


# THE STRAITS TIMES


Life Jasmine Sokko is MTV's best South-east Asia act D10



World Protecting Komodo dragons: \$1,350 to visit A14&15



Life 8 local must-reads D4




Sport Just how good is F1's Lewis Hamilton? C10



## Singapore Shelf

# 8 reads for November

In this monthly feature, Arts Correspondent **Olivia Ho** lines up eight hot-off-the-press Singapore books that readers can dive into



**FICTION**  
**BEAST**  
By Krishna Udayasankar  
Penguin Random House South-east Asia/Paperback/326 pages/\$22.40/  
Books Kinokuniya and Times

Udayasankar, the best-selling author of mythology-inspired series The Aryavarta Chronicles, turns to urban fantasy in this crime novel set in the Mumbai suburbs.

Tasked to solve a gruesome triple homicide, Assistant Commissioner of Police Aditi Kashyap is dragged into the world of the Saimhas, or werelions, and has to team up with Prithvi, an enforcer with his own dark past, to hunt down the otherworldly murderer.




**FICTION**  
**THE ANGEL TIGER AND OTHER STORIES**  
By Barrie Sherwood  
Epigram Books/Paperback/  
164 pages/\$18.90 before GST/  
Major bookstores

Sherwood, a novelist and School of Humanities assistant professor at Nanyang Technological University, produces his first short-story collection.

A woman tries in vain to find croissants at an airport; a young man dives for venomous cone snails for the foreign researcher he is having an affair with; and a Bangladeshi construction worker finds his dream of being a singer reawakened when he is assigned to build a concert hall.





**FICTION**  
**IN THIS DESERT, THERE WERE SEEDS**  
Edited by Elizabeth Tan and Jon Gresham  
Ethos Books and Margaret River Press/Paperback/231 pages/  
\$22 before GST/Books Kinokuniya, Grassroots Book Room and [www.ethosbooks.com.sg](http://www.ethosbooks.com.sg)

In this anthology of 20 short stories from Singapore and Western Australia, a time-travelling aviatrix meets a tiger in 1930s Choa Chu Kang; a sex addict tries to swallow a fish; and at the Victoria & Albert Museum in London, an Ethiopian security guard is conflicted about an exhibition of treasures taken from his home country.



It arose from a conversation between Singapore publisher Ethos Books and Australian publisher Margaret River Press at the Frankfurt Book Fair in 2017, about whether anxieties about terrorism, climate change and rising intolerance were similar in their respective parts of the world.

The anthology is edited by Elizabeth Tan (above left), who was born in Perth to Singaporean parents, and Jon Gresham (above right), who grew up in Australia and now lives in Singapore. The title comes from a line in Diana Rahim's story A Minor Kalahari, in which a watermelon spontaneously grows in an old man's yard.

"Most of the stories involved characters grappling for peace and belonging in a hostile, changing world," says Gresham, 51. "I think most writers from both places found hope emerging in diversity, tolerance and individual expression."

PHOTOS:  
LEAH JING,  
RIMA KARIMA



**ART**  
**THE BROOK'S CLOWN**  
By Jean Lambert-Wild, Koh Hong Teng, Ler Jiyuan and Marc Goldberg  
Achatas 360/Hardcover/76 pages/  
\$44.90/Books Kinokuniya (Ngee Ann City), Achatas 360 (1 Irving Place) and The Farm Store (National Design Centre)

This unusual, whimsical collaboration between French and Singaporean artists combines photography and comic illustration.

Hatoff (illustrations are based on photos in which Hatoff is played by Goldberg) has organised an important meeting in Singapore for himself and his old friend, Gramblanc the Clown (played by Lambert-Wild), but they are distracted by Gramblanc's antics, wandering through a variety of locales such as Haw Par Villa and Teck Ghee Court Market and Food Centre.

In conjunction with the Voilah! Festival, an exhibition of the artwork from this book will run at the National Library Level 9 Promenade until Nov 30.



**CHILDREN'S**  
**THE INVISIBLE PEOPLE: UNCLES AT WORK, AUNTY GOES HOME, THE BUS DRIVER**  
By Ames Chen, illustrated by Jayl Chen  
Graceworks/Paperback/  
28 pages each/\$10 each/  
Books Kinokuniya, Popular, SKS Bookstore, monsterbookery.com and [www.graceworks.com.sg/store](http://www.graceworks.com.sg/store)

This series of picture books introduces children to the "invisible people" in Singapore society, from bus drivers to foreign workers.

In *Uncles At Work*, a child befriends the construction workers who eat lunch at his void deck and witnesses a workplace accident; while in *Aunty Goes Home*, a girl reflects on her relationship with her family's helper, who is returning to her home country.