

Invisible Cities Italo Calvino

'Time is a catastrophe, perpetual and irreversible.' Science and fiction interweave delightfully in these playful Cosmicomic short stories.

Penguin Modern: fifty new books celebrating the pioneering spirit of the iconic Penguin Modern Classics series, with each one offering a concentrated hit of its contemporary, international flavour. Here are authors ranging from Kathy Acker to James Baldwin, Truman Capote to Stanislaw Lem and George Orwell to Shirley Jackson; essays radical and inspiring; poems moving and disturbing; stories surreal and fabulous; taking us from the deep South to modern Japan, New York's underground scene to the farthest reaches of outer space.

A collection of short stories compiled, edited, and introduced by Italo Calvino — including works of E.T.A. Hoffmann, Balzac, Gogol, Poe, and many others — surveying the phenomenon of the fantastic in 19th-century European literature.

New Hampshire Literary Award Winner NPR Books Summer Reading Selection "My favorite collection of short stories in recent memory."

—NANCY PEARL, NPR Morning Edition "Profound . . . with more to say on the human condition than most full books. . . . A remarkable collection, with pitch-perfect leaps of imagination." —Minneapolis Star Tribune "Horvath doesn't just tell a story, he gives readers a window into the hearts, minds and souls of his characters." —Concord Monitor What if there were a city that consisted only of restaurants? What if Paul Gauguin had gone to Greenland instead of Tahiti? What if there were a field called Umbrology, the study of shadows, where physicists and shadow puppeteers worked side by side? Full of speculative daring though firmly anchored in the tradition of realism, Tim Horvath's stories explore all of this and more— blending the everyday and the wondrous to contend with age-old themes of loss, identity, imagination, and the search for human connection. Whether making offhand references to Mystery Science Theater, providing a new perspective on Heidegger's philosophy and forays into Nazism, or following the imaginary travels of a library book, Horvath's writing is as entertaining as it is thought provoking. Tim Horvath teaches creative writing at New Hampshire Institute of Art and Boston's Grub Street writing center. He has also worked part-time as a counselor in a psychiatric hospital, primarily with autistic children and adolescents. He lives in New Hampshire with his wife and daughter.

Appearing here in its first English translation, *Into the War* contains three stories drawing on Italo Calvino's memories of the Second World War in Italy.

In *Invisible Cities* Marco Polo conjures up cities of magical times for his host, the Chinese ruler Kublai Khan, but gradually it becomes clear that he is actually describing one city: Venice. As Gore Vidal wrote 'Of all tasks, describing the contents of a book is the most difficult and in the case of a marvellous invention like *Invisible Cities*, perfectly irrelevant.'

Main description: What sort of society could bind together Jacques Roubaud, Italo Calvino, Marcel Duchamp, and Raymond Queneau-and Daniel Levin Becker, a young American obsessed with language play? Only the Oulipo, the Paris-based experimental collective founded in 1960 and fated to become one of literature's quirkiest movements. An international organization of writers, artists, and scientists who embrace formal and procedural constraints to achieve literature's possibilities, the Oulipo (the French acronym stands for 0workshop for potential literature0) is perhaps best known as the cradle of Georges Perec's novel *A Void*, which does not contain the letter e. Drawn to the Oulipo's mystique, Levin Becker secured a Fulbright grant to study the organization and traveled to Paris. He was eventually offered membership, becoming only the second American to be admitted to the group. From the perspective of a young initiate, the Oulipians and their projects are at once bizarre and utterly compelling. Levin Becker's love for games, puzzles, and language play is infectious, calling to mind Elif Batuman's delight in Russian literature in *The Possessed*. In recent years, the Oulipo has inspired the creation of numerous other collectives: the OuMuPo (a collective of DJs), the OuMaPo (marionette players), the OuBaPo (comic strip artists), the OuFlarfPo (poets who generate poetry with the aid of search engines), and a menagerie of other Ou-X-Pos (workshops for potential something). Levin Becker discusses these and other intriguing developments in this history and personal appreciation of an iconic-and iconoclastic-group.

"This masterful work positions Lu among the vanguard of contemporary futurism and speculative fiction."—Publishers Weekly, starred review

In the tradition of Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities*, debut author S. Qiouyi Lu has written a multifaceted story of borders, power, diaspora, and transformation with *In the Watchful City*. The city of Ora is watching. Anima is an extrasensory human tasked with surveilling and protecting Ora's citizens via a complex living network called the Gleaming. Although ær world is restricted to what ær can see and experience through the Gleaming, Anima takes pride and comfort in keeping Ora safe from harm. When a mysterious outsider enters the city carrying a cabinet of curiosities from around with the world with a story attached to each item, Anima's world expands beyond the borders of Ora to places—and possibilities—æ never before imagined to exist. But such knowledge leaves Anima with a question that throws into doubt ær entire purpose: What good is a city if it can't protect its people? At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

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A collection of transcripts from Mark Fisher's final series of lectures at Goldsmiths, University of London, in late 2016.

Edited with an introduction by Matt Colquhoun, this collection of lecture notes and transcriptions reveals acclaimed writer and blogger Mark Fisher in his element -- the classroom -- outlining a project that Fisher's death left so bittersweetly unfinished. Beginning with that most fundamental of questions -- "Do we really want what we say we want?" -- Fisher explores the relationship between desire and capitalism, and wonders what new forms of desire we might still excavate from the past, present, and future. From the emergence and failure of the counterculture in the 1970s to the continued development of his left-accelerationist line of thinking, this volume charts a tragically interrupted course for thinking about the raising of a new kind of consciousness, and the cultural and political implications of doing so. For Fisher, this process of consciousness raising was always, fundamentally, psychedelic -- just not in the way that we might think...

The *Invisible City* explores urban spaces from the perspective of a traveller, writer, and creator of theatre to illuminate how cities offer travellers and residents theatrical visions while also remaining mostly invisible, beyond the limits of attention. The book explores the city as both stage and content in three parts. Firstly, it follows in pattern Italo Calvino's novel *Invisible Cities*, wherein Marco Polo describes cities to the Mongol emperor Kublai Khan, to produce a constellation of vignettes recalling individual cities through travel writing and engagement with artworks. Secondly, Gillette traces the Teatro Potlach group and its ongoing immersive, site-specific performance project *Invisible Cities*, which has staged performances in dozens of cities across Europe and the Americas. The final part of the book offers useful exercises for artists and travellers interested in researching their own invisible cities. Written for practitioners, travellers, students, and thinkers interested in the city as site and source of performance, *The Invisible City* mixes travelogue with criticism and cleverly combines philosophical meditations with theatrical pedagogy.

*Invisible Cities*Houghton Mifflin Harcourt

This “brilliant collection of essays” and travelogues by the celebrated author of *Invisible Cities* “may change the way you see the world around you” (The Guardian, UK). Italo Calvino’s boundless curiosity and ingenious imagination are displayed in peak form in *Collection of Sand*, his last collection of new works published during his lifetime. Delving into the delights of the visual world—both in art and travel—the subjects of these 38 essays range from cuneiform and antique maps to Mexican temples and Japanese gardens. In Calvino’s words, this collection is “a diary of travels, of course, but also of feelings, states of mind, moods...The fascination of a collection lies just as much in what it reveals as in what it conceals of the secret urge that led to its creation” (from *Collection of Sand*). Never before translated into English, *Collection of Sand* is an incisive and often surprising meditation on observation and knowledge, “beautifully translated by Martin McLaughlin” (The Guardian, UK).

Irritable Bowel Syndrome (IBS) is a condition that is often misunderstood and misdiagnosed. Despite common perceptions, only 50% of cases are related to diet and the causes of the other 50% of cases are rarely examined and sufferers are unable to find suitable treatment. In this groundbreaking new book, Professor John Hunter reveals how you can solve the causes of your IBS. Using his carefully-constructed questionnaire, find out the reasons for your symptoms then turn to the appropriate chapter to learn how to treat them. *Irritable Bowel Solutions* also answers all the other questions that might be causing concern, such as: -What if I don't fit any of the types described? -What do probiotics really do and are they helpful? -Will my disease always affect me or can I manage it effectively?

Broken Stars, edited by multi award-winning writer Ken Liu--translator of the bestselling and Hugo Award-winning novel *The Three Body Problem* by acclaimed Chinese author Cixin Liu-- is his second thought-provoking anthology of Chinese short speculative fiction. Some of the included authors are already familiar to readers in the West (Liu Cixin and Hao Jingfang, both Hugo winners); some are publishing in English for the first time. Because of the growing interest in newer SFF from China, virtually every story here was first published in Chinese in the 2010s. The stories span the range from short-shorts to novellas, and evoke every hue on the emotional spectrum. Besides stories firmly entrenched in subgenres familiar to Western SFF readers such as hard SF, cyberpunk, science fantasy, and space opera, the anthology also includes stories that showcase deeper ties to Chinese culture: alternate Chinese history, chuanyue time travel, satire with historical and contemporary allusions that are likely unknown to the average Western reader. While the anthology makes no claim or attempt to be “representative” or “comprehensive,” it demonstrates the vibrancy and diversity of science fiction being written in China at this moment. In addition, three essays at the end of the book explore the history of Chinese science fiction publishing, the state of contemporary Chinese fandom, and how the growing interest in science fiction in China has impacted writers who had long labored in obscurity. Stories include: “Goodnight, Melancholy” by Xia Jia “The Snow of Jinyang” by Zhang Ran “Broken Stars” by Tang Fei “Submarines” by Han Song “Salinger and the Koreans” by Han Song “Under a Dangling Sky” by Cheng Jingbo “What Has Passed Shall in Kinder Light Appear” by Baoshu “The New Year Train” by Hao Jingfang “The Robot Who Liked to Tell Tall Tales” by Fei Dao “Moonlight” by Liu Cixin “The Restaurant at the End of the Universe: Laba Porridge” by Anna Wu “The First Emperor’s Games” by Ma Boyong “Reflection” by Gu Shi “The Brain Box” by Regina Kanyu Wang “Coming of the Light” by Chen Qiufan “A History of Future Illnesses” by Chen Qiufan Essays: “A Brief Introduction to Chinese Science Fiction and Fandom,” by Regina Kanyu Wang, “A New Continent for China Scholars: Chinese Science Fiction Studies” by Mingwei Song “Science Fiction: Embarrassing No More” by Fei Dao For more Chinese SF in translation, check out *Invisible Planets*. At the Publisher's request, this title is being sold without Digital Rights Management Software (DRM) applied.

"A group of travellers chance to meet, first in a castle, then a tavern. Their powers of speech are magically taken from them and instead they have only tarot cards with which to tell their tales. What follows is an exquisite interlinking of narratives, and a fantastic, surreal, and chaotic history of all human consciousness."--Goodreads

A collection of stories about time, space, and the evolution of the universe in which the author blends mathematics with poetic imagination. “Calvino does what very few writers can do: he describes imaginary worlds with the most extraordinary precision and beauty” (Gore Vidal, *New York Review of Books*). Translated by William Weaver. A Helen and Kurt Wolff Book

“The thought . . . called up the flavors of an elaborate and bold cuisine, bent on making the flavors’ highest notes vibrate, juxtaposing them in modulations, in chords, and especially in dissonances that would assert themselves as an incomparable experience.” — From *Under the Jaguar Sun* These intoxicating stories delve down to the core of our senses of taste, hearing, and smell. Amid the flavors of Mexico’s fiery chiles and spices, a couple on holiday discovers dark truths about the maturing of desire in the title story, “Under the Jaguar Sun.” In “A King Listens,” a gripping portrait of a frenzied mind, the menacing echoes in a huge palace spur a tyrant’s thoughts to the heights of paranoid intensity. “The Name, the Nose” drives to a startling conclusion as men across time and space pursue the women whose aromas have enchanted them. Mordant and deliciously offbeat, this trio of tales is a treat from a master of short fiction. “[Calvino is] a learned, daring, ingeniously gifted magus . . . Under the Jaguar Sun . . . fuses fable with neuron . . . The reader is likely to salivate.” — Cynthia Ozick, *New York Times Book Review*

In a collection of stories written during the 1940s and 1950s, the author captures moments of revelation in the lives of ordinary people, instants blending recognition and alarm as deceptions and illusions are laid bare

This study recovers Italo Calvino's central place in a lost history of interdisciplinary thought, politics, and literary philosophy in the 1960s. Drawing on his letters, essays, critical reviews, and fiction, as well as a wide range of works -- primarily urban planning and design theory and history -- circulating among his primary interlocutors, this book takes as its point of departure a sweeping reinterpretation of *Invisible Cities*. Passages from Calvino's most famous novel routinely appear as aphorisms in calendars, posters, and the popular literature of inspiration and self-help, reducing the novel to vague abstractions and totalizing wisdom about thinking outside the box. The shadow of postmodern studies has had a

similarly diminishing effect on this text, rendering up an accomplished but ultimately apolitical novelistic experimentation in endless deconstructive deferrals, the shiny surfaces of play, and the ultimately rigged game of self-referentiality. In contrast, this study draws on an archive of untranslated Italian- and French-language materials on urban planning, architecture, and utopian architecture to argue that Calvino's novel in fact introduces readers to the material history of urban renewal in Italy, France, and the U.S. in the 1960s, as well as the multidisciplinary core of cultural life in that decade: the complex and continuous interplay among novelists and architects, scientists and artists, literary historians and visual studies scholars. His last love poem for the dying city was in fact profoundly engaged, deeply committed to the ethical dimensions of both architecture and lived experience in the spaces of modernity as well as the resistant practices of reading and utopian imagining that his urban studies in turn inspired.

Cartwright is determined to discover why someone would wish to have DiGorro's innocent cinema verité film destroyed, searching through a host of clues that lie scattered from London, Stonehenge, and Corsica to New York. Reprint.

Earth's survivors cling to life on an unforgiving, distant planet, next to the sun! Three generations after the crash of the colony ship Icarus, Iapix is barely hanging on: one of thirteen cities suspended halfway down deep chasms. The sun on the diamond lands above will kill a man in less than five minutes. The ticktock monsters in the fog forest below are a little slower - but quite a bit smarter. An electromagnetic wash has disabled the computers, the radios, even the lightbulbs. It's the steam and clockwork age reborn: a careful society, rationed and stratified. Which suits Simon Daud just fine. Simon likes the rules, and knows his place - in the shadow of his older brother, Isaac. All he wants is to earn his wings as an ornithopter pilot and get to work in the flight bays. But on his final test flight, something goes wrong. Isaac is killed. Simon is burned; his body will never be the same. Neither will his world. Not everything in Iapix is quite as it seems, and through his rehabilitation Simon falls into the middle of a conspiracy that will bring everything he's ever known to the ground. Down in the fog forest, monsters await - but so does the truth . . . if Simon can survive long enough to find it.

A novel of a delightful eccentric on a search for truth, by the renowned author of *Invisible Cities*. In *The New York Times Book Review*, the poet Seamus Heaney praised Mr. Palomar as a series of "beautiful, nimble, solitary feats of imagination." Throughout these twenty-seven intricately structured chapters, the musings of the crusty Mr. Palomar consistently render the world sublime and ridiculous. Like the telescope for which he is named, Mr. Palomar is a natural observer. "It is only after you have come to know the surface of things," he believes, "that you can venture to seek what is underneath." Whether contemplating a fine cheese, a hungry gecko, or a topless sunbather, he tends to let his meditations stray from the present moment to the great beyond. And though he may fail as an objective spectator, he is the best of company. "Each brief chapter reads like an exploded haiku," wrote *Time Out*. A play on a world fragmented by our individual perceptions, this inventive and irresistible novel encapsulates the life's work of an artist of the highest order, "the greatest Italian writer of the twentieth century" (*The Guardian*).

This lively and informative collection touches upon all of the master's operas and also offers select bibliographies, a chronology, and a *dramatis personae* of the countless people who participated in Puccini's career.

Steve Coogan was born and raised in Manchester in the 1960s, the fourth of six children. From an early age he entertained his family with impressions and was often told he should 'be on the telly'. Failing to get into any of the London-based drama schools, he accepted a place at Manchester Polytechnic School of Theatre and before graduating had been given his first break as a voice artist on the satirical puppet show *Spitting Image*. The late eighties and early nineties saw Coogan developing characters he could perform on the comedy circuit, from Ernest Moss to Paul Calf, and in 1992 he won a Perrier award with John Thomson. It was around the same time, while working with Armando Iannucci and Patrick Marber on *On The Hour* and *The Day Today*, that Alan Partridge emerged, almost fully formed. Coogan, once a tabloid fixture, is now a respected film actor, writer and producer. He runs his own production company, Baby Cow, has a raft of films to his name (from *24 Hour Party People* to *Alpha Papa*, the critically-acclaimed Partridge film), six Baftas and seven Comedy Awards. He has found huge success in recent years with both *The Trip* and *Philomena*, the latter bringing him two Oscar nominations, for producing and co-writing. In *Easily Distracted* he lifts the lid on the real Steve Coogan, writing with distinctive humour and an unexpected candour about a noisy childhood surrounded by foster kids, his attention-seeking teenage years and his emergence as a household name with the birth of Alan Partridge.

Translated by Krzysztof Filjalkowski and Michael Richardson Winner of the 1987 Prix Goncourt for Biography Georges Bataille (1897–1962), philosopher, writer and founder of the influential literary review *Critique*, had an enormous impact on the thinking of Foucault, Derrida and Baudrillard, and his ideas have been the subjects of recent debates in a wide range of disciplines. In this acclaimed intellectual biography Michel Surya enters into a complicity with Bataille's oeuvre to provide a detailed exposition of its themes as they developed against the backdrop of his life. The essence of Bataille's life and work were defined by transience and effacement, reflecting a will both to contest the impermanence of things and to confront death. His troubled childhood, his relationships with surrealism and his paradoxical position at the heart of twentieth-century French thought are enriched here with testimonies from Bataille's closest acquaintances, making this a vivid and detailed study. Revealing the contexts in which he worked, and the ways in which his work and ideas took shape, Surya sheds essential light on a figure Foucault described as "one of the most important writers of the century."

From the myth of Arcadia through to the twenty-first century, ideas about sustainability – how we imagine better urban environments – remain persistently relevant, and raise recurring questions. How do cities evolve as complex spaces nurturing both urban creativity and the fortuitous art of discovery, and by which mechanisms do they foster imagination and innovation? While past utopias were conceived in terms of an ideal geometry, contemporary exemplary models of urban design seek technological solutions of optimal organisation. *The Venice Variations* explores Venice as a prototypical city that may hold unique answers to the ancient narrative of utopia. Venice was not the result of a preconceived ideal but the pragmatic outcome of social and economic networks of communication. Its urban creativity, though, came to represent the quintessential combination of place and institutions of its time. Through a discussion of Venice and two other works owing their inspiration to this city – Italo Calvino's *Invisible Cities* and Le Corbusier's *Venice Hospital* – Sophia Psarra describes Venice as a system that starts to resemble a highly probabilistic 'algorithm', that is, a structure with a small number of rules capable of producing a large number of variations. The rapidly escalating processes of urban development around our big cities share many of the motivations for survival, shelter and trade that brought Venice into existence. Rather than seeing these places as problems to be solved, we need to understand how urban

complexity can evolve, as happened from its unprepossessing origins in the marshes of the Venetian lagoon to the 'model city' that endured a thousand years. This book frees Venice from stereotypical representations, revealing its generative capacity to inform potential other 'Venices' for the future.

This volume of short works is a companion to Malcolm Pasley's translation of *Metamorphosis and Other Stories*. Taken together they illuminate Kafka's life and art by presenting works for the first time in the sequence in which they were written and drawing directly on his manuscripts. Here are the major short pieces left by Kafka and published after his death, including *The Great Wall of China*, *Blumfeld, an Elderly Bachelor*, *Investigations of a Dog* and his great sequences of aphorisms, with fables and parables on subjects ranging from the legend of Prometheus to the Tower of Babel. Allegorical, disturbing and possessing a dream-like clarity, these writings are quintessential Kafka. The complete collection of "nimble and often hilarious" short stories exploring the cosmos by the acclaimed author of *Invisible Cities* (Colin Dwyer, NPR). Italo Calvino's beloved cosmicomics cross planets and traverse galaxies, speed up time or slow it down to the particles of an instant. Through the eyes of a "cosmic know-it-all" with the unpronounceable name of Qfwfq, Calvino explores natural phenomena and tells the story of the origins of the universe. Relating complex scientific and mathematical concepts to our everyday world, they are an indelible and delightful literary achievement. Originally published in Italian in three separate volumes—including the Asti d'Appello Prize-winning first volume, *Cosmicomics*—these thirty-four dazzling stories are collected here in one definitive English-language anthology. "Trying to describe such a diverse and entertaining mix, I have to admit, just as Calvino does so often, that my words fail here, too. There's no way I—or anyone, really—can muster enough of them to quite capture the magic of these stories . . . Read this book, please." —Colin Dwyer, NPR

Shortlisted for the 2013 PEN Award in Translation: Turkey's great experimental modernist pens a philosophical novel in three parts about desire, faith, and the psychology of prohibited love.

Twelve stories by the brilliant Italian author employ the history of science and the poetic imagination to ring changes on the theme and activity of creation

Dear Friends. Pay attention, please. I have no z-e-r-o doubt that *The Regenerative Life* will be a solid-gold winner. --Tom Peters The world often falls short of how we'd like it to be, and our ability to make even just a little difference can seem limited. Sometimes it feels like you need to be a super-hero to achieve anything meaningful. But what if by re-conceiving what you do, you could change the world for the better? In *THE REGENERATIVE LIFE*, Carol Sanford shows you how to fundamentally change the roles you play in society, enabling you to do more than you ever believed possible; grow yourself and others, provide astounding innovations for your clients, children and students, generate extraordinary social returns, become more creative, and bring new life and opportunity to everything around you. *THE REGENERATIVE LIFE* teaches you to see your roles differently: stripping away all preconceptions of how it should be done, understanding what your role is at its core, and building yourself back up to become something new; something so grounded, inspiring, and resilient, it can change the world.

Rene Magritte (1898-1967) did not keep copies of his letters, nor did he generally save those he received. But Harry Torczyner, Magritte's confidant, friend, and attorney, cherished the letters he received from the great Belgian Surrealist artist between 1957 and 1967, and kept them all - along with duplicates of his own responses. Here, selections from this lively correspondence are reproduced and set in context by Torczyner's notes. In his letters, Magritte dealt candidly with the daily concerns of his art. He revealed the workings of his own creative process in words and, frequently, in drawings. Although they belonged to different worlds, Magritte the painter and Torczyner the lawyer shared similar mental inclinations and a vivid curiosity. They were both hostile to obligatory sentiments; boredom was deemed to be the supreme menace, and they remained mutually critical in their correspondence and in their encounters - while remaining friends. The Magritte-Torczyner connection had its special tone, which this book faithfully reflects. Illustrated with reproductions of paintings mentioned in the letters, as well as with personal photographs of both men, this intriguing book offers fresh insights into the last ten years of Magritte's life and work.

"Calvino . . . managed effortlessly what no author in English could quite claim: his novels and stories and fables were both classically modernist and giddily postmodern, embracing both experiment and tradition, at once conceptual and humane, intimate and mythic." — Jonathan Lethem, *New York Times Book Review* Blending reality and illusion with elegance and precision, the stories in this collection take place in a World War II-era and postwar Italy tinged with the visionary and fablelike qualities. A trio of gluttonous burglars invades a pastry shop; two children trespass upon a forbidden garden; a wealthy family invites a rustic goatherd to lunch, only to mock him. In the title story, a compact masterpiece of shifting perspectives, a panicked soldier tries to keep his wits—and his life—when he faces off against a young partisan with a loaded rifle and miraculous aim. Select stories from *Last Comes the Raven* have been published in translation, but the collection as a whole has never appeared in English. This volume, including several stories newly translated by Ann Goldstein, is an important addition to Calvino's legacy.

This is an all new version of the popular *PARALLEL TEXT* series, containing eight pieces of contemporary fiction in the original Italian and in English translation. Including stories by Calvino, Benni, Sciascia and Levi, this volume gives a fascinating insight into Italian culture and literature as well as providing an invaluable educational tool.

The Novel: A Survival Skill radically reevaluates traditional literary criticism offering an exciting account of what is really at stake in the business of writing and reading.

The Glory of the Empire is the rich and absorbing history of an extraordinary empire, at one point a rival to Rome. Rulers such as Basil the Great of Onessa, who founded the Empire but whose treacherous ways made him a byword for infamy, and the romantic Alexis the bastard, who dallied in the fleshpots of Egypt, studied Taoism and Buddhism, returned to save the Empire from civil war, and then retired "to learn to die," come alive in *The Glory of the Empire*, along with generals, politicians, prophets, scoundrels, and others. Jean d'Ormesson also goes into the daily life of the Empire, its popular customs, and its contribution to the arts and the sciences, which, as he demonstrates, exercised an influence on the world as a whole, from the East to the West, and whose repercussions are still felt today. But it is all fiction, a thought experiment worthy of Jorge Luis Borges, and in the end *The Glory of the Empire* emerges as a great shimmering mirage, filling us with wonder even as it makes us wonder at the fugitive nature of power and the meaning of history itself.

"Cities, like dreams, are made of desires and fears, even if the thread of their discourse is secret, their rules are absurd, their perspectives deceitful, and everything conceals something else." — from *Invisible Cities* In a garden sit the aged Kublai Khan and the young Marco Polo — Mongol emperor and Venetian traveler. Kublai Khan has sensed the end of his empire coming soon. Marco Polo diverts his host with stories of the cities he has seen in his travels around the empire: cities and memory, cities and desire, cities and designs, cities and the dead, cities and the sky, trading cities, hidden cities. As Marco Polo unspools his tales, the emperor detects these fantastic places are more than they appear. "Invisible Cities changed the way we read and what is possible in the balance between poetry and prose . . . The book I would choose as pillow and plate, alone on a desert island." — Jeanette Winterson

"The posthumously published collection *Hermit in Paris* draws together an array of Italo Calvino's autobiographical writings that provide an illuminating and unexpectedly intimate portrait of one of the postwar era's most inventive and fascinating writers. In these pages, Calvino recounts his experiences in Italy's antifascist resistance, pays homage to his influences, traces the evolution of his literary style, and, in one of the book's most humorous and entertaining sections, provides a wry commentary on his travels in the United States in 1959 and 1960"-- A moving tale of grief, community and the possibility of starting over, by an award-winning Australian author

This collection of three long stories by the author of *Cosmicomics* "demonstrates clearly his talent for transforming the mundane into the

marvelous" (The New York Times). Italo Calvino is widely recognized as one of postwar Italy's greatest fiction writers and one of the twentieth century's greatest fabulists. This collection of three stories showcases his range and virtuosity. In the title story, an Italian Communist poll watcher is stationed at a hospital in Turin, where nuns guide the hands of invalids to their preferred candidate in a special election. In "Smog," a city's cooperative laundry facility reveals a harbinger of social purification. And in "The Argentine Ant," the citizens of a provincial seaside town struggle against a government-controlled infestation. "Like Jorge Luis Borges and Gabriel García Márquez, Italo Calvino dreams perfect dreams for us." —John Updike, New Yorker

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