



Spain Writes, America Reads: Four by Four by Sara Mesa



LITERATURE
ONLINE

Tue, November 10, 2020

Admission

Free, [RSVP](#) required

Credits

Presented by the Cultural Office of the Embassy of Spain in Washington, D.C. in collaboration with [Open Letter Books](#).

Sara Mesa presents “Four by four” at “Spain Writes, America Reads,” a virtual series of author talks to introduce recently translated books from Spain in the US.

FOUR BY FOUR BY SARA MESA

The second author talk from [Spain Writes, America Reads](#) will introduce American audiences to [Four by four](#), the English edition of Sara Mesa’s novel *Cuatro por Cuatro*, translated from the Spanish by Katie Whittemore, and published in the U.S. by Open Letter Books.

Set entirely at Wybrany College—a school where the wealthy keep their kids safe from the chaos erupting in the cities—*Four by Four* is a novel of insinuation and gossip, in which the truth about Wybrany’s “program” is always palpable, but never explicit. The mysteries populating the novel open with the disappearance of one of the “special,” scholarship students. As the first part unfolds, it becomes clear that all is not well in Wybrany, and that something more sordid lurks beneath the surface.

An exploration of the relationship between the powerful and powerless—and the repetition of these patterns—Mesa’s “sophisticated nightmare” calls to mind great works of gothic literature (think Shirley Jackson) and social thrillers to create a unique, unsettling view of freedom and how a fear of the outside world can create monsters.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Sara Mesa is the author of eight works of fiction, including *Scar* (winner of the Ojo Critico Prize), *Four by Four* (a finalist for the Herralde Prize), *An Invisible*



Fire (winner of the Premio Málaga de Novela), and *Cara de Pan* (forthcoming from Open Letter). Her works have been translated into more than ten different languages, and has been widely praised for her concise, sharp writing style.

ABOUT THE TRANSLATOR

Katie Whittemore is graduate of the University of NH (BA), Cambridge University (M.Phil), and Middlebury College (MA), and was a 2018 *Bread Loaf Translators Conference* participant. Her work has appeared or is forthcoming in *Two Lines*, *The Arkansas International*, *The Common*, *Gulf Coast*, *Los Angeles Review of Books*, *The Brooklyn Rail*, and *InTranslation*. Current projects include novels by Spanish authors Sara Mesa, Javier Serena, Aliocha Coll, Aroa Moreno Durán, Lara Moreno, Juan Gómez Bárcena, Katixa Agirre, and Nuria Labari.

ABOUT THE PUBLISHER

Chad W. Post is the director of Open Letter Books, a press at the University of Rochester dedicated to publishing contemporary literature from around the world. In addition, he is the managing editor of *Three Percent*, a blog and review site that promotes literature in translation and is home to both the Translation Database and the Best Translated Book Awards. His articles and book reviews have appeared in a range of publications including *The Believer*, *Publishing Perspectives*, *The Wall Street Journal* culture blog, and *Quarterly Conversation*.

Order the book and watch all past presentations from *Spain Writes, America Reads*.