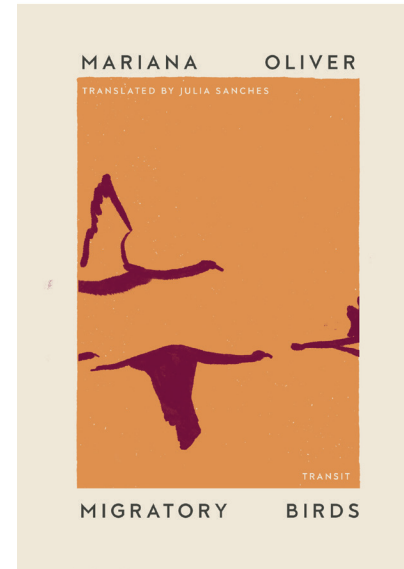
We should adopt words across languages into our everyday vernacular. Pronounce them as confidently as we do those of our childhood, mark them with our accents, vocal modulations, and necessary pauses. Speak them as though they were ours, find a context for them in which their meanings explode, enveloping us. Turn our mother tongues into open spaces that can accommodate any word we choose or happen to come across at a particular time. Recognize others for the words they've chosen. Say "home," "body," or "ghost" in any language and assume every nuance.

In her prize-winning debut, 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 leads us through the underground city of Cappadocia, explores the vicissitudes of a Berlin marked by historical fracture, follows naturalist Bill Lishman alongside his migrating cranes, and recreates the intimacy of the spaces we inhabit. Blending criticism, reportage, and a travel writing all her own, Oliver presents a brilliant collection of essays that asks us what it means to leave the familiar behind and make the unfamiliar our own.



MARIANA OLIVER was born in Mexico City in 1986. Oliver was granted a fellowship for essay writing at the Foundation for Mexican Literature and was awarded the José Vasconcelos National Award for *Migratory Birds*.

JULIA SANCHES is a translator of Portuguese, Spanish, and Catalan. She has translated works by Susana Moreira Marques, Claudia Hernández, Daniel Galera, and Eva Baltasar, among others.



June 8, 2021

Nonfiction / Literary Collections

5 x 7, 136 pages, \$15.95

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from

MIGRATORY BIRDS

She moved to West Berlin at eighteen to work in one of the factories for six months. Eyes accustomed to the colors of Istanbul; dark, thick hair. She wasn't one for headscarves but in Germany the workers wore their hair in nets. She thought of herself as a collector of words and yet knew none so far in German. Turkish was her tongue and her mother's tongue. She arrived in a city rent in half, arranged around a concrete wall and its watchtowers, around control points and the efforts of some to stop others from fleeing. Her hometown, Istanbul, was also two cities, the border between them not stone but a liquid line that has been there forever: the Bosphorus, a strait over which the beginning or the end of Asia and Europe gaze at each other from either side. In its waters, the currents of the Black Sea join those of the Sea of Marmara and together form a single flow. South of the Bosphorus, on the European side, the sea has drawn a path in the land and split the city into two more banks that are seven kilometers long, studded with mosques, palaces, and the Galata Tower. In this area, which is known as the Golden Horn, the water is at once salty and fresh.

About the border of the city where she grew up, the city she knew best, Özdamar wrote:

Madame Athena once told me a story about two madmen in Istanbul: one stood on the European bank and said, "From here Istanbul is mine"; the other stood on the Asian bank and shouted across to the European side, "From here Istanbul is mine."

UNDELIVERED LECTURES

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*

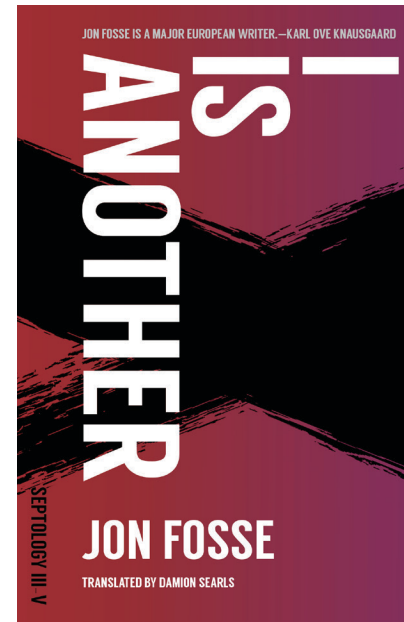
"Fosse's fusing of the commonplace and the existential, together with his dramatic forays into the past, make for a relentlessly consuming work: already *Septology* feels momentous."—**The Guardian**



© 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 . . .

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

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Agent: Gallimard

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

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

Other titles by Noémi Lefebvre



from

POETICS OF WORK

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.

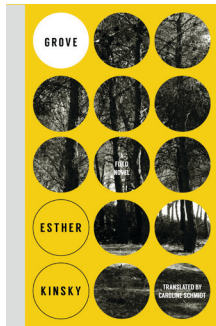
There isn't a lot of poetry these days, I said to my father.

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 . . .

GROVE

Esther Kinsky

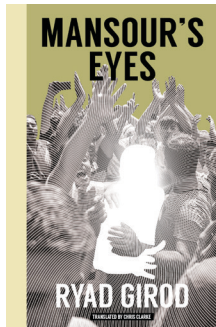


An unnamed narrator, recently bereaved, travels to a small village southeast of Rome. It is winter, and from her temporary residence on a hill between village and cemetery, she embarks on walks and outings, exploring the banal and the sublime with equal dedication and intensity. Seeing, describing, naming 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



• A *Publishers Weekly* Best Book of 2020

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.

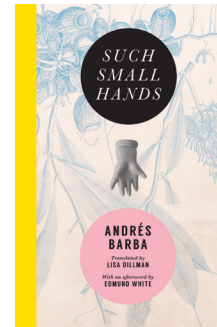
“Magisterial.”—*The New York Review of Books*

“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

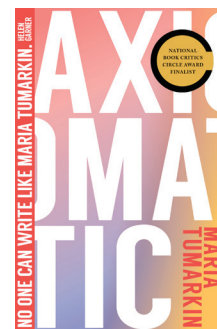
Life changes at the orphanage the day seven-year-old Marina shows up. She is different from the other girls: at once an outcast and object of fascination. As Marina struggles to find her place, she invents a game whose rules are dictated by a haunting violence. Written in hypnotic, lyrical prose, *Such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

LECTURE

Mary Cappello



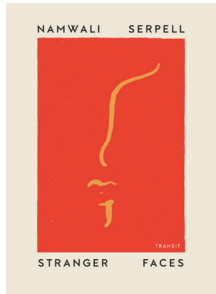
Brimming with energy and erudition, *Lecture* is an attempt to restore the lecture’s capacity to wander, question, and excite. Cappello draws on examples from **Virginia Woolf** to **Mary Ruefle**, **Ralph Waldo Emerson** to **James Baldwin**, blending rigorous cultural criticism with personal history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



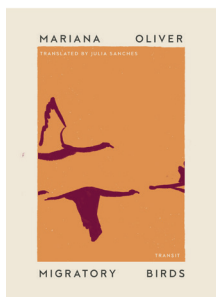
Serpell probes our contemporary mythology of the face in a collection of speculative essays on faces that resist legibility—the disabled face, the racially ambiguous face, the digital face, the face of the dead—imagining a new ethics based on the perverse pleasures we take in the very mutability of faces.

“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



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

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