MISSION
Restless Books is an independent, nonprofit publisher devoted to championing essential voices from around the world whose stories speak to us across linguistic and cultural borders.

Through cultural programming, we aim to celebrate immigrant writing and bring literature to underserved communities. We believe that immigrant stories are a vital component of our cultural consciousness; they help to ensure awareness of our communities, build empathy for our neighbors, and strengthen our democracy.

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Letter from the Publisher

I am writing to you from our new beautiful office and storefront in Amherst, Mass, located on 69 Main Street, just a few steps away from the Emily Dickinson Homestead. Over the last several decades, the space we now occupy was a barbershop and before that, a student laundry. I imagine customers in both enjoying an abundance of stories, at once intimate and significant, while getting a haircut or washing their clothes. It seems fitting to me that our books are now continuing those important conversations. Over the past year, the world seems to have been turned upside down. Ravaging wars in Ukraine and the Middle East have brought enormous suffering and resurfaced ancient hatreds. The need for translation feels urgent. Restless Books has always been about expanding the diet of English-language readers with stories originating in distant places, geographically and metaphorically.

One example is our children’s book Daniel and Ismail, about the unlikely friendship between two boys, one Palestinian and one Jewish. This book was written in Spanish in Chile, which has the largest Palestinian community outside of the Arab world. We published it in 2019 trilingually: English, Hebrew, and Arabic. It has lately touched a chord. The New York Times recently described it as a prime example of how “children’s literature fosters more than just basic awareness of the similarities and differences in our shared humanity: It conjures a realm where we can imagine—together—something better than what is.”

Our next season is full of similar jewels. April will bring Kuwaiti author Bothayna Al-Essa’s The Book Censor’s Library, translated from the Arabic by Ranya Abdelrahman and Sawad Hussain. At a time when book banning is unfortunately pushing us back to a period around the Second World War II, the novel is a plea for open debate. Its satire of censorship, secret archives, and the looming eye of an all-powerful government is reminiscent of canonical literature about liberty and free speech, including 1984, Darkness at Noon, The Handmaid’s Tale, and Fahrenheit 451. Remember: censorship isn’t only about banning books, a strategy unfortunately we are all familiar with; it is also about being apathetic toward the act and art of reading.

Then, Tenderloin, Joy Sorman’s macabre but entrancing novel of an obsessive French butcher also hits shelves (and guts) in April. This gorgeous, stomach-churning tale probes the thin borders between human, animal, flesh, and meat. It won the 2013 François Mauriac prize, and we are very pleased to bring it to English-speaking readers.

The winning novel of our 2022 Prize for New Immigrant Writing is a gripping and poignant tale of power, identity, and unconditional, unconventional love. Between This World and the Next by Praveen Herat follows a British war photographer and a young Cambodian woman whose lives become entangled as they seek to intervene in a web of sex-trafficking and arms deals, drawing them deeper into a world of crime, corruption, and difficult truths. I have no doubt you will find this narrative a refreshing new take on immigrant writing.

A new translation of the Batchelder Award–winning classic The Wildcat Behind Glass rounds out our season. This story of two sisters coming of age during the onset of fascism in Greece is beloved worldwide. It reflects the life of its author, Alki Zei, an outspoken supporter of democracy who was forced into political exile for her views. Karen Emmerich’s translation, the first in over fifty years, brings the timeless tale to a new generation of readers.

Our monthly online series “Rereading the Classics,” in partnership with the New York Public Library and the Jones Library in Amherst, has been going strong since 2017. We have recently discussed One Thousand and One Nights, Dracula, Toni Morrison, Jorge Luis Borges, and Elizabeth Bishop. Likewise, our in-person and online workshops for emerging immigrant writers have allowed many people new to this country to find their voices and share their stories.

Become a Restless reader by submerging yourself into these stories and about 250 others that we have published since 2013. Join our Restless Readers’ Club and receive a new book in the mail every other month. You can also help us continue our mission. Donate at https://restlessbooks.org/donate/ or scan the QR code.

Un placer,
Ilan Stavans
**The Maroons**

**Louis Timagène Houat**

Translated from the French by Aqiil Gopee with Jeffrey Diteman

*A rediscovered classic now available in English for the first time, *The Maroons* is a fervid account of slavery and escape on nineteenth-century Réunion Island.*

Frême is a young African man forced into slavery on Réunion, an island east of Madagascar in the Indian Ocean. Plagued by memories of his childhood sweetheart, a white woman named Marie, Frême seeks her out—but when they are persecuted for their love, the two flee into the forest. There they meet other “maroons”: formerly enslaved people and courageous rebels who have chosen freedom at the risk of their lives.

The only known novel by Black abolitionist and political exile Louis Timagène Houat, *The Maroons* highlights slavery’s abject conditions under the French empire, and attests to the widespread phenomenon of enslaved people escaping captivity to forge a new life beyond the reach of so-called “civilization.” Banned by colonial authorities at the time of its publication in 1844, the book fell into obscurity for over a century before its rediscovery in the 1970s. Since its first reissue in France, the novel has been recognized for its extraordinary historical significance and literary quality.

“This illuminating novel . . . is enriched by the lively and substantial supplemental material, particularly Mauritian author Shenaz Patel’s introduction . . . The episodic narrative stands first and foremost as an important historical document.”

—*Publisher’s Weekly*

“As I read this first contemporary account of the dark and brutal beginnings of our islands’ history . . . I saw the ashes of the past still smoldering all about me.”

—Ananda Debi, author of *Eve Out of Her Ruins*

**LOUIS TIMAGÈNE HOUAT** was a French writer and physician. Originally from Bourbon Island, now known as La Réunion, he was the author of the first novel in Réunionese literature, *Les Marrons*, which he published in Paris in 1844.
Counsel Culture

Kim Hye-jin
Translated from the Korean by Jamie Chang

From award-winning Korean author Kim Hye-jin comes the contemplative, superbly-crafted story of a woman scapegoated by sudden tragedy, and the unexpected paths she must wander in search of redemption.

Haesoo is a successful therapist and regular guest on a popular TV program. But when she makes a scripted negative comment about a public figure who later commits suicide, she finds herself ostracized by friends, fired from her job, and her marriage begins to unravel. These details come to the reader gradually, in meditative prose, through bits and pieces of letters that Haesoo writes and finally abandons as she walks alone through her city.

One day she has an unexpected encounter with Sei, a 10-year-old girl attempting to feed an orange cat. Stray cats seem to be everywhere; they have the concern of one other neighborhood woman and the ire of everyone else. Like Haesoo and Sei, the cats endure various insults and recover slowly. Haesoo, who would not otherwise care about animals or form relationships with children, now finds herself pulled back by degrees into the larger world.

“Melancholy and ruminative yet possessed of a quiet energy, Kim’s tale leads Haesoo toward the realization that, more often than not, what we yearn to be is who we already are, that life is less a matter of becoming than of revealing.”
—Kirkus Reviews

“An appealing meditation on personal and professional ethics.”
—Publisher’s Weekly

Kim Hye-jin is an award-winning author from Daegu, South Korea. She won the 2023 Kim Yujeong Literary Award, the JoongAng Literature Award in 2013 for Central Station, the Shin Dong-yup Prize for Literature in 2018 for Concerning My Daughter, and the Daesan Literary Award in 2020 for The Work of No. 9. She was also the Special Award Laureate of the 4th Lee Hochul Literary Prize for Peace in 2020.
The Book Censor’s Library
Bothayna Al-Essa
Translated from the Arabic by Ranya Abdelrahman and Sawad Hussain

A perilous and fantastical satire of banned books, secret libraries, and the looming eye of an all-powerful government, from award-winning Kuwaiti author Bothayna Al-Essa.

The new book censor hasn’t slept soundly in weeks. By day, he combs through manuscripts at a government office, looking for anything that would make a book unfit to publish—allusions to queerness, unapproved religions, any mention of life before the Revolution. By night, pilfered novels pile up in the house he shares with his wife and daughter and the characters of literary classics crowd his dreams. As the siren song of forbidden reading continues to beckon, he descends into a netherworld of resistance fighters, undercover booksellers, and outlaw librarians trying to save their history and culture.

Reckoning with the global threat to free speech and the bleak future it all but guarantees, Bothayna Al-Essa marries the steely dystopia of Orwell’s 1984 with the madcap absurdity of Carroll’s Alice in Wonderland, resulting in a dreadful twist worthy of Kafka. The Book Censor’s Library is a warning call and a love letter to stories and the delicious act of losing oneself in them.

“Like the fluffy white creatures munching cabbage across these pages, I fell right down Al-Essa’s rabbit hole—I’d follow these characters anywhere.”
—Emily Drabinski, president of the American Library Association

“An urgent, sweeping call to arms for the protection of books and book lovers everywhere.”
—Kirkus Reviews

Bothayna Al-Essa is the bestselling Kuwaiti author of nearly a dozen novels and additional children’s books. She is also the founder of Takween, a bookshop and publisher of critically acclaimed works. Her most recent book, The Book Censor’s Library, won the Sharjah Award for Creativity in the novel category in 2021 and is her third novel to appear in English, after Lost in Mecca and All That I Want to Forget.
Tenderloin
Joy Sorman
Translated from the French by Lara Vergnaud

Can killing be an act of love? Hypnotic, gruesome, and exultant, Joy Sorman’s macabre ballet whirls from industrial slaughterhouses to the boutique butcher shops of Paris.

Pim is a delicate youth—stringy, solemn, and prone to bouts of unexplained weeping. When he enrolls in trade school as an apprentice butcher, his mentors have low expectations, but his lanky body conceals a peculiar flame: a passionate devotion to animals. In a business that strives to distance the chopping block from the dinner plate, his ardor might seem like a handicap, but Pim rises through the knife-wielding ranks with a barely-tethered zeal. He scours blood from floor mats and stacks carcasses in the cold room by day. By night he tries to slake his appetites: at the table over boudin sausage and steak tartare, and in bed with women whose flanks, ribs, and haunches he maps with careful fingers.

As Pim’s professional successes mount, his cravings gnaw. Meat crowds his waking thoughts. Even as he carves ripe flesh from exquisite bone, he labors to close the gap between man and beast—to be seen, understood, even loved, by a primordial mind. Will this ravenous obsession yield to madness, or to ecstasy?

“Sorman’s novel is primitive in the best sense, slicing through pretense to return the flesh to its ‘starring role’ in nature and society.”
—Publisher’s Weekly

“In Tenderloin, butchering is a kind of baptism, and with equal precision and tenderness does Sorman remove the fig leaf, that flimsy belief, that we humans are anything other than animals.”
—Ling Ling Huang, author of Natural Beauty

JOY SORMAN is a novelist and documentarian who lives and works in Paris. She has written fourteen books, including Boys, boys, boys, which was awarded the 2005 Prix de Flore, La peau de l’ours, À la folie, and Sciences de la vie, which was published by Restless Books in 2021 as Life Sciences. Tenderloin, for which she received the 2013 François Mauriac prize from l’Académie française, is Sorman’s second novel to be translated into English.
**The Wildcat Behind Glass**

Alki Zei  
Translated from the Greek by Karen Emmerich

Melia is spellbound by the stuffed wildcat in her family’s living room—her cousin swears that it comes to life and roams the streets at night. When she finds a signed note from the animal with secret instructions, a thrilling and dangerous adventure begins.

For Melia and her sister Myrto, summer means a break from Grandfather’s history lessons and weeks of running free at the seaside with their ragtag group of friends. Best of all, cousin Nikos will visit and tell his fabulous stories about the taxidermied wildcat, which opens its blue glass eye when it wants to do good deeds and its black one when it makes trouble. The black eye must be open lately because all the adults have been acting strangely, arguing about politics and fearful of the police. Soon even the children are divided—who can Melia trust? And can the wildcat help keep her family safe?

Set in Greece during the 1930s, when the nation was torn apart by fascism, The Wildcat Behind Glass is an unforgettable tale of family, humanity, and what it means to be free. From its 1963 release to the dozens of international editions and honors that followed including a Mildred L. Batchelder Award, the novel has enchanted generations of young readers. Now, a fresh English translation—the first in over 50 years—breathes new life into the timeless story.

“A fierce and wondrous marvel, this book is for everyone who wants to stand against the danger in the world with courage and imagination—which is to say, this is a book for everyone.”
—Daniel Handler, a.k.a. Lemony Snicket

“At once evocative of times past and more cogent than ever.”
—Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review

**ALKI ZEI** born in Athens in 1923, studied philosophy at the University of Athens, drama at the Athens Conservatory, and screenwriting at the Moscow Cinema Institute. She got her start in publishing by writing YA short stories for the Greek magazine Neaniki Foni. During the Second World War, she was actively involved in the struggle for freedom and democracy and against the German occupation of Greece. From 1974 until her death in 2020, she lived in Athens.
Between this World and the Next
Praveen Herat

WINNER OF THE RESTLESS BOOKS PRIZE FOR NEW IMMIGRANT WRITING

Praveen Herat’s gripping literary thriller is a breathtaking exploration of power, identity, unconditional love, and the question of how far we’ll go to uncover the truth.

Besieged by grief, British war photographer Joseph Nightingale travels to Cambodia, attempting to come to terms with a past that haunts him and a present that has grown unrecognizable. There, a surreal night and a brush with death lead him to Song, a young Cambodian woman grappling with the mounting psychological and physical scars left by a lifetime of poverty and violence. When Song mysteriously disappears, it’s up to Joseph to piece together the clues, and he finds himself entangled in a web of transnational crime, arms dealing, sex trafficking, and corruption, where nothing and no one are what they seem.

Pulse-pounding and poignant, Between this World and the Next balances unforgettable moments of cruelty with scenes of devastating softness. In this arresting, beautifully paced page-turner, Praveen Herat blurs the boundaries between good and evil, inviting readers to reexamine complicity and the consequences of looking the other way.

“A hauntingly beautiful story of loss and war and the lives we build around them. Herat’s rendering of Cambodia is vivid, dark, and heartbreaking, as three-dimensional as any character.”
— I.S. Berry, author of The Peacock and the Sparrow

“Riven by dark acts, the story is uplifted by love . . . A passionate exploration of power, poverty, and greed.”
— Judges Tiphanie Yanique, Deepak Unnikrishnan & Ilan Stavans

PRAVEEN HERAT was born in London to Sri Lankan parents and educated in the UK, where he graduated from Oxford and completed UEA’s Creative Writing MA. In between times, he has worked in a variety of fields: supporting victims of domestic abuse, project-managing museum events, and working with young people as an academic coach. He currently resides in Paris.
Open your eyes. Empty your mind. What’s happening in the present will pass.

This is what Song tells herself.

It’s dark and hot and the middle of the night. Through the light that comes from the open door, she sees a bead of sweat on the tip of his nose.

He’s kind to have given her fruit juice. How long since she’s tasted juice like that. Fresh from Pursat oranges, so sharp, so sweet, the little flakes of pulp floating on her tongue.

No one has touched her in a very long time. So many hands for so many years and then weeks and months of not being touched at all.

He holds her head down, twists it to her good side.

Images circle in her mind. Her old home. The starlight on the floor. Her golden bear under the crook of her arm.

Don’t follow those thoughts, Song tells herself. You’re eighteen, not twelve. Her body goes limp. The bead of sweat finally falls—a drop on her cheek that runs away like a tear.

When they want to imagine someone else, they close their eyes. But his eyes are open, eating her up. He gasps, tenses, stays completely still.

When she looks again, he is standing in the corner of the room. His back is turned and his shoulders are hunched.

“Okun charan,” he says to the back of the door. Thank you very much. As if she had had a choice. She listens to his feet slap down the stairs, then gets up and crosses the courtyard via the walkway.

In the guest apartment she hurries to the wet room. She will wash it away and it will flow to the river. Dissolve into the endless tides of the sea.

After she is clean, she wraps herself in her sampot and winds her krama around her head so the burned side is covered. Down in the building’s entrance hall she lights the incense sticks in the spirit house. She checks the small blue and white saucer of lychee and smells the jasmine.

“Respect the spirits but don’t think they give a damn about your sister,” Mr. Thom makes a point of telling her. “Just accept the truth. She’s as good as dead.”

But Sovanna will find her. And then, anything and everything will be possible.

An army truck thunders along the street. Song blows out the match and ducks into the shadows, crouching between the scooters that are parked inside the hall. Through the metal concertina gate she sees
soldiers in the truck bed. People are unhappy with the results of the elections and the men will make sure they keep their objections to themselves.

Up above, she hears Thom slamming the door of the Naga Bar; the drunken muttering of the last barang as they lurch into the street and hail their motodops. The power goes out suddenly: no more karaoke, no streetlight. After the sound of the engines have faded, there is only a barking dog and the noodle boy tapping his woodblock. Toc-Toc. Toc. Toc-Toc. Toc.

Back in her room, she looks down at the trio of men on the street corner, bathed in the light of the almost full moon: the tire repairer, asleep within a fort of inner tubes; the cyclo driver curled in his passenger seat like a house cat; the motodop lying flat on his back, his feet crossed casually on the handlebars of his Daelim. She knows each man well, his temperament, his mien, their grumbles and quarrels and laughs. She knows the people who dwell in the dark apartments above— their thoughtfulness at sunset, when they emerge onto their balconies to gaze east to the river in the rose-colored light. But none of them know her. Three rainy seasons have passed since Song has stepped outside. This building—this labyrinth of dank stairwells and partitioned boxes where bong thoms and drunken sexpats get their kicks—is her prison.

Once Sovanna has found her, they will go back to Battambang—to the days of playing tag under the stilts of the family home, the chickens squawking and scattering at their feet. In the heat of the midday sun, they will gather under the shade tree, listening to the sounds of the vast, silent country, sensing the year’s turning through the harvests of fruits and vegetables.

At the end of their working nights in Phnom Penh, they would lie together and list those harvests as a way of remembering:

"Rice," she would say, resting her head in Sovanna’s lap.

"Mango," Sovanna would reply.

"The flooded fields of lotus and lilies."

Song imagines she is helping Ma, chopping the greens for the evening meal: grilled buffalo, a special treat that proves their parents do their best, even in times of hardship, even in the midst of war. Ma tells her to call Sovanna and Pa. And when she shouts bong—big sister—Sovanna answers oun—little one—just as she has always done, even though she is only ten minutes older. Then she walks steadily across the field and Song sees her beautiful face in the twilight—a face to which Song’s had once been completely identical.
**The Invisible Elephant**
Anna Anisimova, Illustrated by Yulia Sidneva
Translated from the Russian by Ruth Ahmedzai Kemp
“A joyous story of unique abilities and possibilities.” —**Booklist**

Hardcover List Price: US $22  
ISBN: 9781632063243 • 7.25” x 9.25” • 112 pages  
Children’s Fiction / Ages 6 - 12—illustrated chapter book / blindness / disability / Russia  

**The House of the Lost on the Cape**
Sachiko Kashiwaba  
Illustrations by Yukiko Saito  
Translated from the Japanese by Avery Fischer Udagawa  
“A powerful story of healing.” —**Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review**

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**Fishing for the Little Pike**
Juhani Karila  
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“This twisted love letter to the rural region leaves a lasting impression.” —**Publisher’s Weekly**

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Foreword by Alexander Chee  
Introduction by Silvia Moreno-Garcia  
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**The Simple Art of Killing a Woman**
Patrícia Melo
Translated from the Portuguese by Sophie Lewis

“A deeply affecting novel illuminating the costs of being a woman in a dangerous, misogynistic society.”
—Kirkus Reviews

“Women rise defiant against misogynistic forces in the truth-filled novel *The Simple Art of Killing a Woman*. While the dead cannot be resurrected, lives might be spared with knowledge—and via feminist alliances.”
—Foreword Reviews, Starred Review

Paperback List Price: US $17
ISBN: 9781632063465 • 5.5” x 8.25” • 254 pages
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**An Unruled Body**
Ani Gjika

“A poignant literary and personal achievement.”
—Booklist, Starred Review

“The author’s poetic prowess is clearly reflected in this text’s lyrical, clean lines, as well as in her compassionate but critical analysis of every character of the story, including herself . . . This is a gorgeously written look at a difficult topic.”
—Kirkus Reviews

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eBook ISBN: 9781632063410

**FORTHCOMING IN FALL 2024**

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Alejandra Banca
Translated from the Spanish by Katie Brown
September 10, 2024
ISBN: 9781632063588 • Rights Held: North America, Audio

**The Trial of Anna Thalberg**
Eduardo Sangarcía
Translated from the Spanish by Elizabeth Bryer
October 15, 2024
ISBN: 9781632063748 • Rights Held: World English, Audio

**John the Skeleton**
Triinu Laan
Translated from the Estonian by Adam Cullen
October 1, 2024
ISBN: 9781632063700 • Rights Held: World English, Audio

**What This Place Makes Me: 21st Century American Plays on Immigration**
Shayok Misha Chowdhury, Hansol Jung, Martyna Majok, Mona Mansour, Charlie Oh, Mfonisa Udozie, Jesús I. Valles
Edited by Isaiah Stavchansky
December 3, 2024
ISBN: 9781632062277 • Rights Held: World English
YONDER HIGHLIGHTS

Temple Alley Summer
Sachiko Kashiwaba
Illustrations by Miho Satake
Translated from the Japanese by Avery Fischer Usagawa

“In an instant classic filled with supernatural intrigue and real-world friendship.”
—Kirkus Reviews, Starred Review

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Ellie’s Voice, or Trööömmmpffiff
Piret Raud
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Daniel and Ismail
Juan Pablo Iglesias Yacher & Alex Peris
Translated into English by Ilan Stavans
Translated into Hebrew by Eliezer Nowodworski and Frieda Press-Danieli
Translated into Arabic by Randa Sayegh

“The [story] subtly acknowledges that a new generation will have to figure out how to make peace and that it is possible for children to lead us.”
—The New York Times


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USBBY 2021 Outstanding International Book

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Silvana Gandolfi
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A 2019 Batchelder Honor Book

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In paperback
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In paperback
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RESTLESS CLASSICS HIGHLIGHTS

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George Eliot
Introduction by Rebecca Mead
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Paperback: $24 • 9781632063069 • 6” x 9” • 752 pages
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Winners of the Restless Books Prize for New Immigrant Writing

Between This World and the Next
An Unruled Body
A Down Home Meal for These Difficult Times
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