



The One Before

Juan José Saer

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"The most important Argentinian writer since Borges."—*The Independent*

The One Before is a triptych of sorts, consisting of a series of short pieces—called "Arguments"—and two longer stories—"Half-Erased" and "The One Before"—all of which revolve around the ideas of exile and memory.

Many of the characters who populate Juan José Saer's other novels appear here, including Tomatis, Ángel Leto, and Washington Noriega (who appear in *La Grande*, *Scars*, and *The Sixty-Five Years of Washington*, all of which are available from Open Letter). Saer's typical themes are on display in this collection as well, as is his idiosyncratic blend of philosophical ruminations and precise storytelling.

From the story of the two characters who decide to bury a message in a bottle that simply says "MESSAGE," to Pigeon Garay's attempt to avoid the rising tides and escape Argentina for Europe, *The One Before* evocatively introduces readers to Saer's world and gives the already indoctrinated new material about their favorite characters.

Juan José Saer was the leading Argentinian writer of the post-Borges generation. The author of numerous novels and short-story collections (including *Scars* and *La Grande*), Saer was awarded Spain's prestigious Nadal Prize in 1987 for *The Event*.

Roanne Kantor is a doctoral student in comparative literature at the University of Texas at Austin. Her translation of *The One Before* won the 2009 Susan Sontag Prize for Translation. Her translations from Spanish have appeared in *Little Star* magazine, *Two Lines*, and *Palabras Errantes*.

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