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A LITERARY QUARTERLY  
OF THE UNIVERSITY  
OF OKLAHOMA  
NORMAN, OKLAHOMA  
73019 U.S.A.

FROM THE

SUMMER 1984

ISSUE

Miquel Àngel Riera. *Panorama amb dona*. Barcelona. Edicions 62. 1983. 182 pages. \$4.

Miquel Àngel Riera (b. 1930, Manacor) acquired fame especially for his recent novels *Morir quan cal* (To Die When Necessary), which won the Sant Jordi Prize of 1973 and *Serra d'Or's* Critics Prize of 1975, and *L'endemà de mai* (1978; The Tomorrow of Never), winner of the National Catalan Fiction Prize for 1979. *Panorama amb dona* (Panorama with a Woman) sprang laterally from *L'endemà de mai* (see *WLT* 54:1, p. 92), wherein the secondary character Na Gabriela de sa Vinya Nova, while living in concubinage with the protagonist En Cosme de S'Almoïna, hears from him of the execution of her husband En Laro. In *Panorama amb dona*, therefore, En Cosme becomes a secondary character and Na Gabriela the protagonist. The novel opens with Gabriela's leaving En Cosme to carry through her planned vengeance against the perpetrators of her husband's death.

The plot of the novel is simple. Gabriela decides to avenge her husband's death by a Francoist firing squad in Mallorca, and in her elaborate scheme to discover the culprits, she finds a way to gain periodic access to the *jefatura* (police station or possibly the Falange headquarters in town). Gabriela's bloodhound quest for vengeance was because "they" deprived her of something that belonged to her and because En Laro, although a declared Republican, had done nothing to deserve his fate. After a series of highly dramatic events—for example, the *jefatura* bosses force a jailed Republican and suspected homosexual to make love to her under duress—Gabriela manages to enter into the service of the police chief Don Francesc de Paula, the one unquestionably responsible for En Laro's death.

In the end, Gabriela's well-planned and sagacious tracking down of the one responsible for En Laro's execution and her placing herself in the culprit's own home result in a "victorious" failure. After correctly analyzing the human weaknesses of her enemy and his family and making him her lover, she concludes that seeking vengeance by shooting Francesc is beneath her. Her real victory comes in discovering her true self. The novel ends with Gabriela rationalizing her return to her estate, the Vinya Nova, to make it what it once was.

Some of the best features of the novel include the skillful portrayal of religious bigotry—exemplified by two pathetic characters, Gabriela's uncle, a high-ranking priest, and Francesc de Paula's infirm wife Maria Ignàsia—and Gabriela's bizarre expression of her somewhat devious sexuality. The novel, written in an unusual, matter-of-fact manner and alternating monologue with impersonal narration, is both a profound and moving psychological study and a dramatically fictionalized historical document. The colorful Mallorcan Catalan adds flavor to the story and makes it doubly appealing. With *Panorama amb dona* Riera is well on the way to a prominent place in Catalan fiction.

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