

## Nostalgia Mircea Cartarescu

Would Hiroshima have been bombed if Japanese contained a phrase meaning 'no comment'? Is it alright for missionaries to replace the Bible's 'white as snow' with 'white as fungus' in places where snow never falls? Who, or what, is Kuzma's mother, and why was Nikita Khrushchev so threateningly obsessed with her (or it)? The course of diplomacy rarely runs smooth; without an invisible army of translators and interpreters, it's hard to see how it could run at all. But though such go-betweens tend to be overlooked, even despised, the subtlest of them have achieved a remarkable degree of influence. Join veteran translator Anna Aslanyan to explore hidden histories of cunning and ambition, heroism and incompetence. Meet the figures behind the notable events of history, from the Great Game to Brexit, and discover just how far a simple misunderstanding can go.

What do Socrates, Hypatia, Giordano Bruno, Thomas More, and Jan Patočka have in common? First, they were all faced one day with the most difficult of choices: stay faithful to your ideas and die or renounce them and stay alive. Second, they all chose to die. Their spectacular deaths have become not only an integral part of their biographies, but are also inseparable from their work. A "death for ideas" is a piece of philosophical work in its own right; Socrates may have never written a line, but his death is one of the greatest philosophical best-sellers of all time. *Dying for Ideas* explores the limit-situation in which philosophers find themselves when the only means of persuasion they can use is their own dying bodies and the public spectacle of their death. The book tells the story of the philosopher's encounter with death as seen from several angles: the tradition of philosophy as an art of living; the body as the site of self-transcending; death as a classical philosophical topic; taming death and self-fashioning; finally, the philosophers' scapegoating and their live performance of a martyr's death, followed by apotheosis and disappearance into myth. While rooted in the history of philosophy, *Dying for Ideas* is an exercise in breaking disciplinary boundaries. This is a book about Socrates and Heidegger, but also about Gandhi's "fasting unto death" and self-immolation; about Girard and Passolini, and self-fashioning and the art of the essay.

This modern classic of global feminist literature, the only novel by one of Romania's most heralded poets, styled as a long letter addressed to the man who is about to leave her, a woman meanders through a cosmic retelling of her life from childhood to adulthood with visionary language and visceral, detail. Like a contemporary Scheherazade, she spins tales to hold him captivated, from the small incidents of their lives together to the intimate narrative of her relationship to womanhood. Through a dreamlike thread of strange images and passing characters, her stories invite the reader into a fantastical vision of love, loss, and femininity. Before becoming the most important Romanian novelist of his generation, Mircea Cărtărescu wrote poetry influenced by the "hallucinatory imagery" of Allen Ginsberg and distinguished by its Beat sensibility and humor. Cărtărescu was in his twenties in the 80s, and his word-slinging poems, with references to Bob Dylan and The Beatles, remain subversive gestures under the dictatorship of Nicolae Ceaușescu: "The West opened my eyes." A young man "overwhelmed by loneliness," charged with erotic, urban energy, and besotted with Natalie Wood, he observed the anonymous women on bicycles and at tram stops with "my hundred thousand eyes, crematoria windows of sparks, [which] set the fir trees ablaze and leave the mountain bald." Brimming with adolescent yearning, self-consciously "complicated," and unwilling to silence themselves, Cărtărescu's poems convey the nervous vibrancy of the younger generation living immediately before and after the fall of communism.

It is well known that Jorge Luis Borges was a translator, but this has been considered a curious minor aspect of his literary achievement. Few have been aware of the number of texts he translated, the importance he attached to this activity, or the extent to which the translated works inform his own stories and poems. Between the age of ten, when he translated Oscar Wilde, and the end of his life, when he prepared a Spanish version of the *Prose Edda*, Borges transformed the work of Poe, Kafka, Hesse, Kipling, Melville, Gide, Faulkner, Whitman, Woolf, Chesterton, and many others. In a multitude of essays, lectures, and interviews Borges analyzed the versions of others and developed an engaging view about translation. He held that a translation can improve an original, that contradictory renderings of the same work can be equally valid, and that an original can be unfaithful to a translation. Borges's bold habits as translator and his views on translation had a decisive impact on his creative process.

Translation is also a recurrent motif in Borges's stories. In "The Immortal," for example, a character who has lived for many centuries regains knowledge of poems he had authored, and almost forgotten, by way of modern translations. Many of Borges's fictions include actual or imagined translations, and some of his most important characters are translators. In "Pierre Menard, author of the Quixote," Borges's character is a respected Symbolist poet, but also a translator, and the narrator insists that Menard's masterpiece—his "invisible work"—adds unsuspected layers of meaning to Cervantes's *Don Quixote*. George Steiner cites this short story as "the most acute, most concentrated commentary anyone has offered on the business of translation." In an age where many discussions of translation revolve around the dichotomy faithful/unfaithful, this book will surprise and delight even Borges's closest readers and critics.

While waiting for a private midnight assignation on a quay by the Tagus, the narrator spend his day, enjoying a series of chance encounters with such colorful characters as a young junky, a gypsy, a lost taxi driver, the ghost of the long dead poet Fernando Pessoa, and many others, both real and imaginary as he makes his way around Lisbon. Reprint.

Winner of the 2004 Prix de Flore—one of France's most distinguished literary prizes—a wildly romantic, true-life love story "History follows a trail of sputtering desire, often calling upon the delusions of lovers to generate the sparks. If it weren't for us, the world would suffer from a dismal lack of stories," writes Bruce Benderson in this brutally candid memoir. "What astonishes and intrigues is Benderson's way of recounting, in the sweetest possible voice, things that are considered shocking," wrote *Le Monde*. What's so shocking? It's not just Benderson's job translating Céline Dion's saccharine autobiography, which he admits is driving him mad; but his unrequited love for an impoverished Romanian in "cheap club-kid platforms with dollar signs in his squinting eyes," whom he meets while on a journalism assignment in Eastern Europe. Rather than retreat, Benderson absorbs everything he can about Romanian culture and discovers an uncanny similarity between his own obsession for the Romanian (named Romulus) and the disastrous love affair of King Carol II, the last king of Romania (1893-1953). Throughout, Benderson—"absolutely free of bitterness, nastiness, or any desire to protect himself," wrote *Le Monde*—is sustained by little white codeine pills, a poetic self-awareness, a sense of humor, and an unwavering belief in the perfect romance, even as wild dogs chase him down Romanian streets.

A translation of the leading Romanian writer's 1989 debut novel consists of five stand-alone chapters that are linked together through imaginative explorations of such themes as humankind's primordial myth-making, the origins of the universe, and an apocalyptic Bucharest tenement district during the years of communist dictatorship. Original.

"Written in 1935 at the height of Czech Surrealism but not published until 1945, *Valerie and Her Week of Wonders* is a bizarre erotic fantasy of a young girl's maturation into womanhood. Drawing on Matthew Lewis's *The Monk*, Sade's *Justine*, K. H. Macha's *May*, and Murnau's *Nosferatu* as well as the form and language of the pulp serial novel, Nezval has constructed a lyrical, menacing dream of sexual awakening involving a vampire with a taste for chicken blood, changelings, a lecherous priest, a malicious grandmother desiring her lost youth, and an androgynous merging of brother with sister. Part fairy tale, part Gothic horror, the novel is a meditation on youth and age, sexuality and death - an exploration of the grotesque that juxtaposes high and low genres with shifting registers of language and moods, thus placing it squarely in the tradition of the Czech avant-garde."--BOOK JACKET.

NostalgiaNostalgia

Julian Semilians poetry engenders itself in the crawl-spaces between language and proto-language, between his two languages, Romanian and English, between what might be translated and what never will, between poetries in an alert critical state.--Andrei Codrescu  
Set in a near-future Bolivia, this "hybrid of cyberpunk and political thrillers [is] sleek, brisk, and clever" (Entertainment Weekly). Set against a backdrop of advancing globalization, this award-winning, "fast-paced" literary thriller puts a cutting-edge digital spin on the age-old fight between the oppressed and the oppressor (The Miami Herald). The South American town of Río Fugitivo is on the verge of a social revolution—not a revolution of strikes and street riots, but a war waged electronically, in which computer viruses are the weapons and hackers the revolutionaries. In this war of information, the lives of a variety of characters become entangled: Kandinsky, the mythic leader of a group of hackers fighting the government and transnational companies; Albert, the founder of the Black Chamber, a state security firm charged with deciphering the secret codes used in the information war; and Miguel "Turing" Sáenz, the Black Chamber's most famous codebreaker, who begins to suspect his work is not as innocent as he once supposed. All converge to create a "propulsive" novel about personal responsibility and complicity in a world defined by the ever-increasing gulfs between the global and the local, government and society, the virtual and the real (Publishers Weekly, starred review). Turing's *Delirium* "combines the excitement of a political thriller with the intellectual ambition of a literary novel" (San Francisco Chronicle). "If William Gibson were a Bolivian, this might be the kind of novel he'd be writing." —Chicago Tribune

Winner of the 2015 Prix Goncourt, an astounding novel that bridges Europe and the Islamic world On the shortlist for the 2017 Man Booker International Prize As night falls over Vienna, Franz Ritter, an insomniac musicologist, takes to his sickbed with an unspecified illness and spends a restless night drifting between dreams and memories, revisiting the important chapters of his life: his ongoing fascination with the Middle East and his numerous travels to Istanbul, Aleppo, Damascus, and Tehran, as well as the various writers, artists, musicians, academics, orientalists, and explorers who populate this vast dreamscape. At the center of these memories is his elusive, unrequited love, Sarah, a fiercely intelligent French scholar caught in the intricate tension between Europe and the Middle East. With exhilarating prose and sweeping erudition, Mathias Énard pulls astonishing elements from disparate sources—nineteenth-century composers and esoteric orientalists, Balzac and Agatha Christie—and binds them together in a most magical way.

Widely regarded as the greatest Romanian novel of the twentieth century, Mateiu Caragiale's *Rakes of the Old Court* (Craii de Curtea-Veche) follows four characters through the bars and brothels of Bucharest. Guided by an amoral opportunist, the shadowy narrator and his two affluent friends drink and gamble their way through a city built on the ruins of crumbled castles and bygone empires. The novel's shimmering, spectacular prose describes gripping vignettes of love, ambition, and decay. Originally published in 1929, *Rakes of the Old Court* is considered a jewel of Romanian modernism. Devoted "Mateists" have long read, memorized, and reenacted the novel, and after the Romanian Revolution, it became part of the high school curriculum. Now canonical, Mateiu's work has been celebrated for its opulent literary style and enigmatic tone.

This collection of pithy, brilliantly acerbic pieces is a companion to *Sixty Stories*, Barthelme's earlier retrospective volume. Barthelme spotlights the idiosyncratic, haughty, sometimes downright ludicrous behavior of human beings, but it is style rather than content which takes precedence.

From the incomparable New York Times and New Yorker illustrator Tamara Shopsin, a debut novel about a NYC printer repair technician who comes of age alongside the Apple computer—featuring original artistic designs by the author. NAMED A MOST ANTICIPATED BOOK OF 2021 BY LIT HUB. *LaserWriter II* is a coming-of-age tale set in the legendary 90s indie NYC Mac repair shop TekServe—a voyage back in time to when the internet was new, when New York City was gritty, and when Apple made off-beat computers for weirdos. Our guide is Claire, a 19-year-old who barely speaks to her bohemian co-workers, but knows when it's time to snap on an antistatic bracelet. Tamara Shopsin brings us a classically New York novel that couldn't feel more timely. Interweaving the history of digital technology with a tale both touchingly human and delightfully technical, Shopsin brings an idiosyncratic cast of characters to life with a light touch, a sharp eye, and an unmistakable voice. Filled with pixelated philosophy and lots of printers, *LaserWriter II* is, at its heart, a parable about an apple.

*Patchogue* is a village on Long Island sixty miles from New York City. After a prologue of "facts" about Patchogue calling to mind the opening of *Moby-Dick*, Thomas McGonigle's acclaimed novel divides naturally into three parts: the going to, the being in, and the coming back from Patchogue by way of Bulgaria, Turkey, and Italy. The trip to and from assumes the contours of the oldest journey of all: the search for paradise, impelled by the disappointment of reality.

Mircea Cartarescu's prize-winning, genre-crossing memoir-novel of hallucinatory Bucharest is a bestseller in Romania. *Blinding* follows the protagonist's childhood and teenaged hospitalisation, his family's migration from Bulgaria the century before, his parents' courtship and the installation of the Communist regime. Personal and political history forms a lush backdrop to an engrossing tale that connects a travelling circus, secret police, zombie armies, American fighter pilots and New Orleanian swamps.

Imparting the story of the systematic 1942 execution of five thousand Belgrade concentration camp prisoners in a transport truck, a schoolteacher recreates historical events for his students on a school bus, an endeavor that overwhelms the teacher with the brutality of the act. Reprint.

Cartarescu brings together twenty short stories that he wrote for ELLE magazine. The protagonist of every story is female, but they are not individual portraits of women - it is a group portrait of womanhood.

New York Times Bestseller Winner of the World Fantasy Award One of New York magazine's 10 Best Books of the Year One of NPR's 5 Best Works of Foreign Fiction The celebrated scary fairy tales of Russia's preeminent contemporary fiction writer—the author of the prizewinning memoir about growing up in Stalinist Russia, *The Girl from the Metropol Hotel* Vanishings and aparitions, nightmares and twists of fate, mysterious ailments and supernatural interventions haunt these stories by the Russian master Ludmilla Petrushevskaya, heir to the spellbinding tradition of Gogol and Poe. Blending the miraculous with the macabre, and leavened by a mischievous gallows humor, these bewitching tales are like nothing being written in Russia—or anywhere else in the world—today.

This novel presents the thoughts of a dying man as he contemplates his life and the events leading to his death. Nikola

Petkov, the head of the Agrarian Party and the last significant opposition leader to defy the Communist takeover of Bulgaria, was hung in 1947 after a show trial in Sofia. Thomas McGonigle records Petkov's last minutes, mixing history and fiction, biography and imagination, and in so doing crafts a compelling testament to both a man and a country. A young American woman arrives in Florence from Boston, knowing no one and speaking little Italian. But Hannah is isolated in a more profound way, estranged from her own identity after a bout with starvation that has left her life and body in ruins. She is determined to recover in Florence, a city saturated with beauty, vitality, and food--as well as a dangerous history of sainthood for women who starved themselves for God. Hannah joins a local rowing club, where Francesca, a welcoming but predatory Milanese, and Luca, a seemingly steady Florentine with whom she becomes involved, draw her into Florence's vibrant present: the complex social dynamics at the club, soccer mania, eating, drinking, sex, an insatiable insistence on life. But Hannah is also rapt by the city's past--the countless representations of beauty, the entrenched conflicts of politics and faith, and the lore of the mystical saints, women whose self-imposed isolation and ecstatic searches for meaning through denial illuminate the seduction of her own struggles. Both sides pull Hannah in: challenging her, defeating her, lifting her up. And when a figure from her past life in Boston reappears, threatening the delicate balance of her present, Hannah's feverish personal excavation becomes caught up with the long history of women's contention with body and spirit, desire and death. A vivid, visceral debut echoing the novels of Jean Rhys, Elena Ferrante, and Catherine Lacey, *Florence in Ecstasy* gives us an arresting new vision of a woman's attempt to find meaning--and find herself--in an unstable world.

*The Matter of Desire* is the story of Pedro, a Bolivian-American political scientist who teaches at a university in upstate New York. Having become entangled in an erotically charged romance with Ashley, a beautiful red-headed graduate student, he returns to Bolivia to seek answers to his own life by investigating the mysteries of his father's past. Trapped between two cultures, Pedro ultimately finds himself in an existential dilemma of tragic dimensions. *The Matter of Desire* combines elements of the political thriller and the family mystery with a torrid illicit love affair and brilliantly elucidates the complex relationship between Latin America and the United States.

A harrowing account of the Armenian Genocide documented through the stories of those who managed to survive and descendants who refuse to forget. The grandchild of Armenians who escaped widespread massacres during the Ottoman Empire a century ago, Varujan Vosganian grew up in Romania hearing firsthand accounts of those who had witnessed horrific killings, burned villages, and massive deportations. In this moving chronicle of the Armenian people's almost unimaginable tragedy, the author transforms true events into a work of fiction firmly grounded in survivor testimonies and historical documentation. Across Syrian desert refugee camps, Russian tundra, and Romanian villages, the book chronicles individual lives destroyed by ideological and authoritarian oppression. But this novel tells an even wider human story. Evocative of all the great sufferings that afflicted the twentieth century--world wars, concentration camps, common graves, statelessness, and others--this book belongs to all peoples whose voices have been lost. Hailed for its documentary value and sensitive authenticity, Vosganian's work has become an international phenomenon.

Munoo, a young boy forced to leave his hill village to fend for himself and discover the world. His journey takes him far from home to towns and cities, to Bombooy and Simla, sweating as servant, factory-worker and rickshaw driver. It is a fight for survival that illuminates, with raw immediacy, the grim fate of the masses in pre-Partition India.

From one of the greatest Norwegian authors of the twentieth century, comes a collection of spare, biting stories of people caught between reality and expectation, hope and despair, love and longing. A man and a woman in a quiet, remote house, an old man on a park bench, an estranged brother in a railway café -- Kjell Askildsen's characters are surrounded by absence. Filled with disquiet, and longing, they walk to a fjord, they smoke, they drink on a veranda, they listen to conversations that drift through open windows. Small flashes like the promise of a sunhat, a nail in a cherry tree, or a raised flag, reveal the interminable space between desire and reality in which Askildsen's characters are forever suspended. Widely recognized as one of the greatest modern short-story writers, with unadorned prose and a dark humor, Askildsen captures life as it really is, the worlds of his characters uncanny mirrors of our own.

Introducing an extraordinary and original writer whose first novel explores the intersections of grief and rage, personal strength and healing--and what we owe one another. Fern seeks refuge from her mother's pill-popping and boyfriends via Soul Train; Gwin finds salvation in the music of Prince much to her congregation's dismay and Jesenia, miles ahead of her classmates at her gifted and talented high school, is a brainy and precocious enigma. None of this matters to Boss Man, the monster who abducts them and holds them captive in a dilapidated house in Queens. On the night they are finally rescued, throngs line the block gawking and claiming ignorance. Among them is lifetime resident Miss Metropolitan, advice columnist for the local weekly, but how could anyone who fancies herself a "newspaperwoman" have missed a horror story unfolding right across the street? And why is it that only two of the three girls--now women--were found? The mystery haunts the two remaining "victim girls" who are subjected to the further trauma of becoming symbols as they continuously adapt to their present and their unrelenting past. Like Colson Whitehead's *The Nickel Boys*, Ferrell's *Dear Miss Metropolitan* gives voice to characters surviving unimaginable tragedy. The story is inventively revealed before, during, and after the ordeal in this singular and urgent novel.

The first translation into English of Celan's Romanian poems.

This remarkable first novel depicts life in the small Mexican town of Ixtepec during the grim days of the Revolution. The town tells its own story against a variegated background of political change, religious persecution, and social unrest. Elena Garro, who has also won a high reputation as a playwright, is a masterly storyteller. Although her plot is dramatically intense and suspenseful, the novel does not depend for its effectiveness on narrative continuity. It is a book of episodes, one that leaves the reader with a series of vivid impressions. The colors are bright, the smells pungent, the many characters clearly drawn in a few bold strokes. Octavio Paz, the distinguished poet and critic, has written that it "is truly an extraordinary work, one of the most perfect creations in contemporary Latin American literature."

Shifting viewpoints, magic realism, and narrative mastery are all integral parts of *Nostalgia*, Romanian author and perennial Nobel Prize favorite Mircea Cartarescu's masterpiece. The book is comprised of five unrelated stories: "The Roulette Player," in which a desperately unlucky man manages to amass a fortune by taking part in dangerous games of Russian roulette; "Mentardy" narrates

the travails of a prepubescent messiah who loses his powers with the advent of his sexuality; "The Twins," a brave exploration of youthful rage; "REM," in which a middle-aged woman falls in love with a university student in a nightmarish Bucharest; and "The Architect," in which a man who cannot silence his car horn becomes obsessed with sound—an obsession that will have cosmic consequences. Readers eager to acquaint themselves with one of the most important voices in modern European literature will not want to miss this sophisticated, haunting collection of stories. Puntos de vista variables, el realismo mágico y la maestría narrativa son facetas íntegras de Nostalgia, la obra maestra del autor rumano y favorito perenne para el Premio Nobel, Mircea Cartarescu. El libro consta de cinco cuentos no relacionados: "El ruletista," en el que un hombre al que nunca le ha sonreído la suerte hace fortuna participando en letales sesiones de ruleta rusa; "El Mendébil," el cual narra los infortunios de un mesías impúber que pierde sus poderes mágicos con el advenimiento de su propia sexualidad; "Los gemelos," una bizarra exploración de la ira juvenil; "REM," en el cual una mujer de mediana edad se enamora de un estudiante de instituto en una Bucarest pesadillesca; y "El arquitecto," en el cual un hombre que no logra silenciar el claxon de su coche se obsesiona con el sonido—una obsesión que tendrá consecuencias cósmicas. El lector interesado en conocer a una de las voces más importantes de la literatura europea moderna no se querrá perder esta sofisticada, inolvidable colección de historias.

This exciting new collection celebrates the richness and variety of the Spanish short story, from the nineteenth century to the present day. Featuring over fifty stories selected by revered translator Margaret Jull Costa, it blends old favourites and hidden gems - many of which have never before been translated into English - and introduces readers to surprising new voices as well as giants of Spanish literary culture, from Emilia Pardo Bazán and Leopoldo Alas, through Mercè Rodoreda and Manuel Rivas, to Ana Maria Matute and Javier Marías. Brimming with romance, horror, history, farce, strangeness and beauty, and showcasing alluring hairdressers, war defectors, vampiric mothers, and talismanic mandrake roots, the daring and entertaining assortment of tales in *The Penguin Book of Spanish Short Stories* will be a treasure trove for readers.

"United States of Banana takes place at the Statue of Liberty in post-9/11 New York City, where Hamlet, Zarathustra, and Giannina are on a quest to free the Puerto Rican prisoner Segismundo. Segismundo has been imprisoned for more than one hundred years, hidden away by his father, the king of the United States of Banana, for the crime of having been born. But when the king remarries, he frees his son, and for the sake of reconciliation, makes Puerto Rico the fifty-first state and grants American passports to all Latin American citizens. This staggering show of benevolence rocks the global community, causing an unexpected power shift with far reaching implications."--P. [4] of cover.

The No. 1 New York Times Bestseller Jess Walter's *Beautiful Ruins* is a gorgeous, glamorous novel set in 1960s Italy and a modern Hollywood studio. The story begins in 1962. Somewhere on a rocky patch of the sun-drenched Italian coastline a young innkeeper, chest-deep in daydreams, looks out over the incandescent waters of the Ligurian Sea and views an apparition: a beautiful woman, a vision in white, approaching him on a boat. She is an American starlet, he soon learns, and she is dying. And the story begins again today, half a world away in Hollywood, when an elderly Italian man shows up on a movie studio's back lot searching for the woman he last saw at his hotel fifty years before. Gloriously inventive, funny, tender and constantly surprising, *Beautiful Ruins* is a novel full of fabulous and yet very flawed people, all of them striving towards another sort of life, a future that is both delightful and yet, tantalizingly, seems just out of reach. 'Magic...A monument to crazy love with a deeply romantic heart' New York Times 'A novel shot in sparkly Technicolor' Booklist 'Hilarious and compelling' Esquire

Available in English for the first time, Mihail Sebastian's classic 1934 novel delves into the mind of a Jewish student in Romania during the fraught years preceding World War II. This literary masterpiece revives the ideological debates of the interwar period through the journal of a Romanian Jewish student caught between anti-Semitism and Zionism. Although he endures persistent threats just to attend lectures, he feels disconnected from his Jewish peers and questions whether their activism will be worth the cost. Spending his days walking the streets and his nights drinking and conversing with revolutionaries, zealots, and libertines, he remains isolated, even from the women he loves. From Bucharest to Paris, he strives to make peace with himself in an increasingly hostile world. For *Two Thousand Years* echoes Mihail Sebastian's struggles as the rise of fascism ended his career and turned his friends and colleagues against him. Born of the violence of relentless anti-Semitism, his searching, self-derisive work captures a defining moment in history and lights the way for generations to come—a prescient, heart-wrenching chronicle of resilience and despair, resistance and acceptance.

With an introduction by award-winning novelist Colm Tóibín *Opening with a crime of passion after a years-long love affair has soured, The Dead Girls soon plunges into an investigation of something even darker: Serafina Baladro and her sister run a successful brothel business in a small town, so successful that they begin to expand. But when business starts to falter, life in the brothel turns ugly, and slowly, girls start disappearing . . . Based on real events, the story of serial-killing brothel owners Delfina and María de Jesús González, whose crimes were uncovered in 1964, The Dead Girls is a deliciously satirical black comedy - a potent blend of sex and mayhem. Written in the laconic tones of a police report, it cleverly uncovers the hopeless pedantry of a broken justice system, and the dark world of prostitution.*

A New York Times Notable Book for 2011 In 1989, the year the Wall came down, a university student in Berlin on his morning run finds a corpse on a park bench and alerts the authorities. This scene opens a novel of extraordinary scope and depth, a masterwork that traces the fate of myriad Europeans—Hungarians, Jews, Germans, Gypsies—across the treacherous years of the mid-twentieth century. Three unusual men are at the heart of *Parallel Stories*: Hans von Wolkenstein, whose German mother is linked to secrets of fascist-Nazi collaboration during the 1940s; Ágost Lippay Lehr, whose influential father has served Hungary's different political regimes for decades; and András Rott, who has his own dark record of mysterious activities abroad. The web of extended and interconnected dramas reaches from 1989 back to the spring of 1939, when Europe trembled on the edge of war, and extends to the bestial times of 1944–45, when Budapest was besieged, the Final Solution devastated Hungary's Jews, and the war came to an end, and on to the cataclysmic Hungarian Revolution of October 1956. We follow these men from Berlin and Moscow to Switzerland and Holland, from the Mediterranean to the North Sea, and of course, from village to city in Hungary. The social and political

circumstances of their lives may vary greatly, their sexual and spiritual longings may seem to each of them entirely unique, yet Péter Nádas's magnificent tapestry unveils uncanny reverberating parallels that link them across time and space. This is Péter Nádas's masterpiece—eighteen years in the writing, a sensation in Hungary even before it was published, and almost four years in the translating. *Parallel Stories* is the first foreign translation of this daring, demanding, and momentous novel, and it confirms for an even larger audience what Hungary already knows: that it is the author's greatest work.

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