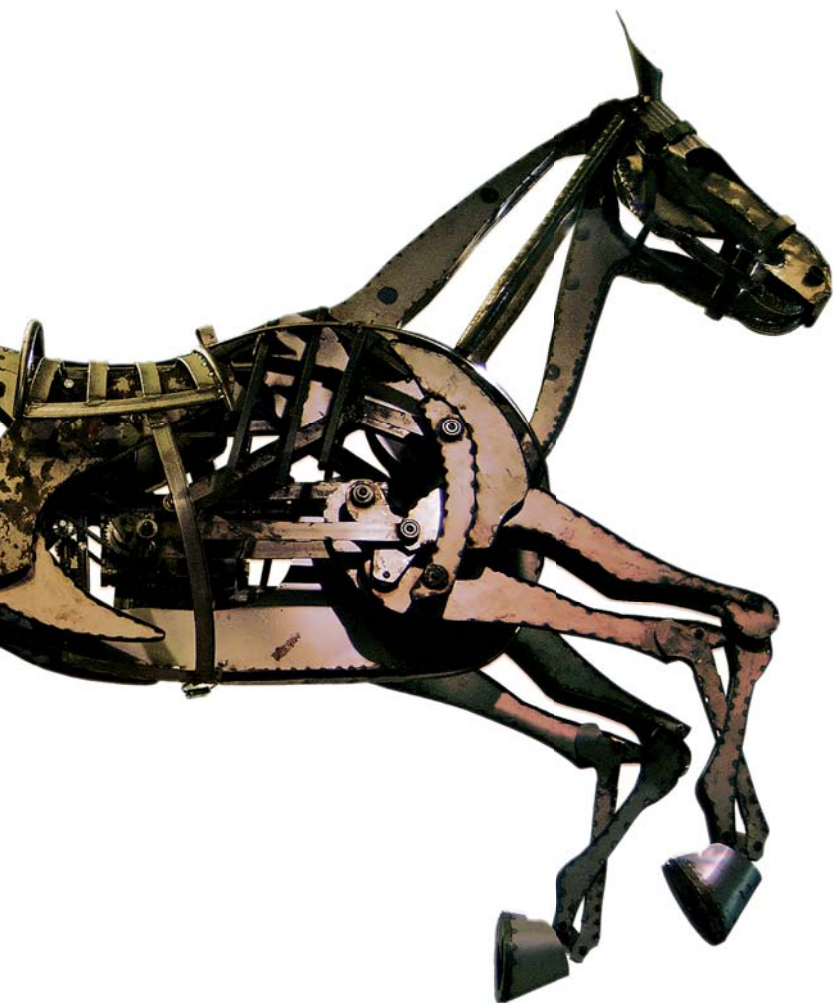


## New Catalan Fiction 2014-2015



## New Catalan Fiction 2014-2015

# Foreword

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This is an outstanding moment for Catalan literature. An exceptionally fine tradition, the seductiveness of modernity and a curiosity about other literatures are all to be found amongst its current strengths, which are further bolstered by a well-established and vibrant publishing industry and the efficient work of literary agents.

One of the goals of the Institut Ramon Llull, as the public institution responsible for the dissemination of Catalan language and culture abroad, is to support authors, translators, publishers and literary agents with the aim of ensuring that Catalan literature is translated, published and read abroad.

This booklet is intended to arouse the curiosity of publishers and open the doors to Catalan literature for readers in other languages. The booklets we produce periodically include a brief introduction to the classics of Catalan literature and selections from new contemporary publications in fiction. We encourage readers in many countries to take this opportunity to enjoy our literature.

Manel Baixauli

# The Fifth Floor

La cinquena planta



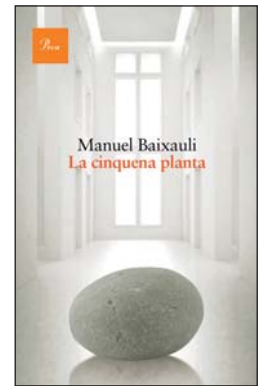
## Absolute physical paralysis with total cerebral consciousness

Just a week after delivering his second novel, B is watching a silent film at the art house when he feels his toes start to go numb. The paralysis slowly spreads through his entire body, leaving him “a stone that can think and feel,” unable to move while his intellect and emotions are as sharp as ever. His novel could become his last will and testament. After forty-two days in intensive care, B is transferred to an old sanitarium, where he lives among psychosis, dementia and art as he struggles to regain full mobility.

The impressive metaphor of the active brain in a stock-still body that guides this powerful novel is actually based on true events. Some of the painful things overheard while immobile and conversations with fellow patients ring true to one’s idea of this unimaginable experience. Yet this is no memoir. The narration is fragmented, crafting a kaleidoscope composed of shifting viewpoints that come together to create a formidable reflection on the artist’s attempt to explain the inexplicable, written in the rich prose of a man who has rediscovered the simple joy of being able to bring a glass of water to his lips.

“B: Amid the short, impertinent beeping of the life support machines, I hear a violin. A distant violin that plays lengthy notes. I close my eyes and advance along a path in a lush forest, drenched in a cerulean light. A fresh, invigorating breeze blows; with each step I take the violin’s notes grow louder and the machine’s beeps fade out. Before me, among the many trees, I discover a small wooden tower the color of bone that culminates in the shape of a human skull. It is from inside there, I believe, that the sound of the violin emerges.”

Manel Baixauli is a Valencian writer and painter. He has published the story collection *Espiral* and three novels, *Verso*, *L’home manuscrit* and *La cinquena planta*. His literary awards include the Salambó, the Catalan Critics’ Prize, and the Valencian Critics’ Prize.



Proa, 2014  
294 pages

### Selected Works

NOVEL

*Espiral [Spiral]* [Columna, 1998]

*Verso [Verse]* [Bromera, 2002]

*L’home manuscrit [The Handwritten Man]* [Proa, 2007]

### Latest Works in Translation

ITALIAN *L’uomo manoscritto* [L’home manuscrit],  
tr. P. Rigobon, S. Cupiccia. Atmosphere Libri, 2012.

### Rights

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## Neus Canyelles

# I Never Know What to do Outside of the House

Mai no sé què fer fora de casa



### A life depicted using literature as a looking glass

Each of the sixteen stories in this collection is inspired in a story by another author, such as Chekov, Carver, Dinesen, O. Henry, and Bukowski. These recreations are used to shed light onto various moments, both pivotal and mundane, over the course of the life of a woman more comfortable at home writing and reading than out in the world. Written in the intimate, quiet voice of a close friend sharing confidences, these frank, unpretentious tales come together to form a portrait of a life. While the narrator's experiences don't always dovetail neatly, she insists on meeting those challenges with her eyes wide open.

Neus Canyelles is a Majorcan journalist with degrees in Spanish Philology and piano who writes for *Última Hora*, a daily newspaper in Palma. She is the author of five award-winning novels, most recently *La novel·la de Dickens*. This collection of short stories won her the prestigious Mercè Rodoreda Prize.

“There are certain mysteries in life that we only manage to solve once it’s too late. But there are others that we never solve. It shouldn’t be surprising that on our death beds, if we still have some moments of consciousness and some breath in us, we return to thinking about the reasons behind our insistence on doing some useless thing throughout every single year of our existence.”

### Selected Works

#### NOVEL

*Cap d’Hornos* [Cape Horn] [Moll, 2003]

*L’alè del búfal a l’hivern* [The Breath of the Buffalo in Winter] [Proa, 2007]

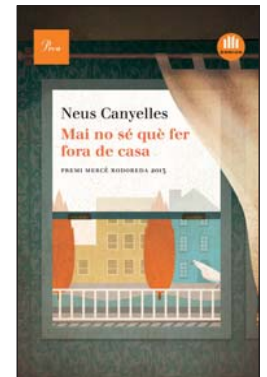
*La novel·la de Dickens* [Dickens’ Novel] [Proa, 2010]

#### SHORT FICTION

*Els vidres nets* [The Clean Windows] [Calima, 2002]

#### NON-FICTION

*Neu d’agost* [August Snow] [Di7, 1998]



Proa, 2014  
184 pages

### Rights

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Pep Coll

## Two Black Coffins and Two White Ones

Dos taüts negres i dos de blancs



**A fictionalized true crime story  
told in the voices of those involved**

In Pallars Jussà, a not very densely populated part of Catalonia, a family was killed in March 1943. How does the murder of both parents and two daughters, aged 9 and 14, go unpunished and hushed up? How does a town go on when most everyone knows who the killers that still live among them are? Who stood to gain from these deaths? While the who was never much of a question, what is the why and the how behind these deaths? Each of the nineteen chapters is told by a different character: witness, lawyer, military judge, victims and even killers. These varying perspectives, complete with photographs, weave together to create an evocative, absorbing portrait of Pallars both before and particularly after the Civil War. The combined picture chillingly reminds us of the close proximity in which we live to evil, and how startlingly helpless we are against it.

Pep Coll is a writer who is very linked to his beloved region of Pallars Jussà, as a scholar of its dialect and a compiler of its legends. Author of more than thirty volumes, including literary criticism, theater, books for children and novels. His numerous awards include the 2005 Sant Joan Prize, the 2007 Sant Jordi Prize and, most recently, the 2014 Catalan Critics' Prize for *Dos taüts negres i dos de blancs*.

“A couple of dogs came to greet them as they approached the house. One of them barked, the other, black with white spots, kept whining as if he were trying to tell them something. Joan, who had been a shepherd, soon realized that the animal didn't know what to do with the herd. There were sheep grazing in the fields, others resting near the house, others bleating desperately in the corrals.”

### Selected Works

#### NOVEL

*El segle de la llum* [The Century of Light] (Empúries, 1997 / Labutxaca, 2014)

*El salvatge dels Pirineus* [The Savage of the Pyrenees] (Edicions 62, 2005)

*Les senyorettes de Lourdes* [The Young Ladies of Lourdes] (Proa, 2008)

Nius [Nests] (Proa, 2010)

### Latest Works in Translation

SPANISH *Las señoritas de Lourdes* [Les senyorettes de Lourdes], tr. L. Buitrago. Ámbar, 2008.

*El salvaje de los Pirineos* [El salvatge dels Pirineus], tr. M. Martí. Aleph Editores, 2005.

FRENCH *Le Sauvage des Pyrénées* [El salvatge dels Pirineus], tr. E. Raillard / J. Vila Actes. Sud, 2010.

ITALIAN *Le signorine di Lourdes* [Les senyorettes de Lourdes], tr. V. Orazi. Atmosphere libri, 2012.

### Rights sold to French (Actes Sud)



Proa, 2014  
440 pages

### Rights

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Joan-Lluís Lluís

# Chronicles of a Lame God

Les cròniques del déu coix



**Of all the gods in the pantheon of Olympus, only Hephaestus endures**

What became of the Greco-Roman gods once humans ceased to offer them sacrifices? The advent of Christianity took a heavy toll and, in fact, only one old god has lived to tell the tale. The odds are against Hephaestus—known to the Romans as Vulcan, the god of fire—and he is forced to rub elbows with humans in order to get the smoke he needs to feed his divine appetite.

In this exceedingly original novel, Hephaestus chronicles his adventures, trials and tribulations over many centuries in broad strokes. It is his voice that pulls us in: droll, sardonic, jaded, haughty, perplexed by mortals but, above all, determined to survive. Seeing ourselves and human history from a decadent god's perspective is a humbling, illuminating and highly diverting experience.

Joan-Lluís Lluís is a journalist, writer and occasional songwriter from Perpignan, French Catalonia. Among his numerous awards, his most recent book, *Les cròniques del déu coix*, is the winner of the 2013 Lletre d'Or Prize.

“I’d never paid much attention to what humans say when they worship me, but they say so many different things in so many languages that I figure it must not be too important: ‘For you, divine Hephaestus, divine Vulcan, god of fire and metal, this sacrifice is for you, eat and drink of what we offer you...’ Since I feel a bit stupid speaking about myself in the second person, I add: ‘For me, for I am the divine Hephaestus, the divine Vulcan’.”

## Selected Works

### NOVEL

*Els ulls de sorra* [Eyes of Sand] (La Magrana, 1993)

*Vagons robats* [Stolen Railway Wagons] (La Magrana, 1996)

*El dia de l’ós* [The Day of the Bear] (La Magrana, 2004)

*Aiguafang* [Sludge] (La Magrana, 2008)

*Xocolata desfeta* [Drinking chocolate] (La Magrana, 2010)

## Selected Works in Translation

FRENCH *Wagons volés* [Vagons robats],  
tr. P. Naracht. Balzac Éditeur, 2003.

*Le jour de l’ours* [El dia de l’ós],  
tr. C.Ytak. Tinta Blava, 2006.



Proa, 2013  
224 pages

## Rights

Cristina Mora Literary  
& Film Agency  
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litagency.com

Joan Jordi Miralles

# A Marvelous Woman

Una dona meravellosa



## Be careful what you wish for...

When this novel opens Neus is a nurse who works on the ninth floor of Bellvitge Hospital, in the neurology department. Her only daughter has recently left the nest. Even though Neus supposedly has “everything,” she finds her life gray and unstimulating. Seeking a radical change of course, she decides to leave her husband of decades and set off on a course of sexual discovery, embarking on a series of random, sometimes degrading, encounters. On the outside Neus seems to be in perfect control of her life, but inside she feels alone, insecure and helpless. Then the stakes are raised exponentially by an accident at work that exposes her to HIV and an accident on the road that kills her daughter.

Suddenly Neus finds her life turned on its ear. Whereas before she was lulled by routine into a boredom she came to find unbearable, she is now sucked into a vortex of grief. Then she happens upon her deceased daughter’s diary, which is filled with shocking, sordid revelations. This addictive, black novel is told in a third-person narration with masterfully paced distance that later alternates with sections of the daughter’s most intimate musings that Neus can’t stop reading. We are likewise drawn into her spiraling descent, from which there is no turning back.

“She opens up the diary again. She starts reading where she left off. The future is being brave even when you are afraid, she repeats to herself. Only if she reads the diary from start to finish will she be able to say that she knew her daughter, at least a little better. If she doesn’t, if she turns her back on it, she’ll have to admit, as a wizened old lady, that she missed out on her last chance to learn a little bit more about the people she loved.”

Joan Jordi Miralles is a novelist, playwright and screenwriter for both the big and small screens. His first book, *L’Altíssim*, earned him the Andròmina Prize. He has also written and directed the film *Die Müllhalde* and the miniseries *Aborígens*, *Oltre i limiti* and *Zoom*

## Selected Works

NOVEL

*L’Altíssim* [The Most High] [Tres i Quatre, 2005]

*L’úter de la balena* [The Whale’s Uterus] [Moll, 2010]

*Això és Àustria* [This is Austria] [Leonard Muntaner, 2012]



Labreu, 2014  
326 pages

## Rights

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labreuedicions@gmail.com

Vicenç Pagès Jordà

# Border Days

Dies de frontera



**On the border of commitment, we watch in slow motion as a couple wavers and slips**

Pau and Teresa, the couple at the center of this modern love story, are at a crossroads. We are first introduced to them in a snapshot where they kiss on a street filled with shoppers, in La Jonquera on the border between Spain and France, in July of last year. From that image we travel back to the late 1970s, in more than a hundred inventive short chapters, to learn the story of Teresa and Pau and what has brought them to this crossroads where they are asking themselves big questions, such as whether they can continue together after his “slip” and whether having a child could heal their relationship.

Their lives are told in moving, seductive, often nostalgic flashes, reflected through the stories of friends and family members. Teresa’s midlife relationship crisis sets her off on a journey to the border of her own inner transitions.

Vicenç Pagès Jordà is an author and literary critic from Figueres. His previous novel, *Els jugadors de whist*, sold briskly and won him the Crexells Prize for the best novel of the year. *Dies de frontera* received the 2013 Sant Jordi Prize and in 2014 he was awarded the Catalan National Culture Prize.

“Teresa gets her dark hair and skin from her mother, but her long legs from her father. Her problems communicating with her family, though, were handed down on both sides.”

## Selected Works

### NOVEL

*El món d’Horaci* [Horaci’s World] (Empúries, 1995)

*La felicitat no és completa* [Happiness is Never Complete] (Edicions 62, 2003)

*Els jugadors de whist* [The Whist Players] (Empúries, 2009)

### SHORT FICTION

*El poeta i altres contes* [The Poet and Other Stories] (Proa, 2005)

### NON-FICTION

*Un tramvia anomenat text* [A Streetcar Named Text] (Empúries, 1998)

*De Robinson Crusoe a Peter Pan. Un cànon de literatura juvenil* [From Robinson Crusoe to Peter Pan. A Canon of Children’s Literature] (Proa, 2006)

## Latest Works in Translation

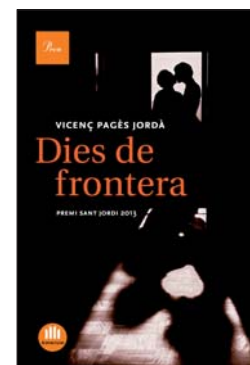
ENGLISH “Continental” in *New Catalan Fiction*, tr. R.R. Phillips. Dalkey Archive Press, 2008.

GERMAN “Senyora Flock” in *Willkommen in Katalonien. Eine literarische Entdeckungsreise*, tr. S. Simon. DTV, 2007.

SPANISH *La dicha no es completa* [La felicitat no és completa]. El Aleph, 2004.

*De Robinson Crusoe a Peter Pan. Un cànon de literatura juvenil* [De Robinson Crusoe a Peter Pan. Un cànon de literatura juvenil], tr. F. Tobar. Ariel, 2009.

*Los jugadores de whist* [Els jugadors de whist], tr. F. Company. JP LIBROS, 2010.



Editorial Proa, 2014  
328 pages

## Rights

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Sergi Pàmies

# Songs of Love and Rain

Cançons d'amor i de pluja



## Love in all its states: liquid, solid and gas

This slender book is comprised of twenty-six short stories that are linked by love in all its strangeness and tenderness. They reflect on the vulnerability and absurd rituals of adult life, touching on such subjects as the death of one's parents, random encounters with sobbing strangers, emotional and intellectual inheritances, awkward social situations, marriage and the inner life of a pet turtle.

Structured into four parts, these tales are told in succinct, charged prose that straddles the line between mordacity and melancholy, as well as the line between fiction and autobiography. They come together to create a mosaic of the small details that define us.

Sergi Pàmies was born in Paris to parents in exile and moved to Barcelona at the age of eleven. Best known for his short stories, he is also a novelist, scriptwriter for television and radio, and a translator from the French. His many awards include the City of Barcelona Prize, the Prudenci Bertrana and the *Serra d'Or*.

“If he'd had any energy left, he would have liked to bargain with death, offering up all the love he had in exchange for living a bit longer. Even if that meant living without love.”

### Selected Works

#### NOVEL

*L'instint* [Instinct] (Quaderns Crema, 1992)

*Sentimental* [Sentimental] (Quaderns Crema, 1996)

#### SHORT FICTION

*T'hauria de caure la cara de vergonya* [You Should Be Ashamed of Yourself] (Quaderns Crema, 1986)

*L'últim llibre de Sergi Pàmies* [Sergi Pàmies' Latest Book] (Quaderns Crema, 2000)

*Si menges una llimona sense fer ganyotes* [If You Eat a Lemon Without Pulling a Face] (Quaderns Crema, 2006)

### Latest Works in Translation

FRENCH *La bicyclette statique* [La bicicleta estàtica], tr. E. Raillard. Actes Sud, 2011.

*Chansons d'amour et de pluie* [Cançons d'amor i de pluja], tr. E. Raillard. Jacqueline Chambon, 2014.

GERMAN *Der große Roman über Barcelona* [La gran novel·la de Barcelona], tr. E. Brilke. Suhrkamp. Taschenbuch, 2003.

*Wie man in eine Zitrone beisst, ohne das Gesicht zu verziehen* [Si menges una llimona sense fer ganyotes], Tr. K. Brandt. Frankfurter Verlagsanstalt, 2008.

SPANISH *La bicicleta estática* [La bicicleta estàtica], tr. S. Pàmies. Anagrama, 2007.

*Canciones de amor y de lluvia* [Cançons d'amor i de pluja], tr. S. Pàmies. Anagrama, 2014.



Quaderns Crema, 2013  
179 pages

### Rights

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Marta Rojals

# The Other

L'altra



**A quietly searing portrait of those almost forty-somethings in today's Southern Europe, those who used to consider themselves middle class.**

Anna, and the other Anna, are the protagonists of this novel set in contemporary Barcelona: the other Anna whom Anna is working so hard to keep tamped down and forgotten; the longing, hurting shadow Anna who tried to drown herself in a bottle. Anna's ability to maintain control proves to be as elusive as a decent job in today's Spain, as her long-term boyfriend Nel gets downsized, his sister moves in with them, and her own steady freelance gig threatens to become not so steady. She takes refuge—from the tedium of her relationship and the uncertainty of her future—in an affair with a young skater boy, but once she's loosened her tight grip on the reins all sorts of ghosts from her past emerge.

In highly realistic language, punctuated by the instant messages and chats that fill our modern days, this wise, deceptively simple book offers an emotional x-ray of what it means to be a certain age in a certain Europe: the jaded Southern Europe of today.

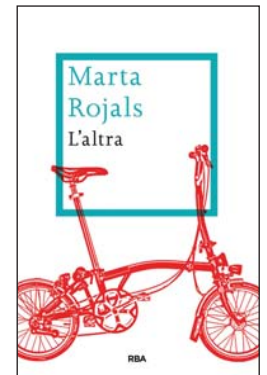
“Delegating empathy in a click is one of the few tasks she enjoys delegating. She clicks ‘Like’ because it’s the right thing to do, because everyone likes liking, because liking is good. Anna aspires to a future without risks, to being pilot of a flight simulator.”

Marta Rojals (La Palma d'Ebre, 1975), with just two novels, has already become a literary phenomenon in Catalonia. Her first novel, winner of the 2011 *Exhaurim-lo!* Prize and finalist for the Crexells, sold out three editions in just four months. *L'altra* has confirmed her status as both a darling of critics and readers, and was the top seller in Catalan fiction for Sant Jordi, a local holiday where books and roses are the traditional gifts.

## Selected Works

NOVEL  
*Primavera, estiu, etcètera* [Spring, Summer, Etc.] (RBA, 2011)

Rights sold to Italian (Rizzoli)



RBA, 2014  
336 pages

**Rights**  
RBA  
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Toni Sala

# The Boys

Els nois



## The unexpected death of two young men turns everyone into a survivor

Set in and around the small town of Vidreres, this novel begins with the death of two brothers and is composed of four stories linked in unexpected ways. Those we meet there—a bank employee, truckers, prostitutes, frustrated landowners and their heirs—are all rattling at the doors of their respective cages, hunting for meaning and their place in the hierarchy of contemporary rural life. This psychological meditation on death, sex and family is written in lyrical prose that often employs interior monologues, holding up the brothers' death as a soul mirror. The shock waves that ripple through the town leave no one untouched, with tension mounting in the closing pages for the final reveal.

Toni Sala (Sant Feliu de Guíxols, 1969) is a professor of Catalan literature and a prolific writer who publishes both prose and scholarly essays. His novel *Rodalies* earned him both the 2004 Sant Joan Prize and the National Literature Prize. In 2005 he was awarded the National Literature Prize by the Catalan government.

“They died so young they took the whole town’s life with them, the truck driver must have thought.”

### Selected Works

#### NOVEL

*Pere Marín* [Pere Marín] (Edicions 62, 1998)  
*Rodalies* [Outskirts] (Edicions 62, 2004)  
*Marina* [Marina] (Edicions 62, 2010)  
*Provisionalitat* [Temporariness] (Empúries, 2012)

#### NON-FICTION

*Petita crònica d'un professor a secundària* [Brief Chronicle of a Secondary School Teacher] (Edicions 62, 2001)

### Latest Works in Translation

SPANISH *Crònica de un profesor en secundaria: el mundo de la enseñanza desde dentro* [Petita crònica d'un professor de secundària], tr. E. Muñoz. Península, 2002.

*Cercanías* [Rodalies], tr. Z. de Torres. EL Aleph, 2004.

*Voces. Antología de narrativa catalana contemporánea.* [Voices. An Anthology of Contemporary Catalan Prose] Editor: Lolita Bosch, tr. A. Carreras, T. Juste. Anagrama, 2010.

GERMAN *Zwischenland* [Rodalies], tr. M. Lübcke. A1 Verlag, 2008.

*Willkommen in Katalonien*, tr. H. Weiss, K. Brandt, P. Zickmann, R. Friedlein, T. Moser, C. Frei, C. Braun, F. Savelsberg, R. Ulbrich, S. Schmid and S. Simon. DTV, 2007.



L'Altra Editorial, 2014  
179 pages

### Rights

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Joan Todó

# The First Horizon

L'horitzó primer



## An edifying journey to right back where he started from

A 35-year-old writer moves back in with his parents, in his small town in the delta region of the Ebro River, because he can't find work in the capital. He finds himself both a native and a foreigner in his hometown in this reverse journey of discovery. Asked to deliver the inaugural speech for the town's annual festivities, he muses on how to sum up the place, its history and his relationship to it. As he walks and smokes he reflects on urban versus rural life, on the weight of one's roots, and on the irony of this honor when he feels he's returning as a failure.

This contemplative, intimate novel beautifully captures the cadence of this region on the border of Valencia. Most notable, though, is the split narrator who warns us from the very first lines that while many people confuse the two, the Writer and the Protagonist are not one and the same. The former frequently addresses the latter directly in a poignant and humorous second person singular, to reproach his shortcomings and remind him who is responsible for the success he takes the credit for.

Joan Todó holds a degree in Literary Theory and Comparative Literature from the Universitat Autònoma in Barcelona. He has published two volumes of

“You imagine what it would be like to live in a small town again, see the same faces each day, survey the same horizon each morning. You and I both know that, despite its small size, you'll always find something compelling in La Sénia; even though you didn't start to really feel you were from there until you left, until outsiders began to identify you that way.”

poetry and a critically acclaimed collection of short stories. This book about his hometown grew out of a series of essays about La Sénia in *L'Avenç*.

### Selected Works

#### POETRY

*Los fòssils (al ras)* [Fossils (On the Surface)]  
(La Breu edicions, 2007)

*El fàstic que us cega* [The Disgust That Blinds You]  
(La Breu edicions, 2012)

#### SHORT FICTION

*A butxacades* [Pocketsful] (Labreu, 2011)



*L'Avenç*, 2013  
184 pages

### Rights

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Núria Iceta  
niceta@lavenc.cat

# Grants

## Literature and the Humanities

### **Translation Grants**

Grants for the translation of Catalan fiction, non-fiction and scholarly works into other languages, to assist publishers of those works in covering translation costs.

Recipients: Publishers.

### **Grants for the Promotion of Catalan Fiction, Non-fiction and Scholarly Works**

Grants for activities promoting Catalan fiction, non-fiction and scholarly works abroad, including: participation in international literary festivals; literary activities within the framework of cultural events; presentations and promotional plans for new works in translation; monographic pieces in cultural journals; and providing information on authors.

Recipients: Institutions, Publishers, Literary Agencies.

### **Travel Grants for Writers and Translators**

Travel grants for writers and translators to participate in activities abroad: events publicizing new published works in translation; literary festivals and fairs; seminars on literary translation; presentation of talks and lectures at international academic conferences.

Recipients: Writers, Translators and Illustrators.

### **Residence Programs for Literary Translators**

Grants for translators with commissioned translations in progress of Catalan literary works, for working stays in Catalonia lasting between two and six weeks.

Recipients: Translators.

### **Grants for the Publication of Children's and Youth Literature**

Grants for the publication abroad of works illustrated by Catalan artists.

Recipients: Publishers.

### **Grants for the Organization of Seminars abroad**

Grants directed to universities in Catalan-speaking areas to organize seminars and activities focused on the Humanities and Social Sciences, to be held outside of Catalan-speaking areas.

Recipients: Universities and Academic Centers Linked to Universities in Catalan-speaking Areas.

The IRL attends the following book fairs: Frankfurt, Göteborg, London, Paris, Roma and the Children's Book Fair in Bologna, providing information about its services.

Catalan Culture was Guest of Honour at Turin (2003), Guadalajara (2004), Frankfurt (2007) and Göteborg (2014). The city of Barcelona was Guest of Honour in Paris (2013).

English translations of works by the selected authors are available upon request.

Please contact us for further information:

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