

Graywolf Press

Rights List

Spring 2022

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FICTION

***Life Is Everywhere* by Lucy Ives**

Novel / October 2022 / World English: Graywolf / Translation: Janklow & Nesbit

A virtuosic, radical reimagining of the systems novel by a “rampaging, mirthful genius”
(Elizabeth McKenzie)

Manhattan, 2014. It’s an unseasonably warm Thursday in November and Erin Adamo is locked out of her apartment. Her husband has just left her and meanwhile her keys are in her coat, which she abandoned at her parents’ apartment when she exited mid-dinner after her father—once again—lost control. Erin takes refuge in the library of the university where she is a grad student. Her bag contains two manuscripts she’s written, along with a monograph by a faculty member who’s recently become embroiled in a bizarre scandal. Erin isn’t sure what she’s doing, but a small, mostly unconscious part of her knows: within these documents is a key she’s needed all along.

With unflinching precision, *Life Is Everywhere* captures emotional events that hover fitfully at the borders of visibility and intelligibility, showing how the past lives on, often secretly and at the expense of the present. It’s about one person on one evening, reckoning with heartbreak—a story which, to be fully told, unexpectedly requires many others, from the history of botulism to an enigmatic surrealist prank. Multifarious, mischievous, and deeply humane, Lucy Ives’s latest masterpiece rejoices in what a novel, and a self, can carry.



Praise for Lucy Ives

“Lucy Ives is a daring writer with a wicked sense of humor. Her books announce a plethora of ideas, her purview broad, with interests ranging from ancient history to contemporary art. She brilliantly observes society and culture, and invents stories only she could imagine. Ives’s sense of language and unique mind make her one of our most original contemporary writers.”

—Lynne Tillman

Lucy Ives is the author of the novels *Impossible Views of the World* (Penguin, 2017) and *Loudermilk: Or, The Real Poet; Or, The Origin of the World* (Soft Skull, 2019) and the story collection *Cosmogony* (Soft Skull, 2021). Her writing has appeared in *Aperture*, *Artforum*, *frieze*, *Granta*, *n+1*, and *Vogue*. She lives in New York and Vermont.

***Mother Country* by Jacinda Townsend**
Novel / May 2022 / World: Graywolf

A transnational feminist novel about human trafficking and motherhood from an award-winning author

Saddled with student loans, medical debt, and the sudden news of her infertility after a major car accident, Shannon, an African American woman, follows her boyfriend to Morocco in search of relief. There, in the cobblestoned medina of Marrakech, she finds a toddler in a pink jacket whose face mirrors her own. With the help of her boyfriend and a bribed official, Shannon makes the fateful decision to adopt and raise the girl in Louisville, Kentucky. But the girl already has a mother: Souria, an undocumented Mauritanian woman who was trafficked as a teen, and who managed to escape to Morocco to build another life.

In rendering Souria's separation from her family across vast stretches of desert and Shannon's alienation from her mother under the same roof, Jacinda Townsend brilliantly stages cycles of intergenerational trauma and healing. Linked by the girl who has been a daughter to them both, these unforgettable characters move toward their inevitable reckoning. *Mother Country* is a bone-deep and unsparing portrayal of the ethical and emotional claims we make upon one another in the name of survival, in the name of love.



Praise for *Saint Monkey*

“[A] compelling debut. . . . Townsend’s writing [is] full of fresh turns of phrase and keen insights.”—*The New York Times Book Review*

“An absolute marvel of a book. Jacinda Townsend is dazzling as she transports the reader to a different time and place.”—Roxane Gay

Jacinda Townsend is the author of *Saint Monkey* (Norton, 2015), which won the Janet Heidinger Kafka Prize and the James Fenimore Cooper Prize. She is a graduate of the Iowa Writers’ Workshop and teaches in the MFA program at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

***The House of Rust* by Khadija Abdalla Bajaber**

Novel / October 2021 / World: Graywolf

Rights sold: Italy (66th & 2nd), Arabic (Al Alamy), English/East Africa (Jahazi)

***Winner of the Graywolf Press African Fiction Prize**

An enchanting debut novel about a Hadrami girl in Mombasa

When her fisherman father goes missing, Aisha takes to the sea on a magical boat made of a skeleton to rescue him. She is guided by a talking scholar's cat—and soon crows, goats, and other animals all have their say, too. On this journey Aisha meets three terrifying sea monsters. After she survives a final confrontation with Baba wa Papa, the father of all sharks, she rescues her own father, and hopes that life will return to normal. But at home, things only grow stranger.

Caught between her grandmother's wish to safeguard her happiness with marriage and her own desire for adventure, Aisha is pushed toward a match with a sweet local boy that she doesn't want. Before she can fight her way to independence—as embodied in the book by the mirage-like House of Rust—she must first gain experience and skills to vanquish Almassi, the imprisoned snake-demon ruler of Mombasa.



Praise for *The House of Rust*

“Bajaber’s writing is matter-of-fact and gem-cut. . . . This debut carries the invigorating mystery of the sea, its unpredictable leap and roil.”—*Vulture*

“With sparse, sharply written prose and surreal imaginings, this vivid coming-of-age novel depicts the complexity of childhood, the importance of family, and the thirst for adventure.”
—**BuzzFeed**

“Bajaber’s depictions of Aisha’s daring episodes and her feminist personality consistently shimmer. Fans of modern fairy tales will find much to appreciate.”—*Publishers Weekly*

Khadija Abdalla Bajaber is a poet and novelist with a degree in journalism. A Kenyan of Hadrami descent, she writes about the ill-documented history of the Hadrami diaspora. Her work has been published in *Brainstorm Kenya* and the *Enkare Review*. She lives in Mombasa, Kenya.

***If an Egyptian Cannot Speak English* by Noor Naga**

Novel / April 2022 / World: Graywolf

***Winner of the Graywolf Press African Fiction Prize**

A lyrical and formally innovative novel about a fateful romance between two unnamed narrators: an Egyptian American woman from New York and an Egyptian man from the village of Shobrakheit

Boy documented the Egyptian Revolution quite lucratively as a photographer, but in the crushing aftermath of the uprising he finds himself unemployed and addicted to cocaine. Girl has come to Cairo to “connect with her roots” but does not quite realize the power she will wield there as an American. The two meet through friends, and before long are in a heated if mutually punitive relationship. Boy abandons his roof-top shack and moves in to Girl’s fancy apartment, and things unravel from there.

Noor Naga examines power, tenderness, and accountability in relationships as well as in narrative. She asks: What are the new forms of colonial violence? How does one survive when one autocrat is replaced by another? Who suffers, and how? And who can tell these stories?



Praise for *If an Egyptian Cannot Speak English*

“In *If an Egyptian Cannot Speak English*, Noor Naga finds a form for diasporan consciousness: capacious enough to hold conflicting voices, inventive enough to capture the dream state of life in translation, supple enough to express varieties of heartbreak at the margins of culture.”

—Sofia Samatar

Noor Naga is an Alexandrian writer who was born in Philadelphia, raised in Dubai, and studied in Toronto. Her work has been published in *Granta*, the *Walrus*, the *Common*, *Poetry*, and elsewhere. Her verse-novel *Washes, Prays* was published by McClelland & Stewart in 2020.

***Sinking Bell* by Bojan Louis**
Stories / September 2022 / World: Graywolf

Potent stories that offer a forceful vision of contemporary Navajo life, by an American Book Award winner

An ex-con hired to fix up a school bus for a couple living off the grid in the desert finds himself in the middle of their tattered relationship. An electrician's plan to take his young nephew on a hike in the mountains, as a break from the motel room where they live, goes awry thanks to an untrustworthy new coworker. A night custodian makes the mistake of revealing too much about his work at a medical research facility to a girl who shares his passion for death metal. A relapsing addict struggles to square his desire for a White woman he meets in a writing class with family expectations and traditions.

Set in and around Flagstaff, the stories in *Sinking Bell* depict violent collisions of love, cultures, and racism. In his gritty and searching fiction debut, Bojan Louis draws empathetic portraits of day laborers, metalheads, motel managers, aspiring writers and musicians, construction workers, people passing through with the hope of something better somewhere else. His characters strain to temper predatory or self-destructive impulses; they raise families, choose families, and abandon families; they endeavor to end cycles of abuse and remake themselves anew.



Praise for *Sinking Bell*

“This book rules. I get a whiff of Denis Johnson’s *Jesus’ Son* in *Sinking Bell*. There’s desperation and magic here and work and love and loneliness, and other inexpressible shapes moving underneath it all. Like each of us, Bojan Louis’s characters are making their way either toward light or away from it. That it’s impossible to be totally sure which one is the real magic in these stories, and why they’ll stay with you long after reading.”—**Ander Monson**

“The narratives in *Sinking Bell*, Bojan Louis’s first fiction collection, are driven by the same kinetic, visceral language that gave his American Book Award winning debut poetry collection, *Currents*, its raw lyricism. No matter the genre, Louis’s voice and vision draw power from their foundation in Diné culture. Even when that culture is not the primary subject, its presence creates a complex, central interplay in these stories, set as they are in an often violent, dog-eat-dog, post-capitalist America.” —**Stuart Dybek**

Bojan Louis is Diné of the Naakai Dine’é, born for the Áshííhí. He is the author of a book of poetry, *Currents*, which received an American Book Award. He has been a resident at MacDowell. He teaches creative writing at the University of Arizona.

BACKLIST HIGHLIGHT

***This Mournable Body* by Tsitsi Dangarembga**

Novel / August 2018 / World: Graywolf

Rights sold: UK/Commonwealth, ex. Southern Africa (Faber & Faber), Southern Africa (Jacana Media), Mainland China (under offer), French (Memoire d'Encrier), German (Orlanda), Russian (Eksmo), World Spanish (Menades), Swedish (Tranan), Portuguese/Brazil (Kapulana),

***Shortlisted for the 2020 Booker Prize**

***Winner of the 2021 PEN Pinter Prize**

***Winner of the 2021 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade**

A searing novel about the obstacles facing women in Zimbabwe, by one of the country's most notable authors

Anxious about her prospects after leaving a stagnant job, Tambudzai finds herself living in a run-down youth hostel in downtown Harare. For reasons that include her grim financial prospects and her age, she moves to a widow's boarding house and eventually finds work as a biology teacher. But at every turn in her attempt to make a life for herself, she is faced with a fresh humiliation, until the painful contrast between the future she imagined and her daily reality ultimately drives her to a breaking point.

In *This Mournable Body*, Tsitsi Dangarembga returns to the protagonist of her acclaimed first novel, *Nervous Conditions*, to examine how the hope and potential of a young girl and a fledgling nation can sour over time and become a bitter and floundering struggle for survival. As a last resort, Tambudzai takes an ecotourism job that forces her to return to her parents' impoverished homestead. This homecoming, in Dangarembga's tense and psychologically charged novel, culminates in an act of betrayal, revealing just how toxic the combination of colonialism and capitalism can be.

Tsitsi Dangarembga is the author of two previous novels, including *Nervous Conditions*, winner of the Commonwealth Writers' Prize. She won the 2021 PEN Award for Freedom of Expression. She is also a filmmaker, playwright, and the director of the Institute of Creative Arts for Progress in Africa Trust. She lives in Harare, Zimbabwe.

NONFICTION

***Banzeiro Òkòtó: The Amazon as the Center of the World* by Eliane Brum,
translated from the Portuguese by Diane Whitty**

Nonfiction / March 2023 / World English: Graywolf / Translation: Indent Agency

An extraordinary narrative of personal transformation (and decolonization) and an impassioned rallying cry against the destruction of the Amazon.

In *Banzeiro Òkòtó*, Eliane Brum aims to decolonize herself and her readers by reforesting herself into community with the human and more-than-human in the Amazon, which she makes emphatically clear is the center of our only world. The title signals this work: *banzeiro* is what the Xingu people call the place where the Xingu River grows fierce (like a whirlpool/vortex with claws), and *òkòtó* is a Yoruba word for a shell that spirals outward into infinity.

The book follows Brum as she decides to move to Altamira, known as the most violent city in the Amazon; it is also where the world's third largest dam, the Belo Monte on the Xingu River, was finished in 2019 with devastating results. Brum makes a new home there, but, as she writes, "The Amazon isn't a place where one can go by simply transporting our body, this sum total of bacteria, cells, and subjectivities that we are. That's not how it works. The Amazon leaps inside us like an anaconda striking, strangling the backbone of our thoughts and mixing us in with the planet's marrow." She forges connections with local and international environmental justice activists to fight alongside displaced communities and against the corrupt administration of Jair Bolsonaro.

Eliane Brum is the author of *The Collector of Leftover Souls* (Graywolf/Granta Books, 2019), which was longlisted for the National Book Award for translated literature. Her work as a journalist has won more than 40 prizes. She is a columnist for *El País* and regularly collaborates with the *Guardian*.

***Shelter: A Tale of Homeland, Baltimore* by Lawrence Jackson**
Nonfiction / April 2022 / World English: Graywolf / Translation: Serendipity

A personal exploration of the history of Baltimore, through the lens of homeownership and real estate

When Lawrence Jackson returns to his childhood home of Baltimore for a teaching job at Johns Hopkins, he decides to live in a somewhat wealthier (and whiter) and bourgeois neighborhood called Homeland, rather than the gentrifying neighborhood around the university where people seem to expect him to live.

With his search for a new home as a starting point, Jackson explores the history of not just his neighborhood, but of Baltimore and Maryland generally, revealing their Southern roots and how much they are still governed by the legacy of slavery. One chapter focuses on a boat trip Jackson takes down the shore to find one of the places where Frederick Douglass—a native Baltimorean—was enslaved. Other chapters trace Jackson’s on and off relationship to church-going, and his family’s history in the black Episcopal church in Baltimore; his involvement with a jazz concert in the Hopkins neighborhood of Homewood; and his efforts at home improvement.

Throughout, Jackson asks what it means to be from a place but outside of its history, and wonders about the proper (or available) responses to brutality while securing safety and security and a place for oneself and one’s family.



Praise for *Shelter*

“There are an endless number of wonderful things to say about Lawrence Jackson’s *Shelter*—from luminous to breathtaking to just being outright admirable. Jackson has the mind of a historian, but he is also something of a poet. *Shelter* is a singular achievement.”—Edward P. Jones

Lawrence Jackson is a professor at Johns Hopkins University, where he teaches literature and history, focusing on African American culture. He is the author of *Chester B. Himes: A Biography* (Norton), *The Indignant Generation* (Princeton), *My Father’s Name* (University of Chicago), and *Ralph Ellison: Emergence of Genius* (University of Georgia). He lives in Baltimore.

***Just Us: An American Conversation* by Claudia Rankine**

Essay / September 2020 / World: Graywolf

Rights sold: UK/Commonwealth (Penguin), German (Spector), Portuguese/Brazil (Todavia), Italian (66th & 2nd), world Spanish (Eterna Cadencia/Seven Stories), Denmark (Kronstork)

A perceptive and relevant new work of nonfiction by the author of *Citizen*

Revelatory, funny, and ingeniously written, the essays in *Just Us* take place in transitional spaces—on airplanes, at a diversity training session, in a therapist’s office, at a dinner party, after a play, on the internet—where presumed neutrality gives way to American culture’s overwhelming whiteness. Claudia Rankine questions what it means in these spaces to interrogate white privilege, well-meaning liberal politics, white male aggression, the implications of blondness, and white supremacy in the White House, the Brett Kavanaugh hearings, and the alarming move toward Brexit.

With a brilliant interplay between text and visuals, *Just Us* examines intimacy and friendship, and brings us into a necessary conversation about what we don’t know.



Praise for *Just Us*

“Rankine has emerged as one of America’s foremost scholars on racial justice. . . . [To] a past we have avoided reckoning, Rankine will be helping America understand itself, one conversation at a time.”—**The Associated Press**

Claudia Rankine is the author of *Citizen* and four previous books, including *Don’t Let Me Be Lonely*. Her work has appeared recently in the *Guardian*, the *New York Times Book Review*, the *New York Times Magazine*, and the *Washington Post*. She is a MacArthur Fellow and teaches at Yale University.

POETRY

***Customs* by Solmaz Sharif**

Poetry/ March 2022 / World: Graywolf

Rights sold: UK/Commonwealth (Bloomsbury), France (Unes)

The devastating second collection by Solmaz Sharif, author of *Look*, a finalist for the National Book Award

In *Customs*, Solmaz Sharif examines what it means to exist in the nowhere of the arrivals terminal, a continual series of checkpoints, officers, searches, and questionings that become a relentless experience of America. With resignation and austerity, these poems trace a pointed indoctrination to the customs of the nation-state and the English language, and the realities they impose upon the imagination, the paces they put us through. While Sharif critiques the culture of performed social skills and poetry itself—its foreclosures, affects, successes—she begins to write her way out to the other side of acceptability and toward freedom.

Customs is a brilliant, excoriating new collection by a poet whose unfolding works are among the groundbreaking literature of our time.



Praise for *Look*

“Language, in this collection, is called upon as victim, executioner, and witness. . . . An artful lexicographer, Sharif shows us that the diameter of a word is often as devastating as the diameter of a bomb.” —Natalie Diaz, *The New York Times Book Review*

“A brilliant, even perfect, book of poems.” —Eileen Myles

Solmaz Sharif teaches at Arizona State University.

BACKLIST HIGHLIGHT

***Postcolonial Love Poem* by Natalie Diaz**

March 2020 / World: Graywolf

Rights sold: UK/Commonwealth (Faber & Faber), World Spanish (Vaso Roto), France (Editions Globe), Denmark (Kronstork), Sweden (Ramus)

****Winner of the Pulitzer Prize**

*** Finalist for the National Book Award, the Los Angeles Times Book Prize, the Forward Prize**

Postcolonial Love Poem is an anthem of desire against erasure. Natalie Diaz’s brilliant second collection demands that every body carried in its pages—bodies of language, land, rivers, suffering brothers, enemies, and lovers—be touched and held as beloveds. Through these poems, the wounds inflicted by America onto an indigenous people are allowed to bloom pleasure and tenderness: “Let me call my anxiety, *desire*, then. / Let me call it, *a garden*.” In this new lyrical landscape, the bodies of indigenous, Latinx, black, and brown women are simultaneously the body politic and the body ecstatic. In claiming this autonomy of desire, language is pushed to its dark edges, the astonishing dunefields and forests where pleasure and love are both grief and joy, violence and sensuality.

Diaz defies the conditions from which she writes, a nation whose creation predicated the diminishment and ultimate erasure of bodies like hers and the people she loves. *Postcolonial Love Poem* unravels notions of American goodness and creates something more powerful than hope—a future is built, future being a matrix of the choices we make now, and in these poems, Diaz chooses love.



Praise for *Postcolonial Love Poem*

“Diaz’s collection is no doubt one of the most important poetry releases in years, one to applaud for its considerable demonstration of skill, its resistance to dominant perspectives and its light wrought of desire.” —*The New York Times Book Review*

“Groundbreaking. . . . Entire dissertations could be written about Diaz’s use of light and color in this book’s lithe lyrics. . . . An unparalleled lyric work.”—*Booklist, starred review*

Natalie Diaz is the author of the poetry collection *When My Brother Was an Aztec*. She has received many honors, including a MacArthur Fellowship, a US Artists Ford Fellowship, and a Lannan Literary Fellowship. She teaches at Arizona State University.

Recent acquisitions/forthcoming publications

Animal Joy by **Nuar Alsadir** (Fitzcarraldo)
The Tribe and Falsa Guerra by **Carlos Manuel Álvarez** (Fitzcarraldo)
The Sky above the Roof by **Nathacha Appanah** (Gallimard)
Black and Female by **Tsitsi Dangarembga** (Faber & Faber)
Dr. No by **Percival Everett** (Melanie Jackson)
Voyager by **Nona Fernandez** (Ampi Margini)
Ten Planets by **Yuri Herrera** (MB Agencia)
Elixir by **Kapka Kassabova** (Wylie Agency)
Predator by **Ander Monson** (Wylie Agency)
The Consequences by **Manuel Muñoz** (Stuart Bernstein)
A Line in the World by **Dorthe Nors** (Ahlander Agency)
Dysphoria Mundi by **Paul Preciado** (Casanovas & Lynch)
Dark Days by **Roger Reeves** (WME)
Owlish by **Dorothy Tse** (Asia Literary Agency)
Sterling Karat Gold by **Isabel Waidner** (Peninsula)