

More Swedish Fiction



SLE SWEDISH
LITERATURE
EXCHANGE

Dear reader,

This booklet is for everyone interested in what's happening in contemporary Swedish literature. You will discover promising debut authors as well as established voices. What they have in common is that they are all deemed to have the potential to reach more readers beyond Sweden's borders.

With help from people in the foreign rights arena, we have produced an overview that can serve as a guide through the vast forest of Swedish literature. Writing takes centre stage, and we have included some brand-new titles as well as less recent works.

The author profiles were written by Jenny Aschenbrenner, Björn Kohlström, Annina Rabe, Sebastian Lönnlöf and Jonas Thente, all of whom are experienced literary critics. Jonas Thente has also contributed a brief survey of several trends prominent in Swedish fiction today.

We hope you will gain a deeper understanding of contemporary Swedish writing and discover some new names to add to your reading list.

Happy reading!

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Head of Swedish Literature Exchange,
Swedish Arts Council

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Anna Brynhildsen

For many people, the Jewish experience includes a silent shared experience. The generation who lived through the Holocaust keeps it secret from their children, and their children don't ask. The third generation – the youth of today – want to know. They look to the past to understand their own cultural roots.

That quest is the subject of two widely discussed novels by Anna Brynhildsen. Her debut, *Everyone Wants To Go Home* (2019), sees Rebecka taking Yiddish classes at university when she meets Elinor, who teaches her the importance of tradition. Brynhildsen's second novel, *Thinner Than Water* (2023) returns to themes of friendship and family ties. Matters come to a head on a trip to Berlin when the main character, Sara, sets out to donate her grandmother's letters to the Jewish Museum.

Brynhildsen has a unique ability to write about people who are trying to understand where they fit in but don't know in what direction to look. She pays meticulous attention to her characters, who come alive as genuine, memorable individuals with flaws that make them believable. In *Thinner Than Water* a parallel narrative about fleeing Nazi rule for Sweden shows how the present is mirrored in the past. The anti-Semitism of today is a tacit thread in the ingenious weave of this novel, whose characters are lost in their lack of knowledge about where they come from.

Brynhildsen's achievement is to educate without lecturing or offering easy answers. Writing with pointed wit, she confronts us, her readers, with moral dilemmas that we find ourselves thinking about as we go through the day and that make a strong and lasting impression.

Björn Kohlström

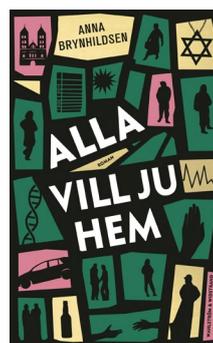
Rights sold to: 1 country



Thinner Than Water
316 pages, 2023, Wahlström & Widstrand

Rights: Bonnier Rights

Sara, her uncle Mats and cousin Evi are taking a weekend trip to Berlin to donate some family letters to the Jewish Museum. The letters attest to the conditions for Jews in Europe during the Nazi era. A gripping and existential story about a single weekend that somehow contains an entire life.



Everyone Wants To Go Home
304 p, 2019, Wahlström & Widstrand

Rights: Bonnier Rights

When Rebecka's boyfriend breaks up with her, she must enrol in university in order to keep their student flat. At Yiddish class, she meets Elinor; meanwhile, other relationships begin to fray and she finds herself in danger of losing control. A novel about identity, anti-Semitism, and intergenerational trauma.



Photo: Thron Ullberg

Christoffer Carlsson

Christoffer Carlsson has fast gained recognition as a giant in Swedish literature and a sure bet in the genre of the literary thriller. In 15 years, he has published 11 books – and if his speed is impressive, his writing is even more so.

His latest series, the Halland Suite, takes us to the Swedish landscape of Carlsson's own youth. Police as well as writers and spies make up the cast of characters in these four books whose storylines move back and forth in time. Together, the books ask how far we are prepared to go to protect or betray ourselves – or our country.

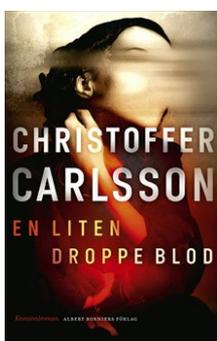
The more compact Leo Junker series features a cop on the ropes who is in danger of losing his badge. In each of the complicated cases he tries to solve, the same childhood friend keeps popping up. The friend, who grew up in the same Stockholm suburb as Junker, now moves in the city's shadowy underground.

Carlsson is also the author of two standalone novels. His 2010 debut, *The Case of Vincent Franke*, unfolds in a dangerous world of drug abuse and trafficking. In *The One-Eyed Rabbit* (2012), readers find themselves in a claustrophobic small town where a group of adolescent friends are driven to commit a brutal and seemingly senseless murder.

From his first entry onto the Swedish publishing scene, Carlsson has proved an assured stylist with a keen sense not only for plot but also for language – its rhythms and registers, ambiguities and depths. And since his debut he has only gotten better, moving from strength to strength – or as we say in Sweden, from glory to glory.

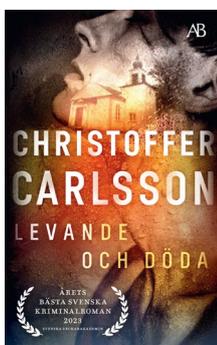
Sebastian Lönnlöv

Rights sold to: 10 countries



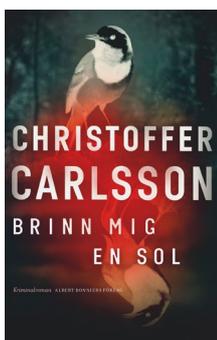
***A Tiny Drop of Blood*
447 p, 2025, Albert Bonniers Förlag
Rights: First Edition
Management**

A death has been discovered, and the police are calling it suicide. But is it? The search for answers leads back to the 1950s, to big secrets and dangerous loyalties. A detective novel about the masks we wear with those we love the most, and even with ourselves.



***The Living and the Dead*
300 p, 2023, Albert Bonniers Förlag
Rights: First Edition
Management**

A group of boys on the threshold of adulthood. The morning after a party, one of them turns up dead. In quick succession, another one dies. The last one decides to leave the area. On a hot July day twenty years later, a fresh murder takes place. The door has been opened between the living and the dead.



***Blaze me a Sun*
350 p, 2021, Albert Bonniers Förlag
Rights: First Edition
Management**

A down-at-heel author moves back home and, with the aid of a retired cop, starts writing about unsolved murders committed in the shadow of the Olof Palme assassination. A story of guilt, truth, and human tragedy, shot through with tenderness and featuring fine dramatic tension and cleverly placed red herrings.

Cecilia Hansson

How should we relate to our literary idols? Perhaps we should leaven our admiration with a few spoons of scepticism. Cecilia Hansson looks for Kafka's footprints in her own life and finds overlaps in illnesses of the lungs, breathing and pain. *Kafka's Lung* is a hybrid of essay and autofiction and an effective blend of poetry and biography where hypochondria thrums like a bass note under lyrical, sonorous prose. To get closer to Kafka, Hansson goes to both Vienna and Prague, but she finds the trail has been swept clean. Matter-of-factly, she observes that "to write about others is to brush up against yourself."

Hansson's writing is moody and poetic, and indeed she began her career as a poet. Preserving the idiom of her native northern Sweden, Hansson's style marries concrete, down-to-earth detail with a light and lyrical address. The result is a quiet melancholy which shows that defeat can be an unexpected form of triumph and disappointments can be the building blocks of literature.

In *Snow and Potatoes* (2021) Hansson explores the difficulties in combining artistic creation with a family life. Here too, travel acts a catalyst for reflections upon identity as the first-person narrator goes back to their origins in north Sweden to get to grips with their heritage and the illness that runs in their family. Both novels show that the best way to reach self-understanding is through an understanding of the world around us. Hansson centres herself, but she is not self-centred, and her original, unpredictable style breathes new life into the autofiction genre. Her twin novels give us new tools for understanding our rootlessness and restlessness, offering a permanent dwelling place in culture and the arts.

Björn Kohlström

Rights sold to: 1 country



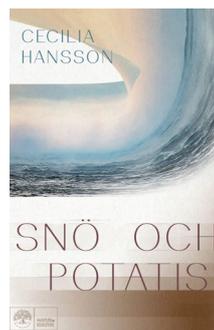
Photo: Martin Vallin



Kafka's Lung
256 p, 2024, Wahlström & Widstrand

Rights: Bonnier Rights

Cecilia Hansson walks with Franz Kafka through adolescence, language and Europe. An intense and dreamlike narrative about heritage, writing, and belonging.



Snow & potatoes
205 p, 2021, Natur & Kultur
Rights: Bonnier Rights

A road trip across north Sweden and a journey into memory, suffused with yearning and the desire for a personal context. A quiet, bare, and intimate story about motherhood, grief, and how anxiety casts its shadow down generations.

Stina Jackson

You might be surprised at how much the deep countryside of northern Sweden has in common with some solitary American landscapes. Author Stina Jackson, born in Skellefteå but resident in New York, marries the Swedish darkness with the American. She writes in a classic noir style, hardboiled but with plenty of subterranean emotion. She is concerned with such themes as longing and loss, and she likes to dig deep into the human psyche. All three of her books might be classed as supremely literary works of psychological suspense.

In her debut novel, *The Silver Road* (2018), a despairing father searches for his long-lost daughter. In parallel, in the same small hamlet, a mentally ill mother and her teen daughter move in with a man the mother met online. The Silver Road is equal parts murder mystery and a novel about culpability and rootlessness.

In *The Last Snow* (2020), Jackson departs from the classic crime setup in favour of a chillingly realistic portrayal of the emotional currents in a small village in Norrbotten, Sweden. Both of the two main characters long for change but seem unable to take their fate in their hands. Yes, someone gets murdered, but the murder story isn't the main thing.

Jackson's third novel, *Ruin The World Tonight* (2023) brings Sweden and America together. In Västerbotten, Sweden, Eva waits worriedly for any sign of life from her daughter Matilda, who is on an unplanned and destructive trip in the United States. At a mangy hotel in Chicago, Matilda meets Tyler, a run-down former addict who would do anything to protect her. Both Tyler and Eva are drawn to Matilda like moths to a flame. But this flame flickers precariously. At any moment it might sputter out.

Annina Rabe

Rights sold to: 6 countries

The Silver Road
295 p, 2018, Albert Bonniers Förlag

Rights: Salomonsson Agency
Night after night, Lelle drives Route 95 in search of his missing daughter. Meanwhile, Meja and her mother are new arrivals in the village. In a small community where everyone knows everyone else, a drama unfolds about never giving up and finding strength even in the darkest hours.



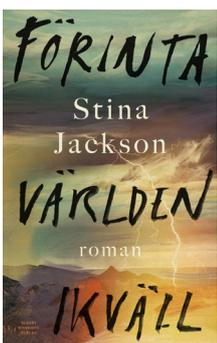
The Last Snow
346 p, 2020, Albert Bonniers Förlag

Rights: Salomonsson Agency
The farms in Ödesmark are abandoned, but one of the houses is still home to Liv, her father Vidar, and Vidar's teenage son. It's a peculiar family, and Liv can feel the watchful eyes of the neighbours on them. They all seem to wonder why Liv hasn't left. A tightly written, moving story about the ties that bind us to places and to each other.



Ruin the World Tonight
424 p, 2023, Albert Bonniers förlag

Rights: Salomonsson Agency
In northern Sweden, Eva is awake, restlessly opening apps on her phone. In the western United States, her beloved daughter Matilda is going whichever way the wind blows. A story about wanting confirmation and love, about daring to live the life you desire. A lyrical excavation of human darkness.



Balsam Karam

In each of her three books, beginning with her debut, *Event Horizon* (2018), Balsam Karam shows her penchant for experimenting with literary forms and strategies. Yet there is never any mistaking Karam's taut and lyrical prose, full of restive energy and always reflecting the perspective of the vulnerable party, the outsider. The conditions of exile, both external and internal conditions of exile, have always been Karam's concern. To a great degree, her themes are influenced by her own background as a Kurdish refugee from Iraq. In her work, the political and the existential intertwine.

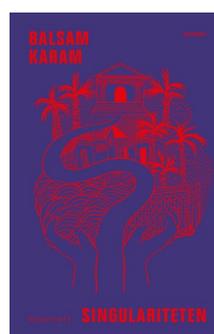
Karam's three novels form a thematic trilogy with motifs taken from outer space. *Event Horizon* and *The Singularity* (2021) both unfold in a sci-fi-esque landscape and centre on mothers and daughters. Motherhood is another of Karam's recurring themes, often with love, vulnerability and loss in focus. In *The Singularity*, a desperate mother searches for her missing teenage daughter; meanwhile, another woman carries a dead fetus in her womb, refusing to let the child leave her body. In *Event Horizon*, mothers and daughters are banished to a bounded area known as the Outskirts.

In *Dark Matters* (2025), the final book in the trilogy, a gravely injured girl is found dumped by the side of the road after the annual May Day celebrations. A group of people take her under their wing, caring for her tenderly. But what will happen when she returns to her family?

Balsam Karam may seem like a dystopian writer. But her books always hold out the hope that – if we keep the resistance alive – humanist values like love and solidarity can prevail.

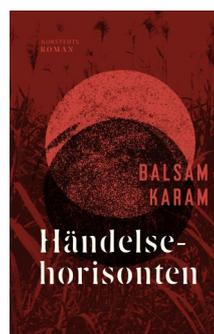
Annina Rabe

Rights sold to: 13 countries



The Singularity
229 pp. 2021, Norstedts
Rights: Norstedts Agency

What sort of mother is able to carry on after her child's disappearance? Balsam Karam's novel is a deeply affecting, politically charged account of grief. Loss is present in – and in spite of – the brittleness and resistance of language.



Event Horizon
250 pp. 2018, Norstedts
Rights: Norstedts Agency

Milde is abducted, imprisoned and tortured before being presented with one final choice: facing death in the city or being sent into space, into a black hole, into the Mass – as part of a research project. He chooses space – and eternity. This novel moves between the existential and the cosmic, in a style that unites corporeality with philosophy.



Photo: Eivind Glænte

Agnes Lidbeck

Agnes Lidbeck burst onto the scene with her debut novel, *Supporting Act* (2018), an acute and unflinching study of one woman's life. The novel is a critical examination of how women are transformed when they seamlessly adjust themselves to the patriarchy they live in. But its harsh gaze falls not only on the woman but also on the mechanisms that mold and mutilate her.

Supporting Act is the first book in a triptych of novels by Lidbeck that all explore human relationships. Where *Supporting Act* focuses on the woman's role, the next two books put sibling relationships and the man's role in focus.

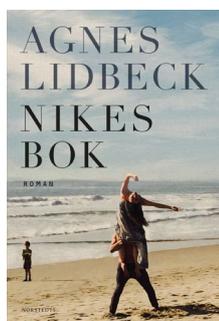
Uniting all three is Lidbeck's observational acuity and her penetration into behavioural inconsistencies, which she exposes with cool, at times scalpel-like precision.

But Lidbeck has more than one string to her bow. In the poetry collection *Ur: Dikter* (2018), she moves from the death of a father through new motherhood to the act of writing itself, in language more intimate and emotionally charged than the cool prose of her trilogy.

More recently, her register has only continued to expand. In the grandly conceived *Nikes bok* (2021), Lidbeck lets the fates of three families in a south Sweden fishing village spill across three decades and 700 pages in a rich and fertile story about motherhood, substance abuse, creativity, and death. In her newest novel, *All My Love* (2023), a story of two couples evolves into a dystopian study of a hypothetical future Sweden where free speech has been throttled and democracy disarmed. Yet regardless of format or genre, all of Lidbeck's work bears her singular stamp: her unerring eye and ear for human behaviour.

Jenny Aschenbrenner

Rights sold to: 4 countries



Niky's Book

**740 p. 2021, Norstedts
Rights: Brave New World**

It all starts with a full-on disaster. Three young families, from vastly different backgrounds. Some are beautiful and polished; others relentlessly hungry, with no inclination to hide their claws. And yet they are linked by ties that grow into love, a love rooted in that initial disaster.

A novel about the complexity of friendship, the price of loyalty and how life is formed in the fragments of that which was destroyed.



At a Loss

**250 p. 2019, Norstedts
Rights: Brave New World**

Lidbeck writes about the little truths and the big lies in our lives, the distance between our dreams and our capabilities, the emotional explosions we carry with us – and how we rationalise our failure to become more than we are.

A novel that lays bare everyday self-deceptions with tenderness and clarity.

Hanna Nordenhök

Perhaps it is her intimacy with the Spanish language that has helped make Hanna Nordenhök one of the most exciting writers in Sweden today. Interpreting outstanding prose writers in other language families must surely benefit your native tongue.

Nordenhök is the eminent Swedish translator of such authors as Pablo Neruda, Fernanda Melchor, Benjamin Labatut, Eduardo Halfon, and Gabriel García Márquez, among others. With the release of her own first book, the poetry collection *Hiatus* (2007), critics began speaking of her as a major author in her own right. So far she has proven them correct, with each of her eight books (and counting) being pathbreaking in its own way.

Her most recent novel, *Wonderland* (2023), slides straight into our DMs. It tells the story of a batch of fraudsters – the kind all of us are more or less encouraged to be these days, lured into it by media and digital programming. The book cuts between multiple main storylines – a woman shifting identities on the North American coast, a Spanish journalist catching a colleague faking news stories, a co-dependent Swedish woman enabling her husband's lies – with a few interspersed "case histories".

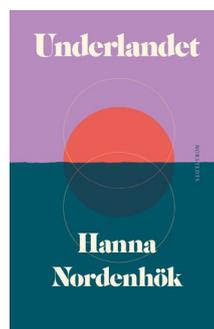
Nordenhök writes the kind of prose you might call dry. She positions herself as an observer, clocking details with the earnestness of an autopsy report and leaving interpretation (and any ethical wrestling) to the reader. Bristling with derelict lots and industrial landscapes, *Wonderland* also evokes a sense of general abandonment in a new world where identity can be as ephemeral as a business startup – not to mention as fragile and as sensitive to the swings of the market.

Jonas Thente

Rights sold to: 4 countries



Photo: Eivind Gjente



Wonderland
262 p, 2023, Norstedts
Rights: RCW Literary Agency

In *Wonderland* people in different places move through a present age that is forlorn, foreboding, and full of false pretences. A gripping study in the many faces of deceit and a clear-eyed look at a chameleonic world where it is never simple to distinguish truth from lies.



Caesaria
243 p, 2020, Norstedts
Rights: RCW Literary Agency

At an isolated summer home, a leading gynaecologist keeps in storage a girl he once cut from the womb, like a shimmering pearl lifted from an oyster. At this, the dawn of modern gynaecology and obstetrics, the dark country of the female body opens under the scalpel. *Asparna* (2017). In nineteenth-century Sweden, at a home for juvenile delinquents, the figures of lost children and ruthless rescuers intertwine. A portrait of evil behind the silence, the beauty, the taboos. A novel inspired by real events, about our vacillating perceptions of crime and punishment, illness and healing, inheritance and environment.



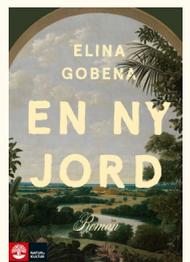
Homeward and outward – The Swedish novel evolves as the world is transformed

Are we living in a time of upheaval? Historians would say no, because any time involves upheaval of one sort or another. Even so, there is something different about the post-millennium years. Following a period of wide-scale improvement for the vast majority, it appears that change has shifted in a different direction. Backwards.

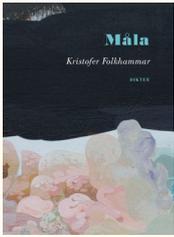
A number of conflicts, frictions and paradoxes have emerged. Efforts to spread literacy, education and research are now under threat from progress previously assumed to be inevitable – namely in the form of generative AI. Globalisation was meant to foster mutual understanding and cooperation, but it has morphed into increasing nationalism, enmity, fragmentation and isolationism. Endeavours to safeguard the environment and life on Earth have gone from being an existential issue to a fraught political question. Equality and human rights are called

into question by privileged modern-day princelings.

Sweden is just as confused as other countries, but we also enjoy many advantages. We live in one of the traditional Nordic welfare states with a healthy economy, and we will have access to clean water for longer than many other countries. The most salient feature in Swedish literature is currently the theme of identity. This is hardly unique in historic or geographical terms, but there may be some aspects that are particular to Swedish writing.



**A New Earth
2024
Elina Gobena
Natur & Kultur**



Paint
2024
Kristofer Folk-
hammar
Lejd

'Homecoming' novels exist in other countries, of course, but not to the same extent as in Sweden. One can speculate about the reasons for this. Other Nordic nations – and indeed most European countries – underwent industrialisation followed by urbanisation at around the same time. Rural areas do not exert a stronger pull on Swedes than anyone else, but the last three decades have seen an unprecedented sell-off and privatisation of Sweden's comprehensive social welfare system, once proudly called *Folkhemmet*, 'the people's home'. The gap between the rich and the less well-off has widened enormously.

Elin Persson provides an effective portrayal of the transformation of Swedish society in her novel *Pizzeria Roma* (2025). It is not actually a 'homecoming novel', since the main characters are now-elderly men who never left their hometown for the big city or university. But it does convey the price of the transformation. The local pizza place serves as the sole remaining social hub for men in the down-at-heel town. Magnus, recently put on sick leave from his job as a welder, reflects on the changes – mainly for the worse – as he drives through town.

"There was a drugstore back then, supermarket, post office, school. People lived in the houses." And: "The garden by the Mission Covenant Church is overgrown. It's like a ghost there, going downhill." He summarises: "Nowadays you've got to drive fifteen miles to go shopping. He supposes he liked it better the way it used to be. When you weren't forced to drive out of town, when there was more if you wanted to do something."

'So why go back? Perhaps it's about returning to what you used to be, before you let yourself get sucked up into the regimented anonymity of Stockholm'

So why go back? Perhaps it's about returning to what you used to be, before you let yourself get sucked up into the regimented anonymity of Stockholm (it's usually Stockholm).

Suspicion awaits those who return to the small communities they had left. Those who stayed put feel scorned and, in many cases, are outright hostile. Other 'homecoming novels' of various types include *Spindelbjörken* (*The Spider Birch*) by Pär Hansson and *Mjölkat* (*Milked*) by Sanna Samuelsson, both published in 2023; *Vargskytten* (*When the Wolf Came*) by Catrin Ormestad, *Cassi* by Johanna Swanberg and *Måla* (*Paint*), a poetry collection by Kristofer Folkhammar, all from 2024. *Bygdedjuret* (*Backwater Beast*) by Sven Olov Karlsson and *Hundnätter* (*Dog Nights*) by Mirja Unge were published in the past year.



Mimmi Jensen Gellerhed Photo: Marta Thisner

Mimmi Jensen Gellerhed's debut novel *Vaken* (*Awake*) provides a vivid example of the way a person who returns home can essentially feel doubly alienated. The place they left feels strange, as does the place they have moved to. A young woman returns to her hometown after a breakup. An elderly man called Pelle has recently died. Pelle used to look after her when her parents fell short. Initially Jensen Gellerhed guides the reader to side with the returning woman against the hostile locals, as expected. But then events take a turn, and we start to doubt the protagonist. This is an evocative novel with a rather new, unexpected take on the theme.

Writing one's world Of course, homecomings are not restricted within national borders. Refugees and immigrants who arrived in Sweden as young children have become significant literary voices, as have second-generation migrants. Could their roots also grow elsewhere? They, too, return – to Tehran (Negar Naseh, *En handfull vind/A Handful of Wind*), Herzegovina (Merima Dizdarevic, *Långt från ögat, långt från hjärtat/Far from the Eye, Far From the Heart*), Kurdistan (Sorin Masifi, *Staten. Systrarna. Dikten/State. Sisters. Poetry*), Ethiopia (*Elina Gobena, En ny jord/A New Earth*) and many other places.

Sweden's indigenous Sámi have increased their presence across all creative fields in recent years. The most prominent literary work in this category is Ann-Helén Laestadius' 'Sámi trilogy', whose third volume, *Skam (Shame)* was published in 2025. Other writers who have been hailed for their portrayals of Sámi culture and identity include Elin Anna Labba (*Far inte till havet/The Home of the Drowned*) and Alexandra Sundqvist (*Matriarkenmarken/The Matriarch Ground*).

In the summer of 2025, Sweden's Expressen newspaper published a list of the 25 best Swedish books of the century so far, as voted by 101 literary critics, scholars and writers. Number one on the list was the diaries of the playwright and author Lars Norén. Totalling more than 1,500 pages,

Sven Olof Karlsson Photo: Moa Karlberg



Norén's diaries were published in five volumes. The first came out in 2008 and the final instalment, which ended mid-sentence, was published posthumously in 2021.

Norén's personal diaries addressed topics of art, the state of the world, personal idiosyncrasies and vendettas. Several writers have taken inspiration from Norén and published their own personal journals. Among the most prolific have been the singer-songwriter, poet and author Ulf Lundell (*Vardagar/Weekdays*, published in 12 volumes since 2018) and the artist Marianne Lindberg De Geer (four volumes of diaries to date, most recently *Faktiskt tyvärr/Unfortunately in fact*, 2023).

Semi-autobiographical novels – also known as autofiction – have also been in the spotlight. This category includes novels that feature a narrator almost identical to the author, as in Stefan Lindberg's trilogy concluding with *Viskarna (The Whisperers, 2024)*. Like some of his male contemporaries, the first-person narrator – an author by the name of Stefan Lindberg – is not really in control of events. Instead, he is drawn into – or perhaps victimised by – his own fictions, in what can undoubtedly be classified in the tradition of the postmodern novel. *Viskarna* consists of eight stories that all make reference to Lindberg's own life and previous works. Diaries and the 'autofiction' genre have divided critics, prompting numerous debates on the purpose of literature.

Elin Anna Labba Photo: Erik Abel

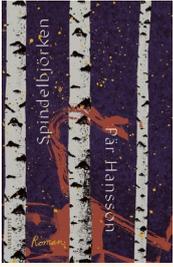


A Dramatist's Journal 2022
Lars Norén
Albert Bonniers Förlag



Unfortunately in fact 2023
Marianne Lindberg De Geer
Kaunitz-Olsson

More Swedish Fiction



Spindelbjörken
2023
Pär Hansson
Norstedts

Another example of the destabilisation of autobiography is *En inre angelägenhet* (*An Internal Matter*) by Kristian Fredén, a recent publication classed as a novel, even though it appears to be entirely autobiographical. Sven Olov Karlsson's novel *Bygdedjuret* (*Backwater Beast*) also fits into this category.

New working-class literature Working-class literature has a proud history in Sweden. In recent decades, though, traditional class analysis has had a hard time keeping up. We live in an era when a skilled tradesman might live in a single-family home and own three vehicles, while a person of similar age with a university degree makes do in low-paid call centre gigs.

The 1980s saw the proletariat become the precariat, scraping by in hotel and restaurant jobs. In 1991 Per Hagman made his debut with a novel entitled *Cigarett* (*Cigarette*) and gained influence and attention. The main character works in a series of restaurant jobs – the modern-day working class – while the older generation of working-class writers grumbled at the absence of cement, buckets and scaffolding.

‘Hotel jobs were popular settings for young writers three decades ago. Now they are back’

Hotel jobs were popular settings for young writers three decades ago. Now they are back, in works such as Rebecka Bülow's debut novel *Genom väggarna* (*Through the Walls*).

But a completely different line of work dominates in contemporary portrayals of the working class – namely, care work. Works that foreground care workers include Linnea Swedenmark's 2020 poetry collection, *En natt kidnappar jag alla mina hemtjänstkunder i en stulen buss* (*One Night I'm Going to Kidnap All My Home Care Clients in a Stolen Bus*) and Erik Vernersson's recently



A Handful of Wind
2022
Negar Naseh
Natur & Kultur

published *Sommartid i sorg i Sverige* (*Summertime in Mourning in Sweden*). Home-based care settings feature in novels by Maria Broberg (*Nattljus/Night Light*) and Lisa Ridzén (*Tranorna flyger söderut/When the Cranes Fly South*). This year, we have books including *Blommorna* (*The Flowers*) by Elin Michaelsdotter and *Den sista kastraten* (*The Last Castrato*), a volume of short stories by Ellika Lagerlöf.



Balsam Karam Photo: Märta Thieser

Escape from reality One of the most fascinating debut titles of recent years is Ellika Lagerlöf's *Den sista kastraten* (*The Last Castrato*). It ploughs a subcultural furrow that had previously been given short shrift in Swedish publishing and literary criticism, taking up established genres such as science fiction and horror, as well as more recent developments like the 'New Weird'. Presumably our unpleasant new world needs new ways of portraying an increasingly bizarre, absurd reality. Swedish literature is putting up a fight. Andrzej Tichý, whose most recent work is the novel *Händelseboken* (*The Book of Events*), and Balsam Karam (*Händelsehorisonten/Event Horizon and Singulariteten/The Singularity*) are two writers who hint at an unforeseeable future – including in Swedish literature.

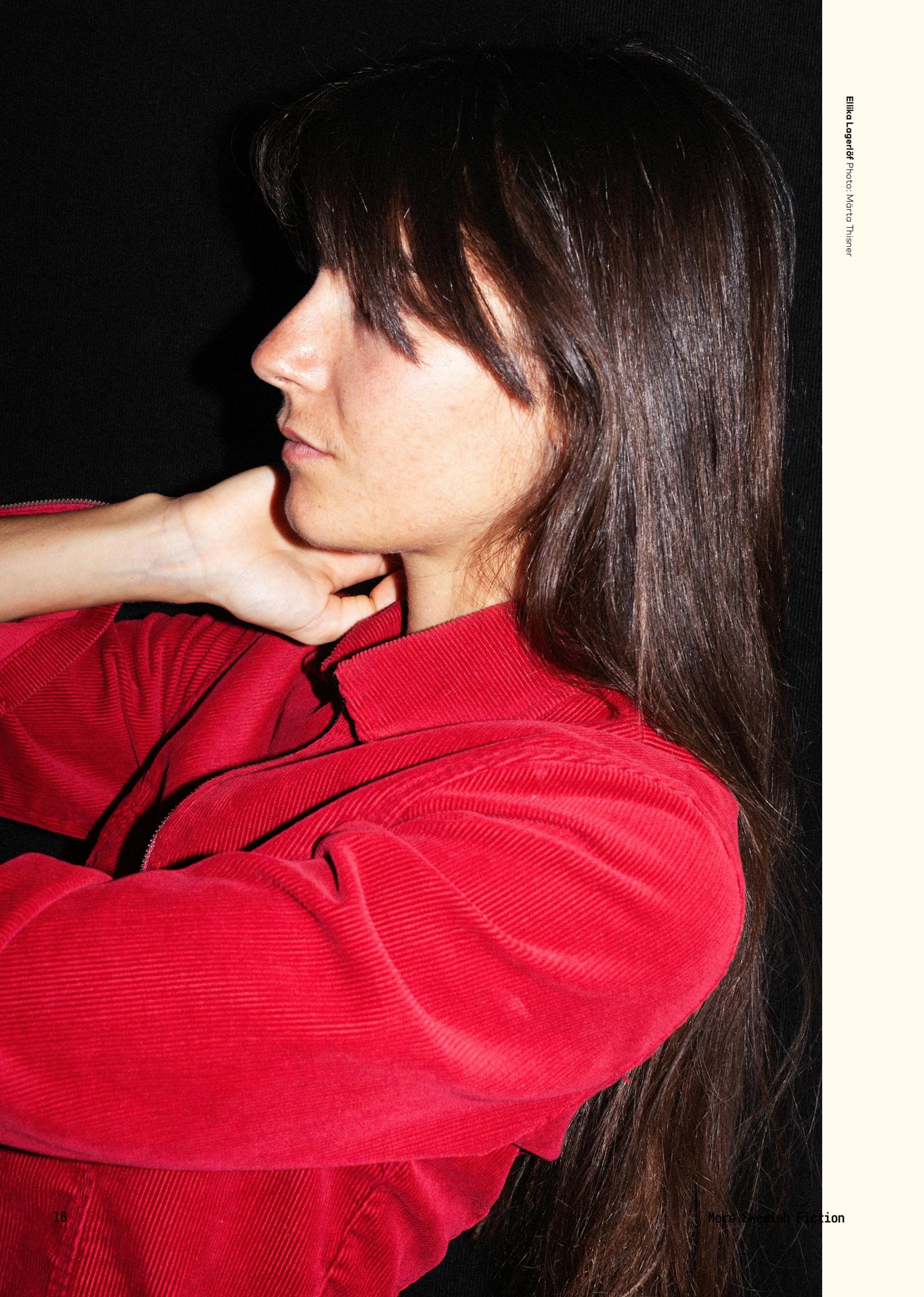




Photo: Sofia Runarsdotter

Elin Persson

What's left for a divorced, middle-aged welder when he can't work anymore? In the critically acclaimed *Pizzeria Roma* (2025), main character Magnus has long ignored the pain caused by years of wear and tear on his back. But one day he hits the wall. For the first time in his life, he's forced to take sick leave, and a new landscape of empty days stretches out before him.

In the small town in north Sweden where Magnus was born and lives, even the grocery store has closed its doors. But there's still a pizzeria where people meet to pass the time and deepen lifelong friendships. Magnus is not the only worn-out worker in town with too much time on their hands.

Pizzeria Roma interweaves contemporary description and memory to create a nuanced picture of masculinity, solidarity, and rural life. It uses a close perspective that puts us right next to Magnus, making us party to his thoughts and conversations. In this story about a single individual, Persson also captures the transformations that have occurred in Sweden (and the world) has in recent decades.

Persson's first novel, *The Afghan Sons* (2020), unfolds at refugee home for unaccompanied minor boys. Something *Pulling Me* (2021) describes the eternal teenage desire to get out, which always comes at the risk of losing what little you have. *Summer* (2023) revolves around two teenage stepsisters, Lea and Jelena, with a relationship as complex and claustrophobic as the novel is dark and electric.

Persson's interest in the turning points that shape a human life is evident in her books. It comes as no surprise to learn that she has spent time doing social work alongside her writing.

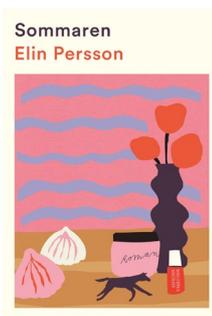
Sebastian Lönnlöv

All rights available



Pizzeria Roma
408 p, 2025, Wahlström & Widstrand
Rights: Albatros Agency

A novel of friendship and solidarity; a book about life in a small town far from the city, blue-collar jobs, love that comes and goes, and love that never leaves. An homage to a rural community and to a landscape of far blue mountains, moss-green forests, and dark and shining lakes.



Summer
144 p, 2023, Wahlström & Widstrand
Rights: Albatros Agency

An electric novel about a summer vacation and two stepsisters who explore the boundaries between tenderness and violence. A sensitively observed story about a claustrophobic world where relationships become both prison and escape while grown-ups look the other way, and in the outside world it's a summer like any other.

Lydia Sandgren

Few Swedish debut novels published in the 21st century have received as much attention as Lydia Sandgren's *Collected Works* (2020). Besides winning the prestigious August Prize, it also generated a media debate on literary merit, with opinions divided on whether the book was mediocre or brilliant. It emerged victorious. With exceptional focus, Sandgren tells the story of two friends, Gustav –an artist – and Martin, who works in publishing. Martin's wife vanished a number of years ago, and her absence has bound the two friends together, even as it threatens to tear them apart. *Collected Works* is a subtle novel that succeeds in its ambitious goal to recreate Gothenburg from the 1980s onward.

Sandgren, who has a day job as a psychologist, impresses with her complex, memorable character portraits that delve into hidden human depths. In her second novel, *Survival of the Species* (2025), Karl Hillberg is a successful writer who is commissioned to pen a biography of an eminent orchestra conductor. The project is dogged by rivalries and secrets. Once again, Lydia Sandgren demonstrates intimate knowledge of a historical event and the ways friendships and romantic relationships can cease or survive when put to the test. Both of her novels manage to avoid easy nostalgia, examining instead how the conditions for artistic creation can change over time.

In a Swedish radio programme, Sandgren explained that she aims to write the way Roy Bittan (the keyboardist in Bruce Springsteen's E Street Band) plays piano. The comparison is spot-on. Her melodic prose flows brightly and effortlessly over invisible keys while retaining elements of darkness and melancholy. She has written two weighty tomes that sound lovely, yet leave space for intelligent, nuanced discussions of friendship and love.

Björn Kohlström

Rights sold to: 15 countries

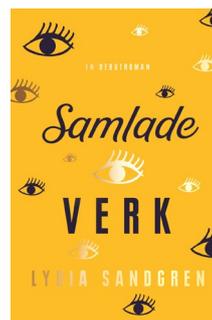


Photo: Daniel Wester



Survival of the Species
700 p, 2025, Albert Bonniers Förlag
Rights: First Edition Management

A rich and winding novel about the conditions of creation, about music, love, and literature in Gothenburg, Rome, and New York, from the 1970s into our present day.



Collected Works
689 p, 2020, Albert Bonniers Förlag
Rights: First Edition Management

When publisher Martin Berg visits an art exhibition and sees a portrait of his missing wife, his life is turned upside down. An addictive brick of a novel about deep love, enduring friendship, and art, set against a backdrop of modernity and social mobility.



Photo: Emelie Aspönd

Jessica Schiefauer

The 17th-century philosopher René Descartes is known for his theory of mind-body dualism. But did you also know he died of pneumonia in a freezing Stockholm after being called there by Queen Christina to serve as her tutor? In her novel *The Thinker's Testimony* (2024), Jessica Schiefauer gives us a free imagining of Descartes' life. Her racy, gripping, dramatic tale weds fascinating biography with a deep dive into the question of the inmost core of our person. Does it exist, and can it really be separated from the body?

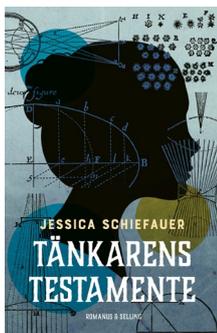
In *The Carriers* (2020), Schiefauer imagines a future where human reproduction is controlled. In this gender-divided society, women live in strict separation from men to protect themselves from a deadly contagion. The society slides from utopia into dystopia when the will of one woman is steamrollered by the rigid system.

Schiefauer first won acclaim as a YA writer, even then with a focus on fantastical elements and human relationships. She published her first novel, *Om du var jag*, in 2009. Two years later, she broke through in earnest with the novel *Pojkarna* (2011), which received the August Prize in the children's and youth literature category. Its unique pairing of magical elements with a penetrating look at harsh high school gender norms was wholly new on the YA publishing scene.

The Eyes of The Lake (2015) is also for young readers and was also awarded the August Prize. Inspired by the widely reported, racially motivated murder of a 14-year-old boy in a small Swedish community, it tackles some of the most difficult questions of our day. Why do children kill other children? How can we make sense of the fact that someone we love might also be a murderer?

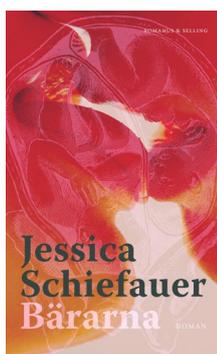
Jenny Aschenbrenner

Rights sold to: 6 countries



The Thinker's Testimony
383 p, 2024, Romanus & Selling
Rights: Nordin Agency

In an age when medieval superstition is losing ground to science, we follow the Thinker on an eventful journey through Europe. The Thinker questions everything – even when the punishment for defiance is death – in the conviction that everything can be studied and controlled. With one exception: emotions and the daughter he never imagined having.



The Carriers
333 p, 2020, Romanus & Selling
Rights: Nordin Agency

The Carriers describes a world where, in response to a generations-old contagion, society has divided itself between women and men, carriers and transmitters. A tightly written, shimmering novel about love, parenthood, and life in a society both like and unlike our own.

Andrzej Tichý

The cover of Andrzej Tichý's novel *Book of Events* (2024) evokes medieval woodcuts or church paintings of the danse macabre, and the skeletons reappear as in the pages as vignettes. The associations to the New Testament's Book of Revelation and the wild visions set down by John are certainly deliberate. But this dance of death more closely resembles a modern rave than a medieval circle dance.

Tichý's first novel, *Sex liter luft* (2005), was based on the premise that everyone on earth except for the main character had disappeared. So Tichý has always been interested in the apocalyptic. His new novel opens in his hometown of Malmö, where we find ourselves watching as a young girl intentionally overdoses on a playground with drugs stolen from a mother on the ropes. Could the girl have been saved? Probably. But Josif, our narrator, is a petty criminal whose fear of the authorities stops him from calling an ambulance.

It is very dark stuff. Criss-crossing plots; realism that slides into absurdism; a cast of characters both bountiful and fleeting. And tangled up in it all, the memory of Scheherazade, the character in the One Thousand and One Nights who told stories to stay her own execution. But is that really what she was doing? In Tichý's interpretation, her motive was to stop the sultan from murdering more women and to spare her own father, the sultan's executioner, from the task. Tichý writes: "It was never about surviving, but about wanting to intervene in reality and change it, shift the power. For the word, as it has been said, is quick and powerful." A sentiment that also seems to be Andrzej Tichý's own lodestar.

Jonas Thente

Rights sold to: 5 countries

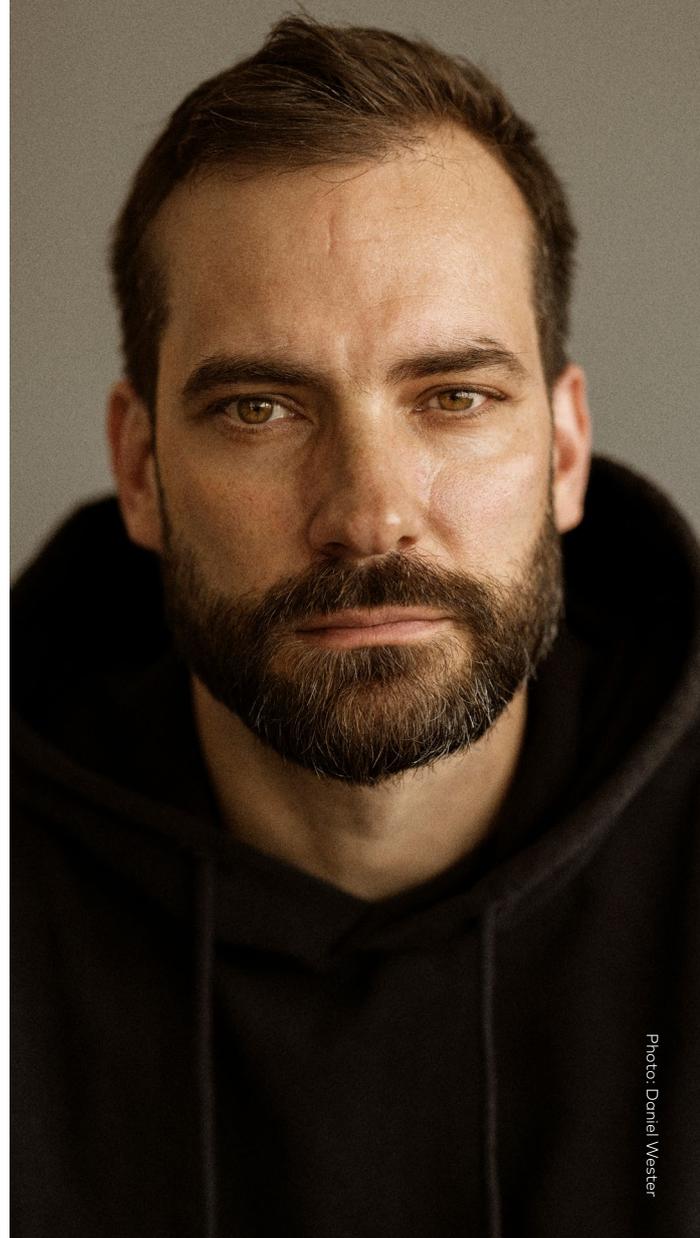
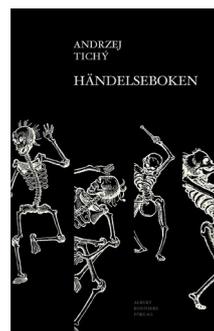


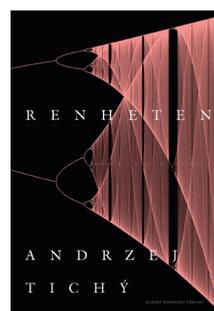
Photo: Daniel Wester



Book of Events
500 p, 2024, Albert Bonniers Förlag

Rights: Salomonsson Agency

Composed of many fragmentary stories, this novel moves between life and death. A mosaic of voices come together a kaleidoscopic narrative. With a keen gaze and gallows humour, the author depicts a world in crisis.



Purity
245 p, 2020, Albert Bonniers Förlag

Rights: Salomonsson Agency

A man on a bus flies into a rage. A social realist kills a friend with a hammer. A guilty thief avows innocence. Reluctantly, the cleaning ladies keep on cleaning. This short story collection by Tichý portrays both the fallen and those still waiting to fall with wit and gravity.



Photo: Göran Segerholm

Mirja Unge

A woman's faceoff with the patriarchy and a culture of silence forms the point of departure for *Dog Nights*, the fifth and latest novel by Mirja Unge. When Nadja returns to the town she grew up in, she is confronted with the same group of local people she once left behind. She is hired to work at a group home for adolescents, where she soon realizes that the girls in the home are being sexually assaulted by men in power.

Nadja has buried memories of her own from her teenage years that no one wants her to dig up or speak out about. But no matter the cost of telling the truth, she refuses to stay silent. It isn't long before the men she wants to expose decide to silence Nadja instead, demonstrating once and for all the penalty for breaking solidarity with the group. With that, *Dog Nights* metamorphoses into a psychological thriller and a dark, hypnotic portrait of the depths of the human psyche. Unge has a signature, singular way with words, markedly unconventional in its use of orality, slang, and dialect. The effect is to insist that readers listen attentively to this particular story, told in this particular way, rather than leaning back and reading on autopilot.

Since her award-winning first novel, *Det var ur munnarna orden kom* (1998), Unge has published four more novels along with a critically acclaimed chapter book for children and a highly original (and wholly fantastic) short story collection, *Brorsan är mätt*. With caustic wit and a fine ear for dialogue, Unge gives us equally nuanced portraits of both victims and perpetrators.

Sebastian Lönnlöv

Rights sold to: 6 countries



Dog Nights
289 p, 2024, Norstedts
Rights: Winje Agency
Nadja returns to her home village and her abandoned family home after years in the city. For good or ill, everything seems unchanged. But when she sees something she shouldn't have, frightening things begin to happen. A literary country noir – dramatic, tender, and threatening.



I Live on Tomorrow
190 p, 2018, Norstedts
Rights: Winje Agency
Tove lives in a rural community with her unreliable dad and her frail, lethargic sister. Listlessly, she circulates among high school corridors rife with abuse, parties at the homes of unsavoury young men where liquor numbs the pain, and her own home, which she prefers to avoid. Unge's singular voice and style carve a path through the days, showing a spark of life in the midst of the misery.

Zara Uzun Kjellner

***Radio Yerevan*, the latest novel from Zara Uzun Kjellner, takes its title from a fictional radio station in the former Eastern bloc that lampooned local conditions. In the novel, the station is real and is helping to unite the Kurdish European diaspora. The two sisters Serra and Zerya are newly arrived in a university city in West Germany. But Serra goes missing in Berlin. When Zerya tries to find her, it's like searching for a needle in a haystack.**

Radio Yerevan is a book about both borders and the suspension of borders. The fate of the two sisters is echoed in the lives of many minor characters, so that a broad network of overlapping experiences takes shape. In a fictional story set against a backdrop of reality, Uzun Kjellner lays out life stories coolly and methodically and shows that separation can also bring people together. This optimistic novel is a patient examination of the ways we are defined by the places we leave behind, and the way memory stretches out long arms to find us, no matter however far we travel.

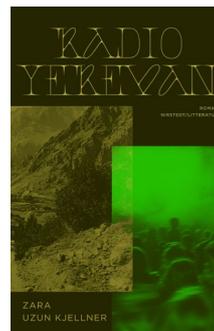
In the earlier novel *A New God* Leila accompanies her boyfriend to a country estate in the woods during hunting season. Inscribed hierarchies become a subject of investigation for Leila, and as she becomes more entangled in privilege, class differences appear in ever sharper relief. When she enters into a risky power game with a maid, she pays the price, discovering that what seduces can also destroy. Alongside *Radio Yerevan*, this suggestive novel about the lure of violence has established Uzun Kjellner as a mature, versatile and ambitious author ready to take on new challenges.

Björn Kohlström

All rights available



Photo: Astrid Greitz



Radio Yerevan
456 p, 2025, Nirstedt
Rights: Sebes & Bisseling

The lives and destinies of the Kurdish diaspora interlace across continents and cultures. From Berlin to Sanliurfa, Bochum to Stockholm, characters search for belonging in a world of dissolving borders and lost identities. In this world, disappearing is easier than finding your way home.



En ny gud
273 p, 2022, Nirstedt
Rights: Sebes & Bisseling

Leila accompanies her boyfriend Ludvig to his family's estate, a home of magnificent salons and muffled emotions. When she initiates a bizarre game with Dolores, a maid, it soon ensnares the whole family.



Manhattan
154 p, 2019, Nirstedt
Rights: Sebes & Bisseling

An ode to Stockholm and young women in motion. Rich in detail and emotionally charged, this first novel is about a young woman and her relationship with her ill mother.

New writers

Andréa Ager-Hanssen

Havoc, the first novel by Andréa Ager-Hanssen, is about Hedda, a young, pregnant academic with a complicated life. But the real main character is not Hedda but her father, an eccentric and unpredictable venture capitalist whose whims ruled the family throughout Hedda's youth. Living in the lap of luxury one day; creditors at the door and the power shut off the next. And the rest of the family left to pick up the pieces. In this dark and tragicomic novel, Ager-Hanssen portrays not just a dysfunctional family but also, by extension, a capitalist system that lures us to live beyond our means and lose ourselves in unrealistic lifestyle aspirations.

Annina Rabe

Rights sold to: 1 country



Photo: Hilda Randuliv



Havoc
267 p, 2025, Natur & Kultur
Rights: Blyant Agency

On the road to disaster – personal bankruptcy, say – is there one moment when it all goes to hell? Or is disaster something that sneaks up on you? And do poor financial decisions get handed down? *Havoc* is a messy, darkly comic book about money, family, and the things we inherit.

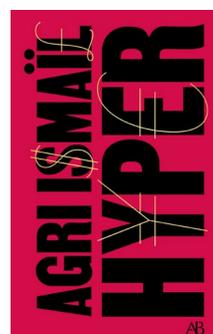
Agri Ismail

Rarely has the financial sector been portrayed with as much insight and sarcastic wit as in *Hyper*, Agri Ismail's debut novel about migration and money and the ways these two powerful forces intersect.

With the 2008 financial crisis as backdrop, Ismail tells the story of a Kurdish family who flee Iraq via Iran and finally wind up in London. But divisions arise, as they do not all have the same capacity to merge or assimilate into this new world in which they find themselves

Hyper is a rich and engrossing novel that moves across continents and class boundaries. It offers unique insight into the massively wealthy world of finance that rules us all, but itself is largely ruled by bunglers; at the same time, it paints an intimate portrait of a family divided by war, politics, and money. Quite the magic trick. *Hyper* was awarded the prestigious Katapult Prize in 2024 and was nominated for both the August Prize and Borås Tidning's Debutant Prize.

Jenny Aschenbrenner



Hyper
420 p, 2024, Albert Bonniers
Förlag
Rights: Albatros Agency

All you need to know about being a refugee and dealing with money: either your own or the hyper-fast transactions of modern finance. Money has the power to liberate, but more often it corrupts. A family history about different ways to perform over expectations.



Photo: Märta Thisser



More Swedish Fiction

Ellika Lagerlöf

With her first book, *The Last Castrato* (2025), Ellika Lagerlöf joins the ranks of writers in an increasingly popular genre known as "weird fiction" – a subgenre of speculative fiction. But perhaps the best way to describe the short stories in this debut is by reference to a film genre: body horror. In an age of digital avatars and artificial intelligence, Lagerlöf writes about bodily fluids, amputations, physical processes, protective gloves.

In one story, a young woman places her uterus in the bathtub like a lump of meat. In another, a woman never eats but has been saving all her meals in frozen or vacuum-packed form since at least the 1940s. At the same time, of course, it's all about right here, right now.

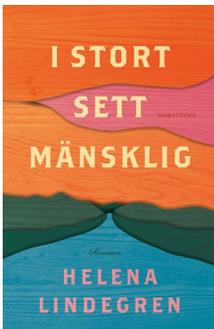
Jonas Thente

Rights sold to: 1 country



The Last Castrato
166 p, 2025, Albert Bonniers
Förlag
Rights: First Edition
Management

A boy who cuts off his genitals with scissors, so he never has to grow up. A camp where pearls are grown in children's mouths. A construction worker who lives for years behind the wall of a family home. This is a twisted short story collection about vacuum-packed food, people in bags, and recreating your father from a strand of hair.



Essentially Human
387 p, 2025, Norstedts
Rights: Norstedts Agency

When Hanna has to move back into her dead father's house, her life comes crashing down – again. In a barren Västerbotten, she battles passivity, desire, and the memory of how good it felt to get drunk. Unflinchingly observed and laced with nearly imperceptible wit, this is a novel about growing up, friendship, and learning to fail with dignity.

Helena Lindegren

If you've ever felt the urge to just lie on the ground crying, you'll identify with *Essentially Human*. Hanna, the main character, lives in a backwater town in north Sweden, a long way from the pulse of the city. She's stuck in her job at the group home, her partner (who is generally insufferable) has left her, and on top of it all, she's been hitting the bottle.

When she has a drunk driving episode, she's forced to get her act together. Outwardly, she succeeds beyond expectations; inside, the chaos remains. And so, of course, do the cravings. Lindegren's first novel has elements of both feelgood and social realism. It's full of a humour and verve that make Hanna easy to love, hard to forget.

Sebastian Lönnlov

Rights sold to: 1 country

Karin Magnusson

In a society in transformation, what happens to the individual? That is the central question in Karin Magnusson's melancholy and affecting debut novel about a middle-aged house painter who is planning suicide. After losing his family, his only friend, and the business the two of them started in a fit of youthful confidence, he is left to eke out a living doing odd jobs in a Sweden that is harsher and colder than it used to be. Now he is finishing up one last flat – it will be his last job. As his paintbrush moves across the walls, his mind ranges over his life, poking at old hurts and dragging up a wealth of stories, all framed by the larger narrative of a man and a country he can't recognize any more.

Sebastian Lönnlöv

All rights available



Broken White
224 p, 2025, Albert Bonniers Förlag

Rights: Salomonsson Agency

Class, money, love, friendship. A middle-aged house painter is painting one last flat before he ends his own life. He has already lost his family, his business, his friends. What he has left are his thoughts about how he could have prevented it. A story of warmth and understated intensity about the kind of ordinary person who rarely takes centre stage.

Pauline Olsson Ghoreishi

In her first novel, *Alejandro* (2024), Pauline Olsson Ghoreishi plunges straight into the body of a boy in one of the gangs Swedes read about in the paper. Alejandro has been fatally shot, and the book takes the form of a monologue by his best friend, who is speaking from a place of still-raw pain.

The monologue is an avalanche of all the friends' shared memories: their childhood, their adolescence, and all the incremental steps on their descent into hell. It is also a portrait of grief and of the struggle to go on living.

The friends have been moving in rough circles in Malmö. They are members of a gang that can change gears in an instant from juvenile pranks to serious assault.

Olsson Ghoreishi brings her young protagonist to vivid life and eschews facile explanations for why young men in Sweden too often engage in violent, meaningless crime.

Jenny Aschenbrenner

All rights available



Alejandro
182 p, 2025, Albert Bonniers Förlag

Rights: Bonnier Rights

Alejandro is dead. Two childhood friends in Malmö are tugged from youthful pranks into a spiral of violence beyond their control. An intense novel about friendship, drugs, grief, loyalty, and bonds that are stronger than life – yet never quite strong enough.



More Swedish Fiction



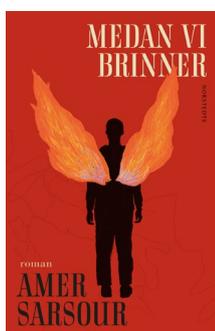
Photo: Banfa Jawla

Amer Sarsour

How do you write with levity and wit about even the gravest topics? Amer Sarsour's first novel, *As We Burn* cuts to the core of the refugee situation in Europe. Omar, 23, is a lost boy of Palestinian background who receives an assignment: go to Sicily to fetch two cousins who are refugees from Syria. His job is to pilot them through a Europe of closed borders to safety in Sweden. *As We Burn* is a literary road movie told with both tenderness and humour. But not for an instant does it let readers forget the implacable gravity of the situation that has inspired it. Sarsour is a familiar name on the spoken word scene, and he brings the same style of repartee and ready wit to this, his prose debut.

Annina Rabe

All rights available



As We Burn
191 p, 2024, Norstedts
Rights: Norstedts Agency

Omar is a young man on a mission. He has to go down to Italy to pick up his cousins, refugees from a Syria that has gone up in flames. But the road proves harder than Omar expected—and not merely because of guards, police, and passport control. Omar begins to doubt himself. Is he really the right man for the job?

"As We Burn is a literary road movie told with both tenderness and humour. But not for an instant does it let readers forget the implacable gravity of the situation that has inspired it."

Annina Rabe

Mattias Timander

The contrast (and sometimes conflict) between city and country is a classic subject in Swedish literature and one that remains alive and well today. Stories of life in the Swedish countryside are manifold. Mattias Timander's first novel, *Your Will is in the Woods* is a lyrical narrative about a restless young man who falls in love with literature and leaves a tiny town in Norrbotten to join the arts scene in Stockholm. He quickly finds his footing in this new world, but he also soon discovers that urban life has its downsides and he is as much a foreigner in his new home as he was in his old. Timander writes with warmth and clarity about belonging, identity, and being fundamentally changed by the magic of books.

Annina Rabe

Rights sold to: 4 countries



Photo: Sofia Runnsdöter



Your Will is in The Woods
212 p, 2024, Weyler förlag
Rights: Weyler förlag

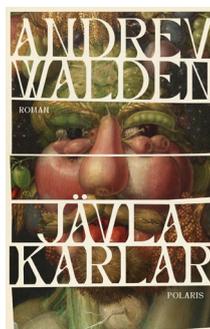
A young man moves away from a small town where old arguments persist long after their reasons are forgotten. He escapes through books – all the way to the literary circles of the big city, which turns out to be a village of another kind. Still, forgetting about life up north is impossible. A return is inevitable. *Your Will is in the Woods* is a quiet, pointed novel about heritage and belonging.

Andrev Walden

When the well-known and much-loved journalist and observer Andrev Walden in 2023 published his first novel, *Bloody Men*, readers and critics alike were floored by his story. Pairing heartrending intimacy with perfectly dosed levity, Walden writes about a childhood – his own – in which a boy tries to survive his mother's relationships with irredeemable men. A long, long parade of boyfriends passes through the family home. Some are pathetic, others downright dangerous, even potentially fatal to the boy and his mother. The more of them we encounter, the more we believe the mother's mantra, which also gives the book its Swedish title. "Bloody men," she says. They really are bloody awful. The novel was awarded the August Prize and is being adapted for film.

Jenny Aschenbrenner

Rights sold to: 12 countries



Bloody Men
376 p, 2023, Polaris
Rights: Politiken Literary Agency

A wild story about a childhood. About moms who smoke under the range hood and says, "Bloody Men". About the way love starts and ends. About a scalped hamster. But above all, about men. When you have seven dads in seven years, you learn a thing or two about men.



Photo: Joel Nilsson & Tina Axelsson

More Swedish Fiction

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