

The SF in Translation Universe #14



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Welcome back to the SF in Translation Universe! I don't know about you, but life's been like a rollercoaster lately. Fortunately, though, I can now devote more time to SFT, and I have so many ideas for essays and books and so many things I want to read. I've figured out that I'll need to live approximately 835 years, give or take, to read everything that looks interesting and that's already been published, so one of you needs to start building that immortality machine.

Back to SFT. This year is starting off slowly but is rich in its SFT offerings. Case in point: French author Grégoire Courtois's *The Agents* (tr. Rhonda Mullins), which came out in January. Described as "*Nineteen Eighty-Four* meets *Tron*, via *The Office*," *The Agents* is indeed a bizarre dystopian story, with humans eating, sleeping, and "working" in highrise buildings that they can never leave (many have never been outside). Their bloody cubicle conflicts and distant machine masters seem to drain the agents' humanity, until one small group of agents decides to try and take it back.

February offers us a new work in English by Dutch horror author Thomas Olde Heuvelt, of *Hex* fame. In *Echo* (tr. Moshe Gilula), Nick Grevers, a travel journalist and mountain climber, ventures into an uncharted area in the Swiss Alps with his climbing partner. Something grim and horrifying happens there, and when Grevers wakes up from a coma, he finds that not only was he badly injured and his partner is missing, but that something has invaded his soul—something terrible that he discovered on that lonely mountain peak.

Next, we have new Chinese and Japanese SFT in March, with an anthology edited by Yu Chen and Regina Kanyu Wang and a new novel by Yoko Tawada. *The Way Spring Arrives and Other Stories: A Collection of Chinese Science Fiction and Fantasy in Translation* contains stories about dining out in the far reaches of the universe, finding immortality in the mountains, watching roses put on a performance of a Shakespeare play, and more. Published in English for the first time, these stories offer Anglophone readers a new window onto modern Chinese speculative fiction.

Tawada, who has brought us brilliant speculative fiction in both Japanese (*The Emissary*) and German (*Memoirs of a Polar Bear*), is out with *Scattered All Over the Earth*, (tr. Japanese by Margaret Mitsutani). Here, she imagines a Japan that has been figuratively (and in some ways literally) splintered and scattered across the globe. That nation, in the near-future, has vanished and its survivors are roaming climate refugees who search for others who can still remember how to speak Japanese. Roaming around Scandinavia and Western Europe, they encounter material pieces of their culture's past and bond with one another. Compared to *Alice in Wonderland* and "a surreal *Wind in the Willows*," *Scattered* is the first in an expected trilogy.

If you're looking for short SFT published so far, look no further than *Apex Magazine* (Cristina Jurado's "Lamia" and Yilin Fan's "City Lights"), *Clarkesworld* (Gu Shi's "No One at the Wild Dock"), and *World Literature Today* (Yuki Fuwa's "Devour Me").

The rest of the year promises some further wonderful SFT, including a trilogy by the one and only Shimon Adaf! Can you tell that I'm excited?

Thanks for reading, and I'd love to hear what you're reading now and what you're looking forward to: rachel@sfintranslation.com.

Until next time in the SFT Universe!