

HANNA BERVOETS



I Biography

II Works and themes

III Publications and honors

IV Bibliography and press reviews

CONTACT

For foreign rights and sample translations of *Fuzzie*:
Chandler Crawford Agency, Inc - chandler@crawford-agency.com

For all other foreign rights and sample translations:
Uitgeverij Pluim - mvanderpluijm@uitgeverijpluim.nl

[I] Biography

Hanna Bervoets (1984, Amsterdam) is one of the most acclaimed Dutch authors of her generation. After earning her Bachelors degree in Cultural Studies and a Masters in Journalism & Research she published seven novels, screenplays, plays, short stories and essays.

Bervoets won the 2009 Debutant of the Year Award for her first novel *Or How Why*. Its follow-up, *Dear Céline*, was awarded the Opzij Literature Prize 2012 for best book by a female Dutch author. It has since been adapted for the big screen. After *Dear Céline* Bervoets made her definitive breakthrough as a novelist with the acclaimed bestseller *Everything There Was*, which has been published in English with Canelo and pre-published in The Guardian. Her next novel *Efter* was nominated for the BNG New Literature Prize and reached the long list of the Golden Book Owl and the Libris Literature Prize. The film rights of *Efter* have been sold to prominent Dutch producer NL Film. Bervoets' fifth novel *Ivanov* won the BNG Literature Prize, was nominated for the ECI Literature Prize and will be translated in French and Turkish. *Fuzzie* was nominated for the ECI Literature Prize 2017 and will be translated in German.

In the spring of 2018 Bervoets was a resident at Writers Omi at Ledig House, New York. Here she worked on her latest novel, *Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill*: an adventure story on chronic illness. *Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill* became an instant bestseller when it was published in 2019.

Between 2009 and 2014 Bervoets worked as a columnist De Volkskrant. For this Dutch newspaper she currently writes reviews and essays on (digital) media and representation. Recently Bervoets was granted the prestigious Frans Kellendonk Prize for her entire body of works.

Hanna Bervoets works and lives in Amsterdam, with her girlfriend and two guinea pigs.

[II] Works and themes

After her award-winning debut *Or How Why* (2009) Bervoets wrote six novels, which often combine literary narratives with fantasy tropes and science fiction themes. Dutch critics sometimes refer to Bervoets' work as 'lab literature' – because her stories often have an academic setting, but also because they explore human behavior in more or less artificial circumstances.

Bervoets third novel *Everything there was* (2013) is an apocalypse tale with a philosophical undertone: how do we define ourselves when the world as we know it gets destroyed?

Efter (2015) is set in a near future in which our thinking about mental health has so radically changed that society has come to believe that being in love is a mental disorder, that can be treated in special clinics. 'Love rehab' is a common retreat for the rich, and Big Pharma is working on a new medicine to go with it: 'Efter'

Ivanov (2016) refers to the true history of Russian scientist Ilya Ivanov, who tried to cross-breed humans with apes in the 1920s. The novel however, is set in 90s New York, during the AIDS epidemic. In this modern day Frankenstein tale female scientist Helena Frank tries to repeat Ivanovs experiments in order to find a cure for HIV – but when things get out of hand, ethical questions are put aside.

In *Fuzzie* (2017) Bervoets explores the mechanisms behind our need for affection. Four lonely people each encounter a fluffy little ball, Fuzzie, that talks to them, soothes them, lets them pet him - or is Fuzzie female? Can a fluffy little ball really be a substitute for love, and if so, what does that mean?

One of the recurring themes in Bervoets work is the way scientific change and new

technologies reshape human relationships – but her novels also focus on our thinking about society; who or what decides what is ‘normal’?

In her latest theater play *CarryMe* (2018) Bervoets explores the implications of our gig economy. *CarryMe* is set in a near future where couples can hire a surrogate mom through an app. Young, mostly low educated women end up in the homes of the rich to carry their children: does that stimulate inequality or is it empowering for all women involved? Like in most of Bervoets’s stories the answer isn’t unequivocal.

The past years Bervoets received several nominations and awards for her work. Her novels were translated in English, German, French and Turkish, excerpts and short stories were published in international platforms such as *Five Dials* and *The Guardian*.

[III] Publications and honors

Publications

Fiction

- 2019 *Welkom in het Rijk der zieken (Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill)*,
Uitgeverij Pluim
- 2017 *Fuzzie (Fuzzie)*, Atlas Contact
- 2016 *Ivanov (Ivanov)*, Atlas Contact
- 2014 *Efter (Efter)*, Atlas Contact
- 2013 *Alles wat er was (Everything there was)*, Atlas Contact
- 2011 *Lieve Céline (Dear Céline)*, L.J. Veen
- 2009 *Of hoe waarom (Or how why)*, L.J. Veen

Non Fiction

- 2015 *En alweer bleven we ongedeerd (And again we stayed unharmed)*,
columns and essays, Atlas Contact
- 2013 *Opstaan, aankleden, niet doodgaan (Get up, get dressed, don't die)*,
columns and essays, Atlas Contact
- 2011 *Leuk zeg doe! (Nice say bye)*, columns and essays, Atlas Contact

Short Stories - selection recent publications in English

- 2018 [*A modern desire*](#), 2.3.74 (literary magazine, online available), Lebowski
(NL/US)
Tower, Amsterdam Noir (short story collection), Akashic Books (US)
- 2017 [*Day 1851*](#), Five Dials (literary magazine, online available), Hamish
Hamilton (UK)

Plays and screenplays

- 2017 *CarryMe (CarryMe)*, theatre play, FirmaMES
- 2013 *Sputen en Slikken (Stick and Swallow)*, theatre play,
co-author, Rick Engelkes Productions
- 2012 *Bowy is binnen (Bowy is inside)*, screenplay, KeyFilm
- 2010 *Roes (Whirl)*, theatre play, FirmaMES

Contributing author

- 2017 *Mathilda*, Mary Shelley, preface, L.J. Veen klassiek
- 2015 *Frankenstein*, Mary Shelley, preface, L.J. Veen klassiek

Columns and essays

- 2014 – 2017 Several articles and essays on (digital) media and (queer) representation
for Dutch newspapers De Volkskrant and NRC Handelsblad, Belgium

newspapers De Morgen and De Standaard and digital platform De Correspondent

2010 – 2015 Weekly column for Volkskrant Magazine (Dutch newspaper)

Awards and nominations

2019 Bookspot Literature Award (long list, *Welkom in het Rijk der zieken*)

2017 Frans Kellendonk Award (won, oeuvre/ entire works)
BNG Bank Literature Award (won, *Ivanov*)
Diorapthe Literatour Award (short list, *Ivanov*)
Bookstores Prize (short list, *Ivanov*)
ECI Literature Award (long list, *Fuzzie*)
Libris Literature Award (long list, *Ivanov*)

2016 ECI Literature Award (long list, *Ivanov*)

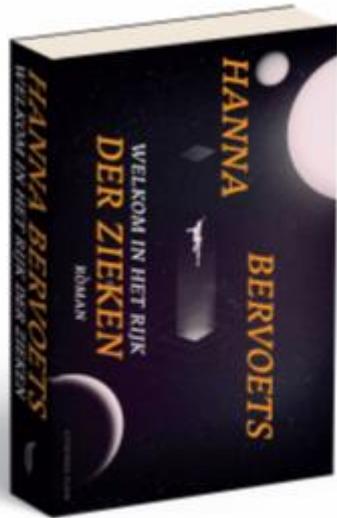
2015 BNG Bank Literature Award (short list, *Efter*)
Libris Literature Award (long list, *Efter*)
Golden Owl Award (long list, *Efter*)
Opzij Literature Award (long list, *Efter*)

2014 Opzij Literature Award (short list, *Alles wat er was*)

2012 Opzij Literature Award (won, *Lieve Céline*)

2010 HvA Debutant of the Year Award (won, *Of hoe waarom*)

[IV] Bibliography and press



WELCOME TO THE KINGDOM OF THE ILL

Uitgeverij Pluim, novel 277 pages, 2019

Sold to Random House (Germany)

Nominated for the Bookspot Literature Award

Three years after Clay has been diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome he wakes up in the Kingdom of the ill, an Alice in Wonderland-like fantasy world structured by new rules and inverse logic. Citizens of this kingdom wear habits and carry their own body on their back. The woman who finds Clay in the poppy field near the entrance gate turns out to be Susan Sontag: Clays tour guide.

Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill shifts back and forward between Clay's journey through the Kingdom of the ill and his gritty memories of the past three years. After his diagnose, Clay hopes that he'll be cured, but instead his condition worsens: his constant pain and persistent fatigue make life almost

unbearable. Doctors tell him he has 'to learn to cope' with his condition, but Clay has no idea how.

'*****' - *NRC Handelsblad* / '*****' - *De Standaard*

'*****' - *Noord Hollands Dagblad* / 'An impressive statement' - *LINDA*.

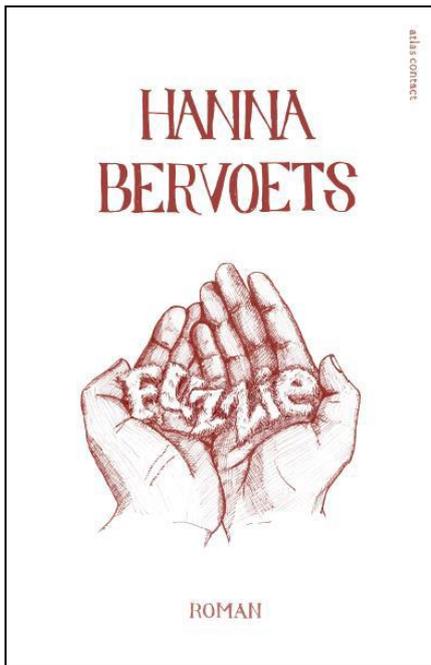
Hanna Bervoets on *Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill*:

'Stories about illness fascinate me. Most fiction (novels, films) on being ill follows a clear course: the protagonist develops symptoms, weakens, fights for his life and eventually dies, or survives. Such stories are powerful tales on suffering and purpose, but I wondered: where's the fiction on being chronically ill? Stories about patients whose illness won't defeat them, but who will also never be cured. Stories on people with symptoms they'll suffer from their entire lives. What kind of story can be told about that?

Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill is a novel about being ill and never recovering.

Ever since I got diagnosed with a connective tissue disorder thirteen years ago I met a lot of people who suffer from chronic illness. They are trying to live their lives while dealing with rheumatism, Lyme disease, chronic pain or the implications of major surgeries after accidents or cancer. Their diagnoses differ, but their symptoms are alike: chronic pain, chronic fatigue. They suffer from invisible illness.

Clay, the protagonist in *Welcome to the Kingdom of the ill*, is diagnosed with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, but his symptoms are similar to those of many other conditions. His quest is not a search for a cure, perhaps it is not even acceptance he's looking for. Much more, it is an attempt to create a story that fits his new reality.'



FUZZIE

Atlas Contact, novel 288 pages, 2017

Sold to Random House (Germany)

11.000 copies sold in The Netherlands

Nominated for the ECI Literature Award

(Rights handled by Chandler Crawford Agency, Inc)

One morning in April, Maisie receives a package in the mail. A small cardboard box containing a little white fluffy ball. Maisie holds the ball to her cheek.

‘Well, hi there’ it says: ‘So you’re here at last?’

Elsewhere around the city, several other people are carrying a little ball around. A blue one for Maisie’s broken-hearted ex, Florence. A purple one for retired businessman Diek, who spends his evenings searching the internet for dates. A pink one for the unemployed Stephan, who no longer gets any joy out of his current relationship, and doesn’t know what to do with his life.

Maisie, Florence, Diek and Stephan all let their little ball guide them. They listen to what their ball tells them, do what it asks of them. They love their fluffy company, because it knows them; yes, it seems to completely understand them – better than anything or anyone else. Or does it just seem that way?

And where do these little balls come from, anyway?

Fuzzie is about four people who are each unhappy in their own way, until they find their Fuzzie. Every day, their ball tells them stories about love, loss, loneliness, relationships – things everyone can relate to. Fuzzie gives their lives a new sense of direction. But can the balls actually function as a substitute for love?

Fuzzie is a sharp, modern day fairytale about the mechanisms of affection and the limits of loving.

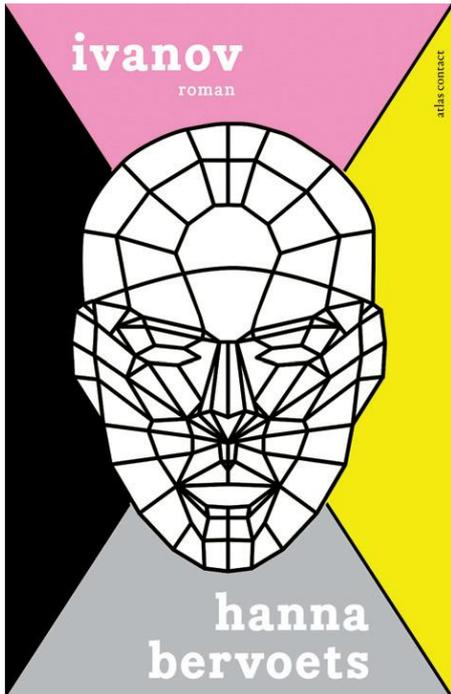
Press on *Fuzzie*:

‘*Fuzzie* reclaims the way we think about affection from the lifestyle gurus. The dream next step in the oeuvre of Hanna Bervoets.’ * * * * – *NRC Handelsblad*

‘A book that screams: Come here, I’ll cherish you.’ * * * * – *De Standaard*

‘Once again, Bervoets stretches the boundaries of literature.’ – *De Groene Amsterdammer*

‘Love, but not as you’ve read it thirty times before.’ * * * * – *Het Parool*



IVANOV

Atlas Contact 2016, novel 320 pages
 Right sold to Aux Forges de Vulcain (France)
 Çaliadam Yayınlar (Turkey)

Won BNG Literature Award.

Nominated for ECI Literature Award, Libris Literature Award, Diorapthe Literatour Award and Bookstores Prize.

Russia, 1924. Scientist Ilya Ivanov has one dream: he wants to cross human dna with that of a chimpanzee, in order to produce a completely new, hybrid being. With French funding Ivanov travels to Africa to inseminate chimpanzees with human sperm.

America, 1994. Virologist Helena Frank investigates the origins of hiv: her thesis is that aids was transferred from ape to man during Ivanov's experiments.

Felix, a young, gay journalism student, decides to write an article about Helena. As his research progresses, he forms an intense relationship with the professor, to the

displeasure of Lois, Helena's younger assistant. Soon, Felix gets caught up in a complex power game with Lois and Helena.

Is Helena using Felix for her experiment or is he using her for his studies? What are the two women hiding? And what role do Ivanov's controversial ideas play in their research?

Bervoets skilfully mixes the bizarre-but-true story of Russian hero Ivanov with Felix's engrossing, poignant memoirs. This makes *Ivanov* a stunning novel about the boundaries we draw to determine who or what we are: perpetrator or victim; friend or parasite; human or animal?

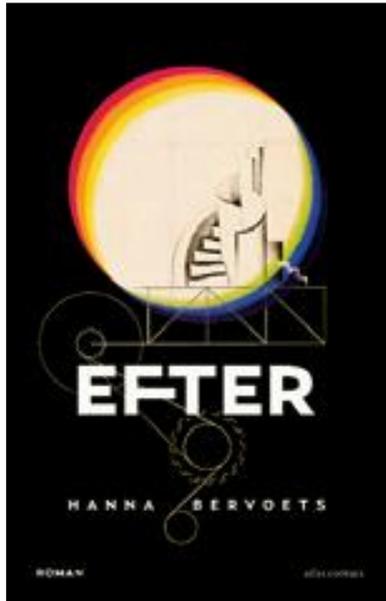
Press on *Ivanov*:

‘A well-done coming-of-age story that reads like a true psychological drama. Bervoets turns a juicy legend into a novel you can chew on for a long time.’ – * * * * *de Volkskrant*

‘Increasingly, Bervoets brings relationships to a head. Never has she been as sharp as in the equally fluent and profound *Ivanov*. Bervoets at her best.’ – * * * * *nrc Handelsblad*

‘This kind of Frankenstein-experiment is just up Bervoets’ alley. She’s a writer who in a short time has built up a very idiosyncratic body of work, composed of science fiction-like novels of ideas, which are most welcome in our literary landscape. The pleasure of this novel lies primarily in its always surprising, sharp observations, as well as the irresistible narrative skill.’ – *Trouw*

“*Ivanov* is literary prize-winning material.” – * * * * *De Telegraaf*



EFTER

Atlas Contact 2013 Fiction, 288 pages

Movie rights sold to NL Film.

Nominated for the Libris Literature Award, Golden Owl Award and Opzij Literature Award

Efter is set in a near future in which doctors and scientists consider being in love to be a mental illness. The health care industry eagerly jumps on this new diagnosis.

Clinics are opened to treat love addiction, and pharmacist Fizzler wants to be the first to bring a cure for being in love on the market: *Efter*.

In *Efter*, we follow various characters involved in the introduction of the drug. The pr-guy who has to introduce *Efter* to market. A teenage girl who falls in love for the first time. A journalist who senses danger. Two young friends in a

love rehab.

They all have their own agenda, they all struggle with their own problems and doubts, they all try to bring order into an increasingly chaotic reality. What they don't know is that their individual choices and decisions set a fateful chain of events in motion.

Hanna Bervoets has written a multi-layered, poignant novel about the stories we tell each other to be able to live with ourselves and each other. In *Efter*, the oldest story of all – Love – is radically rewritten.

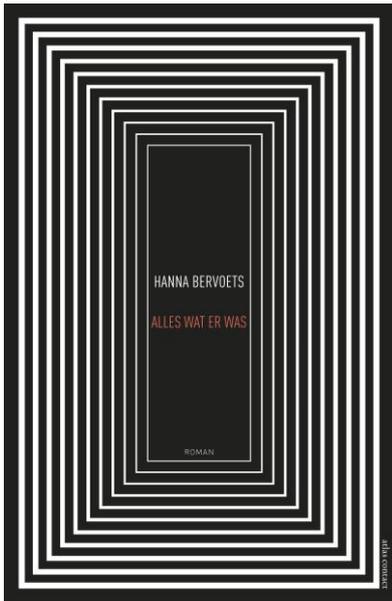
Press on *Efter*

‘Powerful observations in a trendy narrative style.’

– *de Volkskrant*

‘In its coldness a confronting novel. A warning just as actual as *The Circle* by Dave Eggers.’–

*** *Wegener Dagblad*



EVERYTHING THERE WAS

Atlas Contact 2013 Fiction, 288 pages
English e-rights sold to Canelo, pre publication in *The Guardian*.

Nominated for Opzij Literature Award.

13th print in 2019.

One Sunday, eight people gather at a school to record a television programme. But the programme is never made. After a loud bang, the authorities order all windows, doors and curtains to be closed. And to stay closed. For days, then weeks, then months.

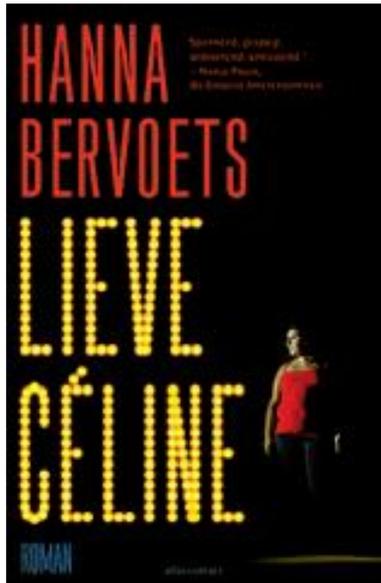
Through the eyes of television editor Merel we see the a group of strangers trying to survive in a new world, a world of darkness and isolation, of sleeping on gym mats and living on ten grains of rice a day. As food supplies dwindle, tensions mount.

How do we adapt to a radically new situation? What do we have to give up? And if everything that once was is no more, what do love, loyalty and friendship mean?

Press on *Everything There Was*

‘This is one truly clever novel. A tragedy unfolds, brutal and hardhitting. Before you know it, the calm, reflective tone has made way for a hallucinatory trip. An uncompromising piece of art’ – *De Groene Amsterdammer*

‘In *Everything There Was*, Bervoets proves that she really knows what matters.’ – * * * *
De Volkskrant



DEAR CÉLINE

Atlas Contact 2011 Fiction, 204 pages

Adapted to big screen bij NL film.

Won Opzij Literatuurprijs

Brooke is a young woman of limited ability from Amsterdam-North with a deep passion for singer Céline Dion. After a series of dramatic events, Brooke has only one goal in life: to watch Céline Dion perform.

So she travels to Las Vegas – on her own.

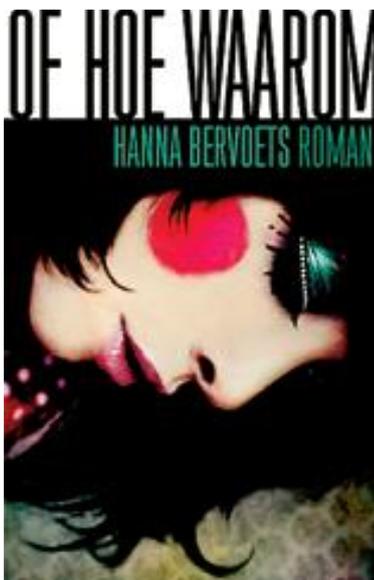
At the airport, Brooke writes eighteen letters to her idol.

Brooke tells Céline about her life in Amsterdam, about her mother, her sister, her family home, about the endless stream of tiny Canta cars that drive through her neighbourhood.

Step by step Brooke reveals her biggest secret.

Press on *Dear Céline*

‘Bervoets creates a world that gradually becomes more absurd and more touching.’ – *NRC Handelsblad*



OR HOW WHY

Atlas Contact 2009 Fiction, 190 pages

Won HvA Debutant of the year award.

Flora is a magazine journalist, obsessed by outward appearances and everyday absurdity.

The question is: where does this obsession come from?

Press on *Or How Why*

‘Bervoets created with cool humour a real Amsterdam Psychopath.’ – *Elle*

‘A successful debut novel (...) including a parade of amusing characters and tragicomical memories and a hair-raising climax.’ –

*** *Algemeen Dagblad*