TRANSIT BOOKS
FALL WINTER 2023
The shouts of children woke me in the morning. I opened the front door, but the hallway was quiet. Sunlight streamed in through the windows. It was too cold to open the large living-room window, so I opened the small window above the kitchen sink. Children stood in a ring, staring down at something. Black objects both big and small dotted the frozen paddy fields.

“They’re dead!” the children shouted. “The birds are all dead!”

I squeezed my eyes shut. Dead birds littered the white fields. I put on a sweater and slid the big window open. The cold wind rushed in. There was a black feather stuck in the frame. The second I reached through the open window, it blew in and stuck to my chest.

Why had so many birds died here? It was difficult for someone like me to understand. Truly, I didn’t know a thing; I couldn’t even begin to guess the cause. I had to tell my husband about the dead birds, I had so much to tell him, but he didn’t return. All day I watched the news and ate peanuts. District Y wasn’t the only place to experience mass bird deaths. There were reports of mass bird deaths all over the country. The cause was unclear. Experts speculated that trauma, bad weather, or the noise from local fireworks were to blame.

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My husband returned close to midnight. He looked noticeably thinner. I clasped his face in my hands, but he didn’t crack a smile. He’d always brought back news from the outside
I had probably never done anything much worse than this, first getting my car stuck and then walking into the forest to look for help, really, what could have made me think I'd be able to find help in the forest, in the dark woods, that thought, no, it was totally wrong even to call it a thought, it was more like an impulse, a sudden idea, something like that, something I just came up with. Nonsense is what it was. Pure foolishness. Stupidity. Pure and utter stupidity.

And I’ve never understood why I do things like this. But probably never in my whole horrible life have I ever done anything like this, and how could I, since I’ve never walked into a forest in late autumn before, and so late in the day, and it’s going to get dark soon, soon I won’t even be able to see where I am, and then, well, then I won’t find anything anywhere, and I won’t be able to find my car again either, no, how stupid can I get, no, this is worse than stupidity, this is, no, I don’t even have a word for it. And now I can really almost not see anything, it’s already gotten so dark here between the trees. And then this snow. And then this cold. Because I’m freezing. Yes, I’m really freezing, I feel colder than I can ever remember feeling before. But if I can just get back to my car then I can start it, turn on the heater, and warm up, get some heat into me as they say. Get some heat into me. Here in the middle of the dark forest. And I’m so tired. I need to rest for a minute. But where can I sit down. There, over there, isn’t that a stone over there. Yes it is, a big round stone in the middle of the forest . . .
SEPTOLOGY
Jon Fosse
TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY
Damion Searls
NATIONAL BOOK AWARD, FINALIST
NATIONAL BOOK CRITICS CIRCLE AWARD, FINALIST
INTERNATIONAL BOOKER PRIZE, FINALIST

What makes us who we are? And why do we lead one life and not another?
Asle, an ageing painter and widower who lives alone on the southwest coast
of Norway, is reminiscing about his life. His only friends are his neighbour,
Åsleik, a traditional fisherman-farmer, and Beyer, a gallerist who lives in
the city. There, in Bjørgvin, lives another Asle, also a painter but lonely and
consumed by alcohol. Asle and Asle are doppelgängers—two versions of the
same person, two versions of the same life, both grappling with existential
questions about death, love, light and shadow, faith and hopelessness. The
three volumes of Jon Fosse’s Septology—The Other Name, I is Another, and A
New Name—now collected in paperback, are a transcendent exploration of
the human condition, and a radically other reading experience—incantatory,
hypnotic, and utterly unique.

Praise for Septology
“An extraordinary seven-novel sequence about an old man’s recursive reckoning
with the braided realities of God, art, identity, family life and human life itself…
The books feel like the culminating project of an already major career.”
—Randy Boyagoda, The New York Times

JON FOSSE is one of Norway’s most celebrated
authors and playwrights. Since his 1983 fiction debut,
Fosse has written prose, poetry, essays, short stories,
children’s books, and over forty plays, with more than
a thousand productions performed and translations
into fifty languages.

DAMION SEARLS is a translator from German,
Norwegian, French, and Dutch and a writer in
English. He has translated many classic modern
writers, including Proust, Rilke, Nietzsche, Walser,
and Ingeborg Bachmann.

And I see myself standing there
looking at the two lines crossing
in the middle, one brown and one pur-
ple, and I see that I’ve painted the lines
slowly, with a lot of thick oil paint, and
the paint has run, and where the brown
and purple lines cross the colors have
blended beautifully and I think that I
can’t look at this picture anymore, it’s
been sitting on the easel for a long time
now, a couple of weeks maybe, so now
I have to either paint over it in white
or else put it up in the attic, in the
crates where I keep the pictures I don’t
want to sell, but I’ve already thought
that thought day after day, I think and
then I take the stretcher and let go of
it again and I realize that I, who have
spent my whole life painting, oil paint
on canvas, yes, ever since I was a boy,
I don’t want to paint anymore, ever, all
the pleasure I used to take in painting is
gone, I think and for a couple of weeks
now I haven’t painted anything, and I
haven’t once taken my sketchpad out of
the brown leather shoulderbag hang-
ing above the stack of paintings I’ve set
aside, over there between the hall door
and the bedroom door, and I think that
I want to get rid of this painting and get
rid of the easel, the tubes of oil paint,
yes, everything, yes, I want to get rid
of everything on the table in the main
room, everything that has to do with
painting in this room that’s been both
a living room and a painting studio,
and that’s how it’s been since Ales and I
moved in here so long ago, so long ago,
because it’s all just disturbing me now
and I need to get rid of it, get it out of
here...
INTRODUCING **TRANSIT CHILDREN’S EDITIONS**, a new imprint from Transit Books, highlighting bold, imaginative, visually distinctive children’s books from around the world.

Founded in the San Francisco Bay Area in 2015, Transit Books publishes a carefully curated list of award-winning literary fiction, narrative nonfiction, essay, and literature for children. Our authors have received or been finalists for the National Book Award, the National Book Critics Circle Award, the International Booker Prize, the PEN Translation Prize, and more.

With Transit Children’s Editions, we hope to inspire a younger generation to read beyond our borders, to bring joy and wonder, to challenge and excite, with a list that features a diversity of languages, perspectives, and literary approaches of the highest artistic quality.
For anyone who’s ever been monster-scared comes a lighthearted book about the dark. About what lives in the attic. And about discovering that monsters are—perhaps—mostly scary in your imagination.

There’s a monster living in the attic. Not a loud monster but a quiet one. It’s probably making a kid trap. Each night, it grows in the dark. Everyone knows monsters feed on darkness.

This is Monster-Scared. With humor and charm, award-winning author Betina Birkjær and illustrator Zarah Juul show us how the things we can’t see grow bigger and scarier, how the slightest sound or shadow can send shivers down our back, and how monsters are—perhaps—mostly scary in our imagination.

• Betina Birkjær is the author of Coffee, Rabbit, Snowdrop, Lost, a 2022 Mildred L. Batchelder Honor Book, a finalist for the 2022 Kirkus Prize in Young Readers’ Literature, and a USBBY Outstanding International Book of 2022.
When Deokgu opens a brand new tailor shop in town, all of Seoul is skeptical of his modern styles. Who would want to wear such funny-looking suits? But Deokgu remains devoted to his craft, and it’s not long before the shop begins to flourish, becoming a beloved fixture in the community.

Written and illustrated by Ahn Jaesun, *The Tailor Shop at the Intersection* follows three generations of tailors weaving themselves and their business into the fabric of their community in a rapidly changing Seoul. Ahn’s award-winning illustrations convey with great affection a more complicated story about the pressures that rapid development place on culture, commerce, and local business.

In *The Tailor Shop at the Intersection*, Ahn Jaesun shows how commitment, adaptability, and staying true to yourself help pave the way for success—and how embracing change and honoring tradition can go hand in hand.

• Bologna Ragazzi Award—Opera Prima, Special Mention
What exactly is a piece of art? What is it meant to capture? And how do we find the courage to believe in our work?

It’s the week of her gallery opening and none of Paty’s paintings are ready. She asks her friends to pose in her studio, and the outcome is . . . just dreadful. After seeing the way Paty has portrayed them, one after the other, they leave in a huff. Paty wonders whether she should cancel the whole thing. Fortunately, Michou, the gallery owner, forbids it. And Paty is in for a surprise on opening day . . .

What exactly is a piece of art? What is it meant to capture? How do we find the courage to believe in our work? Claire Lebourg’s watercolor illustrations convey all the worry and self-doubt that comes with any creative practice and show us that maybe the secret lies in believing in yourself.
Brimming with energy and erudition, Lecture is an attempt to restore the lecture’s capacity to wander, question, and excite. Cappello draws on examples from Virginia Woolf to Mary Ruefle, Ralph Waldo Emerson to James Baldwin, blending rigorous cultural criticism with personal history to give new life to knowledge’s dramatic form.

“[Cappello] at once defends the lecture and calls for holistic and creative improvements to the form.”
—The Atlantic

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

“Wise, warm, witty and dizzyingly wide-ranging.”—The New York Times

Taneja interrogates the language of terror, trauma and grief; the fictions we believe and the voices we exclude. Contending with the pain of unspeakable loss set against public tragedy, she draws on history, memory, and powerful poetic predecessors to reckon with the systemic nature of atrocity.

“Stunning... [Taneja] turns a critical lens toward the way language shapes violence... Poetic, urgent, and self-reflective.”—Publishers Weekly, Starred Review

As Joanna Walsh watches the films of Jean-Luc Godard, she considers beauty and desire in life and art. She is captivated by the Paris of his films and the often porous border between the city presented on screen and the one she inhabited herself. With cool precision, and in language that shines with aphoristic wit, Walsh has crafted an exquisitely intimate portrait of the way attention to works of art becomes attention to changes in ourselves.
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GABRIELA YBARRA ...................................................... THE DINNER GUEST
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AHN JAESUN ............................................................. THE TAILOR SHOP AT THE INTERSECTION
CLAIRE LEBOURG ........................................................ HOW DREADFUL!
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