

From the Land of the Moon

Julian Sachs (June 20, 2011)



Milena Agus

(foto daniela zedda)

Milena Agus' novel "Mal di pietre", winner of the 2008 Zerilli-Marimò/City of Rome Prize for Literature has been published in the United States by Europa editions as "From the Land of the Moon"

Vanity Fair has described it as "a poignant, fascinating, linguistically rich book". From the Land of the Moon is the first English translation of a novel by Sardinian author Milena Agus, published by Europa editions.

Agus published her first work, *Mentre dorme il pescecane*, in 2005, which was soon followed by *Mal di pietre* in 2006. It was the latter that won her the 2008 Zerilli-Marimò/Città di Roma Prize for Italian Fiction, awarded in New York at NYU's Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò on December 9, 2008. The prize consisted of a grant of \$3,000 and, more importantly, a large financial contribution for the translation and publication of her book in the United



States,

Interviewed by i-Italy at the time, she had said, "I would like the passages in Sardinian dialect to be left just as they are. Maybe the translators could add the English version in a footnote at the bottom of the page. This is what they did in France and I find it to be the best solution possible. I think that the Sardinian language lends a sort of intimacy, a familiarity to the characters, which is unknown to their Italian counterparts."

Her wish was respected and this edition leaves the Sardinian passages untouched. This is the 7th novel translated from Italian into English and published in the United States thanks to the literary prize, an outstanding result considering the great difficulties for foreign authors (Italian in particular) to be published in the across the Atlantic. The American public has now a great opportunity to discover a new foreign author and reward the hard work that Casa Italiana Zerilli-Marimò and the Casa delle Letterature di Roma put in towards facing the challenge of spreading contemporary Italian fiction in America.

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