Six ways to Die in Texas
Author:
Marina Perezagua

READER'S NAME: EDUARDO DE LAMADRID

Seis formas de morir en Texas shows us the madness of our reality, life completely bared and exposed: cruelty, ignorance, injustice and stupidity in the full light of the sun and in the 21st century. Firstly, Marina Perezagua reminds us that the death penalty is lawful in the State of Texas today. Secondly, she informs us about another disquieting fact: in China, the government murders prisoners in good health in order to sell in order to sell their vital organs for transplants.

The story line of this novel oscillates between the convoluted and the simple, but in essence it relates the trials suffered by Robin, the protagonist, in the corridors of death row, where she has been confined for 16 years awaiting execution, and the epistolary relations she maintains with her father and her pen pal love interest Zhao. Perhaps it could be said that the novel merely recounts a nightmare, since she is not conscious of having committed the murder of which she is accused, in spite of having signed a confession to that effect. While the novel should be read primarily as an accusation and denunciation of organ trafficking, and a plea against the death penalty, it is also the story of a deception and a betrayal. And although the novel closes with an enigma, many other questions surface during the narrative (for example, what is the relationship between Robyn's biological father and Zhao?). Robyn was from birth marked by two lies, one told by her father and the other by her mother, and there are enough clues provided so that reader has reasonable doubts about the authorship of the crime.

The plot begins in 1984, in Guangzhou, China, when Zhou Hongqing's heart is extirpated while he is in prison and alive, and is sold and transplanted in Edward Peterson, a U.S. citizen. This practice was a major source of income for the Chinese health system. But since Buddhist tradition holds that a deceased person cannot rest while his or her heart still beats, Zhou's son, Linwei, and later his grandson Zinzang, Zhao's real name, will travel to the United States to rescue their ancestor's heart, so that he may have eternal rest. This is the point of confluence for the two stories and plot resumes in Texas and the protag0nist and characters are the grandson and the descendants of the recipient of the transplant. The main action transpires in 2017, while Robyn awaits execution in a few months and starts recounting her life story: how she was convicted of a crime, her love for Zhao, and the double organ transplant proposed between her and her father. She, being blind since age 7, would receive his corneas, and she would give her heart to her ailing father before being executed

Seis formas de morir en Texas is a novel that combines journalism and fiction and places us before an unhinged and completely absurd reality, in which the protagonists struggle to impose meaning and order. The first achievement of the novel is to reflect our time accurately. The second is to use language that is appropriate to the theme: instinctive and direct, not prone to displays of stylistic excess, but carefully planned just the same. In this case, actions are louder than words; the simple descriptions of what happens to the prisoners on death row are harrowing in and of themselves

without need of embellishment. The third achievement is the deftly woven story lines to make a credible whole, showing a writer in complete control of her subject.

Given the topicality of the themes and settings (China, Texas) and the artistry evinced by the writer, this reader opines that it would elicit interest in American readers and is suitable for translation.

Marina Perezagua is a writer, university professor, and long distance swimmer. She has published various literary works prior to *Seis formas de morir en Texas*, notable among which is the novel *Yoro*, winner of the prestigious Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz Prize for Literature in 2016