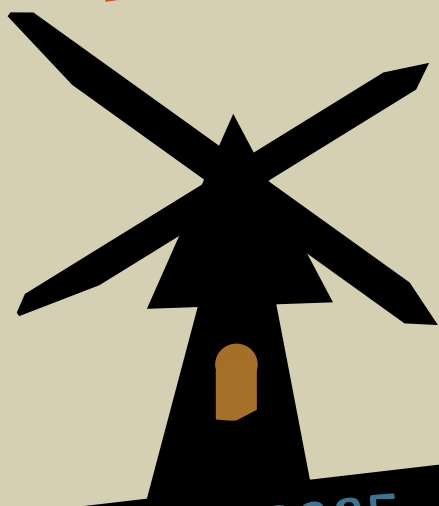


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WINTER 2025

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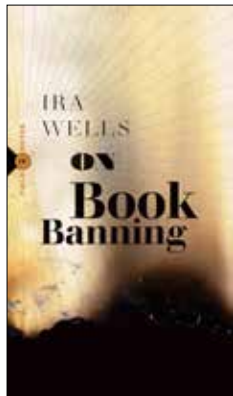
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# IRA WELLS

## ON BOOK BANNING

FIELD NOTES #9

A lively, accessible survey of literary censorship through the ages—and an argument against book bans.



Feb 25, 2025 | Books  
& Reading  
4.5 x 7.75, 128 pp  
\$19.95 | 9781771966634  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:  
Rinaldo Walcott,  
*On Property*  
Mark Kingwell,  
*On Risk*  
Casey Plett,  
*On Community*

From the destruction of libraries in ancient Rome, to the Catholic Church's attempts to tamp down religious dissent and scientific innovation, to state-sponsored efforts to suppress LGBTQ literature in the 1980s and beyond, book bans stem from the ineradicable human impulse toward social control. In *On Book Banning's* whistle-stop tour of landmark legal cases, literary controversies, and philosophical arguments, Ira Wells shows how the freedom to read and publish is the aberration in human history, and that censorship and restriction have been the rule, and argues that today's culture warriors are warping our children's relationship with literature and teaching them that the solution to opposing viewpoints is cancellation or outright expurgation. At a moment in which our democratic institutions are buckling under the stress of polarization, *On Book Banning* is both rallying cry and guide to resistance for those who will always insist upon reading for ourselves.

**Ira Wells** is a critic, essayist, and an associate professor at Victoria College in the University of Toronto. His most recent book is *Norman Jewison: A Director's Life*. He lives in Toronto.



## PRAISE FOR IRA WELLS' *NORMAN JEWISON: A DIRECTOR'S LIFE*

"[*Norman Jewison: A Director's Life* is] a fascinating story told with verve and authority." *TORONTO STAR*

"To read *Norman Jewison: A Director's Life*, is to wonder why this most consequential of directors wasn't better known. A big thanks to Ira Wells for giving biography treatment to a major Hollywood creator who strangely never became a legend." *FORBES*

"Ira Wells makes the persuasive case that Jewison deserves more fame than he has received, and along the way delivers a rollicking tale of Hollywood during Jewison's most active years and plenty of backstage trivia." *AIR MAIL*

"[A]n exhaustively researched look at the career of the country's most prolific, but least understood, filmmaker. The book is an ambitious, and frequently essential, endeavour." *GLOBE AND MAIL*

"A thoroughly enjoyable and detailed look at a memorable life in film." *LIBRARY JOURNAL*

# VIJAY KHURANA

## THE PASSENGER SEAT

A Winter/Spring 2025 Indies Introduce Pick  
Shortlisted for the Fitzcarraldo/New Directions/  
Giramondo Novel Prize



Mar 4, 2025 | Fiction  
5.25 x 8, 232 pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771966306  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:

David Diop,  
*At Night All Blood Is Black*  
Kevin Lambert,  
*Querelle of Roberval*  
Nicholas Herring,  
*Some Hellish*

In a small town in North America, two boys, or men, embark on a vaguely charted road trip through the northern wilderness with little more than canned food and secondhand camping gear—and the rifle they buy on their way out of town for reasons neither seems able to articulate. The more they handle the gun, and the farther they get from their parents’ houses and their peers, girlfriends and online gaming, the grim future that awaits them in their nowhere town, the less their actions—and the games, literal and metaphorical, they play—are bound by the usual constraints. When Adam decides to harass a young couple they meet on the highway, the outcome is irreversible, and leads them even further down a road from which there’s no turning back.

A searing examination of male friendship and the broader social implications of masculinity in an age of toxic loneliness, *The Passenger Seat* introduces Vijay Khurana as a powerful new voice in fiction.

**Vijay Khurana** is a writer and translator based between Berlin and London. He is currently completing a PhD in Creative and Critical Writing at Queen Mary University of London, researching the disembodied voice and its effect on diaspora, long-distance relationships, and loneliness.

### PRAISE FOR *THE PASSENGER SEAT*

“Vijay Khurana’s profound and propulsive *The Passenger Seat* is a thrilling, terrifying, devastating ride. This perfectly pitched tale of masculinity gone wrong exposes the ways that intimacy can so quickly veer into violence—yet it evades easy moral pronouncements at every turn. Khurana is a brilliant stylist who drives straight toward the heart. I would follow him down any road.” **ELVIA WILK, AUTHOR OF *DEATH BY LANDSCAPE AND OVAL***

“This book is simply great—an elegant novel written with disturbing emotional intensity and a sly, judicious sense of contemporary detail.” **LAUREN OYLER, AUTHOR OF *FAKE ACCOUNTS***

“Vijay Khurana writes incredibly succinct and vigorous prose. His stories, always full of insight and depth, shine a light on the most nuanced and ambivalent corners of our lives.” **YAN GE, AUTHOR OF *STRANGE BEASTS OF CHINA***

# MAGGIE ARMSTRONG

## OLD ROMANTICS

Shortlisted for the Irish Book Awards  
*Sunday Independent* Newcomer of the Year



April 1, 2025 | Fiction  
5.3 × 8.5, 272pp  
\$24.95 | 9781771966610  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:

Elaine Feeney,  
*As You Were*  
Kim Fu,

*Lesser Known Monsters  
of the 21st Century*  
Nicole Flattery,  
*Show Them a Good Time*

A woman pursues a man who cut ahead of her in line. Two nice people report that a child is being left unsupervised at a local beach. Romances, old and new, shift and sour. Following Maggie Armstrong's intrepid hero, Margaret, through first love, first bad date, first job, first extremely bad date, and on into midlife and its attendant disillusionment—and surprising revelations—*Old Romantics* is an acutely observed, hideously entertaining collection of linked short stories from an astonishing new talent. Slippery, flawed, and perilously honest, Armstrong's narrators navigate a world of awkward expectation and latent hostility with piercing insight into the trials and tribulations of attempting to be human while female.

**Maggie Armstrong's** work has appeared in the *Dublin Review*, *The Stinging Fly*, *Banshee*, and elsewhere. She lives in Dublin.

### PRAISE FOR *OLD ROMANTICS*

"As for the prose, you could bathe in it. The details, the clever turns of phrase. A ticking clock is 'strict, censorious, like a clacking tongue.' A heart bangs 'like a broken toy.'" *IRISH TIMES*

"The collection builds to four final stories with power, insight and compassion for human frailty." *IRISH INDEPENDENT*

"Funny and awkward and honest and perceptive and shrewd . . . a very exciting new voice in Irish fiction." LOUISE O'NEILL

"Somehow both elegant and fiery. Maggie Armstrong's Dublin is full of surprises. An excellent debut." NICOLE FLATTERY

"A high-wire balancing act; simmering menace juxtaposed with sardonic comedy and razor-sharp self-awareness. Unmissable." SOPHIE WHITE

# JÓN KALMAN STEFÁNSSON

## HEAVEN AND HELL THE TRILOGY ABOUT THE BOY #1

TRANSLATED FROM THE ICELANDIC BY PHILIP ROUGHTON

“Stefánsson shares the elemental grandeur of Cormac McCarthy.”—Eileen Battersby, *TLS*



Feb 4, 2025 | Fiction  
5.25 × 7.75, 224pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771966511  
(trade paper)

### COMP TITLES:

Jón Kalman Stefánsson,  
*Your Absence Is Darkness*  
Roy Jacobsen,  
*The Unseen*  
Carys Davies,  
*Clear*

In a remote part of Iceland, a young man joins a cod-fishing crew, but when a tragedy occurs at sea, he's appalled by his fellow fishermen's cruel indifference. Lost, broken by his experiences, he leaves the fishing village in secret, his only purpose to return a book to a blind old sea captain who lives in a town beyond the mountains—and when he arrives, he finds that he isn't alone in his solitude: welcomed into a warm circle of outcasts, he begins to see the world anew.

*Heaven and Hell* navigates the depths of despair to celebrate the redemptive power of friendship. Set at the turn of the twentieth century, it is a reading experience as intense as the forces of the Icelandic landscape themselves.

**Jón Kalman Stefánsson** is one of Iceland's leading contemporary novelists. His novels, which include the International Booker Prize-nominated *Fish Have No Feet*, have been translated widely.

## PRAISE FOR *YOUR ABSENCE IS DARKNESS*

“Comparisons do not do justice to the complexity of Stefánsson's book, nor the uniqueness of his prose, rendered here in a tumblingly beautiful translation by Philip Roughton.”

DANIEL MASON, *NEW YORK TIMES*

“Stefánsson uses the drama and comedy of everyday lives to dive into a broad range of topics: philosophy, music, faith, and even the science of earthworms.” *NEW YORK TIMES*

“Like fellow Scandinavian authors Jon Fosse and Karl Ove Knausgaard, Mr. Stefánsson joins plainspoken depictions of daily life to intimations of mysticism, creating a spectral, haunted atmosphere . . . Questioning, vulnerable and openly sentimental, this is an absorbing commemoration of what the author calls the paradox that rules our existence, the vivifying joy and paralyzing sorrow of loving another person.”

SAM SACKS, *WALL STREET JOURNAL*

“I couldn't put it down.” *WASHINGTON POST*

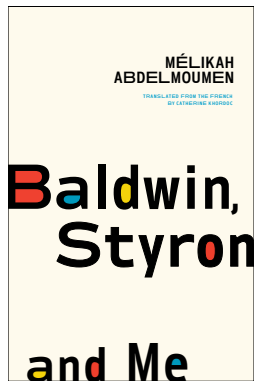
“What makes this so irresistible is the narrator's constant optimism as he probes profound questions from within the murk of his consciousness (‘Give me darkness, and then I'll know where the light is’). Stefánsson is poised to make his mark on the world stage.” *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY (STARRED REVIEW)*

# MÉLIKAH ABDELMOUMEN

## BALDWIN, STYRON, AND ME

TRANSLATED FROM THE FRENCH BY CATHERINE KHORDOC

An unlikely literary friendship sheds light on the public debates around identity, race, and censorship.



March 11, 2025 | Nonfiction  
5.25 × 8, 160pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771966269  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:  
Doireann Ní Ghríofa,  
*A Ghost in the Throat*  
Casey Plett,  
*On Community*  
Rinaldo Walcott,  
*On Property*

In 1961, James Baldwin spent several months in William Styron's guest house, during which time Baldwin is said to have convinced Styron to write, in first person, the story of the 1831 slave rebellion led by Nat Turner. *The Confessions of Nat Turner* was published to critical acclaim and won the Pulitzer Prize in 1968—and caused outrage in part of the African American community. More than sixty years later, the resulting debates still resonate.

In *Baldwin, Styron, and Me*, Mélikah Abdelmoumen considers Baldwin and Styron's friendship from her standpoint as a racialized woman torn by the often unidimensional versions of her own identity put forth by today's politics, media, and society. Considering questions of identity, race, equity, and censorship, and, especially, the means by which public debate around these topics is increasingly radicalized, Abdelmoumen works to create a space where the answers are found by first learning how to listen—even in disagreement.

**Mélikah Abdelmoumen** is the author of many articles and short stories, as well as a dozen novels, nonfiction books and essays. She is editor-in-chief of the Quebec literary magazine *Lettres québécoises*. *Baldwin, Styron, and Me* is the first of her books to be translated to English.



### PRAISE FOR *BALDWIN, STYRON, AND ME*

"A truly relevant essay from one of the greatest Quebec thinkers of our time, who reflects on both the question of cultural appropriation and artistic freedom with great singularity and refreshing freedom." RADIO-CANADA

"In this rich and fascinating essay, Mélikah Abdelmoumen criticizes aggressive radicalism, advocating instead dialogue and empathy. With the help of Baldwin and Styron, the author allows us to see that dialogue is not only possible, but necessary." LA GAZETTE DE LA MAURICIE

# HANNA STOLTENBERG

## NEAR DISTANCE

TRANSLATED FROM THE NORWEGIAN BY WENDY H. GABRIELSEN

“Stoltenberg’s elegant prose makes each scene . . . so engaging that it gives plot a bad name.”—*Guardian*



Jan 14, 2025 | Novel  
5 × 7.75, 200pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771966436  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:  
Rachel Cusk,  
*Second Place*  
Claudia Dey,  
*Daughter*  
Mieko Kawakami,  
*Breasts and Eggs*

For her entire life, Karin has fled from anything and anyone that tries to possess her. Her job demands nothing, she mostly socializes with men she meets online, and she’s rarely in touch with Helene, her adult daughter. But when Helene’s marriage is threatened, she turns, uncharacteristically, to her mother for commiseration and a long weekend away in London. As the two women embark on their uneasy companionship, Karin’s past, and the origins of her studied detachments are cast in a new light, and she can no longer ignore their effects—on not only herself and her own relationships, but on her daughter’s as well.

An unnerving, closely observed study of character—and the choices we do and do not make—*Near Distance* introduces Hanna Stoltenberg as writer of piercing insight and uncommon lucidity.

**Hanna Stoltenberg** is a regular contributor to the Norwegian literary journal *Vinduet* and works as an editor at the Munch museum. Her first novel, *Near Distance* (*Nada* in Norwegian) was published in 2019. It won the prestigious Tarjei Vesaas first book award and the NATT&DAG Oslo prize for best literary work.

## PRAISE FOR *NEAR DISTANCE*

“Stoltenberg debuts with a stunning portrait of a strained mother-daughter relationship . . . Karin’s contradictory emotional realities—at times harsh, at times gentle—are observed precisely and beautifully, and feel true to the complexities of real life. It’s a winner.” *PUBLISHERS WEEKLY* (STARRED REVIEW)

“*Near Distance* tells the tragedy of missed communication and the awkwardness of familial love in a mother/daughter enmeshment. In Karin and Helene, Stoltenberg has created two of the most alive characters I’ve read in some while. With an uncanny grasp on weaving together the past, while keeping sharp focus on the present, *Near Distance* is a philosophical, disarming and devastatingly true depiction of women alive today—an utterly compelling trip.” ELAINE FEENEY, BOOKER-NOMINATED AUTHOR OF *HOW TO BUILD A BOAT*

“In this elegant translation of Hanna Stoltenberg’s first novel, cool prose and precise observations overlay a heartrending and wine-soaked story about marriage, mothers and daughters, and the weird world of yoga, meditation, and self-help.” LIZ HARMER, AUTHOR OF *STRANGE LOOPS*

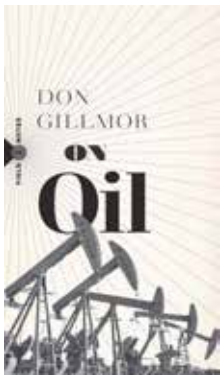
“This tense novel of loneliness and dissatisfaction made me laugh a lot—to begin with. A double award-winner in Norway, it tells the story of 53-year-old Karin and her daughter, Helene . . . Stoltenberg’s elegant prose makes each scene—a trip to London, a memory of a past boyfriend—so engaging that it gives plot a bad name.” JOHN SELF, *GUARDIAN*



# DON GILLMOR ON OIL

FIELD NOTES #10

A journalist, and former roughneck, considers our long, complex, tortured relationship with oil.



April 8, 2025 | Nonfiction  
4.5 x 7.75, 112pp  
\$18.95 | 9781771966672  
(trade paper)

COMP TITLES:  
Rinaldo Walcott,  
*On Property*  
Mark Kingwell,  
*On Risk*  
Casey Plett,  
*On Community*

Oil has dominated our lives for the last century. It has given us warmth, progress, and life-threatening pollution. It has been a gift and it is now a threat. It has started wars, ended wars, and infiltrated governments—in some cases, effectively become the government. In *On Oil*, Don Gillmor, who worked as a roughneck on oil rigs during the seventies oil boom in Alberta, looks at how the industry has changed over the decades since. Gillmor considers the origin and application of early concerns over global warming and documents what oil companies have done to misdirect conversations about environmentalism and frustrate efforts to create lasting change. The twilight of oil is upon us and it is fighting to survive, even as we are ourselves fighting to survive the climate crisis exacerbated by our dependence.

**Don Gillmor** is a journalist and former roughneck. He is the author of *To the River*, which won the Governor General's Award for nonfiction. He is also the author of three novels, a two-volume history of Canada, and nine books for children.



## PRAISE FOR *BREAKING AND ENTERING*

“Surely the most interesting midlife crisis of the year.”  
MARION WINIK, *OPRAH DAILY*

“[Gillmor] deftly converges doubt, infidelity and the fragility of family in a narrative that is both thrilling and relatable.”  
*NEW YORK TIMES*

“Hilarious and devastating.” *GLOBE AND MAIL*

“Powerfully drawn . . . Every aspect of the novel feels true.”  
*TORONTO STAR*

“Genius . . . A smart, funny, and sneakily terrifying version of the way we live now. (Do not read without working air conditioning.)” *KIRKUS REVIEWS* (STARRED REVIEW)

# STEPHANIE ROBERTS

## UNMET

“roberts speaks with clarity and certainty, in a firm and haunting voice. This is an author clearly driven by a need to articulate what is missed.”—A.M. Klein Award Jury



April 1, 2025 | Poetry  
5.5 × 8.5, 104pp  
\$22.95 | 9781771966573  
(trade paper)

#### COMP TITLES:

Mohammed El-Kurd,  
*Rifqa*  
Hannah Green,  
*Xanax Cowboy*  
Liz Howard,

*Letters in a Bruised Cosmos*

Leaning deliberately on the imagined while scrutinizing reality and hoping for the as-yet-unseen, *Unmet* is a poetry collection that explores themes of frustration, justice, and thwarted rescue from a perspective that is Black-Latinx, Canadian, immigrant, and female. Drawing on a wide range of poetics, from Wallace Stevens to Tony Hoagland and Diane Seuss, roberts’s musically-driven narrative surrealism confronts such timely issues as police brutality, respectability politics, intimate partner, and ecological crisis, and considers the might-have-been alongside the what could be, negotiating the past without losing hope for the future.

**stephanie roberts** is the author of *rushes from the river disappointment*, a Quebec Writers’ Federation finalist for the A.M. Klein Prize for Poetry. Her work has been critically praised and featured throughout Canada, the US, and Europe, and has received four Pushcart nominations. She is a citizen of Canada, Panama, and the US, and has lived most of her life in Quebec.



## PRAISE FOR *RUSHES FROM THE RIVER DISAPPOINTMENT*

“This collection enchanted me—smart, thoughtful, inventive, unafraid, poignant, and engaging, these poems are spot on. How lucky are we in this heartbreaking world to have roberts’ compelling voice of beauty, humor, and depth allowing us to dip our toes in this exquisite river of poems.”

KELLI RUSSELL AGODON, AUTHOR OF  
*HOURGLASS MUSEUM*

“A moving and poignant book of poetry, in which roberts exhibits tremendous range in both form and tone. Easily one of the finest poetry titles out this spring.” ANNICK MACASKILL,  
AUTHOR OF *SHADOW BLIGHT*

“A sweeping force of music, pulsing images, clear wit, and tenderness. Within beautifully formed poems, there is extensive consideration of what we can understand about love and grief alongside faith and ‘unbelief’ over time.” *MONTREAL REVIEW OF BOOKS*

Wells · Khurana · Armstrong  
Stefánsson · Abdelmoumen  
Gillmor · Stoltenberg · roberts

IMPORTED FROM SOUTH DETROIT