



The Earth is Falling

Carmen Pellegrino
trans. *Shaun Whiteside*

'Pellegrino is perhaps the most gifted prose-writer of her generation.' – Massimo Onofri, *Avvenire*

'...an absolutely original and poetic vision'
– Elena Cambiaghi, *La Sicilia*

SHORTLISTED FOR THE CAMPIELLO PRIZE & RECIPIENT OF AN ENGLISH PEN TRANSLATES AWARD

The Earth is Falling is a haunting and magical novel based around the existence of an abandoned village outside Naples. The deserted houses that still stand there are peopled with ghosts who live in a perpetual present from which time has effectively been abolished. The village appears to be semi-alive; the landslide which ominously awaits and which will eventually lead to the abandonment of the place has yet to arrive (yet its rumbles are heard).

Pellegrino peoples Alento with eccentrics, luminaries, an eternally optimistic town crier. In the closing pages, the narrator Estella summons the remaining ghosts for a final dinner. The overall effect is unsettling, haunting and uncanny, the trapped souls doomed to repeat their circumscribed daily life for ever, cut off from the world but dimly aware of its continued presence outside. The pervading mood of nostalgia and melancholy works in stark contrast with the inevitability of the impending catastrophe of the landslide that threatens to obliterate their world forever.



Carmen Pellegrino is an Italian historian and writer who studies marginality in urban and rural abandoned areas. An eclectic scholar, she has investigated some of the salient knots of modernity, concentrating her studies on collective movements of dissidence, focusing her research on racism, social exclusion and the conditions of exploitation of migrants. She is the author of *The Earth is Falling* (2015), which was shortlisted for the 2015 Campiello Prize, *If I came back this evening next* (2017) and *The happiness of others*, shortlisted for the 2021 Campiello Prize.

Shaun Whiteside is an award-winning translator from Italian, French, German and Dutch. His translation from the German of *To Die in Spring* by Ralf Rothmann won the Sharpe Books HWA Gold Crown for History Writing in 2018 and his translation from the French of *Serotonin* by Michel Houellebecq was long-listed for the International Man Booker Prize in 2021.

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