The present anthology, *Storytelling: Memory, Love and Loss in Portuguese Short Fiction*, is intended above all to showcase 20th-century Portuguese short story writing. As editors, we have targeted the volume at various types of public, both academic and non-academic, but our main goal is essentially to whet the reader’s interest in great Portuguese authors and outstanding works of short fiction which have not been previously translated or published in a collection.

As a genre the anthology has strengths and weaknesses — its strength is its inclusiveness, its potential to bring authors, styles, stories together. The weakness is having to leave out equally deserving or interesting authors or stories. Indeed, any sample raises the problem of representativeness. Nevertheless, though there might be outliers, we believe that our cross section gives an idea of the main trends and concerns in Portuguese short story writing from the years before the Carnation Revolution until the new millennium. The selection criteria adopted by the editors were deliberately flexible, designed to permit the inclusion of a heterogeneous collection of authors who cross categories. Our aim was to offer English-speaking readers a sense of the richness and diversity of Portuguese literature as it emerged from dictatorship into the current democratic regime.

From the outset our contributors were encouraged to translate authors whose narratives resonated with them. If certain common threads run through the stories, it is no doubt because of the nature of literary production in twentieth-century Portugal. For their part, the accompanying introductions are the work of scholars who have carried out systematic research into the fiction of the authors chosen. From the outset we encouraged them to write freely and at length. Though in most cases the translations were done
by the introducer, a special mention must go here to the award-winning translator Margaret Jull Costa, who gave us generous permission to (re)publish her translations of short stories by Teolinda Gersão and Ana Luísa Amaral.

The anthology includes several writers who are firmly centred in the twentieth century, Jorge de Sena, José Cardoso Pires and Maria Judite de Carvalho. Others straddle both centuries, while yet others may be considered to have reached their literary plenitude in the twenty-first. Nor should another crucial landmark be overlooked, the 25th of April 1974. Some of the authors selected published their stories before the end of the Estado Novo, but readers may quite reasonably ask whether there is a discernible before and after in their literary production. This is manifestly not the case of Maria Teresa Horta, who encountered serious obstacles in her artistic trajectory, namely censorship and the threat of imprisonment. Jorge de Sena spent decades in exile and did not publish “Gran-Canaria” until 1971, after the death of Salazar and just a few years before the Carnation Revolution. José Cardoso Pires was subject to censorship, was arrested, spent several years abroad, and produced his most notable works after 1974. Maria Judite de Carvalho, on the other hand, wrote stories which did not appear to offer overt criticism of Portuguese society, and so escaped the “blue pencil”, the “lápis azul” censors used to strike out any text deemed inappropriate for public consumption in Salazar-era Portugal and which would become an enduring symbol of censorship in the country. No doubt, like other writers, Maria Judite de Carvalho managed to avoid persecution either by resorting to self-censorship or using indirect strategies of symbolism, metaphor and other rhetorical devices that may not have entirely escaped the censors’ attention, but were deemed inaccessible to the majority of readers, already a significantly small percentage of the total population.

It may be no coincidence that Hélia Correia, Lídia Jorge, Teolinda Gersão and Luísa Costa Gomes only began to publish systematically in the 1980s. After the radical change in Portuguese society following the Revolution of April 1974, there emerged a new generation of authors and artists. The writers above mentioned are noteworthy examples of authors who helped to reshape Portuguese literature, simultaneously raising awareness of women’s literary output. Similarly, Mário de Carvalho, who was imprisoned, sought exile in Sweden, returned to Portugal after the Revolution, only really began to publish regularly in the 1990s. Ana Luísa Amaral and Inês Pedrosa followed in the same decade, and are very much women of the new century, although
both grew up in the shadow of the Estado Novo, and matured as writers in its aftermath.

As editors, it is not our intention to categorise these authors and their writing. Indeed, their literary work is immensely rich and resists any taxonomic scheme. Nevertheless, the selection offered will prove that as generations take their place in the Portuguese literary sphere — coinciding or not — the authors explore certain common themes, for instance: love, loss and memory, as the title of the present anthology suggests. Admittedly, the topics are not explored at length nor in the depth one would expect to find in a full-length novel, but they are treated with the intensity and concentration for which the short story is noted and delivered in a wide and varied range of styles.

With the publishing of Storytelling: Memory, Love and Loss in Portuguese Short Fiction we have come full circle. This anthology is the final output of the international project The Reception of British and Irish Short Fiction in Portugal and Portuguese Short Fiction in the United Kingdom and Ireland (1980-2012) — also known by the acronym CC/ST (Contar um Conto / StoryTelling), based in the University of Lisbon Centre for English Studies in conjunction with the Cátedra Gil Vicente, University of Birmingham, U.K.

From the official launch of the project in 2011 until the present moment the lead researcher and her team of scholar-translators and project consultants, as well as numerous collaborators, have organised conferences, a workshop, a special issue of the Comparative Critical Studies journal (10.3), launched a database and published two anthologies of short fiction in translation. It is our earnest hope that our joint work will contribute to a greater dissemination and recognition of Portuguese literary heritage.

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