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Dear James Purdy,

Edicions 62 S.A. has forwarded your kind letter to me. I am happy you liked my translation of your novel Narrow Rooms. When I first read it, I was shocked and it seemed to me a terrible book, and a very difficult one for translation, because of the language both poetic and coarse in some passages, with characters who are angelic and devilish at the same time, living a life that is quite strange to me.

Well, it is the first time an author tells me his impression about a translation of mine, and it is very satisfactory to see that, in this case, it deserved your warm approval. I have translated into Catalan works by Thackeray, Austen, O'Flaerthy, Faulkner, Hemingway, Henry Miller, Anaïs Nin, Burgess, D.H. Lawrence, Lawrence Durrell, Gore Vidal, Henry James, E.M. Forster, Maugham, Nabokov, Tolkien, Arthur Miller, T. Williams, Peter Schaffer, Karen Horney, Margaret Mitchell (yes, I have translated Gone With the Wind into Catalan, too!) and in 1986 the Generalitat de Catalunya (autonomous government) awarded my translation of Vanity Fair, as the best translation of that year, and I have received some other literary Awards, but I must confess your letter is as precious to me as any of those awards.

Maybe you will wonder why I am answering you from Argentina. I was born in Barcelona in 1929 and lived there until 1956. Then I came to Argentina to marry my fiancé who had come here with her family three years before that. Now I am the father of a boy and a girl, and grandfather of a child who is three years old. In 1980, my wife and I went back to Catalonia for the first time in twenty-four years, and you may imagine how exciting it was to meet again relatives, friends and the air and the stones of my country after so many years of exile. At the time, we had thought to visit Henry Miller (as I kept up correspondence with him) in the States, but he was very ill, and we quit the project. In 1983, the Catalan writers' association invited me to a symposium; in 1985, I went back again invited by the Theatre Institute to the International Congress of Theatre, and in 1986, the invitation came for the International Congress of Catalan Language, and I went to receive, at the same time, the award mentioned above. In this opportunity I was glad to meet Gore Vidal, who was in Barcelona invited by the publisher of his novel Washington D.C., that I had translated some years before into Catalan.

I am enclosing some of the interviews that were made during my sojourn in Barcelona and Majorca in 1985.

Thank you very much for your poems and your kind words about my translation, and my best wishes for the publication of your complete poems in the Netherlands.

Very truly yours

Jordi Arbones