



Last Words from Montmartre (New York Review Books Classics)

Qiu Miaojin

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An NYRB Classics Original

When the pioneering Taiwanese novelist Qiu Miaojin committed suicide in 1995 at age twenty-six, she left behind her unpublished masterpiece, *Last Words from Montmartre*. Unfolding through a series of letters written by an unnamed narrator, *Last Words* tells the story of a passionate relationship between two young women—their sexual awakening, their gradual breakup, and the devastating aftermath of their broken love. In a style that veers between extremes, from self-deprecation to pathos, compulsive repetition to rhapsodic musings, reticence to vulnerability, Qiu’s genre-bending novel is at once a psychological thriller, a sublime romance, and the author’s own suicide note.

The letters (which, Qiu tells us, can be read in any order) leap between Paris, Taipei, and Tokyo. They display wrenching insights into what it means to live between cultures, languages, and genders—until the genderless character Zoë appears, and the narrator’s spiritual and physical identity is transformed. As powerfully raw and transcendent as Mishima’s *Confessions of a Mask*, Goethe’s *The Sorrows of Young Werther*, and Theresa Cha’s *Dictée*, to name but a few, *Last Words from Montmartre* proves Qiu Miaojin to be one of the finest experimentalists and modernist Chinese-language writers of our generation.

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