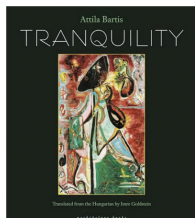


In this detached first-person narration, Jeremy offers graphic descriptions of dogging contacts, rendezvous, and etiquette, as well as his fellow regulars on the circuit: a former estate agent, a refugee, and an ex-boyband member clinging to popularity. Their biggest challenge is finding nooks and corners that the country's surveillance cameras miss, that is until they are met with racism and violence. Even that tension is no match for the startling, jaw-dropping conclusion that overtakes both the narrator and reader.

The Isle of Dogs is author Daniel Davies' debut novel. Before turning to fiction writing, he worked as a curator at the British Museum and as an editor for the *Lancet* and the *Evening Standard*. Davies also taught English abroad in Barcelona, Prague, and San Sebastian.

The novel is presented as a story within a story, in which Jeremy's autobiographical account is delivered to a publishing editor. This framework, along with Jeremy's cool, impassive voice, allows distance between the author and narrator. While his voyeuristic lifestyle may seem purely detached and lascivious, he delivers honest, sharp, and even humorous observations on suburbia, intolerance, and the surveillance society, often with references to literature, music, film, and psychology. Although he partakes in a highly charged atmosphere, Jeremy slowly reveals his loneliness and needs beyond physical attraction.

Readers who appreciate J.G. Ballard's cerebral, dystopian novels and Michel Houellebecq's themes on sexuality will find *The Isle of Dogs* story equally stirring. This short first novel that packs a punch makes Daniel Davies an author to watch. (February) *Angela Leeper*



Tranquility

Attila Bartis
Imre Golstein, translator

Archipelago Books
Softcover \$15.00 (325pp)
978-0-9800330-0-7

Let's begin with a simple declaration: Attila Bartis is a great writer. That his prose, like a slow, centripetal whirlwind, involves one in a dark world monstered with dreadfully fascinating people fumbling at all the big questions and ending up being devoured by them, will be evident to anyone who takes up his new novel, *Tranquility*.

Bartis, a Romanian-born Hungarian, at times puts one in mind of Joyce, at others of Kafka, at others of Roth, yet ultimately eludes all comparison by the strength of his originality. He tells the story of Andor Weér, a brilliant writer forced by the twin demons of duty and guilt to live with and care for his deranged, recluse mother.

His mother is made culpable for her violinist daughter's defection from the communist regime and loses her position as an actress in the national theater. To make amends for her daughter's refusal to return to Hungary, she orders a coffin

made, puts all her daughter's effects inside, has it interred in a cemetery, and mails death notices to sundry commissars and comrades so and so...all to no avail. So she shuts herself in her apartment with her young son and refuses to leave for any reason, effectively imprisoning both herself and Andor. His many attempts at escape over the ensuing years, both physical and emotional, are what propel the plot of the novel.

Since the foundation of Stoic physics, numerous natural philosophers have argued that the universe is a plenum, that there is no such thing as empty space, that all beings are held in a thick unseen aspic that makes the infinite flow of cause and effect possible. At times it would seem that all that the characters in *Tranquility* need do is to cross a spleenful of verbs, to have angry sex with one another, to share a bottle of slivovitz in grudging peace, or to love each other in order to drive each other mad, as though madness were like small pox, a disease spread through some mysterious medium of contagion.

And like a virulent illness, Attila Bartis' novel will be hard for any reader to recover from. *Arturo Mantecón*



The Wandering Heart

Mary Malloy

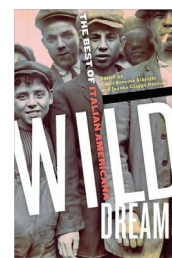
Leaping Frog Press
Softcover \$15.95 (396 pp)
978-0-9815148-5-7

In this debut novel, Mary Malloy illuminates the fact the history is not only replete with answers, but with questions as well. Lizzie Manning couldn't be more excited when she receives an invitation to visit the home of George Hatton who is a descendant of Lieutenant Francis Hatton, an officer in the British Royal Navy. Being a professor of history who specializes in the voyages of Captain Cook, this invitation to leave Massachusetts for a month and visit the sprawling English estate of Hengemont to view artifacts and an unpublished account of Francis Hatton's maritime excursion with Captain Cook provides the perfect opportunity for Lizzie to indulge her passion for naval history as well as help her career.

As charmed as she is by the idyllic setting of and George's hospitality, Lizzie finds herself discovering a nested doll of questions that open mysteries within mysteries of the Hatton family. There are the generations of Hatton women, dating back to the Crusades, whose lives ended in suicide before the age of thirty. There are the poems that each of them wrote, with the line "Where is his heart?" appearing in every one. There are missing pages from a diary, obviously cut out, a secret panel in a cabinet that hides an antique triptych, and the missing blanket and bones of an unintentional grave robbing. Finally, there is the mystery that appears to link Professor Manning to this fabled yet cursed family.

Despite her enchantment with the Hattons, her curiosity leads her into danger and deceit and ends up threatening her life and her marriage. George Hatton's two sons become involved in Lizzie's work and are painted as a modern day Cain and Abel. Edmund is handsome and caring; Richard is greedy and cold. She flirts but never betrays her husband who waits for her in Boston. The longer she stays at Hengemont, the more she begins to question her own sanity.

Throughout the book, Malloy's use of medieval tales, the Knights Templar history, ancient artifacts, and naval history deftly guide the reader deeper into the character and her motivations. As she solves one mystery, another one looms larger and more terrifying, eradicating any chance of reprieve from the tension. This novel itself reads like a seafaring voyage—full of swift turns, unknown frontiers and the desire to answer the big questions we all ask ourselves. (April) *Monica Carter*



Wild Dreams: The Best of Italian Americana

Carol Bonomo Albright and Joanna Clapps Herman, editors
Fordham University Press
Softcover \$21.95 (350pp)
978-0-8232-2910-9

When *Italian Americana* journal was founded in 1974, it took on the ambitious goal of presenting the riot of writers and poets who were paving the way towards a distinctively Italian-American literature. Now, more than thirty years later, long-time editor-in-chief Carol Bonomo Albright and Joanna Clapps Herman, professor of Graduate Studies at Manhattanville College, have culled an anthology of short stories, memoirs, poetry, and interviews from the protean journal. The collection should be the starting point for any student of Italian-American literature.

In defining what Italian-American literature is, some answers seem more intuitive than others. The generation gap between immigrants and their children appears as a great demarcation in Italian-American literature. Short stories featuring first-generation immigrants seem more self-assured. Ben Morreale's rabid, scathing short story, "The Prince of Racalmuto," features a Sicilian prince who is starved into immigrating to an America that robs him of his children, his identity, and his language. Other pieces, like Mary Caponegro's fanciful "An Etruscan Catechism," manifest a longing for traditional Italian culture, draped and sandaled in myth. Later generations of Italian-American writers are more prosaic. Distanced from the poverty of their parents and assimilated to American culture, they fasten onto immigrant tales and seem to write in diminuendo about their own experiences. Albright herself ponders "the kind of literature that future generations of Italian-American authors, who will not know an original immigrant, will produce." The