



Dandelions

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Thea Lenarduzzi

Dandelions

Where, or what, is home? What has it meant, historically and personally, to be 'Italian' or 'English', or both in a culture that prefers us to choose? What does it mean to have roots? Or to have left a piece of oneself somewhere long since abandoned? In *Dandelions*, Thea Lenarduzzi pieces together her family history through four generations' worth of migration between Italy and England, and the stories scattered like seeds along the way. At the heart of this book is her grandmother Dirce, a former seamstress and a repository of tales that are by turns unpredictable, unreliable, significant. Through the journeys of Dirce and her relatives, from the Friuli to Sheffield and Manchester and back again, a different kind of history emerges. A family memoir rich in folk legends, food, art, politics and literature, *Dandelions* heralds the arrival of an exceptional writer: bold, joyful and wise.

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'Dandelions is a book of hauntings, intensely experienced, pierced by occasional terrors, yet irradiated throughout by passionate attachment. Generations of family ghosts wander between Italy and England, their lives summoned from a beloved grandmother's long memories and the author's own wide-roaming, often poetic reflections on botany, history and language. Thea Lenarduzzi has spread out before us a feast of sensuous and sensitive, nuanced and deeply appealing testimony to migration, survival, and complicated identities at a time when such thoughtfulness is rare and desperately needed.'

Marina Warner, author of *Inventory of a Life Mislaid*

'Dandelions is spellbinding. Like the polished beads of a secular rosary, each bearing a remembrance, Lenarduzzi's ancestral memoir conjures intimate histories of migration, love, and loss across decades of passages between Italy and England. Her redoubtable grandmother Dirce will lure you in, as she unfolds fragmentary myths with a sly wit, whispering ascolta, "listen" – and you won't resist.'

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'Lenarduzzi's touching debut, winner of the 2020 Fitzcarraldo Editions Essay Prize, serves up lyrical meditations on food, family, and belonging.... Lenarduzzi's admiration for her grandmother's resourcefulness and resilience provides an affecting emotional backbone, and the elegant prose delights.... The result is a ruminative take on what it means to put down roots.'

Publishers Weekly

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Thea Lenarduzzi is a writer, broadcaster and editor. Her debut, *Dandelions*, a family memoir and cultural history of migration between Italy and England, won the 2020 Fitzcarraldo Editions Essay Prize and was shortlisted for the Ackerley Prize for 'literary autobiography of outstanding merit'.