

Dear Reader.

Welcome to Season 2 of the #Stayathome reading list series.

We encouraged you to *#stayathome* and read some books about isolation during Season 1. The new Season 2 with 10 great episodes of wonderful Latvian literature offers you a chance to travel back and forth in time to many places.

Enjoy!



1.

Flesh-Coloured Dominos

by **Zigmunds Skujiņš**

255 p

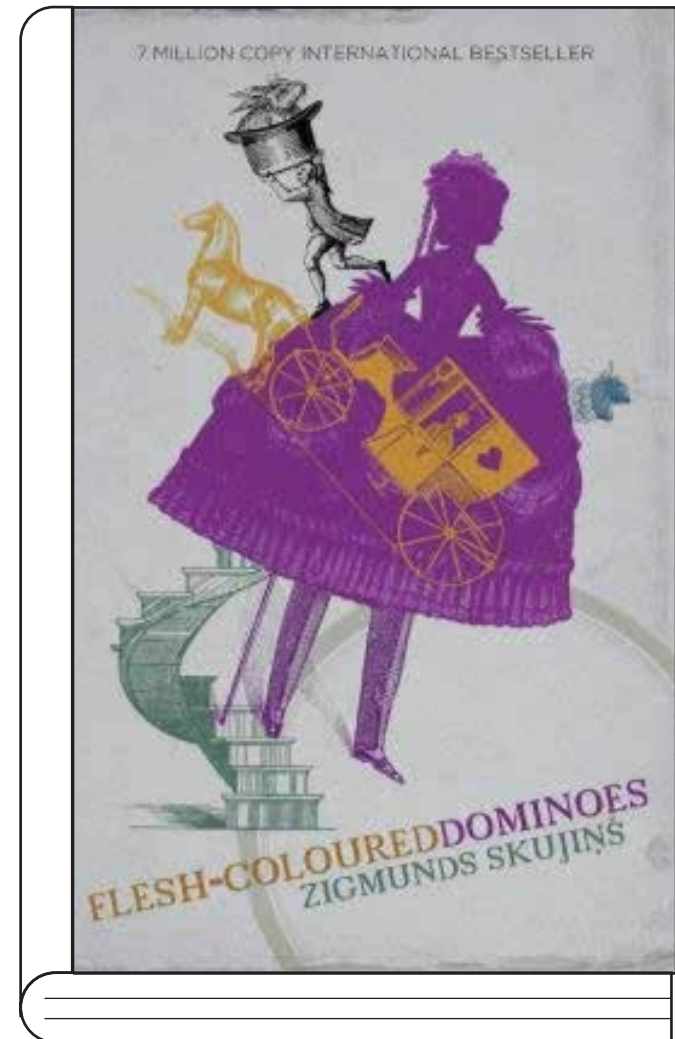
Translated by Kaija Straumanis

Published by Arcadia Books, UK 2019

Flesh-Coloured Dominoes transports the reader between the life of the Baltic gentry during the 18th century and the narrator's life in the modern world. The connection between the novel's two narratives is weaved into in a mesmerizing fantasy of love, lust and loss, as Skujiņš weaves a work of sublime art that is parts funny, moving, enlightening and philosophical.

“Skujiņš is a master at personae and a cosmopolitan writer, filling his landscapes with extraordinary and unforgettable characters.”

World Literature Today



2.

The Year The River Froze Twice

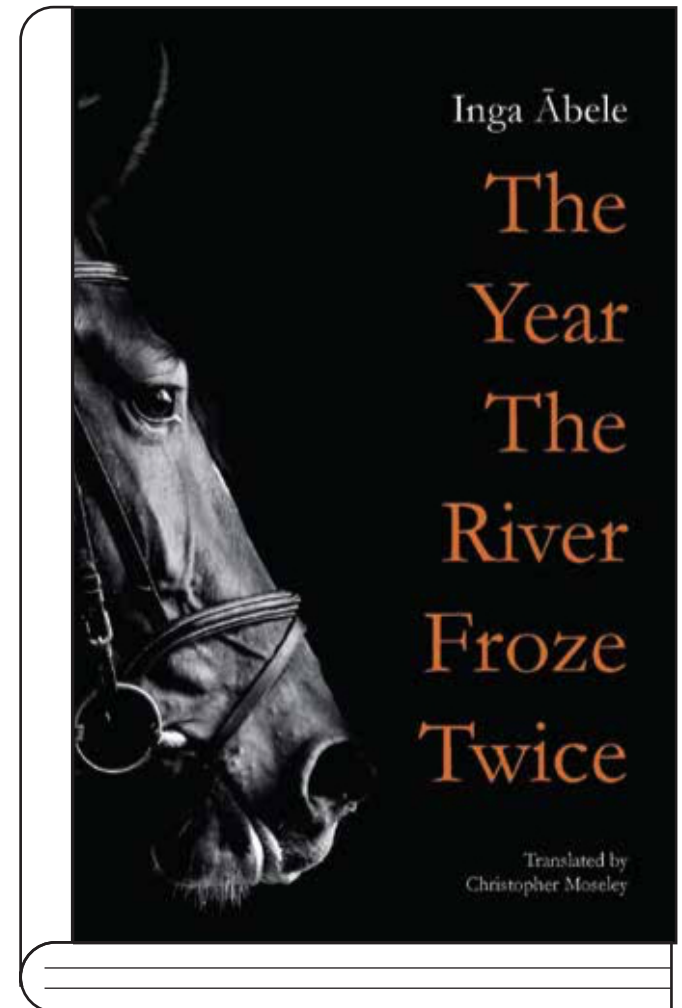
by **Inga Ābele**

458 p

Translated by Christopher Moseley

Published by Norvik Press, UK 2020

A journey of reminiscence across Latvia, never straying far from the mighty Daugava river, which flows through the story of a former horse jockey on a Riga trotting track recalling his early life. The novel recounts the weeks leading up to the fateful day of 25 March 1949, when Stalin launched his deportation campaign in Soviet Latvia.



3.

Five Fingers

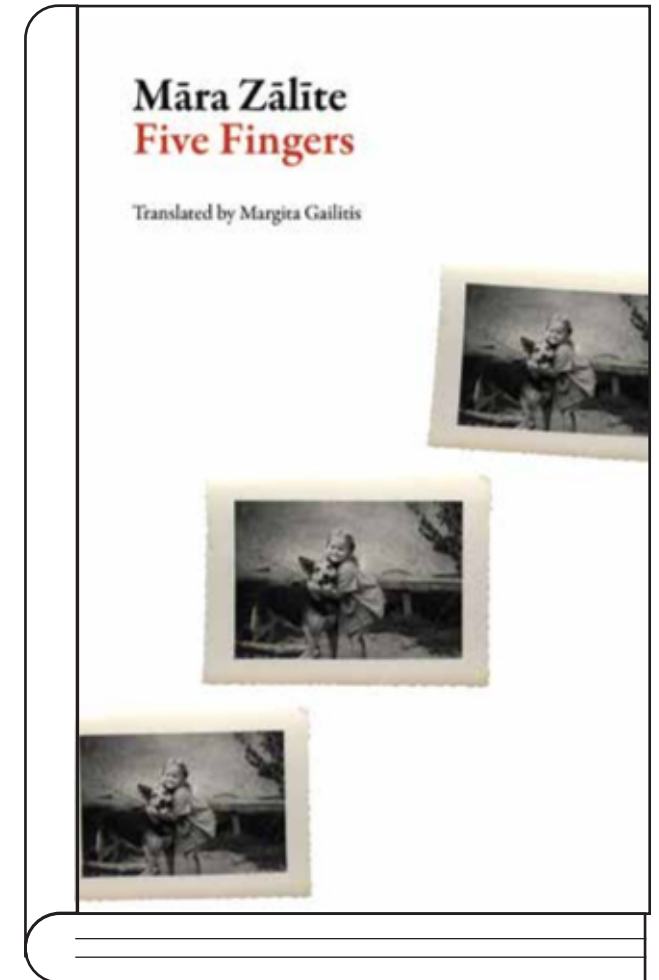
by **Māra Zālīte**

248 p

Translated by Margita Gailītis

Published by Dalkey Archive, USA 2017

Five-year-old Laura was born in one of Joseph Stalin's prison camps in Siberia. The book's opening scenes detail the journey of Laura and her parents back to Latvia, a country Laura knows only from the glowing descriptions that were passed from one person to another in the Gulag. However upon her arrival, she must come to terms with the conflicting images of life she sees around her and the fairytale of Latvia she grew up with.



4.

Insomnia

by **Alberts Bels**

162 p

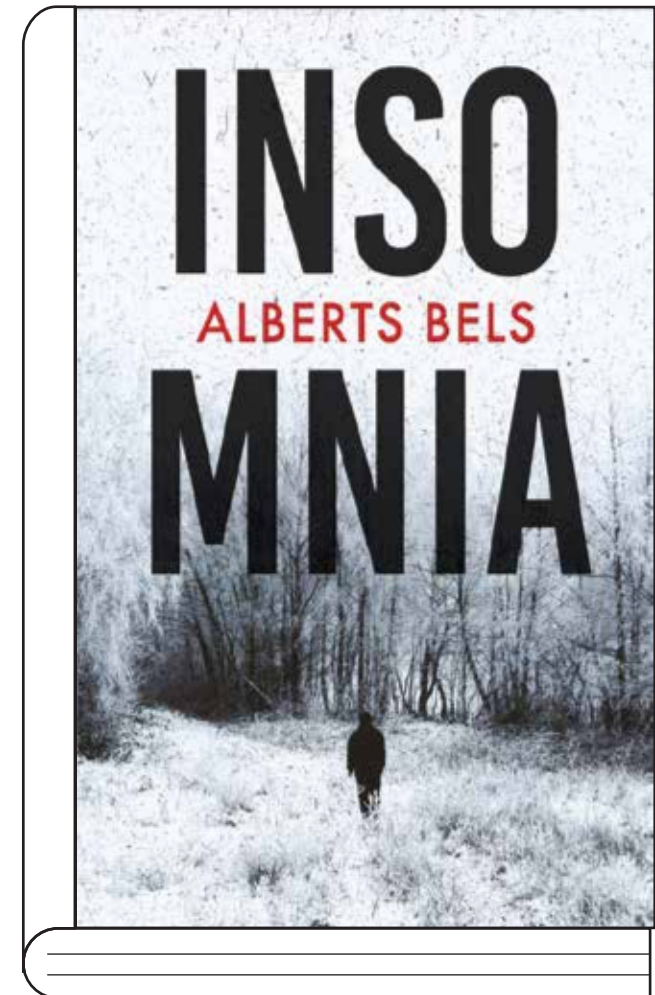
Translated by Jayde Will

Published by Parthian Books, UK 2020

Originally written in 1967 and not released in its uncensored form until 2003, Alberts Bels's novel Insomnia has become a classic of Cold War writing and continues to exert a major influence over Latvian literature. This edition contains the official transcripts of the investigative reports that led to the banning of the book, as well as a foreword by Bels himself, who describes the difficult circumstances he was thrust into as a result.

“Alberts Bels' accessible and compelling novella Insomnia depicts Soviet-era Latvia through the eyes of Mr Eduards Dārziņš.”

New Welsh Review



5.

Doom 94

by **Jānis Jonevs**

256 p

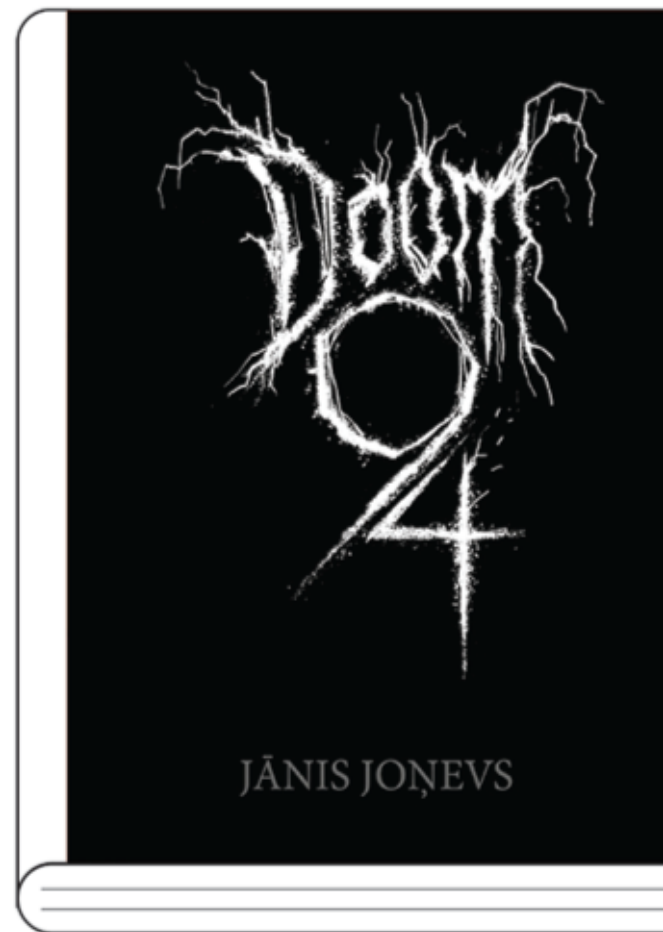
Translated by Kaija Straumanis

Published by Wrecking Ball press, UK 2018

The story is set in the Latvian town of Jelgava in the mid-1990s, and looks at the craze for heavy metal music during the period. Jonevs takes the reader deep into the world of music, combining the intimate diary of a youngster trying to find himself by joining a subculture, as well as a skilful, detailed, and almost documentary-like depiction of Latvia's reindpendence in the 1990s.

“Doom 94 is a book so diverse that most likely everyone will find something intriguing in it, be it the coming of age narrative, the references to metal music, the description of life after the fall of the Iron Curtain or something else.”

Latvia Weekly



6.

The Book of Riga

by **various authors**

128 p

Translated by various translators

Published by Comma Press, UK 2018

Take a chance and travel to Riga, the capital of Latvia. It may be over 800 years old as a city, but its status as capital of an independent Latvia is only a century old, with half of that time spent under Soviet rule. Despite this, it has established itself as a vibrant, creative hub, attracting artists, performers, and writers from across the Baltic region. The stories gathered here chronicle this growth and on-going transformation, and offer glimpses into the dark humour, rich history, contrasting perspectives, and love of the mythic, that sets the city's artistic community apart.

“A quirky and varied literary reflection of a city trying to make peace with a traumatic past and striving to define its own future.” **BookMunch**



7.

Stroika with a London view

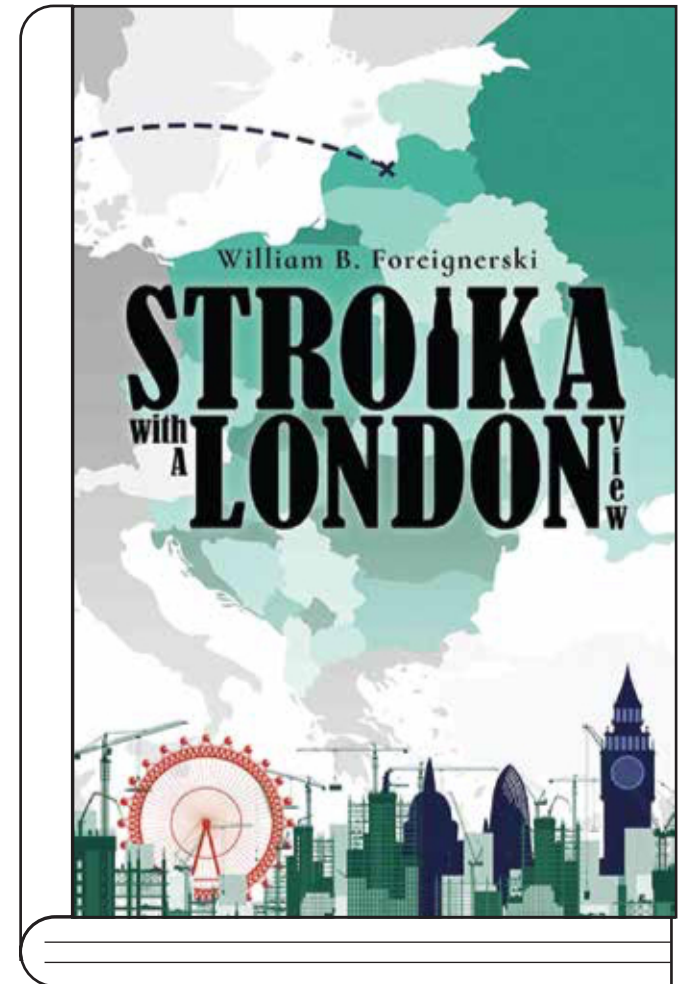
by **William B. Foreignerski**

178 p

Translated by the author

Published by Austin Macauley Publishers, UK 2019

Travel through London by way of the adventures of a Latvian construction worker. After deciding to sort out his dire financial situation by taking up carpentry in the UK, London just might be a love at first sight, however it's a love that's one-sided. No money + no business visa + no English + no job skills = no job. This book, which depicts the landscape of pre-Brexit UK, will be of interest to both Brits and foreigners alike.



8.

People like us

by **Valts Ernštreits**

98 p

Translated by Ryan Van Winkle and Valts Ernštreits

Published by Francis Boutle Publishers, UK 2019

With this bilingual collection of Livonian poetry (a critically endangered Finnic language) you have a chance to travel to fishing villages and communities on the western shore of Latvian that once spoke Livonian. If you travel there today, you would be unlikely to encounter it, as there are fewer than 20 Livonian speakers remaining in the world. Remarkably, three of those speakers are also poets. Arguably one of the smallest literatures in Europe, these poets writing in such a small literary community is vital to its preservation.



9.

The Last Model

by **Raibīs, Ingrida Tārauda, Ligija Purinaša**

94 p

Translated by Jayde Will

Published by Francis Boutle Publishers, UK 2020

This bilingual Latgalian and English collection of poetry allows you to travel to Latgale, a region in southeastern Latvia where roughly 164,000 people speak Latgalian, a tiny language with a vibrant literary output. In rich and innovative poems, Ligija Purinaša, Raibīs and Ingrida Tārauda demonstrate and explore the versatility of a language which punches above its weight.



10.

The Kiosk

by **Anete Melece**

36 p

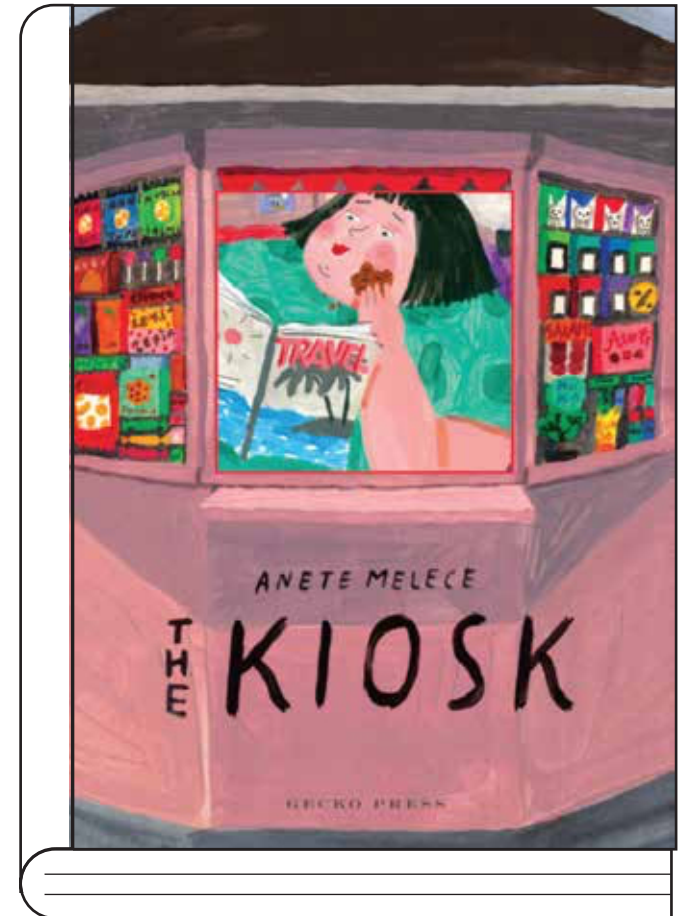
Translated by Elīna Brasliņa

Published by Geko Press, NZ 2020

Children and their parents will be excited to read his best-selling picturebook, which is a warm and unexpected story about someone who is stuck in life and trying to find a way to be free and travel. For years, the kiosk has been Olga's life. She spends her days inside reading travel magazines and dreaming of distant places. One day a chance occurrence turns her life upside down--literally--and sets her off on an unexpected journey.

“A parable for our time, “The Kiosk” is about escaping a confining routine and finding something better, about being “stuck,” as Melece herself has described it, and figuring out a way to “start a journey to your happy place exactly as you are.”

The New York Times



Recommends



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