

Celebrating Women Writers from Around the World

# Belletrista

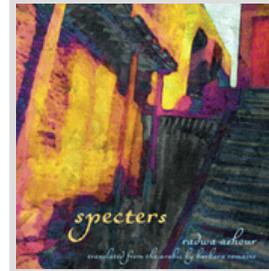
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Explore Africa! Click here to go to reviews of 20 great books written by African women.



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



*Specters* by Egyptian author Radwa Ashour, Chapter One

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...

### WIDOW: STORIES

*Michelle Latiolais*

Michelle Latiolais has a rapacious love of words. She plays with them, rolls them around in her mouth, ruminates on their meanings and

## Ali Smith's *There But For the*

## Belletrista - Issue 12

July/August 2011

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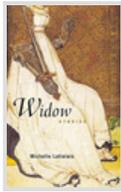
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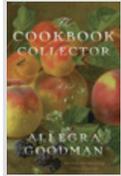
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their origins, reads them backwards even, and links them to other words, constantly coming to different insights and enjoyment of the language.

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Reviewed by Akeela Gaibie Dawood



### 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



### SMUGGLED

*Christina Shea*

This is a story about getting lost and being found. It begins in the perfect time and place for a tale of identity stolen, transformed and rediscovered: 1943, in the midst of the Holocaust. You might think you can imagine what comes next, but that's unlikely. The story is surprising yet realistic, one that has not been told often enough. What happened to the Holocaust survivors who ended up trapped behind the Iron Curtain...

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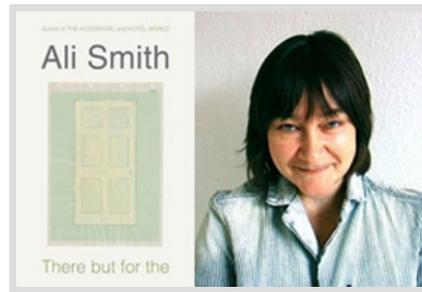
Reviewed by Kathleen Ambrogi



### 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



An extended review by Rachael Beale



## 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 ...[Read the Rest](#)

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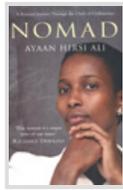
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changes that have occurred in her life.

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**Reviewed by Judy Lim**



**NOMAD: A PERSONAL JOURNEY  
THROUGH THE CLASH OF  
CIVILIZATIONS**

*Ayaan Hirsi Ali*

In *Nomad*, the 2010 follow up to her earlier memoir *Infidel*, human rights activist Hirsi Ali gives a brief update on her life since moving to the United States. Through telling her highly personal story, she develops her philosophy and discusses the efforts to ensure that "women everywhere, of all cultures, merit access to education and basic human rights."

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**Reviewed by Joyce Nickel**

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