

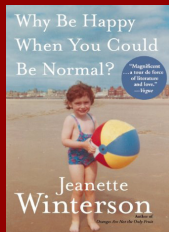
[illegible][illegible]



# Contents

<b>2</b> <b>What we're reading</b> <i>See what the Phoenix team has been reading recently!</i>	<b>3</b> <b>Word of the Board</b> <i>Veerle Kusters, this year's Secretary, reminisces her trip to Denmark in 2014.</i>	<b>3</b> <b>Introduction Letters</b> <i>The Phoenix Board introduces you to the very first Phoenix issue of the year!</i>	<b>4</b> <b>Phoenix Yearbook</b> <i>Meet the new Phoenix Team!</i>	<b>8</b> <b>Hamlet</b> <i>Marit speaks of Hamlet and his conflicted relationship with Denmark</i>
<b>10</b> <b>Tea Time</b> <i>Femke sits down with Dr. Sue Blackwell.</i>	<b>12</b> <b>Culture Corner</b> <i>Patrick talks about his blue-yellow days and the IKEA food experience!</i>	<b>13</b> <b>Playlist of my life</b> <i>Femke and Eva introduce you to their favourite songs!</i>	<b>14</b> <b>Hygge</b> <i>Ever wondered what Hygge is? Siya talks about the Danish Hygge experience.</i>	<b>17</b> <b>The Little Star Girl</b> <i>Thijs combines The Little Match Girl &amp; Twinkle Twinkle Little star in a poem.</i>
<b>18</b> <b>Munch</b> <i>Eva tells you a Scream-worthy story about Munch's art.</i>	<b>19</b> <b>Nordic Creatures</b> <i>The Phoenix team introduces you to their favourite Nordic Mythical Creatures.</i>	<b>19</b> <b>Humans of Albion</b> <i>Meet Emilie Wiingren!</i>	<b>20</b> <b>Bookshelf</b> <i>Phoenix' own Cecille takes you on a trip through Nordic literature.</i>	<b>22</b> <b>Icelandic Stories</b> <i>Hester introduces you to old Icelandic beliefs.</i>
<b>22</b> <b>Culture Corner</b> <i>Editor-in-chief Julia looks back at her trip to Norway.</i>	<b>23</b> <b>Collage</b> <i>Take a look at Mohana's beautiful Nordic inspired collage!</i>	<b>24</b> <b>Culture Corner</b> <i>Femke reviews the Norwegian hit-series Skam!</i>	<b>25</b> <b>Runes</b> <i>Leanne introduces you to Elder Futhark</i>	<b>26</b> <b>The Little Mermaid</b> <i>Helenie confronts you with the dark side of Andersen's famous fairytale...</i>
<b>28</b> <b>Marvel of Norse Myth</b> <i>Mohana talks Marvel VS Nordic Myths</i>	<b>29</b> <b>Minor Market</b> <i>Tessa talks about her experience taking the Swedish minor at UvA.</i>	<b>29</b> <b>Word of the Month</b> <i>Leanne brings us all into a Christmassmood, it's Yuletide!</i>	<b>30</b> <b>Phoenix Ranks</b> <i>Cecile introduces you to her favourite and most underrated Moomin characters.</i>	<b>32</b> <b>Raiders on the Move</b> <i>Twan combines Nordic Gods with poetry.</i>

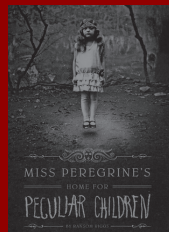
## what we're reading



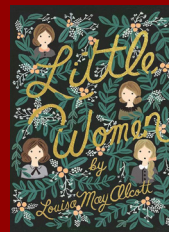
Anna  
**Why Be Happy When You Could Be Normal**  
by  
Jeanette Winterson



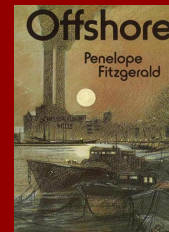
Cecilie  
**SHATTERED**  
by  
Jonathan Allen & Amie Parnes



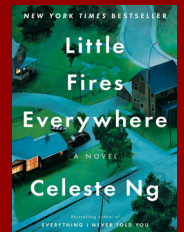
Eva  
**Miss Peregrine's Home for Peculiar Children**  
by  
Ransom Riggs



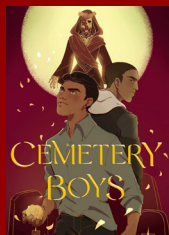
Femke  
**Little Women**  
by  
Louisa May Alcott



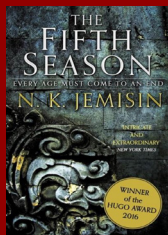
Fenna  
**Offshore**  
by  
Penelope Fitzgerald



Helenie  
**Little Fires Everywhere**  
by  
Celeste Ng



Hester  
**Cemetery Boys**  
by  
Aiden Thomas



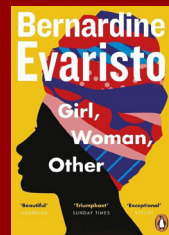
Julia  
**The Fifth Season**  
by  
N.K. Jemisin



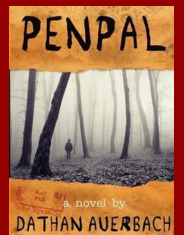
Leanne  
**Good Omens**  
by  
Neil Gaiman & Terry Pratchett



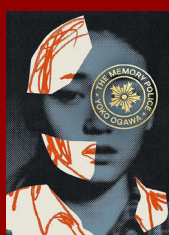
Marijn  
**Worm**  
by  
J.C. McCrae



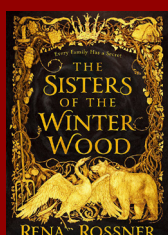
Marit  
**Girl, Woman, Other**  
by  
Bernardine Evaristo



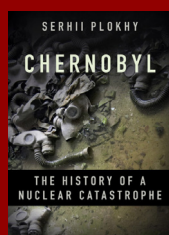
Marlies  
**Penpal**  
by  
Dathan Auerbach



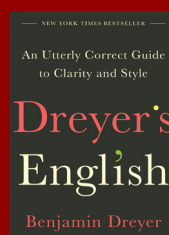
Michelle  
**The Memory Police**  
by  
Yoko Ogawa



Mohana  
**Sisters of the Winter Wood**  
by  
Rena Rossner



Rixt  
**Chernobyl**  
by  
Serhii Plokhyy



Thijs  
**Dreyer's English**  
by  
Benjamin Dreyer



Twan  
**The Rise of Kyoshi**  
by  
F.C. Yee

# Word of the Board



## Veerle Kusters Secretary

excitement in me to visit the rest of the Nordics as well. Iceland has a proud place at the top of my travel wish list, and I long to see the fjords of Norway. Speaking of Norway, another reason the Nordics have a place in my heart is because of the Norse series SKAM. Seriously. If you have not seen this show, you are missing out. You will not regret investing time in these teenagers and their crazy but heart-warming relationships!

Until the next update,

With love,

Veerle

Dear reader,

Thank you so much for taking the time to read our first issue of the year! Due to these weird circumstances we're currently living in, it was a challenge to get this issue ready for you. Our staff made the entire issue from home, which is unusual. This situation is, of course, out of our hands but we made the most of it. Hopefully, you can take a moment to enjoy this issue, read the articles and maybe get into a hygge mood. Our entire team has worked hard to finish it so we hope that you like it.

In this issue we explore a Nordic theme, our entire team was excited to work on this, we had many ideas to fill the pages! In this issue you can explore different Nordic countries and we interviewed our own Cecilie for the Bookshelf article because the Danish culture is a big part of her.

Keep safe during these times, but also, don't forget to take a moment for yourself.

Love,  
Julia Schuurmans  
Editor-in-chief 2020-2021

Hello everyone!

What a crazy year it's been, huh? I don't know about you, but I've been thinking back longingly to my past holidays when I could discover the world freely. As it happens, one of those these past vacations was a trip to Denmark in 2014, which fits perfectly with the Nordic theme of this issue! What an adventure it was. We were so optimistic when we first arrived at our campsite; the sun was shining, the air was chilly but fresh. Little did we know that that chilliness preceded a giant rainstorm. We battled through that first night in our little tents, but we were so afraid of being flushed away, that we packed up our things the next morning and looked for the closest hostel that had rooms available.

Luckily, after this false start, we were able to pick things back up very successfully. We visited a Viking museum (did you know that they didn't actually have horns on their helmets?), we saw some of the most beautiful landscapes ever, including a host of burial mounds, cliffs, and stone circles, and we also visited the colourful Copenhagen. All in all, it remains one of my favourite trips to this day. Of course, this holiday sparked

Kære læser,

I can't even start to tell you about how proud and excited I am about this issue. Having grown up in a Nordic Country myself, many of these topics are near and dear to my heart.

In this issue you can read about a variety of things, from the adorable moomins to the tragic tale of Hamlet, from the fairytales of H.C. Andersen to the runic alphabet. For now, enjoy this issue, I'm sure you'll be able to find something you like or learn about something new.

*"The world is full of great and wonderful things for those who are ready for them." -Moominpappa*

God fornøjelse!

Knus,

Cecilie Balemans-Højberg  
Creative Director 2020-2021



## PHOENIX

Magazine for students of English Language and Culture at Utrecht University.

Issue 32 - December 2020

Cover Image

Fenna Leeuwenburgh & Mohana Zwaga

Logo

Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

Team 2020-2021

### Editorial Board

Julia Schuurmans **Editor-in-chief**  
Femke Edelbroek **Content Editor**  
Michelle Moonen **Content Editor**  
Anna Preindl **Content Editor**  
Marit Vogels **Content Editor**

### Staff Writers

Eva Biesheuvel **Staff Writer**  
Helenie Demir **Staff Writer**  
Mohana Zwaga **Staff Writer**  
Twan van der Donk **Poetry Writer**  
Marit Vogels **Fiction Writer**

### Creative Team

Cecilie Balemans-Højberg **Creative Director**  
Fenna Leeuwenburgh **Photographer**  
Mohana Zwaga **Photographer**  
Marlies Riemens **Illustrator**  
Marijn van de Visser **Illustrator**

### Committee

Julia Schuurmans **Chair**  
Cecilie Balemans-Højberg **Chair**  
Leanne van Kampen **Secretary**  
Thijs Biezen **Treasurer**  
Rixt Tuinstra **Coordinator**

### Thank You

Veerle Kusters, Sue Blackwell, Emilie Wiingren,  
Siya Sithamparanathan, Tessa Karsten and  
Patrick van Oosterom.

### Special Thanks

DaFont and Icons8.

### Subscriptions

Every issue will be published online at [www.albionutrecht.nl](http://www.albionutrecht.nl) and hard copies can be bought independently.

Contact Albion Utrecht

Trans 10  
3512 JK Utrecht  
030 - 253 66 69

### The Shack

Drift 21, 2.08

Phoenix is published independently every academic quarter. All rights reserved.

# 2020-2021 PHOENIX YEARBOOK



A new academic year has started, and with that comes a new Phoenix Team! We've worked long and hard to create an amazing issue for you, so let us introduce them to you before diving in!

## Editor-in-chief



Julia

**BOOK:** A COURT OF MIST AND FURY BY SARAH J. MAAS  
**ALBUM:** PORTALS BY SUB FOCUS & WILKINSON  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** THE LORD OF THE RINGS

"It simply isn't an adventure worth telling if there aren't any dragons"  
 - J.R.R. Tolkien

## Creative Director



Cecilie

**BOOK:** FRANKENSTEIN BY MARY SHELLEY  
**ALBUM:** THE BLUE ALBUM BY LUKAS GRAHAM  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** AVATAR THE LAST AIRBENDER & THE LEGEND OF KORRA

"I'll think about that tomorrow, I have more important things on my mind now." - Moomin



Illustration by Marlies Riemens



# PHOENIX TEAM 2020-2021



Editor



“Vulnerability is the birthplace of innovation, creativity and change.”  
- Brené Brown

**BOOK:** DIE HAND VOLLER STUNDEN BY PAUL CELAN  
**ALBUM:** HARIESCHAIM BY DRANGSAL / RIDE ON BY SEARCH YIU / EROS BY RIN.  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** THAT 70'S SHOW

Staff writer



“Eva Biesheuvel!!!”  
- Bauke Dudink

**BOOK:** MISTBORN BY BRANDON SANDERSON  
**ALBUM:** MELODRAMA BY LORDE  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** KILL YOUR DARLINGS

Editor



“There’s nothing more truly artistic than to love people”  
- Vincent van Gogh

**BOOK:** LOVELESS BY ALICE OSEMAN  
**ALBUM:** A DAY AT THE RACES BY QUEEN  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** ANNE WITH AN E

Photographer



“We are stardust, we are golden.”  
- Joni Mitchell

**BOOK:** SERIOUS CONCERNS BY WENDY COPE  
**ALBUM:** VENTURA BY ANDERSON PAAK  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** GRACE AND FRANKIE

Staff writer



“We don’t say ‘rising into love’. There is in it, the idea of the fall.”  
- Alan Watts

**BOOK:** THE GREAT GATSBY BY F. SCOTT FITZGERALD  
**ALBUM:** OFF THE WALL BY MICHAEL JACKSON  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** HARRY POTTER FRANCHISE

# PHOENIX TEAM 2020-2021



Staff Writer



“Life’s a bitch. You’ve got to go out and kick ass” - Maya Angelou

**BOOK:** THE FEVER KING BY VICTORIA LEE  
**ALBUM:** BEGINNINGS FROM GIRL IN RED  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** BBC SHERLOCK

Secretary



[I cannot fix on the hour, or the spot, or the look or the words, which laid the foundation. It is too long ago.] “I was in the middle before I knew that I had begun.” - Jane Austen

**BOOK:** PRIDE & PREJUDICE BY JANE AUSTEN  
**ALBUM:** ENGLAND KEEP MY BONES BY FRANK TURNER  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** BBC MERLIN

Illustrator



“Our capacity for love increases with each person we cross paths with throughout our lives and with each moment we spend with those people. But too often we neglect that part of ourselves in favour of others, and by the time we realize just how important it is, we find ourselves with fewer folks around to practice with.” - Griffin McElroy

**BOOK:** THE MURDERBOT DIARIES BY MARTHA WELLS  
**ALBUM:** HOLLOW KNIGHT OST BY CHRISTOPHER LARKIN  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** PONYO BY THE SEA

Staff writer



“Remember, girl: It’s the best time in the history of the world to be you. You can do anything! You can do everything! You can be whatever you want to be! Just as long as you follow the rules.” - Candace Bushnell

**BOOK:** THE HUNGER GAMES BY SUZANNE COLLINS  
**ALBUM:** A NIGHT AT THE OPERA BY QUEEN  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** LOVE, ROSIE

Illustrator



“Look what your brother did to the door!” - Old man, The Texas Chainsaw Massacre (1974)

**BOOK:** THE BOOK THIEF BY MARKUS ZUSAK  
**ALBUM:** AVENTINE BY AGNES OBEL  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** HALLOWEEN (1978)



# PHOENIX TEAM 2020-2021



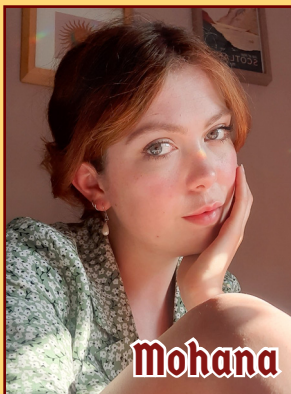
## Editor



“Your shoulders didn’t  
bend at the weight  
of the world in your  
head”  
- @deadcigarettes on  
Instagram

**BOOK:** FINDING SKY BY JOSS STIRLING  
**ALBUM:** OUR VERSION OF EVENTS  
BY E M E L I S A N D É  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** GREY’S ANATOMY

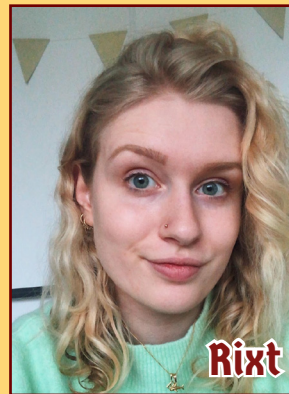
## Photographer



“I have dreamt in my life  
dreams that have stayed  
with me ever after, and  
changed my ideas; they’ve  
gone through and through  
me, like wine through  
water, and altered the  
colours of my mind.”  
- Emily Brontë

**BOOK:** THE BEAR AND THE  
NIGHTINGALE BY KATHERINE ARDEN  
**ALBUM:** CAPE ELIZABETH BY NOAH KAHAN  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** GILMORE GIRLS  
AND FORREST GUMP

## Coordinator



“Life is never fair, and  
perhaps it is a good thing  
for most of us that it is  
not.” - Oscar Wilde

**BOOK:** ARE YOU EXPERIENCED?  
BY WILLIAM SUTCLIFFE  
**ALBUM:** THE DARK SIDE OF  
THE MOON BY PINK FLOYD  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** THE BREAKFAST CLUB

## Treasurer



“There’s more of gravy  
than of grave about  
you, whatever you are!”  
- Ebenezer Scrooge

**BOOK:** WUTHERING HEIGHTS BY EMILY BRONTË  
**ALBUM:** HOZIER BY HOZIER  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:** THE IMITATION GAME

## Staffwriter



“I know you’re not  
supposed to cry over  
spilled tea, but it’s just  
so sad.” - Uncle Iroh

**BOOK:** OF MICE AND MEN BY JOHN STEINBECK  
**ALBUM:** THE BLACK ALBUM BY METALLICA  
**MOVIE/TV-SERIES:**  
AVATAR THE LAST AIRBENDER

# Hamlet and his conflicted relationship with Denmark

Written by Marit Vogels; Edited by Michelle Moonen & Julia Schuurmans

This issue of Phoenix is all about the Nordic wonders, including the beautiful country called Denmark. The play *Hamlet* written by Shakespeare takes place in Denmark, and better said, at the castle of Elsinore, which is nowadays known as Kronborg Slot. Due to the events in the play, Hamlet seems to have lost his love for his country. Considering that Hamlet is the protagonist of the play, it seems obvious that he would love his country, yet Hamlet makes it clear that he despises the state of Denmark.

But what is *Hamlet* actually about? Well, Hamlet is grieving the death of his father, the King of Denmark. Soon after his father's death, Hamlet's mother remarried his uncle, because of this Hamlet is deeply depressed. The ghost of his father tells him that he was murdered and thus that Hamlet should avenge his death. The murderer of his father was his uncle, Claudius, the new King of Denmark. Throughout the play, Hamlet is indecisive over his revenge on his uncle. In the last act of the play, Hamlet kills his uncle, after his mother died of poison. Hamlet himself dies too, giving the play a tragic ending.

Marcellus, a guard that spotted the ghost of the King, exclaims:

"Something is rotten in the state of Denmark..." (Act I, Scene IV). By voicing this, he shows that the current state of Denmark is not right. This is clarified when the ghost shares the evil nature of the new King. He murdered his brother to take over his position as King. Besides, the quick remarriage of Gertrude (Hamlet's mother) with his uncle is also an example of this.



Illustration by  
Cecilie Balemans-Højberg



Especially Hamlet is shocked by this, so soon after his father's demise. Hamlet watches the people enjoy this party, and shares that he feels deeply disappointed by this. He also explains that the Danes seem to live up to the prejudice of them being drunkards. As Prince of Denmark, Hamlet is disappointed in the state of his country after the death of his father. Leaving him in a state of melancholy.

***"Hamlet is proud of his country, yet feels sad by the decaying state of Denmark."***

An additional line in the play said by Hamlet shows his own opinion about what has become of his home and his country ever since King Claudius took over. "Why, then, 'tis none to you, for there is nothing either good or bad, but thinking makes it so. To me it is a prison" (Act II, Scene II). Because Hamlet is on the edge of suicide, he shares how his feelings of grief and disappointment in his mother make his country feel as a prison. Shakespeare emphasises the melancholic state of Hamlet and shows that he is deeply depressed. His uncle and mother do not seem to understand his feelings and want him to go on with his life. Hamlet eventually uses his melancholic feelings to create a mask of madness. By doing so, he can plot his revenge on his uncle without him knowing. Even though he feels like he is not understood by the people around him, he eventually uses his melancholic state to his advantage.

So, while Hamlet does not seem to portray much love for Denmark, this is only because of the characters and the events during the play. Hamlet is proud of his country, yet feels sad by the decaying state of Denmark. But how can one hate it? Because let's be honest, Denmark is gorgeous, isn't it?



Illustration by Marijn van de Visser and Marlies Riemens



# Tea Time with Sue Blackwell

Written by Femke Edelbroek; Edited by Hester Schneider; Photos by Sue Blackwell

*Even if it would have been responsible to travel, considering the current Covid measures, I still wouldn't have been able to visit Dr. Sue Blackwell. Unfortunately, she is momentarily quarantined in the United Kingdom. This means that this Tea Time was done a little different to previous ones, namely digitally. We didn't let this bring us down though, as we were still able to create a lovely atmosphere, with some tea of course. After we got the technical issues out of the way, we discussed how it was nice to have some one-on-one contact between tutor and student, and got started with the interview.*

## What did you study?

I've always been a real mixture of different topics. This has gone back a long time, mind you. I was studying classics, so Latin and Ancient Greek. And I was going to study theology after that, this was at Cambridge, so that's quite traditional stuff. I even got a grant to study for four years instead of three so that I could do this particular combination of courses. I wasn't so sure that I wanted to do this anymore and I was a bit fed up with textual criticism after looking at who wrote Homer. Do I really want to go into who wrote the Old Testament? Difficult stuff. I thought 'I'll do something else'. And then I discovered anthropology, which looked interesting. So I switched to anthropology and I did a combination of social and physical anthropology, which was unusual. And then after that I went into linguistics, because one of the social anthropology courses covered a little bit of linguistics and communication and so on. So I thought, well, this looks interesting. So I went on to a Masters in Linguistics, which was also at Cambridge.

I was toying with the idea of doing a PhD when a job came up in computer

science. I was really interested in combining linguistics and computers. They asked me if I wanted to do GCHQ (Government Communications Headquarters), which would mean being a spy. However, I didn't like the idea of doing that, so I got a job researching corpus linguistics at the University of Lancaster instead. So my first teaching job was actually computer teaching and programming, which was easier to get into than teaching linguistics. And then I slid into linguistics and worked there for a bit. I then went back into research at the University of Birmingham doing corpus linguistics again. So I like to think of myself as fairly interdisciplinary, really. After that, I started teaching linguistics at Birmingham. That's the last thing I did before I came to the Netherlands.

## How did you end up teaching English at the UU?

A little bit before I was in Utrecht, I was at the VU in Amsterdam and they kicked me out after a series of short-term contracts. I don't know if you know much about the Dutch employment law, but they have this rule called the 'ketenbepaling'. That means you can't have a chain of contracts indefinitely. So after you've had, I think it was two contracts in two years (now it's been slightly extended), your employer has the choice of either making it permanent, which would be very nice (but hardly anyone does it) or they make you unemployed. And then after six months, they can take you back on again. So it's a real scandal, actually, and it's just a revolving door. Constructional musical chairs, I call it really. So, what they do is they make you unemployed.

In fact, it got worse – they got me back on because they needed me to teach a particular course on forensic linguistics, but they did it through an employment agency. So technically, the



VU wasn't my employer, the agency was my employer, so VU could get around giving me a permanent position. And then the law changed in January, so that wasn't allowed anymore. I became jobless for seven months, but I was in the lockdown anyway. So I suppose it wasn't too bad not having a job, because a lot of people didn't have one. But I knew this was coming. I sent emails around to academic contacts and they said 'We think there might be something for you at Utrecht'. So I went in for a very informal sort of interview on the 12th of March on Thursday. And shortly after, everything went into lockdown. I thought there would probably be something for me in September, and there was! So I'm quite happy to be employed again, but this is also temporary at the moment.

*After I asked how long her contract would be, she answered that it was only for a year for now, but that she'd like it to be renewed after that.*

## What are your thoughts on online classes?

I feel like I know students better in some ways, because I get to meet their cats, for example. And it's really strange because you wouldn't bring



I was teaching until the end of 2019. At the beginning of January, I decided to do a course to teach Dutch as a second language, because I wouldn't have any more work at the VU or anywhere else. I hadn't yet got a firm offer from Utrecht. And thus I became a student at the VU (where I was also teaching), which is very strange – to see things on both sides. I signed up to do this 'docent NT2, certificaat Nederlands als tweede taal' [teacher NT2, certificate Dutch as second language]. So I started out about a year ago, now. I started in September 2019, and then suddenly in March this year, that came to be online. So I was being taught before I started giving classes. You get to realize what can go wrong and get some respect for the teachers who have to deal with it when it does. And they were quite creative in making things up very quickly, because this was an unexpected situation back in March. They were coming up with all sorts of solutions using different systems. One of them used some sort of Google Docs that we had to fill in, fully interactively, and that was something that was new to me. They would split the class into breakout groups and then they recombine the breakout groups. This gave me some ideas for what I could do in my own teaching.

Would you want to stay in the Netherlands either way or would you consider going back to the UK?

No, I've got no desire to go back to Brexit Britain at the moment, as I do see things getting worse – especially after Christmas. It looks as if we're

*After I noticed that she is currently in the UK, I proceeded to ask how her living arrangements are, and if quarantine had messed up her usual schedule of moving back and forth between the two countries at all.*

## How do you keep yourself busy during quarantine?

The last time I was there, I picked a lot of blackberries and I didn't have time to do anything with them, so I put them in the freezer. So yesterday I got them out of the freezer and made jam. I did some gardening, I dug some weeds, made a bee hotel out of old pieces of metal and added bits of wood in it. Now I'm waiting to see if anything comes and hibernates in them.

*I then moved on to ask whether she likes to read books, which is when she told me that if she reads fiction, it tends to be Dutch fiction rather than English. When I later asked about her taste in music, I got a similar reaction. Her first answer was the composer Schubert and other romantics like Beethoven, but when I dug deeper she also mentioned Dutch pop artists, like Boudewijn de Groot and Guus Meeuwis.*



## Where did your interest in Dutch music and books come from?

Oh, well, this is the story of my life, really, because I was married to a Dutch guy. This is going back to where we first met in the 80s, through the course of linguistics work. He was doing research in Amsterdam, at UVA, and I was doing it in Lancaster. So anyway, we were both married to other people at the time, that eventually unraveled and we ended up with each other ten years or more later. I was going back and forth because he had a place in Holland, and he spent most of his time with me in Birmingham. So then I started learning Dutch and some culture, literature, music and the rest of it. I naturally absorbed it over a period of 20 years. So I finally decided to move to the Netherlands, uprooted myself from Birmingham. Icing on the cake, really, was to get some work here, at the VU. And then it went wrong because within, I think about a year of properly moving and registering myself as living in the Netherlands, he got diagnosed with cancer. Unfortunately, he passed away a couple of years ago. And so that was a nasty period of my life. And then I was left wondering, well, what am I doing here? You know, do I stay? A lot of my friends were asking whether I was going to go back to England, but why would I want to do that? You know? I don't want to go to Brexit Britain and I'd have to give up my job. I didn't have a house there at the time, because I'd only inherit my parents' place a bit later. So I thought 'I think I'll stay here now.'

That's where we ended the interview - pretty soon after that, we wrapped up the call as well. Thank you for joining me for the first Tea Time of the year, Sue!

|||||

# Culture corner: *My Blue-Yellow Days*

Written by Patrick van Oosterom; Edited by Marit Vogels

If there is one thing I always fundamentally loathed, without being able to fully articulate why, is the idea of being employed by a multinational. I've always had this fantasy that employees who work for such corporations lead a lifestyle solely centred around making money, a lifestyle that is as casually destructive for the self as for the environment. However, in the summer of 2019, I had to set my lofty reservations aside because of the simple reason that I badly needed money. I decided to apply for a job at, what locals call, the blue-yellow toy box; the IKEA. On my first day as a Co-Worker FOOD, I kept thinking about lines from Ginsberg's 'Howl.' "What sphinx of cement and aluminium bashed open their skulls and ate up their brains and imagination?" I hopped off the bus and beheld the humongous sphinx that ate SUVs filled with suburbanites like a monster eating its prey alive. "Moloch whose blood is running money!" I entered the employee-section at the back of the beast and was welcomed by a Swedish lady named Elsa. She handed me a tin box of chocolates that said on top of it "IKEA Amersfoort 15 Years!! :)." I was given a uniform for the kitchen staff and then I was all set to start. I was part of the team that manned the bistro after the checkouts, and I provided the customers with hotdogs and ice-creams. Over the following months, I began to absorb the logic of the place and learned to appreciate its streamlined practicality. My manager had written a quote by IKEA-founder Ingvar Kamprad on one of the storage room walls. It was rather forgettable, something about the importance of eating well before making decisions. However, it didn't matter that Ingvar's quote was unmemorable since that was not its function. It was not an exercise in stylistics, but rather a reminder of the important role that we, FOOD-employees, fulfilled. In a sense, I was surprised when it turned out that I didn't work for a Moloch made of "endless oil and stone!" with "a soul of electricity and banks!" The faceless entity had a face, and not one, but many, and these faces were certainly not as uncaring and aloof as the employees from my corporate fantasies. I worked with colleagues who wore t-shirts to work on which quotes like "Don't worry be happy!" were printed unironically and who dreamed of big weddings, who helped their invalid grandparents after work and who were passionate about mosh pits and Dostoyevsky. I still



Illustration by  
Marijn van de Visser

have a gut feeling that somewhere the corporate employees as I imagined them are involved in harmful schemes that would make Ginsberg scream in despair, but I'm pretty sure that I didn't encounter any of them during my blue-yellow days.



# Playlist of my friends

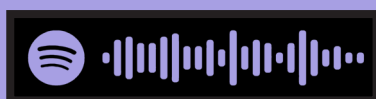
i | l | u | s | t | r | a | t | i | o | n | s | b | y | M | a | r | i | e | s | R | i | e | m | e | n | s

1. Be My Eyes by Pentatonix
2. Is It Just Me? by Sasha Sloan
3. ilomilo by Billie Eilish
4. Juice by Lizzo
5. porselein by Teske
6. Writer In The Dark by Lorde
7. She Used To Be Mine by Sara Bareilles
8. Water by Pentatonix
9. Staring at the Stars by Passenger
10. Sitting by Yusuf / Cat Stevens



*Songs selected by Eva Biersheuvel*

1. Ready Now by dodie
2. Cemetery Gates by The Smiths
3. Achilles Come Down by Gang of Youths
4. Dreams by Fleetwood Mac
5. Send Me on My Way by Rusten Root
6. Words Ain't Enough by Tessa Violet
7. Father and Son by Yusuf / Cat Stevens
8. Paint by The Paper Kites
9. Carolina in My Mind by James Taylor
10. White Winter Hymnal by Fleet Foxes



*Songs selected by Femke Edelbroek*

# There is no such thing as a recipe for Hygge

Written by Siya Sithamparanathan; Edited by Marit Vogels

*As we reached the beginning of a new month, I decided that it was time to put up the Christmas decorations in my apartment. Despite having lived in the Netherlands for a few years now, I haven't had the time yet to properly get into the warm and fuzzy holiday feeling before it was all over again. So this year I wanted to get into the Christmas spirit! I brought out all the decorations that I had accumulated over the years and I started decorating every nook and cranny I could find. Once I was done, my significant other let out a sarcastic "Oh, this is very hygge!" followed by a chuckle. Slightly offended by the comment, I asked what was so funny about hygge and I realised that to him hygge did not quite mean the same thing as it did to me.*

*"Hygge, in whichever shape or form and in whichever language, is something we all have experienced and it is a great feeling."*

*The thing is, the word hygge, for one reason or the other, gained a lot of traction internationally a few years ago. It was even a strong contender for Collins Dictionary's 2016 word of the year, although, granted, it could not beat something as significant as Brexit. Nonetheless, I had never imagined that a single word could become so commercialised and yet at the same time condensed to what is essentially a bunch of candles, hot chocolate and sitting by a fireplace, according to endless guides, articles and books on hygge.*



*Sure, I could have followed a guideline like a recipe and hope that I, to the best of my abilities, had created the atmosphere of hygge. Except, we all have experienced hygge at some point in our lives. Allow me to explain. Hygge is a word that is so frequently used in Denmark, that I don't even know where to start. For the linguistically inclined, the word exists as a noun, adjective and verb, not to mention the endless list of compound words! It is quite versatile both in its usage but also in its definition. When I reminisce about times that I associate with hygge, I think of anything from hour-long parked car conversations to something as simple as being on my own and having found that one great meme page that made me laugh uncontrollably - and everything in between, of course. Essentially, whenever you are super comfortable and having a good time it is, in my opinion, hygge.*

*Finally, I would like to note that Danes probably did not invent this wild concept of hygge either. Our neighbours have words for similar concepts from the Dutch 'gezellig' to the German 'gemütlichkeit' to the Norwegian 'koselig'. I hear Sweden has something similar too but that, I think they stole from us. Jokes aside, hygge, in whichever shape or form and in whichever language, is something we all have experienced and it is a great feeling. And I hope, even in these strange times we keep experiencing it.*



Photo by Fenna Leeuwenburgh



**"Hygge" is an ambiguous word that has different meanings to different people. Here is what "Hygge" means to the Phoenix Team!**

**"A cosy, mainly beige and white, sort of minimalist calming interior paired with a comforting warm beverage" - Anna**

**"Hygge is the feeling of coziness. It's sitting under a blanket in a dim-lit room on a winter evening eating æbleskiver and drinking hot chocolate." - Cecilie**

**"The Danish version of 'gezellig' but make it a lifestyle" - Femke**

**"I think I would equate it to the Dutch words 'gezellig' or 'gezelligheid'; feeling a sense of peace and comfort, while being surrounded by people and things you love." - Fenna**

**"To be at ease, to be at peace with your mind and self. Free of stress and worries, trying to enjoy small things in life." - Helenie**

**"Imagine yourself in bed, with a nice hot cup of tea and a good book, surrounded by the smell of your favourite candle." - Hester**

**"A cozy setting, think of blankets, a fireplace, cup of tea, a good book. Taking some time for yourself to get into the moment." - Julia**

**"'Gezelligheid' / cosiness, a sense of warmth and comfort." - Leanne**

**"The ultimate comfort vibe when it's winter. MAXIMUM COZE. Hot drinks when you just got back inside after being out in the cold late in the evening." - Marijn**

**"Hygge is a word that radiates comfort, coziness and fun. It is the feeling of being at ease and content." - Marit**

**"A crossover between the word 'coziness' and the Dutch word 'gezellig'." - Marlies**

**"A comfortable and pleasant feeling around people" - Twan**

**"To live in a happy, cosy state of being, in which the essentials are warmth, books, tea and a lot of blankets and comfort, maybe while it's raining outside and with a loved one; the ultimate state of comfort." - Michelle**

**"Cosy. The warm feeling of a charming and special moment and savouring these moments of comfort." - Mohana**

**"The feeling you get when it is dark and cold and rainy outside but you're inside where it's warm and cosy and the candles are lit and your favourite show is on or you find that one book that you lost a while ago and start reading it again." - Rixt**

**"Using the word 'gezellig,' as the feeling you feel during the month of December, spending Sinterklaas or Christmas with your friends or family, having a great time" - Thijs**



# The Little Star Girl

Written by Thijs Biezen; illustrated by Marlies Riemens

supernovas in the crisp white snow  
how I wonder where they've been  
before they burnt a hole in the slush

people don't stop and stand and watch  
they've got their own stars to light  
make them twinkle like diamonds

oh! there's a hand inches away  
in orbit of the stars sticking out  
the white heap on the pavement

no! it's not just a mound of snow  
it's a girl in a ratty holey cloak  
covered in a thin bleak sheet

I hope she's warm wherever she is  
because she left her stars long ago  
and let them turn to black holes

there's a smell in the air around her  
a roast turkey and the largest pie  
a christmas tree a great big one

I can almost feel the pine needles  
as I hang imaginary baubles up  
higher and higher until the star

she felt them too I'm sure of it  
from the ghost's smile on her lips  
possessed is not the right word

graced would be a better one for it  
she looks so peaceful after all  
sleeping like a cocooned caterpillar

she flew away a glowing butterfly  
took off to above the world so high  
carried by white wings made of snow

is she smiling now as she watches  
me light a match down her with her  
as people start to gather around.









Anna Sól



Cecilie Sif



Eva Baldr



Femke Loki



Fenna Freyja



Helenie Hel



Hester Eir



Julia Sif



Leanne Frigg



Marijn Freyr



Marit Dragons



Marlies Frigg



Michelle Loki



Mohana The Fossegrim



Rixt Iðunn



Thijs Sleipnir



Twan Thor

what  
we're

...

*Favourite Creature  
from Norse Mythology*

# Humans of Albion

Written by Emilie Wiingren; Edited by Michelle Moonen



Growing up in Denmark is probably not very different from most northern European countries. We go to school, we do sports in our spare time and we prepare for the life ahead of us. One of my fondest memories from my childhood is going to Legoland almost every second week from the age of 4 to 10. We lived quite close to Legoland as it wasn't more than a drive of an hour and a half, and although we weren't extremely wealthy, my parents would buy yearly entrance cards to the park. Sometimes my brother and I would be pulled out of kindergarten or school and we would spend the rest of the day at Legoland. We only left to be home on time for dinner. A lot of my memories from going to Legoland are either melted together or forgotten, but the many pictures are still stored in my parents' photo binders.

# BOOKSHELF

*in conversation with Cecilie Balemans-Højberg*

During our first meeting of Phoenix we decided on the Nordic theme for our first issue of 2020-2021. Our entire team was excited to write articles, but the most excited of all was Cecilie. Grown up in the midst of Danish stories, we found it most fitting to interview her for this first 'bookshelf' of the year. Due to the current COVID-19 crisis, this interview was done via an online setting, but luckily that didn't take away the fun!

**What was your most loved book growing up?**

Well, I have this enormous book: *The Complete Fairy Tales of Hans Christian Andersen* that is filled with his fairy tales and illustrations all inspired by these Danish tales. I read all the stories as a child in Danish. I didn't fully read the English version that I have right now because I already know all the stories. However, I really wanted to have an English version as well because I study English. I remember being able to recite the entire story of *The Princess and the Pea* in Danish. I couldn't even read back then but I could recite the entire fairy tale. These stories just mean so much to me. Another book I really loved as a kid was *Den Store Karla Bog* (*The Big Book on Karla*), which I also read in Danish. This book was filled with stories of her adventures. I read this book multiple times and it was a big part of my childhood. Denmark is a big part of me and who I am, even though I haven't lived most of my life there, because we would go there every summer and every holiday.

**Could you tell me a little more about Danish fairy tales?**

To everyone interested in fairy tales: definitely read Hans Cristian Andersen. I feel like everyone knows *The Little Mermaid* or *The Princess and the Pea*, but there are also a lot of underrated and unknown Danish fairy tales. The one fairy tale I would really recommend is *Klodshans*. This is a really funny story that shows that you should only marry for love and if you can have fun with that person. Fun fact: this is also one of the stories I could recite back to front as a kid. My mom always laughed when I got to the mud part.

**What is your current favourite book?**

It is a bit of a mix between a few. One of which is probably *Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley. I like horror stories and thrillers. It had been on my to-be-read list for the longest time, so I was actually very excited to read it for a course last year. I just fell in love with it, because it's just so good! I really like to read history-esque books, of which my favourite is definitely *In Order to Live* by Yeonmi Park. This entire book really triggered my interest and love for North Korean history as it is just such an eye-opening book.

**What was the last book you read for fun?**

That would be *The Ballad of Songbirds and Snakes* by Suzanne Collins. I am a big fan of *The Hunger Games* series, so I really wanted to read this book. Having read the original trilogy, I already knew a lot about the background of the story, which made me a



bit confused. I found it a bit vague after the actual games ended, but I did like it. *Catching Fire* is also one of my favourite books and it might even be the reason that I decided to start studying English Language and Culture. That used to be my favourite book up until I read *Frankenstein*.

**How often do you read?**

Sadly, I am very busy at the moment so I don't read as much as I would like to. But when I do have time, I read a lot in a very short amount of time.

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

I am going to offend people with this... But I'd say *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen is overrated. I like the idea of *Pride and Prejudice*, but I just couldn't get through the book. I liked the film adaptations, but the book itself not as much. I am also not that big of a fan of books that revolve around marriages and social order in general. I prefer books with action and death because it makes things more interesting. I can appreciate the book; it is just not for me. I feel so bad, I'm sorry!!





### Which book are you most ashamed of for not reading?

I haven't read the Harry Potter books... I still want to read the books, but I don't want to spend my money on them because of You Know Who. Which is a shame, because I really wanted to read the books after watching the films for the first time in my first year at uni (very late, I know). It is probably really bad that an English student has not read these books, so maybe I should slide out of frame. \*Slides out of frame.\*

### Which book have you only read halfway through or less?

There are a lot of books, actually. Sometimes I start a book and I get really excited about it but then school happens, and I forget about the book. So, there are a lot of books that I have started, but not finished as I just haven't had the time to pick them up again. Besides, I spend a lot of my free time drawing, which I also really like to do. A book that I started and really want to finish is *Le Morte D'Arthur* by Sir Thomas Malory. My boyfriend got me this beautiful edition for my birthday. It is filled with stories around King Arthur, so I really want to pick it up again, but I just haven't had the time.

### If you could recommend me one of your books, which one would it be?

I want to pick something Scandinavian, but many of them aren't translated, I think. However, I believe that *Emil i Lönneberga* by Astrid Lindgren is translated into English. I grew up reading this book. It's a children's book, but it is very funny. This book is very underrated, and I think that it should be more appreciated. However, if you want more of a non-children's book, you should definitely go with *The Snowman* by Jo Nesbø.

### If you were to write a book what would it be about?

I would write a book about North Korea. I think that I want to write a thriller about someone that works for the North Korean secret service or about someone who has a high position within that regime who eventually tries to escape. I think that would be very cool and it'd be different to write a book about someone in such a high position who tries to escape, because most defectors are people from outside Pyongyang. Usually, it's mainly lower-class people that are able to escape, if they're able to escape at all.

### Which author have you read the most books of and why?

I think Sylvia Plath, or maybe Suzanne Collins. I just love Sylvia Plath; she is my favourite poet and I love everything that she writes. Such a simple answer but that's it.

### Are you team literature or team linguistics?

Literature obviously! I think that linguistics is scary, and it terrifies me. Especially grammar and syntax scare me a lot. However, I will be following a linguistics course next block, so whoops... Some linguistics topics really interest me, but literature has my heart.

### What is your favourite film adaptation?

Definitely *Catching Fire*. I mean... Finnick Odair? Sam Claflin? That should just say enough. Finnick Odair was my favourite fictional character and Sam Claflin is my favourite actor. So, him playing my favourite character automatically gives you the best film ever. I'm just saying.

### What is the best book you've read for a course?

*Frankenstein* by Mary Shelley during *Cities and Countries*. If it isn't *Frankenstein* then it definitely is *Ariel* by Sylvia Plath, because this introduced me to her poetry, and she is now the love of my life. She really sparked my love for poetry and made me choose the specialisation I did. I now read a lot of poetry because of her. I do not write a lot of poetry myself but after the Creative Writing course I want to do it more often. However, I don't have that much time, sadly.

### Do you want to share something else that you really want to say about Scandinavian literature?

You can find some goldmines in Scandinavian literature or culture. Read underrated Danish fairy tales; try to read less popular stories. You can even pick a random fairy tale that you've never heard of and I am sure that you will enjoy it. I feel like some things are really hyped up, which I understand (and they definitely deserve that), but there are also really good, underrated stories that sadly are not that well-known.



# *Elves, Trolls and Hidden Folk*

**Written by Hester Schneider; Edited by Michelle Moonen**

This may come as a surprise to you, but the majority of Icelanders seem to believe in, or at least don't deny, the existence of trolls, elves and other creatures. Stray rock formations are used to prove that trolls have interfered with the human world before. You see, trolls normally stay unnoticed by us, as they only come out at night. Because if they tread the land when the sun is out, they get turned into stone. If you ask any kid in Iceland about this, troll Gryla is probably the first to come to their mind. Mother to thirteen Yule Lads, Gryla is known to eat children who misbehave during Christmas time... Pretty gruesome, right? While trolls can be seen by humans, elves or hidden folk ("Huldufolk") are supposed to be invisible. They are of human size and behave pretty much like us. Minor difference: they're immortal and we are not, sadly. Icelandic folklore does not really differentiate between elves and the Huldufolk, they could even be the same! While I just said that elves are invisible, there are actually many stories of them crossing the border to the human world and interfering with our lives! Blessed with the gift of foresight, the hidden folk might warn you of danger that is to come. On the other hand, unexplainable mysteries are often blamed on the hidden folk, suggesting a darker side to them. So, if you have plans to visit Iceland one day, be on the look-out for mythical creatures!

## *Culture Corner: Trip through Norway*

**Written by Julia Schuurmans; Edited by Marit Vogels**

A few years ago my family and I went on a camping trip through Norway. My parents hired a camper and when it was fully packed, we took off and we spent three weeks travelling. Along the way to Norway, we spent a few nights in Germany, Denmark and Sweden. The first days were a lot of driving because we wanted to get to Norway as soon as possible. But, from the moment we crossed the Norwegian border, we slowed down our pace to take in our surroundings. When I now look back at pictures, I remember that I've seen such beautiful sights with my own eyes. The landscape of Norway is truly amazing. Personally, I mostly enjoyed the spots where we could enjoy nature. We had multiple nights where we were wholly surrounded by nature without anyone else disturbing us. Those were the best nights. One place where we stayed the night was near a small river. Here my siblings and I spent the afternoon in freshwater and at night we sat around the campfire roasting marshmallows. Sadly, over the years, tourism has become a big part of the country. My parents, who had been here 16 years earlier, were surprised by this change. Luckily, there are still enough sites to explore without busses loaded by tourists. If you're ever in Norway, take your time to explore the environment. These three weeks were not enough to explore the entire country, so I will definitely go back in the future!





**Collage by Mohana Zwaga**

# Culture Corner: Skam Review

Written by Femke Edelbroek; Edited by Anna Preindl

Skam is a Norwegian show about a group of teenagers, following one main character each season as they explore some very interesting topics through these characters' experiences. It became very popular a couple of years ago, enough even for it to be adapted to different countries. I didn't have time to watch them; though there's still a part of me wanting to watch Skam France and Spain because my friend could not stop talking about those two adaptations. So, I will only be discussing my thoughts on the original show, as spoiler-free as possible. When I first heard about Skam I wasn't too excited about it, because it sounded a bit like any other show, so it surprised me how much I learned to love it. At first glance, the show's authentic atmosphere is probably what captivated me the most. This show is very accurate in its representation of teenagers, which I appreciate a lot. For example, they show someone constantly retyping a message because they didn't want to say something wrong. There are a lot of other little things in the show that are relatable or feel like they could genuinely be for someone my age. Another thing that made the show enjoyable for me is the feeling of empathy you feel for each of the characters throughout the show. They focus on one character in the first season and only introduce others as secondary characters, you don't really get insight to their lives at all until they get their moment. When they do, it's suddenly

revealed that they had a lot going on all along, which kind of moves things into a new perspective. That's often also how it goes in real life, I think. Just because you don't see someone's life doesn't mean there isn't stuff happening to them, and this is really amplified in Skam.



This connects to my next point of appreciation: while it's called Skam, meaning "shame" in Norwegian and each character's story does indeed involve shame, the show never actually shames the characters for who they are, especially not when this involves things that are generally shamed by society. This creates a show and story you can escape to because Skam really focuses on comforting their characters and audience that their identity is valid, whatever they might be dealing with. The pacing of the show also isn't as rushed as some other shows are sometimes, if there's a lazy scene in a kitchen where characters interact they give that scene the time to actually feel lazy, giving us a moment to breathe and relax along with the characters in between the more exciting scenes. All in all, I really enjoyed following those seasons of Skam, especially if you're looking for a relaxing or comforting show to watch. The only thing that keeps me from having it on loop in the background while I do other stuff is that I wouldn't be able to understand a word if I wasn't looking at the subtitles.





# ELDER FUTHARK

Written by Leanne van Kampen; Edited by Marit Vogels

When thinking of runes, you might think of either Viking runes, or of the wondrous fictional world called Middle-earth, created by J.R.R. Tolkien, that includes different types of runic writing systems. In Tolkien's book *The Hobbit*, the author tried to adapt Anglo-Saxon runes, called Futhorc, to the modern English language. Those Anglo-Saxon runes can be seen as the child writing system of an older runic alphabet, called Elder Futhark.

Elder Futhark was used as a writing system from the 2nd to the 8th century by Germanic tribes for Northwest Germanic dialects (such as Scandinavian peoples and West Germanic peoples). Runic inscriptions are most commonly found on different types of artefacts, such as jewellery, weapons, and runestones. Most of the inscriptions were found in Scandinavia, but Denmark in particular!

Elder Futhark, believe it or not, stems from Egyptian hieroglyphs (with a lot of steps and time in between). Elder Futhark originates from Old Italic scripts such as Etruscan. These Old Italic scripts are derived from an Archaic Greek Alphabet. The Archaic Greek Alphabet stems from the Phoenician alphabet (Phoenix yay!), which is the script that turned the hieroglyphs into letters!

The name for the writing system Elder Futhark comes from the initial sounds of the first six rune names, namely f, u, θ, a, r, and k and it has 24 runes in total. Below is an overview of the rune names and their meaning.

If you look closely, you'll probably recognise  $\mathfrak{R}$  r,  $\mathfrak{H}$  h,  $\mathfrak{I}$  i,  $\mathfrak{T}$  t, and  $\mathfrak{B}$  b because they look like our modern alphabet, and maybe even  $\mathfrak{X}$  from the Greek letter chi. If you have a basic knowledge of Old English (texts and inscriptions), you might also recognise  $\mathfrak{\theta}$ , called thurs for Elder Futhark and called thorn by the Anglo-Saxons and  $\mathfrak{w}$  because those runes were both used in Old English texts.  $\mathfrak{w}$  actually replaced Latin digraph uu for w.

Keep in mind that Modern English has developed a great deal since the time of the Elder Futhark runes, so it's quite difficult to transcribe Modern English texts into runes because Modern English has some sounds that can't be found in Proto-Germanic languages and vice versa! But because it's still really fun to try, I went ahead and wrote something in (semi-phonetic) Modern English using Elder Futhark. So, if you're up to it, try and transcribe it!



Illustration by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

# A Tongue for a Soul

Written by Helenie Demir; Edited by Julia Schuurmans

As one of my favourite Disney Princesses, I might be a bit biased when I say what a beautiful angelic voice, gorgeous red locks, and awesome friends the Little Mermaid, or Ariel, has (I need a Sebastian in my life – or am I a Sebastian?). There are so many things that one would consider iconic about this mermaid, but most people only know the Disney version of her tale. The original story, written by the Dane: Hans Christian Andersen, is a bit... darker.

The sea witch – the goddess, queen, iconic bi, Ursula – not only asks for the Little Mermaid's voice but also for the "poor unfortunate soul's" tongue, to really make sure there is no way she can speak anymore. She gave up her tongue for a pair of legs that do not feel like the ones you and I have. Ariel receives legs that hurt with every step she takes. While in the Disney-version the Little Mermaid is all cute and Bambi-like, falling on the ground and waiting for her prince to come and help her, the original mermaid was being tortured. Besides, the legs weren't the reason why she wanted to become human.

Ariel didn't care about legs and being "part of your world". In a conversation she has with her grandmother, it is explained how a mermaid has a life of three hundred years, but when they die, they dissolve into seafoam, making it a definite end to their lives. When a human's much shorter life comes to an end, there is still a soul left that lingers around. It was this part that attracted the Little Mermaid to become human. After she made the devilish trade with the sea witch, there were more catches: to gain a human soul, she had to win over the heart of the prince and marry him so that a part of his soul would become hers. If she would fail to do so, the Ariel would dissolve into foam as a consequence.

Spoiler-alert: the prince starts to plan a wedding with another young girl. So, the witch gives Ariel one last chance to redeem herself: she has to kill the prince, drip his blood on her feet to become a mermaid again. Obviously, she cannot bring herself to murder her true love, so she throws herself overboard from the boat the wedding was held on. Instead of dissolving into sea foam, she becomes an earthbound spirit. She is welcomed by those who were as selfless and as desperate as her for an immortal soul. She will have to do good for mankind for three-hundred years if she wants to go to heaven.



**"Life is like a beautiful melody, only the lyrics are messed up." - H.C. Andersen**



**Photo by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg**



# THE MARVEL OF NORSE MYTH

Written by Mohana Zwaga; Edited by Michelle Moonen; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser

Thor and his hammer, Loki the trickster god and Odin with his three ravens... For most of us, at least one of these names rings a bell. In the last few decades, Norse mythology has gained an impressive amount of interest, be it in the form of novels like those written by Neil Gaiman, or the Marvel franchise's Thor films and comics, who is one of their longest running superheroes. But why is it that Nordic mythology and those old Viking beliefs fascinate us that much? What is it about them that makes them so appealing nowadays, more than many other cultures' myths?

Arguably, one of the most straightforward reasons could be related to their image. The picture of Marvel's superhero Thor as we know it, is surely pretty close to what most of us expect when we imagine a Viking warrior. This picture likely isn't glittery and sophisticated as it would be in for example in Greek Myth, but instead brings to mind images of dark thunderclouds, bare, wild landscapes and an even wilder folk. Author Neil Gaiman said it best himself: "There's nothing shiny about the Norse myths. They're stories about a cold, inhospitable place where the best thing you can imagine is to be killed in battle. Most of the stories are utterly tragic, and we find that fascinating. Because you know it's not going to end happily."

*"The Nordic Myths are full of tragic heroes and tragic villains. What more could we want?"*

The Vikings believed that only honourable death could grant their souls passage to Valhalla. Death on the battlefield was the most honourable death of all and therefore not feared but appraised, making the Viking warriors particularly dangerous to their enemies. This trait has historically left an impression that is still incredibly strong today, possibly forming our first image of a Nordic warrior as a blood-lusting, feral Viking. Extremes like these are often a great source for inspiration in literature, and more recently in pop-culture too. Take the wildly popular series Game of Thrones for example. The more gore, drama and magic, the better we seem to like it! The Nordic myths are similar in this sense: trickster god Loki, murdering and destroying for the fun of it. Thor, god of thunder, bashing heads with his enormous hammer over the littlest things... Even Odin, the god who created it all, plucking out his own eye as if it's no more than a loose hair on his shirt. The Nordic Myths are full of tragic heroes and tragic villains. What more could we want?

Perhaps we can even call it Aristoteles' idea of catharsis: the purification or purging of certain emotions primarily through seeing it expressed in the arts, such as the stories we consume. We all have our moments of frustration, anger or whatever other strong (and frankly unpleasant) emotion comes up. Maybe in such a moment, you've felt irked to act on your frustration in some way. But, as that is probably not very sensible or even practical, it might just be better to go home and read or watch mighty Thor doing the skull-bashing you don't get to do, don't you think?







# MINOR MARKET



*Swedish at Universiteit van Amsterdam*

Written by Tessa Karsten; Edited by Anna Preindl

It is a truth universally acknowledged that an English major is a fan of the Swedish music sensation ABBA. Combined with my personal love for IKEA's vegan €0.70 hotdogs, I considered myself to basically be a connoisseur of Swedish culture. The only thing missing was my ability to actually speak the language. After maintaining a complicated relationship with the internet's favourite owl Duo for about ten months, I decided that it was time to find something more, eh, useful. While being able to say "*Den blå ko står bakom den lila katten*" is fun, it was not going to help me prepare for having a proper conversation. I therefore decided to enrol myself in the minor Swedish at the University of Amsterdam. The minor counts for 30 ECTS and is spread out over the course of a full academic year. In September you will start with Swedish Language Acquisition 1 & Culture and Society of Modern Sweden, which is a 6 ECTS course in which you develop basic reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. You will be taught how to form basic sentences, learn a bunch of grammar, and are expected to Quizlet your way through about 200 words a week. While the course only counts for 6 ECTS, you will be spending a lot of time revising outside of your

scheduled classes. It is therefore quite hard to keep up if you are also taking another course alongside the minor, so keep that in mind if you are considering this minor! Once you finish the first course in late October, you will continue with Swedish Language Acquisition & Culture and Society of Modern Sweden 2 to 4. Each course is structured in roughly the same way, and seeing as you will build on from your previously acquired skills, it is key that you keep up your revision. All minor students of languages at UvA also have to take the course De Wereld in Talen in their first semester. This course equips you with knowledge about and insight into the ways in which languages (and language acquisition) work in general. The minor is a really good choice for those wanting to learn a new language properly (no offense Duolingo) and are not opposed to spending an unhealthy amount of time on Quizlet. Keep in mind that taking a minor at a different university takes a bit of extra planning, but don't let this stop you! There are so many interesting options out there, so definitely shop around and pick something you're passionate about. Maybe one day you will then too be able to slowly infiltrate the Skarsgård family.

## Word of the Month: December

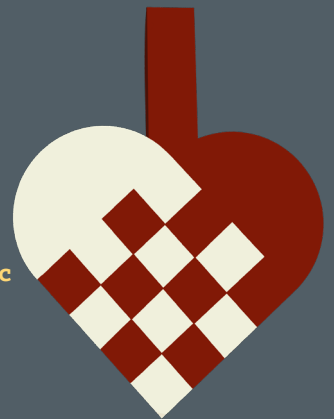
### "Yuletide"

/ˈjuːl.taɪd/

#### Noun

1. (dated) Christmas time; the period around Christmas
2. (dated) The period of celebration around Yule, a pre-Christian festival associated with the winter solstice celebrated by Germanic peoples, particularly the Anglo-Saxons and the Scandinavians.

Cf. the Nordic words for Christmas: Danish 'jul', Finnish 'joul', Icelandic 'jól', Norwegian 'jul' and Swedish 'jul'

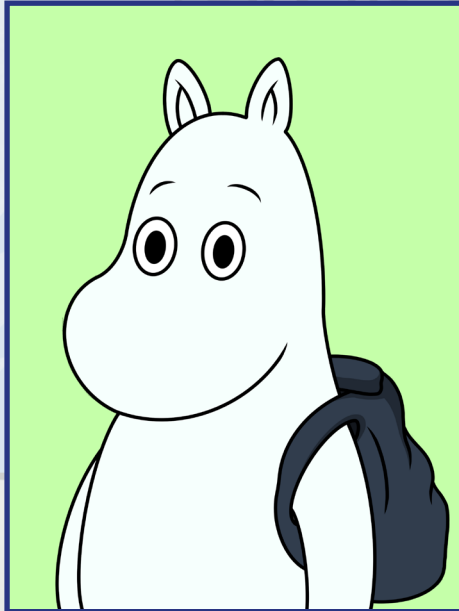


Grab your sweaters, your fluffy socks, and your blankets, because it's nearly the holiday season, also known as Yuletide. The days are short and cold and it's the perfect weather to cosy up to your loved ones, your pets, or just yourselves (human burritos or blanket forts are encouraged). Some of my favourite things about this time of year are all the twinkle lights displayed everywhere around you that light up even the darkest nights. Things I associate with yuletide, or Christmas time, are hot chocolate, strong herbal teas (with cinnamon and ginger), lots of Christmas cookies, Christmas songs, and of course the cliché movies that, even though they don't make any sense most of the time, can really warm your heart. And hey, if you want a more magical Christmas, listen to "Harry in Winter" composed by Patrick Doyle.

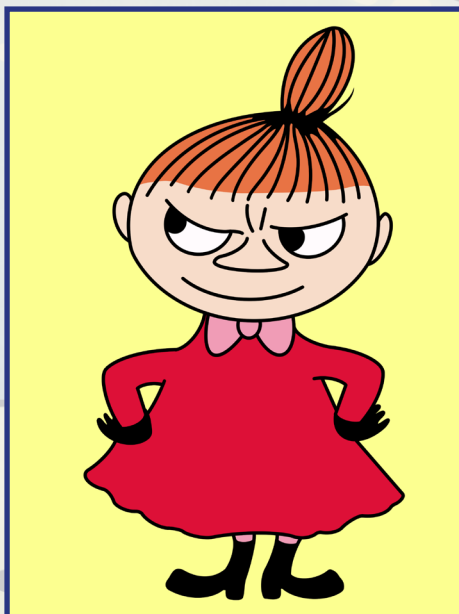
Written by Leanne van Kampen; Illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg

# Phoenix ranks

Written and illustrated by Cecilie Balemans-Højberg; Edited by Julia Schuurmans



How can I rank Moomins without including Moomin himself? Moomin is the reason I fell in love with Moomin Valley as a child. Moomin is very curious and loves spending time while going on adventures with his friends, yet he is scared to be left alone (how precious). Moomin is always excited about everything he sees, and he is trying to understand 'strange' or 'weird' creatures, without the need to fear them as other characters might do (yes Sniff, I'm talking about you). I think we, as humans, can learn a lot from Moomin, don't fear or avoid other people but try to understand and live with each other instead.



I always used to think of Little My as being quite chaotic and annoying. She seems to love small catastrophes and finding out other people's secrets. Yet, despite her sometimes reckless acts, I now realise that she's actually an honest and reliable friend. While she is easily annoyed and might snap back at you, she is never mean on purpose. Little My is the kind of person that brings you back to earth when things get rough or sentimental.

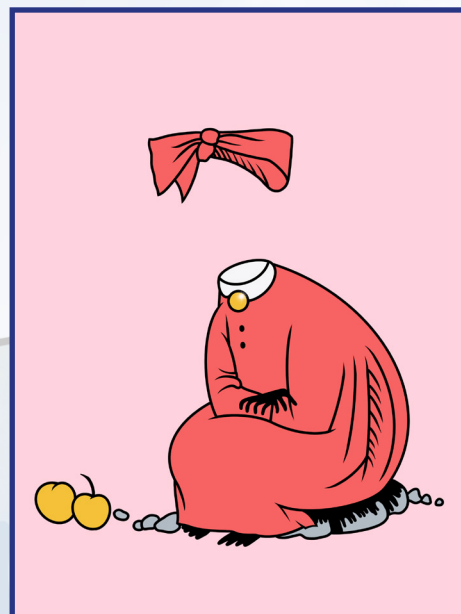
## Most underrated Moomin characters

1. Snork
2. The Groke
3. Ninny





Ninny is another underrated character and her story is quite sad actually. Ninny was mistreated by the person who was supposed to take care of her, because of this, she became invisible. Later on, she was brought to the Moomin family, here she is truly loved. Ninny is very anxious, but as time goes on and she dares to speak more. Eventually, she becomes more visible, until only her face is left missing. Ninny shows that even if times are rough, when you are scared and have lost faith in humanity, there is always a light at the end of the tunnel. In time, you will be able to start healing your old wounds, or, like Ninny, you will become visible to the outside world again.



The Groke is often misunderstood, which is truly a shame. When I was little, I always thought that The Groke was scary. She used to terrify me because, for example, the ground would freeze beneath her when she walked. Everyone in Moomin Valley tends to run away from her because she is quite intimidating with her appearance and rarely says anything when she suddenly shows up. In reality, The Groke is sad and lonely and in desperate need of some friends. I'd say give The Groke some more love, as she really seems like she would love to get a hug sometime.



Snork is DEFINITELY the most underrated Moomin character out there and is mainly known for being Snorkmaiden's brother. Snork is quirky, smart and arguably one of the most creative characters in Moomin Valley. He comes up with the greatest inventions and is really good at solving problems. He is also very precise, which often leads to him doubting his self-worth if things don't work out the way he planned them to. I really think Snork deserves more credit than he is given, or at least, he deserves his own Moomin mug.



# Raiders on the Move

The thunderstorm rages on and battles the waves and ships alike

Thor's wicked wrath falls down on earth and crashes with its might

Odin's enemies shall know no rest or enjoy safe havens at all

The hammer and thunder will keep raining down until all of them fall

Timber washes onto the rocks, a bloodbath at the shore

There is no victory without death as Gods know in their core

Over the beaches now builds up debris, a naval cemetery

Three times the breeze guides the raiders into foreign territory

They're greeted by a sea of brown, their sailing hearts ambivalent

Time hath no fury like men in peril, as natives in defence cement

Odin's blessing is their curse, as charging raiders complete their doom

Thor's guidance leads the men and feeds the enemy into their gloom



Written by Twan van der Donk; Illustrated by Marijn van de Visser