



Islandia

By Mar Negroni, Mar?a translated by Negroni, Mar?a translated by Negroni

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Islandia is a masterful, mixed-genre (prose-poetry and verse) literary work, alternating passages that tell of an island race of exiled, conquering, Nordic heroes, who have landed on and settled an island (presumably Iceland) and remained there for generations, self-enthralled by their own identities as sung in their own Sagas; and the sophisticated and complexly ironical, lyrical verses of the author's own persona, herself isolated, self-reflective, and exiled -- in present-day New York City. Themes from the two aspects of the work seem to approach each other without ever quite touching, across a chasm of mutually re-enforcing but sharply distinct senses of absence. The work is brilliantly translated from the Spanish by Anne Twitty and is presented here in a bi-lingual edition....an extraordinary cycle of poems written in two very different and contrasting forms- the Nordic, masculine, epic style of the prose poems, and the Mediterranean, feminine, mannered, lyric style, of the others. Anne Twitty's translation of this masterful cycle has itself been carried out with great mastery.-Esther Allen

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Islandia By Mar Negroni, Mar?a translated by Negroni, Mar?a translated by Negroni Bibliography

- Rank: #6278999 in Books
- Published on: 2010-01-01
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.97" h x .48" w x 5.97" l, .61 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 160 pages

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Editorial Review

From Library Journal

Argentinean-born poet Negroni, who currently lives and works in New York City, has published five previous books of verse in Spanish; the current title is the first to be translated into English. *Islandia* is a dense, surreal work that, in alternating prose and poetry, describes a group of Nordic heroes long ago exiled from their land living in isolation on a nameless island. This island becomes an extended metaphor for New York City, in which the poet feels isolated. This book is not for everyone?the syntax is bewildering, the imagery vivid but perplexing: "I see a fire to the east and infallible swords (with a curse). Glowing red lances at the entrance of 500 gates and a ship made from the fingernails of all the dead, and a great ill-omened wolf, Fenrir." The verse sections are more compelling than the prose, but too frequently words are combined into awkward phrases: "So obstinate a quest/ for stage decor hieractic limns not/ some perplexity, but rather illustrates/ her art." Some of the awkwardness may be the product of an extremely literal translation (by poet Twitty); a more readable work may have resulted had the translator worked with less rigidity. For larger libraries.?Judy Clarence, California State Univ. Lib., Hayward
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Language Notes

Text: English (translation)

Original Language: Spanish

About the Author

Maria Negroni's poems, essays, and translations have been widely published in literary magazines in both Latin America and Spain. She received a Guggenheim fellowship for poetry in 1994 and a Rockefeller Foundation Fellowship in 1998. Anne Twitty's translations of contemporary poetry in Spanish have been widely published in books, magazines and anthologies, for which she has received international recognition.

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