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Publishing House

Rights Guide

2010 Frankfurt

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HIGHLIGHTS

László Garaczi

LÁSZLÓ GARACZI was born in 1956 in Budapest. He is a writer, poet, dramatist and screenwriter, a cult figure of new writing in Hungary. His autobiographically inspired „Lemurian trilogy”, recounting first the childhood, then the youth, and finally the military service of a young man, has gained him critical and popular appraisal nationwide.

FACE AND ABOUT-FACE (ARC ÉS HÁTRAARC)

Novel, 2010, 173 pages

„Well seasoned with soldiers' slang, the book with it's colloquial language and smooth, easy-going style is a real treat to the reader.”
– Kulter.hu

Face and About-Face is the story of the army: a boy is called up for compulsory military service. He is supposed to do something no nineteen-year-old boy could do and remain of sound mind and body: that is the essence and undeclared goal of military service. It is an education. It breaks you in, and what it breaks you into means the order of the golden years of socialism, the mid 1970s. The narrator, nicknamed Bones, talks about himself sometimes in first person, sometimes in third person. He is capable of doing anything in order to be hospitalized and to nurse his hopes of discharge, even breaking his own arm.

Face and About-Face is not a nostalgic soldier's story. Neither is it an incitement against inhumanity. The world is horrible, brutal and inhuman as it is, as if inhumanity were trickling from the world's core, as if gravity itself were the most outrageous act of inhumanity, as if the physical laws of the world could not bear to have man grow up in it, as if matter itself rejected any kind of moral. Everyone uses and abuses everyone else without really wanting to, and everyone humiliates everyone else without being driven by any particularly brutal instinct or insidious goal. Yet we are well-versed in the tricks of the trade, at least as far as humiliation is concerned. How can people be humiliated? The military is the site of this ingenuity.

Even before beginning his military service the boy is familiar with similar settings. The school works just the same, it is a precursor of the army. Bones is like Camus's Meursault in many respects, except that he does not commit a murder, though it could have befallen him as well. It is little more than a matter of chance that he does not become a murderer, if not of another human being than of himself, so much does he long to flee. Not because of any longing for freedom. He is guided by more nebulous, concealed sentiments. Or if he does know his mind, he is incapable of putting his wishes into words. Although he collects words and records strange and unknown expressions in folders, he remains mute. He collects words because utterance, naming and eventually writing may relieve this paralysis, as if the horror uttered might lose its true force by having been voiced.

Rights sold to:

Austria, Droschl

Also in the Backlist:

MetaXa (*MetaXa*, novel, 2006, 164 pages) In this story of a cellist crushed between two women, Garaczi provides the reader with a view of the eternal experience of human foolishness that shapes all our lives. The reader develops as the plot progresses and although you may become no wiser, the plasticity and perfection of his prose will get you in the end.



Krisztián Grecsó



KRISZTIÁN GRECSÓ was born in 1977. He works as an editor for *Élet és Irodalom*, the most prestigious literary magazine of the country. Grecsó has written five books and won the most prestigious Hungarian prizes. He lives in Budapest. <http://www.grecso.hu>

LONG TIME NO SEE (ISTEN HOZOTT)

Novel, 2005, 319 pages

"His wandering motifs and marvellous depiction, cast in his own personal 'Grecsó idiom', with everyday miracles familiar from the works of magic realist authors, propel the author to the forefront of younger fiction writers in Hungary."

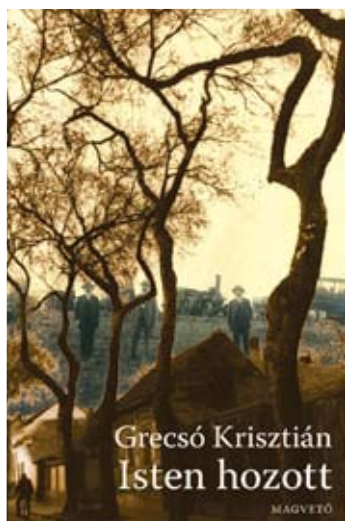
– Népszabadság

Grecsó's first volume of extended fiction is a coming-of-age novel; a singular detective story which brings unusual events in the life of a provincial village in Hungary. An orphan, Gergely has to leave the village as a young boy to pursue his studies, marking the break-up of the Ede Klein Club. He returns as an adult to explore his roots and starts to ask questions about his past and village history.

He suspects that Ede Klein, the man after whom the children's club is named and who was expelled from the village in 1948, may have been his father, although in the end that does not prove to be the case. However, a blood libel case actually did occur in Szegvár in 1948 resulting in the expulsion of one of its residents. The Klein diaries, written to Aunt Panni (who may be Gergely's mother), occupy an important role in the village: although they don't know anything about it for certain, everyone has their own interpretation, whether they think it contains prophecies of the future or reveals dark secrets from the past.

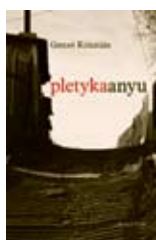
Mystical matters play a major role in the novel with threads of superstition and local lore weaving their way through its fabric, the roots of which stem back to an unusual religiosity, pagan belief, and frequent drunkenness: shadows without their owners appear on the streets and the hair of young girls turns grey overnight.

Masses of marvellous subsidiary stories about the strange residents of the village, their lives both tragic and comic, provide the reader with an insight into the realities of rural Hungarian society.



Rights sold to:

Croatia, Fraktura – Italy, H2O – Czech Republic, Kniha Zlin – Germany, Claassen – Slovenia, Didakta – Turkey, Acik Defter



Also in the Backlist:

Mother Gossip (*Pletykaanyu*, novel, 2008, 194 pages) The twelve short stories of the book are loosely linked as all the characters inhabit a closed community where everybody knows everybody else and like nothing more than to badmouth one dear neighbour to the next. *Mother Gossip* is set in the unruly world of the Hungarian lowlands where however fresh the fruit, its roots burrow deep into the way things have always been.

Dance School (*Tánciskola*, novel, 2008, 304 pages) A young lawyer finds himself in an unfamiliar town where he is forced to confront temptation, the sublime, the ridiculous, the wonder of women, and the horror of death. He doesn't know whether the devil is toying with him or the endless struggle of everyday life has pushed him to the limit. Chance love affairs and a selection of exotic drugs provided by his uncle make everything too confusing to handle.

Rights sold to: Czech Republic, Kniha Zlin



Szilárd Rubin

SZILÁRD RUBIN was born in 1927 in Budapest and died in 2010. He has written five books, two of which have earned him a late, but worldwide recognition: his unique and concise writing, mixing sentimentality with cruel self-examination has been compared to works of Marcel Proust, William Faulkner and F. Scott Fitzgerald.

CHICKEN PLAY (CSIRKEJÁTÉK)

Novel, 1963 / 2004, 214 pages

"It is really rare to read such a detailed examination of self-ugliness in Hungarian with a lack of sentimentalism and the cold fire of dispassionate curiosity. It is a naked, pagan look, not objective but straight and outright. Rare indeed. Calmness. Calmness after defeat, or even in shame; calmness in hysteria: you get what you got. It's the calmness that makes this book unique; a meteor, a Martian – but still."
– Péter Esterházy

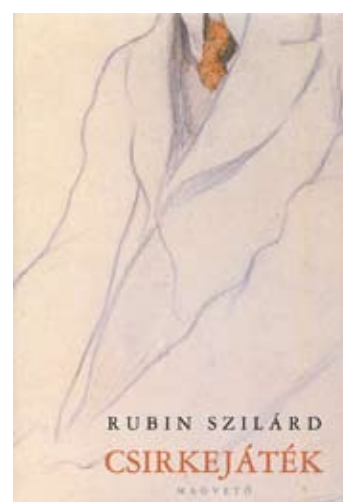
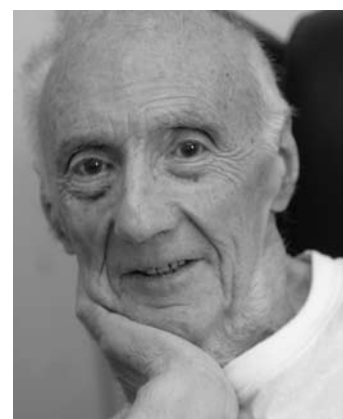
The title refers to a game where players have to hold out sitting on rails as long as possible despite a train rushing near. The novel is the story of two young lovers in post-World War II Hungary. Attila is a poor, aspiring writer, and Orsolya is the descendant of a rich bourgeois German family. Attila felt drawn to Orsolya since they were children, but he dares speak to her for the first time only after the war, when she returns from burned down Dresden to her former home town near Budapest, still marked by her recovery from Typhus. Because her family is German, their former riches are all gone, and they have to rebuild from scratch their pharmacy which they had once owned. In contrast, Attila seems to emerge as a winner under the new socialist rule – so the two form an unlikely coalition turned upside down. But the obstacles Attila and Orsolya face are strikingly similar to the old days: Orsolya's family objects to the relationship, and they quite openly point out to Attila that they don't consider him a good match for Orsolya.

Soon, Attila and Orsolya start hurting and humiliating each other despite their love. Orsolya wants to end their relationship, but Attila keeps harassing her until she agrees to marry him. However, on the first night of their honeymoon he finds out that she only agreed to the wedding so that she could take up a job in Budapest, and she insists on getting a divorce as soon as possible.

Attila's obsession with Orsolya and his refusal to let go of his childhood dreams becomes overpowering, and it loses him all his friends who try to reason with him. In the finishing chapter, Attila watches Orsolya and her new husband through an opera glass at the airport twenty years after they first fell in love, but this time he has no one waiting for him at home.

Rights sold to:

Germany, Rowohlt – Slovakia, Slovart – Spain, Backlist – France, Galaade





ROMAN NUMERAL ONE (RÓMAI EGYES)

Novel, 1985 / 2010, 130 pages

„*Roman Numeral One is full of beauty, with exceptionally touching and memorable parts, inviting the reader to return to this book time and time again.*”

– Élet és Irodalom

Originally published in 1985 and republished in 2010 with great critical acclaim, *Roman Numeral One* is a poetic recollection of an impossible love story between a middle-aged writer who „has grown old but has never managed to grow up”, and an enigmatic, fiercely independent and frivolous dentist called Piroska. As the narrator waits for the long hoped-for return of his lover in a provincial thermal bath, he recalls in carefully ordered fragments his youth in war-torn Hungary, the poor but glamorous life of artists in the seventies – including his long therapeutic stay at Karlovy Vary during the film festival – and the curious events of his love with Piroska, constantly changing between sheer hopelessness and ruthless joy.

The novel can also be read as a *roman à clef*, since in the two friends of the protagonist, one can easily identify the world-renowned poet János Pilinszky and internationally acclaimed Hungarian film director Miklós Jancsó.

Called „one of the most mysterious love stories of Hungarian prose” (Litera.hu), *Római egyes* is a sort of sequel, or sister-book to Rubin’s *Csirkejáték*, despite its concise size, this short novel gives a unique panorama of after-war and socialist Hungary, and presents a deeply touching story of ageing, of giving up on our greatest hopes and finding redemption in silence and simplicity – all this in a beautifully weaved prose that mixes the melancholy of Proustian recollections with the grotesque images of Central Europe’s kafkaesque experiences.

Rights sold to:

Germany, Rowohlt

György Spiró

GYÖRGY SPIRÓ was born in 1946 in Budapest. He is a writer, a dramatist and a translator and scholar of Polish literature. He is one of the most frequently played contemporary playwrights of Hungary.

SPRING COLLECTION (TAVASZI TÁRLAT)

Novel, 2010, 288 pages

"It's not a bad idea for a man to get admitted to hospital a couple of days before a revolution breaks out, stay in until it's been quashed and recuperate quietly at home during the ensuing purge." These are the opening lines of György Spiró's latest novel, *Spring Collection*, that presents the reader with a shocking picture of the 56 Hungarian Revolution. The main protagonist is an engineer by the name of Gyula Fátray who, like so many other qualified professionals at that time, is trying to get along first as a simple worker before the Second World War, and after it as a communist party member, an idealist, and leader of planning in a newly founded factory. Just days before mass protests begin in October, he is admitted to hospital for an operation for haemorrhoids. He returns home after the fighting to be faced by a Soviet-occupied Budapest.

This novel commemorates the unbearably absurd machinations of the dictatorial regime in which not even those innocent could feel safe. When Gyula's name appears in a newspaper article alongside some conspirators against the state, he finds himself ostracised by his best friends and closest colleagues virtually overnight. It no longer seems to matter that he was in hospital for the duration of the revolution and that the charges are false. Just as in Kafka's *Trial*, history marches mercilessly towards an excruciating outcome.

Gyula's situation is made all the more difficult by the fact that his wife, Kati, a tough communist, seems not to understand a thing because she is so wrapped up in herself and her role in organising an art installation known as the Spring Collection.

This novel recalls the purges that came after 56 with touching authenticity. At the end, on May 1st of 1957 the whole nation, the majority of which had revolted against the system half a year earlier, submitted to the new communist leadership that did not understand that Hungary had been defeated for decades. Our hero's life hangs by a single thread, and there is a special twist in the story that makes it possible for him to survive. The false charge and ensuing expulsion from society mark the beginning of the process which eventually led to the trial and execution of Imre Nagy. The impossibility of family life provides a dramatic parallel to the historical parody of a failed, conquered country and it is from this double story that one of György Spiró's most exciting novels is born.

CAPTIVITY (FOGSÁG)

Novel, 2005, 770 pages

„Ethically as well as historically, this parable of grand proportions [...] can get its feet under any literary table you care to mention..."

– Élet és Irodalom

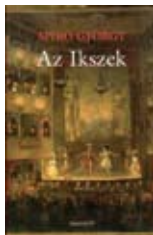
Spiró's fourth major novel has become the literary sensation of 2005 in Hungary. Set in the first century after the birth of Jesus Christ, the new novel is set in the Roman Empire when Christianity was first emerging as a religion. The hero, Uri (Gaius Theodorus), is a Jew who is born





and grows up in Rome's Jewish community. He is a puny, unprepossessing, short-sighted, young man, whom his father, in return for risking his entire tiny fortune as a loan to a high imperial official, gets instated as a member of the delegation that takes the ritual tax for the Jewish community of Rome to Jerusalem every year. Travelling through the eastern half of the Roman Empire, the first great global economy in history, Uri spends time in Judea and Alexandria before finally making his way back to Italy. Along the way, he is imprisoned by Herod's officials for a week in Jerusalem (being joined by two thieves and, it would seem, Jesus himself shortly before their crucifixion) before dining with Pontius Pilate. He is then forced to work among peasants in the Judean countryside before making his way to Alexandria in Egypt. There, he wins a place for three years at the city's elite grammar school, indulges in the pleasures provided by the local prostitutes, and lives through a pogrom with the erection of the first ghetto in history. Uri returns to Rome to find his father has died during his absence and that he is now obliged to take on repayment of the money his father borrowed. He works first as secretary to some of the richest Jewish dignitaries and later as a labourer on a palace for the Emperor Nero, before he is unjustly labelled as being a Nazarene and exiled from his birthplace as a penniless outlaw.

Although he eventually acquires a family, he dies a lonely, neglected figure in wretched circumstances. The very last sentence of the book runs: "I still want to live, he thought to himself, and was lost in wonder." He therefore leads an exciting, varied, and truly adventure-packed life, which offers him the opportunity to become versed in a dozen or more very different occupations. During the course of events, he transforms himself into a true intellectual of his time, reading widely, learning a clutch of languages, acquiring first-hand knowledge of a thousand and one things, and honing a first-class intellect. Despite finding himself in peril on several occasions, but blessed with luck, he ultimately fails to make anything of his life.



Rights sold to:

Italy, Ponte alle Grazie – Russia, Inostranka

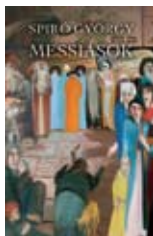
**FULL AND AUTHORISED ENGLISH AND RUSSIAN TRANSLATION
AVAILABLE FOR PUBLICATION FREE OF CHARGE**

Also in the Backlist:

The X-es (*Az Ikszek*, novel, 2007, 542 pages) Set in a fractured Poland at the end of the 18th century, this novel tells the story of struggling theatre director Osiński and the return of a legendary actor long past his prime, whose pursuit of popularity is disturbed by mysterious critical articles signed simply with „x-es”.

Messiahs (*Messiasok*, novel, 2007, 646 pages) In the Polish émigré community of Paris in 1840, a mysterious figure appeared and established a religious sect, claiming to be the Lord himself, and seducing such literary greats as Mickiewicz and Słowacki. This gripping novel tells the story of their social and political machinations. *Rights sold to: Poland, W.A.B.*

Brideride (*Feleségverseny*, novel, 2009, 337 pages) An utopian vision of what Hungary may become in the near future, this satirical novel recounts the events of a country where the communist king elects his wife through a TV show, the country loses part of its territory, and everything becomes even more absurd than it is today.



Krisztina Tóth

KRISZTINA TÓTH was born in 1967. She has written two books of short stories, and is one of Hungary's most highly acclaimed young poets. She has won several awards, and her poetry has been translated into many languages. She lives in Budapest where, apart from writing and translating (from French), she designs and produces stained-glass windows. www.tothkrisztina.hu

BARCODE (VONALKÓD)

Short Stories, 2006, 186 pages

„In Vonalkód she takes the reader on a wild ride, alternately provoking bursts of laughter and gasps of horror, often in the span of a single page.”

– Rachel Miller

This is the first work of prose from a remarkable poet. It contains fifteen short stories, each having subtitle containing the expression line/bar.

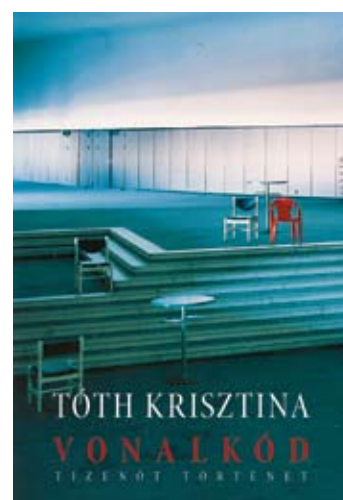
The seventh story, Warm Milk, has the subtitle “Barcode” – it is about an American girl, Kathy, who visits her friend in Budapest in the early eighties. Kathy disrupts her host's life, edges her out of her room, and unravels her relationship with her boyfriend, Robi. The young girl eventually begins to consider suicide. Barcode acts as a metaphor for Western goods and therefore symbolises an unreachable world faraway from Hungary.

The narrator of the stories is either a young girl or a young woman, depending on the reader's interpretation of each story and some may see her as the same person all the way through. However, every action is seen from a woman's point of view: childhood acquaintances, school camps, love, children, deceit, and journeys set against the backdrop of the Kádár era towards its close.

The body, especially the body in pain, carries a central position in the work. Tóth often links the ailing human body to the wounded bodies of animals and the structures of buildings. And she also does a fair share of humoring the body. Directly alongside moments of the absurd, Tóth peppers her stories with the brutal and the grotesque. She builds a narrative world which is both tragic and comic. Her world is at once unsettling and invigorating as she leads the readers on a romp through everyday existence distilled to its extremes, with all of its attendant traumas, serendipities and vagaries in the spotlight.

Rights sold to:

Bulgaria, Ergo – Czech Republic, Agite/Fra – Czech Republic, Tympanum (audio book) – Germany, Luchterhand – France, Gallimard – Finland, Avian – Serbia, B92 – Spain, El Nadir



Miklós Vajda



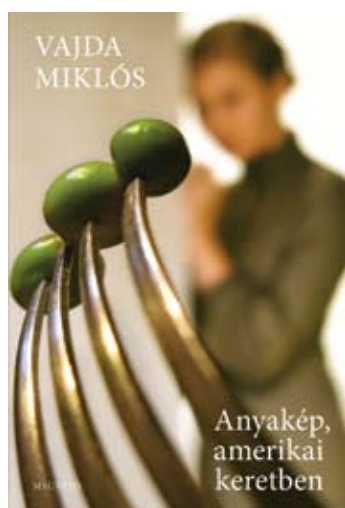
MIKLÓS VAJDA was born in 1931 in Budapest. He is a writer, essayist and translator: his works include a great number of translations from British, American and German authors, and about five dozen plays for the theatre. He was the editor of the review *The New Hungarian Quarterly* until 2005. *Portrait of a Mother in an American Frame* is his first novel which contains his own family story and the fatal history of Hungary in the 20th century.

ANYAKÉP, AMERIKAI KERETBEN (PORTRAIT OF A MOTHER IN AMERICAN FRAME)

Memoire-novel, 2009, 207 pages

„Elegant, reserved but not unemotional. Ironic, but not cynical. So this portrait, or this fragment of an autobiography is the triumph of good taste and the sense of proportions. But above all, it is touching. And we can also add, without further ado, that it's beautiful.”

– Litera.hu



Vajda grew up in a rich family in the first half of the century. His father was a lawyer who represented the Hungarian investments of the Habsburgs. His mother was born into a noble family. Because of the special family background they were fugitives during the WWII and after that in the communist era alike. His father died right after the war and his mother spent years in prison than moved to America immediately after her release. Their son stayed in Hungary because he fell in love with somebody else's wife. Since that time mother and son lived their lives far from each other.

The key figure of the family's hard years was a beautiful woman, the most famous actress around the middle of the century, Gizi Bajor – the godmother of Miklós Vajda. Gizi Bajor also died tragically in 1951, murdered by her husband. She, as the favourite actress of the two dictators Horthy and Rákosi, tried to do everything to save her friend, Vajda's mother and her godson. She hid the whole family during the war and then frequently wrote letters to the dictator Mátyás Rákosi pleading for her friend's release (those letters are the supplement of the book).

The three of them are the protagonists of the novel – the antagonist is the History itself. Vajda as narrator tries to tell the memories of the mother and understand her years in America as well as the death of his godmother. The novel is a confession of a son who couldn't tell how thankful he is to these women.

Rights sold to:

Braumüller, Austria

FRONTLIST

Éva Berniczky

ÉVA BERNICZKY was born in 1962 into the ethnic Hungarian minority population of the small Trans-Carpathian (or Ruthenian) town of Beregszász, then part of the USSR but now in Ukraine, close to the border with Hungary. She has previously published two collections of children's stories and two short-story collections in her native land before joining Magvető with her two collections of short stories and her novel.

CASTLEKEY (VÁRKULCSA)

Short stories, 2010, 192 pages

„Éva Berniczky can write fiction into reality, and turn reality, absurd in it's own right, back into fiction, while establishing her very own version of magical realism, filled up with exquisite flavours of the Transcarpathian.”

– Prae.hu

„Before I could start making up the Chief Laundry Master, I happened to meet his real-life version. Unfortunately I have the bad habit of doing this too early, I tend to breath life into my imaginary creations with a pathological impatience”, confesses Éva Berniczky at the beginning of one of her stories, although it is not easy to decide whether she's telling the truth or just plays one more of her intricate narrative tricks with the reader.

We are in Ukraine, in Transcarpathia, to be more precise, where the absurd is not as far from reality as you might think. It is a traditionally impoverished and deserted part of the world, remote from any centre, and nowadays a devastatingly run-down, oppressively Eastern-European, ex-socialist land, inhabited by a mix of ethnic Hungarians, Russians and Ukrainians. But the author is at home in this ambivalent world, and knows every little corner of it, recounting the most unbelievable events with such a natural charm that even the reader feels familiar with the setting. The passionate rooster-merchant is immersed in fornication with the stitching girls among the textile bales, the cystitic chimney-sweeper's soul gets drunk to match his body, and the man who was born in the river falls back to it while he's peeing, the coffin maker marries his own daughter who was raised in a different household – all under the storytelling gaze of the narrator, watching from her attic room from the castle high above the river Ung.

The twenty short stories contained in the book are all beautiful and horrifying, ridiculous and touching at the same time, slowly building up a whole world of intriguing, funny and loveable oddballs from the peripheries of everyday life – and everyday reality.

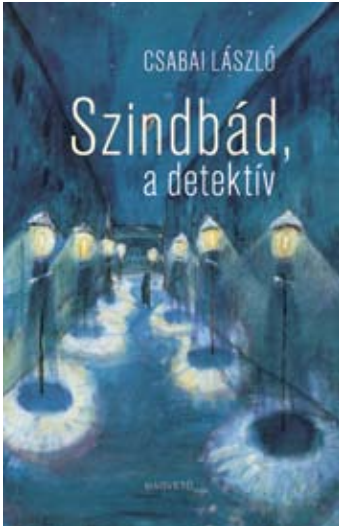
Also in the Backlist:

The Egg-seller's Day of Atonement (*A tojásárus hosszúnapja*, short stories, 2004, 193 pages) The seventeen short stories recount the lives of people in Transcarpathia: luckless, penniless figures devoid of material ambitions, whose desires and emotional worlds are nevertheless just as complex and rich as those of their more fortunate fellow men.

Midwife Bereft her Womb (*Méhe nélkül a bába*, novel, 2007, 202 pages) Two women, both of whom live in Transcarpathia, have never met – but when one of them falls for the light-eyes book collector Szvitelszki, she sets off after the other woman, recreating her from the fabric of her own diary who emerges from her cocoon like a butterfly that flutters away, leaving her love behind and nothing more than a memory.



László Csabai



LÁSZLÓ CSABAI was born in 1969 in Nyíregyháza. He teaches foreign language and is a librarian at a school. His first book of short stories was published in 2006.

SZINDBÁD, THE DETECTIVE (SZINDBÁD, A DETEKTÍV)

„László Csabai was born in 1969 in Nyíregyháza. [...] This is what we all know of him. Until now, a few people also knew that in the recent years he emerged out of the blue on the Hungarian literary scene, and now it seems to me that he'll stay there for good.”

– laudation for Csabai's Vörös Postakocsi Prize

The scene of this crime novel told through fourteen individual stories, is an imaginary, but well detailed and colourful little town in Hungary, Nyárliget – and the time is the very real 20th century, from the 1920s up until the end of World War II.

Szindbád, a Hungarian just returned from his childhood spent in Istanbul, is a freshly graduated detective and the son of one of the most respected patrons of the town. He quickly succeeds to impress his bosses with his logic and psychological insight, solving the mysteries of the town one by one, ranging from the pettiest crimes such as theft and forgery to the more serious ones as murder. One of the great merits of Csabai's book is that the crimes are not over-complicated fantasies, but totally believable events; Szindbád is not a superhero, but a practical and consequent detective, whose mysterious aura comes from his childhood in the Middle East, and his experiences in that faraway exotic civilisation. The book progresses from one case to the other in loosely connected chapters, only to reveal the big picture and a great surprise at the very end – depicting the long-gone world of the twenties and the forties with great detail and sensibility, in the best tradition of historical crime novels.

György Dragomán

GYÖRGY DRAGOMÁN was born in 1973 in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureş, Romania) and has been living in Budapest since 1988. His novel *A fehér király* (The White King, 2005) was a huge international success and has been translated to more than twenty-five languages.

<http://dragomangyorgy.hu/>

THE WHITE KING (A FEHÉR KIRÁLY)

Novel, 2005, 303 pages

"He treats his subject in a truly exuberant, shocking work of consistently high standard."

– Népszabadság

This book conjures up a world of Eastern European dictatorships, yet analyses the general human condition of how it is possible for us to survive, indeed carry on hoping, in even the most dreadful circumstances, with people whose lives have been disfigured by political brutality—trying, despite their vulnerability, to conduct some kind of rational life.

The White King is narrated by an eleven-year-old boy. For political reasons, his father is taken off to a labour camp in the Danube delta, leaving the boy with his mother. At first, of course, the child is not aware, and cannot understand, what exactly has happened, even though he has seen with own eyes his father being carted off by his 'colleagues', as they call themselves. Gradually, however, a true picture begins to emerge for him, too, and he grasps of the essence of the tragic situation that lies behind the silences and lies. The story spans a single year, the book ending with the father being allowed out to attend his own father's funeral, when he is able to meet his son, though we do not find out what happens after that.

The setting is Romania of the 1980s. It is of particular interest that events are seen from the viewpoint of a child, which means that the tragic developments often leave more of an impression of strangeness, oddity and even at times the outright intriguing. The boy is able to find a mischievous excitement, modest hankerings and aspirations even in the wasteland that surround him.

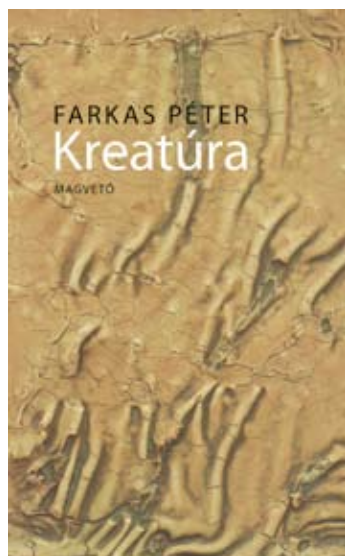
The language of the book is cleverly constructed on the vernacular and ways of thinking that children adopt, allowing the reader to get closer to the nature of a world that the boy does not fully understand and yet is able to map perfectly in the terms of his own logic and imagination.

Rights sold to:

Germany, Suhrkamp – Poland, Czarne – Slovenia, Didakta – Croatia, Fraktura – The Czech Republic, Dybbuk – Slovakia, Kalligram – Bulgaria, Ergo – Serbia, Evro Giunti – Romania, Polirom – Turkey, Acik Defter – USA, Houghton Mifflin – UK, Doubleday – France, Gallimard – Netherlands, Atlas – Italy, Einaudi – Spain, RBA – Brasil, Intrinsica/Sextante – Finland, Otava – Sweden, Bromberg – Norway, Pax – Denmark, Borgen – Greece, Livanis – Israel, Modan – China, Eurasian – Turkey, Yapi Kredi Kültür



Péter Farkas



PÉTER FARKAS was born in Budapest in 1955. He was actively involved with the Hungarian democratic opposition in the 1970s and edited a volume of samizdat writings that appeared in 1979. He left Hungary for West Germany in 1982 for political reasons where he now lives in Cologne.

CREATURE (KREATÚRA)

Novel, 2009, 120 pages

The short novel of Péter Farkas leads the reader to the deepest abyss of human suffering, the suffering of the body as well as the soul. The three parts of the book are centered around the same question: to which point can we consider a human being human? How can starvation, madness or loneliness shut up the individual in a cocoon unbreachable for others, and can still help him to overcome the world from which he is isolated, either through thoughts or deeds? Every part has a corresponding picture and a road. The picture for the first part, *Starvation*, was made by James Nachtwey in Sudan in 1993. It depicts the eternal „muselmann“, a human being whose destiny was already sealed even before his birth. The second part, *Loneliness* is based on a series of photographs, leading from number 6 Boulevard Émile Zola to under the Mirabeau Bridge in Paris. This is the road of Paul Antschel, also known as Paul Celan. The third part, *Fear* is connected to a painting by Francis Bacon, and to the road of Friedrich Hölderlin, leading from his last own dwelling place to Tübingen.

For the pictures, see the webpage <http://www.interment.de/farkaspeter/kreatura.htm>

Rights sold to:

The Czech Republic, Dybbuk

Also in the Backlist:

Eight Minutes (*Nyolc perc*, novel, 2007, 110 pages) The two protagonists are an elderly couple, whose lives seem to have come to an end. Gradually, they peel themselves away from its fabric, holding on only to the thread that binds them together beyond language and beyond memories, as they find each other again and again in everyday routine. *Rights sold to: Germany, Luchterhand – The Czech Republic, Dybbuk*



István Kemény

ISTVÁN KEMÉNY was born in 1961 in Budapest. He is a writer and a poet, the father figure of young Hungarian poetry.

DEAR UNKNOWN (KEDVES ISMERETLEN)

Novel, 2009, 468 pages

„The book of István Kemény is a rich and ambiguous one. Let’s quote the motto: Everything is true, including of course the opposite, but mainly everything. It certainly may seem to be some harmless nonsense, but looking back, I say that it’s the essence of the book, and it’s true, and beautiful.”

– Revizor Online

István Kemény is a cultic figure of contemporary Hungarian literature, a poet, a writer. He is well-versed in the bitterness and wonders of everyday emotions. His prose is animated by the vibrations of everyday affairs, the complexity of human relations, love and hatred. His most recent novel, *Kedves Ismeretlen*, is an adventurous story of improvement of one’s character, but it can simply be dubbed as a family novel as well. It takes place in the bohemian Budapest; its characters are members of a family (a mother, a father and three children) that had been segregated from the city. They are forced to move to the country, after which they attempt to return to Budapest. Not all of them are successful, and they employ various methods to escape the clutches of this petty, inequitable reality. The story is narrated by Tamás Krizsán, one of the children, and it is told over his teenager years to his adulthood (from 1976 to 1982), but some elements go as far back as 1956.

The novel is constituted of two parts which are linked by Tamás: the first part is about the family’s historical and personal tragedies from the point of view of the smallest child, whereas the second one shows us the “new life” of Tamás, which is defined by friendships and love affairs. Another element that is present in both parts is the protagonist’s childhood love interest, Emma Olbach, who suddenly reappears in his life as an adult woman. The second part is about reaching adulthood; it presents us both the amusing and serious aspects growing up, the struggles to overcome the difficulties, love affairs and break-ups, all of which takes place in the maze of the Korvin Library in the Buda Castle. Reading about the relationship of Tamás and his two friends brings forth memories from our own past, when we believed we would be able to do things differently, not like our “folks”...



Noémi Kiss



NOÉMI KISS was born in 1974. She is a writer, essayist and scholar of literature. She teaches Hungarian culture and literature for foreign students in Hungary.

SHABBY JEWELLERY BOX. JOURNEYS TO THE EAST (RONGYOS ÉKSZERDOBOZ. UTAZÁSOK KELETEN)

Travelogue, 2009, 181 pages

„There is a vast amount of knowledge animated in the book, and the detailed descriptions alternate with more literary parts; even a poem can fit in at one place. It's good to be her travelling companion.”

– Magyar Narancs

What are the impulses for travelling? To answer the call of the elsewhere, to leave home behind, and to search for the familiar in the unknown – an unknown that is attractive because of its very foreignness. There is no travelling without remembering. We set off packed with memories of home, and get back with memories of changes. Because travelling is primarily small talk, it is the creation of a verbal topography. Mapping hollows and saliances, straightaways and bends in the land, as well as the faces, the intentions, or moods behind the words.

Noémi Kiss's Central Europe is polyphonic and tactile, both exciting and timeless with its lasting controversions. A keen attention brings forth the historical sparkling from the shabby scenes, and creates outlooks from the narrowness of the present. Its openness guarantees its authenticity, which makes the reader believe that not only the ugliest, and the most beautiful, woman of the world is located in Ukraine, but its centre, as well.

This marvellous book of unusual travelogues sets out to explore the lesser known parts of Eastern and Central Europe, from the once surprisingly cosmopolite city of Chernovitz, birthplace of Paul Celan, to the other remote parts of Bukovina; from the shabby jewellery box of Lemberg and Saxony to the Hungarian-inhabited parts of Vojvodina and Transylvania.

Her experience and description, her critical eye, her plastic depiction, and a voice that can deal with the obscene to the finer points of psychological interpretation, make Kiss Noémi one of the most promising young talents of contemporary Hungarian literature.



Also in the Backlist:

Trans (*Trans, short stories, 2006, 166 pages*) This extraordinarily colourful collection of short stories reflects many points of view: woman as flesh, woman as heart, woman as a journey, transcending borders, gender and relationships, presented through the situation faced by Eastern European immigrants in the West contrasted with the life of those at home. *Sold to: Germany, Matthes & Seitz*

Júlia Láng

JÚLIA LÁNGH was born in 1942 in Budapest. She used to work as a teacher, a copywriter, a social worker, and as a journalist. She lived in Paris between 1977 and 1984, and worked at the Free Europe Radio in München until the radio station was closed. After that, she passed on to Africa to work at a kindergarten. She presently lives in Hungary.

PARIS-JUANA (PÁRIZS FŰ ALATT)

Memoire-novel, 2009, 277 pages

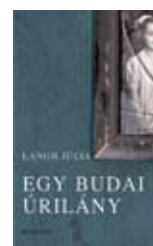
After her two memoir-novels depicting her life in Africa, and another memoir describing her childhood in the war-torn Budapest of the 1940s and 1950s (*A Lady of Buda*, 2003), the author now sets on a literary journey to rediscover her Parisian years, when she first left the country where she was born.

She left Hungary in 1977, simply to spend one year in Paris with her children. But this short stay lengthened as time went by, and the former „lady of Buda” has become a world traveller for twenty years. The book *Paris-juana* is about the first seven years of this journey, spent in poverty but with the constant feeling of freedom after the grim climate of the Hungarian dictatorship. Communes, former revolutionaries of '68, artists, clochards, drumming therapy, strikes, demonstrations, unemployment and illegality – everything and everybody you can find in an open society is here on the pages of the book.

This is the story of bewilderment, amusement and finding one's place in the world, but above all, a heartfelt confession about Paris.

Also in the Backlist:

A Lady of Buda (*Egy budai úrilány*, memoir-novel, 2003, 260 pages) The book relates the author's memories of her childhood between 1945 and 1960. Júlia Láng's parents attempted to raise her as a lady of Buda in an age when being a lady was not an advantage at all, in fact it was quite dangerous.



László Szilasi

LÁSZLÓ SZILASI was born in 1964 in Békéscsaba. He is a writer, one of the most important critics of contemporary Hungarian writing and a scholar of 17th century Hungarian literature, teaching at the University of Szeged in Hungary.



SAINTS' HARP (SZENTEK HÁRFÁJA)

Novel, 2010, 317 pages

„The elements of a spy novel, a detective story, a study in art history and who knows what other genres are united in this book... Events miraculous and horrible at the same time take away the heart of the reader.”

– Revizor Online

The title refers to a popular book of prayers and holy songs used by the Slovak minority in the Hungarian area of the author's birthplace, which is, concealed in the masque of a fictive town called Árpátharagos, is almost like to most important hero of the novel.

Saints' Harp is a historical novel and an intellectual crime story at the same time. Put together from four parts from four distinctively different times of the town's life (1924, 1928, 1954-1956 and 1989), it recounts the history of the place and it's population with it's various minorities with scholarly precision, ranging from the minute reconstruction of the local events that had taken place during the 1956 revolution to a treatise on the architectural style of the Big Church in the center of the city. But this intriguing novel also tries to shed light on a murder case from the 1920s when the young student Tamás Grynæus has shot the well-to-do and respected peasant patriarch Mátyás Omaszta in the middle of the Christmas Mass in the Big Church. What was the motivation behind the murder? Where did the corpse of the enormous Omaszta disappear after the act? How did all this affect the community of the town?

The different parts look at the case from different angles, with the ever-changing narrators of one part becoming the heroes of the next one. And as time goes by, the different detectives have to face informations and evidence that is more and more obscure and questionable. The stories of the novel unfold like onion leaves, recounted in an enchanting, multicoloured language that also reflects the changes of common speech in the region throughout history.

Géza Szőcs

GÉZA SZŐCS was born in 1953 in Marosvásárhely (Târgu Mureș, Romania). He is a poet, writer and essayist. He was a prominent figure of the Romanian opposition in the 1970s and 1980s, and editor of several newspapers and samizdat journals. He left Romania in 1986 for Switzerland because of constant political persecution. After the Revolution in 1990, he returned to Romania and became an important political figure. He presently lives in Budapest, serving as State Secretary of Culture in the Ministry of National Resources of the current government.

LIMPOPO (LIMPOPO)

Novel, 2007, 246 pages

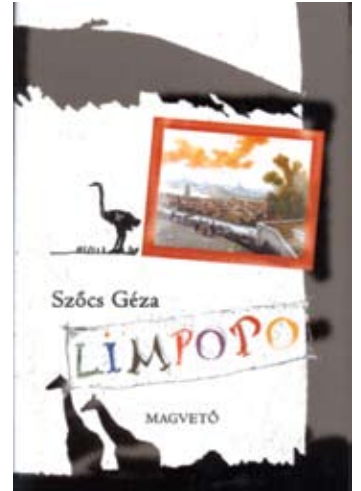
„This book is also about fighting oblivion. The ostriches, as we see, tend to forget things on purpose. They learn to forget words and ideas, and are the first in their attempt to erase the word 'love' from their language. The novel examines the problems of remembering and forgetting, even if it does so with the light steps of an ostrich.”

– Bárka Online

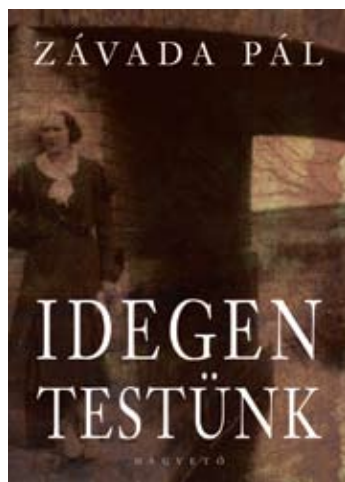
Just how do ostriches end up in the heated cages of an ostrich farm in Eastern Europe? And why is it that when night comes, they are called to another part of the planet with the haunting promise of freedom? Could an ostrich ever learn to fly? Could it escape? And if so, where on earth would it go?

Limpopo, the main character in the book, is a dreamer in her community, who tries to learn how to fly. His peers greet her attempts first with great enthusiasm, but then turn away from her, thinking that she is a lunatic. This way she spends more and more time with his friend Svarz the owl, with whom she discusses her thoughts and fears about life, death, captivity and freedom.

In this „journal of a lady ostrich, translated and edited to Humanspeak by Géza Szőcs”, the author gives the reader exclusive access to the personal diaries of an ostrich where we can witness quite how sensitive these birds are to social subjugation, injustice, and the complex questions of metaphysics with a humour that is uniquely contagious.



Pál Závada



PÁL ZÁVADA was born to a Hungarian-Slovak family in 1954 in Tótkomlós, in the south-eastern corner of Hungary. He is a writer, a sociologist and the editor of the prestigious Hungarian literary review *Holmi*.

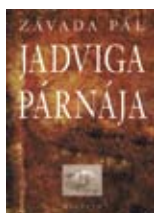
OUR ALIEN BODY (IDEGEN TESTÜNK)

Novel, 2008, 390 pages

„Pál Závada's latest novel is his best and most mature work to date.”
– Könyves Blog

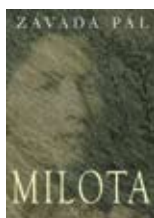
The novel's scene is set in a photographer's studio in September 1940 at a gathering of relatives, friends and lovers all linked by the single figure of a house wife called Janka Weiner – her cousin who works in a fashion boutique, her seminarian brother, a military attaché, a young poet, a reporter, girlfriends, journalists, some Swabish, some Hungarian, some Jewish and many less simple to define. They are enthralled by news of regained territory lost in the First World War and mystified by the race laws. Where have they come from and what will become of them when the war is over?

Pál Závada gathers his cast for a single evening in which he skilfully portrays the mental, physical and spiritual trauma created by the trials and tribulations of the 20th century. He looks at how elements of society become fragments. What does it mean to lose your country to war and how are the seeds of a new dictatorship sewn? This novel is close-up and provocative.



Also in the Backlist:

Jadviga's Pillow (*Jadviga párnája*, novel, 1997, 448 pages) This best selling novel portrays a Hungarian village with a Slovak minority and spans the period from the First World War, through the national awakening of the Slovaks, the Hungarian Soviet Republic, to the Second World War. Told in the intricate form of several overlapping diaries, it is also an unforgettable love story between András Osztatni and Maria Jadviga Palkovits. *Rights sold to: Germany, Luchterhand – Netherlands, Wereldbibliotheek – Slovakia, Kalligram – Czech Republic, Argo – Serbia, Laguna*



Milota (*Milota*, novel, 2002, 700 pages) Another story of a family, a village and a love rolled up in one in the form of parallel and alternating texts, *Milota* is set in a similar Slovak-speaking community as *Jadviga's Pillow*, but this time in the 1990s, depicting the complex love life of two narrators remembering at the same time, both in full knowledge of the other's texts.

The Photographer's Legacy (*A fényképész utókora*, 2004, 413 pages) The photographer of the title is deported to be killed in a Nazi death camp in 1944 because of his Jewish descent. He may no longer be present himself, but the novel concerns his legacy and specifically a photograph that he took in 1942, in which all the main figures can be seen. The photo eventually ends up in the hands of Ádám Koren, grandson of the Slovak woman who appears in the picture and we follow the story of Ádám's life right up to the present day. *Rights sold to: Germany, Luchterhand – Slovakia, Kalligram*



BACKLIST

ÉVA BÁNKI (1966)

Raintown (*Esőváros, novel, 2004, 301 pages*) This brilliant first novel is based on the intertwined histories and fates of two well-to-do Hungarian peasant families in a region that nowadays belongs to Slovakia. The scions of the Torma family show an abiding interest in technology, whereas the Bujdosós are more strongly drawn to the spirit world, but these two family passions are finally reconciled in the present day with the advent of the internet.

Sold to: Slovakia, Kalligram

Golden Stitches (*Aranyhímzés, novel, 2005, 182 pages*) Set in the 10th century AD, this mystical detective story relates the journey of a Hungarian delegation to glorious Venice where they hope to discover more about the past of Bishop Gellért and further facilitate his beatification. Their party is lead by an aged and sick bishop, Gellért's former student and successor, who still holds memories of a time before Christianity when the land was ruled by pagan masters.

Sold to: Bulgaria, Ergo

Hungarian Decameron (*Magyar Dekameron, short stories, 2007, 365 pages*) A modern variation on Boccaccio's masterpiece, the heroes of Éva Bánki when fleeing the plague travel not only through space but also time, and by the time they arrive in the residential suite of the Budapest Hotel in Hungary, they have left the last millennium behind them with all its love affairs, art, and atrocities. This string of short stories threads together outrageous tales from the „backlands”, about great men and little women, the sensual to the senseless.

KRISZTA BÓDIS (1967)

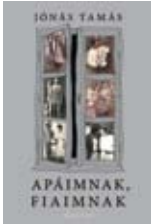
Hard as Butter (*Kemény vaj, novel, 2003, 372 pages*) This stiking, sensual and brave novel probes a specific Hungarian manifestation of the general phenomenon of destitution with inserted passages that might almost sit in a sociographic study, analysing the hopelessness of the plight of Hungary's Gypsies and the complex predicament of prostitution, including the responsibility for this state of affairs borne by the country's politicians, media, legislation, courts and, law-enforcement agencies.

ANDRÁS FORGÁCH (1952)

Zehuze (*Zehuze, novel, 2007, 644 pages*) Zehuze is a Hebrew word that means roughly that's how it is, c'est la vie, like it or lump it. In this hefty epistolary novel a woman, born in Hungary and during the dying days of the Austro-Hungarian Monarchy and settled in 1917-18 in what was then Palestine, writes regular letters, expressing her views about virtually every major event that crowds in on her, to one of her two daughters, who decided to move the other way, settling in Hungary in 1947.



TAMÁS JÓNÁS (1973)



To My Fathers and Sons (*Apáimnak, fiaimnak, short stories, 2005, 232 pages*) In this remarkable book by the renowned Hungarian poet of Gypsy origins, you can read exactly the kind of stories that we prefer not to hear in order to keep our peace of mind. We do wrong. Jónás's heroes are little boys, growing up on love less streets, miserable and unlikely to survive. Those who do, the big boys, manage to deny God and mankind, but still remain hopelessly poor, locked into a daily fight for survival.

ANDRÁS NAGY (1956)



The Bang-Jensen Case (*A Bang-Jensen ügy, non-fiction novel, 2005, 400 pages*) The recently discovered archival materials, as well as a collection of interviews and documentation, shed new light on the tragedy of the Danish diplomat Poul Bang-Jensen, who played an important role in the investigations around the Hungarian revolution of 1956, and who was found dead in Long Island in 1959, after years of supporting the cause of the revolutionaries in the Special Committee and the United Nations.

Sold to: Italy, Baldini Castoldi Dalai

CENTAURI (1972)



Blue Angel (*Kék Angyal, short stories, 2008, 342 pages*) This collection of short stories by the author under the pseudonym of Centauri lavishes the reader with exotic and bizarre tales of a monk who lives at the bottom of a well, a mysterious fishing expedition, the ruination of an arctic adventure, and an apocryphal Flaubert legend – a cacophony of sound and style, which Centauri moulds in his own form to create a collection of stories that merge as one.

CONTENTS

HIGHLIGHTS

Face and About-Face (Arc és hátraarc) by László Garaczi	7
MetaXa (MetaXa) by László Garaczi	7
Long Time No See (Isten hozott) by Krisztián Grecsó	8
Mother Gossip (Pletykaanyu) by Krisztián Grecsó	8
Dance School (Tánciskola) by Krisztián Grecsó	8
Chicken Play (Csirkejáték) by Szilárd Rubin	9
Roman Numeral One (Római egyes) by Szilárd Rubin	10
Spring Collection (Tavaszi tárlat) by György Spiró	11
Captivity (Fogság) by György Spiró	11
The X-es (Az lkszek) by György Spiró	12
Messiahs (Messiások) by György Spiró	12
Brideride (Feleségverseny) by György Spiró	12
Barcode (Vonalkód) by Krisztina Tóth	13
Portrait of a Mother in American Frame (Anyakép, amerikai keretben) by Miklós Vajda	14

FRONTLIST

Castlekey (Várkulcsa) by Éva Berniczky	17
The Egg-seller's Day of Atonement (A tojásárus hosszúnapja) by Éva Berniczky	17
Midwife Bereft her Womb (Méhe nélkül a bába) by Éva Berniczky	17
Szindbád, the detective (Szindbád, a detektív) by László Csabai	18
The White King (A fehér király) by György Dragomán	19
Creature (Kreatúra) by Péter Farkas	20
Eight Minutes (Nyolc perc) by Péter Farkas	20
Dear Unknown (Kedves Ismeretlen) by István Kemény	21
Shabby Jewellery Box – Journeys to the East	
(Rongyos ékszerdoboz – Utazások keleten) by Noémi Kiss	22
Trans (Trans) by Noémi Kiss	22
Paris-juana (Párizs fű alatt) by Júlia Lángh	23
A Lady of Buda (Egy budai úrilány) by Júlia Lángh	23
Saints' Harp (Szentek hárfája) by László Szilasi	24
Limpopo (Limpopo) by Géza Szócs	25
Our Alien Body (Idegen testünk) by Pál Závada	25
Jadwiga's Pillow (Jadviga párnája) by Pál Závada	25
Milota (Milota) by Pál Závada	25
The Photographer's Legacy (A fényképész utókora) by Pál Závada	25

BACKLIST

Raintown (Esőváros) by Éva Bánki	27
Golden Stitches (Aranyhímzés) by Éva Bánki	27
Hungarian Decameron (Magyar Dekameron) by Éva Bánki	27
Hard as Butter (Kemény vaj) by Kriszta Bódis	27
Zehuze (Zehuze) by András Forgách	27
To My Fathers and Sons (Apáimnak, fiaimnak) by Tamás Jónás	28
The Bang-Jensen Case (A Bang-Jensen ügy) by András Nagy	28
Blue Angel (Kék Angyal) by Centauri	28

