

Virgula

Sasja Janssen

translated by
Michele Hutchison

In *Virgula*, Sasja Janssen's award-winning collection, the comma becomes much more than a punctuation mark; it stops the stillness and allows thoughts and language to move forward. *Virgula* is invoked as a muse and a companion; she is called on in every poem, as if she were a goddess, friend or lover, someone who offers space when the emptiness becomes too heavy.

Virgula received the Awater Poetry Prize and was nominated for the Ida Gerhardt Poetry Prize and the Herman de Coninck Prize and De Grote Poëzieprijs (Grand Poetry Prize) for best poetry collection 2021.



Sasja Janssen is a poet and novelist based in Amsterdam. Her first publications were two novels but since her father's death she has written mainly poetry. Her poems feature the body in many shapes, from tool to target, from weapon to wound. *Virgula* (2021) was nominated for five Dutch prizes and awarded the prestigious Awater Poetry Prize. *Putting On My Species* (2014) was her first collection to be translated into English and was published by Shearsman in 2020. Janssen has performed nationally and internationally, including at festivals in Nicaragua, Medellín, Mexico and Buenos Aires.

Michele Hutchison was born in the UK and has lived in Amsterdam since 2004. She was educated at UEA, Cambridge, and Lyon universities. She translates literary fiction and nonfiction, poetry, graphic novels, and children's books. She also co-authored the successful parenting book *The Happiest Kids in the World*.

For press enquiries please contact Rory Cook at rory@prototypepublishing.co.uk

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‘Sasja Janssen is a rare writer who understands the inescapability of the micro-violences and violations of the world and how these inhabit our body and thoughts, as well as our most intimate relationships. *Virgula* – the Latin word for a comma, literally a little twig – allows each feeling and thing to branch into the other, creating a phenomenological poetics. *Virgula* is filled with moments of elation and enchantment, but without illusion or fake transcendence.’

– **Nuzhat Bukhari**

‘A collection that seizes and halts as much as it compels, gathers and pitches. To what end? To the next gather and pitch, to the relentless harrying of life, its blurts, burps, desires and quandaries. The novelty of *Virgula*’s thinking, its wild precision, was a constant revolution. It bubbles and swerves, growing new limbs, continually breaking its own remarkable fever.’

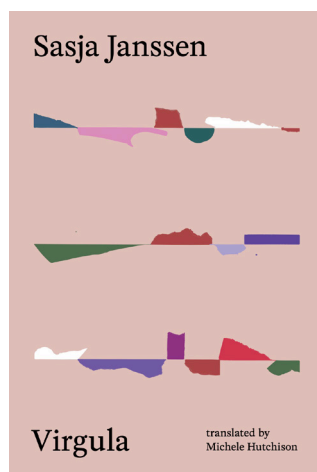
– **Jack Underwood**

‘Sultry, raw and relentless. This intoxicating poetry seizes you with its beautiful, rich images and refuses to let go.’

– **Awater Poetry Prize Jury**

‘This is edifying lyricism, without tricks, stopgaps or an accumulation of adjectives. Janssen’s resounding poems have momentum, many changes of register, a natural rhythm, and they constantly set you on the wrong track without leaving you completely to your own devices.’

– **Alfred Schaffer**



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