6 Catalan Authors
At PEN World Voices Festival ’08
### Private Lives

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

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
356 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.

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*. Halfdan 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.

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. Halfdan 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 women 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.

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

THEATRE AND POETRY:
VISIONS AND METAPHOR
With Kristín Ómarsdóttir and Àngels Aymar
Thursday, May 1
7-9 p.m

Martin E. Segal Theatre
CUNY Graduate Center
365 Fifth Avenue

* Martin E. Segal Theatre Award winner

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 hí 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?
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 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.

Hilde
Un canvi de vida. Després em vaig separat...

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 joventa 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 meva vida. Un dia fent escala en un 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 moste 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 parllant amb mi. M’he alegrat de veure-la»
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 Dalirium. 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**

**French**
- *Les Phalènes (Les Falenes)*, Les Éditions
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 parllant per telèfon i que tanca un negoci o que - per fer-lo 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
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.
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**

**German**
August & Gustau, A1, 2007

**Spanish**
Bochenski y compañía, Empúries, 1989
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
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 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 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.

Christine was a modernist 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 arrelli, de la mateixa manera que no voleu balcons ni amplit 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.
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**


**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
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.
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.

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.
Biography

MARGARIT, Joan 
(Sanaüja, 1938)

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’Hekatónim 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 lastest 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**

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

**Spanish**
*Estació de França*, Hiperion 1999
*Joana*, Hiperión, 2002
*Càlcul d’estructures*, Visor, 2005
*Arquitecturas de la memoria*, Cátedra, 2006
*Casa de misericordia*, Visor, 2007
*Barcelona amor final*, Proa 2008
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,
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.
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
+ *In the Last Blue*, Overlook Press, 2007
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 en sens o no tenir-ne cap per veure-ho tot i sentir a la vegada l’aleteig i la faiçó 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 pinís. 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
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.
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 fens 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**


**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 paret”, A la ciutat en obres (Quaderns Crema, 2002) ['Fragility of Walls', 'In the City of Works']. Translated by Julie Wark.


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.

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