

Uncertain Glory Joan Sales

The Great Spanish Civil War Novel



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“O! how this spring of love resembleth
The uncertain glory of an April day!”
William Shakespeare

Translated by Peter Bush

According to Juan Goytisolo, who recommended the novel *Uncertain Glory* for publication at Gallimard (1962), this work is the great novel of the Spanish Civil War not only for its careful, complex structure but also for its unique approach. Written from the viewpoint of the losing side, the novel contains no political message nor does it exalt any political party. It has withstood the test of time because of its sheer power and can be read today with the same intensity that went into its writing.

Sales’s masterpiece is a meditation on the universal themes of love, death and heroism. The

novel, set in the Spanish Civil War, is divided into four parts and is told from the perspective of the Republicans, or the losers. Joan Sales added material to later editions, thus explaining why the French translation (1962) is longer than the original Catalan version.

“*Uncertain Glory* is the best novel written in the Iberian Peninsula in the 20th century.”

Juan Goytisolo

The French edition was highly acclaimed by critics, who compared Sales to renowned authors such as **Dostoyevsky, Georges Berbanos, Graham Greene** and others. The fourth and final edition of the novel was published in 1971, but the last part, “Últimes Notícies” (Latest News), was also expanded and later became an independent section now titled *El vent de la nit* (Night Wind).

Joan Sales (Barcelona, 1912-1983) was a writer and publisher. He fought on the Madrid and Aragon fronts in the Spanish Civil War and went into exile in France in 1939. He moved to Mexico in 1942 and returned to Catalonia in 1948, when he became a publisher. His collection of poems *Viatge d'un moribund* (*A Dying Man's Journey*) was published in 1952, followed by his most famous novel *Incerta glòria*.

