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Ella Sher
Literary Agency

A selection of titles
for Spain and Latin America

The
Ella Sher
Literary Agency

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David Machado Portugal

David Machado was born in Lisbon in 1978. Having studied Economics, he published his debut novel *O fabuloso teatro do gigante* in 2006 as well as collected stories and childrens' books, for which he was awarded numerous prizes. His second novel *Deixem falar as pedras* was published in 2011.



Deixem falar as pedras (Let the Stones Talk)

Young Valdemar is fascinated by the stories of his grandfather, Nicolau Manuel, who has recently moved into his family home. Valdemar is keen on heavy metal music, never laughs and beats his classmates. His best friend is the anorexic Alice. Despite Valdemar's father's disapproval, the bitter grandfather won't refrain from telling his grandson about his tragic life. He recounts how as a young man he was arrested on his wedding day and only returned to his home village many years later. Though innocent, he repeatedly falls into the hands of the Portuguese intelligence service PIDE during the Salazar dictatorship and is gruesomely tortured by his tormentors. The person whom he accuses of denouncing him, a young tailor, married his fiancée shortly after. When Valdemar reads the obituary of this same tailor in the newspaper, he believes it is time to organise a meeting between his grandfather and his true love. However, soon it emerges the tailor is still alive after all. Had his grandfather been lying to him? Valdemar's father had long doubted the verity of his adventurous tales.

Deixem falar as pedras is a novel full of suspense and depth, irony and black humour. It portrays the urge of an adolescent to find out the truth about the past and to look beyond the smooth surface, which obscures the memories and the questions about the true victims and culprits. After the sudden death of his grandfather, Valdemar must choose which truth to live with in the future.

There is something deeply humane about this story of the Pide and fascism, love and strokes of fate; about how to lose a life where the goats graze and how to influence the future of a grandchild many years later.

Público

We sincerely believe that Deixem falar es pedras will be talked about for a very long time.

Jornal de Letras

Read this novel and be swept away by a mercilessly ironic story penned by an exceptional writer. As only great literature is capable of, this story first seduces its reader then leaves him behind, bewildered and enriched.

Sol

Rights sold:

O fabuloso teatro do gigante, Lisbon: Presença 2006, 212 p.
Italy: Cavallo di Ferro 2009

Deixem falar as pedras, Lisbon: Dom Quixote 2011, 334 p.
Italy: Cavallo di Ferro

Stories:

Histórias possíveis, Lisbon: Presença 2008, 99 p.
Morroco: Racines Editions

Schönhauser Allee 72E
D-10437 Berlin
Germany

Mail info@litag-saile.de
Phone +49-(0)30-44733136
Mobil +49-(0)175 5065782

Postbank IBAN DE 64 1001 0010 0351 1521 07
BLZ 10010010 BIC PBNKDEFF
Kto 351152107

Dulce Maria Cardoso Portugal

European Union Prize for Literature 2009 PEN Prize 2010

Dulce Maria Cardoso was born in Trás-os-Montes. She spent her childhood in Angola and returned to Portugal in 1975. She studied Law and wrote scripts for cinema. *Campo de sangue* is her first novel for which she received the *Grande Prémio Acontece*.

In 2009 she was awarded the European Union Prize for Literature for her novel *Os meus sentimentos*. In 2010 she won the PEN Prize for her novel *O chão dos pardais*.



© Enric Vives-Rubio

Campo de sangue (Field of Blood)

Four women, who have nothing to say to one another, wait nervously in the dim light of an inhospitable room. Four women, all of whom have a special relationship to the man who committed a murder: his mother, his landlady, his ex-wife and a young girl who is expecting a child from him. The events unfurl in the form of flash-backs in which the relationships of the individual women to each other are highlighted. The narrative returns repeatedly to the point of departure. Except for Eva, the murderer's ex-wife, no one in this unusual and profound novel has a name.

The man and Eva, who come from poor families, separated six years ago. Although Eva married a rich man immediately afterwards, they continue to meet like lovers. As his wife, she had worked to keep them both, and now as his ex-wife she continues to finance him with her new husband's money out of exaggerated, almost demented love, it is said. One day the man murders a woman he does not know by stabbing her several times in the chest. Afterwards he explains that she was his girlfriend and that he wanted her heart. Beauty and loneliness can also cause a person to lose their mind.

In an objective and yet poetic language Dulce Maria Cardoso describes a world of hopelessness and repressed feelings, in which everything is a deceptive game, in the search for a truth that does not exist.

Campo de Sangue is a literary magic machine, bewitching and reliable.

Público

Campo de Sangue has a magnificent formal accuracy (...) fascinating in its rhythm and interweavement of monologues (...) admirable aesthetic mechanisms (...) an assured and enriching style.

Diário de Notícias

A strong, almost painful story.

Grande Reportagem

Dulce Maria Cardoso Portugal

Os meus sentimentos (My Sentiments)

Her second novel, *Os meus sentimentos*, revolves around the character of Violeta, a middle-aged woman, who earns her living as a sales representative for hair removal products. At the very beginning of the novel she suffers a heavy car crash. Until the end the reader can't be sure, whether she has survived. Her conscience, however, lives on and scenes of the past are moving before her inner eye, which overlap each other and are mixed up with events just before the accident. Her French-speaking mother, with a beauty ideal that Violeta could not live up to with her unshapely big body, reappears, as well as her father, who was denounced by his illegitimate son during the revolution. She remembers the difficult discussions she had with her daughter Dora, who was idolized and spoiled by her grandparents, for being so different from her mother. Having been freed from the burden of her existence, Violeta, who was often called a scarecrow by people on the street due to her conspicuous presentation, now takes a sharp look behind the façade of her fellow human beings. *Os meus sentimentos* captivates the reader by the exceptional narrative talent of Dulce Maria Cardoso and her poetic and precise language. With empathy rather than sentimentality she creates lively characters and draws an unsparring portrait of today's society.



For Dulce Maria Cardoso's books are similar to being caught up in a whirlwind, images emerge, voices resound, her style is magical and one cannot let go. Without doubt, her novel is inventive and I have sensed nothing comparable since my youth when I discovered the works of Llansol or the early novels by Saramago.

Público

Loin du folklore,... d'une grande originalité narrative, ce deuxième roman époustouffant de Dulce Maria Cardoso invite d'abord à un dépaysement littéraire à l'avant-garde des lettres portugaises.

Lire

Elle écrit comme un artisan travaille la matière : ciselage, polissage, pour une oeuvre d'un seul tenant, pleine de reliefs et de reflets ; l'intensité avec laquelle elle renvoie les lumières et les sons de la vie restera parmi celles qui nous marquent durablement.

Le Matricule des Anges

Cardoso wrote an imploring novel that you should read in as less sessions as possible.

De Standaard

Every word is in its right place. The result is pure music.

De Volkskrant

**Dulce Maria Cardoso
Portugal**

O chão dos pardais (Sparrow Ground)

Afonso is an extremely powerful man, perhaps nothing can get to him – except the years that pass and age him almost as much as anyone else. For a long time the only youth he has known has been in the bodies of his lovers. In Sofia for instance, who hates him and loves Júlio. Meanwhile his wife, Alice, has given up, not even she really knows what she has given up. Their children have grown up and left, without leaving. Their daughter Clara translates useless books and falls for Elisaveta. Their son Manuel is a plastic surgeon, waiting to be sentenced to a postponed love for a distant woman whom he meets on his computer screen. The novel begins with the preparations for Afonso's sixtieth birthday party. Before and after the party, before and after the tragedy that ruins it, the novel explores the forces that throw some characters up against others, whether to love or hate each other. Not forgetting, among all these forces, the vertical force of gravity that sends all the falling bodies sprawling on the ground.

Even so, it seems it should be easy to be happy. Yet the characters almost always run smack into an incapacity for happiness. A strange and surprising inability that stops everything and leaves them uncommunicative.



. . . we are brought into contact with a complex range of feelings, making O chão dos pardais a book to be savoured and digested slowly. The work's lustre comes, above all, from the authenticity of the writing.

The ground of the path the author opens for us is made of gold, the reading experience makes us complete. We await more from her.

Os meus livros

In a certain way this is a book about giving up. About someone who desists from killing and someone who desists from living. About the impossibility of knowing what is true in the biography of someone's life (because the human being is radically opaque), and about the difficulty of bodies dealing with each other, and about mistakes, which this beautiful novel pins down with a melancholy exactitude.

LER

O chão dos pardais is a book to read and immediately re-read . . .

Público

Dulce Maria Cardoso Portugal

O Retorno (The Return)

1975 Luanda, Angola – the decolonisation ignites hatred and war. Within only a few months, more than half a million Portuguese flee back to Portugal, where revolution is at its peak. Many of the returned have nobody to accommodate them, and they are generally received with suspicion and hostility. Rui is 15 years old and has fled from Luanda together with his mother and sister. Just before their departure the father was arrested and nobody can say whether he will be able to join them later. For over a year, the family lives in a small room of a 5 star hotel in Lisbon, bursting with *retornados* and increasingly run-down. *O Retorno* deals with this year at the hotel, which acts as a sort of stage for a tragicomedy with an unpredictable outcome. Angola is always present though the past seems to become more and more remote. During this year of waiting Rui experiences despair, grief and anger, but also hope.

O Retorno is an expertly structured, linguistically impressive novel about loss and growing-up. It tells of absurdly funny situations and portrays the difficulty of being able to distinguish between victim and perpetrator.

Dulce Maria Cardoso demonstrates narrational accuracy as well as a most admirable stylistic lucidity.

Revista LER



Rights sold:

Campo de sangue, Porto: ASA 2002, 297 p.

Sample translation in English

Argentina: Adriana Hidalgo 2005
Brazil: Companhia das Letras 2005
France: Phébus 2004
Italy: Voland 2006
Spain: El Gall (Catalan) 2006

Os meus sentimentos, Porto: ASA 2005, 327 p.

Sample translation in German

Bulgaria: Ergo 2011
Croatia: Disput 2011
France: L'Ésprit des Péninsules 2006
Greece: Nissos 2011
Italy: Voland 2007
Netherlands: Meulenhoff 2009
Serbia: Booka

O chão dos pardais, Lisbon: LEYA/ASA 2009, 224 p.

Sample translation in English and French

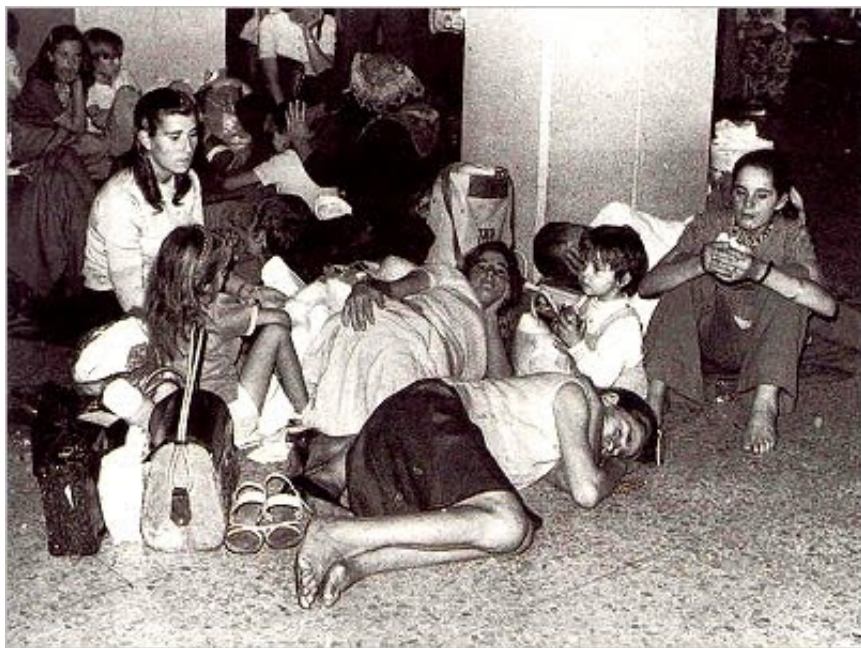
Italy: Voland
Netherlands: Meulenhoff

O Retorno, Lisbon: Tinta da China 2011, 272 p.

Stories:

Até Nós, Porto: ASA 2008

El retorno.



A veces, basta una novela. Acabo de terminar una espléndida, que se titula *O retorno*, publicada a finales del año pasado en Portugal y aún no traducida al español, aunque espero que lo sea pronto. Su autora, Dulce Maria Cardoso, nacida en 1964, cuenta la historia de una familia portuguesa que debe huir atropelladamente de Luanda, (Angola), días antes de que se proclame la independencia de Portugal, el 11 de noviembre de 1975. En el último momento, cuando todos aguardan en la cocina de casa con las maletas hechas a que un pariente les vaya a buscar y les lleve en coche al aeropuerto, un destacamento de soldados independentistas se lleva preso al padre al tomarlo por racista y asesino de negros. La madre, la hija y el hijo, ambos adolescentes, parten, acongojados por la suerte del padre y la suya propia, hacia el aeropuerto, casi empujados por el pariente, que les repite que o se van en ese momento o corren el riesgo de ser también apresados. Horas después toman uno de los innumerables aviones a reventar de gente del puente aéreo Luanda-Lisboa habilitado por el Gobierno portugués para repatriar toda una muchedumbre que abandonaba para siempre su casa, su tierra y su vida, dejando atrás todo lo que no cabía en una maleta por cabeza. Los hijos pisarán por primera vez la Metrópoli, hasta ese momento una asignatura de la escuela, un mapa de colores que debían aprender de memoria, un país difuminado que les llegaba en forma de eco en las remotas batallitas juveniles de los padres o en las felicitaciones periódicas contenidas en las cartas de los primos de allá...

Durante casi un año, la madre, la hija y el hijo vivirán absurdamente en un cuarto de hotel de lujo de Estoril abarrotado de refugiados sin nada, socorridos por unas autoridades más imbuidas en su propio proceso político democrático tras derrocar, en abril de 1974, la dictadura de Marcelo Caetano que en atender a unos ciudadanos pobres e inesperados, no muy bien vistos además por una sociedad que les acogió a regañadientes porque les considera unos advenedizos menesterosos medio extranjeros explotadores de esclavos.

La novela cuenta, en la voz del hijo adolescente, el drama que sufrieron casi 500.000 personas que regresaron a Portugal casi de golpe por aquellos días, procedentes de las antiguas colonias lusas, principalmente Angola y Mozambique. La misma Dulce Maria Cardoso, que vivió hasta los diez años en Luanda, fue una de ellas, y su obra, más que ajustar las cuentas con la

historia o los gobernantes o los políticos o la gente de entonces, lo hace –generosamente, sin señalar a los buenos y a los malos- con ese tiempo suyo de la infancia, muchos años después. Los personajes (y quienes los inspiraron) sienten (sintieron) nostalgia por una patria perdida irremediablemente, Angola, pero también por la madre patria idealizada que no aguantó el cara a cara y en la que, a pesar de todo, tuvieron que refugiarse. Todo esto está contado con ritmo e inteligencia por un chico listo, amedrentado, espabilado, ligón y valiente, que ve su mundo tambalearse sin que a su lado se levante otro fiable. En una de las escenas, Rui, el protagonista, le pregunta a uno de los porteros del hotel que jamás salió de Lisboa: “¿Por qué nos tratan tan mal a los retornados, por qué nos ven como portugueses de segunda?”. Y el portero le responde: “Porque tenemos miedo. Porque aquí nunca se vivió muy bien y tenemos miedo de que con vosotros se viva aún peor”.

Muchos de estos retornados (así se les llama), que en Angola prosperaron como empresarios u hombres de negocios, juraron, como el padre de Rui, quemar su casa y sus industrias antes de “abandonarlas en manos de los negros”. Otros no. Adelina Amorim, una persona real que nació en Luanda y que tenía 33 años cuando huyó de la guerra con destino Lisboa, contó parte de su historia en un reportaje publicado en noviembre en *Público* (la novela ha generado múltiples reportajes y comentarios aquí, ya que muestra cicatrices históricas que aún supuran en Portugal). Y aclaró que su padre, propietario de una empresa de transportes, se negó a destruir lo que había levantado en África al salir: “Dejó su flota de camiones perfectamente alineada frente a la puerta de la fábrica, con la documentación de cada uno en el asiento del copiloto y las llaves puestas. Después se fue”.

 **blogs.elpais.com**

 <http://blogs.elpais.com/rua-lisboa/2012/03/el-retorno-un-libro.html>

 <http://goo.gl/ffgS>



Eliane Brum Brazil

Eliane Brum was born in Ijuí, in the south of Brazil in 1966. She has worked as a journalist, writer and documentary filmmaker. In two decades of reporting she has won over 40 national and international awards in journalism, among them the *Premio Rey de España* and the *Inter American Associated Press Award*. In 2008, she received the *United Nations Special Press Trophy*. In the field of documentary film, she was co-director and co-writer of *Severina's Story* (2005), winner of over 20 national and international awards. Eliane Brum currently works as a freelance journalist. She is a regular columnist for *Época* news magazine.



Uma Duas (One Two)

In her debut novel, Eliane Brum delves into a mother-daughter relationship. It is a psychological thriller that begins with the mother's near-death and charges on towards the final page at a breath-taking pace.

Laura, a forty-something journalist with a fertile imagination tries to escape her mother's influence and shuns all contact with her. She receives a call one morning from a spiritual centre that her mother had regularly frequented. She had not called in for days. As Laura enters her mother's apartment she finds her lying on the floor, completely famished. In hospital she is diagnosed with a fatal cancer. With great reluctance Laura is now forced to take care of her mother.



In order to distance herself Laura had begun to write down her personal story, thereby reinventing her own persona. The boundaries between the real and fictive Laura, between reality and fiction become blurred. The mother too is given the opportunity to voice her own version. Everyday life is depicted with a dreamlike focus. Reality is punctured by fantastic elements and leaves behind a nightmarish aftertaste. With great insight and dark humour Laura reveals the dishonesty of her fellow people as well as the abysses in a seemingly ideal world.

It is not every day one comes across an author such as Eliane, for whom writing is an act of crossing borders, an existential transgression rather than a virtuoso exercise.

O Globo

Mario Prata Brazil

Mario Prata was born in Uberaba in the Brazilian state of Minas Gerais in 1946. He studied economic science at the USP in São Paulo, has worked for television and written numerous highly successful theatre plays. For many years he wrote "Crônicas" for the newspapers Estado de S. Paulo, IstoÉ and Época. *Os Viúvos* is his fifth novel and third crime story, which topped the bestseller lists for weeks and has already sold 10,000 copies. Mario Prata now lives in Florianópolis in Southern Brazil.



Sete de Paus (The Seven of Spades)

In the southern Brazilian city of Florianópolis the police agent Ugo Fioravanti and his young assistant Darwin Matarazzo are called to investigate the case of the murderer of the Seven of Spades. Within short time two equally wealthy as corpulent men were killed by a single shot to the head. The assassin cut off their dicks and placed the seven of spades card on their bodies. One can only suspect how many more murders are to follow. The investigations lead Fioravanti to northern Brazil, the Cape Verde Islands and Portugal. It soon emerges that the victims had become friends years ago at a spa clinic. Along with five other overweight and humorous men they had pulled a little prank which would later cost them their lives. Despite his long time experience and exceptional talent, Fioravanti, who easily succumbs to a woman's charm only realises very late that all that time he could have hardly been closer to the perverse serial killer. From page one to the very last, *Sete de Paus* is a gripping and outrageous crime novel, moreover it pays homage to the great authors of this genre.



Mario Prata Brazil

Os Viúvos (The Widowers)

In the suspenseful and extremely humorous crime novel *Os Viúvos* detective and ex policeman Fioravanti is hired by a prince from Dubai to track down a prostitute whose behind is somewhat of a legend in the southern Brazilian city of Florianópolis. His partner Matarazzo is to take over the case, leading to substantial marital trouble. Another mystery which increasingly occupies ageing Fioravanti is the case of a psychopath also at retiring age who writes him frequent emails about his sad life and moreover claims to know him. So what would drive a conscientious former bank employee, who set up his own business as a pensioner to earn a little money with the sale of patent-registered corkscrews, to take revenge on his accountant in such a gruesome manner?

Fioravanti finally locates the psychopath who is just as big a fan of crime fiction as he is and whose life, though in many aspects completely in contrast, shows quite a few commonalities. The daughter of his long-standing friend and ex lover also manages to find the missing prostitute. She falls in love with her and follows her to Dubai.

Imaginative and fast-paced, the novel *Os Viúvos* tells us about the trouble with Brazilian tax authorities, of criminal accountants and bank employees, who impose unprofitable investments on their customers. And it tells of the revenge of a pensioner who innocently turned criminal.



Os Viúvos is the authors second jaunt towards a kind of book that is laden with crime, suspense, complicated dramas and always creates an equally old-fashioned as entertaining atmosphere.

Estado de S. Paulo

Rights available

Purgatório, São Paulo: Planeta 2007, 272 p

Sete de Paus, São Paulo: Planeta, 2008, 264 p

Os Viúvos, São Paulo: Leya, 2010, 285 p

Schönhauser Allee 72E
D-10437 Berlin
Germany

Mail info@litag-saile.de
Phone +49-(0)30-44733136
Mobil +49-(0)175 5065782

Postbank IBAN DE 64 1001 0010 0351 1521 07
BLZ 10010010 BIC PBNKDEFF
Kto 351152107

The
Ella Sher
Literary Agency

For further information:

Tel +34 93 12 50 596
Mobile +34 664 51 53 58

Email: ella@ellasher.com
Website: www.ellasher.com