

PUBLISHING NEWS



Quim Monzó
Benzina (Gasoline)

Open Letter
Translated into English by Mary Ann Newman

It is always a celebration when a book is translated into English. In the Anglo-Saxon world, the publishing market only releases some three percent of translations. But the publishing house Open Letter desires to break this ceiling, motivated by the warning bell sounded by some writers, who have realized that this imbalance impoverishes them beyond measure. They have decided to publish *Benzina (Gasoline)*, a novel situated in the New York of the eighties and whose main character is Heribert, an artist at the peak of an arduously achieved fame. He faces crisis: creative, matrimonial, and sexual. *Benzina* was first published in 1983 and followed in 2005 a new version, completely revised by the author. The English translation is based on the 2005 edition. Why this complete revision? When Monzó wrote the novel, he himself has explained, he had not yet worked in press and radio. His experience with the communications media made him abandon affected and artificial words belonging to a language inherited from the middle of the twentieth century, and look for a model closer to that of the current reader. In addition, he changed the tense of the work from simple perfect to present.



Jaume Cabré
Viatge d'hivern (Winter Journey)

Swan Isle Press
Translated into English by Patricia Lunn

Since the 2007 Frankfurt Book Fair and the success achieved by *Les veus del Pamano (Voices from the Pamano)* in Germany, Jaume Cabré has not ceased to increase the number of his translations into various languages and to travel around promoting his books. Now he makes his debut in English with the delicious volume *Viatge d'hivern (Winter Journey)*, which was presented in Chicago, Providence and New York this past February. The stories that make up *Viatge d'hivern* are a literary homage to Schubert, Bach, and music, at the same time honoring painting, symbolized by Rembrandt. Cabré is a music lover, and plays violin as a hobby. For him music and literature are well connected: "The sense of rhythm," he says, "the musical sense that you acquire as a music lover make you get sharper when you sit down to write. In a certain way, the work of a composer and a writer are similar. I am one of those who read out loud, like Flaubert, especially when you see a fragment that isn't quite working, so then you sound it out. I find it very noble to appeal to the acoustic part of literature."



Anselm Turmeda
Disputa de l'ase (The Donkey Dispute)

LIT Verlag
Translated into German by Robert Beier

The writer Anselm Turmeda (Palma de Mallorca, 1355 - Tunis, 1423) entered the Franciscan order and studied in Bologna and Lleida. Later he converted to Islam and lived in Tunis under the name Allāh ibn 'Abd Allāh al-Targūman al-Mayūrqi. In 1417 Turmeda wrote the *Disputa de l'ase (The Donkey Dispute)*, a satirical work in which the author dialogues with a donkey about the superiority of man over animals. For its strong skeptical and antimonic component, the Inquisition put the work on its index of banned books. Certainly this is the reason why the original, written in Catalan, was lost. As a result this translation has been made from the only extant version, a French translation from 1544. This is the third volume of the *Katalanische Literatur des Mittelalters (Medieval Catalan Literature)* collection,

which began with the German version of the chivalric novel *Curial e Güelfa* and with an anthology of Ausiàs March's poems. The collection is the fruit of an agreement between the publishers Barcino and Lit Verlag.



Nouvelle Revue Française number 590
Special on Catalan poetry

Edited by Xavier Folch
Various translators

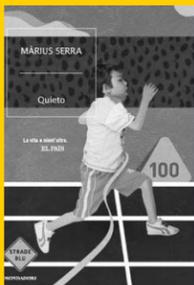
Volume number 590 of the prestigious journal *Nouvelle Revue Française*, published by Gallimard, and which last year celebrated the centenary of its creation, presents a special dossier dedicated to Catalan poetry. The editor Xavier Folch made the selections with the premise of offering works unpublished in French. The fourteen chosen poets are: Salvador Espriu translated by Bernard Lesfargues; Joan Vinyoli in the French version of Patrick Gifreu; Joan Brossa translated by Montserrat Prudon-Moral; Vicent Andrés Estellés in Jean-Marie Barberà's rendering; Jordi Sarsanedas translated by Annie Bats; Blai Bonet in a version of Jép Gouzy; Miquel Bauçà in the rendering of Patrick Gifreu; Narcís Comadira in a version of Denise Boyer and Bernard Lesfargues; Francesc Parcerisas translated by Annie Bats; Pere Gimferrer in the rendering of François-Michel Durazzo and Bernard Lesfargues; Enric Casasses translated by Patrick Gifreu; Maria-Mercè Marçal, Albert Roig and Andreu Vidal in versions by Annie Bats.



Joan Vinyoli
Y que el silencio quemé por los muertos (May Silence Burn for the Dead, a poetic anthology)

Pre-textos
Translated into Spanish by Carlos Marzal and Enric Sòria

Y que el silencio quemé por los muertos (May Silence Burn for the Dead) offers an anthology of the poetic work of Joan Vinyoli, the first monographic anthology of the Barcelonan author translated into Spanish published in the last ten years. The anthology, in a bilingual edition (Catalan-Spanish), includes a selection of the most important pieces of the following poetry collections by the author: *De vida i somni (On Life and Dreaming)*, *Les hores retrobades (The Rediscovered Hours)*, *El Callat (The Silent One)*, *Realitats (Realities)*, *Tot és ara i res (All Is Now and Nothing)*, *I encara les paraules (And Still the Words)*, *Ara que és tard (Now that It's Late)*, *Vent d'aram (Copper Wind)*, *Llibre d'amic (Book of the Friend)*, *Cants d'Abelone (Songs of Abelone)*, *El griu (The Griffin)*, *Cercles (Circles)*, *A hores petites (In the Small Hours)*, *Domini màgic (Magic Dominion)* and *Passeig d'aniversari (Birthday Stroll)*. Its publication closes the honorary events that were celebrated throughout 2009, with the motive of the 25th anniversary of the poet's death.



Màrius Serra
Quiet (Still)

Mondadori
Translated into Italian by Beatrice Parisi

The book finds its main character in Lluís Serra, or Llullu, the son of the author and a child affected by a multiform encephalopathy, as the doctors say. This cerebral illness means that Llullu cannot walk, laugh, speak: he cannot communicate. From behind the wheelchair in which he pushes his son, Màrius Serra was a privileged observer of the stares and paradoxes that were born around him. The book is made up of stories that are not chronologically ordered, about family situations that revolve around Llullu, until he turned seven. He does so without sentimentality, with tenderness, lucidity, and even humor, a difficult balance that

forms the best of literature. The author says: "Of course it is not fiction, but I use mechanisms of narrative, the same that I would use to write a story or a novel. At the same time, there is a clear aesthetic desire to establish a literary work. The power of literature is that it looks for ways to explain the world."

MONTSERRAT SERRA

LITERARY SOCIETY

Literature and Film: Paradoxes and Exceptions

Àngel Guimerà, Josep Maria de Sagarra, Mercè Rodoreda, Salvador Espriu and, in more recent times, Lluís-Anton Baulenas, Josep Maria Benet i Jornet and Sergi Belbel, are some of the Catalan authors who have been adapted in film through a contradictory and even paradoxical relationship. In the beginning, Catalan culture scorned the cinema and excluded it from the circle of other arts of greater tradition and prestige. The local cinematographic industry, reciprocally, did not offer guarantees of solvency that would dispel this suspicion and preferred populism to intellectualism. During the Franco era, Catalan literature and film were primarily countercultural or exceptions and only since the reinstatement of democracy have the circumstances necessary for an understanding been forged, which brings with it another contradiction: the involvement of the cinematographic avant-gardes is much greater with the plastic arts than with literature of a realist point of view. The filmography of Ventura Pons, on the contrary, is an example of coherence and fidelity when constructing a personal oeuvre based on Catalan texts, but it is an exception. The majority of new cinematographic auteurs opt for original scripts prior to adaptations of Jaume Cabré (*La teranyina, The Spiderweb*), Ferran Torrent (*L'illa de l'holandès, The Dutchman's Island*) or Emili Teixidor (*Pà negre, Black Bread*). Acquiring the rights of these makes the projects more expensive, and for the moment, does not guarantee that they can capture international markets. This is the point of view of the producers, but there are other factors to consider and authors to claim. Why, for example, has Josep Pla been the object of a modest television series of a biographical nature while none of his works have ever been adapted for the big screen?

ESTEVE RIAMBAU

ON LINE Digital initiatives

Visat. <http://www.visat.cat/>

An enormous website maintained by PEN Català, with sections on "Translations of Catalan literature," "World literature in Catalan," "History of literary translation," and a "Translators' space." Without a doubt, the best tool to underscore the importance of translation and translators. In Catalan, German, English, Spanish, and French.

bloQG: El quadern gris, una altra vegada (The Gray Notebook, Again). <http://elquaderngris.cat/blog/>

To commemorate ninety years since the writing of the most famous diary in Catalan literature, *El quadern gris*, by Josep Pla, a group on the internet has taken up its publication day by day, from March 8, 2008 to November 15, 2009 (with images, links, and commentaries). In Catalan.

Poetry videos. <http://vimeo.com/blocsdelletrés/videos>

Josep Porcar, editor of Blocs de lletres (Literature Blogs, www.blocsdelletrés.com), a web page of reference for the principal Catalan blogs about literature, has produced some sixty excellent video clips freely accessible on the internet, uniting image, audio and poetry (original version and translated) of great names such as Auden, Benn, Larkin, Leopardi, Rilke, Shakespeare, and Szymborska.

Combray. <http://combray.bloc.cat/>

The recent Catalan edition of *Combray*, by Marcel Proust (Vienna, 2009), under the direction of Josep M. Pinto, came out of a well-known blog in which, over the course of three years, the translator made available fragments of his work in process. In Catalan.

Joan Maragall. <http://www.joanmaragall.cat/>

Maragall is one of the great classic names of Catalan literature of the turn of the twentieth century. The "Joan Maragall Year" dedicated to celebrate the centenary of his death and 150 years since his birth, includes this institutional web site, which will present news of all the events, exhibitions and publications that are planned.

JAUME SUBIRANA