

ROBERTO BOLAÑO

*Una novelita
lumpen*




ANAGRAMA
Narrativas hispánicas

Una novelita lumpen

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Una novelita lumpen Roberto Bolaño **The Final Bolaño Novella**

"Now I am a mother and a married woman, but not long ago I led a life of crime": so Bianca begins her tale of growing up the hard way in Rome. Orphaned overnight as a teenager - "our parents died in a car crash on their first vacation without us" - she drops out of school, gets a crappy job, and drifts into bad company. Her little brother brings home two petty criminals who need a place to stay. As the four of them share the family apartment and plot a strange crime, Bianca learns how low she can fall.

Electric, tense with foreboding, and written in jagged, propulsive short chapters, *A Little Lumpen Novelita* delivers a surprising, fractured fable of seizing control of one's fate.

Una novelita lumpen Details

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From Reader Review *Una novelita lumpen* for online ebook

Mike Puma says

I think it's inevitable for *A Little Lumpen Novelita* to not live up to the expectations of other completists, like myself. BUT, I'm pleased to not be in that number, not that other reactions are incorrect (what would that be?) or invalid (really? An 'invalid' reaction?) For me, at least, this fits rather nicely into his collected works, his *oeuvre*.

First, for those unaware: Lumpen refers to a social status, akin to that of an outcast or troublemaker, perhaps criminal. Old Marxists, like myself (well, actually more of an ice cream socialist) will recall *lumpenproletariat*.

Now, to the novel. An orphaned sister and brother, along with two friends of the brother, set in motion a plan to commit a robbery that will set them up for life, a robbery which involves taking advantage of an older, much fatter, ex-bodybuilder/actor named Maciste. Basic. Straightforward. But this is Bolaño, and that's not how things work.

The two friends, are nebulous creatures, coming and going, ever-cleaning and tidying up. One, or the other, could end up in the room of the sister on any given night, any night she was in the mood. No names are ever given. They're only known as the Bolognan and the Libyan.

The **Bolognan** and the **Libyan** should set off flashing lights in the minds of completists. The Bolognan (Belano/Bolaño?) and the Libyan (Lima?). Hmm? Maybe. I prefer to think so. Characters who appear in other Bolaño novels and stories. No way to confirm it; not essential to the story—just a little thing Bolaño did from time to time—inflict his alter-ego into his work. I like it, or like thinking it.

A couple quotes (which will suffer out of context)—keep in mind, the novel is narrated by the sister:

And sometimes I imagined ... convincing him [Maciste] to go out every once in a while, maybe not to the movies but for a walk, like two normal people or two people who pretend to be normal and by pretending actually are normal or become normal...

But I knew that to keep visiting him with no ulterior motive would destroy me.

Deep down I was always thinking about the future. I thought about it so much that the present had become part of the future, the strangest part.

4 stars. Right time, right novel, right darkness, right amount of sentimentality for a favorite author (or really, really, close to the right amount).

Kyriaki says

Ε?χα πολ? καιρ? να διαβ?σω βιβλ?ο που να με κ?νει να χ?σω την α?σθηση του χρ?νου σε τ?τοιο βαθμ?, να με απορροφ?σει τ?σο πολ?, να μην θ?λω να σηκ?σω το κεφ?λι μου. Το ?νοιξα μια φορ? και το ?κλεισα μια ?ταν ?φτασα στο τ?λος. Ε?ναι το πρ?το βιβλ?ο του Bolaño που διαβ?ζω και η αλ?θεια ε?ναι ?τι το δι?λεξα λ?γο στην τ?χη, επειδ? ?τσι, ?θελα να διαβ?σω κ?τι δικ? του και μου ?ρεσε ο τ?τλος του συγκεκριμ?νου και το π?ρα. Μου ?ρεσε η γραφ?, η ρο? του, η ατμ?σφαιρ? του, η α?σθηση του, το τ?λος του που δεν ?ταν τ?λος.....χα?ρομαι που δεν ?ξερα τι θα δι?βαζα, δεν το ε?χα ψ?ξει καθ?λου. Μου ?ρεσε πολ? και σ?γουρα θα ακολουθ?σουν κι ?λλα δικ? του.

Greg says

I have no idea what the compulsion is. There are quite a few Bolaño books that I haven't read yet, and which I don't own. There are a couple of them that I own but which I haven't read yet. So, I'm not sure what the compulsion was to buy this one in hardcover the day it was released. Maybe it was because there wasn't much of interest that had come out that week? I don't remember what other books were published that week. But, that doesn't really answer the question since I buy so few books these days. Maybe I just wanted the feeling of buying a book instead of just acquiring them, which is what I seem to do these days (and no, I don't steal books. I'm not a Bolaño character)

Since, I actually paid money for this and I have a week or so left where I can read books I choose, maybe that's why I read it? And because it is short? I don't know, but I decided to read this. I could have read one of the three other Bolaño books that I own but haven't read.

Maybe I'm just trying to figure out for myself why I spent money and the very small amount of time on this book, when again, there are other Bolaño books I could read without spending money on, and piles of books that I really do mean to read sometime in the next decade.

As you can see from the three stars, and if you know that my feelings on the other Bolaño books that I've read (I think I've used the phrase, his books are perfect examples of the reason why i like to read), you'll realize that I'm not in awe of this one. It actually made me wonder upon finishing it just how much more stuff there is of his out there waiting to be translated into English, and if it's possible that we are at the bottom of the barrel of his stuff. But how big is the bottom of this barrel?

This is again one of his "last published works", this seems to be a description given to many of his recently published works in America. To be fair this is an actual novella of new material, and not just a episode from *2666* or *Savage Detectives* reworked (or in an early form) that is being sold as it's own piece. Maybe I heard this somewhere, or maybe it's just a conjecture I thought of a while back and now believe I must have read it and didn't just make this up, but I get the feeling that Bolaño published a lot of things in his lifetime to make money to survive in between working on his longer works and that he was more than happy to cannibalize off of his own larger works. (On re-reading this, I'm pretty sure that there is a Bolaño character in one of the novels who cannibalizes his own work and re-publishes things just to try to win literary prize money). I know from the publishing history of *2666* that he was also very concerned with providing for his family after his death. This novella feels like a longish short story, but with some reformatting tweaks was turned into a hundred page novella, and which would earn some money off of fans of his work and help in the building up of some security for his family.

I can't blame that guy for something like that.

I just didn't really enjoy the story all that much.

It's about a teenage girl whose parents die in a car accident. She's left orphaned with her brother. They stop going to school. She starts to work in a hair salon, he sweeps up in a gym and starts lifting weights. They watch movies together. Two older friends of her brother sort of move into their apartment. She embarks on the thug life (ok, petty criminal life).

Surprisingly she doesn't embark on the petty crimes of stealing books. Something glorified in other Bolaño works, and also in another novel written originally in Spanish, about a beautiful young book thief and an older bookseller who becomes enthralled by her (that would be *Severina* by Rodrigo Rey Rosa, you can read my review [here](#).)

I'm not going to say what the crime is she gets involved in, but it's the sort of hair brained thing that the sorts of characters she is living with would come up with. It's ambitious, but also kind of depressing in the scope involved. It's smarter though than the crime of the young adult novel *Monster*. That's not saying much, though.

The book is short. It's broken into a bunch of short chapters. But each short chapter is followed by about three to five blank pages, which makes this 109 page book only about fifty pages of actual text/story/whatever you want to call it. It's a very nice looking book though.

Kind of think about the layout of David Foster Wallace's *This is Water*.

I'm ok with short, it just doesn't seem to go anywhere. This is the kind of story that would be told as a chapter in one of Bolaño's larger novels, it would be like the backstory of one of his female characters who is now invoked in something more substantial. And it's not even one of his more interesting characters that he's given us.

Also there is something a little creepy about the character, I don't really buy the character as a teenage girl, but rather she is kind of a fantasy that a middle aged man might have about what a teenage girl who is kind of sophisticated (read the code word you want for this) beyond her age is like. It's not that he goes into any explicit detail, or glorifies her actions, but there is still something creepy in the portrayal. And I just don't buy her as an authentic character, there is too much aged worldliness about her that doesn't feel like how a teenage girl would really be. But she is what an older intellectual with a rebellious spirit would probably like an idealized teenage girl to be like.

This book doesn't diminish my love for Bolaño, but it didn't feel like a book that was all that necessary. It would have been better as a long short story in a collection rather than as it's own standalone piece. By itself it is up against too much competition from Bolaño's other work and just doesn't stand up to those works.

Makis Dionis says

Una Bolanita novelita.

Στα ?ρια του κλασικο? θα το λμο?σα να πω, ο Bolano παραδ?δει μαθ?ματα γραφ?ς, με επ?κεντρο το βουβ? π?νο.

Κινείται στο ρυθμό του παγοδρομ?ου κ του τρ?του Ρ?ιχ

Sofia says

Δεν ?χει σημασία αν μιλ?με για μικρ? ? μεγ?λη φ?ρμα. Ο Μπολανιο ξ?ρει να σε μαγε?ει.

Corto Maltese says

Μπολ?νιο κατ?τερος του αναμεν?μενου ωστ?σο παραμ?νει Μπολ?νιο.

George K. says

Στη βιβλιοθ?κη μου υπ?ρχουν κ?μποσα βιβλ?α του Ρομπ?ρτο Μπολ?νιο που περιμ?νουν για χρ?νια ολ?κληρα να διαβαστο?ν απ? την αφεντι? μου, αλλ? η πρ?τη μου επαφ? με το ?ργο του μεγ?λου αυτο? συγγραφ?α ?μελλε να ε?ναι η συγκεκριμ?νη νουβ?λα -το τελευτα?ο ?ργο που ?γραψε πριν πεθ?νει-, την οπο?α αγ?ρασα πριν δυο-τρεις μ?ρες. Ε, τα κ?νουμε που και που κ?τι τ?τοια κουλ? εμε?ς οι βιβλιοφ?γοι. Λοιπ?ν, πρ?κειται για μια πραγματικ? πολ? καλογραμμ?νη και ενδιαφ?ρουσα νουβ?λα, συνδυασμ?ς κοινωνικ? δρ?ματος και ιστορ?ας ενηλικ?ωσης, με στοιχε?α απ? το αστυνομικ? ε?δος. Το δυνατ? στοιχε?ο της νουβ?λας ε?ναι η ?λη πρωτοπρ?σωπη αφ?γηση, την οπο?α θα χαρακτ?ριζα αρκετ? χειμαρρ?δη και ικαν? να κρατ?σει τον αναγν?στη στην τσ?τα μ?χρι την τελευτα?α σελ?δα. Προσωπικ?, ο τρ?πος αφ?γησης κατ?φερε να με βυθ?σει για τα καλ? στο μελαγχολικ? κ?σμο της ιστορ?ας και να με κ?νει ?να με τη νεαρ? αφηγ?τρια. Γενικ? η γραφ? ε?ναι εξαιρετικ?, μπορε? να πει κανε?ς ακ?μα και μεθυστικ?. Το μ?νο σ?γουρο ε?ναι ?τι μ?σα στη χρονη? θα διαβ?σω και ?λλα βιβλ?α του Μπολ?νιο.

Deniz Balç? says

Söz konusu Bolano oldu?unda nesnel bir yakla??ma sahip olmam imkans?z, zira yazar benim için iki elin parmak say?s?n? geçmeyen, en büyük gördü?üm ustalar?n ba??nda yer al?yor.

?ilili yazar?n 'Lümpen Roman'da kendine mekan seçti?i yer ?talya. Seda Ersavc? taraf?ndan çevrilen bu novella Bolano'nun hayatta iken, kendi iradesiyle yay?mlad??? son kitap olma özelli?ini ta??yor. Siyasi zulümlerin gölgesinde ?ekillenen, güçlü ve etkileyici büyük romanlara sahip olan Bolano burada çok daha butik bir öykü kaleme alm??.

Bolano, 'Lümpen Roman'da Bianca isimli ba? karakter üzerinden 'suç' olgusu üzerine felsefi bir öykü sunmu?. Yanl??tan do?ru ç?kar m?? Suç nihayete ermemi? olsa bile niyetiyle insana tabi hale gelmez mi? ?nsan?n ahlaken, hukuken, vicdanen do?ru olmayana e?ilmesine sebep olan ?eyler, asl?nda o insan?n karanl???n? ortaya ç?karan etkenler de?il midir ve bu tersine sa?lan?p, kötüden iyiye yol çizilebilir mi? Katharsis bu anlamda tekamül sürecinin bir sonucu olabilir mi yoksa hep devam eden çizgisel bir ?ey midir?

Ahlaki bir bak?? aç?s?na sahip yazarlar bana hep biraz dikteci gelmi?tir. Ancak Bolano'da durum çok farklı.

O bir tan?k gibi, sadelikle öyküyü anlat?rken; okurun kendi kendine dü?ünmesini sa?lıyor. Bu yan?yla beni çok etkiliyor. Derin derin ruhsal çözümler yap?p karakterlerin iç dünyas?n? önümüze sermiyor. ?çinde ya?an?lan ana denk dü?en ve okurun kendi tecrübeleriyle kararlanabilece?i edebi bir doküman sunuyor. Nas?l ki 2666'da bölümlerin alt?nda sessizce ilerleyen ve nihayetinde mana kazanan his, roman boyunca geli?ip güçlenirken; burada da karakterin hisleri kar??s?nda okurun kendi aynas?na bakmas? durumu dallan?p budaklan?yor.

Ne kadar 2666'n ilk bölümü olan çevirmenlerle ilgili k?s?mda kap?ld???m sadelik hissi burada da beni cezbetse de; Bolano'nun konuyu daha etrafl?ca ve uzun bir ?ekilde ele almas?n? isterdim. Bu yüzden puan?m? dört olarak belirledim.

Seda Ersavc? çevirisinin gücüyle, tertemiz bir ?ekilde tan?k olabildi?im yazar?n cümle kurma becerisi ilham verici, onu da not dü?mek isterim.

Bolano'ya ba?lamak için uygun bir tercih mi, bence de?il. Zira ilk kez kar??la?t???m bir Bolano var bu romanda. Ama yine de Bolano var, o bile yeter!

Türkçede daha önce Metis ve Pegasus taraf?ndan bas?lm??t? Bolano. ?imdi bütün haklar?n? Can Yay?nlar? ald?. Bütün kitaplar? yeniden basacaklar. Bunun devam?nda da yazar?n henüz Türkçeye kazand?r?lmam?? eski yap?tlar?n? ve henüz ?spanyolcada yeni bas?lan Bolano'nun izni olmadan ortaya ç?kart?lan gizli kitaplar?n? da basacaklar?n? ümit ediyorum, bekliyorum.

Roberto Bolano okuman?z? tavsiye ederim!

7.5/10

Hakan says

bolano muhte?em bir romanc?. dü?ünce ile yaz? ya da gerçeklik ile yaz? aras?ndaki fark? neredeyse yok eden muhte?em bir yazar.

neredeyse çocukça bir basitlikte yazar. basit cümleler art arda s?ralan?r, birikir. bu birikimden sanki bir ???k f??k?r?r. ya da basit cümlelerin sonunda, o cümlelere benzemeyen ba?ka bir cümle ?im?ek gibi çıkar. cümlelerin ????? bazen her ?eyi ayd?nlat?r, bazen de bir tür körlü?e sebep olur. cümleler, paragraflar, hikaye, tüm metin hem aç?k seçik gözünüzün önündedir, hem de kafa kar??t?r?c?d?r. hem benimsersiniz, hem yad?rgars?n?z bolano'yu. hem memnun eder bolano hem rahats?z eder. hem inand?r?r hem ?üpheden ?üpheye sürükler.

vah?i hafiyeler ve 2666'da gördü?ümüz bu yaz?nsal nitelikleri yap?s? farkl? olsa da lümpen roman'da da görmek mümkün. zira lümpen roman bir olgunluk eseri. büyük, kalabal?k, da??n?k romanlar?ndan bir öz ta??yor içinde. h?zla okuyup çabucak bitirecekken duraklatan, bittikten sonra tekrar okuma iste?i uyandıran, tekrar okunsa da tükenmeyece?ini hissettiren ?ey bu öz.

lümpen roman suç?a, suçlulu?a, suçluluk duygusuna odaklan?yor. bolano'nun büyük romanlar?ndaki kahramanlara benzeyen kahramanlar, o romanlardaki gibi zorlu s?namalardan geçiyorlar. de?iyorlar, dönü?üyorlar, yüzle?iyorlar, sorguluyorlar. hikayenin bir yan? ba?tan itibaren okura uzak, so?uk ve tuhaf ilerlerken sona do?ru okuru sarmaya, ku?atmaya ba?lıyor. okur sanki birdenbire kendini s?nav?n içinde

buluyor. hem lümpen roman'daki karakterlerin s?nav? bu hem de okurun kendi hikayesinin. bolano romanlar?ndaki "öz" de bundan ba?ka bir ?ey de?il. sorgulamak, yüzle?mek, hespla?mak.

Sevgi K. says

Bolaño'nun okudugum ilk kitabı, çevirmen olarak Seda Ersavcı'yı çok ba?arılı buldum zira ana karakterin dü?ünce dünyası yazar tarafından sürükleyici bir kurguyla anlatılmı? olsa da yer yer bir kelimenin bile farklı yorumlanması kurgunun hemen bozulmasına sebep olabilirdi. Ama çok güzel ve temiz bir çeviri olmu?.

Kitaba gelirsek yazar; ana karakterin yaşam mücadelesini ajitasyona döndürmeden anlatırken zamanla daha da so?ukkanlılıkla devam eden ahlaki gelişimini samimiyetten uzaklaşmadan başarılı bir şekilde yansıtabilmi?.

Özetle iyi ki okudum dediğim eserlerden biri oldu.

Jibran says

The real only stands for a different kind of unreality, a less random, more fleshed out unreality.

An Italian girl, Bianca, and her unnamed brother, two recently orphaned teenagers left alone in the world, struggle through the disaster of their parents' deaths in a car accident to make a new path for themselves.

The narrative is shaped by an undercurrent of sad foreboding in Bianca's voice, but it comes with a vein of an adolescent's insouciance towards the gravity of her situation, which ironically gives her the courage to push on with life.

The whole thing feels like an innocent fantasy which Bianca projects on to her surroundings. There is good reason to believe that the two mysterious 'friends' of her brother's, who are only known as a man from Bologna and another from Libya, might be a figment of her overwrought imagination, a product of her luminous, recurrent dreams she tells about.

Because they appeared mysteriously and conducted themselves in a way incompatible with people their kind. How come two jobless vagrants clean and wash, cook meals for all, and keep everything tidy in the house for free? That was Bianca fantasizing about order. Likewise both men alternately go to Bianca's room at night to have sex with her, and it is to one of them she loses virginity. That's her fantasy for a life partner after she'd broken up with her boyfriend. The two "friends" finally come up with the idea of breaking bad and enlist the siblings to rob a blind and rich ex-bodybuilder. That was Bianca's idea of parents (or fate) helping them from the dead?

It is fantasy because the book starts with, *Now I'm a mother and a married woman, but not long ago I led a life of crime.* But there was no crime, none that Bianca committed: there were only plans that were never followed up on.

I can't say anything with certainty. It's surreal. Maybe it really *is* surreal! But without reading into the symbolism, the story just doesn't take off. It feels underdeveloped and premature. Reviewers have

complained that the writer builds the story and the characters for a hundred pages without bringing it to a conclusion. I think it was deliberate. Bianca says early in the story:

Life, despite what I expected, continued unchanged.

And so it did.

A Little Lumpen Novelita is Bolaño's swansong. It works, but only just.

LW says

~~Un romanzetto canaglia~~ Una novelita lumpen

È un racconto svelto , denso e scuro , con tante ombre e un poco di luce esitante .

La storia di Bianca e suo fratello , di due balordi senza nome, il libico e il bolognese , è raccontata dalla ragazza in prima persona, come un lungo flashback *,una storia di uccelli in una tempesta di sabbia, senza rumore e senza occhi , che veniva da un altro mondo* in una Roma irreale .

Adesso so che la vicinanza non esiste . Qualcuno ha sempre gli occhi chiusi .

Uno vede quando l'altro non vede. L'altro vede quando uno non vede.

Solo una madre può essere vicina,ma questo allora era l'ignoto. Inesistente.

Esisteva solo il miraggio della vicinanza. E la vicinanza degli amici di mio fratello, una vicinanza costruita , fra l'altro, a base di sguardi e piccole attenzioni, non solo mi lusingava, ma mi piaceva pure.

In quel periodo sognavo molto e dimenticavo in fretta quasi tutti i sogni.

La mia vita in realtà era come un sogno. A volte mi affacciavo a una finestra qualsiasi della casa di Maciste e mi mettevo a pensare ai sogni e alla vita ,che era come mettersi a pensare ai miei sogni che dimenticavo con tale rapidità

e alla mia stessa vita che sembrava un sogno, e non arrivava da nessuna parte ,

niente si chiariva dentro la mia testa, ma il solo fatto di farlo, di pensare ai sogni e alla vita, toglieva un peso incerto dal mio cuore o quello che io chiamavo il mio cuore, il cuore di una delinquente, di una persona senza scrupoli o con scrupoli così distorti che faticavo a riconoscerli come miei.

Comfortably says

Δε θυμ?μαι π?σο καιρ? ?χω να διαβ?σω βιβλ?ο χωρ?ς να σταματ?σω, απ? την πρ?τη σελ?δα στην τελευτα?α. Φυσικ? βοηθησαν και οι 119 σελ?δες του. Μα, ο Μπολ?νιο ποτ? δε σε απογοητε?ει. Στ?κεται π?ντα γενναι?δωρος στον αναγν?στη του και δ?νει την ολ?τητ? του ανεξ?ρτητα απ? το μ?γεθος του βιβλ?ου. Ευχαριστ? το φ?λο μου που με παρ?τρυνε να το διαβ?σω, επ?μεινε και εν τ?λει μου το ?στειλε, με τη δικ? του γενναιοδωρ?α. ?ντε και στα επ?μενα!

Lee says

Feels like a few days of consistent improvisation that came off well enough to call a novella, particularly the first half before the arrival of Maciste. Foreboding, anticlimactic, the tone of *The Third Reich*, sort of. Riffs reliant on outerspace. Making love. Always on the verge of some great violence. Worth an hour or so of your time.

Jonfaith says

They weren't his friends, though my brother chose to think they were.

Much like the apocryphal "last recordings" of Eric Dolphy which continued to arrive for years, the Bolaño caravan into English continues long after his death. There have been a number of jewels in recent years so I suppose a dud was inevitable. I am quick to qualify, the book is only inert as being an undercooked fancy. An Italian woman recounts her adolescence when after her parents died she and her brother were left to their own devices. Did a weird community develop a la *The Cement Garden*? No, she worked at a salon while her brother hangs out with disagreeables at a gym. What follows is the slimmest of ideas. It can barely sustain the introduction of pivotal character two-thirds of the way through the novella. The effect is jarring. There is but a single aesthetic flourish around p.92 where the Master becomes apparent. That said, I didn't feel any hope in this text, not a philosophical hope but a literary one where somehow the plot could find its legs.

I remain ready to be convinced otherwise, but this wasn't the best way to spend a rainy afternoon.
