

Pasolini o La noche de las luciérnagas

Pasolini or The Night of the Fireflies



UK panel's choice Year 2016

Author: [José Mª García López](#) [1]

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On the night of the 1-2 November 1975, Pier Paolo Pasolini was brutally murdered on the beach at Ostia. The public opinion of half of Europe was excited and the event led to the conviction of a young man, although the forensic evidence suggested that there was more than one culprit. A couple, she a criminologist and he a professor, undertake an investigation which is largely based on Pasolini's unfinished novel "Petrolio" about Mafia conspiracies and the suspicious death of Enrico Mattei, the father of the oil industry. Through a tour of the streets of Rome with these "ragazzi", José M.ª García López concocts a disturbing novel about Pasolini's life and demons: his literary works, his cinematography, his relations with artists and intellectuals of the era (Fellini, Sartre, Moravia, Elsa Morante...) and his firmly held and controversial political convictions.

UK panellists opinion:

The circumstances surrounding the murder of Italian poet, writer and film director Pier Paolo Pasolini in November 1975 have been the subject of conjecture for many years. This book transforms the biographical details of his life into literary prose, and combines this with a fictional investigation into his death. It could be seen both as a celebration of the life and work of a great artist, and a call to reexamine a case that has never been fully investigated or concluded.

The book begins in 1950, as Pasolini and his mother Susanna Colussi flee their home in Casarsa della Delizia, in the Friuli region of Italy, to start a new life in Rome. They leave behind father and husband Carlo Alberto, a military man and fascist, an alcoholic and a bully. The pair are also haunted by the memory of Pasolini's partisan brother Guido, killed in an ambush by Garibaldine partisans under the command of Tito. Pasolini has recently been accused of corruption of minors, expelled from the Communist Party, and lost his local reputation as a poet and teacher. On the train, he dreams about a beautiful young man called Andrea, and foresees what he believes is his own death.

... The reader gets a real sense of Rome in the descriptions of Pasolini's wanderings - its monuments and bridges, its seedier neighbourhoods - many of which form the backdrop to Pasolini's writing and films.

Though this is a long book at over 400 pages, it doesn't feel like a chore to read it, as it keeps the reader's interest by alternating between straight prose and poetic musings, existential and philosophical dialogue, all framed by the complicated puzzle of the investigation. Although García López' interpretation of Pasolini's thoughts, feelings and conversations with his contemporaries involves a certain artistic license, it allows for a depth that would not be possible in a straight biography or factual investigation, permitting the author to explore the workings of Pasolini's mind, and to raise questions about the place of an artist in society. The 2014 Abel Ferrara film 'Pasolini' has recently brought more attention to the director in the English speaking world, and this book will be fascinating to anyone interested in further exploring the work of one of Italy's greatest artists: as such, it is an excellent candidate

for translation.

From the reader's report by [Lise Jones](#) [3]

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Additional information **Prizes and reviews:**

José M.^a García López enjoys himself and entertains us with the beauty of his magnificent prose" (El País). "Very few Spanish writers manipulate the language like this author does" (ABC).

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