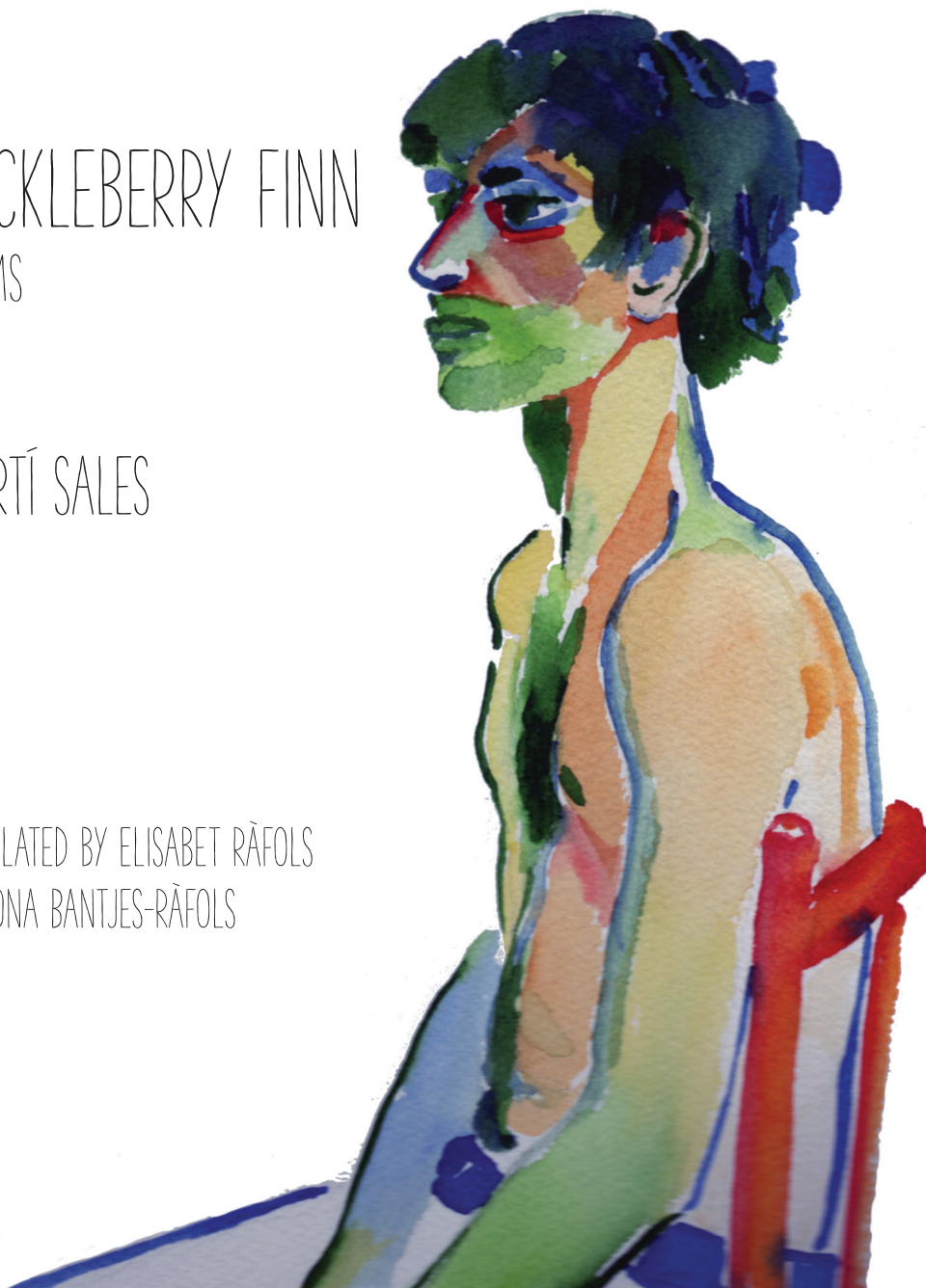


HUCKLEBERRY FINN
POEMS

MARTÍ SALES

TRANSLATED BY ELISABET RÀFOLS
AND ONA BANTJES-RÀFOLS



Enter the world as seen through the eyes of Huckleberry Finn—a weary and defeated landscape, but one of inherent hope, where reinvention is possible through the seminal power of words, those elemental beings that are capable of creating realities all their own.

There's sex, there's drugs, and there's rock'n'roll—and all the while, there's a young man's search for wisdom through the beauty of literature and love that he finds along the way.

In a style that combines the avant garde tradition with an authentic adventure-style narrative, the poems of Catalan poet Martí Sales' debut collection *Huckleberry Finn* usher us in to the primordial experience of giving name to each and every thing, as a means to inaugurate life—or the city of Barcelona, which, in some ways, for Sales and Huckleberry, are one and the same.

A tour de force, this delving into Barcelona, as Martí Sales digs deep into the psyche of the city, making its darkneses and hidden luminosities inform a poetics that echoes the classics in its elegance and beauty, while inventing a new, ultra modern expression of reality now. This excellent translation of *Huckleberry Finn* will move all who read it to see Catalan poetry in different light. — Beatriz Hausner, author of *Enter the Raccoon*



FIRST ENGLISH EDITION

original text © by Martí Sales, 2005

English text © by Elisabet Ràfols and Ona Bantjes-Ràfols, 2015

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ALL THINGS FALL

*The ice age is coming, the sun is zooming in
Engines stop running and the wheat is growing thin
A nuclear error, but I have no fear
London is drowning—and I live by the river
—The Clash*

*Curtain. Dark depths
of the fertile crescent.
The urban
moss
trembles.
Will they
finally
change,
all these greens?*

BORN TO BE HAGGIS

Everybody's a star.

—Aeister Crowley, magician

At the steel factory
we dance
parents and children
sweetly knocking
on thirty-nine
communal graves

Every face in its mirror
more sombre each day
watching flesh dry out
from so much pounding

At times, light breaks
slowing down machines
and curbing the racket—
martyrdom
is etched
classically
upon our bodies,
resplendent
as shooting stars:
we seem alive
but we're only falling

Metallic at night
we draw close
for warmth
but all we'll achieve
is a dull ringing

Hiding—circumflex—
you dodge the devious light
of a street lamp and enter the bar
that is open late: paths cross here
where you can no longer stand
your thirst

One of the drinkers says
“The sky is too heavy.
That’s why the asphalt is thin,
the cars run as if possessed
from gas station to gas station
toward the mountain, fleeing the voice
that repeats the streets the monuments the buildings
the metro station any route any urban itinerary...
EVERYTHING WILL BE CRUSHED.” shouts
the coryphaeus from the bar

You shut yourself in the washroom
a small stinking sanctuary
of elongated suns
that coddle you,
fluorescent.
you draw a jungle of the Pyrenees
over the map of the city¹.
You look at yourself in the mirror
and draw a moustache and glasses.

1. You follow an erratic route / aleatory / yet straightforward enough to destroy / step by step / the idea / —of the pest—the Map: / you tattoo the world with your feet / and give away earplugs / —the excess of decibels / makes pandemonium / of the multiplicity of voices. / Only with the holocaust of others / and of you— or with the invention of a new sociopathy / will you recognize your path / the cataclysm / of the / fateful / route. (from *How to Write a Travel Guide*)

“

I thrash in pain on the black and white stripes of the bedspread. My face is disfigured. I wear a red poncho with a thin, white border and a thicker one of a darker colour. I look through the window that opens to the inside courtyard. The light that reaches me is comforting. Stretched out on the bed, illuminated by the lives of others, doing nothing... I don't turn on any lights. If a ray of light that's strong enough happens to enter the room, I quickly take out a piece of paper and start writing something: "I thrash in pain on the black and white stripes of the bedspread. My face is disfigured. I wear a red poncho with a thin, white border and a thicker one of a darker colour. Through the window I have a cropped view of the sky, sick of oily pipes, neighbours who sneeze, and closed windows. The blue rectangle that I can see is clear, precise, lenient. The room I am in is dark. The shades between sky and room represent my toothache according to a symbolic interpretation of what is happening.

CORE

I will walk and walk and let
everyone walk in front.

I will walk slower and slower
until I am left so far behind

I reach that terrible immobility
that is the origin of everything.