



Last Evenings on Earth

By Roberto Bolaño

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The first short-story collection in English by the acclaimed Chilean author Roberto Bolano. Winner of a 2005 PEN Translation Fund Award.

"The melancholy folklore of exile," as Roberto Bolano once put it, pervades these fourteen haunting stories. Bolano's narrators are usually writers grappling with private (and generally unlucky) quests, who typically speak in the first person, as if giving a deposition, like witnesses to a crime. These protagonists tend to take detours and to narrate unresolved efforts. They are characters living in the margins, often coming to pieces, and sometimes, as in a nightmare, in constant flight from something horrid.

In the short story "Silva the Eye," Bolano writes in the opening sentence: "It's strange how things happen, Mauricio Silva, known as The Eye, always tried to escape violence, even at the risk of being considered a coward, but the violence, the real violence, can't be escaped, at least not by us, born in Latin America in the 1950s, those of us who were around 20 years old when Salvador Allende died."

Set in the Chilean exile diaspora of Latin America and Europe, and peopled by Bolano's beloved "failed generation," the stories of *Last Evenings on Earth* have appeared in *The New Yorker* and *Grand Street*.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Chilean Bolaño (1953–2003) wrote 10 novels (including *Distant Star*, published to acclaim last year), books of poems and two story collections before this one. These 14 bleakly luminous stories are all told in the first person by men (usually young) who yearn for something just out of their grasp (fame, talent, love) and who harbor few hopes of attaining what they desire. *New Yorker* readers may remember two selections: "Gómez Palacio," concerning the grimly uneventful encounter of a Mexico City writer with the woman who directs the backwater writing program where he comes to teach, and the title story, set in 1975, in which a young Mexico City man and his father vacation in Acapulco—a trip their relationship is not strong enough to survive. The stories are similar, in theme and voice (though not in locale), and they are perfectly calibrated: Bolaño limns the capacity of a voice to carry despair without shading into bitterness. (*May*)

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Review

"I am addicted to the haze that floats above Bolaño's fiction." (Wayne Kostenbaum - Bookforum)

"The most influential and admired novelist of his generation in the Spanish-speaking world." (Susan Sontag)

"Just behind the nervy, deadpan narrative a total breakdown perpetually looms." (Andersen Tepper - Village Voice)

"Brilliant." (Kirkus Reviews)

"Widely known in the Spanish-speaking world as the premier writer of his generation." (Dan Pope - Hartford Courant)

"If you haven't heard of Roberto Bolaño yet, you will soon." (Benjamin Lytal - The New York Sun)

"Bolaño's characters yearn for amnesia as well as for the ability to connect to someone or something in the present." (Stephanie Hanson - Los Angeles Times)

"[B]leakly luminous stories..." (Publishers Weekly)

"His generation's premier Latin-American writer... Bolaño's reputation and legend are in meteoric ascent." (Larry Rohter - The New York Times)

"Conjures dreamlike worlds that shock with their familiarity." (Philip Herter - St. Petersburg Times)

"Complex and provocative." (International Herald Tribune)

About the Author

Author of 2666 and many other acclaimed works, Roberto Bolaño (1953-2003) was born in Santiago, Chile, and later lived in Mexico, Paris, and Spain. He has been acclaimed "by far the most exciting writer to come from south of the Rio Grande in a long time" (Ilan Stavans, The Los Angeles Times), and as "the real thing and the rarest" (Susan Sontag). Among his many prizes are the extremely prestigious Herralde de Novela Award and the Premio Rómulo Gallegos. He was widely considered to be the greatest Latin American writer

of his generation. He wrote nine novels, two story collections, and five books of poetry, before dying in July 2003 at the age of 50.

The poet Chris Andrews teaches at the University of Western Sydney, Australia, where he is a member of the Writing and Society Research Center. He has translated books by Roberto Bolaño and César Aira for New Directions.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Steve Adams:

Have you spare time for the day? What do you do when you have more or little spare time? Yes, you can choose the suitable activity regarding spend your time. Any person spent all their spare time to take a move, shopping, or went to the particular Mall. How about open or even read a book eligible Last Evenings on Earth? Maybe it is to be best activity for you. You recognize beside you can spend your time with the favorite's book, you can better than before. Do you agree with the opinion or you have additional opinion?

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Christopher Larsen:

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Lesley Dwyer:

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