



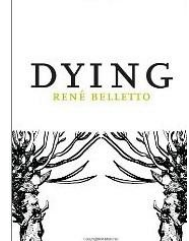
Contemporary French literature in translation

Are you interested in discovering the new talents of the French literary scene today? Are you curious to learn more about the voices that are shaping the trends of tomorrow? The FIAF Library presents the following selection of contemporary French novels which have been translated into English since 2005. The original French texts are available in the FIAF Library.

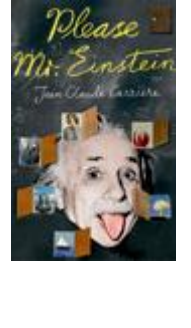
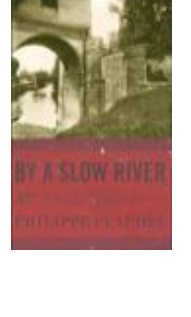
For more information on all French titles translated into English, we invite you to consult the website of **French Book News** (www.frenchbooknews.com). This outstanding site, jointly managed by the French Book Offices of New York and London, presents an overview of recently-published titles translated from the French in all domains (social sciences, literary criticism, arts, science, cinema, etc.), as well as author bibliographies, blogs, and news.

To sample excerpts of translated novels, you are invited to read **Fiction France**. This title, published twice a year by the the French Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs, offers a selection of 20 excerpts from works of fiction written in French with English translations, in the fields of new fiction, crime fiction and a selection of established greats (*available in the FIAF Library.*)






You may also participate in the **European Book Club**, organized by ten New York cultural organizations to promote the readership of European authors in English translation. For more information, visit www.europeanbookclub.org. or contact Yann Carmona at ycarmona@fiarf.org


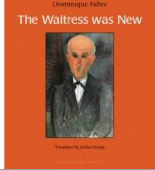
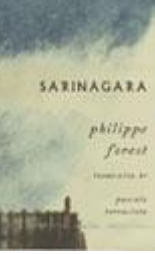



	<p>Alexakis, Vassilis. <u>Foreign Words</u> (Les Mots étrangers) Autumn Hill Books, 2006 <i>Incapable of expressing his emotions, a man works out his immense grief over the death of his father by heading to Africa to learn the Sango language. There, he examines his past, his family history, and the colonial and political ties of his homelands. In this new language, he discovers that he is able to write about his father and his loss, making it easier to let go of his grief.</i></p>
	<p>Audéguay, Stéphane. <u>The Theory of Clouds</u> (La Théorie des nuages) Harcourt Books, 2007 <i>This is a first novel by a film historian, and tells a story of the enigma of intellectual passions, human nature, and the nature of clouds. Virginie, an aimless young librarian, is hired by Hiroshima survivor and Paris couturier Akira Kumo, to categorize his obsessive library of cloud and meteorological-related material. As Kumo's past begins to come into focus, Virginie is drawn into his life.</i> <i>There is little dialogue in this book, and its clinical depiction of sex and its scenes of violence to animals may disturb some readers, but Audeguay's sensual and hypnotic prose depicts the changes of time, melancholy, history and imagination as fleetingly as moving clouds. This novel was the French-language selection for the European Book Club, April 2008</i></p>
	<p>Belletto, René. <u>Dying</u> (Mourir) Dalkey Archive Press, 2010 <i>In this darkly playful novel, René Belletto tells two complimentary stories: In one, a man finds himself paying a ransom demanded by the kidnappers of a woman he's never actually met; in the other, a second man makes plans to fake his own death to escape a woman whose devotion has begun to terrify him. Fast, funny, and sarcastic, partaking of the same vocabularies, imagery, and pitch-black sense of humor, these two variations on a single theme form a novel as much at home in the surreal as in</i></p>

	<p>everyday reality.</p>
	<p>Ben Jelloun, Tahar. <u>The Last Friend</u> (Le Dernier Ami) The New Press, 2006 <i>This is the new novel of the internationally acclaimed author Tahar Ben Jelloun. It is a tale of friendship and betrayal set over 40 years in Tangiers, where two young men struggle to find their identities and sexual fulfillment in the repressed climate of Morocco. It traces their friendship through their university days, political activism, marriages and imprisonment, and tells the story of the coming age of both these two friends and their country of Morocco. Each hero tells his side of this complex story of friendship during equally complex societal times.</i></p>
	<p>Ben Jelloun, Tahar. <u>This Blinding Absence of Light</u> (Cette Aveuglante absence de lumière) Penguin UK, 2005 <i>Based on a true story, Tahar Ben Jelloun traces the experiences of Salim who, in 1971, took part in a failed coup attempt to oust King Hassan II of Morocco. With sixty others Salim was incarcerated in a secret prison complex in the Moroccan desert where he remained for nearly twenty years. In stark and eloquent prose, Ben Jelloun relates the prisoners' experiences as they struggle to survive. Despite its difficult subject matter (torture, starvation, torture, grisly internment, the evil of mankind), the novel celebrates the human spirit and its determination to survive.</i></p>
	<p>Ben Jelloun, Tahar. <u>Leaving Tangier</u> (Partir) Arcadia, 2009 <i>Tangier, in the early 1990s: young Moroccans gather regularly in a seafront café to gaze at the lights on the Spanish coast glimmering in the distance. Facing a future with few prospects in a country they feel has failed them, their disillusionment is matched only by their desire to reach this paradise – so close and yet so far... not least because of the treacherous waters separating the two countries and the frightening stories they hear of the fates of would-be illegal emigrants. These stories are heartbreakingly sad and probably accurately reflect the experiences of thousands of modern immigrants who struggle to build new lives in countries where they are not really welcomed; where their cultural background, physical looks and limited education keep most of them outside the new culture and at a permanent disadvantage economically and socially.</i></p>
	<p>Benacquista, Tonino. <u>Badfellas.</u> (Malavita) Bitter Lemon Press, 2010 <i>Under cover of darkness, an American family moves into a villa in Cholong-sur-Avre in Normandy. Fred Blake, the father, tells everyone he is there to write a history of the Allied landings. His wife Maggie gets involved in a local charity; their teenage children enrol in the lycee. At first glance a family like any other. But Fred's real name is Giovanni Manzoni - an ex-Mafia boss who has grassed and is now part of the FBI's witness-protection program. And his record in other locations would indicate that his cover is not likely to last very long.</i></p>
	<p>Benacquista, Tonino. <u>Someone else.</u> (Quelqu'un d'autre). Bitter Lemon Press, 2005 <i>This fast-paced thriller, written by an immensely popular author in France, won the popular literary prize RTL-Lire. It tells the story of two tennis buddies who decide to embark upon the creation of new identities for themselves. And who has not wanted to become "someone else", the perfect person of all your dreams and hopes? Only this time, things backfire. One man spirals into alcoholism and the other surgically reconstructs his face, all in the name of finding yourself and your ideal happiness. The story is less a mystery than a deftly constructed diptych of existential escapism, love, and cynicism.</i></p>

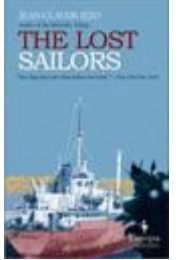
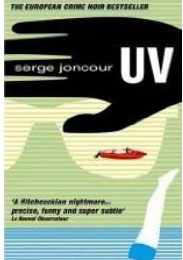
	<p>Bouillier, Grégoire. <u>The Mystery Guest</u> (L'Invité mystère) Farrar, Straus & Giroux, 2006 <i>Out of the blue on a cold fall afternoon, Grégoire Bouillier receives a phone call from the woman who left him, without warning, ten years before. Without any explanation for her past action, she is calling to invite him as the mystery guest to a birthday party for someone he has never met. As he tries to guess the woman's motivations, he revisits his broken heart, and how he got a hold of his own feelings on his road to recovery from the break up. A magical story with a comic ending, the novel is a mix of hapless obsession and sophisticated abstraction. The author has a cult following in France, for his iconoclastic style and treatment of the themes of love and aging, obsession and self-doubt.</i></p>
	<p>Bouraoui, Nina. <u>Tomboy</u> (Garçon manqué) Bison Books, 2007 <i>The semi-autobiographical coming-of-age story of Brio, who grows up in Algeria speaking French with her French mother, and Arabic with her father. She shields herself from the Arab dictates of women's behavior by becoming a tomboy with short hair, a mannish swagger and a boy's nickname. Over the years, she tries to find a balance between the conflict of her dual identities and her urge to become a writer.</i></p>
	<p>Carrière, Jean-Claude. <u>Please Mr. Einstein</u> (Einstein, s'il vous plaît) Harvill Secker, 2006 <i>This novel reads like a café philosophique session led by the great master himself. French screenwriter Carrière sets out to present in simple language the ideas of Einstein. A young, nameless student intent on learning more about Einstein finds her way into a mysterious office that houses Einstein himself, still busy at work on his theories, yet approachable and eager to make his ideas clear with accessible explanations covering the basics of relativity. However, the young woman wants to know more about the repercussions of his theories...notably the creation of nuclear weapons. The simple student asks questions about morality that the brilliant professor cannot answer, and the ensuing scientific and philosophic debates are captivating.</i></p>
	<p>Chessex, Jacques. <u>A Jew Must Die</u> (Un Juif pour l'exemple) Bitter Lemon Press, 2010 <i>Chessex, a prominent Swiss writer, died in 2009 at age 75. He was the first non-French citizen to win the Prix Goncourt, France's most prestigious literary award. This novel is a swift and stunning narrative based on a true incident. In the Swiss town of Payenne (the author's hometown), in 1942, a group of Swiss Nazis kill a successful Jewish cattle trader. It was nothing personal, as it were, but rather an act of intimidation aimed at the Jewish community of Switzerland at large. This spare but heart-piercing novel illustrates the dementedness of as it captures the European mind-set of the 1930s and 1940s.</i></p>
	<p>Claudel, Philippe. <u>By a Slow River</u> (Les Ames grises) Knopf, 2006 <i>This is a compelling historical novel set in WWI is also a "cold case" murder mystery. Three odd civilian deaths occur in a small town near the front: the murder of a child, the suicide of the lovely young schoolteacher, and the death in childbirth of the wife of the narrator, who is a local policeman. These deaths will continue to haunt the local policeman over the next 20 years. Trying to make sense of these mysteries and the senselessness of the raging war, the policeman summons up the past from the notebooks he kept during the investigations, opening up wider and wider views onto the tragedies. This is a tale of galvanizing suspense and an indelible meditation on morality.</i></p>

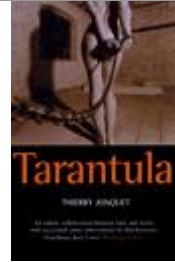

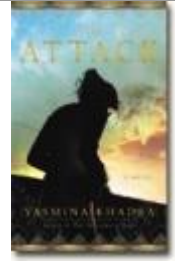
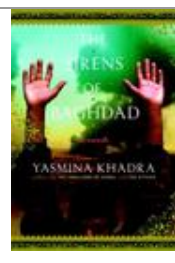
	<p>Claudel, Philippe. <u>Brodeck</u> (Le Rapport de Brodeck) Anchor, 2010 <i>Inhabitants of an unnamed village order Brodeck to produce a report about their murder of a mysterious stranger. Brodeck also writes a personal report about his knowledge of the townspeople's guilt. Although no time or place is specified, the story is clearly inspired by the Holocaust.</i></p>
	<p>Condé, Maryse. <u>The Story of the Cannibal Woman</u>. (Histoire de la femme cannibale) Atria Books, 2007 (Thriller) <i>Roselie Thibaudin was born in Guadeloupe, but has since lived in Paris, London, Japan, New York and now Cape Town. She is a painter who for 20 years has lived with Stephen, a British literature professor, despite the difficulties often encountered as a mixed couple. Rosélie's husband goes out for cigarettes one night and never returns, and she learns that he was murdered, just after midnight, by an unknown assailant. In the months following his death, Rosélie discovers that she did not know her husband very well, and realizes that she does not know herself much better. During the ensuing investigation, she revisits her memories and past obsession, trying to understand who she is and where she fits into the world. The literary thriller allows the acclaimed writer of Caribbean culture to plunge once again into the haunting legacies of Africa in the Caribbean and the modern world.</i></p>
	<p>Curiol, Céline. <u>Voice Over</u> (Voix sans issue) Seven Stories Press, 2008 <i>In order to seduce the man that she loves who is in love and lives with another woman, a young woman does not hesitate to suffer and to refuse any concession to her goal. She works as an announcer at the Gare du Nord in Paris and drifts aimlessly through life, often finding herself in a number of sordid and perilous one-night stand encounters. This is a mesmerizing, brooding and bleak debut album by an author greatly admired by Paul Auster.</i></p>
	<p>Dioume, Fatou. <u>The Belly of the Atlantic</u> (Le Ventre de l'Atlantique) Serpent's Tale, 2008 <i>Salie lives in Paris. Back home on the Senegalese island of Niodior, her football-crazy brother Madické counts on her to get him to France, the promised land where foreign footballers become world famous. The story of Salie and Madické highlights the painful situation of those who emigrate. It is a moving account of one of the great tragedies of our time.</i></p>
	<p>Djebbar, Yasmina. <u>The Tongue's Blood does not run dry</u> (Oran, Langue morte) Seven Stories Press, 2006 <i>Internationally acclaimed novelist, scholar, poet, and filmmaker Assia Djebar presents a brutal yet delicate exposition of how warring worlds enact their battles upon women's lives and bodies. Foreigners both in their home and homeland, the people in these stories search for authenticity in hospitals, in homes, in family, in graves. With renowned and unparalleled skill, Assia Djebar does more than bring to life the unspeakable realities of war and independence, and leads us to discover on these pages that the human heart exists in a world without borders.</i></p>
	<p>Dorner, Françoise. <u>The Woman in the Row Behind</u>. (La Fille du rang derrière) Other Press, LLC, 2006 <i>This is a first novel by an established playwright. It relates the complex machinations of a bored young working-class Parisian wife. Disappointed that her husband no longer seems interested in her, she takes a page from the porn magazines that are sold at the newsstand they run. On their pages she discovers a world of pleasure and sex, and she decides to adopt a new personality under a new disguise of a black wig and raincoat. This new persona helps her deal with her dull husband, her overbearing mother, and her unhappy girlfriends, and helps her discover that she is indeed an attractive woman. In smart, snappy dialogue, the author shows a marriage at risk and the powerful emotions of self-discovery.</i></p>

	<p>Dubois, Jean-Paul. <u>Vie Française</u> (Une vie française) Knopf, 2007 <i>Ordinary man Paul Blick is a native of the southern city of Toulouse. He loses his beloved brother in childhood, flirts with the revolutionary side of the '60s during his student days and finally sells out to marry Anna, the proud daughter of an aggressively capitalist family. Peaceful domesticity eventually gives way to Paul being unfaithful, and to his newfound passion for photography, which in turn brings him fame. Each section of Paul's life is titled with the name of the French president at the time ("Charles De Gaulle"; "François Mitterrand") and not-so-subtle parallels are drawn by Paul between his shifting discontent and his country's restlessness, climaxing in a series of random tragedies. The resulting portrait is not a typical French life but rather an amalgamation of personal and national experiences felt throughout France in the latter half of the twentieth century.</i></p>
	<p>Dufossé, Christophe. <u>School's out.</u> (L'Heure de la sortie) Vintage Books, 2007 <i>A "Lord of the Rings" à la française, this first novel won the « First Novel Prize" in France, and has been translated into 10 languages. When a teacher is found dead, having apparently committed suicide while his students stood by watching as he jumped out the window, his replacement Pierre Hoffman finds himself responsible for a class of subdued, well-behaved and yet strangely menacing pupils. Was it suicide or murder? Hoffman spies on the students' secret meetings and learns mysterious deaths have shadowed the entire class since they started school. In the end, Hoffman accompanies these strange young teens on a class trip with haunting consequences.</i></p>
	<p>Duteurtre, Benoît. <u>The Little Girl and the Cigarette</u> (La Petite fille et la cigarette) Melville House Publishing, 2007 <i>This outrageous comedy depicts two stories. The first is that of a death row inmate becomes a darling of the media-and the tobacco conglomerates-after he demands his right to a final cigarette in a smoke-free prison. The second is of a little girl who accuses a petty municipal bureaucrat of sexual perversion when she catches him sneaking a cigarette. Incredulously, he realizes that in this world where children are not just kings, but tyrants, a cigarette could lead him to the electric chair.</i></p>
	<p>Echenoz, Jean. <u>Ravel</u> (Ravel) The New Press, 2007 <i>A major bestseller in France, this biographical novel presents an original evocation of the last ten years in the life of the musical genius Ravel. The book opens in 1927 as Maurice Ravel—dandy, eccentric, and curmudgeon—voyages across the Atlantic aboard the luxurious ocean liner the France to begin his triumphant grand tour across the United States. Upon his return and at the request of a friend, Ravel offhandedly composed his masterpiece, Boléro. However, lapses begin to intrude in his memory and eventually debilitate him. After harrowing brain surgery, Ravel died in 1937. Echenoz's characteristically sly humor and stylish prose reveal a delightfully quirky portrait of a famous musician coping with the ups and downs of his professional and personal life and a truly touching farewell to a dignified and man at the end of his days.</i></p>
	<p>Enard, Mathias. <u>Zone</u> (Zone) Open Letter, 2010 <i>Homeric in its scope and grandeur, remarkable in its detail, Énard's American debut is a screaming take on history, war, and violence. Francis Servain Mirkovic, the son of a French father and a Croatian mother, is a spy whose job it is to resell stolen secrets to their legitimate owners. His "Zone" is the Mediterranean. Weighing heavily on him is his time with the Croatian army during the "Yugoslav madness," where he witnessed and took part in atrocities. As Francis's train speeds along, his story picks up momentum, becoming nearly frantic by the final stretch.</i></p>

	<p>Ernaux, Anne. <u>Things Seen</u> (La vie extérieure) University of Nebraska, 2010 <i>In this "journal" Ernaux turns her penetrating focus on those points in life where the everyday and the extraordinary intersect, where "things seen" reflect a private life meeting the larger world. From the war crimes tribunal in Bosnia to social issues such as poverty and AIDS; from the state of Iraq to the world's contrasting reactions to Princess Diana's death and the starkly brutal political murders that occurred at the same time; from a tear-gas attack on the subway to minute interactions with a clerk in a store: Ernaux's thought-provoking observations map the world's fleeting and lasting impressions on the shape of inner life.</i></p>
	<p>Fabre, Dominique. <u>The Waitress was New</u> (La Serveuse était nouvelle). Archipelago Books, 2008 <i>The story of the life of Pierre, a French waiter. Divorced and 56, he is a fixture at the Café le Cercle where he works. When the café closes its doors for good, Pierre is faced with the extreme solitude of his existence.</i></p>
	<p>Forest, Philippe. <u>Sarinagara</u> (Sarinagara) Mercury House, 2010 <i>The Japanese word 'Sarinagara' means 'and yet', and the last word of one of the most famous poems of Japanese literature. When he writes it, Kobayashi Issa has just lost his only child. But Issa mysteriously adds this last word to his poem, leaving its meaning in suspense. This enigma is the theme of a narrative that brings together the stories of three Japanese artists across the centuries: Issa, the last great Haiku master of the 18th century, Natsume Soseki, inventor of the Japanese modern novel at the end of the 19th century, and Yamahata Yosuke, who was the first photographer to take pictures of the victims and ruins of Nagasaki in August 1945. Sarinagara is a poignant meditation on the nature of grief, art, and memory.</i></p>
	<p>Gavalda, Anna. <u>French Leave</u> (L'Echappée belle) Europa Editions, 2010 <i>Three thirtyish siblings ditch a stuffy wedding to drop in on their brother, a tour guide in a chateau in the country in this bright-toned bestseller from France. They include a young woman lawyer afraid to take the bar, a young man who can't find love, a newly-divorced mother, and an adoring father. Being together gives them the opportunity to flashback to their youth, and reflect upon their connections as siblings.</i></p>
	<p>Gavalda, Anna. <u>Hunting and Gathering</u> (Ensemble, c'est tout) Chatto & Windus, 2006 <i>This book is a bestselling sensation in France, by an author who has galvanized the literary world with an exquisite genius for irresistible storytelling. The author explores the twists of fate that connect four people in Paris. This group of misfit losers comprises a starving artist, her shy, aristocratic neighbor, his obnoxious but talented roommate, and a neglected grandmother. This curious, damaged quartet may be hopeless different, but together, they may just be able to create a family and face the world.</i></p>
	<p>Giesbert, Franz-Olivier. <u>The American: A memoir</u> (L'Américain) Pantheon Books, 2005 <i>The author Franz-Olivier Giesbert, was born in America but grew up in France, the child of an American father and French mother who met after the dad participated in and survived D-Day. Frederick Giesbert, was twenty years old when he landed on Omaha Beach in Normandy, on June 6, 1944. It was to be the defining moment of his life, "wounded to the quick at having survived." Three years after the invasion, Frederick was living in his hometown of Chicago; married to a French girl he'd met in Normandy. But when the seemingly happy couple returned to Normandy to make a home with their baby, Franz-Olivier, something in the father snapped, and he began habitually to batter both his wife and his child. In this heartbreaking story, the son tries to come to grip with the abuse without ever coming to a forgiving resolution with his father, and tragic loss of a family to the consequences of war, years later.</i></p>

	<p>Grimbert, Philippe. <u>Secret</u> (Un secret) Portobello Books, 2007 <i>Growing up in post-war Paris as the sickly child of glamorous, athletic parents, the narrator invents for himself a make-believe brother, older, stronger and more brilliant than he can ever be. It is only when the boy begins talking to an old family friend that he realizes his imaginary brother had a real predecessor: a half-brother whose death in the concentration camps is part of a buried family secret. Based on the author's own history and already a best-seller in Europe, this is the unforgettable story of a family haunted by the secrets of their past: an illicit love affair, a lost child, and a devastating betrayal dating back to the darkest days of the Second World War.</i></p>
	<p>Guène, Faïza. <u>Kiffe Kiffe tomorrow</u> (Kiffe Kiffe demain) Harvest books, 2006 <i>This first novel won instant fame for its author upon its publication for its creative first-person use of the ebullient language of the youth of the suburbs. It tells the story of Doria, a fifteen-year-old Muslim French girl living in the infamous Paradise projects of suburban Paris, She suffers all the problems of normal teens, with the added complications of an overworked illiterate mother, an absent and alcoholic father, a neighborhood full of crime, drugs and racism, and an inability to understand French boys. She confronts her welfare life of social workers and frustrations with cock-eyed optimism, and believes that things are getting better and better each day, instead of the same old-same old ("kiffe-kiffe"). Wise and hopeful and funny and fresh, Doria is a heroine that will steal your heart.</i></p>
	<p>Guène, Faïza. <u>Some dreams for fools</u> (Du rêve pour les oufs). Mariner/Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2010 <i>A literary sensation in France, this novel by the teenaged Guène describes life in the projects, her battles with her traditional North African family, the difficulties of being an immigrant in the new France and confusion concerning her native identity. She must contend with a disabled father and a brother who runs with a tough crowd. She is caught between two worlds and at home in neither.</i></p>
	<p>Halter, Marek. <u>Canaan Trilogy</u> (Sarah, Zipporah, Lilah) Random House, 2005-2010 <i>A trilogy based on Biblical women, using a biblical story to frame an overtly feminist interpretation of their lives.</i></p>
	<p>Houellebecq, Michel. <u>The Possibility of an Island</u> (La Possibilité d'une île) Knopf, 2006 <i>Fewer authors have spilled more ink worldwide in the past 10 years as this one. Houellebecq has become a phenomenon and the most famous French novelist since Camus. Is it warranted? You be the judge of this tale of present circumstances told from the future, when humanity as we know it has vanished. Houellebecq takes on some of big questions, not only about the dangerous trajectory towards moral bankruptcy on which mankind currently seems to be headed but also about the very nature of what may be wrong with humans as a species and with life, the world and the universe in general. It is a skillful amalgam of prophecy, satire and science fiction. The central character is a representative man of our times, a comedian named Daniel, who has attained some renown as a social critic, skewering mankind's consumerism, religious fundamentalism, sexual profligacy, and other affronts, Daniel is forty before he falls prey to the human condition himself: his beloved's body sags with age, their marriage dissolves, and true happiness seems a luxury reserved for their dog, Fox. After the colossal failure of his second great love affair, he joins a cult of health fanatics determined to produce a misery-free eternal life via clones. Daniel's neohuman clones comment on the race as a whole, and illuminate the basic tenets of our existence-laughter, tears, love, remorse-and their nostalgia for such emotions, all</i></p>

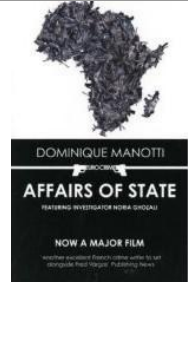
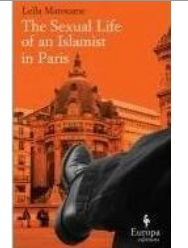



	<p>of which have long since disappeared. The reader is left to wonder if there is an exit from nihilism other than the one offered in the Possibility of an Island.</p>
	<p>Izzo, Jean-Claude. Solea. (Solea: trilogie Fabio Montale, tome 3) Europa Editions, 2007 <i>Solea continues Jean-Claude Izzo's distinctive brand of vibrant crime writing, skillfully evoking a time and place that has captured the hearts and imaginations of readers the world over. The simmering issues of race, politics, organized crime and big business in Marseilles come to a rolling boil in the third and final installment in the remarkable Marseilles Trilogy (Total Chaos, Chourmo.) Ex-cop, loner, and would-be bon vivant, Fabio Montale is back and his heartfelt cry against the criminal forces devastating his beloved Marseilles provides the touching conclusion to a trilogy that epitomizes the aspirations and ideals of the Mediterranean noir movement, where even the bright sun cannot illuminate the cynicism of his world. Fabio Montale is an unforgettable character.</i></p>
	<p>Izzo, Jean-Claude. The Lost Sailors (Les Marins perdus) Europa Editions, 2007 <i>This moody tale from one of France's best-known authors, the story revolves around a ship waylaid by debts in the port of Marseilles. After most of the freighter's crew is sent home, only the Lebanese captain, Abdul Aziz; the Greek first mate, Diamantis; and the pleasure-loving Turkish sailor Nedim remain. All three are dogged by a loss of purpose, memories of the women they have loved and abandoned, and the great myths of the Mediterranean, including the Odyssey. In close quarters charged with physical and emotional tension, each life begins to resemble a chapter in the complex, colorful, and tragic story of the Mediterranean Sea itself, with all its romance, legend, passion, and drama.</i></p>
	<p>Izzo, Jean-Claude. Total Chaos (Total Kheops: trilogie Fabio Montale, tome 1) Europa Editions, 2005 <i>Three boys grow up on the mean streets of Marseilles, where they promise to never break their bonds of friendship. However, people and circumstances change: Ugo and Manu get sucked down into the criminal underworld of Europe's toughest, most violent and vibrant city, and the third boy grows up to become famed police detective Fabio Montale. When Manu is murdered and Ugo returns from abroad to avenge his friend's death, only to be killed himself, it is left to detective Fabio Montale to ensure justice is done, despite a corrupt police force, racism, and the mafia. But the real hero of this novel is Marseilles: explosive, tragic, passionate, melancholic, breathtakingly beautiful... and deadly.</i></p>
	<p>Joncour, Serge. UV (UV) Black Swan, 2005 <i>UV is a literary suspense novel set in the sultry summer heat of a bourgeois French holiday. On a hot and lazy sun-drenched afternoon, a handsome stranger unexpectedly turns up, and lingers by the pool. Boris introduces himself as an old school friend of Philip, the feckless brother who has not yet returned from America for the summer vacation. Eager to meet a friend of their son, Boris is warmly welcomed. Confident and charming, Boris quickly establishes himself as a centerpiece in the daily routine, organizing midnight swims and daredevil boat rides as he gradually exerts a powerful influence over the family. Only one person remains impervious to Boris's charms — Andre-Pierre, Philip's brother-in-law. His knowledge of the real, secret reason that Philip has been in America for 18 months gives Andre-Pierre cause to be hugely suspicious of any 'friend' who imposes so forcefully upon perfect strangers. As Andre-Pierre's suspicions become a conviction that there is a dangerous man in their home, Boris seems to turn a malevolent eye towards him. UV is chillingly quiet with a persistent sense of tension simmering beneath the surface image of a beautiful, elegant holiday among the French elite.</i></p>



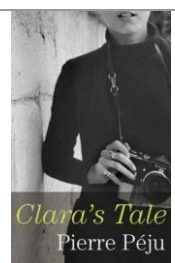
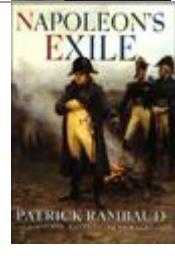

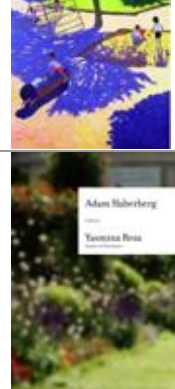
	<p>Jonquet, Thierry. <u>Tarantula</u>. (Mygale) Serpent's tale, 2005.</p> <p><i>Richard Lafargue is an eminent plastic surgeon haunted by dirty secrets. He has an operating theatre in the basement of his chateau and keeps his partner Eve imprisoned in her bedroom. Eve is only allowed out to be paraded at cocktail parties and on the last Sunday of each month, when the couple visit a young woman in a mental asylum. In alternating chapters, Jonquet introduces seemingly unrelated characters - a criminal on the run after murdering a policeman, and an abducted young man who finds himself chained naked in a dark chamber, forced to endure all manner of physical torture at the hands of a mysterious stranger, whom he calls "Mygale", after a type of tropical spider. All of these characters are caught in a deceitful web, doomed to meet their fate.</i></p>
	<p>Khadra, Yasmina. <u>Autumn of the Phantoms</u> (L'Automne des chimères) The Toby Press, 2006</p> <p><i>Khadra's third Inspector Llob mystery searingly portrays present-day Algeria's brutal realities. Llob faces expulsion and death threats after writing—under the pen name Yasmina Khadra—a series of books detailing Algeria's civil war and corruption from the inside out. This narrative doubling, which might seem overly postmodern in another story, deepens the menace hanging over Llob. Following the funeral of one of Llob's oldest friends, killed by the radical Islamists who are waging war on the Algerian government, Llob lives through bombings, terrorist attacks and waves of threats from superiors who could have him killed without the slightest repercussion. There is more than a touch of Camus in its bleak view of a society in which power and cruelty are synonymous.</i></p>
	<p>Khadra, Yasmina. <u>The Attack</u> (L'Attentat) Nan A. Talese, 2006</p> <p><i>Khadra, the pseudonym of Mohammed Moulessehoul, an exiled Algerian writer celebrated for his politically-themed fiction, turns his attention to the Israeli-Palestinian conflict in this moving novel. Dr. Amin Jaafari is a man caught between two worlds; he's a Bedouin Arab surgeon struggling to integrate himself into Israeli society. The balancing act becomes impossible when the terrorist responsible for a suicide bombing that claims 20 lives, including many children, is identified as Jaafari's wife by the Israeli police. Jaafari's disbelief that his secular, loving spouse committed the atrocity is overcome when he receives a letter from her posthumously. In an effort to make sense of her decision, Jaafari plunges into the Palestinian territories to discover the forces that recruited her. From the graphic, beautifully rendered description of the bombing that opens the novel to the searing conclusion, <i>The Attack</i> portrays the reality of terrorism and its incalculable spiritual costs. Intense and humane, devoid of political bias, hatred, and polemics, it probes deep inside the Muslim world and gives readers a profound understanding of what seems impossible to understand.</i></p>
	<p>Khadra, Yasmina. <u>The Sirens of Baghdad</u> (Les Sirènes du Bagdad) Nan A. Talese, 2007</p> <p><i>The third novel in Yasmina Khadra's bestselling trilogy about Islamic fundamentalism brings readers into Baghdad. Forced to leave the University of Baghdad when the Americans invade Iraq, a young man from a small desert village returns home, where he witnesses three events that transform him. First, American soldiers at a checkpoint kill the sweet and beloved "village idiot." Several days later, an American plane bombs a wedding on the outskirts of the village. And then one night, soldiers looking for terrorists come to the young man's own home and humiliate his father in full view of the terrified family. Consumed by the desire to avenge this unspeakable act, the youth leaves the village for the city, and becomes an educated, intelligent and radicalized Arab terrorist. A masterful and chilling look at violence and its effects on ordinary people, <i>The Sirens of Baghdad</i> probes situations few writers dare examine. Powerfully written like Khadra's previous novels, it explores the depths of human nature and shows that, even in the most horrific circumstances, good can prevail, all the while conveying his powerful message of how the occupation of Iraq has brutalized both the Iraqis and the Americans.</i></p>

	<p>Kourouma, Ahmadou. <u>Allah is not obligated.</u> (Allah n'est pas obligé) Heinemann, 2006. <i>The late Ivory Coast author and political activist Kourouma writes with a brutal and obscene frankness reminiscent of Celine in this powerfully tragic novel about a West African child soldier who learns early that "Allah is not obliged to be fair about all the things he does here on earth." Ten-year old Birahima tells the story of his three years as a child soldier. After his mother's death, the boy is entrusted to a roguish shaman and sent to live with an aunt in Liberia. En route, they fall into the clutches of a warlord, and Birahima joins their forces as a boy soldier, witnessing and participating in all manner of savagery. Birahima is given a Kalashnikov, scant rations of food, and plenty of dope. Fighting in a totally chaotic civil war, and alongside many other child soldiers, he sees death, torture, amputation and madness, but somehow manages to retain his own sanity... His story brings us closer to comprehending the rivalries, power structures and customs that fuel Africa's bitter wars.</i></p>
	<p>Kristeva, Julia. <u>Murder in Byzantium.</u> (Meurtre à Byzance) Columbia University Press, 2006 <i>In this intellectually absorbing historical novel Julia Kristeva combines social satire, medieval history, philosophy, psychoanalytic theory, and autobiography within a gruesome murder mystery. Stephanie Delacour, a Paris journalist, goes to cover the hunt for a serial killer in the city of Santa Varvara, "the paradise of various mafia groups and sects," where she begins an affair with a police commissioner with the improbable if suggestive name of Northrop Rilsky. The story deftly moves from eleventh-century Europe, wracked by the turbulence of the First Crusade, to the sun-dappled, cultural wasteland of present-day Santa Varvara, threatened by religious cults, gangs, and a serial killer on the loose.</i></p>
	<p>Le Clézio, J.M.G. <u>Desert</u> (Le Désert) David Godine, 2009 <i>This novel, translated into 23 languages, is now available in English for the first time. It is composed of two alternating narratives, set in counterpoint. The first takes place in the Sahara Desert between 1909 and 1912, and evokes the migration of a young boy and his family, driven from their lands by the French troops. The second narrative relates the contemporary story of Lalla, who counts as ancestors the famous « Blue Men » warriors of the Saharan desert. She lives in a shanty town but cannot forget them or the desert. Her love for Hartani, a mute shepherd, and the power of nature and the legends of the desert harden her soul. Exiled to Marseilles, she works in a brothel, falls pregnant and becomes a famous covergirl, all the while maintaining her passion for the desert.</i> <i>This novel is considered the breakthrough for the novelist who won the 2008 Nobel Prize in Literature.</i></p>
	<p>Lenoir, Frédéric and Violette Cabesos. <u>Angel's Promise</u> (La Promesse de l'ange). Pegasus Books, 2006 <i>The celebrated church and abbey at Mont St. Michel provide the backdrop for this clever tale filled with art history, architecture, ghosts, two romances separated by a thousand years, murder and more. In the present, Johanna, an archeologist, is tormented by dreams of a headless monk associated with the abbey Mont-Saint-Michel. In 1022, Benedictine Brother Roman is undertaking the construction of an immense new church. After brigands beat Roman, the beautiful Moira, a Celtic healer, cares for him and the two fall in love. When Moira refuses to renounce her pagan religion, the church authorities torture her to death. In the meantime, Johanna slowly unravels the mystery of the headless monk while a killer picks off members of her archeological team, and explores secrets that have long lain buried at the sacred site.</i></p>





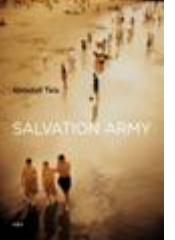
	<p>Lévy, Justine. <u>Nothing serious</u> (Rien de grave) Melville House Publishing, 2005</p> <p><i>One of the edgiest and most innovative novels to come out of Europe in years-not to mention one of the most scandalous and successful (over 20,000 sold)-this thinly veiled roman--clef is about the daughter of one of Europe's most famous writers as she navigates life after the collapse of her marriage. It is a penetrating, sometimes funny, sometimes enraged look at pain in the limelight, where a glamorous, privileged world offers no protection for shattered heroine Louise. Deserted by her famous husband--the man she has loved since they were children--when he falls for a model-turned-rock-star, she is unmoored in a world that suddenly has no meaning for her. And as her life implodes, one misfortune seems to follow another-her grandmother dies, her mother develops cancer, and always the question, why did Adrien leave? Based on some of Europe's most glamorous real-life stars--including Bernard-Henri Levy and Carla Bruni, Mick Jagger's ex--Justine Levy captures the world of the "beautiful people" with lacerating relish, as well as humor and a wonderfully poetic eye for detail. In the end, narrator Louise spares no one-and especially not herself--from her ruthless and ultimately energizing honesty.</i></p>
	<p>Mabanckou, Alain. <u>Broken Glass</u> (Verre Cassé) Soft Skull Press, 2010</p> <p><i>A man known as Broken Glass is a regular in Credit Gone West, a run-down bar in the Congo; the bar's owner, aka the Stubborn Snail, selects him to record the stories of the bar's other sodden, down-and-out habitués. This premise allows Mabanckou to spin a raucous tale of the regulars, the bar, corrupt and inept government, and life in Trois-Cents, an impoverished district of an unnamed city.</i></p>
	<p>Magnan, Pierre. <u>Death in the Truffle Wood</u> (Le Commissaire dans la truffière) St. Martin's Press, 2007</p> <p><i>Pierre Magnan, born in 1922, has long been a hugely-popular and renowned crime writer in France. This novel introduces his celebrated Commissaire Laviolette to U.S. readers, and brings to life the peasant culture of the Provence region. The small, peaceful village of Banon thrives on the truffle, its principal source of income. When a tourist is discovered dead in the freezer of the local hotel, we discover that there is more going on in this village than eating spectacular food. Magnan's style, with winks to Simeon and Agatha Christie, combines surreal landscapes, oddball humor, gentility and quirkiness.</i></p>
	<p>Magnan, Pierre. <u>The Messengers of Death</u> (Lec Courriers de la mort) St. Martin's Press, 2008</p> <p><i>The second Provence mystery after Death in the Truffle Wood opens in the Provence village of Banon. When avaricious spinster Véronique Champourcieux is found with 30 centimeters of rusty 1871 bayonet in her belly shortly after receiving a mysterious letter, Laviolette's old acquaintance Judge Chabrand enlists his help in the murder investigation. As one grisly killing after another ensues, the pair delve into long-repressed secrets of the poor, harsh Provençal countryside. Magnan blends elegant clue laying and deft characterizations that strike to the core of human frailties, all within a detective tale with a theme as old as Cain and Abel, as new as tomorrow's headlines and as eternal as the Greek myths that inspire Magnan's fiction. Best-sellers in France, these delightful, old-fashioned mysteries will appeal to readers who prefer their crime fiction with a strong sense of place and a heavy dose of local atmosphere...and who can resist Provence?</i></p>
	<p>Magnan, Pierre. <u>The Murdered House</u> (La maison assassinée) Thomas Dunne/Minotaur, 2009</p> <p><i>Any architect will tell you that a building is a living organism. In this latest Pierre Magnan mystery, the same thought is developed in the story of the destruction of a family homestead. A veteran of World War I returns home to discover that his entire family was massacred in their home. He vows to cleanse the bloodstains in this eerie tale of murderous vengeance. The violent, yet poetic, writing vividly describes the emotions of this house as it is destroyed.</i></p>


	<p>Makine, Andreï. <u>The Woman who waited</u> (La Femme qui attendait) Sceptre, 2006 <i>A sensuously styled, elegiac tale set in the mid-1970s, Makine's latest opens a window onto a generation of post-WWII Russian widows through one mysterious woman's vigil. In the village of Mirnoe on the northern White Sea coast, a young male journalist researching local customs meets an intriguing woman who has waited 30 years for her fiancé, reported killed, to return from the war. Just 16 when her lover was conscripted, Vera devotes herself selflessly to the care of the town's many war widows: she rows out to tend to the widows' graves on a nearby island and lives alone, ever watchful. Makine's novel is a lyrical rhapsody on the mysteries of womanhood, a meditation on the objectifying nature of the male gaze, love and loss, and a sensuous evocation of love in a cold climate.</i></p>
	<p>Manchette, Jean-Patrick. <u>The Prone Gunman.</u> (La Position du tireur couché) Serpent's tale, 2006 <i>A legend in Europe for the spectacularly tight and innovative thrillers he wrote for Série Noire beginning in 1971, Manchette (1942-1995) retired from the field after this tour de force of violence and the absurd appeared in 1981, apparently feeling he had reached the apex of his art. Martin Terrier plans on quitting his career as a paid assassin and marrying his childhood sweetheart, Anne, but his bosses in the gun-for-hire trade refuse to accept his resignation, and demand that he perform one last contract on a visiting Arab oil-magnate politician without profound collateral bloodshed. Yet, absolutely nothing goes as planned... This taut, fast-paced novel contains all the standard noir elements: mysterious motives, a tough hero, detailed technical descriptions of firearms, irony, sex, deception, and a high corpse-to-page ratio. Its ironic denouement also tempts us to interpret it as a commentary on French politics and on the noir genre itself.</i></p>
	<p>Manotti, Dominique. <u>Lorraine Connection</u> (Lorraine connection) Arcadia, 2008 <i>When a cathode ray tube factory in a bleak Lorraine town owned by the Korean Daewoo group is hit first by a strike and then by a suspicious fire, the battle for the takeover of the plant's beleaguered parent company heats up. The factory is at the center of a strategic battle being played out in Paris, Brussels, and Asia for the takeover of the ailing state-owned electronics giant Thomson. Accusations of foul play fly, and rival contender Alcatel calls in its intrepid head of security Charles Montoya to investigate. He soon uncovers explosive revelations and a trail of murders, dirty tricks, blackmail, and corporate malfeasance.</i></p>
	<p>Manotti, Dominique. <u>Dead Horsemeat</u> (A nos chevaux!) Arcadia, 2008 <i>This novel by one of France's most incisive writers today relates the underworld of the turf, filled with political intrigue and mystery. A group of school friends from the heyday of 1968 France take center stage in this racy account of horse racing, public corruption, and criminal intent. Agathe Renourd and her protégé, Nicolas Berger, are in charge of the communications network of a major European insurance consortium. Christian Deluc has become a council member at the Elysée Palace, and Amelie raises thoroughbreds. Now, in 1989, their paths cross in an unexpected fashion as events begin to spiral out of control. Racehorses die under mysterious circumstances; unimaginable quantities of cocaine appear at Parisian parties; and the dashing Nicolas Berger meets a violent end when a bomb explodes in his car.</i></p>

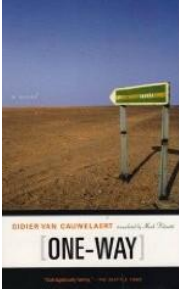
	<p>Manotti, Dominique. <u>Affairs of State</u> (Nos fantastiques années fric) Arcadia, 2010 <i>The young police inspector Noria Ghozali takes her first case as a police inspector of the 19th arrondissement of Paris. And what a case it turns out to be. A call-girl, whose black book lists her elite international clients, is found murdered in an underground garage; a plane bound for Iran laden with illegal arms disappears from the skies over Turkey; and the head of a controversial national security unit—who happens to be the president’s closest advisor—is found to be illegally manipulating the system. Noria Ghozali believes that these seemingly unrelated events tell a deeper story. As she reveals the sinister connections, she confronts the confluence of money and corruption in the Elysée Palace and combats the deeply embedded racism that repeatedly stalls her.</i></p>
	<p>Marouane, Leïla. <u>The Sexual Life of an Islamist in Paris</u> (La vie sexuelle d’un islamiste à Paris) Europa Editions, 2010 <i>At the center of this novel is Mohamed Ben Mukhtar, a pious, 40-year-old virgin who lives outside of Paris with his nagging mother. One day Mokhtar decides he’s had enough: he shaves his beard, adopts a French name and rents his own apartment, and decides to bed scores of women.</i></p>
	<p>Mérot, Pierre. <u>Mammals</u> (Mammifères) Black Cat, 2006 <i>One of the most internationally noteworthy titles from Europe in recent years, Mammals is a witty anatomization of modern life. Caustic, comic, and unflinchingly honest, Mammals is a cruel but beautiful tale of love, solitude, alcoholism, family, and unemployment. This fictional memoir of a glorious loser recounts the life of the Uncle, an overeducated, underemployed 40-something and very unhappy Parisian bachelor whose only true loves were a Polish girl and a divorcee. He is the black sheep of his model family and a sarcastic drunk. He works and fails in several fields until he winds up as a teacher in a high school, surrounded by neurotic women. Therapy fails; he can’t get along with his family and attempts to write a bestiary of his parents whom he sees as nothing more than mammals.</i></p>
	<p>Nothomb, Amélie. <u>Tokyo Fiancée</u> (Ni d’Eve ni d’Adam) Europa Editions, 2008 <i>A love story for our times, but with a romantic feel of the Prince Charming lore of the past. Amélie is a young language teacher living in Tokyo. When she succumbs to the attentions of her one and only student—the shy, wealthy, and oh-so-Japanese Rinri—the lovers-to-be find themselves swept along by an affair that is as unusual as it is tender. This is a new kind of love story that pits a woman’s desire for companionship against her strong sense of individual identity. This splendid novel, highly autobiographic, offers readers a quietly revolutionary vision of romantic love.</i></p>
	<p>Olmi, Véronique. <u>Beside the Sea.</u> (Bord de mer) Peirienne Press, 2010 <i>A single mother takes her two sons on a trip to the seaside. They stay in a hotel, drink hot chocolate and go to the funfair. She wants to protect them from a cold and uncomprehending world. She knows that it will be the last trip for her boys. This is a haunting and thought-provoking story about how a mother’s love for her children can be more dangerous than the dark world she is seeking to keep at bay.</i></p>

	<p>Oster, Christian. <u>In the Train</u> (Dans le train) Object Press, 2010 <i>In the Train is a love story that takes off from the moment the train leaves the station. Frank meets Anne on the platform in Paris. She is struggling with a heavy bag and he immediately wants to help. From that first moment, his thoughts and anxieties unravel in a sharply focused, engaging and introspective narrative.</i></p>
	<p>Parot, Jean-François. <u>The Chatelet Apprentice</u>. (L'Enigme des Blancs-Manteaux) Gallic Books, 2007 <i>This is the first novel by an author who has been compared to Simenon. A diplomat and historian from the Loire region, he has published a total of 6 Nicolas Le Floch mysteries, all which have met with success. As his name indicates, Le Floch is a Breton. A young police recruit, he is called to investigate the disappearance of a police officer. The story is not set in Maigret's Paris, but the Paris of 1761. In addition to the complex twists and intrigue of the mystery, the novel is filled with period detail and atmospheric descriptions of a pre-revolutionary Paris we can only imagine.</i></p>
	<p>Péju, Pierre. <u>Clara's Tale</u> (Le Rire de l'ogre) Harvill Secker, 2007 <i>A young Frenchman and a young German woman first meet in the 1960s. He is the son of a Resistance fighter, she the daughter of a Wehrmacht doctor. Although both are born in peacetime, Paul and Clara are victims of history, as they discover as their paths continue to intertwine over the years.</i></p>
	<p>Rambaud, Patrick. <u>Napoleon's Exile</u> (L'Absent) Grove Atlantic, 2006 <i>With this stunning historical novel, Patrick Rambaud closes his epic trilogy (The Battle, The Retreat) with this final chapter of Napoleon's story. In 1814 Napoleon is racing back to Paris from the debacle of his Russian invasion. A plot afoot in the capital — to return a royal to the throne — succeeds, and Napoleon's marshals force him to abdicate and go into exile. Octave Senecal, Napoleon's loyal aide and savior, tells the tale of their journey south through the angry, mob-filled countryside to Elba, a tiny island off the coast of Tuscany. Here Patrick Rambaud brings to life not the Napoleon of the history books, but Napoleon the man — a man horribly bored by exile, gambling with his mother to pass the time, spearing the occasional tuna with local fishermen, and fretting constantly that secret agents and murderers surround him. He is soon planning his escape, while in France his former soldiers spend their evenings drinking to the return of "I'absent." They won't have long to wait....</i></p>
	<p>Reza, Yasmina. <u>God of Carnage</u> (Le Dieu du Carnage) Dramatist's Play Service, 2010 <i>What happens when two sets of parents meet up to deal with the unruly behavior of their children? A calm and rational debate between grown-ups about the need to teach kids how to behave properly? Or a hysterical night of name-calling, tantrums, and tears before bedtime? Yasmina Reza's sharp-edged new play premiered at Wyndham's Theatre, London, in March 2008 and at Bernard B. Jacobs Theater, New York City, in March 2009.</i></p>
	<p>Reza, Yasmina. <u>Adam Haberberg</u> (Adam Haberberg) Knopf, 2007 <i>Internationally acclaimed and award-winning playwright Yasmina Reza's second novel, Adam Haberberg, revels in the tragicomedy of one man's midlife crisis. Adam, a 47-year-old writer, has eye trouble and consequently is full of fear of disability, age, and death. But he is also sulking on a rainy day in the Jardin des Plantes because his newest book and his marriage are utter disasters. There he encounters an upbeat former classmate, Marie-Therese. Adam agrees to dinner at her place, where she</i></p>

	<i>summons up awkward memories and raves about electrical appliances</i>
	<p>Roubaud, Jacques. <u>The Loop</u> (La Boucle) Dalkey Archive Press, 2009</p> <p><i>This is the second novel in Roubaud's Proustian series, which investigates the haunted domain of memory and its continual ebb and flow. Devastated after the death of his young wife, the author conceives of a project that will allow him to continue writing, but also living: to write the story of this terrible loss and to investigate the lonely world in which he lives. A major work of contemporary French prose by a famed poet and literary theoritian.</i></p>
	<p>Rozier, Gilles. <u>The Mercy Room</u> (Un amour sans résistance) Little, Brown and Company, 2006</p> <p><i>This novel by the director of the Center for Yiddish Culture in Paris attempts to probe the psyche of a Vichy collaborator who falls in love with a Jew and hides him in the family cellar.</i></p> <p><i>Set in a small town in occupied France during World War II, The Mercy Room tells its story in the first-person narrative. The narrator is an emotionally buttoned-down teacher of German (whose sex we never learn) has only two passions: for German literature (especially by authors forbidden by the Nazis--Thomas Mann, Heinrich Heine) and for the young French soldier who, before the occupation, had delivered documents to be translated by the narrator for the local military leaders. In a dark corridor of the Gestapo offices, waiting for the latest assignment, he or she catches sight of the young French soldier, "brought there by fate," in a cluster of Jews being processed for deportation. It is surprisingly easy to lead him away from the group and out of the building while the German guards are busy. And so the narrator conceals the beloved in a hidden room in his or her cellar, where they fall in love and have a torrid sexual relationship. Is this a heterosexual or homosexual affair?</i></p>
	<p>Sa, Shan. <u>Empress</u> (Impératrice) Regan Books, 2006</p> <p><i>Shan re-creates a China ruled by the powerful Tang dynasty of the 7th century. Chosen to become one of the emperor's royal concubines, a young girl known as Heavenlight is thrust into the exotic world of the Forbidden City, where she must learn to navigate politics, court intrigue, and petty jealousies. One among 10,000 girls and women, she eventually distinguishes herself from the others by relying on her intelligence, wit, and fierce determination. Chosen by the heir to the throne to be his first wife, she ascends to the throne after her husband's death, becoming the first empress of China. For the first time in thirteen centuries, Empress Wu flings open the gates of her Forbidden City and tells her own astonishing tale -- revealing a fascinating, complex figure who in many ways remains modern to this day.</i></p>
	<p>Sachs, Maryam. <u>Without Saying Goodbye</u> (Sans te dire adieu) Quartet Books, 2009</p> <p><i>An Iranian exile in Paris since the revolution of 1979, Roxane, 30 years old, lives a quiet life with her husband Kamran. She works in a bookshop and is married to the man she fell in love with when she was twelve-years old. Although her husband is often away on business and she longs for the smells and tastes of her home in Tehran, Roxane is never lonely. Her life changes one evening while dining in a local restaurant. She catches sight of a young man with blue eyes sitting at the next table, who stares at her with no reserve. Immediately, everything else in her life falls away. Normally timid and withdrawn, Roxane finds herself brazenly following him through the streets of Paris. While he lights a cigarette on a street corner and she gathers courage to speak with him, something happens that will change both their lives forever.</i></p>

	<p>Salvayre, Lydie. <u>Everyday Life</u> (La Vie commune) Dalkey Archive Press, 2006 <i>The hiring of a new secretary shouldn't be a big deal—just a slight a change in the office environment. But for the protagonist of this novel, it is a declaration of war, a call to arms. A longtime secretary at a French marketing firm is sent gradually over the edge by the newly arrived competition in French novelist Salvayre's bitterly comic novel. After 32 years of service, the loyal, widowed Madame Suzanne Barette can barely endure the vulgar, blowsy new blond secretary. Her quiet life of sacrifice and service has been rudely disrupted by the new hire, and she is not—despite the advice of her doctor, her neighbors, and her daughter—about to leave it at that. Instead, sabotage, alcohol, and kindness become the arsenal in a conflict fought across copy rooms and office parties. The humor is undercut by a sadness, a sense of defeat that makes this slim novel resonate with the injustice of our increasingly impersonal, corporate world.</i></p>
	<p>Salvayre, Lydie. <u>The Power of Flies</u> (La Puissance des mouches) Dalkey Archive Press, 2007 <i>The hero of this novel, a Pascal devotee who works as a tour guide in the philosopher's abbey at Port-Royal-Des-Champs, is on trial for the murder of an unidentified victim. While on trial he narrates his life events in a disjointed coordination of personal anecdotes and literary interpretations, all full of trauma and hopelessness.</i></p>
	<p>Sansal, Boualem. <u>The German Mujahid</u> (Le village de l'Allemand ou Le journal des frères Schiller) Europa Press, 2009. <i>This is the story of two brothers, Malrich and Rachel, born of an Algerian mother and a German father, and raised by an elder uncle in the Paris suburbs. Rachel grows up to be a successful engineer working in a multinational firm, and Malrich hangs out with the wrong street crowd. The brothers do not see each other much, until the day geir parents are killed in an Islamic fundamentalist raid in their village in Algeria. The attempt to trace his backstory sends the two brothers on a spiralling descent. This outstanding work unites three dissimilar but very united stories: the Holocaust as seen through the eyes of a young Arab, the Algerian civil war of the 90s and the situation of the Algerian youth living in the housing projects of the suburbs of Paris. This is a powerful story by a masterful writer.</i></p>
	<p>Schmitt, Eric-Emmanuel. <u>Monsieur Ibrahim</u> (Monsieur Ibrahim et les fleurs du Coran) Other Press, LLC, 2004 <i>This is the irresistible story of the friendship between a troubled, Jewish boy, Momo, growing up in the Paris Jewish quarter in the 1960s and the solitary Muslim shopkeeper named Monsieur Ibrahim. The unlikely pair shares their mutual stories of suffering, love, compassion, and faith in both God and humanity. Momo's hilarious yet heart-wrenching story begins when loses his virginity in a bordello at the age of 11. Ibrahim offers Momo his ear and advice, and gradually the precocious boy that there is more to life than whores and stealing groceries. Eventually the two decide to make a trip across Europe to the birthplace of Monsieur Ibrahim that brings them to the most important crossroads of their lives. Monsieur Ibrahim and the Flowers of the Koran has been made into a motion picture starring Omar Sharif (available in the FIAF library)</i></p>
	<p>Taïa, Abdellah. <u>Salvation Army</u> (L'Armée de Salut) Semiotext(e), 2009 <i>Taïa's slim autobiographical coming-of-age story begins in poverty in Salé, Morocco, where young Abdellah reports on the impoverished town's doings. As a young adult, he falls for an older man who introduces him to Europe and the possibility of leaving home and its repressive social mores behind.</i></p>

	<p>Toussaint, Jean-Philippe. <u>Monsieur</u> (Monsieur) Dalkey Archive Press, 2008 <i>Monsieur is a highly paid commercial director of Fiat France, who goes to Cannes, types a treatise on crystals, attends a dinner party with the secretary of State, finds a new lover--all without showing any appreciable effort or affect. Unassuming and self-effacing, this French Mr. Bean goes through life quietly and successfully. He's not really clueless, he knows he could lose it all which is why he hides.</i></p>
	<p>Toussaint, Jean-Philippe. <u>Running away</u> (Fuir) Dalkey Archive Press, 2009 <i>Upon arriving in China, the narrator of this novel receives a cell phone as a gift. He always felt unconsciously that his fear of this phone would somehow be connected with his death. Yet not before a night in a train between Shanghai and Pekin did he receive the confirmation of his worst fears. This novel won France's prestigious Prix Médicis in 2005.</i></p>
	<p>Toussaint, Jean-Philippe. <u>Camera</u> (L'Appareil photo) Dalkey Archive Press, 2008 <i>This sparse and stylized novel by Toussaint (Monsieur) pursues the listless cerebral meanderings of a Parisian man as he falls in love with the clerk at his driving-education school. The first-person narrator, who enjoys an uneventful life of indeterminate employment, reading newspapers and thinking, begins hanging out with the languid young lady at the driver's ed office, a sleepy divorced single mother named Pascale Polougaïevski.</i></p>
	<p>Toussaint, Jean-Philippe. <u>The Bathroom</u> (La Salle de bain) Dalkey Archive Press, 2008 <i>A man spends more and more of his time in his bathroom. He meditates for hours in his bathtub with the feeling that his meditations will bring him salvation. It takes an invitation from the Austrian embassy to shake him out of his warm cocoon, prompting him to take a risk and leave his bathroom. This debut album was published in 1985 and heralded an entire new generation of innovative French literature.</i></p>
	<p>Trudel, Sylvain. <u>Mercury under my Tongue</u> (Du mercure sous la langue) Soft Skull Press, 2008 <i>This first novel by a Quebec author was an immediate success upon its publication. In the first person narrative, Frederick Langlois relates his confrontation with bone cancer. He is a normal 17-year-old, but he spends his days in the hospital instead of the classroom. He lives here the life of any normal high schooler: he writes love poems, fantasizes about the opposite sex, argues with adults, and makes friends: only here it is with the other patients who share his tragic fate. Frédéric is angry but refuses to entertain self-pity and his voice is immediate, winning and utterly believable until the end.</i></p>
	<p>Valtat, Jean-Christophe. <u>03</u> (03) Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2010 <i>A precocious 12th grader in a French suburb finds himself powerfully, troublingly drawn to the girl he sees every day on the way to school. As he watches and thinks about her, his daydreams—full of lyrics from Joy Division and the Smiths, fairy tales, Flowers for Algernon, sexual desire and fear, loneliness, rage for escape, impatience to grow up—reveal an entire adolescence. And this fleeting erotic obsession, remembered years later, blossoms into a meditation on what it means to be a smart kid, what it means to be dumb, and what it means to be in love with another person. The text is composed of one very long paragraph.</i></p>



Van Cauwelaert, Didier. **One-way**
(Un aller simple) Other Press, LLC, 2003

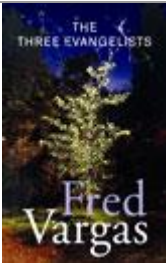
This novel won the prestigious Prix Goncourt in 1994, the year after France passed laws restricting immigration and the rights of current immigrants, which serves as the background of the author's story, which relates the funny and tender quest of an orphan for his identity.

Aziz Kemal is a young Frenchman raised as an Arab by Marseille gypsies. Arrested for a crime he did not commit, Aziz becomes the target of the new immigration and repatriation laws and finds himself en route to Morocco, a place he's only read about. Accompanying Aziz is a touchingly naïve and neurotic "humanitarian attaché" named Jean-Pierre Schneider, who drowns his own personal woes in his zeal to build a new life for his charge in a land neither one has ever seen. In this person Aziz discovers a kindred spirit, and a friendship of faith develops. This story also challenges the ethnic and national identity in France: what is identity, the novel asks, other than what we chose to believe we are?



Van Cauwelaert, Didier. **Out of my head.**
(Hors de moi) Other Press, LLC, 2004

This haunting literary thriller is full of captivating twists. Didier van Cauwelaert, the award-winning author of One-Way, explores the illusory nature of identity and the instability of the things we take for granted. American botanist Martin Harris is relieved to return home after a week-long absence, three days of which he spent in a coma in a Paris hospital following a car accident. What a surprise, then, to discover that his wife of 10 years doesn't recognize him and is now living with another man, a botanist named Martin Harris whose knowledge and memories are identical to the narrator's in every detail. When no one from his former life will vouch for him, Martin finds himself in an absurd and disturbing nightmare.



Vargas, Fred. **The Three Evangelists.**
(Debout les morts) Harvill Secker, 2006

This fast-paced thriller concerning a cold case has been written by the current darling of the French mystery writers. Read this novel and you, too, will see why her fresh characters and plot have taken France by storm.

Sophia Siméonidis, a Greek opera singer, wakes up one morning to discover that a tree has appeared overnight in the garden of her Paris house. Intrigued and unnerved, she turns to her neighbors: Vandoosler, an ex-cop fired from the police for having helped a murderer to escape, and three historians, Mathias, Marc and Lucien. The "Three Evangelists" all agree to dig around the tree and see if something has been buried there, but they come up with nothing. A few weeks later, Sophia herself disappears and nobody really worries about it until her body is found in a car. Who killed her: the husband, her ex-lover, her best friend, or possible the lovely niece recently moved to the capital? They all seem to have a motive...



Vargas, Fred. **Wash this Blood Clean from my Hand**
(Sous les vents de Neptune) Penguin, 2007

In this remarkable addition to the Commissaire Adamsberg series, has a serial killer followed Adamsberg to Canada on his training mission? Between 1943 and 2003, nine people have been stabbed to death with a most unusual weapon: a trident. In each case, arrests were made; suspects confessed their crime and were sentenced to life. Commissaire Adamsberg is convinced all the murders are the work of one person: the terrifying Judge Fulgence. Years before, Adamsberg's own brother had been the principal suspect in a similar case and avoided prison only thanks to Adamsberg's help. History now repeats itself when Adamsberg, who is temporarily based in Quebec for a training mission, is accused of having savagely murdered his young lover. The heir to Maigret, Commissaire Adamsberg is back in a new investigation that will keep the reader spellbound until the very last word.

	<p>Viel, Tanguy. <u>Beyond Suspicion</u> (Insoupçonnable) The New Press, 2009 <i>Sam is the brother of Lise. At least that is what everyone thinks when Lise marries Henri Delamare, a 50 year old rich man. But it is especially Henri who must believe it, so that Sam and Lise can pull off their kidnapping scheme. Yet Henri has a brother, a real one this time, and his name is Edouard...A Hitchcockian thriller set in the south of France from one of the most promising French novelists to emerge since Michel Houellebecq. Bestselling French wunderkind Tanguy Viel, heir to the legacy of Georges Simenon, has created his own literary genre in the noir tradition: thrillers with Proustian attention to detail and Freudian insights into his characters. A master of style and suspense, Viel explores moral dilemmas in poetic language rarely found in a crime novel.</i></p>
	<p>Vigan, Delphine de. <u>No and Me</u> (No et moi) Bloomsbury USA Children's Books, 2010 <i>This moving story begins when 13-year-old Lou, a ferociously shy and intelligent Parisian, declares an unusual class project: "I'm going to follow the journey of a homeless girl." Her teacher's enthusiasm forces Lou to follow her idea through, and in a train station she meets 18-year-old No. Lou feels like an outsider even at home, after her baby sister's sudden death and her mother's subsequent breakdown. With No she finds a surprising, true friendship, and she convinces her parents to allow No to move in. An excellent story for young adults, full of memorable questions and poignant scenes of idealism.</i></p>
	<p>Zaoui, Amin. <u>Banquet of Lies</u> (Festin des Mensonges) Marion Boyars Publishers Ltd, 2008 <i>A young man, Koussaila, recounts the awakening of his unbridled sexuality in the arms of older women. In the closed world of suppressed desire in 1960s Algeria, he goes from the arms of his aunt to the schoolmaster's wife to those of a nun he meets in a cemetery. In a climate of mounting political unrest, Koussaila continues on his chaotic path of desire, self-disgust, women, and sex, attempting in vain to uproot his innermost self, torn between the world of Islam and that of the west. One day, however, he will be forced to choose.</i></p>
	<p>Zeller, Florian. <u>The Fascination of Evil</u> (La Fascination du pire) Pushkin Press, 2006 <i>When the narrator receives an invitation to visit Egypt as the guest of the French Embassy in Cairo, he anticipates a boring week of literary discussions and official dinners. He certainly does not foresee the extraordinary events that will ultimately lead to murder. From the start, his fellow author--Martin Millet--seems determined to stir up the tensions that underlie the politeness of Egyptian society. He offends Islamic sensibilities with his views on art and the novel, and worse: his entire stay degenerates into an obsessive search for an Egyptian woman willing to have sex with him. The atmosphere is one of mutual mistrust, bordering on open dislike, not just between East and West, but also between the two authors.</i></p>