winter spring 2024
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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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† In memoriam.
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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](https://restlessbooks.org/donate).

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 Devi, 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.

Paperback List Price: US $18.00  
ISBN: 9781632062321  
Publication: March 5, 2024  
5” x 7.125” • 208 pages  
Fiction: South Korea / Cancel Culture / Urban Isolation / Rescue Cats  
Rights Held: North America  
eBook ISBN: 9781632062338

- A SECOND NOVEL FROM PRIZE-WINNING AUTHOR: In her typical style, author Hye-jin approaches the controversial topic of cancel culture from an original perspective, tackling not the drama of cancel culture but what it means to live in a society that gives so much of its care and focus to what takes place on a screen.

- A TIMELY LOOK AT OUR OBSESSION WITH SOCIAL MEDIA: Like Haesoo, participants in discussions on TV news programs are usually coiffed and their conversations carefully scripted. What happens offstage, of course, can bear little resemblance to the manufactured images we project about ourselves.
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 day 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?

“The 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.

“Captivating, immersive, and arrestingy beautiful, *Between This World and the Next* holds you in its grip as it effortlessly navigates the complexities of our modern world.”
— Saleem Haddad, author of *Guapa*

“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*

**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.
From Savagery
Alejandra Banca
Translated from the Spanish by Katie Brown
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ISBN: 9781632063588 • 5” x 7.125” • 288 pages
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What This Place Makes Me: 21st-Century American Plays on Immigration
Shayok Misha Chowdhury, Hansol Jung, Martyna Majok, Mona Mansour, Charlie Oh, Mfonisa Udofia, Jesús I. Valles
Edited by Isaiah Stavchansky
December 3, 2024
Paperback List Price: US $22
ISBN: 9781632062277 • 6” x9” • 350 pages
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John the Skeleton
Triinu Laan
Illustrations by Marja-Liisa Plats
Translated from the Estonian by Adam Cullen
October 1, 2024
Hardcover List Price: US $22
ISBN: 9781632063700 • 190mm x 255mm • 64 pages
Children’s Fiction—Picture Book / Estonia / Family / Aging
Rights: World English • eBook ISBN: 9781632063717

What This Place Makes Me: 21st-Century American Plays on Immigration

COMING SOON

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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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Patricia Melo
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—Kirkus Reviews
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—Foreword Reviews, Starred Review

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Einat Yakir
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Mar 11, 2025 ● Rights Held: World English, Audio

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Linda Bondestam
Translated from the Swedish by A. A. Prime
Mar 25, 2025 ● Rights Held: North America

Lamentations of Nezahualcoyotl
Translated from the Nahuatl by Ilan Stavans
Illustrated by Cuauhtemoc Wetzka
Apr 2, 2025 ● Rights Held: World All Languages, Audio

In a Wilderness of Mirrors
Olufemi Terry
May 7, 2025 ● Rights Held: World English, Audio

The Mysterious Town Beyond the Fog
Sachiko Kashiwaba
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May 28, 2025 ● Rights Held: World English, Audio

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Dr. Camille U. Adams
June 3, 2025 ● Rights Held: World All Languages, Audio
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—The New York Times
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Silvana Gandolfi
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Prize for New Immigrant Writing

The Restless Books Prize for New Immigrant Writing was created in 2015 to honor outstanding debut literary works by first-generation immigrants, awarded for fiction and nonfiction in alternating years. The winner receives $10,000 and publication by Restless Books.

Restless Books congratulates Catharina Coenen for winning the 2023 Prize in Nonfiction! Her collection of essays, Unexploded Ordnance, will be published in 2025.

Submissions for the 2024 Prize in Fiction will be accepted from January 1, 2024, through May 31, 2024.

“Few literary prizes are devoted to the celebration of immigrant writing. Fewer still are dedicated to providing a platform for immigrant writers by publishing their work. Chief among these is the Restless Books Prize for New Immigrant Writing . . . In Restless Books, writers have found a press that champions new voices that push boundaries of form and content.”

— “A Prize for New Immigrant Writing” in Poets & Writers
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