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Biggest books of autumn 2020: what to read in a very busy year

With so many hundreds of books, it's hard even to scratch the surface, but one debut to look out for is Canadian prizewinner **Reproduction** by Ian Williams (Dialogue, September), an enjoyably offbeat family saga set in polyglot Toronto. Meanwhile, Australian Laura Jean McKay gets her first UK publication with **The Animals in That Country** (Scribe, September), a powerful, uncanny tale of a flu pandemic that allows humans to understand the language of animals.

Finally, two one-of-a-kind novels that remind us of fiction's power to take us to another world and expand our understanding of this one. **When We Cease to Understand the World** by Benjamín Labatut (translated by Adrian Nathan West, Pushkin) describes itself as "fiction based on real events"; it illuminates unexpected and often darkly ironic connections between scientific discoveries, and showcases the minds seeking to pierce the mysterious heart of mathematics. **Piranesi** by Susanna Clarke (Bloomsbury, September) performs a very different kind of magic from her beloved *Jonathan Strange and Mr Norrell*: austere, otherworldly and profound, it's best embarked on absolutely fresh.