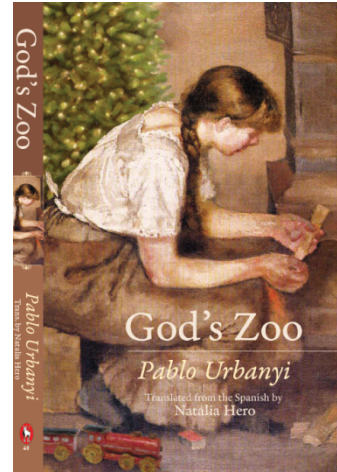


Forming bonds both familial and erotic

God's Zoo captures the brutality of the Second World War in Eastern Europe, told through the eyes of young Fenix, a boy who lives in the small Hungarian-Czechoslovak city of Ipolyság. Fenix lives in a loveless world, abused by his cold, materialistic mother, and neglected by his often absent father. He seeks refuge in the care of Judit, a young woman who works as a nanny and servant in the family home. Judit and Fenix form a deep and complex bond that is at once familial and erotic, embodying friendship, kinship, motherhood, romantic love, and sexuality. Together, they bear witness to the city's successive occupation first by troops from Hungary, followed by the German army, and, finally, the Russians. As the devastating events of the war unfold around them, their love perseveres and grows stronger—until its unexpected end.



Eroticism permeates the narrative, fleetingly yet profoundly, and the nimbus of poetry. *God's Zoo* is ultimately a beautiful coming-of-age love story, one written in a deeply personal style (is it even possible to write otherwise?), but in which the reader may nevertheless find a sense of familiarity.

—**Caroline De Liever**, author, France

The challenge, taken up here with fervent nostalgia, is to blend a satirical, ironic tone with a childish depiction of events, an irony that confronts the figures of oppression, whether Communist or Nazi, and the adult world. The result is a lucid phantasmagoria: onboard his electric train, Fenix recounts the tragedies that, one after another, carry away his loved ones. Like many writers, recounting the events of his life allows him to shed its cruelties ... As Baudelaire once wrote: “Genius is childhood rediscovered by an act of will.”

—**Juliette Einhorn**, *Magazine Littéraire*, France

Pablo Urbanyi was born in Hungary in 1939. At the age of eight, he emigrated to Argentina, where he grew up, was educated, and wrote and published his first two books, a collection of short stories and a novel. From 1975 to 1977, the year he emigrated to Canada, he worked as an editor for the cultural supplement of the newspaper "La Opinión" in Buenos Aires. In Canada he continued writing. He published *Sunset, Silver* (finalist for the Argentine Planeta award) *El zoológico de Dios*, all translated into Hungarian, French (France) and English. His writing is characterized by critical humour, and a subtle and profound irony. In addition to being a Planeta finalist, he has received other awards and mentions: he was the winner of the 2004 Somos la Expresión Literaria Award, Latin American Achievement Awards, Toronto. His native city, Ipolyság in Hungary, named him Honorary Citizen for his literary achievements. He has given lectures, seminars, and readings in Germany, Spain, and France, and published five more books. He is a member of PEN International.

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