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Celebrating Women Writers from Around the World

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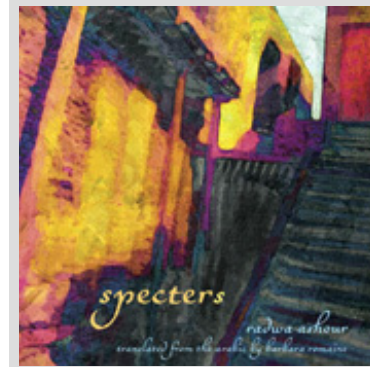
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Explore Africa! Click here to go to reviews of 20 great books written by African women.



We interview Najat El-Hachmi, author of *The Last Patriarch*.



Specters by Egyptian author Radwa Ashour, Chapter One

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If you are enjoying what you see here in Belletrista, please

With this issue Belletrista is marking her second birthday! Over the past two years, all of us here at Belletrista have enjoyed bringing to you a diversity of women writers from around the world, so that we might celebrate together the richness and variety of their literature.

In this issue, we are featuring a special section of twenty reviews of books by women from Africa. While not an exhaustive selection, it's an excellent introduction to women's writing from a vast and varied continent. In keeping with our African theme, we have an exclusive interview with Moroccan/Catalan author Najat El-Hachmi, and an excerpt from Egyptian author Radwa Ashour's latest book to be translated into English. Of course, you'll also find our usual review section of interesting books from around the world, and our largest ever New & Notable section, packed with fine books for your reading pleasure. Whether you are a regular to these pages or a newcomer, thank you for being a Belletrista reader!

Reviews

Click on 'Reviews' to see the full list of this issue's reviews...



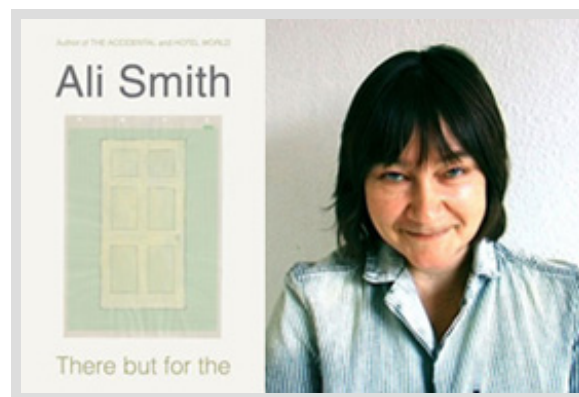
THIS TOO SHALL PASS *S. J. Finn*

I inhale. Realign my chair, which slides a little too easily under me. I do have one niggling concern (there are several but this is the one that comes to mind): while I will go on feeling as transparent as air, what I'm about to put in writing will show itself in a dense hue, one that might even shock me. —With these thoughts we are introduced to Jen, now known as Monty, who goes on to simply and honestly recount the changes that have occurred in her life.

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Reviewed by **Judy Lim**

Ali Smith's *There But For the*



An extended review by Rachael Beale



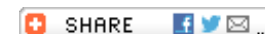
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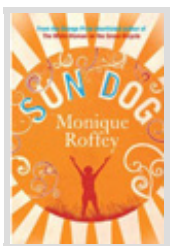
ADIOS, HAPPY HOMELAND!

Ana Menéndez

How does one escape? From what one does one need to escape? Why? Ana Menéndez's new collection of interlinked tales is all about escape artists, starting with the author herself. Each tale is attributed to a concocted author, for whom Menéndez has supplied an appropriately imaginative biographical note, including one for herself: "Ana Menéndez is the pseudonym of an imaginary writer and translator, invented, if not to lend coherence to this collection, at least to offer it the pretense of contemporary relevance."

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Reviewed by Jane A. Jones



SUN DOG

Monique Roffey

Glorious colours riotously abound in Monique Roffey's first novel: 'deep purples, maroons, reds and oranges'. It is set in a delicatessen cum cafe in Shepherd's Bush, London where large, ungainly August Chalmin presides over culinary riches.

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Reviewed by Chris Mills

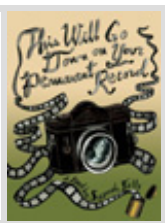
If Written By a Woman

Visit our new Belletrista blog!

The Caine Prize for African Writing 2011 – shortlist announced

The shortlist for this year's Caine Prize has just been announced and three women are in the running for the prestigious award. This is always an exciting time of year – the Prize is a great way to discover short stories by excellent writers. Lucky for us, the Prize's website links to a copy of ...

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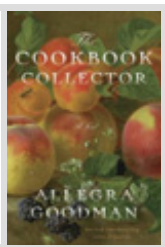
THIS WILL GO DOWN ON YOUR PERMANENT RECORD

Susannah Felts

This Will Go Down On Your Permanent Record defies categorisation; it is not merely a coming of age story, but neither is it a sugary high school drama nor a moralistic critique of the potential pitfalls of teenage life. This debut novel focuses on the importance of friendship and the lessons learned as you grow up—sometimes surprising lessons—about what real friendship means.

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Reviewed by Ceri Evans



THE COOKBOOK COLLECTOR

Allegra Goodman

The Cookbook Collector is one of those instantly engaging books that makes you want to tell all your friends that they must read it even when you are only half way through the novel yourself. Author Allegra Goodman did herself a disservice when she described her new novel as "Sense and Sensibility for the digital age", particularly given the number of outraged responses that subsequently appeared on Jane Austen fan pages. Goodman deals with much bigger issues than Jane Austen ever aspired to write about in her novels, however exquisite those classics might be.

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Reviewed by Dorothy Dudek Vinicombe

