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LITERARY MAGAZINE

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WORDS COME ISI

# FROM THE AUTHOR

Dear reader,

First of all, thank you so much for subscribing to Words Come Isi Literary Magazine.

I am Isi, the girl behind the title. I thought it would be nice for you to get to know me a little as you are going to be sharing my biggest passion with me: books.

I am 22 years old, I am from Chile, but I also have Croatian origins. These are incredibly important to me, since my croatian grandmother and I shared an incredible bond. In fact, it was her migration story one of the big inspirations that made me pack my bags back then in 2021, and go find my future somewhere else.

After wandering around America and Europe, I finally settled in Germany around a year ago.

It's been a wild journey, but it has given me the strength and knowledge that I needed to pursue my long life dream of becoming a writer.

This magazine is one big step towards that goal. I hope you enjoy reading it as much as I enjoy writing it.

All my best,  
Isi



BOOK TALK

# "MRS. DALLOWAY" BY VIRGINIA WOOLF

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"Mrs. Dalloway" is an amazing book, but in my opinion one should be in a particular state of mind to read this or any of Virginia Woolf's novels. I'll explain why later, because first I want to give some insight on the author and how I got to know her.

The first work of Woolf that I had the pleasure to read was "A Room of One's Own", an essay she wrote about women being fiction writers. Her smart approach to feminism by using metaphors like the very known story about Shakespeare's sister amazed me. But this was not all. What really fascinated me was her story, and mostly, the end of it. Virginia Woolf, despite having privileges for her time, such as excellent education and relations with the greatest intellectuals in England, faced sexual abuse in her childhood and struggled with mental illness throughout her whole life. This resulted in suicide, by jumping to the Ouse river with rocks in her pockets. Her suicide note was a letter to her husband Leonard Woolf, who she loved deeply and wrote how happy he had made her, but she just couldn't fight the demons she had inside anymore.

At the time I got to know all this, I was struggling severely with mental health as well, so I felt deeply intrigued by the art that would come out of a mind that seemed to be similar to mine. And for a couple of years, without exaggerating, I felt like Virginia was my only friend. In the quotes I found while reading her novels, I found a kind of understanding that so far, no one had given me.

Something that moved as much as it challenged me, was her way of writing, which today we know as stream of consciousness. What I love the most about this style is that it gives such a genuine image of how the mind works: chaotically, jumping from thought to thought and from feeling to feeling sometimes without a reason.



PENGUIN CLASSICS

VIRGINIA WOOLF

*Mrs Dalloway*

And in the chaos of stream of consciousness is where its beauty lies. But this doesn't make it less complicated or academically challenging, since you have to be very focused while reading to keep up with what is going on. Therefore my comment at the beginning, "Mrs. Dalloway" is not the right book to read when you want to switch off your mind or when you are distracted. If that is the case, you will miss the point or start daydreaming while reading (trust me, it has happened to me while reading Virginia a bunch of times)

So now, let's get into the plot. It starts with Clarissa Dalloway, a 51 year old woman living in Westminster, a wealthy neighborhood in central London. She is heading out to buy flowers for a party she is about to host later that evening.


The historical setting is 1923, only five years after the first world war has ended. This is important, because every single character is one way or another



feeling the consequences of it.

While we accompany Clarissa on her walk towards the flower shop, we get the first glimpse of her personality: very reflective, appreciative of nature and her surroundings, and also a bit nostalgic. She also questions herself and the life she led, while remembering Peter Walsh, a lover from her youth who showed her passion and thrill. She reminisces on what could have been, but she reassures herself that she is glad that she married Richard Dalloway, a wealthy and smart, but less sensitive and more logical man. Although she feels content with her choice, she recognizes that she has lost some of her identity by marrying him.

"She had the oddest sense of being herself invisible; unseen; unknown"



As we can see, Clarissa carries this burden. But still, finds joy in life and its little treasures, even when they might seem shallow to someone like her ex lover Peter.

Outside the flower shop we encounter an episode that snaps Clarissa (and everyone else around) out of their inner worlds and back into the shared reality: a car produces a loud sound with its motor, and Mrs. Dalloway first thinks it's a gunshot. Other Londoners speculate who was in the car, thinking it might have been the Prime Minister or the Queen. Another important character, Septimus Warren Smith is in the scene, and reacts with panic to the sound due to post traumatic stress disorder which he suffers from the war. On the other hand, his wife, Rezia, worries about his state.

This setting is recurrent throughout the novel. We encounter different characters who experience the same reality but process it internally completely different.

There are various symbols that remind us (and them) that they are all sharing the same environment, such as the big ben marks for the time, the lady singing outside the park, and even the trees.

Another challenge that makes the reading and the analysis of Mrs. Dalloway even more difficult, is that there are a lot of characters and all of them get their fair share of attention, so if we were to dedicate time to each of them, we could spend hours and possibly write a full book. So, I will focus on the three characters that spoke to me the most: Clarissa, Peter and Septimus.

In their three personalities we can find opposite views of the world: On Clarissa's behalf, we see self doubt and deep questioning of life, but still joy in living and in the simple things. Then in Peter, we see more of a free spirit that challenges traditional values, and sees no worth in trivial things. Lastly, we have Septimus, who after experiencing trauma and disappointment on his beliefs, can no longer find a will to live either in the simple or in the complex.

These are three different ways to approach life, but the way I see it, they are not mutually exclusive. One can find a debate of all the three standpoints inside oneself. I know I have been there myself. Struggling between finding a will to live, being unable to feel marvelled by the small things like flowers or a cool breeze, and focusing (or even over focusing) on existential questions and the intellectual world, finding everything else worthless.

But one of the main messages of "Mrs. Dalloway" is the complexity and subjectivity of reality, and how, after all, we have a choice on what to believe and therefore building a new reality for us. One that fulfills us enough to continue existing.




## BOOK TALK

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In the case of Septimus, he fails to do so. We see how his view is distorted and disproportionate, paying more attention to imaginary fears than to real problems, like the distress his own wife is feeling. I like how Virginia Woolf displays this scenario without necessarily judging him. After all, Septimus is sick. And lastly, his illness ends up driving him to suicide by jumping out from a window.

Now, what we can ask ourselves is, considering how subjective reality is, is suicide a valid choice? Could we force someone to see hope when they just can't? We can try, definitely, to show someone all the beautiful things there is to continue living for. But if they don't find beauty in it, because again, it is subjective, what can we do?

Then we have Peter's case. He judges Clarissa for settling with being what we today would call a trophy wife. He judges her specially because he knew her when they were young, and he knew she could have been more.



But appealing to subjectivity once again, what if to someone being a wife is the ultimate dream, and there is no such thing as a "more"? And what is "more" after all? Aren't they all simply different paths to take?

At the same time, Clarissa judges Peter, for never settling down, for being reckless, and for pursuing a divorce and a new lover when he is already in his 50s.

All the characters end up judging each other, but that doesn't stop them from wondering what could have been, if they had made different choices. I think, this is just human nature, and human complexity. We want to believe that what we chose was right, because if we don't, it might be an unbearable burden to carry.

In my case, I left university when I was doing incredibly good academically. I had a very

promising future in the institution. But one day I felt like it wasn't enough, and I started a journey that turned my life upside down. Today I can say that I am the happiest I've ever been and I am more than satisfied with the life I am building. But I can't help to wonder, what could have been, if I had stayed. Specially these days, when my best friend from college is graduating. I can't help to wish I was there, graduating too. But at the same time, if I had to do it all over again, I wouldn't change a thing.

Remember that inner struggle I mentioned before? Well, I made a choice. I decided to let myself be amazed by simplicity, and alas, that brought me happiness. I let my guard down, some might say I wasted my potential, or that I became shallow. But I am content, and I have not only will but excitement to live, and for me, that outweighs everything else.


At the end, Clarissa comes to a similar conclusion. Maybe the highlight of her day was when her husband brought her flowers, and maybe that seems trivial, but, so what? After all,

**"What does the brain matter compared with the heart?"**

We do what we can to find fulfillment and thrive, even when

**"It might be possible that the world itself is without meaning."**

And to Clarissa Dalloway, the way of doing that is throwing a party, simply to celebrate life. And that, is enough.



# ASPIRING WRITERS

## OUR WRITER OF THE WEEK: MARIA LOUISE GREEN

This week we are meeting Maria Louise, an 18 yearold girl originally from Romania, that has been in living in London since she was 10. For her, this meant having to quickly learn a new language. After having the pleasure of reading a few pieces written by Maria, I can say that I would have never guessed that English isn't her mother tounge: the vocabaliry she uses and incredibly rich and perfectly placed, giving a beautifully poetic sense even to her prose. I loved her style and I can see a mixture of the eloquency one can find in classics and the raw honesty we, readers who want to connect with something genuine, crave from modern poetry. In a book industry where honesty is becoming is rare, Maria's work precious.

-What inspire you the most to write?

"I'm a self-reflective person, and channelling the emotions I ruminate on into something tangible is like communicating a piece of my soul to whoever may be reading it. It is truly one of the most rewarding experiences in my life to have created something beautiful - or even repugnant, in the sense of its unapologetic candour - from a pain, a trouble, or even a triviality of my life. I struggled with alcohol and drug addiction since I was 14, and have recently recovered, so a lot of my work draws inspiration from that experience, and much was written during that time period itself. It has helped me process my relationship with something that I simultaneously loved, but that I was being destroyed by."

-Are there any authors that you look up to? Or any that you've been compared to?

"I love Ancient Greek Tragedies, so Euripides, Aeschylus, and Seneca have a way with words that I find thoroughly enchanting. Fernando Pessoa's haunting prose on the absurdity of life has inspired me greatly; reading 'The Book of Disquiet' has definitely elevated my prose. Sappho's poetry is also dear to my heart, along with Sylvia Plath's. In terms of contemporary poets, I love Savannah Brown and Dakota Warren, and I look up to them since I am closer in age to them than I am to most other established authors. I'm also a massive Game of Thrones nerd, so George R R Martin is my favourite fantasy write."

-What other artists have influenced you as a person and as a writer?

"Despite the fact that I mainly listen to metal music, Lana Del Rey is my favourite artist and her music and poetry have definitely moulded aspects of how I relate to the world from a very early age. She is unapologetic in her lyrics and this helped me write my truth, for myself, rather than writing only what I think other people want to read."

-I love the fact that your influences go from Greek poets to Lana del Rey, I relate to this so much!- What is your goal as a writer? Where do you see yourself in the future?\*

"I've always maintained that I want to find an audience, however big or small, that enjoys my work. In the future, I definitely want to also venture into writing full-length novels, and ideally, be able to sustain myself through my writing. But this is increasingly more difficult with how saturated the book market is, and I'm perfectly content to continue writing for myself and perhaps a small audience, alongside completing the PhD in Classics that I aspire towards"

-What is your biggest dream?

"My biggest dream is to become a well-known writer and to somehow affect my readers' lives for the better. I know how comforting reading something you see yourself in can be, and I want to eventually be able to write such a piece for others, to hold a mirror up and show a reflection of themselves. I'd want my work to make people discover things about themselves they didn't know before. I also want to become a Classics professor"

-What makes you want to share your writing? Where you ever shy about it in the past?

"The main purpose of my poetry and prose is to make someone else feel something, maybe help them relate, or just instigate any emotional response, whether it be joy or melancholy. Emotions are beautiful and they connect us all in their universality (...)"

-What is your favourite quote? Why?

"'Darkness helps us to feel holy' from The Bacchae by Euripides. Despite my not believing in God, I find beauty in how the divine is interlinked with darkness. It is a pre-requisite for reaching peace, or our own form of paradise."

-Where can people find your work?

[marialouisegreen.com](http://marialouisegreen.com)

## I DREAM - BY MARIA LOUISE GREEN

It is that spectacular night sky that, shameless, spread before the eyes of the Lord, lures me to all the corners of the cosmos that I've yet to touch, bound by a sense of child-like innocence. It is in the secretive whispers of trees, or the stars in their forceful domination of Eastern shores, it is in a dream that, until now, I have profoundly mistaken for life.

The creak of a desolate door is declaring that I only need look through its keyhole, and I shall arise as a new conception. I am invited, by all, to experience you. I am being held hostage in freedom. I am being pulled in every direction towards every place I've ever regretted parting from, those locations as facets of my cognition which I still visit in my dreams, as if I never really left. This Procrustean bed, my tomb, signals my future as a budding flower, thawing on a Victorian veranda. I stand before myself as if to say 'It is me, and I never truly left'

I breathe because my lungs can hold no more, operating on the assumption that they will learn the same easy-going stagnancy as the featherbed that I am being engulfed by in these winter shadows. I find I never truly dream until my eyelids part ways. Dreaming is the act of recalling, the melting fragments that you cling to, with a certain inherent knowing that the key to understanding yourself lies in remembrance. The adventure of sleep, however, is what constitutes living. I am no more alive now than I was last night, in a deep, elusive slumber. I ought to admit, I was far more alive, for nothing had imposed restrictions upon my perception, unlike the forces of the waking present.

I am bound by chains to a material plane that I experience on an immaterial level. Everything I see is the inauguration of the laws of the universe, which can be cold and unloving in their poignant monotony. Dreams are omnipotent, and we can choose to be their slaves or their masters. In waking life, one has nothing but the cold chains of a servant binding one's wrists in grief. What a night... What a night, dear friends, to choose omnipotence!



# LATEST IN LIT



## DYLAN THOMAS PRIZE 2023 FINALISTS

Named after the famous Welsh poet, the Dylan Thomas Prize is definitely unique in its kind, being open to any published author under the age of 40, who works in the same literary forms as Thomas; this includes poetry, prose, fictional drama, short story collections, novels, novellas, stage plays, and even screenplays. This year, the titles that will be competing for the £20,000 reward are: "Limberlost" by Robbie Arnott, "Seven Steeples" by Sara Baume, "God's Children Are Little Broken Things" by Arinze Ifeakandu, "I'm a Fan" by Sheena Patel, "Send Nudes" by Saba Sams and "Bless the Daughter Raised by a Voice in Her Head" by Warsan Shire. The winner will be announced on May 11th, prior to International Dylan Thomas day on May 14th.



## ATTEMPT TO BAN BOOKS SKY ROCKETED LAST YEAR

The American Library Association started gathering data about censorship in books over a decade ago. Recently, they released the report for 2022: there were 1,269 documented demands to censor books and library resources, which almost doubles the 729 cases of 2021. Also, a record of 2,571 petitions to completely remove books from libraries. 58% of the requests were regarding school libraries and curriculums, and the majority of them had complaints about racism and LGBTQ+ or sexual content. I am a firm believer that writers should be free to write whatever they want, and it's the reader's choice to consume it or not. But when it comes to children, it is their parents' choice, so coming to a consensus on what is displayed in school grounds is definitely very difficult, especially when education believes are so polarized nowadays.

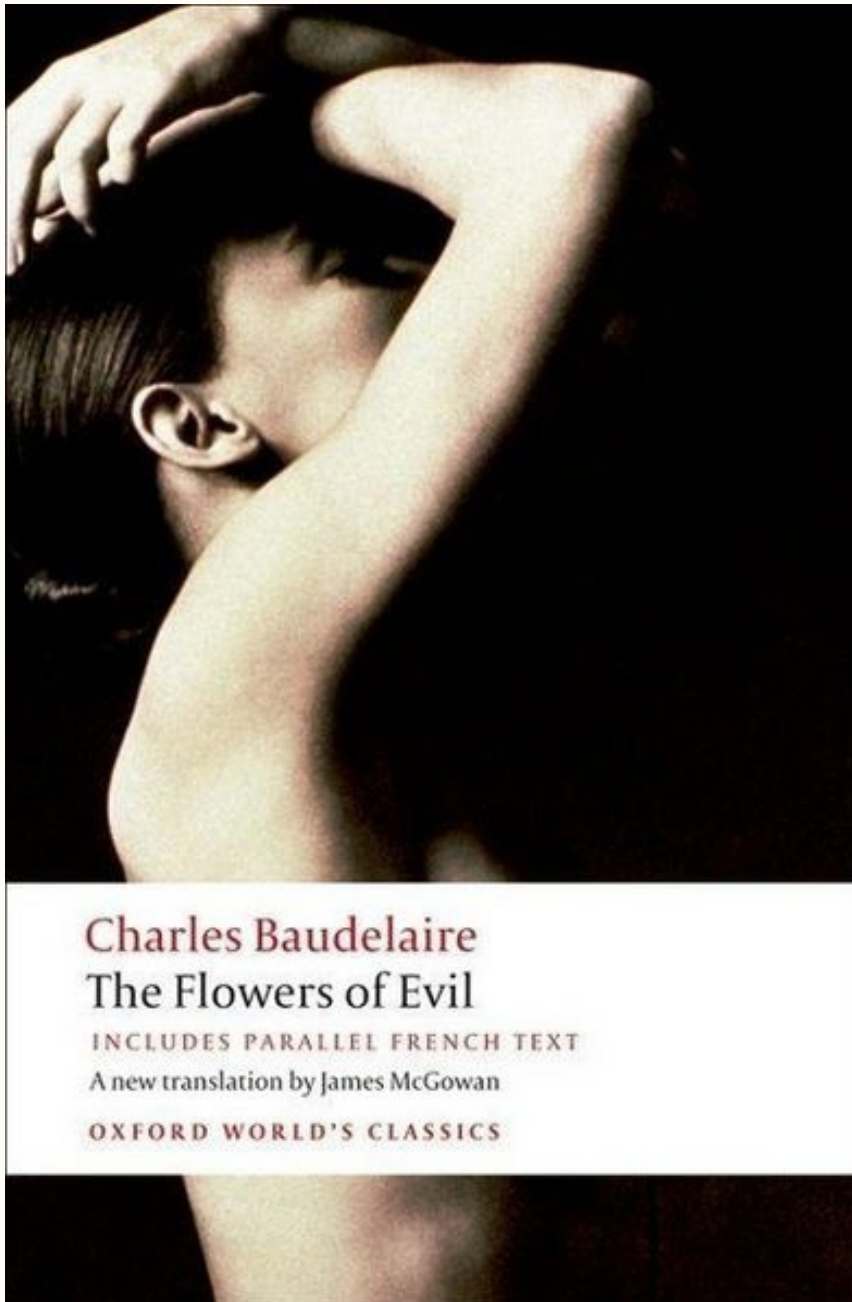


## OVID'S BIRTHDAY

It feels odd to say "birthday" considering that the Roman poet would have turned 2,065 years old on the 20 of March. Regardless, it is important to commemorate his birth. Publius Ovidius Naso, widely known as Ovid in English, lived during the reign of Augustus, and was a contemporary of Horace and Virgil, although younger. Ovid is most famous for the "Metamorphoses", a continuous mythological narrative in fifteen books written in the meter of epic, which today is considered one of the most important sources of classic mythology. Ovid's work was popular even in his time, but due to unclear motives (in Ovid's own words: "a poem and a mistake"), the emperor exiled the poet to a province on the area of the Black Sea, where he remained ten years until his death.

## NEXT WEEK'S BOOK TALK: "THE FLOWERS OF EVIL" BY CHARLES BAUDELAIRE

I am pretty sure that when most people think of poetry, don't imagine what is inside this book. So, for next week, be ready to talk a lot about suffering, death, and worms. A lot of worms. Some dark but incredibly beautiful poetry awaits us!





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CONTACT



@wordscomeisi



wordscomeisi@gmail.com

