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Earthly Signs

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The Slynx
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White Walls New York Review of Books
Ever since the term "creative nonfiction" first came into widespread use, memoirists and journalists, essayists and fiction writers have faced off over where the border between fact and fiction lies. An early and influential book on questions of form in creative nonfiction, *Bending Genre* asks not where the boundaries between

the genres should be drawn, but what happens when you push the line. The expanded second edition doubles the first edition with 23 new essays that broaden the exploration of hybridity, structure, unconventionality, and resistance in creative nonfiction, pushing the conversation forward in diverse and exciting ways. Written for writers and students of creative writing, this collection brings together perspectives from leading writers of creative nonfiction, including Michael Martone, Brenda Miller, Ander Monson, David Shields, Kazim Ali--and in

the new edition--Catina Bacote, Ira Sukrungruang, Ingrid Horrocks, Elena Passarello, and Aviya Kushner. Each writer's innovative essay probes our notions of genre and investigates how creative nonfiction is shaped, modeling the forms of writing being discussed. Like creative nonfiction itself, *Bending Genre* is an exciting hybrid that breaks new ground. Features in the second edition: -Updated introduction to the new edition -Expanded sections on Hybrids, Structures, and "Unconventions" -A new section on Resistances -50 essays in all

Good Behaviour New York Review of Books

“Tolstaya carves indelible people who roam the imagination long after the book is put down.” –Time Tatyana Tolstaya’s short stories—with their unpredictable fairy-tale plots, appealingly eccentric characters, and stylistic abundance and flair—established her in the 1980s as one of modern Russia’s finest writers. Since then her work has been translated throughout the world. Edna O’Brien has called Tolstaya “an enchantress.” Anita Desai has spoken of her work’s “richness and ardent life.” Mixing heartbreak and humor, dizzying flights of fantasy and plunging descents to earth, Tolstaya is the natural successor in a great Russian literary lineage that includes Gogol, Yuri Olesha, Bulgakov, and Nabokov. *White Walls* is the most comprehensive collection of Tolstaya’s short fiction to be published in English so far. It presents the contents of her two previous collections, *On the Golden Porch* and *Sleepwalker in a Fog*, along with several previously uncollected stories. Tolstaya writes of lonely children and lost love, of philosophers of the absurd and poets

working as janitors, of angels and halfwits. She shows how the extraordinary will suddenly erupt in the midst of ordinary life, as she explores the human condition with a matchless combination of unbound imagination and unapologetic sympathy. *The Secret Commonwealth* John Wiley & Sons

This collection of essays presents the materials of the Third Annual Juri Lotman Days at Tallinn University in Estonia (3–5 June 2011). The participants discussed the semiotics of urban space from the perspective of the Tartu-Moscow School in comparison with contemporary approaches. This book consists of four sections. The articles in the first section discuss how “urban texts” function in modern and contemporary Baltic cultures. The papers in the second section focus on the semiotics of place in nineteenth- and twentieth-century Russian and Soviet culture from the perspective of linguistic poetics, cultural semiotics, and new materiality. The last two sections are devoted to the visual perceptions of the cityscape and their ideological interpretations as exemplified by Ukrainian, Estonian, Korean, Chinese, and

North American illustrations.

Castle Gripsholm New York Review of Books

A smart and hilarious memoir of privilege and excess told by the son of a powerful, seductive member of the New York elite. Ben Sonnenberg grew up in the great house on Gramercy Park in New York City that his father, the inventor of modern public relations and the owner of a fine collection of art, built to celebrate his rise from the poverty of the Jewish Lower East Side to a life of riches and power. His son could have what he wanted, except perhaps what he wanted most: to get away. *Lost Property*, a book of memoirs and confessions, is a tale of youthful riot and rebellion. Sonnenberg recounts his aesthetic, sexual, and political education, and a sometimes absurd flight into “anarchy and sabotage,” in which he reports to both the CIA and East German intelligence during the Cold War and, cultivating a dandy’s nonchalance, pursues a life of sexual adventure in 1960s London and New York. The cast of characters includes Orson Welles, Glenn Gould, and Sylvia Plath; among the subjects are marriage, children, infidelity,

debt, divorce, literature, and multiple sclerosis. The end is surprisingly happy. [Motley Stones](#) New York Review of Books Vivid accounts of life in a Soviet prison camp by the author of *Inhuman Land*. Interned with thousands of Polish officers in the Soviet prisoner-of-war camp at Starobielsk in September 1939, Józef Czapski was one of a very small number to survive the massacre in the forest of Katyń in April 1940. *Memories of Starobielsk* portrays these doomed men, some with the detail of a finished portrait, others in vivid sketches that mingle intimacy with respect, as Czapski describes their struggle to remain human under hopeless circumstances. Essays on art, history, and literature complement the memoir, showing Czapski's lifelong engagement with Russian culture. The short pieces on painting that he wrote while on a train traveling from Moscow to the Second Polish Army's strategic base in Central Asia stand among his most lyrical and insightful reflections on art.

Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk New York Review of Books

An existential detective story by one of France's most popular modern writers, set

in a mid-nineteenth century mountain village, available in English for the first time *A King Alone* is set in a remote Alpine village that is cut off from the world by rugged mountains and by long months when the ground is covered with snow and the heavens with cloud. One such winter, villagers begin mysteriously to disappear. Soon the village is paralyzed by terror, which gives way to relief and eager anticipation when the outsider Langlois arrives to investigate. What he discovers, however, will leave no one reassured, and his reappearance in the village a few years later, now assigned the task of guarding it from wolves, awakens those troubling memories. A man of few words, a regal manner, and military efficiency, Langlois baffles and fascinates the villagers, whose different responses to him shape Jean Giono's increasingly charged narrative. This novel about a tiny community at the dangerous edge of things and a man of law who is a man alone could be described as a metaphysical Western. It unfolds with the uncanny inevitability and disturbing intensity of a dream.

Marrow and Bone New York Review of Books

In the warring, neo-feudal society of this cross-genre novel for fans of Cormac McCarthy and William Gibson, the greatest treasure is a dose of tellurium—a magical drug administered by a spike through the brain. *Telluria* is set in the future, when a devastating holy war between Europe and Islam has succeeded in returning the world to the torpor and disorganization of the Middle Ages. Europe, China, and Russia have all broken up. The people of the world now live in an array of little nations that are like puzzle pieces, each cultivating its own ideology or identity, a neo-feudal world of fads and feuds, in which no one power dominates. What does, however, travel everywhere is the appetite for the special substance tellurium. A spike of tellurium, driven into the brain by an expert hand, offers a transforming experience of bliss; incorrectly administered, it means death. The fifty chapters of *Telluria* map out this brave new world from fifty different angles, as Vladimir Sorokin, always a virtuoso of the word, introduces us to, among many other figures, partisans and princes, peasants and party leaders, a new Knights Templar, a harem of phalluses,

and a dog-headed poet and philosopher who feasts on carrion from the battlefield. The book is an immense and sumptuous tapestry of the word, carnivalesque and cruel, and Max Lawton, Sorokin's gifted translator, has captured it in an English that carries the charge of Cormac McCarthy and William Gibson.

Last Letters: The Prison Correspondence between Helmuth James and Freya von Moltke, 1944-45 New York Review of Books

A fierce indictment of colonialism, Max Havelaar is a masterpiece of Dutch literature based on the author's own experience as an administrator in the Dutch East Indies in the 1850s. A brilliantly inventive fiction that is also a work of burning political outrage, Max Havelaar tells the story of a renegade Dutch colonial administrator's ultimately unavailing struggle to end the exploitation of the Indonesian peasantry. Havelaar's impassioned exposé is framed by the fatuous reflections of an Amsterdam coffee trader, Drystubble, into whose hands it has fallen. Thus a tale of the jungles and villages of Indonesia is interknit with one of the houses and

warehouses of bourgeois Amsterdam where the tidy profits from faraway brutality not only accrue but are counted as a sign of God's grace. Multatuli (meaning "I have suffered greatly") was the pen name of Eduard Douwes Dekker, and his novel caused a political storm when it came out in Holland. Max Havelaar, however, is as notable for its art as it is for its politics. Layering not only different stories but different ways of writing—including plays, poems, lists, letters, and a wild accumulation of notes—to furious, hilarious, and disconcerting effect, this masterpiece of Dutch literature confronts the fixities of power with the protean and subversive energy of the imagination.

Generations New York Review of Books
A moving collection of autobiographical essays from a Russian poet and refugee of the Bolshevik Revolution. Marina Tsvetaeva ranks with Anna Akhmatova, Osip Mandelstam, and Boris Pasternak as one of Russia's greatest twentieth-century poets. Her suicide at the age of forty-eight was the tragic culmination of a life buffeted by political upheaval. The essays collected in this volume are based on

diaries she kept during the turbulent years of the Revolution and Civil War. In them she records conversations of women in the markets, soldiers and peasants on the train traveling from the Crimea to Moscow in October 1917, fighting in the streets of Moscow, a frantic scramble with co-workers to dig frozen potatoes out of a cellar, and poetry readings organized by a newly minted Soviet bohemia. Alone in Moscow with two small children, no income, and a missing husband, Tsvetaeva struggled to feed her daughters (one of whom died of malnutrition in an orphanage), find employment in the Soviet bureaucracy, and keep writing poetry. Her keen and ruthless eye observes with compassion and humor—bringing the social, economic, and cultural chaos of the period to life. These autobiographical writings not only give a vivid eyewitness account of Russian history but provide vital insights into the workings of Tsvetaeva's unique poetics. Includes black and white photographs.

Outside the "Comfort Zone"

Bloomsbury Publishing USA

Written over the course of four decades, Francois-ReneÅL de Chateaubriand's epic

autobiography has drawn the admiration of Baudelaire, Flaubert, Proust, Roland Barthes, Paul Auster, and W. G. Sebald. In this unabridged section of the Memoirs, spanning the years 1768 to 1800, Chateaubriand looks back on the already bygone world of his youth. He recounts the history of his aristocratic family and the first rumblings of the French Revolution. He recalls playing games on the beaches of Saint-Malo, wandering in the woods near his father's castle in Combourg, hunting with King Louis XVI at Versailles, witnessing the first heads carried on pikes through the streets of Paris, meeting with George Washington in Philadelphia, and falling hopelessly in love with a young woman named Charlotte in the small Suffolk town of Bungay. The volume ends with Chateaubriand's return to France after eight years of exile in England. In this new edition (the first unabridged translation of any portion of the Memoirs to be published in more than a century), Chateaubriand emerges as a writer of great wit and clarity, a self-deprecating egoist whose meditations on the meaning of history, memory, and morality are leavened with a mixture of high whimsy

and memorable gloom.

[A Companion to Russian History](#) New York Review of Books

Eighteen strange, whimsical, and philosophical tales by the Russian master of the weird, all now in English for the very first time. When Comrade Punt does not wake up one Moscow morning--he has died--his pants dash off to work without him. The ambitious pants soon have their own office and secretary. So begins the first of eighteen superb examples of Sigizmund Krzhizhanovsky's philosophical and phantasmagorical stories. Where the stories included in two earlier NYRB collections (*Memories of the Future* and *Autobiography of a Corpse*) are denser and darker, the creations in *Unwitting Street* are on the lighter side: an ancient goblet brimful of self-replenishing wine drives its owner into the drink; a hypnotist's attempt to turn a fly into an elephant backfires; a philosopher's free-floating thought struggles against being "enlettered" in type and entombed in a book; the soul of a politician turned chess master winds up in one of his pawns; an unsentimental parrot journeys from prewar Austria to Soviet Russia.

[The True History of the First Mrs. Meredith and Other Lesser Lives](#) New York Review of Books

Bove's tale of a World War I veteran living in postwar Paris, searching for friendship and warmth, is an ironic, entertaining masterpiece by one of France's favorite authors. My Friends is Emmanuel Bove's first and most famous book, and it begins simply, though unusually, enough: "When I wake up, my mouth is open. My teeth are furry: it would be better to brush them in the evening, but I am never brave enough." Victor Baton is speaking, and he is a classic little man, of no talent or distinction or importance and with no illusions that he has any of those things, either; in fact, if he is exceptional, it is that life's most basic transactions seem to confound him more than they do the rest of us. All Victor wants is to be loved, all he wants is a friend, and as he strays through the streets of Paris in search of love or friendship or some fleeting connection, we laugh both at Victor's meekness and at his odd pride, but we feel with him, too. Victor is after all a kind of everyman, the indomitable knight of human fragility. And, in spite of everything, he, or at least his

creator, is some kind of genius, investing the back streets and rented rooms of the city and the unsorted moments of daily life with a weird and unforgettable clarity.

Rowan Vintage

A Dickensian coming-of-age tale about poverty, sex, World War I, and the darker side of human nature as seen through the eyes of a lobby boy in a Budapest hotel. *Temptation* is a rediscovered masterwork of twentieth-century fiction, a Dickensian tale of a young man coming of age in Budapest between the wars. Illegitimate and unwanted, Béla is packed off to the country to be looked after by a peasant woman the moment he is born. She starves and bullies him, and keeps him out of school. He does his best to hold his own, and eventually his mother brings him back to live with her in the city. In thrall to his feckless father, Mishka, and living in a crowded tenement, she works her fingers to the bone, while Béla shares a room with a hardworking prostitute. Finally, Béla secures a job in a fancy hotel. Though exhausted by endless work, he is fascinated by the upper-crust world that his new job exposes him to; soon he is embroiled with a rich, damaged, and

dangerous woman. The atmosphere of Budapest is increasingly poisoned by the appeal of fascism, while Béla grows ever more aware of how power and money keep down the working classes. In the end, with all the odds still against him, he musters the resolve to set sail for new future.

Memories of Starobielsk New York Review of Books

The first English translation of an essential Austrian novel about life in early-twentieth-century Vienna, as seen through a wide and varied cast of characters. *The Strudlhof Steps* is an unsurpassed portrait of Vienna in the early twentieth century, a vast novel crowded with characters ranging from an elegant, alcoholic Prussian aristocrat to an innocent ingenue to “respectable” shopkeepers and tireless sexual adventurers, bohemians, grifters, and honest working-class folk. The greatest character in the book, however, is Vienna, which Heimito von Doderer renders as distinctly as James Joyce does Dublin or Alfred Döblin does Berlin. Interweaving two time periods, 1908 to 1911 and 1923 to 1925, the novel takes the monumental eponymous outdoor

double staircase as a governing metaphor for its characters’ intersecting and diverging fates. *The Strudlhof Steps* is an experimental tour de force with the suspense and surprise of a soap opera. Here Doderer illuminates the darkness of passing years with the dazzling extravagance that is uniquely his.

Telluria New York Review of Books

A beguiling fable about a summer holiday in the Swedish countryside that transforms into a provocative parable about oppression and the evil awaiting Europe as the Nazis came to power. *Castle Gripsholm*, the best and most beloved work by Kurt Tucholsky, is a short novel about an enchanted summer holiday. It begins with an assignment: Tucholsky’s publisher wants him to write something light and funny, otherwise about whatever Tucholsky wants. A deal is struck and the story is off: about Peter, a writer; his girlfriend, known as the Princess; and a summer vacation far from the hurly-burly of Berlin. Peter and the Princess have rented a small house attached to a historic castle in Sweden, and they have five weeks of long days and white nights at their disposal; five weeks for swimming

and walking and sex and talking and visits with Peter's buddy Karlchen and with Billie, the Princess's best friend. It is perfect, until they meet a weeping girl fleeing the cruel headmistress of a home for children. The vacationers decide they must free the girl and send her back to her mother in Switzerland, which brings about an encounter with authority that casts a worrying shadow over their radiant summer idyll. Soon they must return to Germany. What kind of fairy tale are they living in?

My Friends New York Review of Books
A best-selling, autobiographical depiction of class privilege, bad romance, and political intrigue during World War II in China. Now available in English for the first time, Eileen Chang's dark romance opens with Julie, living at a convent school in Hong Kong on the eve of the Japanese invasion. Her mother, Rachel, long divorced from Julie's opium-addict father, saunters around the world with various lovers. Recollections of Julie's horrifying but privileged childhood in Shanghai clash with a flamboyant, sometimes incestuous cast of relations that crowd her life. Eventually, back in Shanghai, she meets

the magnetic Chih-yung, a traitor who collaborates with the Japanese puppet regime. Soon they're in the throes of an impassioned love affair that swings back and forth between ardor and anxiety, secrecy and ruin. Like Julie's relationship with her mother, her marriage to Chih-yung is marked by long stretches of separation interspersed with unexpected little reunions. Chang's emotionally fraught, bitterly humorous novel holds a fractured mirror directly in front of her own heart.

Bending Genre New York Review of Books
"Riveting . . . There is a wealth of new information here that adds considerable texture and nuance to his story and helps to set Russia apart from previous works."—The Wall Street Journal An epic new account of the conflict that reshaped Eastern Europe and set the stage for the rest of the twentieth century. Between 1917 and 1921 a devastating struggle took place in Russia following the collapse of the Tsarist empire. The doomed White alliance of moderate socialists and reactionary monarchists stood little chance against Trotsky's Red Army and the single-minded Communist dictatorship

under Lenin. In the savage civil war that followed, terror begat terror, which in turn led to ever greater cruelty with man's inhumanity to man, woman and child. The struggle became a world war by proxy as Churchill deployed weaponry and troops from the British empire, while contingents from the United States, France, Italy, Japan, Poland, and Czechoslovakia played rival parts. Using the most up to date scholarship and archival research, Antony Beevor assembles the complete picture in a gripping narrative that conveys the conflict through the eyes of everyone from the worker on the streets of Petrograd to the cavalry officer on the battlefield and the doctor in an improvised hospital.

Political Action New York Review of Books

In this definitive biography of the legendary Russian poet, Elaine Feinstein draws on a wealth of newly available material—including memoirs, letters, journals, and interviews with surviving friends and family—to produce a revelatory portrait of both the artist and the woman. Anna Akhmatova rose to fame in the years before World War I, but she would pay a heavy price for the political

and personal passions that informed her brilliant poetry. In *Anna of All the Russias* we see Akhmatova's work banned from 1925 until 1940 and again after World War II. We see her steadfast opposition to Stalin, even while her son was held in the Gulag. We see her abiding loyalty to such friends as Mandelstam, Shostakovich, and Pasternak as they faced Stalinist oppression. And we see how, through everything, Akhmatova continued to write, her poetry giving voice to the Russian people by whom she was, and still is, deeply loved.

Family and Borghesia New York Review of Books

Available for the first time in English, a moving prison correspondence between a husband and wife who resisted the Nazis. Tegel prison, Berlin, in the fall of 1944. Helmuth James von Moltke is awaiting trial for his leading role in the Kreisau Circle, one of the most important German resistance groups against the Nazis. By a

near miracle, the prison chaplain at Tegel is Harald Poelchau, a friend and coconspirator of Helmuth and his wife, Freya. From Helmuth's arrival at Tegel in late September 1944 until the day of his execution by the Nazis on January 23, 1945, Poelchau would carry Helmuth's and Freya's letters in and out of prison daily, risking his own life. Freya would safeguard these letters for the rest of her long life. *Last Letters* is a profoundly personal record of the couple's fortitude in the face of fascism.

Heaven's Breath New York Review of Books

Two novellas about domestic life, isolation, and the passing of time by one of the finest Italian writers of the twentieth century. Carmine, an architect, and Ivana, a translator, lived together long ago and even had a child, but the child died, and their relationship fell apart, and Carmine married Ninetta, and their child is Dodò, who Carmine feels is a little dull, and these days Carmine is still spending every

evening with Ivana, but Ninetta has nothing to say about that. *Family*, the first of these two novellas from the 1970s, is an examination, at first comic, then progressively dark, about how time passes and life goes on and people circle around the opportunities they had missed, missing more as they do, until finally time is up. *Borghesia*, about a widow who keeps acquiring and losing the Siamese cats she hopes will keep her company in her loneliness, explores similar ground, along with the confusions of feeling and domestic life that came with the loosening social strictures of the 1970s. "She remembered saying that there were three things in life you should always refuse," thinks one of Natalia Ginzburg's characters, beginning to age out of youth: "Hypocrisy, resignation, and unhappiness. But it was impossible to shield yourself from those three things. Life was full of them and there was no holding them back."