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To Begin at the Beginning (Cahiers)

Javier Marías

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To Begin at the Beginning (Cahiers) Javier Marías
In *To Begin at the Beginning*, celebrated Spanish novelist and translator Javier Marías explores his impulse to write, the origins of his own family, and the connection between these two different sorts of beginnings. Exploring the difference between what is true in the world and what is true in fiction, he explains why an appeal to “real” events has never convinced him; why the history of his own family—with its Cuban and Spanish strands—has left him uncertain about what is legend and what is historic fact; and why what has been imagined or dreamed can end up being truer than what “really happened.”

Complemented by an essay by Margaret Jull Costa on the practice of translating Marías, the cahier is also accompanied by images taken from the works of the influential Cuban artist Wifredo Lam. The result is a beautifully produced chapbook by one of Europe’s preeminent novelists, ready to be discovered and celebrated by English readers.

“It is a rare gift, to be offered a writer who lives in our own time but speaks with the intensity of the past, who comes with the extra richness lent by a foreign history and nonetheless knows our own culture inside out. Yet, strangely, Marías—who is famous in Spain and garlanded with prizes from the rest of Europe—remains almost unknown in America. What are we waiting for? All the gifts we are offered in life (as Marías himself is fond of pointing out) are fleeting ones, easily lost or ignored or undervalued and only regretted when they are no longer available to us. It's high time we accepted this one.”—*New York Times*

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