

# PUBLISHING NEWS



## Lluís-Anton Baulenas

*"Per un sac d'ossos" ("Za worek koDci", For a Sack of Bones)*

Wydawnictwo Literackie  
Translated into Polish by Anna Sawicka

The novel's point of departure: Nico's father had only one friend in the concentration camp of Miranda de Ebro in the nineteen-forties, the persecuted Bartomeu Camús. He died of cold and was buried hurriedly at the side of a road. Nico's father is also about to die when he makes his son promise to recover the body of Bartomeu Camús, bury him, and find his papers, which guard a terrible secret. Nico is fifteen years old when his father dies and twenty four (in 1949) when he decides to fulfill his promise.

"Per un sac d'ossos" won the Ramon Llull award in 2005, the most well-endowed prize in the Catalan language. For Lluís-Anton Baulenas this is a year of international exposure. As his publisher announced: Signature made a strong presentation of the Dutch translation of "La felicitat" (The Happiness), of which have already been sold more than 15,000 copies. The same publisher has already bought the rights for "Per un sac d'ossos." In France, after selling more than 12,000 copies of the translation of "El fil de plata" (The Silver Thread) and more than 10,000 of "La Felicitat" and "Alfons XIV" (under the title "Combat de chiens"), the publisher Flammarion will publish "Noms a la sorra" (Names in the Sand) in September and has bought the rights to "Per un sac d'ossos." In the United States, Harcourt has also bought the rights to "Per un sac d'ossos."



## Albert Sánchez Piñol

*"La pell freda" (Cold Skin)*

Mir Knigi  
Translated into Russian by Nina Avrova

"La pell freda" is the most-translated Catalan work ever, by now published in more than thirty languages. The three most recent are Icelandic, Galician, and Basque. The book has become an international phenomenon. In some countries, like Russia, hundreds of thousands of copies have been sold. There are not many living authors of Mediterranean Europe whose works have exceeded the number of editions reached by "La pell freda." This adventure novel begins with the main character disembarking on

a small remote island to stay for a year as official meteorologist. But the man he is to replace is nowhere to be found and, instead, he meets a crazy lighthouse keeper. The hero soon discovers that each night mysterious and menacing visitors appear. The book is the first part of a trilogy, of which Sánchez Piñol has already written the second, "Pandora al Congo" (Pandora in the Congo), also with international success. The author has just published the book of stories "Tretze tristos tràngols" (Thirteen Sad Dilemmas).



## Joan Margarit

*"Tugs in the Fog"*

Bloodaxe Books  
English version by Anna Crowe

"Tugs in the Fog" is an anthology of all of the poetic production of Joan Margarit, one of the most-read living poets in Catalonia today. The anthology includes around two hundred poems. Anna Crowe's English version has been awarded a prize by the Poetry Society. The poetry of Margarit has also been translated into German, Hebrew, and Russian. This year the poet will be recognized with the National Literature Prize for his most recent collection, "Casa de misericòrdia" (House of Mercy), a book which also

received the Catalan Critic's Prize. About his poetry, Margarit has said, "I look for lucidity. Lucidity is intelligence accompanied by understanding and feeling. The capital sins are still the same as ever, and behind each sin is fear. The only way to neutralize it is by understanding and facing it, opening the door of that dark closet. Only in this way does it lose its menacing aspect."



## Josep Pla

*"El quadern gris" (The Gray Notebook)*

Surkamp Verlag  
Translated into German by Eberhard Geisler

The publishing house Suhrkamp published Josep Pla's "El quadern gris" to coincide with the International Book Fair in Frankfurt in 2007, where Catalan culture was the guest of honor, with a prologue by the critic and editor Josep Maria Castellet. Josep Pla (Palafrugell, 1897 - Mas Pla de Llofrui, 1981) is one of the great Catalan prose stylists of the twentieth century, and "El quadern gris" is his referential work, a fundamental volume in the history of Catalan literature. It is a diary of his youth, which he began to write on March 8, 1918, and continued until November 15, 1919, just before Pla went to Paris as a correspondent for the newspaper La Publicitat. Years later, before publishing, he revised it. "El quadern gris" is not the only work by the author translated into German: the publisher Ammann has published "El carrer Estret" (The Narrow Street) and Berenberg, "Histories de mar" (Sea Stories), with its likenesses dedicated to Antoni Gaudí and Salvador Dalí.



## Jaume Cabré

*"Les veus del Pamano" ("Le voci del fiume", The Voices of the River)*

La Nuova Frontiera  
Translated into Italian by Stefania Maria Ciminelli

"Les veus del Pamano" has become, after its publication in January of 2004, one of the most-read Catalan novels, recommended and widespread in the past years. And now it also seduces Europe. It has been translated into more than ten languages (French, Dutch, Italian, Slovenian, Romanian, Hungarian, German...), receives critical praise from respected voices such as the ex-minister of German Foreign Affairs, Joschka

Fisher (who recommended it during the 2007 International Book Fair in Frankfurt), or Andrea Camilleri in Italy ("one of the books that has most profoundly impressed me", he said in an interview). In addition, the Italian translation by Stefania Maria Ciminelli received Honorable Mention in the Roma Prize of 2008. "Les veus del Pamano" develops in two times: in the early years of the post-war, and at the beginning of the twenty-first century. It takes place in a small town of the Catalan Pyrenees. Tina Bros, teacher and amateur photographer, discovers in the abandoned schoolhouse a notebook that contains the memoir of Oriol Fontelles, the former teacher of the town, also thought to be a Franquist hero. The notebook reveals the true history of Oriol Fontelles, quite different from what was said of him, which will be difficult for Tina to explain. The book is an elegy against forgetfulness, an impassioned defense for remembering, and a fight to ensure that history is not only written by the victors.

MONTSERRAT SERRA

# LITERARY SOCIETY

## THE TWO FACES OF MERCÈ RODOREDA AT GALLIMARD

The centenary of Mercè Rodoreda has resulted in an important undertaking in France: Gallimard, the publisher of *La plaça del Diamant* (The Time of the Doves), has decided to recover the French versions of *Quanta, quanta guerra...* (How Much War) and *La mort i la primavera* (Death and Spring), which will appear to the public this month of October.

We won't find ourselves in quite the same situation as in Germany, where one publisher, Suhrkamp, offers its public the entirety of Rodoreda's work. But the appearance of these three novels of Rodoreda, under the Gallimard name, may change the perception of her work.

Published in 1962, *La plaça del Diamant* is the story of a Barcelonan woman whose life is turned upside down by the civil war; published in 1981, *Quanta, quanta guerra...* is the story of a boy who looks for liberty in war; unfinished and posthumous, *La mort i la primavera* is the story of a town and the laws that govern it, totalitarian when it comes to death. Proscribed death, in this town, consists of filling the dying with cement so the soul cannot escape through the mouth at death. The French reader, very conscious of the tribute that literature always pays to death, surely is reminded of Jean Améry and his essays about extermination camps (*Més enllà del bé i del mal, Beyond Good and Bad*): "What worried *l'homme d'esprit* just as much as his non-intellectual friend was not death but *how he would die*. [...] The story was told, for example, of an SS man who had gutted a hunted animal and filled its stomach with sand." Maybe, with this step toward Paris, Rodoreda will return to Catalonia transformed into what she is: a European writer in the Catalan language.

MARIA BOHIGAS

# ON LINE

## Rodoreda Year

<http://www.mercerodoreda.cat/>

<http://www.lletra.cat/expo/mercerodoreda/>

2008 marks one hundred years since the birth of the greatest (and most translated) contemporary Catalan novelist: Mercè Rodoreda. We recommend the websites of her Foundation and another with an excellent virtual exhibition. In Catalan, Spanish, English, and German.

## Grup 62

<http://www.grup62.cat/>

After various fusions, Grup 62 is today the most important Catalan publishing house, appearing under 18 different labels, which embrace all literary genres and all aspects of publishing. In Catalan, Spanish and English.

## Institut Ramon Llull

<http://www.llull.cat/>

The Ramon Llull Institute is the official body responsible for the exterior promotion of Catalan Culture. It subsidizes translations from Catalan to other languages, and organizes periodic events for the promotion of Catalan works and authors at international fairs and festivals. In Catalan, Spanish and English.

## AELC Updates

<http://www.escriptors.cat/>

The Association of Writers in the Catalan Language (AELC) maintains literary notices on its website, updated daily.

## Literary Blogs

<http://www.blocsdelletrés.com/>

"Catalan Literature Hyperblog" allows you to follow permanent updates of the best literary blogs in Catalan. Received the 2007 Lletra prize for best digital initiative in Catalan literature.

## VilaWeb Letters

<http://www.vilaweb.cat/www/lletres>

The best digital space for information about Catalan letters. VilaWeb Letters is a section of the recognized independent electronic newspaper VilaWeb.

JAUME SUBIRANA