



# The Roving Shadows (Seagull Books - The French List)

*Pascal Quignard*

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There are few if any voices more distinct in contemporary French literature than that of Pascal Quignard, a prolific writer of rare erudition and elegance. Essayist, critic, translator, novelist and musician, Quignard attempts here an ambitious amalgam of his many artistic styles in a fragmentary work that defies the idea of genre. And his daring was rewarded in 2002 when *The Roving Shadows* became the first non-novel in more than sixty years to win the Goncourt Prize, France's most prestigious literary award.

The first book in Quignard's Last Kingdom series, *The Roving Shadows* can be read as a long meditation on reading and writing that strives to situate these otherwise innocuous activities in a profound relationship to sex and death. Writing and reading can in fact be linked to our animal natures and artistic strivings, to primal forces and culturally persistent fascinations. With dexterity and inventiveness, Quignard weaves together historical anecdotes, folktales from the East and West, fragments of myth, and speculative historical reconstructions. The whole, written in a musical style not far removed from that of Couperin, whose piano composition *Les Ombres errantes* lends the book its title, coheres into a work of literature that reverberates in the psyche long after one has laid it down.

*The Roving Shadows* is a rare and wondrous tour de force that cements Quignard's reputation in contemporary world literature. Available now for the first time in English, this boldly adventurous work will find a new and welcoming audience.

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