From One Reader to Another

An invitation to read internationally

To celebrate the tenth anniversary of its Writers in Translation programme, English PEN is teaming up with The Reading Agency and Free Word to invite book groups to read and discuss titles from the World Bookshelf, a unique online showcase of the most exciting contemporary literature available in English translation.

There are over 100 books on the World Bookshelf but here is a suggested reading list to get you started:

- The Yacoubian Building by Alaa Al Aswany (Egypt, Arabic)
- Dreams from the Endz by Faïza Guène (France, French)
- Arab Jazz by Karim Miské (France, French)
- Compartment No.6 by Rosa Liksom (Finland, Finnish)
- The Lady from Tel Aviv by Rabai al-Madhoun (Palestine, Arabic)
- Vango: Between Sky and Earth by Timothée de Fombelle (France, French)
- The Devil’s Workshop by Jachym Topol (Czech Republic, Czech)
- In the Sea There Are Crocodiles (for younger readers) by Fabio Geda (Italy, Italian)
- Bronze and Sunflower (for younger readers) by Cao Wenxuan (China, Mandarin)
- How the Soldier Repairs the Gramophone by Saša Stanišić (Bosnia-Herzegovina, German)
- The Lights of Pointe-Noire by Alain Mabanckou (Congo, French)
- The Goddess Chronicle by Natsuo Kirino (Japan, Japanese)
- Allah Is Not Obliged by Ahmadou Kourouma (Ivory Coast, French)
- The Iraqi Christ by Hassan Blasim (Iraq, Arabic)
- Morning Sea by Margaret Mazzantini (Italy, Italian)
- Sworn Virgin by Elvira Dones (Albania, Italian)
- A Perfect Crime by A Yi (China, Mandarin)
- The End of Days by Jenny Erpenbeck (Germany, German)
- The Sound of Things Falling by Juan Gabriel Vásquez (Colombia, Spanish)
- The Whispering City by Sara Moliner (Spain, Spanish)

Share your thoughts about these books by leaving a comment on the website or by getting in touch on Twitter: @englishpen, @readingagency, @FreeWordCentre
Morning Sea by Margaret Mazzantini

Libya, 2010. As chaos and violence flood the streets of Tripoli, Farid and his mother Jamila face two stark choices: flee to the border and risk capture by mercenaries, or trek to the coast and chance their luck on the hazardous crossing to Sicily.

Sicily, 2010. Vito wanders the desolate beaches recalling his mother’s stories of her idyllic childhood in Libya. Forced to leave the country years earlier, Angelina has never forgotten – nor forgiven – the forces that tore her from her childhood love, a young Arab boy whose fate was very different from her own.

Moving back and forth between the continents, this deeply moving portrait focuses on two families and one stretch of water, and in terse, lyrical language captures perfectly the dark, uncertain quality of our times.

About the author
Margaret Mazzantini was born in Dublin and lives in Rome with her husband and four children. She has written seven novels, all international bestsellers, which have won numerous awards and been translated into over 30 languages. Twice Born won the Premio Campiello award, sold over one million copies, and was made into an international film directed by Sergio Castellitto, starring Penelope Cruz and Emile Hirsch.

About the translator
Ann Gagliardi, a New England native, lives and works in Bologna, Italy. Her literary translations include work by authors Rosanna Campo, Ascanio Celestini, Margaret Mazzantini and Christian Raimo.

For discussion
1. News stories of immigrants travelling from North Africa to Italy occur with tragic frequency. After reading Morning Sea, do you feel your view of this situation has changed in any way?

2. Of the four principal characters, who do you identify with most and why?

3. At a key moment Farid has a memory of a gazelle. What might the gazelle represent?

4. Silence can be more important than words. In Morning Sea, there are many situations where characters choose not to speak, in particular Angelina. What might this silence symbolise?

5. ‘Real joy always contains some fear.’ (p. 38) To what extent do you agree with this statement?