
VERVE
BOOKS
NEW
TITLES
2026
& backlist

VERVE BOOKS

Launched in 2018, VERVE Books is an independent publisher of page-turning, diverse and original writing penned by fresh and impactful voices.

Our books are connected by rich storytelling, vividly imagined settings and unforgettable protagonists. The list is tightly curated by a women-led team of passionate booklovers whose hope is to bring together an eclectic collection of titles for modern readers.

SIGN UP TO OUR TRADE & CONSUMER NEWSLETTERS

Join our growing community of readers and follow us on social media to hear the latest updates from the VERVE team, including cover reveals, event information and exclusive author content.

We also have a separate bookseller newsletter if you are keen to sign up for trade news.

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MAKE SURE YOU DIE SCREAMING

ZEE CARLSTROM

An unflinching interrogation of class rage, economic (im)mobility and gender expression, *Make Sure You Die Screaming* is the loud, funny, suspenseful American road trip novel of our times.

When their mother calls with news that their MAGA-pilled, conspiracy-theorist father has gone missing, the newly unemployed queer narrator of *Make Sure You Die Screaming* does what anyone would do: steals their ex-boyfriend's BMW and races from Chicago to deep-red Arkansas on a mission to kidnap their estranged father and bring him home.

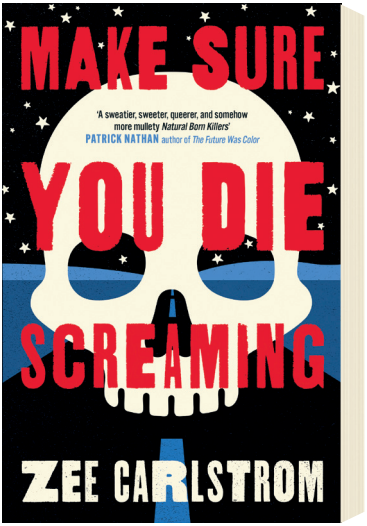
Now, with a bottle of premixed margarita jiggling in the cupholder and their brand-new garbage-goth bestie, Yivi, screaming through night terrors in the passenger seat, our hero hurtles toward a family reunion from hell. Along the way, they experiment with Yivi's mystery pills, elude a relentless stalker and outrun some cops who believe the narrator committed a tragic murder.

'Roars to life from page one and never lets up. It's a *Fear and Loathing* for the generation devastated by the generation that brought us *Fear and Loathing*'
– TORREY PETERS

'This iconic road-trip novel is a balm for a bleak, uncertain world'
– VANESSA WALTERS

JANUARY 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/Make-Sure-You-Die-Screaming

PBO **978-0-85730-942-6 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 x 129mm)**
PAGE EXTENT **224pp** // EB **978-0-85730-943-3 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction/LGBTQ+** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada** // OTHER PUBLISHERS **Flatiron – USA & Canada**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**
AUTHOR LOCATION **New York, USA**



'I loved every loud, messy page'
– SAM IRBY

'Carlstrom has written a book that feels incredibly of the moment, twining together anger and glee, hope and despair, alienation and community'
– *LA TIMES*


photo: Amy Lombard

ZEE CARLSTROM grew up in Illinois and now works as a creative director. They live in Brooklyn.

zeecarlstrom.com
@zeecarlstrom

THE END OF ROMANCE

LILY MEYER

A big-hearted novel about a woman who theorises that happiness is possible solely with the eradication of all romance – only to find a love that could change her life forever.

After escaping a suffocating marriage to her abusive childhood sweetheart, Sylvie Broder decides she is done with love. She returns to graduate school and sets out to prove that, for a straight woman to be truly happy, she must separate love from sex and give up on all pursuits of romance.

Driven by PhD research, relationship trauma and pride, Sylvie's new philosophy seems set to stick. Until Robbie comes along. And then Abie... Finding herself falling in love – not once, but twice – Sylvie must make a decision: to be brave and let this love in, or to choose her research and burn everything else to the ground.

Deeply relatable and utterly compelling, *The End of Romance* is an anti-romcom for anyone who, despite their very best efforts, has fallen in love and wondered why.

'A sly subversion and exemplar of the [romance] form'
– NEW YORK TIMES

'Meyer's novel is earnest and analytical, interspersed with theory and sex'
– VULTURE

'The anti-rom rom-com of the year... Heart-warming and thought-provoking'
– LITERARY HUB



'If Grace Paley and Miranda July had a baby, the result would be *The End of Romance*. Hilarious, off-kilter, sparklingly special, deliciously Jew-ish and disarmingly deep'
– EMMA COPLEY-EISENBERG

'An unforgettable cast of characters'
– KATIE YEE

'A brainy, highly original anti-romance romance that will speak to anyone who has ever wrestled with questions of love'
– SUSAN COLL

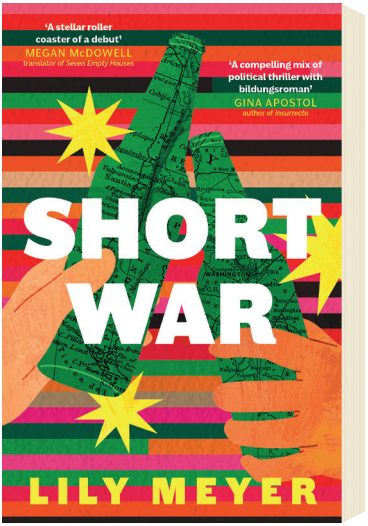
FEBRUARY 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/The-End-Of-Romance

PBO **978-0-85730-954-9 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 X 129mm)**
EXTENT **320pp** // EB **978-0-85730-955-6 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Viking – USA & Canada**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**

SHORT WAR

LILY MEYER

Told in three distinct voices, *Short War* brings together a rapturous teenage love story set in Chile, the hunt for the author of an eye-opening literary detective story and a complex reckoning with American political intervention in South America.



It's 1973, and Jewish-American Gabriel Lazris is sixteen years old and desperately in love with Caro Ravest, a Chilean Catholic. When the pair meet at a party in Santiago, something clicks. They fall fast, but with news of growing instability in Chile spreading even faster – partially thanks to Gabriel's Nixon-loving newspaper editor dad – can they stay together amid political uncertainty?

Decades later, Gabriel's American-raised adult daughter Nina heads to Buenos Aires in a last-ditch effort to save her dissertation. She quickly gets sidetracked: first by a sexy professor, then by a controversial book called *Guerra Eterna*. A document of war and an underground classic, *Guerra Eterna* destabilises Nina's identity and drags Gabriel's past into the light.

'A breathtaking debut: a deeply felt portrait of youth and longing, and also a geopolitical barnburner of a story'
– DWYER MURPHY

'A stellar roller-coaster of a debut'
– MEGAN MCDOWELL

JULY 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/Short-War

PBO **978-0-85730-956-3 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 X 129mm)**
EXTENT **272pp** // EB **978-0-85730-957-0 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Deep Vellum – USA & Canada**
AUTHOR LOCATION **Washington DC, USA**


photo: Pete Kiehart

LILY MEYER is a translator, a critic and the author of the novel *Short War*. She is also a contributing writer at *The Atlantic*. Her stories and translations can be found in *The Dial*, *The Drift*, *The Sewanee Review*, *The Southern Review* and many other journals, and her essays and criticism appear in outlets including *Bookforum*, *The New Yorker* and *The New York Times Book Review*.

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ORANGE

CURTIS GARNER

A candid portrayal of first love and self-discovery, from the author of the 'instant queer classic', *Isaac*.

Cornwall, 2018. In the quiet fishing village of Portscatho, sixteen-year-old Daniel Orange forms an unexpected connection with local boy Jago. What unfolds is transformative, particularly for Daniel, who for the first time feels truly seen.

East London, 2023. Daniel has rewritten himself: sharper, louder, queer in a way the city understands. But a visit from Jago stirs up a reckoning with his former life, forcing them both to question how much change their bond can withstand.

'Garner is clearly one to watch'
– PATRICK GALE

'Heart-wrenching... An unforgettable meditation on what it truly means to find home'
– ANDREW PORTER

'If you're a fan of the tenderness of nuanced relationships found in Sally Rooney, you'll want to pick up a copy of *Orange*'
– *RADIO TIMES*

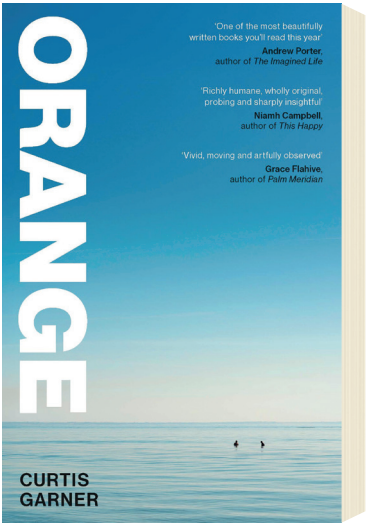
FEBRUARY 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/Orange

PBO **978-0-85730-940-2 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 x 129mm)**
EXTENT **320pp** // EB **978-0-85730-941-9 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction/LGBTQ+**
RIGHTS **World All Languages** // AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Arsenal Pulp – US & Canada**
AUTHOR LOCATION **London, UK**



Also **AVAILABLE**

ISAAC
PBO **978-0-85730-865-8 £10.99**



'An effective exploration of how we live and experience different pressures together and apart'
– *DAZED*


photo: Adam Dixon

CURTIS GARNER was born in Cornwall in 1996. When he was eighteen, he moved to London to study Creative Writing and English Literature at the University of Greenwich. He graduated in 2017 and has been working in publishing since. In 2020, he also received an MA with Distinction from Manchester School of Creative Writing, where much of his debut novel, *Isaac*, was written. He lives in Hackney.

@curtis_garner
@queer_novels

UNDER THE HAMMER

SAMANTHA DOOEY-MILES

Jemma would kill to end the housing crisis – one landlord at a time...

Jemma has lost everything... Well, the very little she had. Her toxic boyfriend has run off with her best friend, leaving Jemma alone in their flat, and she can't afford the extortionate rent on her own. She's aimless, depressed and, above all, furious. Slowly but surely, her fury finds its focus: landlords. If only something could be done about them...

When Jemma's landlord has a fatal accident while carrying out a property repair, she stumbles across her life's mission: to punish as many landlords as possible. She begins targeting landlords who have appeared on her favourite binge-watch, a home-improvement TV show where their greed is laid bare. It's a messy job, but someone's got to do it.

Governed by her own rules, Jemma is convinced her actions are just – but how long before this vigilante turns villain?

A darkly comic and highly topical crime satire, perfect for fans of *How to Kill Your Family* by Bella Mackie, *Sweetpea* by CJ Skuse and *I Want To Go Home But I'm Already There* by Róisín Lanigan – it's as if Muriel Spark had written the TV series *Dexter.*

'Pitch-black perfection – Dooey-Miles is an evil genius'
– KIRSTIN INNES

'The ultimate Generation Rent revenge novel'
– DAILY RECORD

'This dark satire perfectly captures the resentment and fury that too many landlords instill in their tenants'
– STYLIST

MARCH 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/Under-The-Hammer

PBO **978-0-85730-938-9 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 x 129mm)**
EXTENT **272pp** // EB **978-0-85730-939-6 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Crime** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**
AUTHOR LOCATION **South Lanarkshire, UK**



'Outrageously funny'
– LAURA ELLIOTT


photo: Euan Robertson

SAMANTHA DOOEY-MILES'S fiction focuses on first-person female voices. Her work explores rage, shame, embarrassment and the significance seemingly small moments can hold. Her stories have been published in *New Writing Scotland*, *Gutter* and *Postbox* amongst others. In 2021 she won a Scottish Book Trust New Writer Award. She has had monologues performed by Slackline Productions and Coronavirus Theatre Club. Her short plays have been staged by Short Attention Theatre and at Queen's Theatre, Hornchurch.
samanthadooeymiles.com
@samanthadooeymiles

SLASHED BEAUTIES

A. RUSHBY

A spellbinding tale of sisterhood, betrayal and reclamation revolving around three 18th-century wax models of women, known as Anatomical Venuses or 'slashed beauties'. Legend has it, these beauties are bewitched, coming to life to murder men who have wronged them.

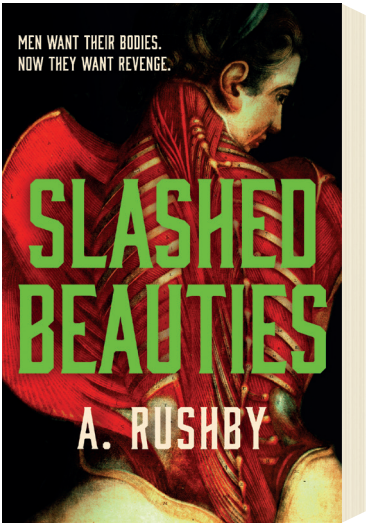
Finally, these men will get what they deserve. We will make sure of it. Together.

Seoul, present day: Antiques dealer Alys is offered a vast sum of money to transport one of three highly coveted Anatomical Venuses to London, with one key condition – she must destroy it when she reaches the city.

London, 1769: After a chance meeting at the Vauxhall Pleasure Gardens, young and inexperienced Eleanor is promised a life of luxury by the beautiful and charismatic Elizabeth and her protégé, Emily. All she must do is allow Elizabeth complete control of her destiny.

In a darkly compelling and magical plot, prepare to discover the dangerous secret shared by these four women – a secret that spans centuries, and which will unearth horrors not of this world.

'I adored this gorgeous, sumptuously gothic feminist novel'
– EMMA COWING



'Easily one of the best books I've read this year... Captivating from start to end and tells a haunting tale of feminine rage'
– ABBIE EATON

'The warped, witchy lovechild of Madame Tussaud and Jack the Ripper – an engrossing gothic tale of friendship, misogyny and the murderous consequence of denying women's autonomy'
– ELLIE MARNEY

APRIL 2026 (B FORMAT PB)
vervebooks.co.uk/Slashed-Beauties

DEMY (216x135mm) HB **978-0-85730-885-6 £18.99**
B FORMAT (198 x 129mm) PB **978-0-85730-946-4 £11.99**
EXTENT **352pp** // EB **978-0-85730-886-3 £9.99**
CATEGORY **Historical Fantasy** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada, ANZ & India** // OTHER PUBLISHERS **HQ - Australia & New Zealand; Berkley - USA & Canada; Hachette India - India**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**

ALL HER BEAUTIFUL DEATHS

A. RUSHBY

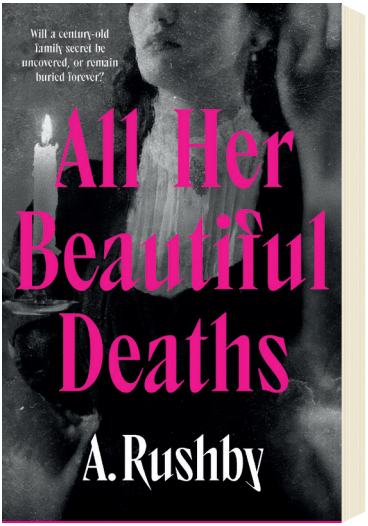
A gripping gothic mystery that deepens across decades, *All Her Beautiful Deaths* is an exploration of classism and ownership in the art world that beautifully portrays expressions of grief and love.

London, 1865. Desperate for work, Minnie takes employment as a maid for the wealthy Culpepper twins. The siblings lead a strange and unconventional life: Edmund operates a laboratory from the house while Edith experiments with morbid photography. Drawn in by a dangerous attraction to one of the twins, and with a sick sister of her own to provide for, by the time Minnie makes a disturbing discovery it's too late – she must stay and unravel the mysteries of Culpepper House before she becomes a victim of one of Edith's photographs herself.

London, present day. Grieving artist Hadley is consumed by an album of Victorian death photography, including the exquisite image of a deceased young girl with a swan. When this photograph is involved in an art world scandal, Hadley is given the opportunity to create an installation surrounding the image. But the enigmatic Kit Culpepper, of the Culpepper Trust, has other plans. He offers Hadley an eye-watering sum of money to sell him the album and never speak of its contents again. As Hadley digs deeper into the album's truths, she begins to suspect Kit Culpepper is guarding a deathly secret... and she's not entirely sure how far he'll go to keep it.

SEPTEMBER 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/All-Her-Beautiful-Deaths

PBO **978-0-85730-928-0 £11.99** // FORMAT **B (198 X 129mm)**
EXTENT **416pp** // EB **978-0-85730-929-7 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Historical Fiction**
RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada & ANZ**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **HQ – Australia & New Zealand; Berkley – USA & Canada** // AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**
AUTHOR LOCATION **Queensland, Australia**



Perfect for fans of Kate Morton and Stacey Halls with echoes of Daphne du Maurier.



A. RUSHBY (also writing as Allison Rushby) was gifted the middle name of Jane, for Jane Austen. Wordsmithing was duly destined and, under several pseudonyms, she has published more than thirty books. She has long been a fan of cities steeped in history, wild and overgrown cemeteries, red brick Victorian museums, the curious and the uncanny. She prefers to write with a cup of French Earl Grey tea by her side and a cat curled up in her lap.

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@allisonrushbyauthor

THE WILDERNESS

ANGELA FLOURNOY

An era-defining novel about four women over the course of their twenty-year friendship, from National Book Award finalist Angela Flournoy.

In 2008, Desiree, January, Monique and Nakia are in their early twenties and at the beginning. Of their careers, of marriage, of motherhood and of big city lives in New York and Los Angeles. Together, they are finding their way through the wilderness, that period of life when the reality of contemporary adulthood – overwhelming, mysterious and full of freedom and consequences – swoops in and stays.

Desiree is estranged from her sister Danielle, and the two nurse bitter family wounds in different ways. January's got a relationship with a 'good' man she feels ambivalent about, even after her surprise pregnancy. Monique, a librarian and aspiring blogger, finds unexpected online fame after calling out the university where she works for its plans to whitewash fraught history. And Nakia is trying to get her restaurant off the ground, without relying on the largesse of her upper middle-class family who wonder aloud if she should be doing something better with her life.

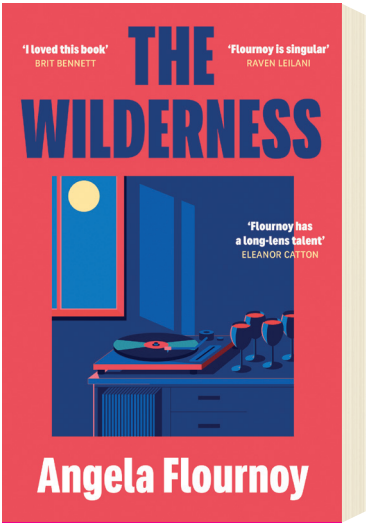
As these friends transition from young adults to grown women, they must figure out what they mean to one another – amid political upheaval, economic and environmental instability and the increasing volatility of modern life.

'Flournoy is singular'
– RAVEN LEILANI

'Wonderfully ambitious... Flournoy explores the complexity of friendship, family and home in a voice that is expansive yet intimate, humorous yet devastating'
– BRIT BENNETT

APRIL 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/The-Wilderness

PBO **978-0-85730-952-5 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 x 129mm)**
EXTENT **320pp** // EB **978-0-85730-953-2 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Mariner Books HarperCollins – USA & Canada**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**



One of Barack Obama's favourite books of 2025

Shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award

Longlisted for the National Book Award and the Kirkus Prize

'A triumphant whirlwind of a novel'
– NAMWALI SERPELL

'One of the wisest, most talented authors working today'
– JUSTIN TORRES

'A future classic'
– HARPER'S BAZAAR

'Flournoy inhabits a quartet of shifting perspectives with wit, tenderness and exquisite grace... Evokes the hushed, disconsolate quality of [Toni] Morrison'
– NEW YORK TIMES

THE TURNER HOUSE

ANGELA FLOURNOY

Meet the Turners: a big, complicated, loving, feuding, vibrant American family.

The Turners have lived on Yarrow Street for over fifty years. Their house has seen thirteen children grown and gone – and some returned. It has seen the arrival of grandchildren, the fall of Detroit's East Side, the loss of a father.

The house still stands despite abandoned lots, an embattled city and the inevitable shift outward to the suburbs. But now, as ailing matriarch Viola finds herself forced to leave her home and move in with her eldest son, the family discovers that the house is worth just a tenth of its mortgage.

The Turner children are called home to decide its fate and to reckon with how each of their pasts haunt – and shape – their family's future.

***The Turner House* brings us a colourful, complicated brood full of love and pride, sacrifice and unlikely inheritances. It's a striking examination of the price we pay for our dreams and futures, and the ways in which our families bring us home.**

'Flournoy is a magician. Here is a story that is charming and funny while being whip-smart and profound'
– TAYARI JONES

'Funny, heartbreaking, with the sort of characters you'll miss like family when you finish'
– ELIZABETH MCCRACKEN

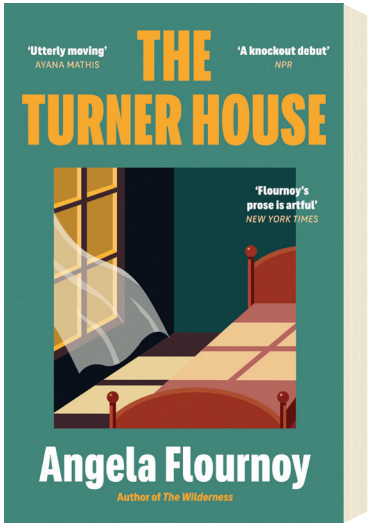



photo: Miranda Barnes

ANGELA FLOURNOY is a novelist and essayist who lives in New York. Her new novel, *The Wilderness*, was longlisted for the National Book Award and the Kirkus Prize, and shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Her debut novel, *The Turner House*, was a finalist for the National Book Award. Her nonfiction has appeared in many publications, including *The New York Times, The Nation, The Los Angeles Times* and *The New Yorker.* A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Flournoy has taught at the Iowa Writers' Workshop, The New School, Columbia University, Princeton University and UCLA.

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OCTOBER 2026
vervebooks.co.uk/The-Turner-House

PBO **978-0-85730-958-7 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 X 129mm)**
EXTENT **352pp** // EB **978-0-85730-929-7 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction** // RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Mariner Books Harper Collins – USA & Canada**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**
AUTHOR LOCATION **New York, USA**

HEAP EARTH UPON IT

CHLOE MICHELLE HOWARTH

A creeping story of sibling rivalry and dangerous obsession, for fans of Julia Armfield and Yael van der Wouden.

January 1965. The orphaned O'Leary siblings – Tom, Jack, Anna and Peggy – arrive in the village of Ballycrea, tight-lipped about their troubled past and desperate for a fresh start.

After being met with suspicion from most of the locals, the family are thrilled when they're taken under the wing of their well-respected neighbours, Bill and Betty Nevan, who offer them work, companionship and an opportunity to fit in.

But for one of the O'Learys, this new friendship sparks an intense attachment that makes the dynamic dangerous for all. It's difficult to bury secrets, but almost impossible to bury feelings...

Crackling with suspense, *Heap Earth Upon It* revisits the rural Ireland of Howarth's critically acclaimed debut, *Sunburn*, to explore the damaging impacts of grief, tradition and unspoken desire.

'A devastating mix of hope and heartbreak, from one of Ireland's most exciting queer voices'
– NIAMH NÍ MHAOILEOIN

'I lost myself in Howarth's strange and startling second novel. A deeply affecting tapestry of gothic landscapes and virtuosic, character-driven prose'
– LUCY ROSE

MAY 2026 (B FORMAT PB)
vervebooks.co.uk/Heap-Earth-Upon-It

DEMY (216x135mm) HB **978-0-85730-905-1 £16.99**
ROYAL (234x156mm) TPB EXPORT **978-0-85730-917-4 £14.99**
B FORMAT (198 x 129mm) PB **978-0-85730-947-1 £10.99**
EXTENT **288pp** // EB **978-0-85730-906-8 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction/Historical Gothic**
RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Melville House - USA & Canada; The Bombay Circle Press - India** // AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**



'The perfect slow burn; an absorbing, multifaceted and uneasy novel, with inscrutable characters who shed layers until their fierce, flawed centres are revealed'
– EMMA VAN STRAATEN

'Masterful... *Heap Earth Upon It* confirms Howarth as essential reading'
– *SCENE MAGAZINE*

'A slow-burn rural Gothic perfect for chilly autumn nights'
– *DAILY MAIL*

BACKLIST HIGHLIGHT...

SUNBURN

CHLOE MICHELLE HOWARTH

Over 100,000 copies sold worldwide

Shortlisted for the 2024 Book of the Year: Discover Award

Shortlisted for the 2023 Nero Book Award for Debut Fiction

It's the early 1990s, and in the Irish village of Crossmore, Lucy feels out of place. Despite her fierce friendships, she's always felt this way, and the conventional path of marriage and motherhood doesn't appeal to her at all. Not even with handsome and doting Martin, her closest childhood friend.

Lucy begins to make sense of herself during a long hot summer, when a spark with her school friend Susannah escalates to an all-consuming infatuation, and, very quickly, to a desperate and devastating love.

Fearful of rejection from her small and conservative community, Lucy begins living a double life, hiding the most honest parts of herself in stolen moments with Susannah. With the end of school and the opportunity to leave Crossmore looming, Lucy must choose between two places, two people and two futures, each as terrifying as the other. But only one can offer her real happiness.

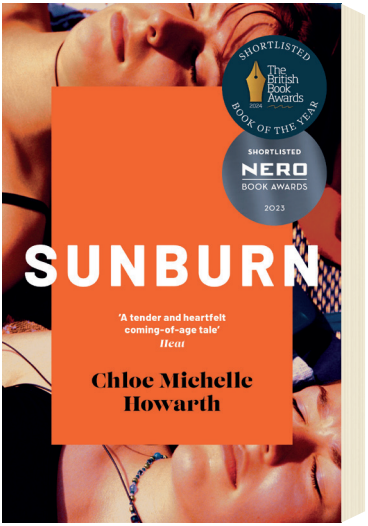
READERS LOVE *SUNBURN*

'Achingly beautiful, almost lyrical... This was both sweet and heartbreaking – I couldn't put it down' *****

'An addictive, honey-dipped queer love story' *****

'Completely heart-wrenching, devastating, all-consuming... Spectacular' *****

PBO **978-0-85730-841-2 £10.99** // FORMAT **B (198 x 129mm)**
EXTENT **288pp** // EB **978-0-85730-842-9 £6.99**
CATEGORY **Literary Fiction/LGBTQ+ Romance**
RIGHTS **UK & Comm ex Canada & India**
OTHER PUBLISHERS **Melville House – USA & Canada; The Bombay Circle Press – India; Bastei Luebbe – German edition; Artbooks Spółka – Polish edition; Laboratoria – Ukrainian edition; Dobrovský – Czech edition**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes** // AUTHOR LOCATION **Brighton, UK**



AVAILABLE NOW
vervebooks.co.uk/Sunburn



photo: Erin Hall

CHLOE MICHELLE HOWARTH was born in July 1996. She grew up in the West Cork countryside, which has served as an inspiration for her writing. Chloe currently lives in Brighton. Her debut novel, *Sunburn*, was shortlisted for the 2024 Polari First Book Prize, the 2024 Book of the Year: Discover Award at the British Book Awards and the 2023 Nero Book Award for Debut Fiction and longlisted for the 2024 Diverse Book Awards.

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VERVE VOICES: QUEERPHORIA

JENNA GORDON & DEMI ECHEZONA (ED.)

The inaugural collection in the new VERVE Voices series, *Queerphoria* is a joyful and defiant queer-authored anthology proudly supporting Switchboard, the national LGBTQIA+ support line.

Four housemates welcome you into their home for a birthday party. A group of friends enters a tropical queer utopia in Australia. A couple invite a shipwrecked sailor into their isolated lighthouse on the night of their thirtieth anniversary. A single woman embarks on a romantic relationship with a sex robot. Two wives secretly prepare for their baby's arrival in a world where procreation is controlled by the Establishment.

Through prose, poetry and essays, thirty-one writers bring their visions of euphoria to life. These pages celebrate, subvert, expand and reimagine what joy can look like, even in uncertain times.

Switchboard, the national LGBTQIA+ support line, will receive a £1 donation from every copy sold. Find out more about Switchboard's work here: switchboard.lgbt | @switchboardlgbt



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THE MAN

LAURA SIMS

A masterful domestic suspense novel that follows a 1960s housewife turned amateur photographer who begins to fear for her life when she notices the dark silhouette of a man in the background of her self-portraits.

The photos Judith Stanley takes are just for her, a private passion to fill her suburban days. But when she shares them with Paul Sorenson, her new photography instructor, she's unprepared to hear his astonished praise. 'Stunning,' he calls her photos. 'Extraordinary.' She has an uncanny eye, he says, and should consider publication. He could help. Except Judith has no interest in sharing her work; in fact, the mere idea of it frightens her.

Still, emboldened by Paul's encouragement, Judith ventures out beyond her quiet neighbourhood to the city in search of increasingly striking images. When she starts to notice the dark shape of a man in the corner of her self-portraits, Judith is certain he's an attacker from her past. She doesn't know why he has returned, but she's sure of his presence: the hoarse sound of his breathing, his hard grip on her elbow. Perhaps it would appease the man if she were to put her camera down and give up her private passion. But she can't; she refuses. Until one night when the man finally emerges from the shadows, and Judith's story suddenly and irrevocably becomes his own.

'This book kept me awake at night, heart in throat, then stayed with me long afterward. I could not stop turning the pages. Sims has done it again'
– VANESSA CHAN

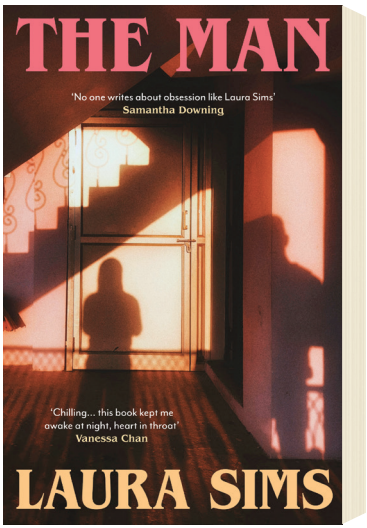
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HOW CAN I HELP YOU
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'Haunting, atmospheric and relentlessly unnerving'
– ANDREA BARTZ



photo: Jen Lee

LAURA SIMS is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *Looker* and *How Can I Help You*. An award-winning poet, Sims has published four poetry collections; her essays and poems have appeared in *The New Republic*, *Boston Review*, *Conjunctions*, *Electric Lit*, *Gulf Coast*, and more. She and her family live in New Jersey, where she works part-time as a reference librarian and hosts the library's lecture series.

laurasims.net
@laurasims2121

THE RAYBURN AFFAIR

LAURIE PETROU

Art, ambition and desire collide when a struggling academic becomes entangled in the marriage and creative life of her literary idol.

By day, Dr Ruth Morgan lectures on 'AI: the new frontier of storytelling' at East Toronto University. By night, she toils away at a collection of short stories, fantasising about a writing career to rival that of the internationally renowned Shelby Rayburn, a literary icon widely hailed as the voice of Ruth's generation of women.

When Shelby and her husband, Oscar, make an appearance at an annual faculty party, Ruth can't believe her luck. The trio instantly hit it off, and an intoxicating intimacy builds between them, underwritten by a simmering sexual tension.

Everything changes when Shelby makes Ruth an offer she can't refuse – one she can't tell anyone about, including Oscar. As boundaries blur and secret alliances form, distrust takes root and threatens to implode it all. Ruth and Shelby need each other, but each has their own agenda when it comes to friendship, love and literary stardom.

'A dark, sexy tale of infatuation, envy and creative life'
– ROBYN HARDING

'Raw, real and riveting, *The Rayburn Affair* should be on everyone's must-read list'
– SAMANTHA M BAILEY



'Dark, fascinating and utterly fearless, *The Rayburn Affair* reminded me of Julia May Jonas's *Vladimir* in the best possible way... Petrou writes with razor-sharp insight and lyrical power, marking her as one of our most daring contemporary voices'
– MARISSA STAPLEY

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photo: Pam West

LAURIE PETROU is an award-winning author and Professor at Toronto Metropolitan University. She lives in Niagara with her family. *The Rayburn Affair* is her sixth book.

lauriepetrou.com
@lauriepetrou

AFTER CARE

DIVYA MANIAR

'Poor Grace. Poor, poor Grace.' It's what she wanted everybody to say.

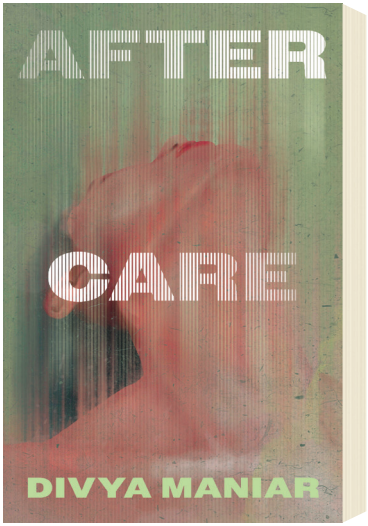
Grace is no longer famous. She sits alone in her Crown Heights apartment, endlessly watching reruns of herself on the reality TV show, *Speed Daters*. One night, a man breaks in through her window. A rare, still-obsessed fan or raging incel – Grace is unsure who he is. Before she can find out, he disappears.

That same night, the world is rocked by the news that Anoushka, Grace's reality show rival, has taken her own life, thrusting Grace back into the public eye.

At first, Grace is thrilled to be relevant again. Driven by her desperation for love and attention, she clings to the dregs of her old life: her followers, her on-again, off-again boyfriend Cal and her unstable influencer income.

But fame is fickle, and Grace's image is fragile. When the fans begin to turn on her, Grace escapes with Cal to his isolated cabin in the middle of nowhere. Alone in the woods with nothing but each other, can they mend what's broken without destroying what little is left?

Blending biting social critique with an uncanny claustrophobia and the feverish pressure of 'influencer culture', *After Care* interrogates what happens behind the scenes of what we see on our screens and what that reflects back at us, the audience. It asks, in a world full of harm, is there any point in caring about anybody but yourself?



Perfect for readers who enjoyed *Boy Parts*, *Acts of Desperation* or *My Year of Rest and Relaxation*.



DIVYA MANIAR is a writer from Singapore. She went to Brown University, where she studied Comparative Literature and Philosophy, and Cambridge, where she got her MPhil in English Literature. She is also a professional pole dancer and instructor. *After Care* is her debut novel.

divyamaniar.com
@divyamaniar

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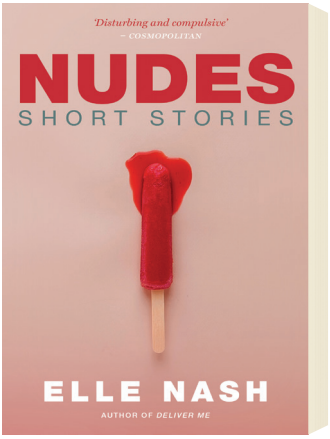
ELLE NASH

Beginning with a story of an ex sex-worker drifting through a small rural town in the south, and ending with a young woman's wedding night, who learns from her new husband what it takes to kill a man, Nash writes across the complications of working class women, rendering their desires with visceral prose and psychologically dissecting the fundamental root that threads her work: craving and the conflicts within.

'Disturbing and compulsive'
– COSMOPOLITAN

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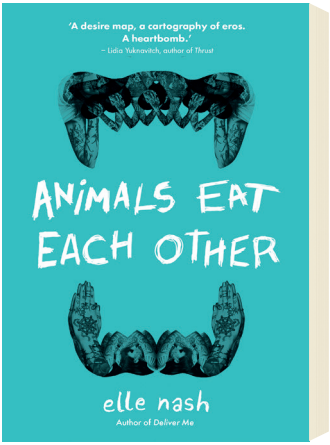
ELLE NASH

A young woman with no name embarks on a fraught three-way relationship with Matt, a tattoo artist, and his girlfriend Frances, a new mum. She begins to recognise the dark undertow of obsession and jealousy that her presence has created between Matt and Frances, and finds herself balancing on a knife's edge between pain and pleasure, the promise of the future and the crushing isolation of the present.

'A desire map, a cartography of eros. A heartbomb'
– LYDIA YUKNAVITCH

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OTHER PUBLISHERS **Dzanc – US & Canada**
AUTHOR LOCATION **Glasgow, UK**





ELLE NASH is a British-American author and editor known for her fearless exploration of desire, identity, and the human condition. Her most recent novel, *Deliver Me*, was published by VERVE Books in 2024 and was longlisted for the Saltire Society Fiction Book of the Year.

Ellenash.net | @saderotica

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FRAGILE ANIMALS

GENEVIEVE JAGGER

When an ex-catholic woman develops a sexual relationship with a vampire, she is forced to confront the memories that haunt her religious past.

Struggling to deal with the familial trauma of her Catholic upbringing, hotel cleaner, Noelle, travels to the Isle of Bute. There, she meets a man who claims to be a vampire, and a relationship blooms between them based solely on confession.

But as talk turns sacrilegious, and the weather outside grows colder, Noelle struggles to come to terms with her blasphemous sexuality. She becomes hounded by memories of her past: her mother's affair with the local priest, and the part she played in ending it.

Bridging the gaps between contemporary gothic fiction, queer fiction and magical realism, *Fragile Animals* lures readers into Noelle's loose grasp on her world and immerses them in some of Scotland's most harsh and claustrophobic environments.

Shortlisted for the 2025 Betty Trask Prize, the 2025 Book of the Year: Discover Award at the British Book Awards and the 2024 Saltire Society First Book Award.

'A slick literary vampire novel to sink your teeth into'
– ALICE SLATER

'Shirley Jackson meets *The Wasp Factory*... Bold, beguiling and breathtaking' '
– CARRIE MARSHALL

'A queer literary novel you simply must add to your TBR'
– LUCY ROSE

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RIGHTS **World All Languages Excl. Spanish**
AUDIO EDITION **W F Howes**
AUTHOR LOCATION **Glasgow, UK**



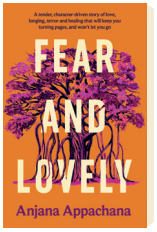

photo:David Rogan

GENEVIEVE JAGGER is a queer, autistic witch from Scotland. Her debut novel, *Fragile Animals*, was shortlisted for the Betty Trask Prize, a Saltire Award and a British Book Award. Genevieve is a tarot reader, dealing fortunes across Glasgow with her small tarot company, Two for Joy. She loves stuffed animals and farming video games with romanceable characters. Genevieve's second novel, *Lovers, Reversed*, will be published by VERVE Books in 2027. Her favourite tarot card is The Star.

genajag.com
@underwurldgurl

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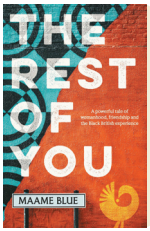
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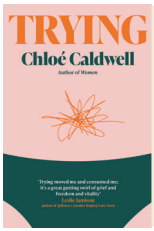
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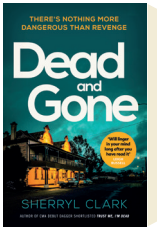
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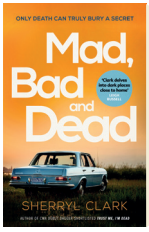
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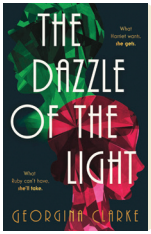
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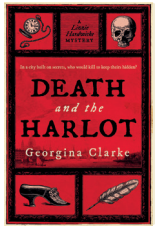
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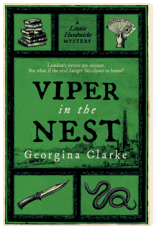
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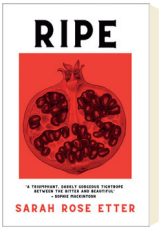
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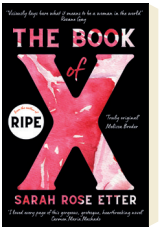
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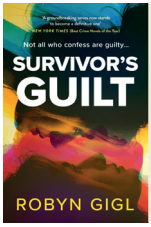
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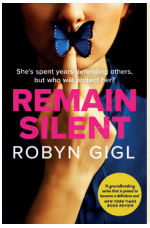
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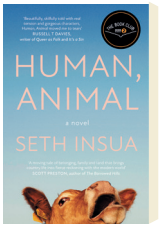
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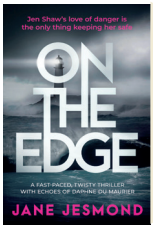
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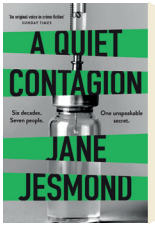
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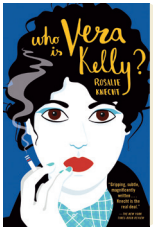
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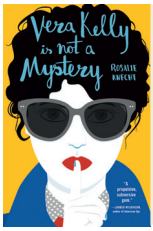
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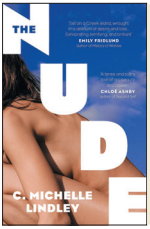
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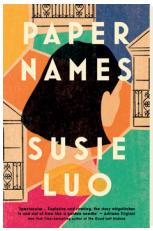
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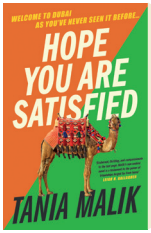
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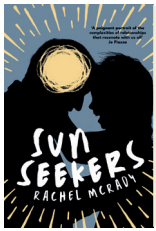
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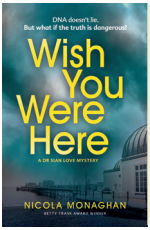
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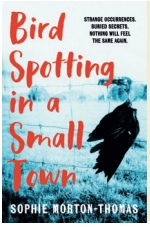
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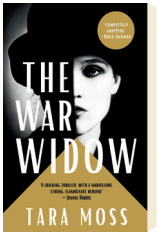
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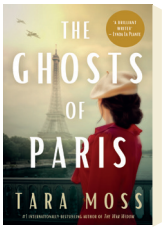
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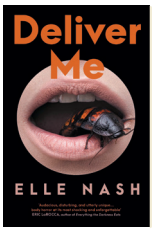
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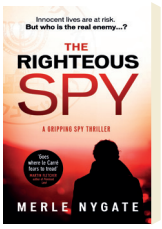
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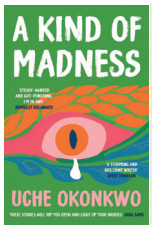
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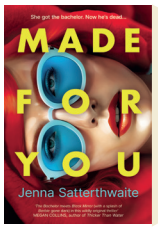
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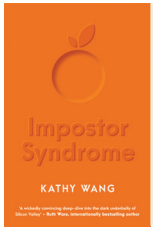
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