



MELVILLE HOUSE

145 PLYMOUTH STREET | BROOKLYN, NY 11201
718.722.9204 | F 718.722.9205 | MHPBOOKS.COM

Dear Bookseller,

On September 1, 2002, Melville House published its first book — Poetry After 9/11. In all honesty, neither one of us envisioned starting a publishing company. We were a couple of artists following an activist impulse — we'd witnessed the attacks on the World Trade Center and were living in the stunned aftermath, and we wanted to protest the president's call to war, as well as offer up the kind of hope that only art can provide. We wanted to make the kind of statement we thought only a book can make. It was a passionate project, as all art projects are — but it was definitely supposed to be a one-shot deal.

Except then we had another idea, and then another. Sometimes it was a political book, sometimes it was a book of translated fiction — it can still feel like a kind of political activism to publish translated or avant garde work in this culture — and sometimes it was some weird book it was hard to classify. But we found we couldn't stop. While Melville House ran off our kitchen table for the first few years, eventually some other literary renegades joined us, until lo and behold we had a company of sorts. We weren't doing things the way you were supposed to — often, because we didn't know how — but it worked nonetheless.

Now, ten years later, we realize that we're actually doing something very old fashioned: making books that are not beholden to the bottom line so much as to the effort to make the world a better place. It's the same kind of reasoning, we believe, that prompts other people to open bookstores. In any event, indie bookstores have always been our real partners, the place where our books were most at home, the place where we found our greatest champions. In short, we couldn't have done it without you.

Heartfelt thanks from both of us.

Valerie Merians and Dennis Johnson