Coffee House Press began as a small letterpress operation in 1972 and has grown into an internationally renowned non-profit publisher of literary fiction, essay, poetry, and other work that doesn’t fit neatly into genre categories.

Coffee House is both a publisher and an arts organization. Through our Books in Action program and publications, we’ve become interdisciplinary collaborators and incubators for new work and audience experiences. Our vision for the future is one where a publisher is a catalyst and connector.

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Time Is the Thing a Body Moves Through
An essay by T Fleischmann

W.G. Sebald meets Maggie Nelson in an autobiographical narrative of embodiment, visual art, history, and loss.

How do the bodies we inhabit affect our relationship with art? How does art affect our relationship to our bodies? T Fleischmann uses Felix Gonzalez-Torres’s artworks—piles of candy, stacks of paper, puzzles—as a path through questions of love and loss, violence and rejuvenation, gender and sexuality. From the back porches of Buffalo, to the galleries of New York and L.A., to farmhouses of rural Tennessee, the artworks act as still points, sites for reflection situated in lived experience. Fleischmann combines serious engagement with warmth and clarity of prose, reveling in the experiences and pleasures of art and the body, identity and community.

PRAISE FOR T FLEISCHMANN:

“T Fleischmann’s Syzygy, Beauty shimmers with confidence as it tours the surreal chaos of gender, art, and desire. Its declarative sentences—seductive, abject, caustic, moving, informative, and utterly inventive—herald a new world, one in which we are blessedly ‘here with outfits like strings of light and no future.’” —MAGGIE NELSON

T FLEISCHMANN is the author of Syzygy, Beauty and the curator of Body Forms: Queerness and the Essay. A nonfiction editor at DIAGRAM and contributing editor at Essay Daily, they have published critical and creative work in journals such as the Los Angeles Review of Books, Fourth Genre, Gulf Coast, and others, as well as in the anthologies Bending Genre, How We Speak to One Another, Little Boxes, and Feminisms in Motion.

RIGHTS: uk and Translation, Audio/Audio-Visual, Dramatic
Moving west—from Singapore to America, from New York to California—a young woman dreams of home even as she theorizes its various impossibilities.

When Trisha Low moves west, her journey is motivated by her desire to arrive “somewhere better”—someplace utopian, like revolution; or safe, like home; or even clarifying, like identity. Instead, she faces the end of a relationship, a family whose values she no longer shares, and America’s casual racism, sexism, and homophobia. Seeking answers in art, films, philosophy, and literature, Low attempts to reconcile her yearnings with her radical politics and begin the next chapter of her life, asking: Do our quests to fulfill our deepest wishes propel us forward, or keep us trapped in familiar dead ends?

PRAISE FOR TRISHA LOW:

“Trisha Low has been leaving us periodic notes about what we can keep of hers if she should happen to go off the deep end... It’s stunning, and I promise you’ll want to keep everything she gives you.”

—BARBARA BROWNING

TRISHA LOW is the author of The Compleat Purge (Kenning Editions 2013). She earned a BA at the University of Pennsylvania and an MA in performance studies at New York University. She lives in the East Bay.

EMILY BOOKS is a publishing project and e-book subscription service that champions transgressive, genre-blurring writing by (mostly) women. Its founders are Ruth Curry and Emily Gould.
The Remainder
A novel by Alia Trabucco Zerán
Translated by Sophie Hughes

A coffin, a camera, a bottle of pisco: three friends embark on a road trip through Chile to confront a history they can neither remember nor forget.

Felipe and Iquela, two young friends living in modern-day Santiago, are plagued by the legacy of Chile’s dictatorship. Felipe prowls the streets counting dead bodies real and imagined, aspiring to a perfect number that might offer closure. Iquela and Paloma, an old acquaintance from Iquela’s childhood, search for a way to reconcile their fragile lives with their parents’ violent militant past. The body of Paloma’s mother gets lost in transit, sending the three on a pisco-fueled journey up the cordillera as they attempt to grapple with pain that stretches across generations.

“A fundamental book about what it means to mourn the past, about the remainders of a history that refuse to be forgotten. This is the debut we all wish we had written. A spirited, brave, urgent book, capable of weaving the political and the poetic.”

—CARLOS FONSECA

ALIA TRABUCCO ZERÁN was born in Chile in 1983. She was awarded a Fulbright scholarship for a master’s in creative writing at New York University. La Resta (The Remainder) was chosen by El País as one of its top ten debuts of 2015. She lives in London, where she is studying for a PhD at University College London.

SOPHIE HUGHES is an award-winning translator from Spanish and a literary critic. She has been the recipient of a British Centre for Literary Translation mentorship and residency and an American PEN/Heim Translation Fund grant.
Empty Words

A novel by Mario Levrero
Translated by Annie McDermott

From a legendary cult figure in Latin American literature, the story of a writer who obsessively observes his own handwriting in search of answers about his identity.

An eccentric novelist begins to keep a notebook of handwriting exercises, hoping that if he’s able to improve his penmanship, his personal character will also improve. What begins as a mere physical exercise becomes involuntarily colored by humorous reflections and tender anecdotes about living, writing, and the sense—or nonsense—of existence.

“A lighthearted wisdom beats in every sentence of Empty Words, a little masterpiece by Mario Levrero, who is, to me, one of the funniest and most influential writers of recent times. This book might change your life, or at least your handwriting.”

—ALEJANDRO ZAMBRA

PRAISE FOR MARIO LEVRERO:

“We are all his children.”

—ÁLVARO ENRIGUE

MARIO LEVRERO was born in Montevideo, Uruguay, in 1940 and died there in 2004. Levrero was a photographer, bookseller, comics scriptwriter, humorist, crossword author, and creator of brain games. In his later years, he directed a literary workshop. Empty Words is his first novel translated and published in English.

ANNIE McDERMOTT’s translations from Spanish and Portuguese have appeared in Granta, the White Review, Asymptote, Two Lines, and World Literature Today, among others. Her translation of The Luminous Novel by Mario Levrero is forthcoming from Coffee House Press and And Other Stories.
Song for the Unraveling of the World
Stories by Brian Evenson

From a modern master of the form, a new short story collection that dexterously walks the tightrope between literary fiction, sci-fi, and horror.

A newborn’s absent face appears on the back of someone else’s head, a filmmaker goes to gruesome lengths to achieve the silence he’s after for his final scene, and a therapist begins, impossibly, to appear in a troubled patient’s room late at night. In these stories of doubt, delusion, and paranoia, no belief, no claim to objectivity, is immune to the distortions of human perception. Here, self-deception is a means of justifying our most inhuman impulses—whether we know it or not.

PRAISE FOR BRIAN EVENSON:

“Some of the stories here evoke Kafka, some Poe, some Beckett, some Roald Dahl, and one, a demonic teddy-bear chiller called ‘BearHeart™,’ even Stephen King, but Evenson’s deadpan style always estranges them a bit from their models: He tells his odd tales oddly, as if his mouth were dry and the words won’t come out right.”

—THE NEW YORK TIMES

“Evenson’s fiction is equal parts obsessive, experimental, and violent. It can be soul-shaking.”

—THE NEW YORKER

BRIAN EVENSON is the recipient of three O. Henry Prizes and has been a finalist for the Edgar Award, the Shirley Jackson Award, and the World Fantasy Award. He is also the winner of the International Horror Guild Award and the American Library Association’s award for Best Horror Novel, and his work has been named in Time Out New York's top books.

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RIGHTS: Translation
Baseball Epic: Famous and Forgotten Lives of the Dead Ball Era

Words and pictures by Jason Novak

From Paris Review and New Yorker cartoonist Jason Novak, a witty history of the scrappy beginnings of baseball, told in 101 one-sentence biographies.

In this work of cartoon revisionist history, Jason Novak explores the little-talked-about dead ball era of baseball—from 1900 to 1920, when a single ball was used for an entire game—and the men and women who shaped its course. Ranging from mischievous in-game antics to the racial barriers being crossed well before Jackie Robinson, these miniature biographies highlight the joys and struggles, both on and off the field, of the unsung heroes who played pro ball before it was a profession.

“While flag-waving, replays, and statistical noise ruin the joy of contemporary baseball, Jason Novak has written and illustrated a Gorey-esque history of the dead ball era that is delightfully morbid, intriguing, and a hell of a lot of fun. And maybe best of all, Novak’s magic comes from stories rather than numbers.” —JOSH OSTERGAARD

JASON NOVAK is a cartoonist whose work has appeared in the New Yorker, the Paris Review, and the Believer, among other places. He lives in Oakland, California.

RIGHTS: uk and Translation, Audio/Audio-Visual, Dramatic
Without Protection
Poetry by Gala Mukomolova

From Russian fairy tales to Craigslist ads, stories of identity, family, and sexuality are unraveled and woven anew in poems of a woman caught between two worlds.

In poems rich with sensuality and discord, Mukomolova explores her complex identity—Russian, Jewish, refugee, New Yorker, lesbian—through the Russian tale of Vasilyssa, a young girl left to fend for herself against the witch Baba Yaga. Heavy with family and fable, these poems are a beautiful articulation of difference under duress.

“Oh, this delicious book, this steamy, soaring documentary fairy tale! Mukomolova’s erotic sensibility is refreshingly unmodified by sentimentality—raw, explicit, wounding, a hunger unmitigated by the banalities of love. She conjures lush, mythic spaces starring a queer-heroic maiden and an unappeasable witch-crone that are shot through with quotidian, retro-cool references to Myspace, Craigslist Missed Connections, and Lesley Gore’s ‘You Don’t Own Me,’ just as her forms, improvisational, variegated, lacy, cleaved, give way to a prose line as solid as a knife-edge against stone. Mukomolova has given us a speaker whose wild embodiment is a revolt against displacement and trauma, who has the bravery to enter the witch’s house without protection and sit down at her table.”

—DIANE SEUSS

GALA MUKOMOLOVA earned an MFA from the University of Michigan. Her poetry and essays have appeared in POETRY, PEN America, the Billfold, and elsewhere. In 2016 Mukomolova won the Discovery Poetry Prize. Gala writes astrology-inspired love letters under the name Galactic Rabbit.
Exiles of Eden
Poetry by Ladan Osman

Poems steeped in the Somali tradition refract the streets of Ferguson, the halls of Guantánamo, and the fields near Abu Ghraib through the myth of Adam and Eve to ask: What does it mean to be a refugee?

Exiles of Eden looks at the origin story of Adam, Eve, and their exile from the Garden of Eden, exploring displacement and alienation from its mythological origins to the present. Steeped in Somali narrative tradition yet formally experimental, Osman’s poems give voice to the experiences and traumas of displaced people over multiple generations. The characters in these poems encounter exile’s strangeness while processing the profoundly isolating experience of knowing that once you are sent out of Eden, you can’t go back.

PRAISE FOR LADAN OSMAN:

“In a world that too often plugs its ears to voices it thinks unworthy, Osman shows that it’s actually more inappropriate to be decorous.” —CHICAGO TRIBUNE

Big Cabin
Poetry by Ron Padgett

Contemplative, wry, profound observations from one of the greatest masters of contemporary poetry.

Written over one season in a Vermont cabin, these poems act as a reflecting pool, casting back mortality, consciousness, and time in new, crystal-clear light. The chatter of the chickadee, the smell of new-sawn pine, the fog on the pond—Padgett uses daily minutiae to consider what it means to exist in the world.

PRAISE FOR RON PADGETT:

“Wonderful, generous, funny poetry.”
—JOHN ASHBERY

“[His] poems speak backwards and forwards in time, to self, to family and friends, to poetic technique, to the birds caged in the chest. It is so lovely.”
—ALICE NOTLEY

RON PADGETT grew up in Tulsa and has lived mostly in New York City since 1960. Among his many honors are a Guggenheim Fellowship, the American Academy of Arts and Letters poetry award, the Shelley Memorial Award, and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. Padgett's How Long was a Pulitzer Prize finalist in poetry, and his Collected Poems won the William Carlos Williams Award from the Poetry Society of America and the Los Angeles Times Book Prize for the best poetry book of 2013. In addition to being a poet, he is also the translator of Guillaume Apollinaire, Pierre Reverdy, and Blaise Cendrars. His own work has been translated into eighteen languages.

ALSO AVAILABLE:
- How to Be Perfect: An Illustrated Guide
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- Alone and Not Alone
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“Nettel’s sharp, potent novel depicts how even the briefest relationship can affect the rest of a life.” —PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, STARRED REVIEW

“A compassionately written portrait of urban loneliness and the human impulse to belong.”

“In After the Winter, Nettel has fashioned a powerful and luminous novel, one that portrays absence, presence and human imperfection with a unique and penetrating voice.”

“Guadalupe Nettel’s After the Winter is a dazzling excavation of the glimmering particularities of consciousness, and how a collision of fates can transform our inner worlds. This taut, atmospheric novel is an ode to the complicated heartbreak of loving what will forever be just out of reach.”

—LAURA VAN DEN BERG

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A novel by Martin Riker
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After he dies, Samuel Johnson inhabits one body after the next, waiting for a chance to return to his son.

“Riker is a gifted storyteller, and his novel’s enchanting exploration of humanity and philosophy, of how humans connect with their environment and community, is unforgettable.”

“A philosophical yet fast-paced tale filled with satisfyingly unexpected turns.”

“John Donne once proclaimed, ‘I sing the progress of a deathless soul.’ Well, so does Martin Riker. His Samuel Johnson’s Eternal Return is a masterpiece of metempsychosis. That it also warbles and bellows so brilliantly about fatherhood and husbandhood, about the religious life and the mediated life, is an indication of Riker’s range, which is as rolling-field-expansive as his empathy.”

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