



Sostiene Pereira

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Sostiene Pereira Antonio Tabucchi , Carlos Gumpert (Translator) , Xavier González Rovira (Translator) Lisboa, 1938. En una Europa recorrida por el fantasma de los totalitarismos, Pereira, un periodista dedicado durante toda su vida a la sección de sucesos, recibe el encargo de dirigir la página cultural de un mediocre periódico. Pereira tiene un sentido un tanto fúnebre de la cultura y prefiere la literatura del pasado. Necesitado de un colaborador, contacta con el joven Monteiro Rossi. Y la intensa relación que se establece entre el viejo periodista, Monteiro y su novia Marta cristalizará en una crisis personal, una maduración interior y una dolorosa toma de conciencia que transformará profundamente la vida de Pereira.

Sostiene Pereira Details

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From Reader Review Sostiene Pereira for online ebook

Roula says

Δεν έχω διαβάσει ποτέ ξανά Ταμπούκι , δεν ήξερα τίποτα γ'αυτόν μέχρι που διαβάσα το βιβλίο "τα 3 επίπεδα της ζωής" του Τζουλιαν Μπαρνς(*θριαμβευτικές ιαχές*)και εκεί το ανέφερε ως ένα βιβλίο διαχείρισης του πένθους.ομως τελικά ήταν πολύ περισσότερο απο αυτο..

Η ιστορία εκτυλίσσεται το καλοκαίρι του 1938 στη Λισαβ'να που βρίσκεται υπο το καθεστώς δικτατορίας και σε όλη τη "γειτονία" της ευρωπης επικρατει αναβρασμος και επ'λαση του φασισμού.ο ηρωας είναι φυσικά ο γλυκυτατος Περειρα.ενας μεσηλικας που προσπαθει(αποτυχημενα) να διαχειριστει την απωλεια της συντροφου της ζωης του , αλλα παραμενει ενας "φειχιστης αναμνησεων".ονειροπολει, μιλα στο πορτρατο της συζυγου του και ασχολειται με τη λογοτεχνια γραφοντας στη στηλη με τα πολιτιστικα μιας μεγαλης εφημεριδας τις...νεκρολογιες μεγαλων λογοτεχνων ακομη και αν αυτοι δεν εχουν ακομη πεθανει γιατι οπως λεει πρεπει να είναι ετοιμος για κατι τετοιο.κοινως η ζωη του εχει μεσα το θανατο.και ξαφνικα στη ζωη του μπαινει ενα ζευγαρι νεαρων που δεν εχουν καθολου χρονο για το θανατο.αντιθετως τον αγνοουν και ζουν στα ορια, αντιστεκομενοι στο καθεστώς που επικρατει και προσπαθωντας να τον παρασυρουν μαζί τους.τι κανει λοιπον ο Περειρα? Πως μπορει να αφησει πισω τις αναμνησεις του και να ξεκινήσει απο την αρχη ,να ξαναζει στο τωρα και όχι στο τότε?πως γινεται καποιος δυσκινήτος(κυριολεκτικα και μεταφορικα)σαν αυτον να αρχισει να κινειται στους ταχυτατους ρυθμους που απαιτουν οι εξελιξεις στο πολιτικο τοπιο?

Αυτα και αλλα πολλα πραγματευεται αυτο το βιβλίο που είναι γραμμενο τοσο απλα(σχεδον απλο?κ?) αλλα θιγει σημαντικοτατα θεματα τοσο πολιτικα οσο και φιλοσοφικα.μια σκετη αναγνωστικη απολαυση και ενας κεντρικος ηρωας που εγινε πολυ γρηγορα ενας απο τους αγαπημενους μου.

Υ.γ. αιωνιος σεβασμος στον Τζουλιαν(τον Μπαρνς)

Jim Fonseca says

It's 1938, the time of the Spanish Civil War. Fascism under Franco of Spain is creeping into neighboring Portugal as well under its dictator Salazar. A kosher meat shop the main character frequents is vandalized by fascist thugs.

Pereira, our main character, is a journalist having his mid-life crisis. His wife died a few years ago and he regrets that they never had children. He's aging, lonely, overweight. He writes about art and literature and seems so disconnected from the political winds that a couple of friends, one a priest, tell him "stop living in another world; go out and see what's happening all around you." At night he tells his wife's photo about his day and asks her opinion about things.

Kind of accidentally he starts to get politically active in a big way. He hires a young man as an assistant who is assisting anti-fascist forces in Spain and trying to recruit Portuguese to fight. He has a beautiful girlfriend and a male friend who makes fake passports. The journalist reads the political writings of the assistant which he knows he can't publish because of Portuguese censorship. But he starts helping them out by giving them

Ο υπ?ρβαρος μεσ?λικας Δρ. Περ?ιρα ε?ναι απελπιστικ? μοναχικ?ς απο τη στιγμ? που πεθα?νει η σ?ζυγος του, αναπολε? με γλυκι? νοσταλγ?α το παρελθ?ν της νι?της του και πον?ει στη σκ?ψη εν?ς παιδιο? που δεν απ?κτησε ποτ?.

Αισθ?νεται πως το παχ?σαρκο σ?μα του τον εγκαταλε?πει αργ? στη φθορ? του χρ?νου. Ε?ναι ευ?λωτος, χαμ?νος, αδ?ναμος και ταλαιπωρε?ται απο την επιδε?νωση της υγε?ας του.

Ζει μ?σα απο τις αναμν?σεις, τα ?νειρα που δεν αποκαλ?πτει ποτ? και την αγ?πη του για τη λογοτεχν?α. ?τσι ισχυρ?ζεται ο Περ?ιρα...

Και ο συγγραφ?ας χρησιμοποιε? αυτ? τη φρ?ση ως επωδ? μ?σα στο βιβλ?ο, δ?νοντας την α?σθηση πως πι?ζεται για την ακρ?βεια του απολογισμο? του. Για την πιστ?τητα της μαρτυρ?ας που καταγρ?φεται.

Μ?σα απο μια σειρ? συμπτ?σεων συναντ? ?ναν νεαρ? ?νδρα που αγων?ζεται με το ισπανικ? κ?νημα αντ?στασης εν?ντια στον Φρ?νκο.

Οι καιρο? που περιγρ?φονται ε?ναι δ?σκολοι και επικ?νδυοι. Η Ευρ?πη πυροδοτε?ται αργ? και σταθερ? για την ?κρηξη εν?ς αιματηρο? πολ?μου. Προφαν?ς η φιλ?α του Περ?ιρα με φανατικo?ς ν?ους επαναστ?τες στα τ?λη της δεκαετ?ας του 1930 - μια περ?οδος δ?σκολη και σκοτειν?- μας αποκαλ?πτει αφεν?ς την ?λλειψη πολιτικ?ς επ?γνωσης της κοινων?ας και του ?διου του Περ?ιρα και αφετ?ρου ?να βαθ?, δραματικ?, συγκινητικ? και γεννα?ο συμπ?ρασμα.

Πρ?κειται για ?να μικρ? βιβλιαρ?κι το οπο?ο με το κ?νητρο και την τ?χνη του συγγραφ?α αναστατ?νει τον αναγν?στη αφ?νοντας την α?σθηση σπαραγμο? απο την ζω? και τη δρ?ση του Περ?ιρα.

Μια ?στατη κραυγ?, μια πανανθρ?πινη προοπτικ? των επιλογ?ν που κ?νουμε.

Αγ?πησα αυτ? τη μοναδικ? αφ?γηση που αναπαρ?γεται ως μαρτυρ?α.

Με συνεπ?ρε κυρ?ως η μορφ? και το ?φος της αφ?γησης.

Ταυτ?ζονται τ?λεια με την γερασμ?νη ρουτ?να του ?ρωα μας.

?τσι, ?χουμε τον ηλικιωμ?νο Περ?ιρα που ενδιαφ?ρεται για τις καιρικ?ς συνθ?κες, φροντ?ζει ?σο γ?νεται τη διατροφ? του, περιγρ?φεται επακριβ?ς ο τρ?πος που ζει καθημεριν?, πως κοιμ?ται, πως τρ?ει, τι σκ?φεται, τι συν?θειες ?χει και πολλ? χαμ?να αναπ?ντητα «γιατ?».

?λες οι ανησυχ?ες και οι εμμον?ς που κυριαρχο?ν στη ζω? εν?ς γερασμ?νου ανθρ?που.

Ο Περ?ιρα ε?ναι αρχικ? δειλ?ς, φοβισμ?νος και διστακτικ?ς ?μως ο συγγραφ?ας καταφ?ρνει σιγ?-σιγ? να τον αφυπν?ζει με την π?να του, κυρ?ως συνειδησιακ?, ?στε με ?νεση να αλλ?ζει τρ?πο σκ?ψης και δρ?σης.

Αριστοτεχνικ? πορε?α εξ?λιξης, τ?λεια διαδικασ?α δημιουργ?ας χαρακτ?ρα.

Φθ?νοντας το τ?λος που καθιστ? την πρ?ξη εξ?γερσης εντυπωσιακ? και την κορ?φωση του δρ?ματος αξ?χαστη.

???????????

Καλ? αν?γνωση

Πολλο?ς ασπασμο?ς.

Dolors says

***UPDTAED 2013 August, 28th ***

Translated from Catalan to English:

When a book makes you think.

Disguised as an endearing story, sweet and juicy as a ripe summer peach, "Sostiene Pereira" is a novel that will remain in your thoughts for some time after you've turned the last page.

Pereira is an unusual hero: an overweight man of advanced age, a lonely widower whose dreams he never reveals, a man who talks to the portrait of his deceased wife. Pereira works as head of the Cultural Section in the local newspaper *Lisboa* at the period of increasing oppression of the Salazar regime in the Portugal of the late 30s, and despite the obvious internal repression in fascist Europe, he is not interested in politics.

Pereira is naïve, or maybe he wants to be. He doesn't want to know what the real situation in Lisbon is like, he devotes his own life to literature and he feels contented eating his omelettes aux fines herbes in the bar below the editorial where he works. His life is uncomplicated and easy going.

But his peace of mind starts to change when he meets Mario Rossi and his girlfriend Marta, a young couple who start talking about terms like *justice* or *revolution*. Pereira finds himself unwittingly or willingly involved with the young couple and starts helping them, triggering a series of symbolic events which make him rethink his entire existence and put his sense of justice to the limit.

Tabbuchi masters the language in order to evoke the atmosphere of Lisbon in the 30s, he writes in a beautiful and simple prose, making it impossible to stop reading once you've started.

Despite it being a short novel, the story evolves at a pace that allows you to enjoy the smallest of details: a swim in the open ocean during a scorching day in August, a disturbing encounter on a train, chats about health and literature with a surprisingly open-minded Psychologist, evoking memories of the sanatorium in "The Magic Mountain" by Thomas Mann...

This novel is about life, death, and what we do during the time we have been granted.

And the lesson: it is never too late to open your eyes and be courageous and start acting to actually change things.

Exciting and melancholic.

It's a book like this one which makes of literature a life changing experience.

Quan un llibre et fa pensar.

Disfressada d'història entranyable, dolça i sucosa com un préssec a ple estiu, "Sostiene Pereira" és una novel·la que t'acompanyarà durant uns quants dies un cop hakis girat l'última pàgina.

En Pereira és un heroi insòlit: un senyor d'avançada edat, amb sobrepès, un vidu solitari que té somnis que mai explica i que parla amb el retrat de la seva esposa, que treballa com a cap de la secció cultural del Lisboa, durant l'època de creixent opressió del règim de Salazar a la Portugal de finals dels anys 30, i tot i l'obvietat de la repressió interna i de l'Europa feixista, en Pereira no està interessat en política.

En Pereira és innocent, o vol ser-ho. No vol saber quina és la situació real a Lisboa, la seva vida és la literatura i les seves truites a les fines herbes del bar de sota la redacció.

Tanmateix, la seva perspectiva comença a canviar quan coneix en Mario Rossi i la seva nòvia Marta, els quals comencen a parlar de termes com justícia i revolució. En Pereira es troba ajudant la parella sense voler-ho, o volent-ho, i una sèrie de fets simbòlics fan que es replantegi tota la seva existència i que s'impliqui fins a límits insospitats.

El llenguatge que utilitza Tabbuchi és ideal per evocar l'atmosfera de la Lisboa dels anys 30, escrit amb una prosa preciosa i senzilla, fa que sigui impossible deixar-lo un cop l'has començat.

Tot i ser una novel·la curta, la història evoluciona a un ritme que et permet assaborir els petits detalls, un bany a mar obert durant un dia calorós d'Agost, un encontre inquietant en un tren, converses sobre la salut i la literatura amb un psicòleg de mentalitat sorprenentment oberta, evocant certs records del sanatori de la "Muntanya Màgica" de Thomas Mann.

La vida, la mort, i què fem durant el temps que ens ha estat concedit.

I la lliçó: mai és tard per obrir els ulls i per ser valent i actuar.

Emocionant i melancòlica.

Això és literatura, així dóna gust llegir.

Roberto says

Niente è come sembra

Venticinque brevi capitoli punteggiati da quel salmodiante “*Sostiene Pereira*” che ci ricorda il linguaggio di una cosa raccontata, come una testimonianza resa al narratore.

La scrittura, impeccabile e scorrevole, è sobria e registra unicamente i fatti minimizzando sensazioni o commenti.

La storia di Pereira, un uomo tranquillo, innocuo, giornalista a fine carriera che scrive sulla pagina culturale di un piccolo giornale di Lisbona. E' il 1938, durante il regime dittatoriale di Salazar.

Pereira è un uomo non perfettamente in salute, pingue, che suda a fare le scale, vedovo. Solo. L'unica persona con cui curiosamente parla è proprio moglie, o meglio la foto di lei.

Un uomo normale quindi, non un eroe. E' il caso che gli fa conoscere un ragazzo insicuro che gli ricorda sé stesso quando era giovane; e forse anche il figlio che gli sarebbe piaciuto avere. Un incontro che inizia a lavorargli dentro lentamente, provocandogli conflitti interiori, domande senza risposta. E' un debole lui, è solo un giornalista, è solo un letterato. Cosa può fare un letterato di fronte alle ingiustizie che gli stanno intorno?

La mancanza di fiducia in sé stesso e la rassegnazione lentamente fanno spazio alla consapevolezza della sua funzione nella società e dell'importanza del ruolo del giornalista per compiere un processo di liberazione.

Le pagine della letteratura possono coincidere con quelle della storia, se si ha il coraggio di sconfiggere l'indifferenza dei singoli.

"La filosofia sembra che si occupi solo della verità, ma forse dice solo fantasie, e la letteratura sembra che si occupi solo di fantasie, ma forse dice la verità"

BlackOxford says

Reasons of the Heart

Giving unto Caesar is considered by most Christians to be a strict requirement of citizenship. From the payment of taxes to the offering of one's life in patriotic war, one is expected to conform as a Christian duty. Established government appears to be divinely sanctioned by the biblical command. After all, Christianity stands for orderliness in the universe. Social chaos is by definition evil. And isn't salvation a purely personal matter?

Martin Luther, for example, divided the world cleanly in two. In his interpretation the spiritual had nothing at all to do with the political. Modern Evangelicals still view existing law as God-given, unless of course they take offence at it. But mostly, middle-class Christians simply accept the inevitability of government and its policies and they adopt an attitude of impotent indifference to the resulting suffering - usually by the less well-off and non-Christians. Commonly they claim to do so in the name of Christianity itself.

So it was in Salazar's Portugal during the 1930's, as it was in most of contemporary Europe. Fear and hypocrisy combined to create political acceptance, even among those who found its oppressive fascism most distasteful. And so is it now in Trumpist America. Christianity seems to have a natural affinity with monarchs, dictators, and anyone else who can consolidate power in its, Christianity's, interest. Occasionally however someone, usually a non-Christian, provokes the dormant conscience of the Christian psyche. *Pereira Maintains* is the story of such a provocation, and its consequences.

Christian conscience can be a strange thing. The eponymous Pereira feels uncomfortable with the political condition of his country and "... *he wanted to repent but didn't know what he had to repent of, he only felt a yearning for repentance as such, surely that's what he meant, or perhaps (who knows?) he simply liked the idea of repentance.*" Repentance, like salvation, is a personal thing without social implications. The resolution of Pereira's discomfort, he thinks, is confession and counsel. Political involvement is unthinkable.

Pereira is drawn to memory, mainly the reminiscence of his deceased wife. But more generally he is motivated by the memory of how things used to be, the familiar orderliness of past life. Unable to live in the past, he ignores the reality of the present except within the limited sphere of his own ego - his digestion (poor), the weather (hot), his job as a journalist (satisfying), the maintenance of his social isolation from potential threats (mainly the government and its network of informers).

Pereira fervently believes in and desires the resurrection of his soul but not his body. The later, of course, is inherently social and dependent upon other human beings. This is hardly an orthodox opinion but it is necessary in order to maintain his detachment from the world. What he finds, however, is that the slightest human contact is political. It can't be helped. His soul is part of a "*confederation*" over which he has no real control and whose connections are matters of the collective heart not the individual will. Even mere translation of long dead authors establishes such a bond that is politically dangerous.

The entire story is told in the form of a judicial deposition or police interrogation report as suggested by the title. It is a narrative prepared by an intermediary, ready perhaps for confirmation by the person who has been questioned. The central point of this narrative is stated early on: "*Philosophy appears to concern itself only with the truth, but perhaps expresses only fantasies, while literature appears to concern itself only with fantasies, but perhaps it expresses the truth.*" What's wanting then is only a signature admitting this crime of recognition.

Carmine says

Frequentare il futuro

"Il mondo è un problema e certo non saremo noi a risolverlo."

Esistono opere che assumono valore universale e trascendono il contesto in cui sono narrate.

Lo stile pacato e soffuso, quasi dimesso, di Tabucchi risulta indispensabile nel delineare il risveglio dal torpore, quella rinascita a cui noi, molti di noi, smettiamo presto di anelare.

L'arido e triste mondo esterno non è forse specchio dell'accettazione del nostro grigio microcosmo, reso purtroppo una costante nel quotidiano?

Non si può considerare un atto di eroismo lo spezzare la perpetua catena di azioni compiute giorno dopo giorno?

Tabucchi ridona dignità a quelle vite abbandonate, dimenticate da tutti; e ci ricorda che la libertà di pensiero e di poter scegliere sono diritti sacri ed inviolabili per ognuno di noi.

Helene Jeppesen says

This was a very different and peculiar read that I really liked! I stumbled across this book in another book ("Diary of a Bookseller" by Shaun Bythell) and decided that I wanted to read it. Apparently, this is a well-loved classic that many people have read and loved over the years.

I understand why that is, because while this was a straight-forward story about an overweight journalist in Lisbon in 1938 who encounters a young man that ends up changing his life, this is also a story filled with layers and meaning. The political aspect of it was actually really interesting, but what fascinated me the most was the covert development of our main character, Pereira.

Mingled with this is the fact that this book is written as a testimony which was refreshing and intriguing.

I think this is one of those novels that will stay with me for a while to come, but for now all I can say is that I really liked it; it's a small book with a lot to say and a deep meaning behind it.

Stephen P says

Obsessed suddenly and unexplainably with death Doctor Pereira seeks out a journalist who has written a magazine article on the subject. They meet at a restaurant. Monteiro Rossi is young, not obsessed with death but with life. Charismatic, he reminds Pereira of the son he has never had and his own youth which he will not talk about. Monteiro Rossi has no interest in death. His interest is in life and living. The article turns out to be excerpts from his bogus thesis at school. He is broke and desperately needs a job. Pereira surprisingly hires him to write obituaries in advance for writers and famous people who might die in the future. Then the newspaper, where he heads the cultural affairs section, (the main and only employee,) would not be caught shorthanded. A pre-obit. folder. However Rossi's articles in Pereira's mind are terrible, including too much creativity, politics, and life, which would prove out of line with his boss, the editor, and the paper's patrons, the changing milieu in and surrounding the city.

Our hero is an anti-hero, languishing in the past out of sadness for the death of his wife and an undefined need for repentance. Any steps taken into the present is met with the blinding light of the sun, the exhaustive heat sweltering sweat from his obese body. His weight like a gravitational pull keeps him rooted. Yet, with no announcement, even change in tone, he may also be seen as an unintended Christ figure. While he has not given up his life for mankind he has nonetheless given up living his life in search for a means of repentance. How to repent for the death of his wife? He may struggle to keep her and their relationship alive by speaking to her photograph. Also, there is his work, the paper smuggled into the banal while performing back bending stretches to not offend Franco, whose shadow is beginning to cramp Portugal just prior to the war?

Tabucchi's meticulous craft, his silent whisper, is that when large events muscle their way to the forefront it happens so quietly that it sifts into the reader's pores. Falling under its spell, Tabucchi creates a reading experience unlike anything I have encountered. The simplicity of style packages profound ideas, flips stasis on its head uncovering touching moments bursting with significance. The book's main treasure of riches is that Tabucchi focuses his lens close in on the personal crisis Pereira is going through while pinpointing the signs of the oncoming global calamity reaching Portugal's borders. Will Pereira transform himself out of his withdrawal from life as we know it or will the ritualized comfort prove that the blazing sun and sweat of life outside of his small globe of existence is not worth it? Could, should, he live what the majority has agreed on is life? Does being, take place outside of the window he stares out from? This makes the recalcitrant Rossi all the more attractive. This new son brought to him.

While Pereira is maintaining, Tabucchi is exploring. He seems to never stop exploring although witnessing this is near impossible. He works in the stealth of night.

But what does Pereira's, maintaining, mean? The impression of his being grilled by a member of authority, possibly there to maintain the order of society, to be sure no one is stepping outside of the proscribed bounds, is implied, felt. In this context he responds to the grilling which takes place throughout the story, by sticking to his position. Will he waver? Will there be change or will he maintain? Over and over again it is repeated that Pereira maintains as he tells, sticks to his his story.

This is the tension, the taught wire the reader is asked to cross with no net beneath. Though the tension is palpable the net is invisible. This is the magic Tabucchi performs without a stage, costumery, just another person passed in a crowd but whose mind is spinning threads of a perfected web.

The narrator speaks to us at times in present alternating into past tense relating what Peirara is saying in describing the scenes and events of his life. However, at times he or she is unsure what is going on in the mind of Pereira who wants to keep his childhood guarded and unspoken. The narrator offers us possible suggestions but clearly none conclusive. The narrator is not writing this story otherwise she or he would know what exactly what is going on with Pereira. All of the information is provided by Pereira who is selective and has his own biases. It is told to us though by the narrator and is run through their filter, then through our own as readers. This is not to mention Tabucchi who is somewhere writing this though he is in hiding. The strained potion we receive is diluted, possibly inflated, conjoined, distorted and distended. We experience intellectually and viscerally Pereira's experience which is many times removed. Almost within the grasp of his hand but never quite there.

Like his, *Requiem, A Hallucination*, this is exalted writing while never appearing to be so. Not out of modesty but out of his poised craft Tabucchi remains hidden. I highly recommend this book to anyone who is a Reader, I maintain.

Fionnuala says

Set in Lisbon in 1938, when fascism was running riot across Europe, a lonely, obese middle-aged man follows his heart. Read it to discover one of the most unassuming heroes in literature.

Nickolas the Kid says

Ο Ταμπούκι με έναν απλό και μινιμαλιστικό τρόπο γραφής μας μιλεί για τον Περίρα... έναν μεσολιλικό ευτραφέ υπάλληλο μιας εφημερίδας στην Λισαβόνα, ο οποίος έχει αποδεχθεί την μικροαστική και μζερή ζωή του. Ο Περίρα είναι μοναχικός τπος, μιλεί συχνά με την φωτογράφά της γυναίκας του, πίνει πολλές λεμονάδες και έχει πλήρη επήγνωση της σωματικής του κατάστασης ...

Μία γνωριμία με έναν νεαρό φοιτητή όμως θα του αλλάξει την ζωή και τον τρόπο σκέψης αφού μετά απ' μια σειρά γεγονότων θα αρχίσει το τοπίο να ξεκαθαρίζεται μπρος στα μάτια του...

Ο Περίρα είναι ένας χαρακτήρας που ο αναγνώστης θα τον συμπάθει, θα συμπέσει μαζί του και θα καταλάβει τις εκρήξεις του και το αδιέξοδο που του προκαλεί στις σκέψεις το φασιστικό καθεστώς του Σαλαζάρ. Είναι γνωστό πια πως οι ρωές δεν γίνονται κατ' επιλογή αλλά κατ' ανάγκη...

Για ακόμη μια φορά εξαιρετικός ο Ταμπούκι εν' οι εκδόσεις Άγρα μας δώσαν ένα πολύ κομψό βιβλίο με μια εξίσου κομψή μετάφραση.
5/5...

ΥΓ1: Στην κινηματογραφική μεταφορά του βιβλίου ένας υπήρχος Μαρτσόλο Μαστρογιάννη ζωντανέ με τον καλύτερο τρόπο στο πανό τον Περίρα, δηλώνοντας πως ήταν ο καλύτερος ρόλος της καριέρας του!

•Karen• says

Young people: they can be a real pain when they play Daft Punk - and that is not a randomly capitalized qualifying adjective, I mean Daft Punk - at a volume level that stuns the snoozing song thrush out the tree, or when they turn the night time inner city streets into alcohol fuelled yodelling and technicolour burping festivals. Nevertheless they are our stake in the future, the next generation that will have to deal with what the previous one left behind, whatever kind of a mess that is.

Pereira is no longer young. Reminders of his own mortality are knocking hard at his door, his heart is not so good, high blood pressure, he should lose a few pounds, since his wife died and left him alone with no other family he's let himself go a little. He's not miserable, but he is complacent. He has a cosy job, editor at the Lisbon paper, now in charge of the weekly arts page, a new rubric which mostly consists of Pereira's own translations of 19th century French classics, which deliver him not a little satisfaction and pride. The concierge from his apartment block comes in to do the cleaning and leaves him a meal prepared. He has built himself a tidy wee nest, a corner of the world where he can plod along at what he does, no worries.

This cannot last. Obviously. No sand in the machinery, no story.

The hot summer weather makes Pereira all the more aware of his physical decline. He sweats, he is short of breath, his heart races. His thoughts turn to death, so that an article in a literary journal which consists of an extract from a dissertation on the subject of death catches his eye. He rings the young man who wrote the dissertation. Arranges to meet this young man. And as he makes his way to their meeting place that warm summer evening in Lisbon, it becomes clear that there is another reason why Pereira's rather bland idyll cannot last: for this is the summer of 1938 and fascism is sweeping across Europe. Even his decision to

publish nothing but 19th century French classic tales in his arts section is a form of collusion with a dictatorial regime. This is a situation in which it is impossible to remain neutral. Those who do not defy the system are collaborators.

In translucent, quiet rhythms, Tabucchi sets out each careful, tiny step that Pereira takes towards following his heart. It is not an easy or sudden transformation, Pereira needs help along the way from those good people who challenge his complacency, who remind him of his better self, who give him permission to change. Each tiny step, the help along the way. Heroism as a joint achievement, an act of courage by an individual, yes, but with many contributors.

Tension is maintained throughout by the repeated use of the phrase 'Pereira declares', as in a testimony, which most vividly suggests a police interrogation. The temptation to sneak a look at the last page is almost irresistible.

Everyone should read this. Young, old, and all of those between. Everyone.

Seemita says

It was one of those days when I had a good meal; the fresh herbs, the right salt, the approachable variety, the generous portions, the nice host. I walked back home with a content smile. Upon unlocking the door, a whiff of scented potpourri filled my senses and I sunk on my couch thinking, 'a day well spent, a tummy well fed.' I, then, switched off the lights of the living room and yawned to usher in a good night's sleep. I got up the next morning at the invigorating slant of the sunshine and was enveloped by a good feeling. My mom called up while I was sipping tea.

"How was yesterday? We couldn't catch up."

"It was good, mamma. A fruitful day at work."

"And your dinner? I hope you ate something proper."

"I did. In fact, a good meal at The Zephyr."

She didn't wait for me to finish. "Good meal? Aha! So, what did you eat away, my girl?"

And I blurted almost the same instant, "Oh I had a ermm (*gently crushing my eyelid*)... hang on, I think..... (*dropping my palms to my lap*)... ah well, it was good and that's enough for one outing, isn't it, mamma?"

No, I am not aiming at your cupcakes. And I remember I am reviewing a book, a rather interesting novella about Dr. Pereira, a senior editor of culture page in an evening newspaper of Lisbon of 1930s, whose apolitical stand comes under fire when a passionate but troublesome young writer, Rossi, joins him as an assistant. The story was replete with its elements: a hesitant, awkward yet endearing protagonist, his ordinary life whose highlights were hidden in the contours of routine webs, a quirky bunch of colleagues and acquaintances whose frequent entries and exits rendered the story a velvet drape of drama, a politically charged environment that overshadowed the nascent cultural propagation and a constant, waging war between his givings and misgivings. I quite liked Pereira's demeanor, a wise man on the other side of the age, living a life just so he can write about literature and talk about the same to his dead wife's photograph. Rossi was a well-sketched representation of that aspect of human beings called *habit* which eventually draws us into the wells that our elders asked us not to peep into lest we fall prey to their bottomless depths. The excessive shots of lemonade, the chucklesome frown towards the caretaker, the impulsive surges of benevolence, the devout exercise for change, the unexplained reasons of bonding and the adrenaline rush of breaking through: they all had a current which when passed through me, left me in pleasant quivers. But once the current was off for good, I no longer contained the firm after-effects of the sensory pleasure; just like my meal which although left a good taste in my mouth, could not do enough to seal a signature dish or two in my mind, long after I had scrubbed the last morsel off the plate.

Chrissie says

I enjoyed every minute spent with this book.

It is short and it is presented as a mystery, two things I usually avoid. Still I ended up loving it exactly as it was.

You've got a journalist writing the culture section of an evening paper in Lisbon. It is 1938. He is apolitical, and yet the Spanish Civil War is in full swing and he is a journalist! Guernica has happened. What will wake him up? Will he wake up? He insists; he is only responsible for the culture page. N-O-T-H-I-N-G M-O-R-E!!! He is a widower and alone, without kids, not even a pet. But he has a photograph of his dead wife, and that is all he needs, he tells himself. I am not going to tell you any more.

In this thin book you get marvelous, funny lines. Picture a guy in his fifties or so. This is Pereira. A paunch in front, thinning hair and for lunch he eats omelet sandwiches, which he has to shove in a drawer when anyone enters his room. He branches out; he begins dining at Café Orqueda, where Pereira has to ask the waiter, Manuel, "So what is going on?" Remember that it is Pereira that is the journalist! Then he orders his usual - "omelette aux herbes" and lemonade, with lots of sugar. This is the man that later proclaims, "I am a lone wolf and like it!" Why? You will have to read the book to find out. Later he sort of adopts a young man. He has no son himself; he never had a son, but he knows that it is only to a son you must continually hand out money, so he says to the boy when he asks for pay before he has done any work, "I don't approve of your making a father of me." It is very hard to show you how hilarious these lines are until you read and see them in context. I find the writing intelligent and funny and well, I just love it.

The book has a message. If something is wrong you just have to do something about it. Don't you?!

I love how he, Pereira, speaks to his wife, or rather that photo he has of her.....and she smiles back and she understands. There are other women too. How they are described is equally perfect, be it merely a shapely arm, a shoulder or crossed dress straps. The author creates an image that the reader completes in their own mind, in their own fashion.

I will finish with this: look at the word "maintains", in the title and in many, many of the lines of the book. It is stated over and over again in the text. What does that word mean to you? When do you use it? What does it signify? Make sentences with it, play with it and you will understand. Or read the book, then you are sure to understand. I will tell you this: it turns the book into a mystery which you have to figure out, even though this book is not a mystery, not in the conventional sense.

Really fantastic book.

As is the narration by Derek Jacobi. Absolutely fantastic narration. It couldn't be better. Women sound like women. Derek Jacobi is the most talented male narrator of women that I have ever come across. He does secretaries and bitchy caretakers and attractive women, each and every one is pitch-perfect. All the different characters have their own intonation. Each sentence has the perfect inflection to say what the author wants said. I cannot praise the narration enough.

A perfect little book!

Manuel Antão says

If you're into stuff like this, you can read the full review.

“[...] but I feel I must tell you that originally, we were Lusitanians, and then came the Romans and the Celts, and then came the Arabs, so what sort of race are we Portuguese in a position to celebrate? The Portuguese Race, replied the editor-in-chief, and I am sorry to say Pereira, that I don't like the tone of your objection, we are Portuguese, we discovered the world, we achieved the greatest feats of navigation the world over, and when we did this, in the 16th century, we were already Portuguese, that is what we are and that is what you are to celebrate, Pereira.”

In “Pereira Declares” by Antonio Tabucchi.

I read this in a Portuguese translation from the Italian more than ten years ago, if memory serves me right, I haven't come across anything quite like it and I still have a place in my heart for portly, perspiring Pereira with his omelets and his quiet, but subversive, decency. This time, this wonderful translation by Patrick Creagh just made my day.

In a narrative that does not want a puzzle, Tabucchi uses a very similar resource to the one used by Isaac Bashevis Singer: that of telling alien stories supposedly collected from conversations with real people, and not hiding it in the book's writing. “Pereira Declares” is a book that walks slowly, seeking to situate the scenario through which the characters walk, without extending the descriptions but worried to leave the reader with significant details about the characters, as, for example, the custom of Pereira to take Lemonades and the same path every day. Alongside this, there is a concern for more philosophical discussions, or at least the ones that foster deeper reflections. One can use as an example both the theory of the confederation of souls and the hegemonic hegemony proposed by Dr. Cardoso as well as Pereira's trajectory.

If you're into Lusitania, read on.

Azzurra Usher says

È con le lacrime agli occhi che scrivo, ho appena finito di leggere.

È un periodo di merda per me, e negli ultimi due giorni non sono stata in grado di fare nulla per la strage avvenuta nella mia amatissima città e per le manifestazioni di razzismo e fascismo latenti che ho ritrovato in commenti, social media, scambi di opinioni con vicini e conoscenti. Ho il cuore a pezzi e probabilmente quel che mi ci voleva davvero era Tabucchi con questo inno alla libertà, questo racconto romantico e coraggioso sulla resistenza e sulla lotta al regime. Mi ha davvero risanato l'anima (o le "personalità").

Pereira è il nostro antieroe per antonomasia, Tabucchi *sostiene* di averlo conosciuto in sogno e di averlo lasciato sfogare, di averne dato forma compiuta il giorno del compleanno di sua figlia emozionata (un rimando inevitabile a Pessoa sulla genesi di questo personaggio). Tabucchi *sostiene* di averlo accolto con tutti i suoi difetti e malanni, di averlo accarezzato e compreso e così ce lo presenta, come un uomo timido, insicuro sul come muoversi, ma dai valori radicati, forti indistruttibili. Un uomo che resta dubbioso in un primo momento dinanzi ai piccoli moti dell'animo, ci sembra quasi ingenuo e poco maturo nonostante l'età e il lavoro che ha, ma che alla fine si riscatta. Pereira è un uomo che al dolore e alla morte si oppone con maestria e arguzia inattesa, ma soprattutto con il cuore, quel cuore che davvero malato non è.

Romantici anche i personaggi che scuotono la vita di Pereira, Marta, Monteiro Rossi, don António e il dottor Cardoso. Ognuno ha il potere di smuovere la coscienza di Pereira, forse ognuno di essi ne è parte della *confederazione delle sue personalità* della teoria dei dottori Ribot e Janet e che il nostro protagonista aveva così accuratamente celato per tutta l'esistenza nei passi contati fino alla redazione, nelle incertezze della sua salute, nella noiosa e comoda routine che, alla fine, così bene si addice alle vite degli uomini comuni. Fino all'egemonia dell'io finale, della parte più selvaggia e forte, che vuole guardare alla vita e al futuro nonostante tutto. Quella che sa di sopravvivenza e di amore vero per gli altri.

Grazie, grazie, grazie.

RK-isme says

I needed something lighter to read recently and found "Pereira Declares" to be just the thing coming in at just over 100 pages. Thanks to Fionnuala for the suggestion.

The lightness of the book in terms of size and readability, should not be confused with lightness of message. This novella carries a great deal of baggage. It is set in 1938 Portugal against the background of Fascism in Portugal, Italy and Germany while the civil war rages in Spain. This is not to be forgotten. Nor is the oft repeated title, "Pereira Declares". The title is ominous and should be kept in mind to the end of the book.

Antonio Tabucchi knows how to say a lot in few words. Without getting into the story too much, I shall simply point out that this simple story of an aging, overweight, lonely journalist, Dr. Pereira, for a third-rate newspaper carries much emotional and political weight.

Through the use of humour, ranging from our journalist who, until the end, gets his news from a waiter whose 'friend' listens to BBC News to a doctor treating the Pereira with seaweed treatment (thalassotherapy) and crackpot psychology, a theory that we have competing egos and that Pereira is undergoing a change of ruling egos Tabucchi keeps the reader disarmed for the coming tragedy (long sentence).

Pereira is finally seen as a good, even noble, person whose own sense of decency is able to overcome his hitherto willful blindness to the nature of the political situation around him in 1938 Portugal. Are his actions enough to validate his life? Inasmuch as any of us, as literature loving, otherwise absurd modern individuals can validate our lives, I would say, "Yes".

I would recommend this book to anyone who reads thoughtfully. It is well worth the short time investment. We should keep in mind our own role in society.

Agnieszka says

What a lovely piece of writing it is. I really do not want to waste your time that you could devote to read the story itself so I'll try to be brief. Like in *The Requiem*, the previous story by Tabucchi I've read, we are in scorching Lisbon again where a chubby, mid-aged journalist named Pereira, every day talking with a photograph of his deceased wife, thinks about death, soul and resurrection of the body. Accidentally having come across on an article written by Monteiro Rossi, on impulse engages him to writing occasional obituaries of famous writers and poets, happily still alive. Pereira maintains that he just wants to be prepared in the event of their death. Sounds crazy?

Written in a specific form, statement or maybe, as the publisher suggests, an interrogation, with repetitive phrase *Pereira maintains* , it is a beautiful and haunting tale about the man who at all costs is trying to avoid politics and troubles and at the same time remain decent man. It's also a tribute to the brave man ready to risk own life to protest against the evil and power of an insane ideology; the thing is going on in 1938, in the shadow of Nazi activities in Spain and Italy.

Something in Rossi, maybe some memory of himself as a young man makes Pereira start to help him. But does he finally perform his awakening, does his divided soul find the ruling element? Just read it.
