



6 Catalan Authors

At PEN World Voices Festival '08

Priv **Public Lives**

Private Lives



AN EVENING OF POETRY

With Joan Margarit
and Philip Levine
Thursday, May 1
7:00 p.m.

Housing Works
Bookstore
126 Crosby Street, N.Y.



THEATRE AND POETRY: VISIONS AND METAPHOR

With Kristín Ómarsdóttir
and Angels Aymar
Thursday, May 1
7-9 p.m.

Martin E. Segal Theatre
CUNY Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue



READING THE WORLD

With Janet Malcolm,
Halldan Freihow, Peter
Carey and Francesc Serés
Friday, May 2
1-2 p.m.

Scandinavian House
58 Park Avenue



READINGS FROM EUROPE AND MEXICO

With Coral Bracho, Arnon
Grunberg, Andrés Ibáñez,
Carme Riera, and P.F.Thomése
Friday, May 2
1-2 p.m.

Instituto Cervantes
211-215 East 49th Street



LEARNING TO SPEAK

With Jean Hatzfeld, Xiaolu
Guo, Halldan Freihow, and
Carme Riera
Saturday, May 3
5-6:15 p.m.

The French Institute,
Alliance Française
FIAF: Tinker Auditorium
55 East 59th Street



DISCOVER NEW CATALAN FICTION

With Colum McCann, Jaume
Subirana, Mercè Ibarz, Josep
M. Fonalleras and Francesc
Serés
Saturday, May 3
8:00 p.m.

Lillian Vernon Creative
Writers House at NYU,
58W. 10th St., NY.

6 Catalan Authors
at PEN World Voices
Festival 2008
April 29-May 4

Catalan Literature, Old and New

Jaume Subirana

Jaume Subirana (www.jaumesubirana.com)
is a writer and scholar. He has recently edited
New Catalan Fiction for Dalkey Archive Press.

What would you say is “el mejor libro del mundo?” In Cervantes’ famous work, *Don Quixote* awards this title to *Tirant lo Blanc* by Joanot Martorell - one of the gems of 15th-century Catalan literature. A few months ago, during the opening in Frankfurt of the largest book fair in the world, another writer reduced an audience of hundreds of publishers and literary agents (with a front line full of presidents and ministers) to laughter with his speech. The author of the speech, Quim Monzó, recited a popular Catalan tongue-twister in reflection of his own amazement as representative of the guest of honor (Catalan culture) at the Fair, which broke for once with the implacable logic of a world of official countries. So, with five centuries setting them apart, what do *Tirant lo Blanc* and Quim Monzó have in common? The answer is that both are outstanding representatives of Catalan literature - the literature written in a romance language with a thousand years of history; sister of Portuguese, Spanish, French and Italian, alongside which it has made its way from the middle ages to the avant-garde, producing a torrent of books, theater plays, magazines and authors - a heritage that is one of the last hidden treasures of European culture. Today, everyone in the world knows where Barcelona is. Many have seen the buildings of Gaudí, the artistic genius of Dalí and Miró, and they have even heard of the cuisine of Ferran Adrià. But not everyone who knows these names is also aware that Barcelona is the great capital of Catalan culture, or that the language of Gaudí, Dalí, Miró and Adrià is Catalan - the old language of the Romanesque hermitages in the Pyrenees and of the Gothic cathedrals in Girona, Palma and Valencia, a language spoken today by several million people and written by international bestselling authors, renowned essayists and young alternative poets. Catalan was the language of the kings’ chroniclers in the 13th century; it was into Catalan that the *Divine Comedy* was translated into verse for the first time; Catalan continued to be written in France, Chile and Mexico by many of the writers who were exiled after the Spanish Civil War. In the 20th century, the novels of Mercè Rodoreda or the poetry of Salvador Espriu (both authors translated into English are international references for our literature). But today, with over 9,000 titles published in Catalan every year, it is difficult to represent this wealth and its presence in a dynamic society, an effervescent culture where design, architecture and gastronomy obviously have their own literary correlative. New Catalan Fiction reflects this wealth and also the strength of the contemporary Catalan short story where, alongside the landscapes that have made us a world tourist destination, there are new neighborhoods, immigrants, the weight of memories and the tensions of a unique society in a globalized world. Like Barcelona itself, and like Catalan art, our literature is a small but great piece of reality, always open to the events of the world and always, as the poet said, “enthralled by the new and in love with the old.” Being far from what is evident brings it close to many.

Program

6 Catalan Authors
at PEN World Voices Festival 2008
Public Lives/Private Lives

April 28th-May 4th

THURSDAY May 1

7:00 p.m.
AN EVENING OF POETRY

Housing Works Bookstore
126 Crosby Street, N.Y.

The paths of both poets, Catalan **Joan Margarit** and Californian **Philip Levine** meet at searching for universal truths, and their plain-speaking poetry is a testament to the durability of love, the strength of the human spirit and the persistence of life in the face of death. They will read from their works; Margarit will read from his book of poems, *Tugs in the Fog*.

Free and open to the public.
Cosponsored by the Institut Ramon Llull.

7-9 p.m.
**THEATRE AND POETRY:
VISIONS AND METAPHOR**

Martin E. Segal Theatre
CUNY Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue

Join playwrights **Kristín Ómarsdóttir**, from Iceland, and **Àngels Aymar**, from Catalonia, Spain, for a discussion with special readings from their work.

Free and open to the public.
No reservations.
Cosponsored by the Martin E. Segal Theatre Center, The Graduate Center, CUNY

FRIDAY May 2

1-2 p.m.
READING THE WORLD

Scandinavian House
58 Park Avenue

New Yorker staff writer and nonfiction author **Janet Malcolm** plunges us back into wartime France and the lives of Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas with a reading from her most recent book, *Two Lives*. **Halldan Freihow** offers us a more personal journey to the heart of his family and his relationship with his young son Gabriel. Booker Prize-winning novelist **Peter Carey** takes us to Australia with a reading from his just-released novel, *His Illegal Self*. **Francesc Serés** will give voice from the languages of the periphery to the uprooted, disarrayed, and neglected main characters of the works from which he will be reading.

Cosponsored by The American-Scandinavian Foundation.

1-2 p.m.
**READINGS FROM
EUROPE AND MEXICO**

Mercantile Library
17 East 47th Street

Journey across the globe as we travel from Catalonia and Spain with **Carme Riera** and **Andrés Ibáñez** to the Netherlands with **P.F. Thomése** and **Arnon Grunberg**, and finally land in Mexico with **Coral Bracho**.

Free and open to the public.
No reservations.
Cosponsored by Instituto Cervantes and the Consulate General of Spain

SATURDAY May 3

5-6:15 p.m.
LEARNING TO SPEAK

The French Institute, Alliance Française: Tinker Auditorium
55 East 59th Street

Xiaolu Guo writes of learning to speak English in her delightful and funny novel, *A Concise Chinese-English Dictionary for Lovers*. She talks about the sometimes funny, other times poignant and heartbreaking moments that occur between two people who don't always quite understand what the other is saying. **Halldan Freihow** has to place every word carefully and precisely when he speaks to his autistic son, Gabriel. The wrong word, or the right word in the wrong place, can result in severe fractures in his little boy's life. **Jean Hatzfeld**, acclaimed journalist of wartime Rwanda, has helped the traumatized people of Rwanda tell their stories. Through the works of Hatzfeld we can hear the voices of the survivors and those of the killers to better understand the tragedy of the war there. **Carme Riera**, Catalan novelist, will share different perspectives of her own experience: as a woman emerging from the Franco years, as a Catalan writer following the repression under the Spanish dictatorship, and as an author who recovered the memory of the Jews expelled from Spain in the 15th Century.

Moderated by Sam Tanenhaus of *The New York Times*.

\$12/\$8 FIAF/PEN members/students
www.Ticketmaster.com or
(212) 307-4100

Cosponsored by French Institute:
Alliance Française.

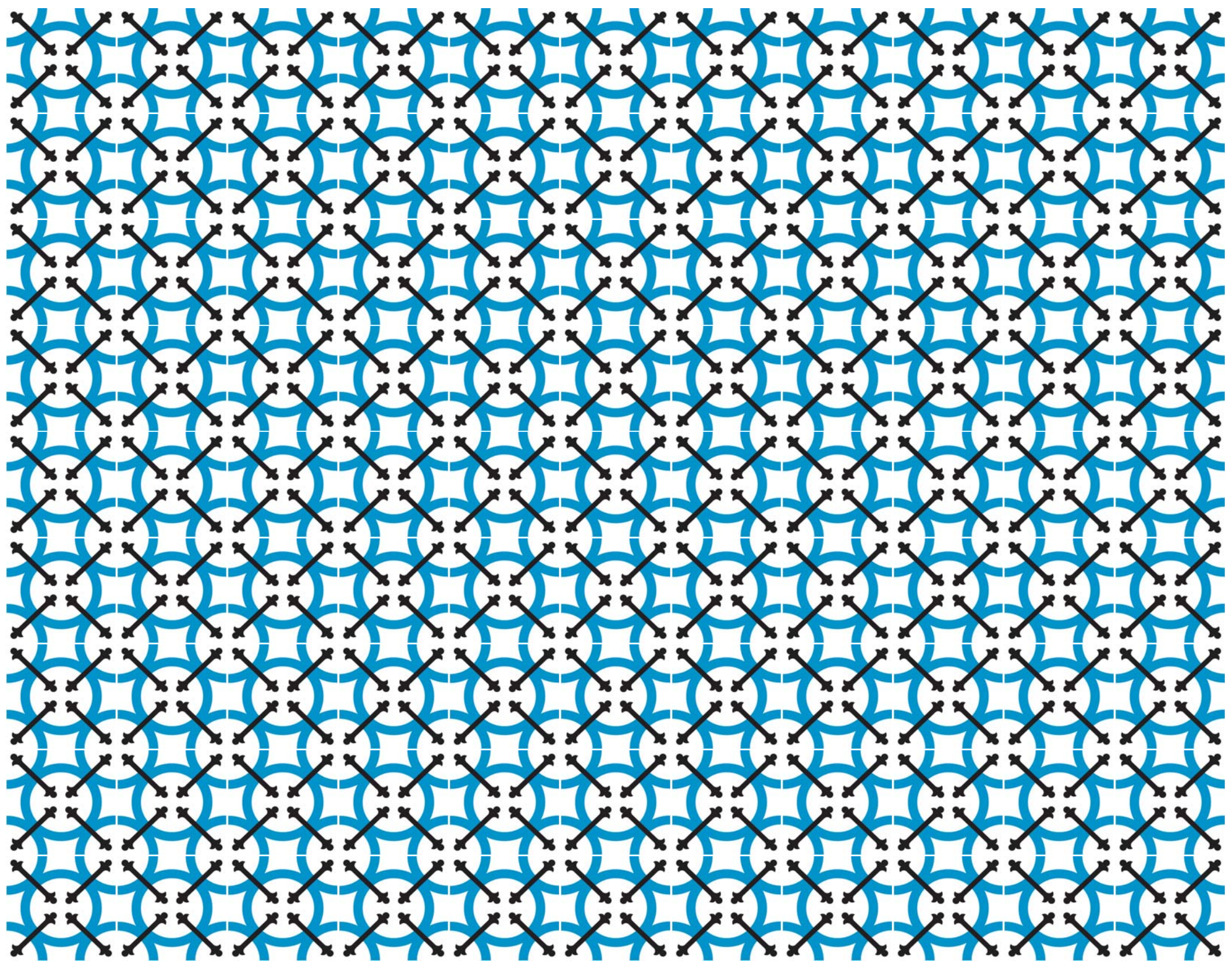
8:00 p.m.
**DISCOVER NEW
CATALAN FICTION**

Lillian Vernon Creative Writers House at NYU
58 W. 10th St., N.Y.

Launch of *New Catalan Fiction* (Dalkey Archive Press), an issue of over fifteen short stories written by a broad range of contemporary Catalan writers.

Author **Colum McCann** will introduce the event which will include a short statement by the journal's editor and **Jaume Subirana**, responsible for the selection of the texts. Writers **Mercè Ibarz**, **Josep M. Fonalleras**, and **Francesc Serés** will read brief excerpts from their works in Catalan followed by actors' readings of the English translations. The presentation will close with a short Q & A. with the authors. Moderated by **Mary Ann Newman**, director of the Catalan Center at New York University's Center for European and Mediterranean Studies.

Organized by the Institut Ramon Llull.



Àngels Aymar

Magnolia Café

Translated by Marion Peter Holt

Woman

(*Standing beside the JOURNALIST*)
Now I'll give everyone beads, and
before you leave make a wish in
front of the tree. You have to
throw the beads so that they
catch on a branch, if you want
your wish to come true.

Wife

I've left a lot of wishes hanging
on those branches.

Man

And none ever came true?

Woman

Maybe the wind blew them off, or
you didn't wish hard enough.

Wife

Maybe it was the wind . . .

Hilde

I always forget what I wish for. I
only remember the wish that
came true after I threw a coin in
the Fountain of Trevi.

Martina

And what was the wish?

Hilde

A change in my life. Afterwards
we broke up.

Senyora

(*dreta al costat del PERIODISTA*)
Ara els donaré un collaret a
cadascun, perquè abans de
marxar demanin un desig davant
de l'arbre. L'han de llençar amb
força i ha de quedar penjat d'una
de les seves branques si volen que
es compleixi.

Esposa

Jo hi he deixat molts desitjos
suspesos d'aquestes branques...

Home

I mai se li han complert?

Senyora

Potser han caigut pel vent, o no
els ha demanat amb prou
convicció.

Esposa

Potser ha estat el vent...

Hilde

Jo sempre m'oblido del que he
demanat...només en recordo un,
que se'm va complir després de
llençar una moneda a la Fontana
de Trevi.

Martina

I què vas demanar?



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Elena

I don't believe that throwing coins in a fountain or in a river, or rubbing statues with your finger, or tossing beads on a Magnolia tree can change your life . . .

Musician

Just as you can't believe in the stars affecting your life or palm reading.

Martina

I do believe in palm reading.

Martina

One is superstition and the other astrology.

Photographer

It all depends in the faith you put in it. When I was a young girl, a fortune teller told me I wouldn't have a long life. For a long time I believed that everything I did was for the last time. It was a terrible feeling, but now I can say that I've never lived so intensely as I did in those years, and I realize that it was the best part of my life. One day I ran across the fortune teller again in an airport. I was going to India

Hilde

Un canvi de vida. Després em vaig separar...

Elena

No crec que per llençar unes monedes a una font o en un riu, o per resseguir escultures amb un dit a La Gran Place, o llençar collarets al Magnòlia, et pugui canviar la vida...

Músic

Així tampoc deus creure en les estrelles, ni en les línies de la mà.

Martina

Jo en les línies de la mà sí que hi crec.

Elena

Una cosa és la superstició i l'altra l'astrologia.

Fotògrafa

Tot depèn de la fe que hi posis. Quan era jove una vident em va dir que no viuria massa anys. Durant molt de temps vaig creure que tot ho feia, per última vegada. Era una sensació terrible, però ara puc dir que mai he viscut tant intensament com en aquella època, i reconec que va ser la millor de la meua vida. Un dia fent escala en un

and she was coming back . . . I recognized her by the peculiar way she dressed . . . She didn't remember me, but I went up to her and said: "I have lived all these years in a state of anxiety and it's all your fault. You told me that I would die young." She looked deep into my eyes, deeper than anyone ever has since, and answered: "If I told you that, it's because I did see it at that moment, but within each of us there exists the strength to change the course of the river of our destiny. If you hadn't possessed that strength, you wouldn't be speaking with me today. It's been a pleasure seeing you."

Elena

Well, I think you were civilized about it. Someone else would have smashed her face after the shitty thing she did to you.

aeroport vaig trobar la vident, jo anava a l'Índia i ella en tornava... la vaig reconèixer per la peculiar forma d'anar vestida... ella no em recordava... m'hi vaig acostar i li vaig dir: «he viscut tots aquests anys amb una gran inquietud i vostè n'és la culpable. Em va dir que moriria jove». Ella em va mirar al fons dels ulls, d'una manera com crec que no m'hi ha tornat a mirar mai més ningú i em va respondre: «Si jo li vaig dir això és perquè ho vaig veure en aquell moment, però dins cadascun de nosaltres existeix la força per alterar el curs del riu del nostre destí. Si vostè no ho hagués sabut, avui no estaria parlant amb mi. M'he alegrat de veure-la»

Elena

Doncs trobo que vostè va ser prou civilitzada, una altra li trenca la cara després de la 'putada' que li va fer dient-l'hi.



Biography

AYMAR, Àngels (Barcelona, 1958)

She received a degree in Drama from the Institut de Teatre de Barcelona in 1983. She is currently resident playwright at the Teatre Nacional de Catalunya. Àngels works as an actress, playwright and theater director. She created her own company *Lunranlaltre* in 1990. As an actress, she has appeared in international and Spanish films, on Catalan TV and in plays by Oscar Wilde, Bertolt Brecht, Jean Anouilh, Michael Frayn, Woody Allen, and Marc Camoletti, among others. She has directed her own plays including *The Van*, *Brainstorm*, *Brossa in the Eyes*, and *Dalírium*. She has written twenty plays in Catalan that have been translated and published in Spanish, English, French, Romanian, German and Italian, and her work has

been presented in Europe (France, Italy, and Spain), Latin America (Mexico and the Dominican Republic), and the United States (New York and San Francisco). She has also received several awards for her playwriting. With the collaboration of the North American Embassy, Italian Culture Institute, O.I.B. of Brussels and the New Dramatist New York, she designed and coordinated the First International Interchange of Writers for the Association of Stage Creators-Project Vaca. She received a grant from the *Generalitat de Catalunya* (Catalan government) for research work on the Wilma Theater Company in Philadelphia in 1992.

Selected works in translation

English

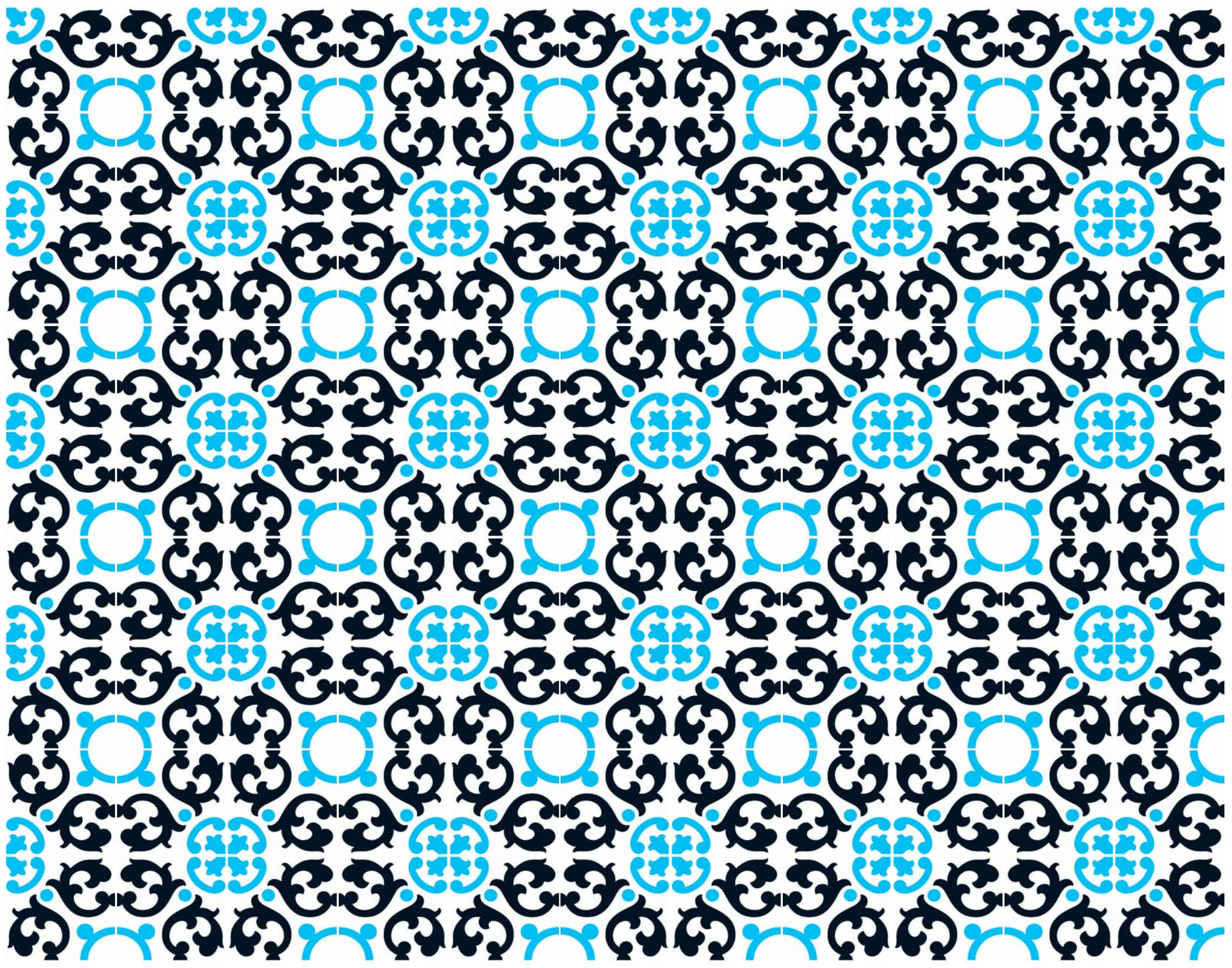
A Female Scene. Three Plays by Catalan Women, Five Leaves Publications, 2007. (Anglo-Catalan Society).

French

La camionette. Accident. Entre chien et loup (*La camioneta, Accident, El color del gos quan fuig*), Les Éditions de l'Amandier, 1999.

Trois hommes attendent (*Tres homes esperen*), Les Éditions de l'Amandier, 2002.

Les Falènes (*Les Falenes*), Les Éditions



Josep Maria Fonalleras

The Reader Will Think My Story Implausible

Translated by Martha Tennent

If I write that father is talking on the phone and closing down his business or that-to add a bit of drama, making guilt the driving force of the story in the chapters that follow-he is arranging a date with his lover who works with him at the office while his young daughter pulls on the bottom of his jacket, trying to impress on him the seriousness of mother's accident (she slipped in the bathroom, hit her head on the faucet, most unfortunately, rolled in a daze against the stool, where they regularly sit to cut their toenails, and is now stretched out upstairs, unconscious, a puddle of blood already spreading, threatening to become a river flowing from its source in the bathroom down the stairs like a waterfall only to end up in the swimming pool, which will be stained with mother's blood, and

Si escric que el pare està parlant per telèfon i que tanca un negoci o que - per fer-ho més dramàtic, i per tal que el sentiment de culpabilitat, en els capítols següents, sigui el motor del relat - està concertant una cita amb l'amant que treballa amb ell al despatx, mentre la nena li estira la vora de l'americana per fer-lo adonar de la gravetat de l'accident de la mare, que ha relliscat al quarto de bany amb tanta mala fortuna que el cap ha topat amb l'aixeta i, després, la mare ha rodolat, estabornida, fins al tamboret que fan servir, de manera habitual, per seure i arreglar-se les ungles dels peus, i que ara la mare és estirada a dalt, inconscient, i que ja hi ha un toll de sang que s'escampa i amenaça de convertir-se en un riu que neix al quarto de bany i que baixarà per l'escala, com un salt d'aigua, i que anirà a parar a la piscina i que la piscina es tacarà amb la sang de la mare, la



DISCOVER NEW CATALAN FICTION

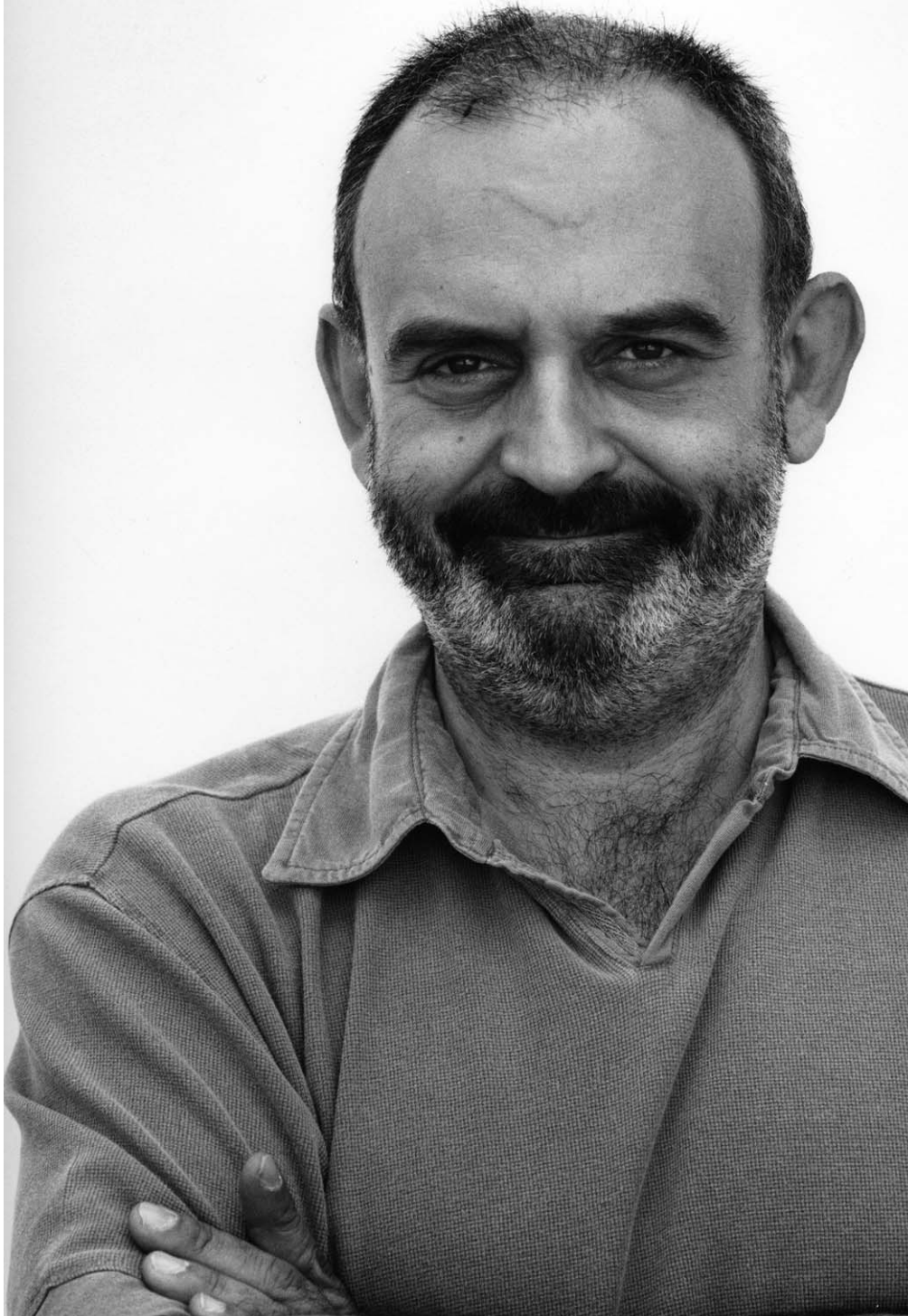
With Colum McCann, Jaume Subirana, Mercè Ibarz, Josep M. Fonalleras and Francesc Serés

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Writers House at NYU,
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when the water has turned red, she will be dead, irremediably)-- should I write this, the reader will find my story implausible, for if only the girl cries out loud enough, convincingly, father would be obliged to hang up the telephone (and not close down the business or arrange a date with any lover) frantically dash up to the bathroom, and, after considering the gravity of the injury, phone for an ambulance with (frightening?) composure that would later be praised by friends and family on both sides, whereby his cool-headedness would save mother's life and he would be able to use the time she was recovering in the hospital to finish closing down the business and arrange with his lover not just a date but an entire weekend in a little hotel, in which case this story would no longer be implausible but merely a slice of daily life, one that has no pedigree and holds no interest, or anything for that matter.

qual, quan l'aigua sigui de color vermell, ja s'haurà mort del tot i ja no hi haurà res a fer, si escric això, el lector es pensarà que es tracta d'una història exagerada, i que si la nena cridés prou, i amb convicció, el pare es veuria obligat a penjar el telèfon (i no tancaria el negoci i no concertaria cap cita amb cap amant) i pujaria, rabent, al quarto de bany i, un cop analitzada la profunditat de la ferida, amb una tranquil·litat (¿esfereïdora?) que seria lloada després pels amics i pels familiars de tots dos, trucaria al servei d'urgències i així, gràcies a la seva sang freda, salvaria la vida de la mare i podria aprofitar el període de convalescència a l'hospital per acabar de tancar el negoci i per concertar, amb l'amant del despatx, no pas una cita sinó un cap de setmana sencer en un hotelet, amb la qual cosa aquesta història ja no seria una història exagerada sinó un fragment de vida quotidiana d'aquests que no tenen ni pedigrí, ni reputació, ni res de res.



Writer and columnist. Josep Maria Fonalleras has published numerous newspaper articles, some of which are collected in *Interior de balena* (1999) ['Inside the Whale'] and *Itinerari recomanat* (2003) ['Recommended Itinerary']. He works in the genres of the short story, the novel and children's literature. He is always noted for having developed a writing style and manner of his own. His is a narrative that constructs itself in eloquent silences, stylistic prose, precise verbiage and a distancing irony incredulous to the point of sarcasm. He has published his short stories in *Botxenski i companyia* (1990) ['Botxenski and Company'] and *Avaria* (1990) ['Breakdown'] and has collected a good part of his work in *Llarga vista* (2003) ['The long View']. In the genre of the novel, he has published *La millor guerra del món* (1998) ['The Best War in the World'], which won the Ciutat de Palma Prize in 1997; also, *August & Gustau* (2000). In 2006 he won the Crítica Serra d'Or Prize for his book of short stories *Sis homes* (2005) ['Six Men']. His latest book is *Un any de divorciat* (2007) ['One Year Divorced'].

Selected works in translation

English

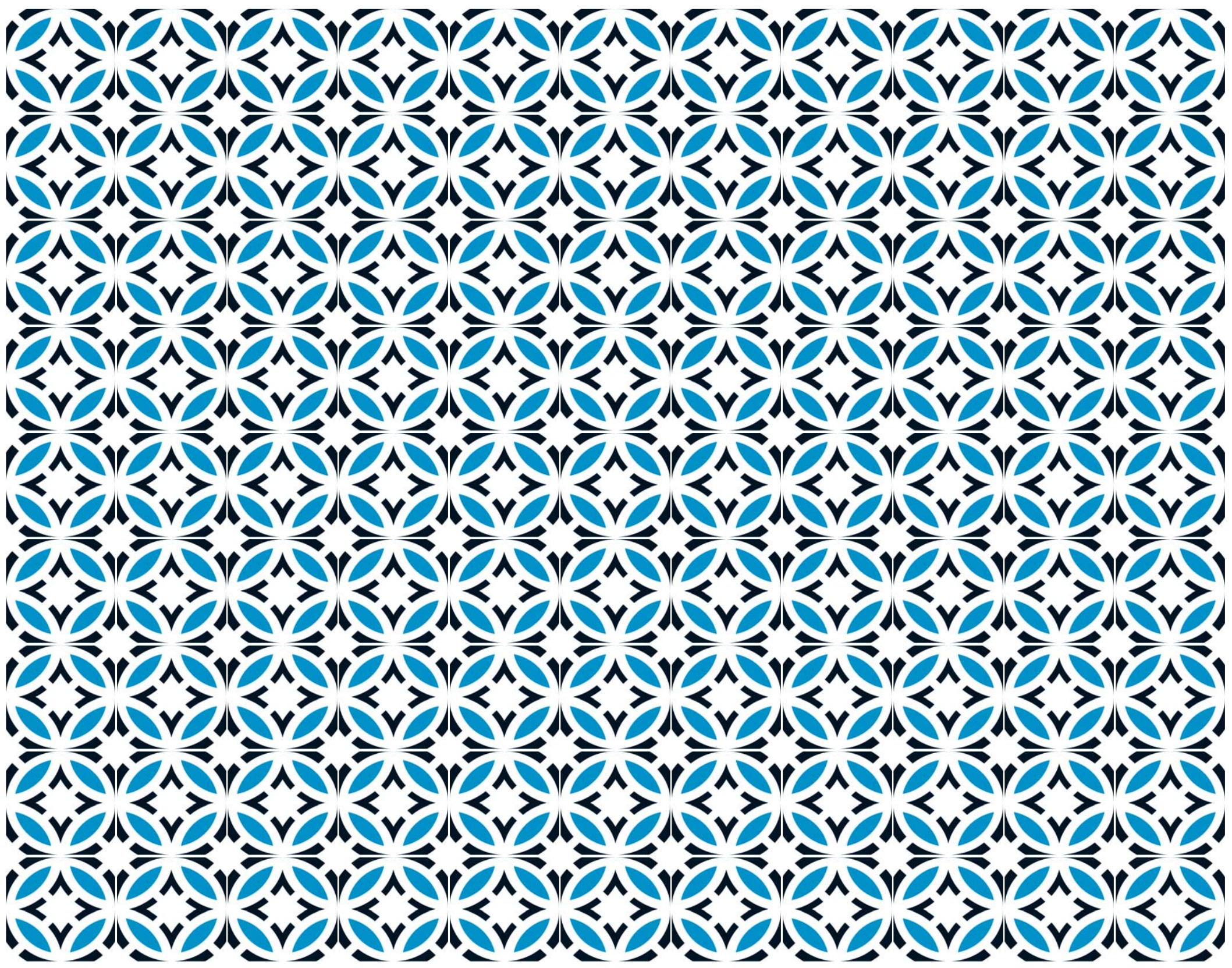
New Catalan Fiction. The Review of Contemporary Fiction, Dalkey Archive Press, 2008

German

August & Gustau, A1, 2007

Spanish

Bochenski y compañía, Empúries, 1989



Mercè Ibarz

Fragility of Walls

Translated by Julie Wark

These days Christine was talking a lot about the ugliness of new buildings and blocks of flats, was furious about the absence of balconies and the bare facades bereft of any decorative relief-work. We talked about the city of works as if nothing more important was happening or - and now I see it - as if talking about the transformation of the city was talking about the cancer that was consuming her and that had me baffled. She, who was dying, was thinking about the present and future of the balconies, while I, who would survive her, was thinking about the gloomy mansions in the Eixample district and the abandoned houses all over the city.

The minimal and repetitive solutions of the present seemed to her an anti-musical offence. She said over and over again that forms and ornaments had always been in houses and urban planning because they're architecture's way of being like music and, for people, the way we can believe we're inhabiting our own space, just like everyone has a personal tune, or a ballad, or an aria or blues song. Or a silence, a space between two notes of the music.

Christine was a dyed-in-the-wool modernist. Compared with her I am more of a sarcastic modernist. Sometimes I used to say she was

En els últims temps Christine parlava sovint de la lletjor dels edificis i pisos nous, s'enfurismava amb la manca de balcons i les façanes sense relleus. Parlàvem de la ciutat en obres com si no hi passés res de més important o, ara ho veig, com si parlar de la transformació de la ciutat fos parlar del càncer que a ella se la menjava i a mi em confonia. Ella, que s'estava morint, pensava en el present i el futur dels balcons, mentre que jo, que la sobreviuria, pensava en els casalots tètrics de l'Eixample i en les cases abandonades per tota la ciutat.

Les solucions mínimes i repetitives del present li semblaven un atemptat antimusical. Deia un i altre cop que les formes i els ornaments han estat sempre a les cases i a l'urbanisme perquè són la manera que l'arquitectura té d'assemblar-se a la música i, per a les persones, la manera de creure que habitem un



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decadent, but she wasn't. Her feeling and sensibilities were independent of fashions. Her rage was aimed at the bogus elites which, she said, had destroyed artisanal memory. If you followed her train of thought and linked up the arguments, intuitions, decisions and commitments that her taste expressed, hers was a dialogue with the squat skyscrapers that had begun to proliferate in the city: yes, inside you have a lot of light and are probably agreeable at first sight to inhabitants and visitors or to buyers and office workers, but you're ugly to look at; you're made to be not looked at, you don't want to be looked at, you want to be penetrated, you only want people to come in and out, you don't want anything to take root, just as you don't want balconies or window sills because you don't want to know anything about the world outside, or to let anyone that inhabits you look at anything; it's not good for business, attaches too much importance to life in the street.

In the time since she died, the same tongue-tied, isolating solutions have come to the city's old neighbourhoods, whose agglomerations of uninhabitable dwellings have now been mopped up (as some urban planners say) and replaced by housing with windows that are horizontally-barred - in aluminium, pristine material - and that don't even let you hang out your washing, or allow you to see bodies in the window thinking about their stories, or to gaze out to find out what's going on in public.

Now I'd like to know what Christine would say about the ornamental border that follows the stairs up to the second landing where I've stopped to catch my breath. My lungs have gone back to breathing at their proper pace and I'm looking at the frieze: it's a stuccoed edging that the painters have respected and protected, a space of colour that powerfully contributes to the sensation of cleanliness and pulchritude. Artisanal memory makes its presence felt wherever it can. Here, it has created this kind of miracle that lets the passer-by rally again: a well-painted frieze in the diabolical stairway of an interior of labyrinthine distribution where the order of the flats is lost.

I have the feeling that Christine's laughing, wherever she is.

espai propi, com cadascú té una tonada o una balada o una ària o un blues personal. O un silenci, un espai entre dues músiques.

Christine era una modernista empedreïda. Al seu costat, jo més aviat sóc una modernista sarcàstica. De vegades li deia decadent, però no ho era, el seu sentit i la seva sensibilitat eren independents de les modes. La seva ira s'adreçava a les falses elits, que, deia, han destruït la memòria artesana. Si li seguies la veta i anaves encadenant els arguments, intuïcions, resolucions i compromisos que el seu gust traduïa, el seu era un diàleg amb els gratacels ajaguts que havien començat a proliferar a la ciutat: sí, per dins sou lluminosos i probablement agradables a primer cop d'ull als habitants i als visitants o als compradors i als treballadors d'oficines, però sou lletjos de mirar: esteu fets per no ser mirats, no voleu ser mirats, voleu ser penetrats, només voleu que la gent entri i surti, que res no hi arrel·li, de la mateixa manera que no voleu balcons ni ampits de finestra perquè no voleu saber res de l'exterior ni deixar que ningú que us habiti miri res: no és bo per als negocis, dóna massa importància a la vida al carrer.

En el temps que fa que ella és morta, les solucions aïlladores i emmudides han arribat també als barris vells de la ciutat, esponjats (diuen alguns urbanistes) d'aglomeracions de cases impossibles d'habitar que han estat substituïdes per cases amb finestres reixades horitzontalment-d'alumini, matèria sense empremtes-que no deixen ni estendre roba, ni veure cossos a la finestra pensant en les seves històries, ni mirades xafardejant la cosa pública. Ara m'agradaria saber què diria Christine de la sanefa que ressegueix l'escala al segon replà on m'he aturat a respirar. Els meus pulmons han tornat al bon ritme i miro la sanefa: fa una randa estucada que els pintors han respectat i protegit, és un espai de color que contribueix poderosament a la sensació de neteja i pulcritud. La memòria artesana sobresurt així que pot; ha creat aquí aquesta espècie de miracle perquè el caminant es refaci: una sanefa ben pintada en una escala diabòlica d'un interior de distribució laberíntica i on s'ha perdut l'ordre dels pisos. Em fa l'efecte que Christine riu, on sigui.



Biography

IBARZ, Mercè (Saidí, 1954)

Narrator, essayist and journalist. Her prose writing includes *La terra retirada* (1994) ['The Withdrawn Land'], an attractive and multifaceted text that evokes the life of her town, Saidí, on the Aragon-Catalan border. Her novel *La palmera de blat* (1995) ['Corn Palm'] combines memory, anthropology and dreams. *A la ciutat en obres* (2002) ['In the City of Works'] is a tryptic formed by three novellas that together form a small altarpiece of women walking through the city and revisiting friendship in the post-Franco period. Three years later she published the collection *Febre de carrer* (2005) ['Street Fever'], in which the protagonists, more powerful than ever, live in nomadic circumstances and create a poetry of space and travel, looking for the other and, thus, themselves. She has also published articles and essays on literature, arts, film and photography, such as her study *Buñuel documental. Tierra sin pan y su tiempo* (1999) ['Buñuel Documentary. Land without Bread and its Time']. She recently published the essay/novel *Rodoreda: Exili i desig* (2008) ['Rodoreda: Exile and Desire'], her personal vision of the life and works of Catalan writer, Mercè Rodoreda.

Selected works in translation

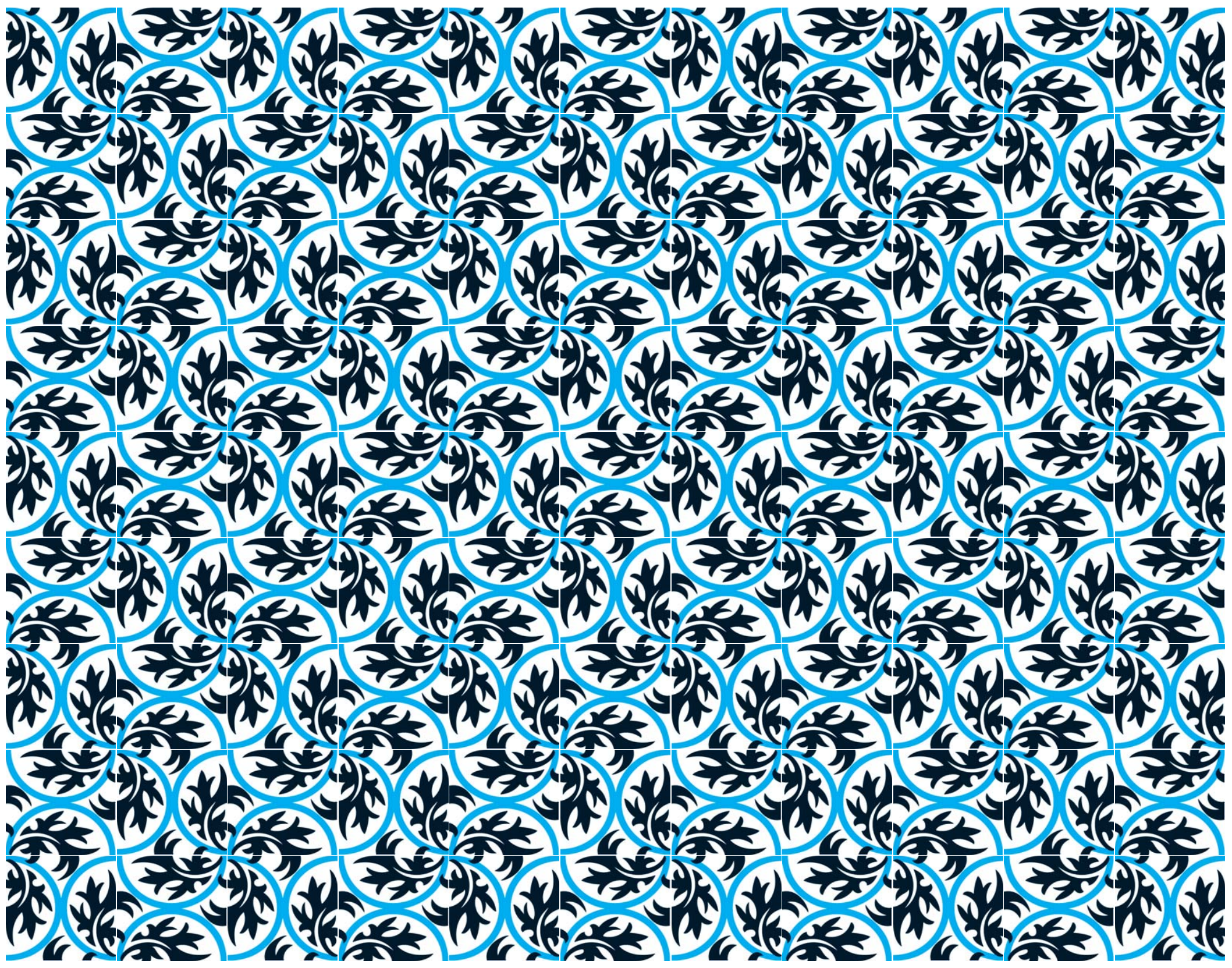
English

New Catalan Fiction. The Review of Contemporary Fiction, Dalkey Archive Press, 2008

French

Dans la ville en chantiers [A la ciutat en obres], Tinta blava, 2004

Le Saut de l'ombre [La palmera de blat], Tinta blava, 2005



Joan Margarit

In the dreary Girona of my seven-year-old self,
where post-war shop-windows
wore the greyish hue of scarcity,
the knife-shop was a glitter
of light in small steel mirrors.
Pressing my forehead against the glass,
I gazed at a long, slender clasp-knife,
beautiful as a marble statue.
Since no one at home approved of weapons,
I bought it secretly, and as I walked along,
I felt the heavy weight of it, inside my pocket.
From time to time I would open it slowly,
and the blade would spring out, slim and straight,
with the convent chill that a weapon has.
Hushed presence of danger:
I hid it, the first thirty years,
behind books of poetry and, later,
inside a drawer, in amongst your knickers
and amongst your stockings.
Now, almost fifty-four,
I look at it again, lying open in my palm,
just as dangerous as when I was a child.
Sensual, cold. Nearer my neck.

Translated by Anne Crowe

First Love
Primer amor

En la Girona trista dels set anys,
on els aparadors de la postguerra
tenien un color gris de penúria,
la ganiveteria era un esclat
de llum en els petits miralls d'acer.
Amb el front descansant damunt del vidre,
mirava una navalla llarga i fina,
bella com una estàtua de marbre.
Com que els de casa no volien armes,
vaig comprar-la en secret i, en caminar,
la sentia, pesant, dins la butxaca.
A vegades l'obria a poc a poc,
i sorgia la fulla, recta i prima,
amb la conventual fredor de l'arma.
Presència callada del perill:
vaig amagar-la, els trenta primers anys,
rere llibres de versos i, després,
dins un calaix, entre les teves calces
i entre les teves mitges.
Ara, a prop de complir els cinquanta-quatre,
torno a mirar-la, oberta al meu palmell,
tan perillosa com a la infantesa.
Sensual, freda. Més a prop del coll.



AN EVENING OF POETRY

With Joan Margarit
and Philip Levine
Thursday, May 1
7:00 p.m.

Housing Works
Bookstore
126 Crosby Street, N.Y.

Her thigh-bones broken under the weight of ninety years,
suspicious and greedy, my mother-in-law watched us closely,
and that coward of a father-in-law, chronically obese,
held his tongue in ten languages. My son, with a dark,
cold hole in his head, sat stuffing himself with food,
his face in front of the television.
My brother was gorging himself to death, swelling visibly
and uttering obscenities at the white table-cloths.
My parents, withered and dumb from years of mutual hatred,
wore on their faces a look of terminal loneliness.
This was a moral banquet, disgusting, fantastical.
Having salvaged our friendship from the wreck,
you smiled as you gazed at me,
but so many years of monsters have been relentless.

*Amb els fèmurs trencats pel pes de noranta anys,
malfiada i golafre, la sogra ens vigilava,
i el covard del meu sogre, sota l'obesitat,
en deu llengües callava. El meu fill, amb un pou
fred i fosc al seu cap, s'atipava
davant de la televisió.
El meu germà es matava, engreixant-se i cridant
procacitats vulgars a les tovalles blanques.
Dissecats, els meus pares, muts de tant odiar-se,
duien la soledat terminal a la cara.
Era un banquet moral, repugnant i fantàstic.
Amb la nostra amistat salvada del naufragi
somrient em miraves,
però tants anys de monstres han estat implacables.*

At home there were scarcely any books
fit for adolescent restlessness.
The essays on town planning bored me
and Catalonia, a luckless people
was too sad a title.
I picked up Mein Kampf, a small black book
that seemed profound to me. I made my debut,
via the filthiest spot in literature.
Hitler's words, utterly vulgar,
revealed a dark pit.
I haven't forgotten it in spite of not remembering it.
It was lucky to bump into reality.
That is where poetry began,
difficult, with no false hopes.
I have always done what the wild boar does,
who searches for and, delicately, selects and eats
the bulb, of what is known as the orchis, of the orchid.

*Adients al neguit adolescent,
a casa no hi havia gaires llibres.
Els tractats d'urbanisme m'avorrien
i Catalunya, poble dissortat
era un títol massa trist.
Vaig agafar el Mein Kampf, un llibret negre
que em va semblar profund. Vaig començar,
pel lloc més brut de la literatura.
Les paraules de Hitler, tan vulgars,
mostraven un pou negre.
No l'he oblidat malgrat no recordar-lo.
Va ser una sort topar amb la realitat.
Allí va començar la poesia,
difícil, sense falses esperances.
Jo sempre he fet igual que el porc senglar,
que busca i, delicat, tria i es menja
el bulb, que se'n diu orquis, de l'orquídia.*



Poet and architect of structural engineering. Joan Margarit has been, since 1968, a professor at the Barcelona School of Architecture. It was in the eighties that Margarit, who until then had been writing in Spanish, changed to Catalan as his primary poetic language. Among his numerous books are *Cants d'Hekatonim de Tifundis* (1998), winner of the Crítica Serra d'Or Prize; *Vell malentès* (1981) ['Old Misunderstanding'], winner of the Crítica Prize; *Mar d'hivern* (1986) [Sea of Winter], winner of the Carles Riba Prize; *La dona del navegant* (1986) [The Wife of Seafarer], winner of the Serra d'Or Prize; *Estació de França* (1999) ['Railway Station']; *Joana* (2000). His poetry is realist in nature, with a strong autobiographical character, and his protagonists range from anonymous characters to jazz

musicians. It is precisely this passion for jazz that has brought him and the musicians to record *Paraules de jazz* ['Words of Jazz'], a CD that combines poetry with jazz standards. In 2001 he published his collection of poetry, *Poesia amorosa completa* (1980-2000) ['Complete Love Poetry'], and in 2004 a great part of his work was published under the title *Els primers freds* (2005) ['The First Frosts']. The following year he received the Crítica Serra d'Or Prize for *Càlcul d'estructures* ['Calculation of Structures']. In this year he received the Crítica Prize for *Casa de la misericòrida* (2007) ['House of Mercy'], his latest book. All of his poetry is translated to Spanish by the poet himself. His book of poetry, *Tugs in the Fog* (Poetry Book Society recommended translation), has been translated to English.

Selected works in translation

English

Tugs in the Fog, Bloodaxe Books, 2006
Barcelona Final Love, Proa, Barcelona 2008 (Catalan-Spanish-English)

Hebrew

[*Mai no m'he tingut per grec*], Keshev, 2005
[*The Eyes in the Rear-view Mirror*]
Keshev, 2008

German

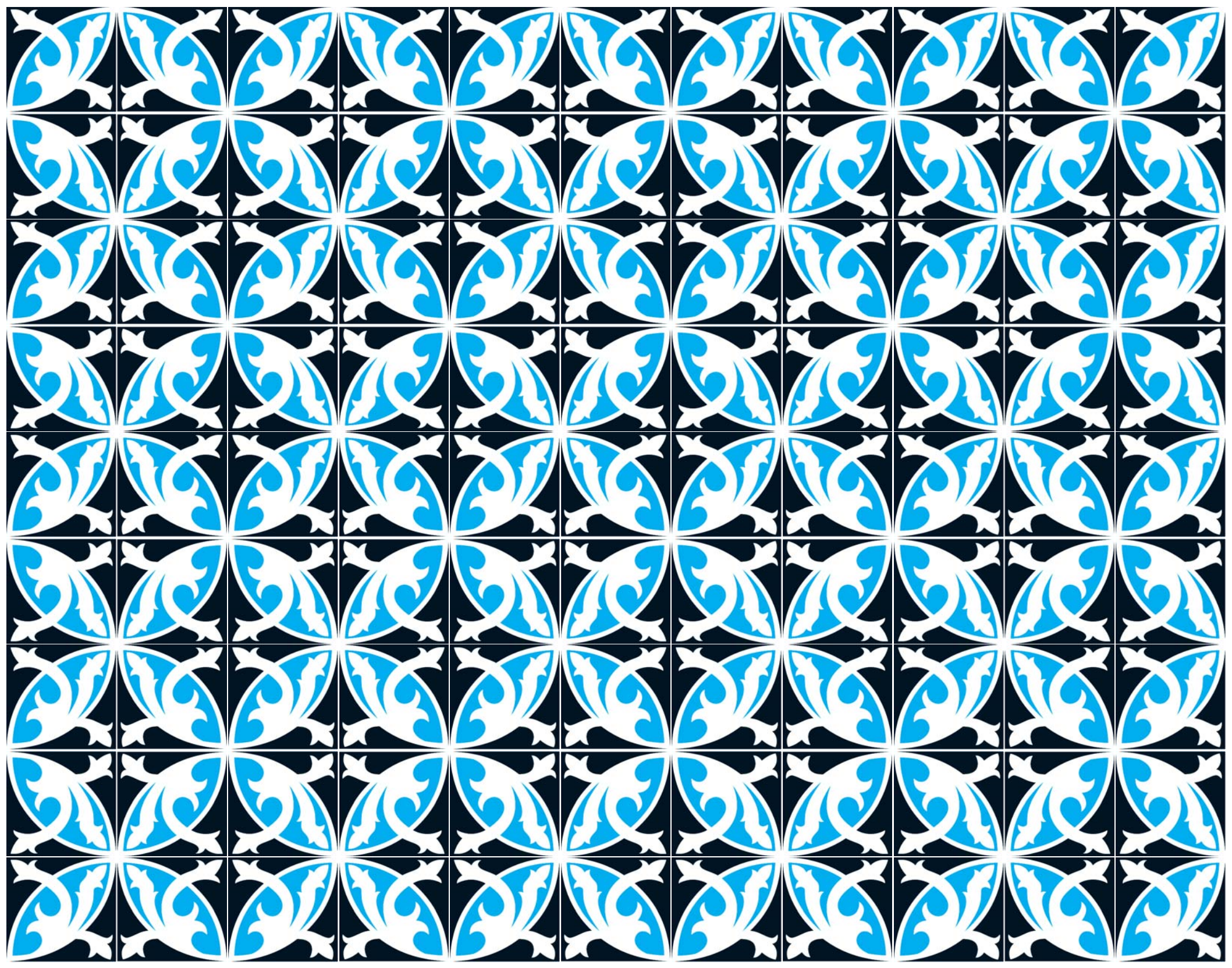
Joana und andere Gedichte, Edition Delta, Stuttgart, 2007

Russian

[*Els llums dels instants*], St. Petersburg University Press, 2003

Spanish

Estació de França, Hiperion 1999
Joana, Hiperión, 2002
El primer frío (*Poesía 1975-1995*), Visor, 2004
Cálculo de estructuras, Visor, 2005
Arquitecturas de la memoria, Cátedra, 2006
Casa de misericordia, Visor, 2007
Barcelona amor final, Proa 2008



Carme Riera

In the Last Blue

Translated by Jonathan Dunne

I
The morning found them awake. They taste that dawn like a bitter-sweet dish. Most of them worked all night and prayed. In a very low voice, in their own homes, they intoned psalms of praise and thanksgiving. They unearthed tubs, searched hiding places, rummaged in drawers. Anything that might be of use was put to one side: money, gold, jewels. The women sewed pockets and pouches, added worsted linings to skirts. They kneaded and baked bread, prepared cakes. But when they heard Eloi, they put down their needles, extinguished fires, closed workshops and changed into the best clothes they had to attend Mass. They took holy water and prepared to fulfill their obligation. Dotted about the church, they do not stint in their devotion. At the end they returned to Segell and Argenteria, but nobody changed into work clothes. They kept on their fine clothes, their Sunday best, to go for a stroll. The women took a bundle with the bread,

I
La matinada els ha trobats desperts. Com un menjar d'agredolç han tastat aquesta alba. La majoria han feinejat tota la nit i han resat. En veu baixíssima, cadascú a ca seva, han entonat salms de lloança i d'agraïment. Han desenterrat les alfàbies, escorcollat els amagatalls, remenat els calaixos. Tot quant pugui ser de profit ha estat triat: els doblers, l'or, les joies. Les dones han cosit butxaques i butxacons, han afegit folres d'estam a les faldetes. Han pastat pa i l'han enforat, han fet pujar les coques. Però en sentir n'Eloi han deixat les agulles, han apagat els focs, han tancat els obradors i s'han mudat amb les millors robes de què disposen per anar a missa. Ja prenen l'aigua beneïda i es disposen per complir amb el precepte. Disseminats pel temple no escatimen devoció. En acabar, han tornat al Segell i a l'Argenteria, però cap no s'ha posat roba per feinejar. Han conservat els vestits bons, els vestits de festa, per anar a fer quatre passes. Les dones han agafat un farcell amb el pa en butxaca, perquè han decidit aprofitar el bon dia, un dia net



READINGS FROM EUROPE AND MEXICO

With Coral Bracho, Arnon Grunberg, Andrés Ibáñez, Carme Riera, and P.F. Thomése
Friday, May 2
1-2 p.m.

Instituto Cervantes
211-215 East 49th Street



LEARNING TO SPEAK

With Jean Hatzfeld, Xiaolu Guo, Halfdan Freihow, and Carme Riera
Saturday, May 3
5-6:15 p.m.

The French Institute,
Alliance Française
FIAF: Tinker Auditorium
55 East 59th Street

having decided to make the most of the fine day, a clear day with a glorious sky, to lunch on the seashore and enjoy a spring that seems to have come two weeks early and promises sweetening softness. They didn't leave together. They left in small groups, some with their family, others on their own. Nobody attracts attention. They greet acquaintances, bow right down in front of lords and ladies and even kiss the bishop's precious amethyst when they bump into him on his way back to the Palace. The bishop blesses them and pats the children who come up to him. The children walk alongside the women, jumping and shouting. They look clean, with a perfectly straight parting. The men on reaching the King's Garden pass in front of them. They gather and form a solid group. They precede the others through the sea gate, look to see where the best place to rest would be, what people they might meet on the shore. Some of the old ones lag behind, dragging their feet, limping, going as fast as they can, afraid that they won't be on time. It's cost them a lot of money and a lot more words to be accepted and they can't believe that the time has come at last. They're weighed down. They're carrying all they have in pouches stitched into their shirts, which are tight because of their vests; in their baggy pants, disguised by the folds, they're hiding the richest merchandise.

amb un cel de glòria per dinar a la riba i gaudir d'una primavera que sembla haver-se avançat quasi dues setmanes al calendari i promet suavitats endolcidores. No han sortit junts. Ho han fet en petits grups, alguns amb la família, d'altres tots sols. Cap d'ells no crida l'atenció. Saluden els coneguts, s'inclinen amb una bona capada davant els senyors de categoria i fins i tot besen l'ametista puríssima del Bisbe en topar-se'l casualment devers la Portella, quan torna a Palau. El bisbe els beneeix i descambuixa els infants que se li acosten. Els infants caminen devora les dones botant i cridant. Van nets, amb les clenxes ben dretes. Els homes en arribar a l'Hort del Rei els passen davant. Es reuneixen i formen un grup compacte. Precedeixen els seus en travessar la Porta del Mar, albiren quins llocs seran millors per descansar una estona, quina gent trobaran per la Riba. Endarrerits queden alguns vells, arrossegant les passes, peu coixeu, fan també via, així com poden, amb el temor de no arribar a temps. Els ha costat molts de doblers i moltes més paraules de ser admesos i qualcun no es pot avenir que a la fi hagi arribat l'hora. Van carregats. Duen tot quant tenen dins les bosses ripuntades al cos de les camises, ben estretes amb els guardapits; dins els calçons amb bufes, dissimulades pels plecs, hi traginen les mercaderies més riques.

RIERA, Carme (Palma, Mallorca, 1948)

Full professor and director of the José A. Goytisolo Chair of the Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. She began her literary career in 1974 with *Te deix, amor, la mar com a penyora* ['I Leave You, my Love, the Sea as my Token'], a volume of short stories. Her first novel was *Una primavera per a Domenico Guarini* (1980) ['A Spring for Domenico Guarini']. But it was *Dins el darrer blau* ['In the Last Blue'] that brought her to prominence as one of the most powerful voices in the panorama of Catalan literature. The following year she won the National Prize for Narrative 1995, which for the first time was given to a novel written in Catalan. In 2000 she published *Cap al cel obert* ['Towards the Open Sky'], in 2004 *La meitat de l'ànima* ['Half of the Soul'] and in 2006 *L'estiu de l'anglès* ['The Summer of English']. Most of her work has been translated into Dutch, English, French, German, Greek, Italian, Turkish and Spanish.

Selected works in translation

English

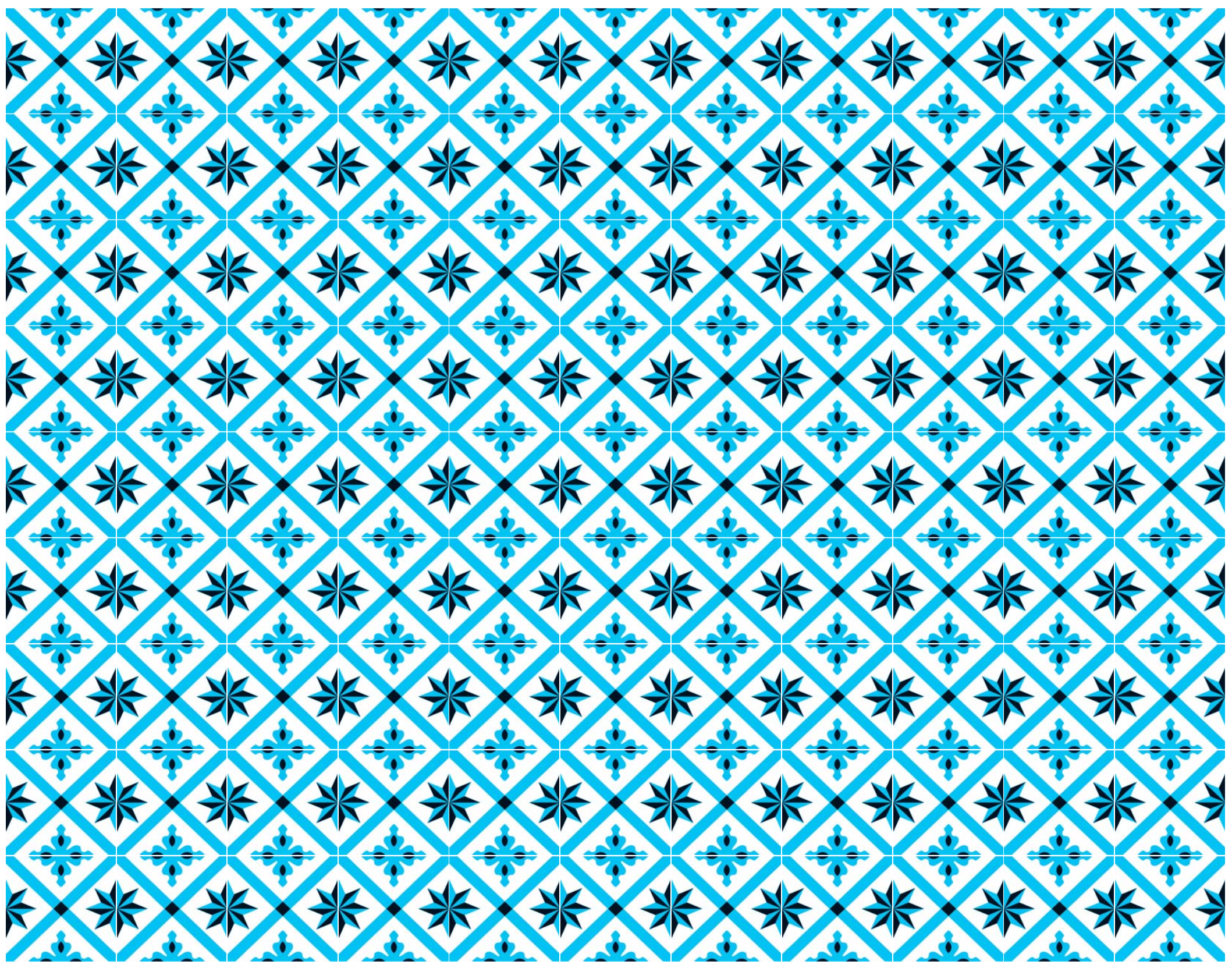
Mirror Images, Peter Lang, 1993

Report, Serpent Tail, 1993

A Matter of Self-Esteem and Other Stories, Holmes & Meier Publishers, 2001

In the Last Blue, Overlook Press, 2007





Francesc Serés

Field of Battle, Field of Fruit

Translated by Peter Bush

Spreading out like a dense forest, shaking and rippling like a field of corn combed by the north wind, a hypnotic wave, a river above craggy peaks, the flock is like a cloud-filled sky when a storm is mounting, when more than a thousand eyes are needed to encompass them all or none, so as not to see them at all, and hear the simultaneous fluttering and fashioning of this hologram, the flock above, a whole mirror.

‘Do birds float?’

‘Yes, of course they float,’ his father says, ‘and see everything, smell everything with the sharp noses they have, and know everything, through their small, beady eyes that are always still, though they say nothing, they know everything. Now the harvests are poor they feel starved, and nervous, and live fearfully above the plains; ever since we started killing them, they are afraid of the nets and tarred branches. Yet still they swoop down. Fly down and eat the olives or peck at maize, or go inside barns and steal feed. The forest is black, pitch

La bandada, tot plegat com un bosc espès que tremola fent les mateixes aigües que el blat sota el cerç que el pentina; com un oneig hipnòtic, com el riu des de dalt dels penya-segats, sembla el cel de sota els núvols quan es carrega la tempesta, quan hom voldria tenir més de mil ulls per mirar-ho tot ensams o no tenir-ne cap per veure-ho tot i sentir a la vegada l’aleteig i la faigó d’aquest holograma que és la bandada damunt nostre, tot un mirall.

-¿Els ocells suren?

Sí, sí que suren els ocells, diu el pare, i ho veuen tot, tot ho ensumen amb aquest nas esmolat que tenen, ho saben tot, els ocells, els entra dins dels ulls petits i vius que no es mouen, encara que no diguin res, ho saben tot. Ara que les collites no van bé se’ns afiguren afamats, per això estan nerviosos i viuen esporuguits a les planes; d’ençà que els matem, tenen por de les xarxes i de les branques amb pega. Malgrat això, davallen. Baixen a menjar les olives o a desgranar el panís, o per entrar dins de la granja i furtar el pinso. El bosc és negre, ben negre, i cau tremolant de dalt del cel ballant la seva forma sense parar, apareixent i desapareixent, només ho fan els



READING THE WORLD

With Janet Malcolm, Halfdan Freihow, Peter Carey and Francesc Serés
Friday, May 2
1-2 p.m.

Scandinavian House
58 Park Avenue



DISCOVER NEW CATALAN FICTION

With Colum McCann, Jaume Subirana, Mercè Ibarz, Josep M. Fonalleras and Francesc Serés
Saturday, May 3
8:00 p.m.

Lillian Vernon Creative
Writers House at NYU,
58W. 10th St., NY.

black, and falls from high in the sky, an ever trembling, dancing mass, appearing, disappearing, and only thrushes fly this way. Huge flocks of thrushes float and darken the sky like thunder clouds, change direction and the light and allow the sun to shine, in unison, as if the flock had a single brain; the bastards know everything, can move all at once,' says his father.

Yes, of course the birds float, float through the air and move quickly like fish, fins fluttering; they float approaching from afar like a dark forest, a distant, rippling line that keeps thickening. There are times when the whole sky is covered in black and neither in the distance nor beyond the plains can you see clearings where there are no thrushes, and then they drop down, as if plummeting vertically: from our farmhouse I saw the plains turn black, and us shut inside so they didn't know we were inside, peering through the crack in the wooden door, the holes in the windows and listening to their nails scraping the tiles. The first two years they left us no olives, grapes, corn or maize, and there was a shortage of oil and wine and bread as well, and green walnuts didn't manage to heal the wounds left by the first flocks for the next wave had already eaten them.

tords això, és el seu vol. Suren bandades immenses de tords que ara enfosqueixen el dia com bromes de tronada i ara canvien la direcció de vol i també la llum deixant sortir el sol, tots ensems com si la bandada tingués un sol cervell; els malparits ho saben tot, saben com fer-ho per anar tots alhora, diu el pare.

Sí, sí que suren els ocells, suren en l'aire i es mouen ràpids com els peixos, també, aletejant; suren, vénen de lluny com un bosc fosc que s'apropa, tot just una línia llunyana tremolosa que es va engrossint. Hi ha vegades que s'ha cobert tot el cel de negre i ni lluny, ni més enllà de les planes es veuen forats on no hi hagi tords, i aleshores es deixen caure, com si la baixada fos a plom: jo he vist des del mas ennegrir-se les planes, nosaltres tancats perquè no sabessin que érem allà dins, mirant-los entremig del clivellat de la porta de fusta, pels forats de les finestres mentre senties com les ungles esgarrapaven les teules. Els dos primers anys no ens van deixar olives, ni raïm, ni blat, ni panís, i l'oli escassejà i el vi i el pa també, i les nous verdes no arribaven a cicatritzar les ferides de les bandades capdavanteres que les següents ja se les havien menjat.

SERÉS, Francesc (Saidí, 1972)

Francesc Serés has a degree in Fine Arts as well as in Anthropology and has been lecturer of Ancient and Medieval Art History at the Pompeu Fabra University (Barcelona). In 2003 under the title *De fems i de marbres* ['On Manure and Marble'], he published the trilogy he had been working on up until then: *El ventre de la terra* (2000) ['The Earth's Womb'], *L'arbre sense tronc* (2001) ['The Tree Without a Trunk'] and *Una llengua de plom* (2002) ['A Lead Language']. The trilogy looks to slowly measure the evolution experienced by farmers from western Catalonia over the past decades with the will to testify to social transformations experienced there. His latest works, *Matèria primera* (2007) ['Raw Material'] is an impressive book with *La força de la gravetat* (2006) ['The Force of Gravity'] in which the stories of one - taut, bare narratives, calibrated as though by a high-pressure instrument - and the articles of the other could have been interchanged. While in the first appear rangers, farmers, miners and port workers who want to understand the reason for mortality, in the second there are nurses who cannot sleep and truck drivers who enter and leave from a scene in which nothing happens. He has won, among other awards, the National Prize for Literature (2007).

Selected works in translation

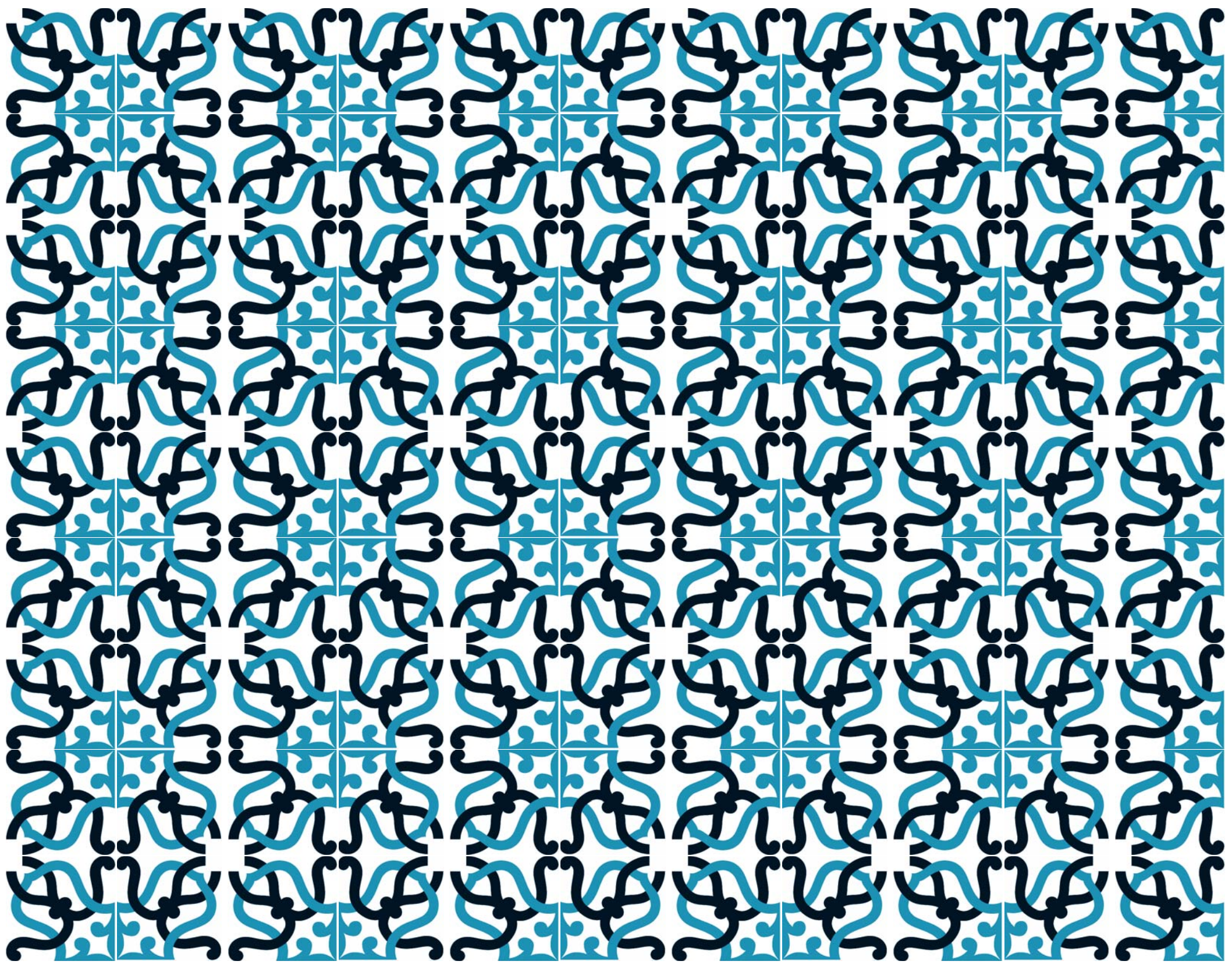
English

New Catalan Fiction. The Review of Contemporary Fiction, Dalkey Archive Press, 2008

Spanish

El vientre de la tierra, Alpha Decay, 2004
El árbol sin tronco, Alpha Decay, 2004
Una lengua de plomo, Alpha Decay, 2004





Edited by Institut Ramon Llull

©Text

Àngels Aymar: from *Magnòlia cafè* (Associació d'Actors i Directors professionals de Catalunya, 2002); "Magnolia Café" in *A Female Scene: Three Plays by Catalan Women* (Five Leaves Publications, 2007).
Translated by Marion Peter Holt.

Josep Maria Fonalleras and
Translated by Martha Tennent.

Mercè Ibarz: from "Fragilitat de les parets", *A la ciutat en obres* (Quaderns Crema, 2002) ['Fragility of Walls', 'In the City of Works'].
Translated by Julie Wark.

Joan Margarit: "Primer amor", "El banquet", *Els motius del llop* (Columna, 1995) ['The Motives of the Wolf']. "El buscador d'orquídiess", *Casa de la Misericòrdia* (Proa, 2007) ['House of Mercy'].
Translated by Anna Crowe.

Carme Riera: From *Dins el darrer blau* (Proa, 2007); *In the Last Blue* (Overlook Press, 2007).
Translated by Jonathan Dunne.

Francesc Serés: from "Camp de fruit i batalla", *Un arbre sense tronc, dintre de De fens i de marbre* (Quaderns Crema, 2003) ['Field of Battle, Field of Fruit', 'A Tree Without a Trunk' in 'On Manure and Marble']. Translated by Peter Bush.

© Photography

Merce Ibarz by Carme Esteve;
Josep M. Fonalleras by Txema Salvans;
Joan Margarit by Tanit Plana; Carme Riera by Daniel Riera.

Design Compañía

Printed by:



This booklet was illustrated with motifs taken from the ceramic tiles used to decorate many Catalan homes starting in the late 19th-century. Forgotten for several decades, they are now one of the most characteristic features of Catalan *Modernisme*.

