

A.M. Heath
Frankfurt Book Fair Hotlist
Autumn 2025

For more information on any of our titles, please contact:
translation@amheath.com

FICTION

2-TONES OF MURDER

Julia Chapman

Crime & Thriller

Coventry, 1979. A city thrumming to the raw, infectious beat of the new 2-Tone ska sound – where cultures clash, identities shift, and music might just be the only thing holding the town together.

When bus driver and aspiring-trombonist Errol “Dex” Dexter stops his bus one night to save a man from a gang of skinheads, he doesn’t expect that man to be Finn McNulty, a flame-haired Irish private investigator with a knack for trouble.

Within hours, Dex’s life unravels: suspended from his job for lashing out at a racist colleague, he returns home to find his mother’s house in flames. He’s sure the skinheads are behind it. But this is a city simmering with tension, and the police are the last people a man like Dex can trust.

When that same colleague turns up dead in a bus inspection pit, and Dex’s fingerprints are found on the murder weapon, the noose tightens fast. To clear his name, Dex has no choice but to team up with the unpredictable McNulty.

As the pair dig for the truth, they uncover corruption, cover-ups, and a city cracking under pressure. In the fight for justice, Dex and McNulty form a formidable force, an unlikely crime-fighting team of outsiders bound by justice, music, and the fight to be heard in a divided city.

Julia Chapman is the author of the *Dales Detective* series, which follows the adventures of Samson O’Brien and Delilah Metcalfe as they solve cases in the Yorkshire Dales. Born with a wanderlust that keeps her moving, Julia has followed her restless feet to Japan, Australia, the USA and France. Now, having spent many years wandering, she is glad to call the Yorkshire Dales home, its distinctive landscape and way of life providing the setting for her first cosy crime series.

Agent: Oli Munson | **UKBC:** On submission | **French:** La Bête noire/Robert Laffont |
International: To be submitted shortly

THE BOOK OF LILA RUTH

Siofra Dromgoole

Literary & Upmarket Fiction

In the summer of 2014, 18-year-old Lila Ruth arrives in Israel, burdened by heartbreak and the fantasy of reinvention. Hoping to emulate her mother's kibbutz past, she instead stumbles into a tangle of uneasy attachments: Moshe, a 79-year-old writer drawn to her youth; Becca, another young woman on a Birthright trip who teaches her lust and dissociation; and Aron, an actor who performs adulthood as well as he does desire.

With a voice as frank and dryly comic as Sally Rooney's, and the sensitivity of Isabella Hammad or Jenny Erpenbeck, *The Book of Lila Ruth* explores how the urgency of personal becoming intersects with the violence of national mythologies. In giving us, by proxy, Lila Ruth's smaller-scale trauma, rootlessness, and fierce desire to individuate, Siofra writes girlhood onto the political stage – and uses girlhood's sometimes deranged exceptionalism to refract other, bigger derangements.

A high-wire romance, and a novel about sex and subjectivity, guilt and solidarity, *The Book of Lila Ruth* also asks the question: will artmaking's relationship to crisis always be one of failure? Is writing about crisis from the self always a failure, too, or is it the only instrument we have?

Siofra Dromgoole works as a bookseller at John Sandoe Books. She has written for theatre, film, TV, and radio: her award-nominated plays have been performed to critical acclaim nationally and internationally; her most recent play, *After Sex*, was published by Methuen. This year her new translation of Pushkin's *Eugene Onegin* toured the UK, playing at Holland Park Opera House. Her book of poetry *Goodbye Scarecrow* was published by the San Mei Gallery, and she is currently co-writing a queer vampire western for the BBC. This is her first novel.

Agent: Jessica Lee | **UKBC:** Libby Marshall, Serpent's Tail | **International:** To be submitted shortly

OPERATION: LIVE, LAUGH, LOVE

Rae Gold

Commercial Fiction

Kylie Clark is a self-proclaimed basic b*tch – and proud of it. As a nail technician at Tottenham's top beauty salon, she lives for vanilla lattes, horoscopes, and nights out with the girls. Or at least she did, before catching her fiancé in bed with her best friend.

Now Kylie's swapped brunch dates for burner phones, becoming an underground hero to wronged women everywhere. Need to reverse image search your catfish? Confirm your boyfriend's "business trip"? She's fluent in gel polish, shellac, and online sleuthing.

Those skills land her in hot water when MI5 brings her in for questioning. They're surveilling a Knightsbridge salon suspected of fronting a criminal operation involving drugs, money laundering,

and arms dealing. They need someone undercover – and they’ve learned it’s easier to train a beautician to be a spy than teach a spy to master the perfect manicure.

Kylie becomes “Kelly”, their newest recruit, armed with her new alias, a beauty kit, and an inconvenient attraction to her maddeningly handsome handler, Agent Locke.

Can Kylie nail her most high-stakes assignment yet, or will the mission (and her heart) end up in complete chaos?

Rae Gold is the new pseudonym of a beloved British author, renowned under her own name and also internationally published under another pen name. Rae Gold marks her branching out into a different part of the market.

Agent: Rebecca Ritchie | **UK:** Eleanor Teasdale, Piatkus at auction | **US:** Alex Logan, Forever/Grand Central at auction | **Film/TV:** optioned by Sister, following a heated 10-way auction | **International:** On submission

THE FINAL HOUR OF VIVIAN SAINT

Andrew Nichols

Crime & Thriller

On New Year’s Day, Leo Parker wakes on a rocky shore in a dinner suit beside a wrecked boat. With no memory beyond his own name, he discovers he’s the prime suspect in a murder that occurred six hours earlier at a party hosted by a famous actress.

Then the impossible happens: Leo begins jumping through time, reliving the day in alternating hours – before and after the murder – steadily moving toward the fatal hour at the heart of the mystery.

Having already seen his own arrest, he knows the only hope of proving his innocence is to solve the crime himself. Aided by a mysterious ally who only communicates with him through text messages, but who is somehow privy to his inner-most thoughts, Leo races to recover his memories and identify the real killer.

But as time runs out, he realises the stakes are far greater than he ever could have imagined.

Andrew Nichols is a debut author who lives in Norfolk with his wife and two sons.

Agent: Oli Munson | **UKBC/International:** To be submitted shortly

MAY I DIE FOR YOU

Nilou Panahpour

Literary & Upmarket Fiction

Nargess, a criminal defence lawyer in New York, has come to Miami to be at the bedside of her father. There is something he wants to tell her before he dies, but on the day he’s finally ready to talk, her mother drags Nargess to the hairdresser and instructs Dr. Baker, her father’s louche best friend, to take her out to dinner. When the two return, her father is dead.

Has he committed suicide, as he often threatened? Did her mother assist him, or even kill him, as the authorities come to suspect? What was the secret her father took with him to the grave? And what are the Iranian pills that she finds among his possessions that take her back to her childhood in Tehran?

May I Die for You is a sharp, contemporary novel about family allegiances and the weight of inheritance that examines fractured kinship, and the broader immigrant experience – just not the kind we’re used to hearing about. Nilou Panahpour writes with the caustic wit of Edward St. Aubyn and the unsettling honesty of Ottessa Moshfegh, illuminating a world that exists, for most of us, just beyond view.

Nilou Panahpour is a Los Angeles-based writer and criminal defence lawyer. She studied at Brown and Stanford Law School and completed her MFA at NYU. Her work has appeared in the *New England Review* and *Rolling Stone*, where she also worked as a writer and editor.

Agent: Anna Webber | **UKBC:** Auction underway | **International:** On submission

EMMELINA

Caroline Slade

Commercial Fiction

Deep Cuts *meets* One Golden Summer *meets* Daisy Jones & The Six

Two life-changing summers. One unforgettable song. A love that refuses to fade.

1993. Fresh-faced college student Emmelina has her whole life mapped out – until she meets Jake, the infuriating heartthrob who keeps borrowing her pens. When they both end up staying in sleepy River Birch for the summer, their explosive first meeting gives way to something neither expected: a love that burns bright and fast under the hot summer sun.

1997. No mobile phones. No internet. MTV is king. Emmelina never imagined she’d still be stuck in River Birch, waving goodbye to yet another colleague chasing bigger dreams. Then one day, a familiar voice drifts across the radio singing her name. It’s Jake, the boy who left her behind to become a rockstar. And his song about her is an instant worldwide sensation.

Suddenly, Emmelina’s safe, comfortable life is thrust into the glaring spotlight. But fame isn’t the same as having the person you love, and a hit song can’t answer the questions that have haunted her for four years. Everyone wants to know how it feels to be Jake’s muse, but how can she answer them when she isn’t even sure this is a love song?

Switching between two hot, sticky summers in the ‘90s, *Emmelina* is an epic and ambitious love story about first love, missed chances, and what it means when your most private heartbreak becomes the world’s favourite anthem. A love letter to the music that defines us and a reminder that youth isn’t always wasted on the young.

Caroline Slade is a lyric-loving New Zealander who lives in London with her husband and 15-month-old son. She is an award-winning creative copywriter with 15 years’ experience writing for design. In 2020, she left her role as Director of Words at Design Bridge London to freelance and

focus on her first love: storytelling. She has been selected for various creative writing courses, including the visiting Iowa Writers' Workshop at Modern Letters (Victoria University of Wellington), and more recently, the Writer Your Novel course at Curtis Brown Creative. She holds an honours degree in English Literature and a Master of Arts in English and Film Adaptation.

Agent: Florence Rees | **UKBC/International:** To be submitted shortly

BONE BAD

Charlotte Tarr

Crime & Thriller

A year after losing her job at a national newspaper, quitting vodka tonics (for good this time) and slinking back to her hometown, reporter Morven Munro is done covering murders. Puff pieces are boring, but boring never drove her to drink.

When she's assigned a feature on Dunbar Island, Scotland's controversial 'free-range' prison, Morven discovers her estranged brother Malcolm among the inmates. She hasn't spoken to him since testifying against him fourteen years ago, a decision that still feels like betrayal. Facing him might do what neither vodka nor therapy could and finally close that bone-deep wound.

But when Malcolm is found dead at the base of the island's treacherous cliffs, closure becomes impossible. And when it becomes clear his death was no accident, Morven ventures into the wind-whipped prison town to investigate. It's not the story she wanted, and it could be the story that gets her killed, but if she doesn't uncover the truth she may never get justice for Malcolm or silence her guilty conscience.

Charlotte Tarr is a debut author and content marketer based in West Lothian, Scotland.

Agent: Oli Munson | **UKBC/International:** To be submitted shortly

COUNTERPOINT

Vala Thorodds

Literary & Upmarket Fiction

Counterpoint is a sweeping and intimate novel that traces the lives of twin sisters – Freyja and Lilja – across continents, generations, and artistic awakenings. Set between the stark beauty of Iceland and the chaotic pulse of New York and Berlin, the story explores the fragile architecture of memory, trauma, and desire.

Through poetic prose and deeply introspective narration, Vala Thorodds crafts a portrait of young women navigating the complexities of family, sexuality, and creative ambition – shaped always by invisible weight of what came before them.

As Freyja seeks solace in music and art, and Lilja confronts the violence of the world with fierce clarity, *Counterpoint* becomes a meditation on survival, sisterhood, and the quiet power of reclaiming one's voice.

Vala Thorodds is a writer, poet and translator. She is founding director of the literary press Partus and managing editor of *Oxford Poetry*. Her work is published in the *Guardian*, *Granta*, the *White Review*, *PN Review*, *The Penguin Book of the Prose Poem* and Carcanet's *New Poetries* series. For her translations she has received a PEN/Heim grant and the World Literature Today Translation Prize.

Agent: Anna Webber | **UKBC/International:** To be submitted shortly

NON-FICTION

29 YEARS: THE INCOMPLETE WORKS OF MATT BERNINGER, 1996-2025

Matt Berninger

Arts & Culture

Matt Berninger, lead singer and lyricist of the Grammy Award-winning band The National, is beloved for his evocative lyrics; famously esoteric, yet deeply understood (and frequently tattooed by superfans). His creative process is an eclectic one, shifting between songwriting, poetry, and visual art, and he employs whatever comes to hand, whether it's using a Sharpie on a whiteboard or scribbling lyrics on a baseball.

29 Years: The Incomplete Works of Matt Berninger, 1996-2025 invites readers into this process in all its untidy, experimental glory. It's a highly visual chronicle of lyrics, paintings, graphic designs, collages, and screenplays – even the blueprints to the house he designed and built. Readers are invited in, given insight into his imagination, as well as the chance to tear his methods apart, the better to find their own.

Pairing the inspiration of Rick Rubin's *The Creative Act* with the intimacy of Nick Cave's *Stranger Than Kindness*, *29 Years* is as much about creativity and process as it is about the song lyrics – though the book will contain every set of lyrics he's written, including those that have never been released. It will feature short contributions from the likes of Taylor Swift, Phoebe Bridgers, David Letterman, and more as Matt's collaborators and friends share their favourite songs and perspectives on Matt's particular approach to the making of art.

Matt Berninger lives in rural Connecticut with his wife and daughter. *29 Years* is his first book.

Agent: Tom Killingbeck | **UKBC:** Auction underway | **International:** To be submitted shortly

HOW STATES DIE

Yuan Yi Zhu

History & Current Affairs

States are the most basic building-block of the international system we live in. Not an inch of the world's inhabitable surface is beyond the reach of the state. Our rights, duties, and freedoms are

defined by the state to which we belong as citizens. But what happens when a state disappears from the surface of the Earth? So far, few alive have had to confront this question, for no more than a handful of states have disappeared since 1945. But this is a historical aberration. 60% of the states which existed two centuries ago no longer exist. In a world where states face threats old and new, from rising sea levels to secessionist movements to expansionist neighbours, the brutal truth is that not all of the world's 200-odd sovereign states will make it to the next century.

Drawing on groundbreaking original research from the fields of history, law, and international relations, this book – the first work of its kind – looks at the process of state death. By what means do states die? What emerges in their wake? And how do politicians, diplomats, lawyers, and citizens deal with the death of states? From the wilds of the South Pacific to the heart of Europe, this book is an in-depth examination of one of the most dramatic, but also one of the least examined political phenomena.

Yuan Yi Zhu is an assistant professor in international relations and international law at Leiden University, a senior policy adviser at the Parliament of Canada, a research associate at the University of British Columbia, and a tutor at the University of Oxford. He was previously a research fellow at Harris Manchester College, Oxford, a lecturer at Pembroke College, Oxford, and a senior research fellow at Policy Exchange. His research focuses on the history of the modern international order. He has written for a wide range of publications, including the *New Statesman*, *The Times*, *Critic*, *Spectator*, *Telegraph*, *History Today* and *UnHerd*. His work has been cited in several parliaments, by publications such as [the Economist](#), as well as by [senior](#) public figures.

Agent: Tom Killingbeck | **UKBC:** Auction Underway | **German:** Under offer | **International:** On submission