

New Catalan Fiction 2013-2014



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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.

Blanca Busquets

The House of Silence

La casa del silenci



Melodies of the heart

A violin lost and found is the thread that winds through this tightly-crafted suspense story of love across class lines. This engaging novel is told in alternating voices, revealing the perspectives and true motivations of three women and one man, bound together by music and their relationship with a charismatic orchestra director who emigrated to Barcelona from behind the Iron Curtain. The love of music they share is tempered by ambition, envy and greed, which simmer to a crescendo on the evening of a classical concert in Berlin, when the presence of an old lady in the audience makes some members of the orchestra very nervous.

Who is the rightful owner of this exquisite violin? What is more important in a musician: mastering technique or playing from the depths of their heart? And, as secrets come to light, how far will some people go to seek revenge?

Set between Germany and Spain throughout the 20th century, this romantic page-turner keeps readers guessing until the final revelation, a love letter to seek beyond the grave.

Blanca Busquets (Barcelona, 1961) is a writer and a radio journalist. She began writing at the age of 12 and has now published six novels, including the winner of the 2011 Catalan Booksellers' Prize.

“Well, if you don't want me to put so much of my soul into it, why did you ask me to play’, I said one day in exasperation. He looked into my eyes and responded, ‘because it’s easier to take out a little bit of soul than to add it in where it’s lacking’.”

Selected Works

NOVEL

Presó de Neu [Prison of Snow] (Proa, 2003)

El jersei [The Pullover] (Rosa dels Vents, 2006)

Tren a Puigcerdà [Train to Puigcerdà] (Rosa dels Vents, 2007)

Vés a saber on és el cel [Heaven Knows Where the Sky Is] (Rosa dels Vents, 2009)

La nevada del cucut [The Last Snow] (Rosa dels Vents, 2010)

Latest Works in Translation

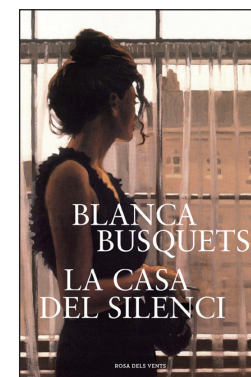
RUSSIAN *Свитер* [El jersei], tr. E. Gushchina. Inostranka, 2008

GERMAN *Die Woll-Lust der Maria Dolors* [El jersei], tr. U. Bachhausen. DTV, 2011.
Bis dass der Zufall uns vereint [Vés a saber on és el cel], tr. U. Bachhausen. DTV, 2011.

SPANISH *A saber dónde está el cielo* [Vés a saber on és el cel], tr. C. Rodríguez Juiz. Plaza & Janés, 2009.

ITALIAN *L'ultima neve di primavera* [La nevada del cucut], tr. G. Tavani, Piemme, 2013

Rights sold to Spanish (Grijalbo / Random House Mondadori), Norwegian (Cappelen Damm).



Rosa dels Vents, 2013
236 pages

Rights

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Núria Cadenes

The Banker

El banquer



A mosaic portrait of a man without scruples

Short scenes, flashes, snippets of life come together in this stunning work of pastiche to offer us a portrait of a banker that is multifaceted, complex and as contradictory as life itself. Quick chapters, concise sentences and the silences between them pull the reader into a dense and sordid atmosphere marked by betrayal. In the Majorca of the first half of the 20th century, Miquel Lluc is a banker whose ambition and lack of scruples will make him a legend.

Cadenes portrays this fascinating character in a collage that often surprises, incorporating biographical details of real characters like the bankers with ones borrowed from literature to form a powerful mosaic. With a masterful hand, Cadenes reminds us that we are all sometimes moved by impulses we would be hard pressed to classify.

Núria Cadenes (Barcelona, 1970) lives in Valencia, where she works as a bookseller and a journalist in addition to writing. Her work of short fiction, *AZ* earned her both the City of Elx Prize and the Valencian Critics' Award.

“But there isn’t enough. He has to have a custom-built castle. Impregnable. Worthy. When the time is right, when he finds the place, he’ll have it made.”

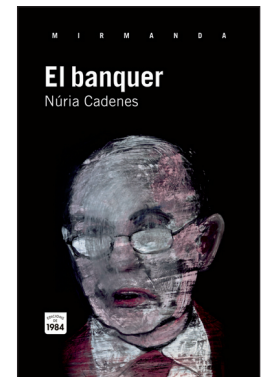
Selected Works

NOVEL

El cel de les oques [Sky of the Geese] [Columna, 1999]

SHORT FICTION

AZ [AZ] (Edicions 3i4, 2009)



Edicions de 1984, 2013
237 pages

Rights

Edicions de 1984
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Josefa Contijoch

Breathless

Sense alè



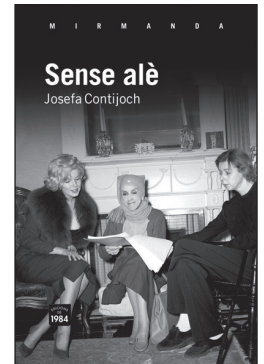
Sumptuous prose for tumultuous times

Part literary fiction, part existential autobiography, *Sense alè* confounds category. The emotional shock of a friend's violent death at her husband's hand is the detonator for a series of possible scenarios for the murder suicide – each written in a different literary style – that serve as a leitmotif for the poet's ruminative reflections on the last half-century of Catalan cultural life. Contijoch grew up in a town in the countryside, with no awareness of the future. When she began to write poems they came easily to her, perhaps a disgorging of all the high and low culture she devoured in her parents' bookshop and the local cinema. Her honeysuckle-drenched childhood memories give way to the 60s, to the ideological radicalism that was a path of no return, like her decision to switch from writing in Spanish to writing in Catalan.

Must reality be written down in order to become real? What are the casual links that bind a life together? Contijoch addresses these questions in a highly original, highly personal way, stringing together what she refers to as "footnotes to life". Her prose is that of a true poet, captivating and bordering on the magical, yet at the same time wonderfully down to earth.

"...if there's anything compromising, it's words. We were set aflame by the fire of historical creation: we were changing the world. In that moment, everything was eternity. The world, buzzing lover, launched long lances."

Josefa Contijoch (Manlleu, 1940, "the year of the flood") is a writer of poetry and prose, as well as an essayist and translator. Among her numerous awards are the 2013 City of Barcelona Prize and the Serra d'Or Critics' Award for *Sense alè*. She is a member of the Writers' Committee of the Catalan Centre of PEN Club.



Edicions de 1984, 2013
185 pages

Selected Works

La dona líquida [The Liquefied Woman] [Columna, 1990]
Tòrrida tardor [Torrid Autumn] [El Mèdol, 1997]
Els dies infinits [Infinite Days] [Columna, 2001]

POETRY

Les lentes Il·lusions [Slow illusions] (Ed. 62, 2001)
Congesta [Snowdrift] (Ed. 62, 2007)

Rights

Edicions de 1984
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Manel de la Rosa

Each Colour of a River

Cada color d'un riu



Our scars show us just how far we've come

Àlex and Minkara, two loner children, finally find in each other a truly special bond, and this connection is seared into their psyches by a tragic triple murder that also leads to their separation. They are forcibly pulled apart from their embrace and won't see each other again for ten years. Àlex's letters to Minkara go unanswered, but his feelings for her remain as if trapped in amber.

The title's myriad colours of a river represent the spectrum of ways we can choose to deal with the traumas of our past. Àlex opts for the path of oblivion. When he is finally reunited with Minkara, a decade later, he is excited at the prospect of picking up where they left off, now as adults. Minkara, however, has been unable to recover the part of her that was lost that fateful day and before long Àlex learns that she has grown dangerously obsessed with revenge.

This dynamic, fast-paced novel explores the role of our childhood experiences in our present and poses the question of whether it is possible to save someone else. Àlex and Minkara share a bond that transcends death, and readers will also find it stays with them long after they've closed the book.

“My father didn't believe in prophecies. But if I'd known those verses when I was reunited with Minkara, I would've had faith in them, in that good luck that was my birthright. Despite what had happened that third of August. I would've clung to anything that allowed me to believe that Minkara and I, ten years after our separation, could have a chance. That my luck would expand and shield her as well. Sometimes, song lyrics turn out to be prophetic. Sometimes they're just words that rhyme.”



Edicions del Periscopi, 2012
245 pages

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gency.com

Manel de la Rosa (Barcelona, 1961) is a teacher at the Creative Writing School of the Ateneu in Barcelona, and a luthier of electric guitars. This, his first novel, earned him the 2012 FNAC New Talent Award (Spain).

Edicions del Periscopi
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Alba Dedeu

Summer Never Ends

L'estiu no s'acaba mai



Nine haunting, atmospheric stories

Like a misty fog, the stories that make up this collection suggest more than they dictate. Behind fairly commonplace events – nothing more momentous than a wake, a handball tournament and some marital infidelities – throbs the secret heart of these tales, oozing between the lines. Dedeu's gaze lingers on the intersections between humans, all that is left unsaid, the distances that arise unconsciously over time, the glue that binds us together. The plots are almost beside the point in these ambient, evocative stories that dazzle in their economy and are as subtly enigmatic as life itself.

Dedeu's elegant, subdued prose seduces and accompanies the reader on a shared journey that is both compelling and strangely comforting, even while it offers no answers.

Alba Dedeu (Granollers, 1984) studied medicine in Barcelona and Florence, and works as a literary translator. Her latest translation is *Una donna*, by Sibilla Aleramo. She has adapted authors such as Bernat Metge and J. Sans i Miret to current Catalan. Her first book, *Gats al parc* (2011), earned her both the Mercè Rodoreda Short Story Prize and the Serra d'Or Critics' Award.

“Maybe he wouldn't care, she thought perversely; maybe he'd walk right past the two intertwined bodies, glance inside the pot and say, 'Bah, lentils again! Bah, lentils!' [...] Luckily the sound of the extractor fan covered up their rhythmic moaning. Luckily, too, the sink was clean and the vegetables shined on the marble, the eggplants swollen and dark, the zucchini long and svelte, the tomatoes small and furiously red; luckily the cherry tree was drawing near the window, and there were birds coming and going and pecking at the fruit, squawking, frenetic, heady with all the sweetness. The scene could have been much more sordid, she told herself [...]”



Proa, 2012
195 pages

Selected Works

SHORT FICTION

Gats al parc, [Cats in the Park] (Proa, 2011)

Rights

Grup 62

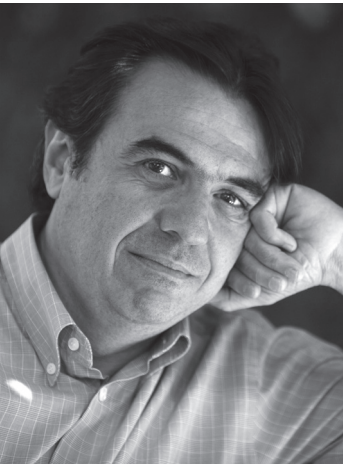
Pilar Lafuente

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Martí Domínguez

The Failure

El fracassat



The loneliness of a radical, misunderstood and truly innovative artist

The life of Paul Cezanne wasn't easy. He refused to become a banker like his father, and rejected all the trappings of middle-class life in order to devote himself fully to his quest for artistic authenticity on his own terms. He married a model of humble origins and felt the need to keep their child a secret. Cezanne's dogged insistence on creative integrity above all other concerns meant that he was plagued by money problems and constantly having to defend his choices. Domínguez finds in Cezanne the epitome of the true artist, and in this novel inspired by the Impressionist's life, he depicts him as a true non-conformist, his choices setting him apart from society. In the salons of Paris and setting up their easels beside the Seine, this book is filled with the artists of a vibrant era, most notably Cezanne's friends Camille Pissarro and Émile Zola.

Martí Domínguez (Madrid, 1966) is a writer and a journalist, who holds a doctorate in Biology, is a journalism professor at the University of Valencia and the director of the science magazine *Mètode*. Among his numerous awards are the National Journalism Prize and the Josep Pla Prize for *El retorn de Voltaire*.

“A painter is an interpreter of reality, and therein lies the beauty of art. There are no two identical landscapes, just as there are no two identical men.”

Selected Works

NOVEL

Les confidències del comte de Buffon [The Confidences of the Count of Buffon] (Eliseu Climent / 3i4, 1997)
El secret de Goethe [Goethe's Secret] (Edicions 62, 1999)
El retorn de Voltaire [Voltaire's Return] (Destino, 2007)

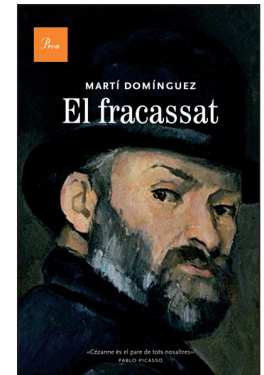
SHORT FICTION

Bestiari [Bestiary] (Eliseu Climent / 3i4, 2000)

Latest Works in Translation

SPANISH *El regreso de Voltaire* (El retorn de Voltaire), tr. M. Domínguez. Destino, 2007

Las confidencias del conde de Buffon: una época de la naturaleza [Les confidències del comte de Buffon], tr. A. Cardona. Península, 1999



Proa, 2013
272 pages

Rights

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Llucia Ramis

All that Died One Afternoon with the Bicycles

Tot allò que una tarda morí amb les bicicletes



Diving into the sea of the past to stay afloat in the present

Llucia Ramis has always been a chronicler of her generation, but the dating and beers with friends have now given way to a more mature reflection on our present moment, and its emotional underpinnings. Ramis, both the author and the protagonist, is a cultural journalist who finds herself single, unemployed and back at her parents' house in Palma at thirty-five. In an attempt to explain what she sees as her lack of a future the author investigates her family history. Coming to terms with the diminished opportunities available to her leads her to an examination of the myths we buy into and to a voyage of discovery to the lives of her great-great-grandparents and her own childhood on the island of Majorca.

In a deceptively straightforward style, Ramis tells of the family zinc mining business, of how her Belgian mother met her father, using her and her family's experiences as a lens through which to reflect much larger themes such as the passage of time and the ties of love that bind families together. Ramis draws parallels between our childhood beliefs and the conscious lies we tell ourselves as adults to avoid a reality we don't want to accept, exploring the idea that perhaps these lies are necessary to maintain the hope that gives meaning to our actions.

“My mother’s generation was led to believe they could reach the moon. Mine has confirmed more than once that dreams blow up live on television.”

Llucia Ramis (Palma, 1977) grew up in Majorca and moved to Barcelona when she was eighteen to study journalism. She is a columnist for *El Mundo* and *El Periódico*. Her second novel, *Egosurfing*, earned her the Josep Pla Award in 2010.

Selected Works

NOVEL

Coses que et passen a Barcelona quan tens trenta anys [Things that Happen to You in Barcelona When You're Thirty] (Columna, 2008)
Egosurfing [Egosurfing] (Destino, 2010)

Latest Works in Translation

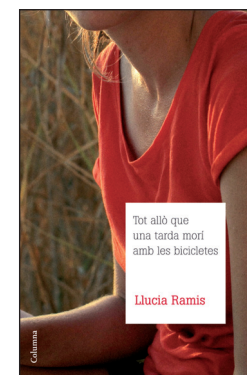
SPANISH *Egosurfing* [Egosurfing], tr. A. Vitó i Godina. Destino, 2010

Voces. Antología de narrativa catalana contemporánea. Editor: Lolita Bosch, tr. A. Carreras and T. Juste. Anagrama, 2010.

SLOVENIAN

Egosurfing [Egosurfing], V. Rot. Učila International, 2012

Rights sold to Spanish (Libros del Asteriode)



Columna, 2013
223 pages

Rights

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Carme Riera

Time of Innocence

Temps d'innocència



A moving window onto a lost world, through the keen eyes of a child

The poet Jaime Gil de Biedma claimed that nothing important happens after the age of twelve, or at least nothing as important as what had happened up until then. This memoir takes that one step further, focusing only on Carme Riera's first ten years of life, those years of innocence in which the novelty of our feelings makes us intensely aware of them. Here one of our most acclaimed authors takes us on a journey both inside herself and back to the Majorca of the 1950s. We get a privileged glimpse at the island before it was overrun by mass tourism, a world of olive groves on the shores of the Mediterranean, where the trees sing the waves to sleep. A world of magic and traditions, of nuns and the fear of eternal hellfire, the world in which Carme Riera learned to read.

In vivid prose she describes the deepest roots of her literature, shifting the "kaleidoscope of the past" to offer us a unique, lyrical look at a simpler, bygone era, the sounds and scents of her "lost paradise".

Carme Riera (Palma de Mallorca, 1948) is a writer and a professor of Spanish literature specialising in 20th-century poetry and women's literature. She was awarded the Ministry of Culture's National Literature Prize in 2001, and the Sant Jordi Prize. She is member of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language.

"I shifted the kaleidoscope of the past, composing images which I later turned into cherries and placed in a basket and, as cherries are wont to do, they became all entwined."

Selected Works

NOVEL

Dins el darrer blau [In the Last Blue]
(Destino, 1994)

Cap al cel obert [Toward the Open Sky] (Destino, 2000)

La meitat de l'ànima [Half a Soul] (Proa, 2004)

L'estiu de l'anglès [The English Summer] (Proa, 2006)

Natura quasi morta [Almost Still Life] (Edicions 62, 2011)

SHORT FICTION

Jo pos per testimoni les gavines [I Call the Seagulls as My Witness] (Laia, 1977)

Latest Works in Translation

ENGLISH *In the Last Blue* [Dins el darrer blau],
tr. J. Dunne. Overlook Press, 2007.

FRENCH *Vers l'azur infini* [Dins el darrer blau],
tr. A. Charlon. Éditions Autrement, 2012.

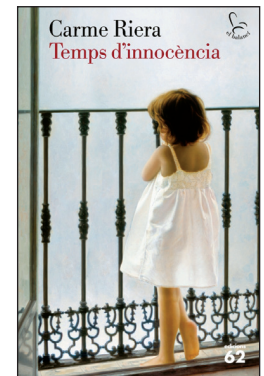
GERMAN *Der englische Sommer* [L'estiu de l'anglès],
tr. K. Brandt. Ullstein, 2007.

HEBREW *Betokhakhí hakakhol haakharon* [Dins el darrer blau],
tr. I. Ron. Bambook Publishers, 2007.

TURKISH *Maviligin Sonunda* [Dins el darrer blau],
tr. S. Kiliç. Alef, 2012.

Her work has also been translated into Italian (Fazi), Arabic (Saad Warzazi Éditions), Portuguese (Teorema) and Spanish (Alfaguara).

Rights sold to Spanish (Alfaguara)



Edicions 62, 2013
236 pages

Rights

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Toni Sala

Temporariness

Provisionalitat



Taking the moral high ground isn't always the most moral choice

The two novellas that comprise this volume are each told by men looking back on their lives as a way to measure where they are now. The former is told in the first person by a middle-aged man and the latter in the third person by an older one, but you will find that the voice sounds unmistakably like the one inside your own head. Sala manages to insert his characters there with a prose so universal that their foibles become yours. You will feel complicit in their reflections on jealousy, youthful egotism and the passing of time, the ephemeral nature of life and the difficulty of being truly present for it, even though their details – a man on a nostalgic detour to his grandparent's funereal niches and a thwarted romantic weekend from his college days and a retired dentist awoken to introspection by his wife's unexpected diagnosis with brain cancer, leading him to reconsider having cut off ties with his brother – don't coincide with yours in the slightest. And, through this identification, you will come away with a subtle new layer of appreciation for your own life.

Toni Sala (Sant Feliu de Guíxols, 1969) is a writer and a professor of Catalan literature. His teaching experiences were the spark for his best-selling essay *Crònica d'un professor de secundària*. His novel *Rodalies* earned him both the 2004 Sant Joan Prize and the National Literature Prize.

“The passing years have tempered my jealousy.”

Selected Works

NOVEL

Pere Marín [Pere Marín] (Edicions 62, 1998)

Rodalies [Outskirts] (Edicions 62, 2004)

Marina, [Marina] (Edicions 62, 2010)

SHORT FICTION

Autoestop, [Hitchhiking] (Edicions 62, 2007)

NON-FICTION

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

Quatre dies a l'Àfrica [Four Days in Africa] (Edicions 62, 2005)

Comelade, *Casasses*, *Perejaume*, [Comelade, Casasses, Perejaume] (Edicions 62, 2006)

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. 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



Empúries, 2012
139 pages

Rights

Grup 62
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Carles Terès

Lycanthropy

Licantropia



A seductive journey to the dark side of human nature

Llorenç, a photographer from Barcelona is drawn to a woman from the Catalan-Aragonese borderlands, where he also has family ties. Once they are happily married and living there, he finds himself pulled by forces that, while strange and inexplicable, aren't altogether unpleasant. It's as if something in his blood is calling to him, something that ties him to this land and to a caste with an ancient secret: the *lobaters*, men who charged local ranchers to drive out the wolves that plagued their flocks, basically wolf-whisperers. The 18th-century manuscript Llorenç's Aunt Encarna gives him and his brother-in-law's violent death make it all too clear that the feelings he's having are not just the product of an overactive imagination.

Licantropia has the satisfying pace of a gothic thriller. Weighing impulse against reason, science against nature, Llorenç and his wife call into question the very concept of "normalcy" and come to appreciate the dark areas in the evolution of the species.

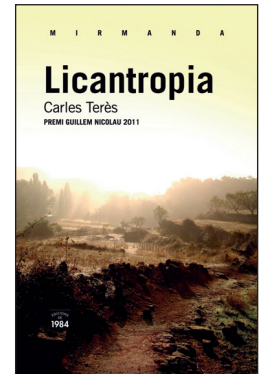
Terès's first novel is gripping and lucid in its treatment of those shady regions of our animal nature, and his deft use of dialect transports the reader into the hinterlands and reveals the gothic side of the present.

“‘What?’

‘I experienced an episode of... lycanthropy.’
Laura moved to take his hand but, on reflex,
he pulled it away.

‘It was terrible.’ He shifted his gaze toward the
Prats valley. ‘It was terrible because I liked it. A lot.’”

Carles Terès (Barcelona, 1962) is a graphic designer who has always also written, publishing articles and short stories over the years. *Licantropia*, his first novel, was the winner of the 2011 Guillem Nicolau Prize.



Edicions de 1984, 2013
252 pages

Rights

Edicions de 1984
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Roger Vilà

Boundaries

Marges



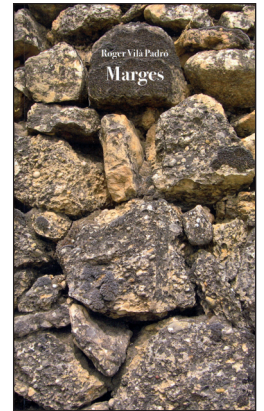
A meditative tribute to the rural lifestyle of the Priorat

Menna is a forty-year-old man who is still searching for his place in the world, on the cusp between youth and maturity. Three years following the death of his wife, he has yet to find peace. This leads him to a retreat in the land of his father, the Priorat region. When asked what brings him there, he says he is studying the “boundaries” that define the landscape: the dry wall stone structures used in this mountainous area to terrace the land for agriculture. He immerses himself in the peacefulness of the land, in a determined effort to bring tranquility to his own spirit, to become one with the geography itself. To that end, he strolls through the countryside and the vineyards, meets up with friends from the summers he’s spent there, takes photographs, reads and writes. Above all, Menna reflects. On his role within the landscape, on the meaning of these boundaries: as roots, as transformation, as echoed in the dialect of the region, as a declaration of principles. And how we are each defined by the borders we erect.

The contemplative, introspective style of this book harkens back to an earlier time, and Vilà’s lovely, quiet tone is sensitive to the many metaphors that surround us in nature.

“This is a modest, necessary boundary. There are gestures and actions like that in life: modest, invisible, but terribly necessary. This boundary is a lesson in life.”

Roger Vilà (Sentmenat, 1968) is a Catalan language teacher, a former roller hockey player and a full-time metal head. He has been involved in numerous cultural initiatives, including the poetry series “Parauls Nocturnes” and the digital magazine *El Procés*.



Barcino, 2013
211 pages

Rights

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The Promotion of Catalan Literature: Grants and Services

Translation grants are available for publishing companies that intend to publish in translation literary, non-fiction and scholarly works originally written in Catalan. The grant is intended solely to cover, or partly cover, the translation costs.

Illustrated children's books. International publishing companies are welcome to apply for subsidies to cover the illustrator's honorarium.

Grants for initiatives aiming at the promotion and circulation of Catalan literary, non-fiction and scholarly works abroad. Publishing companies, literary agencies, private non-profit organisations and literary and/or cultural journals may request grants for activities to promote Catalan literature that are organised outside the Catalan-speaking areas: participation in festivals, introduction of new titles in translation, articles in magazines, etc.

Travel grants for authors. Writers of Catalan literary, non-fiction and scholarly works who are invited to take part in literary activities outside Catalan-speaking areas may request assistance to cover travel expenses.

Residency grants for translators. This grant is addressed to translators presently translating a Catalan literary work who wish to spend between two and six weeks in Catalonia while working on the translation.

The IRL also provides information about Catalan literature: if you would like to know which works of Catalan literature have been translated into other languages you are welcome to visit our database – **TRAC** – at our website www.llull.cat/trac. You can also find information and contacts on literary translators from Catalan at **TRALICAT**: www.llull.cat/tralicat.

Should you need information about who handles the rights of the work you wish to publish, or if you wish to contact Catalan publishers or literary agents, please do not hesitate to contact us.

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

Catalan Culture was Guest of Honour at Turin (2003), Guadalajara (2004) and Frankfurt (2007). The city of Barcelona was Guest of Honour in Paris (2013). The *Voices from Catalonia* programme will be held in Göteborg 2014.

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

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The Institut Ramon Llull is a public institution established by the Government of Catalonia in 2002 with the aim of promoting the Catalan language and culture through encouraging artistic and cultural exchanges, and providing support for the study of Catalan language and culture at university level.

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