

TRANSIT

BOOKS



TRACES OF ENAYAT

Iman Mersal

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC BY

Robin Moger

From one of the preeminent poets of the Arabic-speaking world, a luminous biographical detective story retracing the mysterious life and erasure of Egyptian literature's tragic heroine.

Cairo, 1963: four years before her lone novel is finally published, the writer Enayat al-Zayyat takes her own life at age 27. For the next three decades, it's as if Enayat never existed at all.

Years later, when celebrated Egyptian poet Iman Mersal stumbles upon Enayat's long-forgotten *Love and Silence* in a Cairo book stall, she embarks on a journey of reflection and rediscovery that leads her ever closer to the world and work of Enayat al-Zayyat.

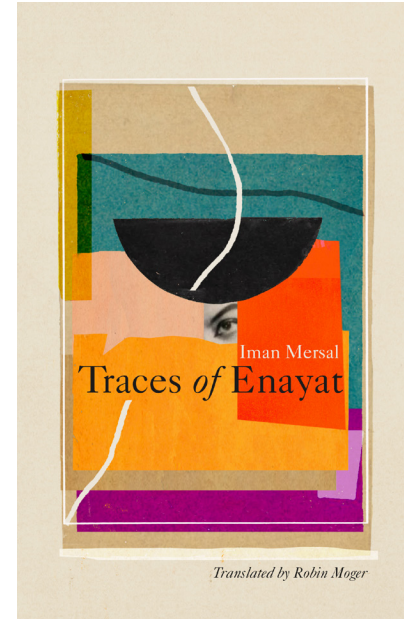
In this luminous biographical detective story, Mersal retraces Enayat's life and afterlife through interviews with family members and friend, even tracking down the apartments, schools, and sanatoriums where Enayat spent her days. As Mersal maps two simultaneous psychogeographies--from the glamor of golden-age Egyptian cinema to the Cairo of Mersal's own past--a remarkable portrait emerges of two women striving to live on their own terms.

With *Traces of Enayat*, Iman Mersal embraces the reciprocal relationship between a text and its reader, between past and present, between author and subject.



IMAN MERSAL is a writer, academic, translator, and one of the most prominent poets of the Arab-speaking world. Born in Egypt in 1966, she emigrated to Canada in 1999. *Traces of Enayat* won the prestigious 2021 Sheikh Zayed Book Award, making Mersal the first woman to win its Literature category. Her most recent poetry collection is *The Threshold* (FSG, 2022)..

ROBIN MOGER is a translator of Arabic living in Barcelona. He has translated poetry and prose, including Haytham El Wardany's *The Book of Sleep* and *Slipping* by Mohamed Kheir.



April 2, 2024

Nonfiction

Paperback Original

5.25 x 8, 280 pages, \$18.95

Rights: North America

Agent: Sterling Lord

978-1-945492-84-6 (pb)

from
TRACES OF ENAYAT

It wasn't what happened in the novel that made me fall in love with it. Even in 1993, callow as I was, I knew that a good novel is more than the sum of its incidents. Nor was I drawn to it because of its social or feminist 'consciousness', or the simple historical fact that it had been written by a young woman in the 1960s. As a matter of fact, at that time in my life, in conversation with friends and fellow writers I would frequently mock the idea of describing a novel as 'conscious' or praising a work of literature simply because it 'reflected reality' or championed a particular social class, or issue, or nation. And we reserved our profoundest mockery for any defence of 'higher values' in incompetent literature.

Back then, I was the same as all my friends. We read 'high literature' (defined by consensus), but we also read randomly, hunting out whatever appealed to us around the margins of this definition. My passions included CP Cavafy, Wadie Saadeh, Yehia Haqqi, Régis Debray, Samir Amin, Tzvetan Todorov, Eduardo Galeano, Milan Kundera, Louis Awad and more, and I would argue for my choices with a partisan's fervour:

'How can you even mention al-Aqqad alongside Taha Hussein?'

'Critics need to read Abdelfattah Kilito.'

'Sepúlveda's *The Old Man Who Read Love Stories* is better than *One Hundred Years of Solitude*.'

'So the Ministry of Culture can invite Darwish and Adonis, but not Sargon Boulus?'

A young woman writer had to...

THE NOVICES OF LERNA

Ángel Bonomini

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY

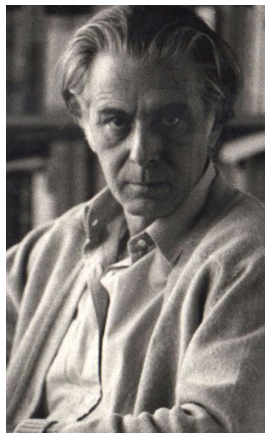
Jordan Landsman

A forgotten masterpiece by an enigmatic master of Argentine fantastic literature.

When unambitious scholar Ramón Beltra receives a mysterious invitation to a lucrative six-month fellowship at the University of Lerna in Switzerland, he reluctantly complies with the unusual qualifying paperwork requiring several pages of detailed measurements and photographs of his entire body. Beltra soon finds himself in the deserted university town of Lerna, together with twenty-three other “novices” subject to the same undisclosed project—all of them doppelgangers of Beltra himself. At first, Beltra is the only one to bristle at the school’s dizzying array of rules and regulations, but this all changes with the onset of an uncontrollable epidemic, and the fellows begin dying off one by one...

The Novices of Lerna introduces Bonomini’s fantastic tales to English readers for the first time. Shot through with wry humor and tender absurdity, these meditations on identity, surveillance, and isolation remain eerily prescient.

“I’m so enthralled by the book that one night, when Borges came over, I proposed we read the only story I hadn’t read yet: “The Novices of Lerna.” We were dazzled. The story is admirably told, with much wisdom, everything is spot on.”
—letter from Adolfo Bioy Casares to Ángel Bonomini, September 18, 1972



An overlooked and enigmatic master of Argentine fantastic literature, **ÁNGEL BONOMINI** was forty-three years old in 1972 when he published *The Novices of Lerna*, the first of four books of short stories he released before his death at age sixty-four. A contemporary of Jorge Luis Borges, Adolfo Bioy Casares, and Silvina Ocampo, he received the prestigious Premio Konex two times.

JORDAN LANDSMAN was born in New York City. After graduating from Binghamton University, he spent several years living in Buenos Aires, where he co-created the BA Comedy Lab. *The Novices of Lerna* is his first translation.



May 7, 2024

Fiction/Stories

Paperback

5.25 x 8, 180 pages, \$17.95

Rights: World English

Agent: Pre-Textos

978-1-945492-85-3 (pb)

from
**THE NOVICES OF
LERNA**

The month I graduated from university (and not exactly with flying colors), the editor of the alumni magazine asked if I would do him a big gauchada. He wanted me to write him an article. Since I didn’t know how to say no, I delivered a few modest pages, mostly class notes mixed with an abundance of quotes. That was my entire academic record: a degree I had barely obtained and an article of dubious originality.

With such a meager resumé, I couldn’t help but be surprised when, a few weeks after my article was published, I received a proposal from the University of Lerna: they were offering me a six-month fellowship. What was even more astonishing was that they required (along with my confirmation) a frankly disconcerting report of my physical characteristics.

Yes, the fellowship was tempting in and of itself: lots of money, the unilateral ability (on my part) to rescind the agreement at any time, paid travel, paid clothing, life insurance, the possibility to take classes in my field as well as others, not a single subsequent obligation (publications or reports); a true sinecure that would also give me the opportunity to see the world.

But in addition to the unexpected offer and unusual requests, there was something else I found unnerving: the tone in which the offer letter from Lerna was written. The syntax was generally unobjectionable, but the tone aroused my suspicion due to how cloying, cautious, and bland it was. An example...

KINTU (ANNIVERSARY EDITION)

Jennifer Nansubuga Makumbi

This 10-year anniversary edition celebrates a classic of Ugandan literature.

First published in Kenya in 2014 to critical and popular acclaim, *Kintu* is a modern classic, a multilayered narrative that reimagines the history of Uganda through the cursed bloodline of the Kintu clan. Divided into six sections, the novel begins in 1750, when Kintu Kidda sets out for the capital to pledge allegiance to the new leader of the Buganda Kingdom. Along the way, he unleashes a curse that will plague his family for generations. In an ambitious tale of a clan and a nation, Makumbi weaves together the stories of Kintu's descendants as they seek to break from the burden of their shared past and reconcile the inheritance of tradition and the modern world that is their future.

“Magisterial.”—*Namwali Serpell, The New York Review of Books*

“Ancestral curses often ‘explain’ a group’s essential character. But Makumbi inverts that conceit: What if a curse expressed all the ways that families, cities and nations fail to cohere?”—*Julian Lucas, The New York Times*

“A soaring and sublime epic. One of those great stories that was just waiting to be told.”—*Marlon James*

“With a novel that is inventive in scope, masterful in execution, she does for Ugandan literature what Chinua Achebe did for Nigerian writing.”—*Lesley Nneka Arimah, The Guardian*

“A masterpiece of cultural memory, *Kintu* is elegantly poised on the crossroads of tradition and modernity.”—*Publishers Weekly (Starred Review)*



JENNIFER NANSUBUGA MAKUMBI is a Ugandan fiction writer. She is the author of three books, *Kintu*, *Let's Tell This Story Properly*, and, most recently, *A Girl is a Body of Water*. Makumbi is a recipient of the Windham-Campbell Prize. She won the Global Commonwealth Short story prize 2014 for her short story, *Let's Tell This Story Properly*. She is a Cheuse International Writing Fellow (2019) and KNAW-NAIS residency (2021). She has a PhD from Lancaster University and has been senior lecturer at several universities in Britain.



June 4, 2024
Fiction/Literature
Paperback
5.25 x 8, 464 pages, \$19.95
Rights: North America
Agent: Antony Harwood
978-1-945492-83-9 (pb)

from
KINTU

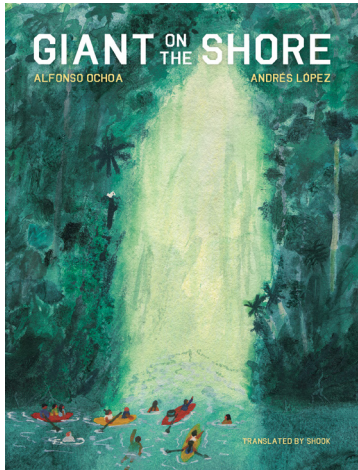
There was a knock. Kamu's woman woke up and climbed over him to get the door. She picked a kanga off the floor and wrapped it around her naked body. Sucking her teeth at being disturbed so early in the morning, she walked to the door with the annoyance of a proper wife whose husband was at home.

The woman considered herself Kamu's wife because she had moved in with him two years earlier and he had not once thrown her out. Every night after work he came home to her, brought shopping, ate her cooking. He was always ravenous. When she visited her parents, Kamu gave her money so she did not go empty-handed. That was more than many certified wives got. Besides, she had not heard rumors of another woman. Maybe Kamu banged some girl once in a while but at least he did not flaunt it in her face. The only glitch in her quest to become Kamu's full wife was that he still wore a condom with her. With his seed locked away, she had not grown roots deep enough to secure her against future storms. A child was far more secure than waddling down the aisle with a wedding ring and piece of paper. Nonetheless, she would bide her time: condoms have been known to rip. Besides, sex with a condom is like sucking a sweet in its wrapper; Kamu would one day give it up.

The woman unbolted the door and pulled it back. She stepped outside on the veranda and stood stern, arms folded. Below her were four men, their breath steaming into the morning air. Their greetings were clipped and...

Transit Children's Editions





GIANT ON THE SHORE

Alfonso Ochoa

Illustrated by Andres Lopez

TRANSLATED FROM THE SPANISH BY
Shook

\$19.95 • 978-1-945492-87-7
9.5" x 12.75" • 32 pg • HC
Ages 3+

A tale of vulnerability and belonging that explores the enormity of self-doubt and the tremendous potential in taking risks.

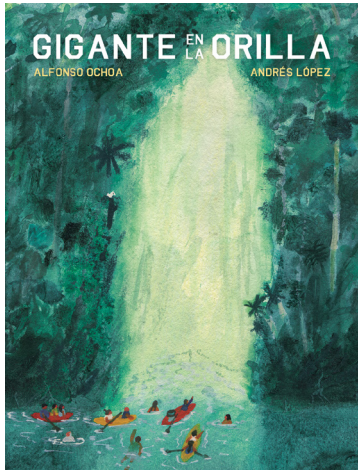
A giant stands on the shore of a secluded city: a place where no trains pass through, where you can hear the sound of birds, and the air smells of bread. What would happen if the giant entered the city? Would the people welcome him? Would they invite him to play in their games? Would they tell him stories and teach him to dance? Would he need lawn mowers to trim his beard and power cables to jump rope? Or would he simply return to the waves?

Featuring poignant, acrylic paintings by award-winning illustrator Andrés López, *Giant On The Shore* is a tender fable about overcoming loneliness and welcoming new possibilities.

• **Andrés López is a Mexican illustrator of books for children and young adults, including *Giant on the Shore* and *Look Up*, both forthcoming from Transit Children's Editions. They are the recipient of the International Illustration Bologna Children's Book Fair-Fundación SM award.**



APRIL 2024



GIGANTE EN LA ORILLA

Alfonso Ochoa

Illustrated by Andres Lopez

SPANISH LANGUAGE EDITION

\$19.95 • 978-1-945492-88-4
8"x 11" • 32 pg • HC
Ages 3+

A tale of vulnerability and belonging that explores the enormity of self-doubt and the tremendous potential in taking risks.

Un gigante está en la orilla de una ciudad aislada: un lugar donde no pasan los trenes, donde se oye el canto de los pájaros y el aire huele de pan. ¿Qué ocurriría si el gigante entrara a la ciudad? ¿Le daría la bienvenida la gente? ¿Lo invitarían a jugar en sus juegos? ¿Le contarían cuentos y enseñarían a bailar? ¿Necesitaría él cortacéspedes para cortarse la barba, y cables eléctricos para brincar la reata? ¿O simplemente voltaría a las olas?

Con pinturas acrílicas conmovedoras del ilustrador premiado Andrés López, *Gigante en la orilla* es un cuento de vulnerabilidad y pertenencia que examina la enormidad de la desconfianza de sí mismo/inseguridad y la potencial tremenda en tomar riesgos.

• **Andrés López is a Mexican illustrator of books for children and young adults, including *Giant on the Shore* and *Look Up*, both forthcoming from Transit Children's Editions. They are the recipient of the International Illustration Bologna Children's Book Fair-Fundación SM award.**



APRIL 2024



STORY OF THE EVERYTHING, THE NOTHING, AND OTHER STRANGE STORIES

Gyula Gabor Toth
Illus. Norbert Nagy

TRANSLATED FROM THE HUNGARIAN BY
Adam Z. Levy

\$19.95 • 978-1-945492-86-0
8" x 9" • 42 pg • HC
Ages 4+

Whimsical stories that prompt readers to reflect on the unfamiliar features of the seemingly familiar world around us.

*Once upon a time there was a Nothing.
In this Nothing there was Nothing.
There weren't dragons, witches, elves, astronauts, policemen, sharks, or little mice...*

So begins Gyula Gábor Tóth's book of whimsical stories that whisks readers away to lands of paradox and play: to a place where anything can happen, one where everything exists all at once, and another where nothing exists at all. "What else do you think wasn't in this Nothing?"

Fantastical and full of wit, these short fable-like tales prompt children to reflect on the unfamiliar features of the seemingly familiar world around us.

Norbert Nagy, one of the most prominent Hungarian graphic artists, sets dramatic moments from Tóth's text against a surreal, often humorous illustrated landscape, creating a stunning visual world for this award-winning book.

• 2022 White Ravens Selection



MAY 2024

LECTURE

Mary Cappello



- *Firecracker Award Finalist*

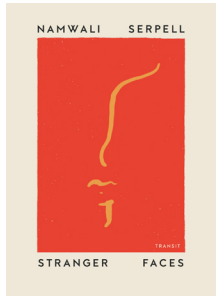
Brimming with energy and erudition, *Lecture* is an attempt to restore the lecture's capacity to wander, question, and excite. Cappello draws on examples from **Virginia Woolf** to **Mary Ruefle**, **Ralph Waldo Emerson** to **James Baldwin**, blending rigorous cultural criticism with personal history to give new life to knowledge's dramatic form.

"[Cappello] at once defends the lecture and calls for holistic and creative improvements to the form."
—*The Atlantic*

September 2020 | Nonfiction | 136 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-42-6

STRANGER FACES

Namwali Serpell



- *National Book Critics Circle Award Finalist*

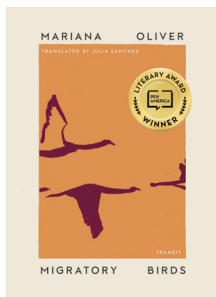
Serpell probes our contemporary mythology of the face in a collection of speculative essays on faces that resist legibility—the disabled face, the racially ambiguous face, the digital face, the face of the dead—imagining a new ethics based on the perverse pleasures we take in the very mutability of faces.

"Wise, warm, witty and dizzyingly wide-ranging."—*The New York Times*

October 2020 | Nonfiction | 192 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-43-3

MIGRATORY BIRDS

Mariana Oliver



- *PEN Translation Prize Winner*

Mexican essayist Mariana Oliver trains her gaze on migration in its many forms, moving between real cities and other more inaccessible territories: language, memory, pain, desire, and the body. With an abiding curiosity and poetic ease, Oliver presents a brilliant collection of essays that asks us what it means to leave the familiar behind and make the unfamiliar our own.

June 2021 | Nonfiction | 136 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-52-5

AFTERMATH

Preti Taneja



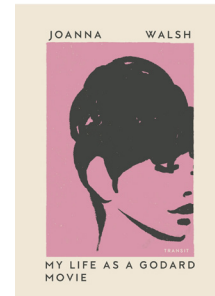
Taneja interrogates the language of terror, trauma and grief, the fictions we believe and the voices we exclude. Contending with the pain of unspeakable loss set against public tragedy, she draws on history, memory, and powerful poetic predecessors to reckon with the systemic nature of atrocity.

"Stunning... [Taneja] turns a critical lens toward the way language shapes violence... Poetic, urgent, and self-reflective."—Publishers Weekly, Starred Review

November 2021 | Nonfiction | 260 pgs | World | 978-1-945492-54-9

MY LIFE AS A GODARD MOVIE

Joanna Walsh



As Joanna Walsh watches the films of Jean-Luc Godard, she considers beauty and desire in life and art. She is captivated by the Paris of his films and the often porous border between the city presented on screen and the one she inhabited herself.

With cool precision, and in language that shines with aphoristic wit, Walsh has crafted an exquisitely intimate portrait of the way attention to works of art becomes attention to changes in ourselves.

September 2022 | Nonfiction | 104 pgs | NA | 978-1-945492-64-8

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