



Father and Son: A Lifetime

Marcos Giralt Torrente

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"This is a story about two people, but I'm the only one telling it."

Many authors have wrestled with the death of a father in their writing, but few have grappled with the subject as fiercely, or as powerfully, as the brilliant Spanish writer Marcos Giralt Torrente does in *Father and Son*, the mesmerizing and discomfiting memoir that won him Spain's highest literary award, the Spanish National Book Award. Giralt Torrente is best known for his fiction, but it is in this often savage memoir that he demonstrates the full measure of his gifts.

In the months following his father's death from cancer, Giralt Torrente could not write—until he began to write about his father. In many ways, they were strangers to each other; after his parents' relationship ended, when he was quite young, Giralt Torrente's father remained in contact with him but held himself at a distance. Silences began to linger, prompted by Giralt Torrente's anger at his father's lies and absences and perpetuated by their inability to speak about the sources of the conflicts between them. But despite their differences, they had a strong bond, and in the months leading up to his father's death from cancer, they groped toward reconciliation. Here the author commits to exploring it all, sparing neither his father nor himself, conscious of their flaws but also understanding of them. Weaving together history and personal narrative, Giralt Torrente crafts a startlingly honest account of a complex relationship, and an indelible portrait of both father and son. Beautifully translated by Natasha Wimmer, the award-winning translator of Roberto Bolaño, and as lyrical and clear-eyed on mourning as Joan Didion's *The Year of Magical Thinking*, *Father and Son* is an uncommonly gripping memoir by an uncommonly talented writer.

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Sharon Doyle:

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