

# PHOENIX

Issue 4 - 2016-2017

Meet Next Year's Board!

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Tea Time with Onno Kusters  
& Kiki Recaps All the Times She  
Had Tea... Time!

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Visit Niki's  
Bookshelves!

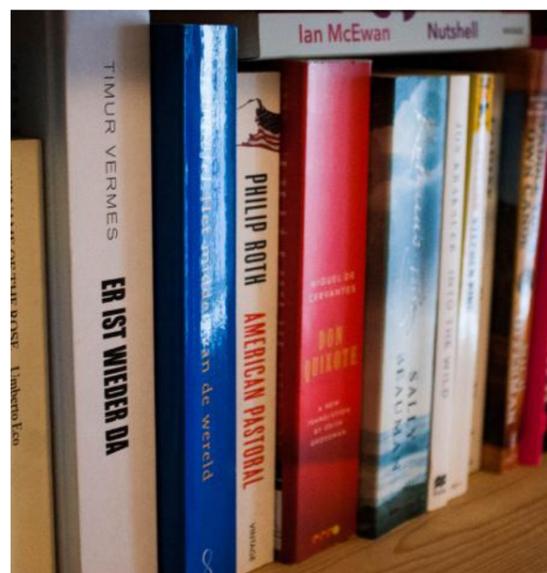
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# WORD OF THE EDITOR

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Dear readers,

Endings are always bittersweet, and just this simple fact is what begs them to be described in clichés. After putting plenty of words on digital paper throughout the year, it's now time to write my last words for Phoenix. Saying goodbye is never easy, but if anything, it's hard to say goodbye not only to Phoenix, but to someone who has made Phoenix what it is now – Kiki. Thank you for always providing us with engaging ideas, fascinating facts about our teachers, and stories about cats (not sure which I'll be missing more).

Phoenix has been on my mind for an incredible amount of hours throughout these past ten (or so) months and I've come to love it even more than I did at the start. Just the simple fact that there's plenty of you out there reading what 10 people put their efforts and creativity into, is amazing to me.

I can say with certainty that the issue on your screens right now is not going to disappoint – to be fair, this very last issue is looking more alluring than ever. And its beauty is not just external; its content is amazingly varied, gripping, and creative as well.

As it's the end of the year, we'll have the old Albion board introduce the new board through interviews, Lola and Minthe tasted where to go in Utrecht for the best ice cream, and Pauw Vos shows us his art in this issue's Showcase. Kiki visited Onno Kusters and looks back on her previous Tea Times. Bookshelf features someone who should have been included much, much sooner, almost-graduated Niki Liebrechts, while Humans of Albion features a familiar face to most of Albion: Bart Vermeulen. In Q&Alumni we meet with Christian Hendriks, former-treasurer and now active in business banking.

Enjoy the read!

Much love,  
Inge

M E E T T H E

X X V I I

B O A R D

CHAIR: ANNA & JOB

**A: What do you expect of next year?**

J: Oh jeez, this is a very intense first question. But perhaps that already says it all. I think next year is going to be amazing, yet intense. Of course there is nothing I can really compare it with. Someone said it resembles the Great Journey, which I helped organizing this year, a bit in a way that it is the intensity and fun of a board year, but then packed in a single week. So I don't know, I hope it's going to be fun.

**A: Are there things you expect to achieve this year, or that you're looking forward to learn?**

J: Uhm, another tough question. Well, of course I hope Albion is going to flourish even more this year. But personally? I like to explain and to teach other people things, so I'd like to speak in front of a crowd more easily. At the moment I have to admit I can get quite anxious beforehand sometimes, but I think this will resolve itself along the way. How naturally you and my predecessors speak right now only encourages me.

**A: You are a ginger of course, so the real question is: whom from the Weasley family can you identify yourself the most with?**

J: Haha, thanks for asking me a Harry Potter question. I think a part of me resembles Percy a bit, since he's quite ambitious. But after a while he turns sort of bad, so not really though. Perhaps also a bit with Ron, sorry for the cliché, but he wants to be a good friend and is also a bit lazy when it comes to school,

but also has opinions. So I think I fit in that description a bit. I don't know, why do you ask me these hard questions about my life!

**A: What would be your best and worst subjects at Hogwarts?**

J: According to a BuzzFeed quiz my best subject would be Defence Against the Dark Arts. Fair enough. Transfiguration seems also kinda fun. I think I'd be terrible at Divination though. Not really my thing I suppose.



**A: What kind of fruit are you?**

J: I'm a banana. Or a raspberry. Ooh, can I be a juice of these combined?

**A: Who of the Candidate Board do you think won't survive a Zombie Apocalypse?**

J: Sorry, Minthe, but you're gonna die first. At first I was implied to go for Justine, but thinking this through I believe Minthe will simply die from a sort of shock.

Also, Justine is simply too lovely to convert, even for zombies. And Alessandra would be our saviour who karate kicks them all, while Tanisha and I watch.

**A: If you are allowed to eat only one thing the rest of your life, what would it be?**

J: PIZZA. I think a board year won't be that hard for me in this aspect, since I love pizza. My favourite is an original Italian pizza, those with a thin crust, with banana and pineapple as toppings.

SECRETARY: VINCENT & TANISHA

**V: For next year, what are you looking forward to the most?**

T: Uhm, let's think. Beer. No, not beer. I'm looking forward to, at least I hope, that we'll make it a great year with the five of us, I really do.

**V: Coming straight from the heart.**

T: Yeah, makes me very emotional. Just kidding.

**V: But: a great year, and in the next, say, ten years?**

T: Graduate, get a job, a house.. Yes, huis-je-boompje-beestje! And I'd like to travel.

**V: So you like to travel. Have you travelled much?**

T: Not a lot, mostly within Europe, with my parents but I'd love to go on my own someday.

**V: Exciting!**

**V: If you never had to sleep again, how would you fill the time?**

T: Pfew, so many options.. Maybe learn a new skill, something like that?

**V: A new skill?**

T: Cook, play music... things you don't normally have time for.

**V: Hobby-stuff? Nice.**

T: And naps. I'd still sleep, but less.

**V: Is there anything that you would never want to eat?**

T: Herring...

**V: Herring?**

T: Herring. I just don't have the guts to eat them. I work in a sort of fish shop, where we sell herring, and just seeing that basket with the remains of the herring... No. And that smell... Nope nope nope, not eating that.

**V: What is the most illegal thing you've ever done?**

T: Uhm... I'm very well-behaved, actually. The most illegal... That'd just be underage drinking. I mean, smashed, when I was fourteen. Can't think of anything else, pretty sure that's it.

**V: What is the most surprising insight you've ever had? About yourself, or something else, where you were really like, "wow! I was not expecting this!"**

T: Uhm, let's see. During a chemistry exam in high school. I suddenly understood everything, could answer questions I hadn't understood for three years. That was.. that was intense.

**V: Is there a film or series you refuse to watch?**

T: I'm afraid people might start to hate me now, but I've never felt the need to watch Star Wars.

**V: Don't worry, neither have I.**

T: Sorry to everyone that enjoys Star Wars! I just don't like it.





# COMMISSIONER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS JITSKE & MINTHE

**J: What is the one Albion activity you participated in that you like the most?**

M: One of the Albion activities I enjoyed the most is one of the more recent ones; Albion's night of the professors! It was a huge success and I loved the music. It is something I would definitely like to organise again next year.

**J: Who is your favourite teacher?**

M: This is a hard question to answer, as I like so many of them. My favourites would be, Simon Cook, Marcelle Cole, Nynke de Haas & Koen Sebregts. Which are almost all of them already.. Which goes to show that the English department really has the best teachers. A teacher which I haven't had a course from is Onno Kusters, he is on my bucket-list for next year.

**J: What are you looking forward to the most, and the least, next year?**

M: The thing I am most looking forward to are the office hours to be honest, hanging out with the other Albioneers complaining about how many flights of stairs we have to climb.

The thing I'm least looking forward to are of course those stairs, haha no just kidding, I think that would be Job forcing me to relive that Kinderen voor Kinderen song we had to perform. I would very much like not to ever hear that song again...

**J: What song is the soundtrack to your life?**

M: George Michael – Careless Whisper, without any doubt.

**J: What would you take with you on a deserted island?**

M: Well, I just bought a way too expensive ukulele, so i'd bring that, so that my money wouldn't go to waste. And if i'd ever come back to the real world, i'd be a crazy talented ukulele player.

# TREASURER CHRYSTEL & JUSTINE

**C: What do you dread the most, for next year?**

J: The buckets filled with self criticism that I'll without doubt dump on myself!

**C: Okay, fuck-marry-kill with your Albion board - how would it end?**

J: This is going to sound so wrong whatever answer I give. So: fuck - Tanisha, marry - Alessandra, kill - Job. Sorry Job. Oh, and I'll marry Minthe as well. Polygamy, totally my thing! (Yes, that was sarcastic).

**C: What are you looking forward to the most?**

J: Getting to know new people, fun parties and activities, I just enjoy doing Albion-related stuff.

**C: Next year, you'll be contributing to the SexyBesturenkalender. How much skin do you dare show and what theme would you like to pick?**

J: Theme: Britain, naked: not very. Sexy doesn't have to be naked! I think I'll have faith in my natural charisma...



# COMMISSIONER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS IRIS & ALESSANDRA

**I: What's your opinion on cats?**

A: I think cats are super sweet, and I really want one. Me and my housemates are working on that, actually.

**I: If you didn't do English, what would you be studying right now?**

A: Last year, I spent a year doing 'sociale geografie en planologie,' but I didn't like it at all.

**I: Why?**

A: I think the subject is interesting, but I got quite a different impression from the studies beforehand. I thought I'd very much like it, and that it'd fit me, but as soon as I realised I didn't like the electives at all, I quit. I figured I'd never want to work in that field of study!

**I: Do you prefer English?**

A: I love English, and I love linguistics.

**I: If you were to pick a different study as well, what would it be?**

A: I think philosophy or Italian.

**I: Not bad, not bad.**

**I: What (type of) fruit are you and why?**

A: I am a grape and I am still searching for the bunch I belong to.

**I: I am also a grape! But small and with a bite.**

**I: What do you like the most about Albion?**

A: The people and the fact that everyone's super sweet and accepting.

**I: Let's do fuck-marry-kill, but with fuck-marry-ice-challenge to a dance battle!**

A: Wait, what's ice?

**I: Hiding Smirnoff Ice for someone, unexpectedly, in weird places, and when that person finds it, he or she has to drink it.**

A: Okay, I'm definitely challenging Job to a dance battle! He's not a very good dancer, I'm curious as to how that'd work out. I think I'd f\* Minthe. I'd ice Tanisha, and marry Justine. Of course I'd marry Justine!

**I: Everyone would marry Justine!**



# PHOENIX RANKS

## Ice Cream Parlors



### Pistaccio

*By Minthe Woudstra*

Pistaccio is a newer name in Utrecht but its popularity is certainly growing. They're situated in the tiny street from the Oudegracht to Neude (if this doesn't help you, it's next to the McDonald's). One of their selling points is that they make their own ice cream with only fresh biological products. As their name probably gives away, their pistachio ice cream is their specialty! After taking pictures of their store, they were kind enough to let me taste their pistachio ice cream, and I mean, giving away free ice cream is a win in itself.

### Australian

*By Lola van Scharrenburg*

Situated in Hoog Catharijne, only a few metres away from Utrecht Central Station's exit, Australian is hard to miss. They're a global chain that, besides ice cream, also sell chocolates and milkshakes. Although Australian's ice cream might not be as artisanal as that of Utrecht's smaller ice cream shops, it certainly tastes good and makes a perfect on-the-go snack for when you have to endure yet another ride in one of those suffocatingly hot rush-hour trains.



### Luciano

*By Lola van Scharrenburg*

Luciano is definitely one of the more well-known ice cream places in Utrecht, and it's easy to understand why. With shops in multiple Dutch cities, and even one on Bonaire, Luciano has won the title "IJssalon van het jaar" more than once. All the ice cream is prepared from fresh ingredients at their main store in Wassenaar daily. Luciano's Utrecht store is situated at the Nobelstraat (right around the corner from Drift) so if you ever have some time to spare before class on a hot day, be sure to pay them a visit.



### Ik Smelt Voor Jou

*By Minthe Woudstra*

They call themselves the one and only ice cream place on wheels. Ik Smelt Voor Jou is that cute pink bus you've probably seen near the Dom. However, next to their cuteness, their ice-cream is pretty damn good as well. They have gluten free ice-cream, have the best milkshakes. Most notably, they have a special flavour called Dom ice cream, which every inhabitant of Utrecht must have tasted in their life. So, head on over to this place, even if it is just for that perfect Instagram shot.





## Favourites

### Film

“I’m very fond of virtually anything by Stanley Kubrick. I really like his style: very raw and very explicit, in the good sense of the word. Another favourite of mine is The Big Lebowski.”

### TV-series

“The Big Bang Theory. My daughter and I got hooked eight or nine years ago.”

### Book

“I would assume that many students will guess that it would be Ulysses by James Joyce, so I’m not going to say that. I’ll skirt round Joyce and say Author, Author by David Lodge.”

### Music

“I’m really fond of Nick Cave. I’ve been following him and going to concerts from the early 1980’s. And Indie music; Radiohead, Oasis, that’s the scene I really enjoy. But also Dvořák, Symphony from the new world: I’m very slowly finding my bearings in classical music, as some of us do as you get older.”

### Colour

“Black.”

# Tea Time

with

# Onno Kusters

*By Kiki Drost  
Pictures by Minthe Woudstra*

Since this is the last Phoenix of the academic year we wanted a Tea Time you’d remember all summer long, and what better way of doing this than by visiting everyone’s favourite Joyce-enthusiast: Onno Kusters.

We are greeted at the door by Onno and his cat, Poema. “He’ll be 16 in June. I adopted him when he was nine years old.” We sit down with a cup of tea and something sweet and begin our interview.



### What did you study yourself?

“I studied English at the Vrije Universiteit and after I graduated I did what was then called a kopstudie in comparative literature, so I graduated twice. When I graduated from the Comparative Literature Programme I had the option to become a PhD student. But as I was working on that proposal I decided that, since you never know, I’d also start applying for jobs. Then I found a job at the Leiden University library as an acquisition librarian. It was very confusing, because I was working on this dissertation idea and the academic trajectory I was going to follow and then this happened. I had a chat with my supervisor, who advised me to go for the job, saying that it would mean I’d take a bit more time for my dissertation, but I’d have loads of work experience. It took me ten years to write it, because so many other things came up. Life intervened, as they say.

When I finally took my PhD, I decided to quit my job, because ten years in a library is enough. I then got a job at an architects firm in Amsterdam as a knowledge manager, a kind of glorified librarian. After three years my temporary contract ended, and I was let go. I thought I could get back in the saddle quite easily, but then nobody wanted me, so I started as a freelance translator, and I designed websites and did editorial work. As part of that self-employment I was asked to fill in for Professor De Voogd, David Pascoe’s predecessor, who was taking early retirement. I took over a couple of courses from him and then in 2007 I was offered one of the last permanent posts for a long time here at the department of English. And the rest is history.”

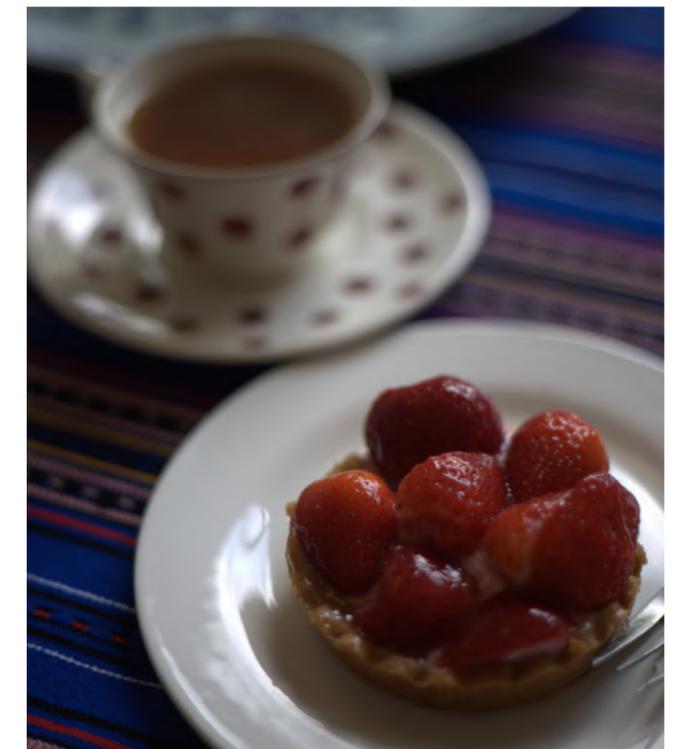
### Do you have any hobbies?

“Reading, of course, and writing as a professional poet. I’m a poet, as well as a translator and an academic, and I always enjoy experiencing how my three main occupations feed into each other. I also play tennis a lot. I love playing tennis: good for the brain and good for the body. I’ve got a small knee-injury, so I’m taking it easy, only playing once a week. I used to play a lot when I was young. Then I stopped for almost 15 years and played squash, but I’ve come back to the real game. Otherwise, spending time with my cat and my daughter, listening to music, that sort of thing; I like to go to the movies, but it’s not as structural as the tennis.”

### Do you have a favourite course to teach?

“I love teaching poetry. Irish-English Literature is another favourite of mine. It taps into my research as well, which is on Joyce, Beckett and Anglo-Irish literature. There were two courses, before the new basispakketten set-up, one of which I taught with David, called Dryden to Blake: an English poetry course. And I put together a kind of follow-up course called Wordsworth to Wordsworth, going from very early Romantic poetry to very late Romantic poetry. I really love teaching poetry, because it’s a difficult genre and students often don’t know what to do with it and I love letting them explore the nitty-gritty of what’s going on in the poem until that eye-opening moment when the penny drops. I still regret that there’s no dedicated poetry-course, but then again, I do as much poetry as I can.”

**After we’ve asked all we have to ask and captured Onno’s natural habitat on camera it’s time for us to leave. Onno, thank you once again for your hospitality!**



# Tea Time

recap

by Kiki Drost

After four years of being in Phoenix and, more importantly, four years of doing Tea Time, it is time for me to say goodbye. I thought that the most appropriate way to do so was by giving you a little recap of all the fun, interesting and awkward cups of tea I've had with our beloved teachers.

The very first interview was with Roselinde. We figured that if anyone would be willing to participate (without there being a previous version to refer to, just to make it less awkward for the teachers, since others had done it as well) it would be her. And indeed, she was more than willing to participate. In hindsight I wish we'd gone to her place later, because my word limit and skills were at their lowest, but her interview was one of the most interesting ones and we had a lot of material (we talked twice as long as Tea Time usually takes, which is partially our fault, because we asked many questions, and partially because Roselinde had a lot of interesting things to say). Then again, it would be unfair and untrue to say the other teachers have been less interesting and that their interviews would be easy to summarize into an article of a few hundred words.

One of the things people sometimes ask me is whether it isn't super awkward to do these interviews. Well, sometimes, yes. Of course, it depends on how comfortable our host is with having us over, but it also depends on the moment. The moments before we start the interview, when tea is poured, cookies unwrapped or cakes cut, and small talk is expected, can be quite awkward. As well as that moment when the interview is over and we pack our stuff and get our coats, when we've already sort of wrapped up ("I will send the draft version to you over the weekend") but we're not actually gone yet. However, most of the time it is simply really nice to do these interviews. Our teachers are genuinely nice people, they have so many interesting things to say, and they really try to make an effort. Many of them

also have that grandmother habit of trying to make sure you eat enough. The amount of cookies and cake we've been fed is impressive. (Onno rightfully observed that he may have found the real reason we're doing these interviews.)

Another thing people sometimes want to know are details about our teacher's homes. Here, I'm afraid I often disappoint people: I never give away much, because I feel like I'd be betraying their trust if I did. They let me into their home after all. Admittedly, sometimes I will share a small story or some details with someone, but these are trivial things, like how the teacher in question halfway through the interview suddenly turned to Dutch to call their cat. Something I can reveal is that a surprisingly high number of houses I visited had a little Totoro standing on a shelf somewhere. Also, when it comes to the cat vs. dog debate, cats are the obvious winners amongst English language and literature professionals. (Maybe because they're easier to keep as pets when you're at uni all day, maybe because they're just better than dogs.)

I don't have a favourite Tea Time, but I do have favourite questions to ask: I really liked asking if they had a favourite colour or animal. These are the kind of questions you always have an answer to when you're a child, but never think about when you're older. It was fun to see the difference in reactions to these questions: some were absolutely puzzled, while others had an answer straight away. The "what is your favourite..." questions were fun to ask anyway. They mainly served as a conversation starter, but it's kind of sweet how almost every one asked if they could have more than one favourite book and ended up with a list the size of a level 3 literature course reading list.

Doing all these interviews has been really great and I feel sad that the time has come to leave this behind, but at the same time I'm sure someone else will do just as well and I'm looking forward to reading about their Tea Time adventures!



# Master Market



## Intercultural Communication, Utrecht University

By Hannah Schoonewille

This time last year I was looking for a master but had no idea what I wanted to do. After doing a minor in Communicatie- en Informatiewetenschappen I knew I wanted to continue studying communication but I didn't want to give up on my love for the English language. With this master, I feel like I have the best of both worlds!

Intercultural Communication (ICC) is the master for you if you love culture and languages and if you're interested in organisational communication. In just one year, you will learn how to conduct research within an organisation

and how to advise on intercultural matters. The master is very practice-oriented, but with the theoretical courses in the first and second block there is a great balance between theory and practice. In the first and second block you take three courses: two mandatory courses and one language specific course. I took an English course with Roselinde in the first block and a Dutch course in the second block. If you're one of those lucky people who speaks more than two languages, you can also take courses in French, Spanish, Italian and German.

In the first block you will conduct research in an organisation. You will be joining in on meetings and advise the organisation on their internal communication. It's a lot of fun and a very good learning experience for the internship you will be doing in the fourth block. The second block has a Telecollaboration project in which you work on a research paper with students from other universities. I worked with two girls from Pakistan and Poland and our weekly skype meetings were a lot of fun! Block three will be spent on your master thesis. It was hard work but I really enjoyed it! We're currently in the fourth block which means that all ICC students

are now doing an internship. I'm in the lovely city of Cambridge, where I'm doing an internship at the University of Cambridge. I'm conducting research in the International Student Team and will be researching the effectiveness of their communication with Erasmus students.

So, what can you do after you've finished this master? A few examples of fields that ICC alumni currently work in are: communication, PR, mediation and training, marketing, and language education. Does ICC sound like the master for you? Then check out the website for more information: <https://www.uu.nl/masters/interculturele-com-municatie>



By Janieke Koning

## Comparative Literary Studies, Utrecht University

So, you've been looking for an MA program and you think you may have found the one in the RMA Comparative Literary Studies. Well, let me tell you... That's what I thought and I still do. I'm nearing the end of a two-year path to god-knows-what (this is a new sentiment, don't worry). My fellow students and I were urged to find the answer to the question: "Is there life after the RMA?" On a bad day, our answer is a cold, hard no. On a good day, we will conquer the world within six months. The key element in this RMA is research and it shows: the program is designed to prepare you for an academic, research-related literary career and doing a PhD is the irresistible outcome. You do have other options, because the

program is set up to be malleable to students' interests. For example, during my exchange I focussed more on children's literature, while someone else examined literature and the stage and a third person focussed on Derrida and Foucault entirely.

The people that know me know that I complain a lot about the workload, just for the sake of complaining, but the workload is not a joke. It's intense, and it won't let up until you're done with that thesis (it's 30-40 thousand words, don't sweat it). The core curriculum focusses on current debates in the field as well as important theories and methodologies; for specialization, there's options for electives, going abroad or an internship; and for professionalization you follow lecture series. Of course, there's also your thesis which can be as fun as you make it: I've been to see Disney's new Beauty and the Beast at least four times, purely for research.

The application procedure is supposed to scare you off. A strong motivational letter is important, but I've found that passion gets you further: you need to want it all. You need to want that spot in the RMA, you need to want that academic approach, to a certain extent you need to want that PhD, you need to want literature, and you need to

want theory. That's an important one: apart from a love for literature, there needs to be a love for, or at least an understanding of, theory and criticism. Your passion and your understanding will show during the interview. I would be lying if I said I loved every minute of the program, but I have enjoyed it more than I thought I would. But here's the thing...

## Master Literary Studies - Writing, Editing, and Mediating, University of Groningen

I have decided to broaden my horizon. During my exchange, I realized I wasn't quite ready to settle down with my beloved dream of doing a PhD. So, I'm doing a second master's: Writing, Editing, and Mediating at the University of Groningen; one of the four tracks offered in the MA Literary Studies. This semester, I'm taking a course on editing and translating. It consists of one huge group assignment of translating, editing, and delivering a final manuscript of a Dutch eighteenth century travel log. I don't have any significant translating and editing experience, so my learning curve is insane, keeping me motivated. So far it seems promising, although I won't know much more until next year. Maybe I'll hate it when I don't have Beauty and the Beast to distract me. Maybe I'll love it more. Who knows...

## YOU CAN SPEAK YOUR MIND JUST NOT HERE

By Berfin Berçem Kaya

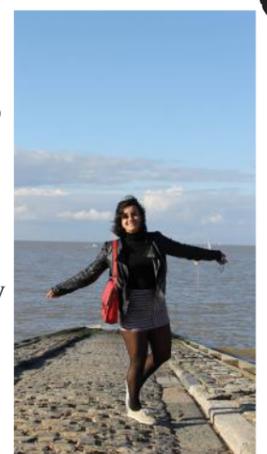
Some weeks ago, I came across a documentary on NPO2, *Ik alleen in de klas*. Karin Junger, a Jewish Dutch woman married to a black man, used the moving stories of her mixed race children and their multicultural friends to portray the reality of multiculturalism and – according to a lot of people, non-existent – racism in the Netherlands. Soon after

I watched that, the bombing in Manchester happened. Somehow, the combination of the two – especially including the comments I read regarding the bombing – made me think again of this observation by Kader Abdolah. I noticed that there was still a lot of colourism and islamophobia going on in the Netherlands, and remembered how Abdolah wrote in *Het huis van de moskee* how Henk and Ingrid (and Carmen and Maurits) are tolerant, but not necessarily accepting.

(Before explaining what this means, a short disclaimer: this is another 'not-all-Dutch-people-do this'-case, because as always, there will be someone screaming "I don't do that though". We know that you don't.)

In the Netherlands, people with differences will be tolerated. Henk and Ingrid generally know that you're not supposed to hurt people, because there is the law, there is freedom, there is awareness of common decency. However, people still don't accept the other as much as you would assume in a multicultural, diverse country like the Netherlands. This was present in *Ik alleen in de klas* as well. A room full of people, but still lonely. For example, you're probably familiar with the phrases "I don't mind the gays, but they don't have to shove their love in my face", or "You can practice any religion you want, but why is there a mosque in my neighbourhood?" And "I don't want my daughter to marry one of those types." Another familiar one,

"I accept those n\*\*\*\*\* the way they are, but what is their problem with Black Pete? It's OUR tradition. They should go back to their own country, if they don't like our traditions". Tolerance is present, but the need for extreme integration as well. Everyone can live the way they want. But only low-key. High-key, everyone has to integrate in such way that the country we live in, remains pure Dutch.



# ALBIONEERS ABROAD

## Chicago, US

By Adriaan Walpot

CHICAGOOOOOOOOO. Birthplace of the skyscrapers, of jazz and blues, of Al Capone and Obama, and the city I've been calling home since January. I often hear people call this pearl in the Midwest the "embodiment of the American city". And it's true. If you come here you'll find it is robust, but beautiful. And its people are to the point and the friendliest folks around. Raging snowstorms in the cold winters created a communal environment. "Stay warm" is what you utter as a goodbye. It's safe to say that the Midwest of America is the "real" America and a very good place to be.

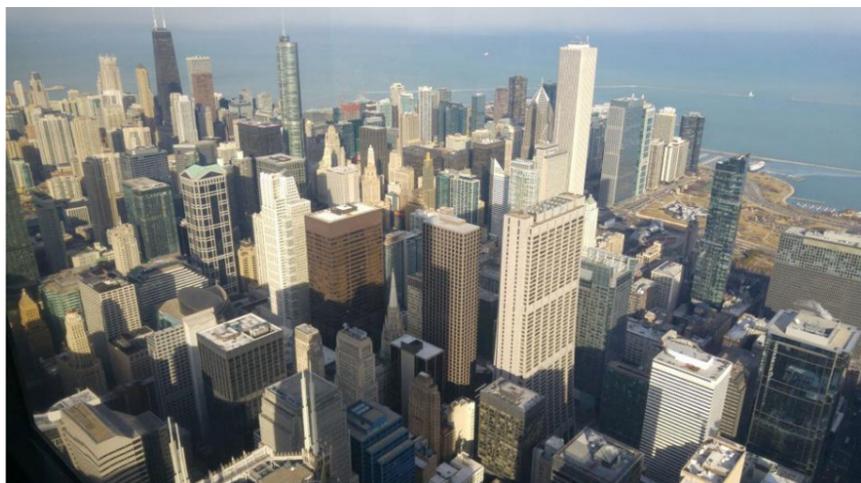
I should confess though that everyone who's lived in Chicago loves Chicago. And so do I. I could talk about all the wonderful things in the city and its people for days, but I guess I should also tell you what I'm doing all the way over here.

When I finished my BA in January after 3.5 years of studying (I studied part-time for a year when I was on the board of SPIN Boardsports), I wanted to go abroad but also continue to develop myself. So I applied for an internship at the Netherlands Consulate General and got the job. It's been an interesting time. In a very small team of 6 people I developed a communications strategy for the Consulate, taught everyone how to use social media, organized events, and a lot of other things. On top of that I have got to travel around and meet some interesting people along the way, such as the Architect of the Uithof library, who I told I had spent many many tedious hours



of studying in his artwork, and Greg Shapiro, the guy behind the "Netherlands Second" video.

The most interesting place I have visited has to be the city of Holland. I accompanied the Ambassador and Consul General to the yearly tulip festival, and you cannot believe it, but for 8 days everybody dresses up in old Dutch costumes with wooden shoes. Even the governor! There is cheese, windmills, tulips, everything. And thousands of people claim to be 100% Dutch, though they don't speak the



language. It's very fascinating, as the people there are so much more Dutch than we are. Oh and there's also Zeeland, Overijssel, and for some reason Borculo.

Anyway, if you ever happen to go to the US, you have to visit Chicago! Have you been to New York? Did you think it was really amazing, but at the same time dirty and too crowded? Then go to Chicago next time, because it's even more amazing and without the dirty and crowded parts.

## Hull, UK

By Georiga-Rae Dijk

Dear Albion, I have missed you so so much. Albion was a huge part of my life when I studied in Utrecht. In Utrecht, I was the enthusiastic secretary with (too) long hair who only wore skirts. In Hull, I'm the tall Dutchie. Whenever people ask where I'm from, I explain I'm from a village in the east of the Netherlands, which, no, is not near Amsterdam. But I always add that I used to live and study in Utrecht, the most beautiful city in the Netherlands. I tell everyone to visit it, because Utrecht is as pretty as Amsterdam, with canals but without the many tourists, (and yes, you can smoke in Utrecht too).

I filled my Albionless life in England with fun stuff I had never done before. I joined the



lacrosse team, and bought a beautiful pink lacrosse stick. I could play matches pretty soon as well, and running around in mud has never been so much fun. Besides lacrosse, I also started boxing, which I never expected to do but here I am a year further and I love it. Another thing that I had never considered until I started living here in England, is the fact that the public libraries are completely in English. This might sound strange, but you are English students, so you might understand that I was extremely happy when I discovered a whole library full of books I'd read as a teenager, in English. And then there also are all those charity shops which sell loads of books, of which I bought many. Besides books, I also love films and that's why I decided to join the Film Society. It was just a bunch of nice people watching a film together, and talking about it in the pub afterwards, but it was a lot of fun.



Living in England is very different from travelling to it. I haven't eaten as much fish and chips as I expected to, but I have been able to try different food from all over the world. The great thing about studying abroad is you don't just meet English people, but as an international, you meet people from many different places. My Hull uni best friends are from South Korea, France, Vietnam, Portugal and England. Long story short, I would recommend everyone to study or live abroad. Hull has been an amazing experience for me, and I'm going to miss it when I'm back in the Netherlands in a few weeks. Did I miss my friends, my family, my favourite study association? Yes. But it was absolutely worth it.

# SHOWCASE

By Pauw Vos

“It is a curiosity for the image and a fascination with nature that compels me. In my work, I do not attempt to create an image that represents nature as it should be, instead, I attempt to convey my personal view of nature.

Walking through nature I notice shapes, colours and the tactility of all that I see. I emphasise these elements by adding to them, or by altering the image directly. It is in these alterations that the image manages to conjure up a feeling of wonderment, suspense and mystery.”



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# Q & Alumni

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With **Christian Hendriks**

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*By Inge van Nimwegen*

**This issue's Alumnus is a fairly recent graduate: he left us in 2015, after having been active in two Albion boards and spending plenty of time around the English faculty. "I snooped about other faculties, did some courses here and there," says Christian. But this leaves us with the burning question: how did he end up in business banking?**

**Q: Why did you choose to study English?**

A: From the beginning, this decision was based on what I enjoyed doing. I was interested in literature, and moreover I wanted to do English as it'd allow me to grow personally, to get to know myself, and have that coveted certificate. However, I always insisted that I would end up pursuing a career in business within a couple of years. I never regretted studying English, also because the group I became part of was amazing, and I was very active in its study association.

**Q: What can you tell us about your time with Albion?**

A: I spent two years on the Albion board, as treasurer. In these years,

we were in the middle of transitioning from a pretty amateur board, to what Albion is now. An example: we were the first board that didn't show up at official events in T-shirts. Our board put in more structure throughout the different aspects of Albion, which current boards probably still build on.

**Q: What did you do after you finished the Bachelor?**

A: I always thought I'd make it in a large company, and indeed I now find myself working in the banking sector. After I'd finished my thesis, summer holiday right around the corner, I thought to myself: 'Now what?' Suddenly your studies are done. I browsed around for job vacancies and found one at SNS Bank which appealed to me. It concerned a job in customer service, in the private sector.

However, I quickly realised I didn't like it all that much. Through intensive mail and phone contact with clients, I found myself thinking how clueless people actually are and realised I didn't have the required patience. I knew from my time as treasurer at Albion, where I'd first gotten into contact with the business side of banking, that it differed substantially from how you and I

take care of our finances and I was interested in knowing more. After three weeks in customer service I approached the business unit's manager to ask whether I could work there instead. And they were interested! That's the story of how I ended up in business banking. Business banking is much faster and people have a better idea of what they want. SNS Bank however shifted their focus away from commercial to private banking, so I searched elsewhere.

**Q: So what does your current job entail (on a day to day basis)?**

A: I now work as 'Interim Professional Business Banking' for Welten. That's the official title - it means you're hired for specific projects, by other companies. This project-by-project basis is great as I have a say in when an assignment isn't fruitful anymore. This job at Welten is actually a traineeship. I'm taking a course in business financing. Eventually I'd like to work as business financier for starting businesses.

At the moment I'm working on a project at Rabobank in Amsterdam, contributing to client acceptance - doing intake interviews with potential clients and risk mapping, mostly.

**Q: Why did the banking world appeal to you?**

A: Firstly, I am a people person and love having conversations. But the complexity of the business side of things also had my attention. The ability to contribute to the growth of a small enterprise into a successful company. The idea of being involved in these very early stages, that's what appeals to me the most. Entrepreneurs are incredibly enthusiastic people with great ideas. Banking isn't sitting behind a computer all day. Although, since everything must be recorded, I spent yesterday writing reports - that's a little something.

**Q: Do you consider your English studies any use within your current job?**

A: Amsterdam, where I'm currently working at, is very much English-oriented. Large international corporations have their office there, so banks too have a lot of contact in English. The studies gave me a solid basis from which I feel comfortable holding conversations in English. But the technical jargon is a different matter altogether - a lot of terms and abbreviations. Speaking to clients in English is confusing at times, as there is no such thing as a database with terms in both languages which you could consult.

But next to the language itself, I think the communication and thinking skills you acquire at any university education are very valuable, for many jobs: the ability to think creatively, to navigate through complex situations, to oversee what needs to happen. Especially in literature,



there is no one true answer - you are encouraged to formulate your own ideas, to look at a problem from different angles, different standpoints. I do think these skills help me in my job.

**Q: Any words of advice for current students of English?**

Join an association, like Albion. You can establish a close-knit social group, something to fall back on in tough times. Moreover, you'll be trained in social interaction. During my studies I saw an incredible amount of clever people, who only barely dared to look over the edge of

their book in class. Talking to people outside of the English department you'll discover there's a great variety of people out there, which is bound to prepare you for what's ahead. There a world of difference between your student days and real life!

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# Welten®

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## EVENT

### Balfolk in the Moira

By Charlotte van Ruiten

On a sweltering spring day, I sought refuge in the Moira in Utrecht. In this charming concert hall near the Drift I danced all night, in excellent company and to wonderful music. The music was played by accordionist Niek van Uden, who had just returned from a trip to Japan and graciously provided us with green-tea sweets.

The kind of dancing I did was balfolk, a modern dance form based on traditional European dances. Other than traditional folk dancing, which often has elaborate choreographies and aims at preserving tradition, balfolk is mostly about connecting with people and having fun. The basics of the dances are simple so everyone can join easily, and there is a lot of room for variation. Some of the dances are danced in couples, others are danced in a group.

You don't need a partner to dance balfolk, anyone can ask anyone to dance. Who leads or follows in couple dances is determined by personal preference, not what happens to sit between your legs. When I first started, I was a little nervous to ask people to dance, but I soon found out that this scene is incredibly welcoming and relaxed.

What's also special about balfolk is that it is always danced to live music. The music is inspired by traditional folk, but many bands have incorporated modern influences from all kinds of genres. Typical folk instruments like accordions, bagpipes and violins are popular, but really anything goes as long as it can be danced to. (Yes, there is such a thing as hip-hop balfolk music - and it's amazing.)

Balfolk events are organised all over the country - all over Europe in fact - and if you are curious I highly recommend attending a bal some time to see if it's something for you. Before nearly every bal there is an hour of dance instructions for beginners so you'll have no problem dancing along the rest of the night.

## TV SERIES

### Doctor Who Season 10:

#### Horribilis Veritas

#### (The Terrible Truth)

By Vincent Potman



The tenth season of New Who, the third season of Peter Capaldi playing the twelfth Doctor, is one I didn't have high hopes for to begin with, but it's truly dismal when I start to yearn for Clara Oswald. We are now seven episodes in, out of a total of twelve, and not one of the episodes has made me gush in joy.

To be fair, it did start off better than season nine ended, and I had a bit of hope. Bill – the first openly gay companion – is not a girl in special circumstances or danger; she's not super smart and sassy – a clear step away from everything that Clara Oswald was. To flip things around even more, the relationship angle that Moffat went for this time around was her being the student and the Doctor her teacher. Even better was the fact that twelve seemed to have lightened up, what with him cracking jokes and what not more than he did prior. Less caustic, I feel.

This is still the case seven episodes in, but even a better twelve cannot make up for shoddy writing, which exemplifies itself in plot holes and little to no good character development. Moffat's style has those very hick-ups often, because whilst he is very good at writing one-shots, in bigger stories he offers up both sense and character for cool; he is a big proponent of the rule-of-cool. As such the chemistry between Bill and the Doctor is very much lacking, and even worse is that as a consequence I enjoy some of the Nardole moments, which is blasphemous in and of itself. Not to even get into the whole background plot with the Master that doesn't necessarily hold my interest – even knowing a regeneration is up and coming, finally killing this Missy Incarnation.

No, on the whole of it this season has been a disappointment, and maybe these last two episodes of set up will lead to a great reveal, but given how terrible they were (especially the twist), I doubt it. Watch the series up to season seven, and leaving it off after that is more than A-Okay, in my eyes.

## INTERNATIONAL FILM

### Raw

By Lucinia Philip

Visitors fainting at a film festival and being hospitalised, and theatres providing vomit bags; the French-Belgian film Raw (French: Grave) by Julia Ducournau is definitely not for those with a weak stomach.

Raw explores the journey to adulthood of Justine, a bright student and vegetarian who enrolls into veterinary school. During an initiation ritual for new students, Justine is forced to eat raw rabbit kidney. Experiencing the taste of meat for the first time, her body starts to change and she begins to crave meat. Ducournau pointed out that her film is mostly about growing up and exploring the female body and sexuality, and she demonstrates this wonderfully through Justine's transition from vegetarian to cannibal. Whenever Justine is confronted with a new experience, her first Brazilian wax, for example, or losing her virginity, her desire for meat increases. When her cannibalistic urges are exposed, she soon finds out that she is not the only one on campus with an appetite for flesh.

When I first saw the trailer, I immediately started laughing: "Is this what made people faint? It's just some blood and meat, nothing disgusting about it." However, as I learned the hard way, there are still filmmakers who don't give away the entire film in their trailers. Raw is by far the most gruesome film I have ever seen. I usually have a strong stomach when it comes to blood-spattered films (to me gory films are pure comedy and the zombie genre is one of my favourites so humans eating humans is not something I'm grossed out by), but I must admit that I didn't watch the entire film.

Nevertheless, Raw is a very captivating and aesthetically pleasing film as the cinematographic aspects of the film and the script made me want to keep watching.

The film also relies heavily on sound and music. Whereas in most films the moans of a roommate receiving oral sex on the other side of the door or the sound of saucy meat being grabbed would be in the background, this film intensifies these sounds to the point where you feel you are part of the event.

Overall, I think Raw is a horror masterpiece and very unique, but I strongly recommend you to not watch this film if you are not a fan of blood.

## CONCERT

### Daniela Andrade

By Vincent Potman

On the 15th of May, Daniella Andrade, a relatively famous Youtube star from Canada known for her soft music and voice, kicked off her first European Tour. Along for the ride was Tim Atlas, a singer-songwriter from California, also known from the Youtube platform. They kicked off in Amsterdam, in a small and rather cozy bar by the name of Bitterzoet, and as a big fan of Daniella I had to go. Bitterzoet is a charming place, consisting of two floors with a rather darkened atmosphere, which is spiced up by colorful glass murals depicting saucy scenes. It felt all rather indie and alternative, which fit, but I am still of the opinion that a lounge bar would have suited them both better. Still, not like dancing would have been an option anyways if that was their style – the place was rather packed, showing that she was more known here than I had anticipated.

Buying myself a beer to keep me company, the event started off with Tim Atlas, who I had not looked up prior to going – I wanted the opening act to be somewhat a surprise and I was not disappointed. He didn't get me to sell my soul either, but it was of a different tack than what Daniella brings to the table. Where Daniella's style is soft spoken, calm and romantic in nature, Tim's style is a bit more vibrant, trying different things that sometimes work and sometimes don't. The best song he played for us was Compromised, which you can find on both Spotify and Youtube – I highly recommend giving it a listen.

Then came the main event, and Daniella Andrade took to the stage, being as down to earth as she is in her videos. She played songs off her new visual album Shore, as well as classics for those who've been following her for a while. What made my whole night is that she played Dark Coffee, which is probably my favorite song by her, giving me goosebumps. There also were some laughs, as she fluffed up at a part, and her handling of it was sweet as anything. Indeed, both artists interacted fantastically with the audience. To close she mentioned that of the merch being sold, a third or so would be dedicated to a charity for mental health, and given that I wanted to contribute to both her and such an institution I bought myself a shirt. Sadly it was the less interesting one, the most popular one sold out by the time I got there.

In any case it was a good way to spend an evening, a complete success in my eyes. So, if you identify yourself with any of this give one or both of them a follow, and maybe I'll see you the next time she's in Europe!

## CONCERT

### Enter Shikari

By Inge van Nimwegen

Enter Shikari are arguably the UK's finest uncategorizable band. Their Ronda show is an anniversary show for debut album *Take To The Skies* – sounding bigger, better and smoother than it ever could have upon its release 10 years ago.

On their last tour, the band emerged themselves in mash-ups and surprising EDM remixes, flashing lights, insane graphics on an enormous screen, and surround sound. Tonight's back-to-basics approach brings out a whole new Shikari. Their gigs are never mediocre, yet this one is one for the books specifically because it seems to have stepped up its level through having been stripped down.



*Take To The Skies* hasn't seen much material being played live during their last few tours, but with new songs released every year it's no surprise the setlist is often changed. Time flies when you're tearing down venues and genre barriers for over a decade. Especially memorable are songs never heard live before, such as "Adieu" and "Today Won't Go Down In History".

Newer songs are thrown in the mix as well, like the spatial "Torn Apart" and "Redshift", and gutsy bangers "Juggernauts" and "Anaesthetist". Vocally, the group are on top of their game, showing beautiful harmonies, both vulnerable and aggressive. But Shikari wouldn't be Shikari if it wasn't for their live formula that has the power to make any crowd go wild – culminating in heaps of crowd surfers and venue-filling mosh pits. Stable banger "Sorry You're Not a Winner" has everyone clapping along and even working together to form human pyramids of several rows high. TivoliVredenburg unfortunately has too little standing (read: moshing) area compared to balcony area, forcing everyone below to crowd in the middle and topple over one another.

"Return to Energiser" sees vocalist Rou Reynolds making his way over the balcony, interacting with anyone on his route from the right to the left side of the venue – in the process having and giving everyone present the time of their lives. A set that only cemented Enter Shikari's unparalleled status as live band, their self-proclaimed "music that knows no bounds."

## BOOK

### Longbourn

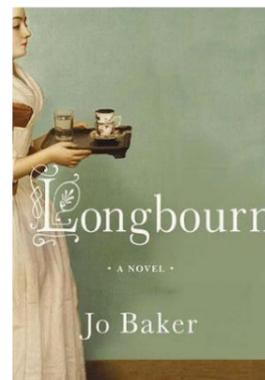
#### Jo Baker

By Kiki Drost

"If Elizabeth Bennet had the washing of her own petticoats, Sarah often thought, she'd most likely be a sight more careful with them." This quote is on the cover of Jo Baker's 2013 novel *Longbourn*. Although it was written a few years back, it will be relevant again soon, since a movie is scheduled to come out this year.

As might have become clear from the quote, this novel is an adaptation of Jane Austen's *Pride and Prejudice*. As you also may have guessed, it is a retelling of the famous story from the perspective of the servants. Now, before you run out to the bookstore and get your copy, expecting to get a new perspective on Elizabeth and Darcy, let me warn you: the novel is hardly concerned with her, or any other Bennet, for that matter. Instead, Baker centres the story around Sarah, a housemaid, and the other servants. So, while the Bennets are excited that Netherfield Park is let at last, the servant's lives are changed by the arrival of a new footman with a mysterious past. Of course Lizzy&co make the occasional appearance, but since the household staff has more to do with the laundry than with the family, you as a reader will not get close to the people upstairs either. However, if you do not pick up the novel expecting this, you will find it is a very nice novel in itself.

Some minor characters are given a personality and a story and some other characters are added to the Longbourn and Netherfield estates. Of course the same events take place in Longbourn as in *Pride and Prejudice*, but only things that are relevant to the servants get attention. If Mr. Darcy unexpectedly drops by this is only worth mentioning because Mrs. Long will have to put on water for tea. And Mr. Collin's visit is important not because he is a potential husband for one of their master's daughters, but because if he is impressed by the servants' good work, he might keep them on when he inherits the estate. The new perspective this novel offers is fresh and interesting, although it can get kind of bleak sometimes. But, if you haven't watched *Downton Abbey* or an equivalent, this novel could even help you get some insight into the living conditions of the non-rich in Austen's time.



## CONCERT

### Cherry Glazerr

By Lola van Scharrenburg

American band Cherry Glazerr hit Bitterzoet in Amsterdam, and it was a punch that could be felt long after.

The evening was opened by Dream Nails, a "DIY feminist punk band", and although they weren't exactly bad, they missed the mark for me. Before they started, frontwoman Janey asked all girls to come to the front. Some did, some didn't, all fine. But there was this guy standing front-row, and without any other reason than his gender, Janey urged him to move back. He didn't want to; he had taken the effort to be early so he could enjoy the show from up close. Janey, however, didn't care and announced they wouldn't play until he stepped back. Finally, the guy reluctantly stepped back a little and Dream Nails started their show. Their songs were fine – although not exactly what I would call punk – but the incident, which showed the band's idea of feminism was painfully off and made somebody feel very uncomfortable, really put me off (and judging by the audience's faces, I was not the only one). But then there was Cherry Glazerr to save the day. The American band is often described as being "centered around lead singer Clementine Creevy", but I disagree. Drummer Tabor, bass player Devin and multi-instrumentalist Sasami, contributed to the band's performance just as much as Clementine. The band was full of energy, and that surprised me. I mainly know Cherry Glazerr from their second album, *Hazel Princess*, which is rather mellow and dreamy. Although follow-up *Apocalipstick* is more powerful and upbeat, I didn't expect to see the raw, full-energy show I ended up witnessing. And how glad I was my expectations weren't met.

The band played a mix of old and new, known and less-known. Clementine's signature dreamy voice was often replaced by fierce screams, shouts and howls, which fit perfectly with Sasami's accompanying vocals. The synth player has this cynical, I-hate-all-of-you kind of attitude at first glance, but she gave it her all and the fun she had clearly showed. Between songs, Clementine and Sasami joked around and told stories as if they were talking to friends. Meanwhile, drummer Tabor hit away with tons of energy and a tightness similar to that of Devin, keeping the songs together during the messier moments. The band put up an amazingly strong and energetic show, and their effort was clearly appreciated by the audience, which danced and jumped until the last note.

## FILM

### The Circle

By Job Petersen

This movie, based on the bestselling novel by Dave Eggers, features some of the most high-profile actors of this time in the leading roles: Emma Watson, Tom Hanks, Karen Gillan and John Boyega. Watson has finally grown up, portraying the more mature character of protagonist Mae Holland. Mae comes to work for the fictional social networking company The Circle through her friend Annie (Gillan).

**"Whereas some nuances made in the book are not present in the movie, it clearly shows the main concept Egger's provided us with in a very modern and accessible manner."**

Even though Watson's acting was marvellous, the main character appeared to have less intellect than in the book. They focussed on the idea of an organisation being able to control everything, and left most of Mae's feelings out. Because of this, the few warnings that were given appear to be disregarded naively by following board member Eamon Bailey. Eamon couldn't have been portrayed better by anyone other than Hanks. He can't only sell you ideas, but almost makes you actually believe in them while watching, as does Mae of course. However, the more Mae believes in the ideology of The Circle and promotes it along the way, the more her friend Annie gets depressed. When Gillan receives more emotional scenes, she has difficulties with hiding her Scottish accent. This, however, was cleverly resolved by locating the origins of her character in Scotland as well.

Whereas some nuances made in the book aren't present in the movie, it clearly shows the main concept Eggers provided us with in a very modern and accessible manner. However, this did come at a cost and some of the original emotional aspects of Mae were changed. The movie's ending was vague and unexpected and differed significantly from the book.

## BOOK

### *Fun Home* *A Family Tragicomic*

By Noa Tims

I should probably give a little disclaimer before I start this review; *Fun Home* is an old(er) graphic novel, from 2006, and famous. It has won all sorts of stuff and was adapted into a theatre production. Alison Bechdel is already world famous too, as she has created the Bechdel-test to superficially check if films represent women somewhat equally to your familiar action hero. On top of that, I'm hugely biased since I'm writing my thesis on this work – you kind of have to love what you're working with or you might have a bad time. Still, I think *Fun Home* is a must read.

*Fun Home* recounts Bechdel's youth in the mansion – she hates the term – her father restored with his own two hands from a pile of rotting wood into a true palace of his passion for Victorian nobility. Sounds nice, really isn't: "He treated his children like furniture and his furniture like children", Bechdel mentions in the graphic novel. She explores, not in chronological order, her strained relationship with her parents, her father especially, her coming out, her father's closeted experience and his death – which she suspects was suicide. She parallels her own coming out with her father's secret second life and the different times in which they had to deal with it – him, gay and attracted to younger men in a time when stereotypes reigned, and her during the waves of feminism and underground gay movements in the eighties.

Although *Fun Home* is a graphic novel and dialogue happens in speech bubbles and narration in blocks, Bechdel has a very specific style. The dialogue is short and snappy – long conversations were not really happening in her home – while the narration is sophisticated, almost poetic and a little too distanced from the emotionally heavy events she recounts. Even though you know she is not objective, she's always analysing rather than judging, interested rather than angry (although you feel these other emotions bubbling under the surface). She is unafraid of explicitness or showing off her literary knowledge, cramming in all sorts of literary references with which students of English might just enjoy themselves (think Shakespeare to Joyce, Proust to Esla Gidlow) and her attention to detail in her recreation of events makes her come across as reliable and open.

*Fun Home* is a must, surprisingly easy to read, satisfyingly hard to process and I can't wait to start the second part of her memoir, *Are You My Mother?*

# HUMANS OF ALBION

By Minthe Woudstra



Bart Vermeulen - 26 - fifth year

"The great thing about growing older is how much you learn about yourself. I'm 26 now, but I feel like a different person compared to five years ago, when I started this course. There have been amazing times, there have been horrible times. You learn to deal with all of it and to appreciate both the good and bad. It seems to become easier and easier as you keep reflecting on your life, the choices you make, the things you love, the things you hate and the things that happen to you outside of your influence. For example, as I'm writing this, I just lost my wallet, including my passport and all kinds of important cards I require for survival. I'm sure, however, that I'll learn to actually check things, close my bags so said items cannot drop out of it, not bring extremely important items you don't need everywhere and maybe, just maybe, not drink 'one more beer!' when you really know you shouldn't."

## WORD OF THE BOARD



By Iris Pijning

I don't get the idea many people would describe me as an easily pissed off person, but these last weeks I've been uncharacteristically cranky and I can only blame my mood on one thing: Eurovision. Don't get me wrong; I'm not one of those people whose day is ruined by the thought of an international contest full of shitty songs like some of my more sour friends are. On the contrary, I MCFREAKING LOVE THE EUROVISION SONG CONTEST! To help me write this I've even put 1974 winner Waterloo on repeat.

Like any other year, I have spent most of my early spring afternoons sewing sequins onto every item in my wardrobe down to every last sock in my drawer to prepare for this year's feast of extravagance. Despite all my vigorous preparation, nothing could have prepared me for the enormous disappointment that was this year's finale (I'd missed the other shows, due to the actually fabulous Night of the English Professors among other things). I think I can safely say this was the most boring collection of performances at Eurovision in the 22 years I've spent on this planet. Where was the Eurobeat, the drag queens, the singing turkeys with overweight but exotic dancers (Ireland 2008), the German singing mirror balls personified (Ukraine 2007), or the opera singing disco vampires (Romania 2013)? I've never been very impressed with any of the Dutch acts but at least with the Toppers in 2009 it felt like we really tried, you know.

I wish I had more words to spend on educating those interested about the true beauty of Eurovision, but since I don't you'll have to make do with my playlist on the Albion Youtube channel 'Pittige Playlist'. And while you're there, make sure to check out Vincent's excellently curated 'Vincent's Kekke Filmpjes'.

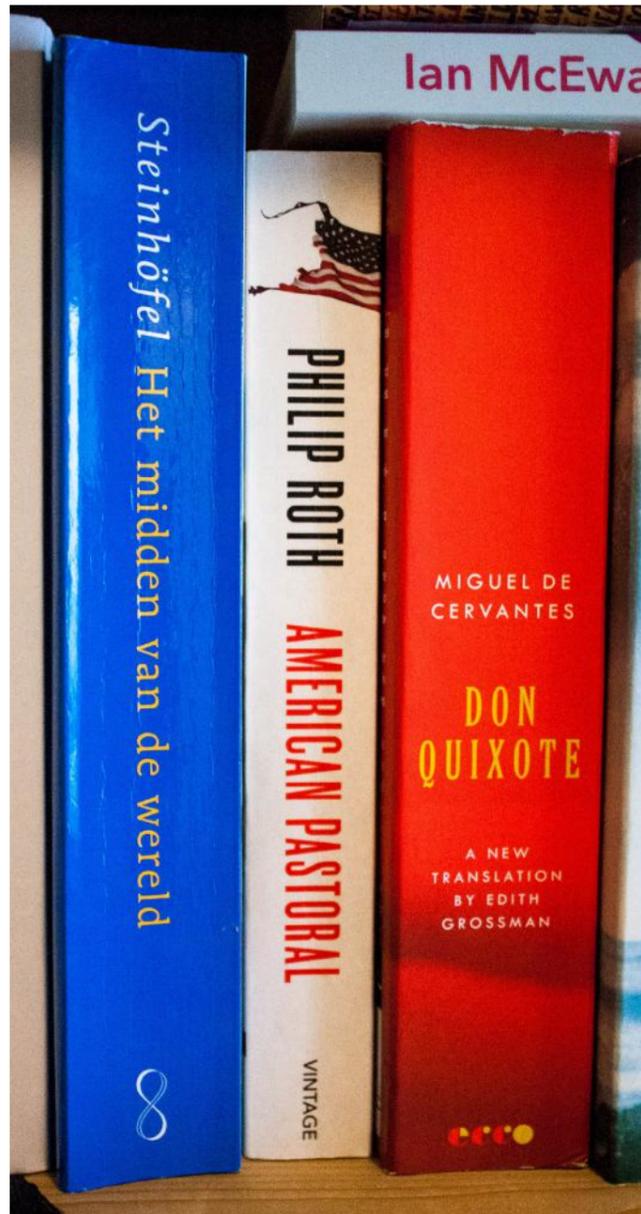
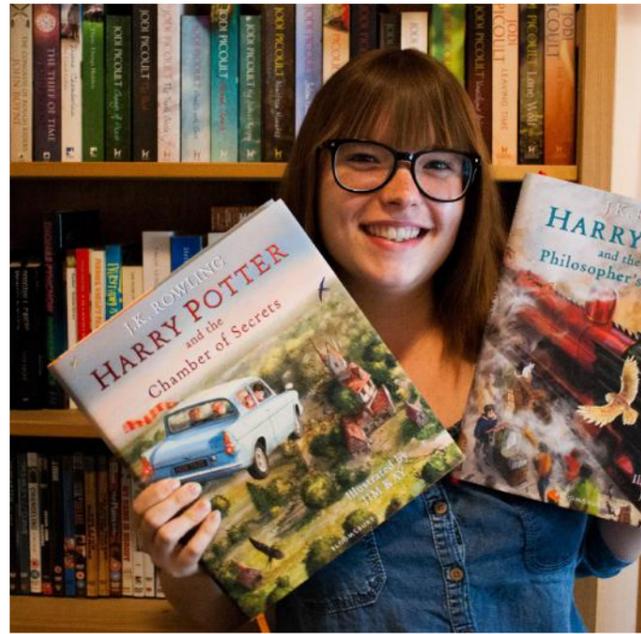
## IF YOU DON'T READ DON'T GIFT ME BOOKS



By Kiki Drost

There are few things that annoy me more on my birthday or Christmas than being gifted books by people who don't read. "Why," I can hear you think, "don't you like books?" The problem is not that I don't like books, the problem is that they don't like books. They mean well, of course, thinking that since I study English literature and enjoy reading, a book is a perfect present for me. And they are right, but what they don't understand is that I don't necessarily want to read every book ever written. To them a book is an object, made of paper and ink. There's words in it, and they form sentences, and these sentences form a story. What more could you possibly want?

They don't understand that a good novel can take you to another world, it can teach you things, it can make you appreciate certain people, conditions, cultures, animals, or whatever, a good novel can make you think, you will remember it for a long time, a good novel is something more than some paper containing words. So here I am, unwrapping a book-shaped present gifted by a relative I know doesn't read, and I am already dreading the outcome. It will be picked not because they loved it, or because they recommend this writer, not even because they like novels written during that time, or the genre; it will be picked based on the cover at most, but mainly just because it is a book. "Ah, cool," I say, while I turn it around to read the back, "hmm yes, that sounds very interesting. Thank you!"



# B O O K S H E L F

## N I K I

By Job Petersen  
Photos by Lola van Scharrenburg

**This former board member is on the brink of leaving Albion since she's almost finished her bachelor. So, this is a great opportunity for everyone to either get to know Niki just a little bit better before she leaves us, or to hear from her for the final time. I had a real serious conversation with her, but we also spoke about some dirty writings.**

**What's your favourite book at the moment?**

"That's *American Pastoral* by Philip Roth. It's about the disintegration of the American dream. I like it because there's a lot of American history in it, which interests me anyhow. You don't know what's going to happen. You get an image of something perfect, but after a while there appear to be many faults underneath and it seems there's no such thing as 'perfection'. It's about the idea that this dream doesn't exist; there is no perfect family or a perfect life. He put it into words very well."

**Which book do you think is extremely overrated?**

"Definitely *The Fault in Our Stars* by John Green. Everybody thinks it's a very dramatic book, but I really don't understand what all the fuss is about. I myself didn't weep, I can tell you that. I just think the characterization is annoying; those typical girls on whom I don't go very delicious."

**What makes a book 'good' according to you?**

"Unpredictability and multi-dimensional characters. Also, the accuracy of characters, but this slightly depends on the genre, like when characters do not match with their historical setting. Language is also important, no Jip en Janneke writing. It's nice when someone can deliver emotions to a text without many words."

**What's your favourite English word?**

"Quite." I wanted to come up with a very difficult word, but it's actually a very simple one. You can put it after every sentence. An Irishman I know uses it all the time: 'hmm, quite'. I don't know, it just sounds very British. It's the reaction image among words. I imagine a tea-drinking cat when I hear it. Or Kermit."

**Of all books you've read, which one's the most disgusting?**

"I can get you really disgusting novels from my bookshelf for sure. Every disgusting book I have read has its roots in a lecture from Simon I had about porn. The dirtiest is *Yellow Dog* by Martin Amis. To give you an image of it: it contains a nude tape, incest, a transsexual, and more. Here I have a great quote: 'his phallus, ideally black, seemed to constitute an obstacle: she couldn't go past it, she couldn't go round it. No, she had to go through it, as if her real goal lay somewhere within his loins' (297). Also, part of the events happen in Fuck Town. Lovely. Unfortunately, the book itself wasn't that great, but the

lecture was. Fun fact: I was drunk back then, after drinking in the park."

**What's your least favourite Harry Potter?**

"*The Prisoner of Azkaban*. This one didn't make that much sense, concerning the overall plot. I was like, 'Voldemort, where

you at?' He really is a top-notch villain. Normally, he's somehow a bit of a threat throughout the book, and I missed that in this one."

**What's your favourite crime novel?**

"I've read quite a lot of them for Aesthetics of Detection, my David course. I think *Gaudy Night* by Dorothy L. Sayers. It has a sort of feministic perspective in the crime novel genre. It goes a bit against the stereotype of a male detective like Sherlock Holmes. But even though it goes against the conventions, it still fits. You need to stay a bit focussed though."

**You have almost finished your bachelor, so which novel you had to read over the past years has influenced you the most?**

"*Everything is Illuminated* by Jonathan Safran Foer, which I read for Kracht van Literatuur. What interests me is the way it shows that traces of history always remain visible, and how this influences you as a person even generations after the event, in this case the Second World War. The book is important since it's a signal to everyone that they should talk about history. When people stop talking about history, then I think that we, as a society, are doomed. Hatred and terrorism will increase. That's the main reason why I think this is a very good book. It reminds me that we should not forget, but learn to live with it. To reference a recent event, it's like the woman who sang *Don't Look Back in Anger* after the Manchester attack: you can't do anything about it anymore, but you must learn to find a way to put it into words in the future."

**Who is your favourite fictional character?**

"Draco Malfoy. I was doubting between Draco and Scorpius, but I don't go very well on *Cursed Child* to be honest. Draco is also very dramatic and salty: he brings drama with flair. I can appreciate that. Draco's my bae. They also really screwed him over in the movies. His entire character development isn't shown."

**From which author have you read the most books?**

"I've filled almost an entire bookshelf with books by Jodi Picoult, so I figure I've read most books by her. Only now do I realise how taffus many books

she's written by the way. They're separate novels, but they always contain a moral dilemma the main character has to deal with. I like that, because then I think about what I'd do for a moment and then I'm glad I don't have to choose. Topics vary from a suicide pact to religion, but most of them are located in America. She writes quite easy books, so I don't have to think that much. Yes, I admit it: I'm a lazy reader. I wanted to give you all intellectual answers, but I'm not actually like that."

**Do you have a favourite reading spot?**

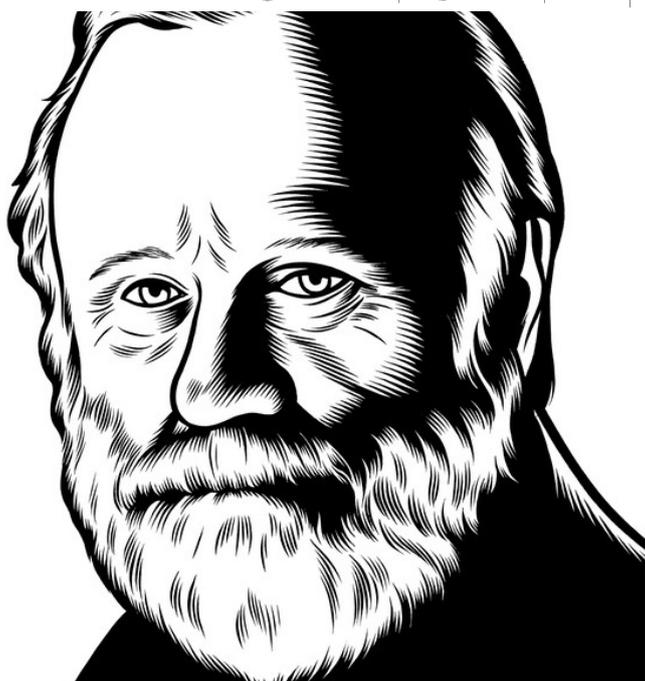
"Actually it's at my dad's home, even though I don't go there very often anymore. I used to read a lot in my bed, but somehow that doesn't work here very well."

**Finally, if you were to write a story about Albion, what or who would it be about?**

"Well, since the fanfiction about Simon has already become a classic, it seems fun to me to write a very bad Albion fanfiction: *Fifty Shades of Albion* (but then better written of course). Nominees for the roles of Anastasia and Christian are Maarten and Erik; who's gonna be who is up to your own imagination. They have already proven to be excellent candidates for their parts due to their lovely audio file (in which they recorded *Fifty Shades* in a very professional and erotic manner; still available for fans by the way!). I see possibilities to create a sensual scene, by which I mean extremely gay porneau of course, on a piano, à la Thierry Baudet. Apologies, Mr. Baudet would of course call it a *pianoforte*. Yeah, I believe this would be a great story."

“There is no  
real ending.  
It’s just the  
place where  
you stop  
the story.”

Frank Herbert



#### Colofon

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