



reward her with sweet tarrying on the hardness of their summits.

Her fingers follow the rise and fall of all the spirals of her body, coinciding at every moment with the other fingers traveling her body from

inside. They recognize each other through the skin like the points of two burning pins that travel the two surfaces of a piece of cloth and char where they meet. The fingers of the air she breathed at her window gave

her hands the power to set her body afire. It is the same air that draws her legs taut, that creates whirlwinds between her legs, the days' other climate that rises like the tide, that floats indecisively at six in the evening.

What could those who saw Fatma sitting placidly at her window know, if she herself was uninterested in showing the density of what startled her and the pungent flavor of its barbs. For even when she left her house to walk the streets near the dock, seeking to provoke chance with her uncertain steps, to favor an encounter, she would never allow others to imagine they knew those whom Fatma hoped to meet on every corner; what faces and names they had, who it was who inhabited the air pushed by the sea toward her window.

And it could have been that their backs were slightly rippled and muscular, like that of the dyer whom Fatma surprised bathing in the fountain the morning she left her house earlier than usual to get water, or that they had the smooth waist and vibrant breast of the woman she saw running naked over the rocks before entering the sea, or the gray eyes of the twins who played dice in the spice shop, or the arms, rising light as the night, of the slim black woman who sells milk. The arms that disturbed her every time they reached out to hand Fatma a purchase or her change. But only Fatma could know whether the air that was reaching out its hand to her body and cutting her breath short had a name, a single name that could be secretly uttered in joy. **W**

**1987 VILLARRUTIA PRIZE
FOR BEST MEXICAN NOVEL**

Set in an imaginary walled city off the coast of Morocco, *Mogador. Los nombres del aire* (Mogador. The Names of Air) traces the days and nights of Fatma, a young woman who finds herself suddenly seized by desire. As she wanders the city's maze of erotic pleasures, she encounters other desiring bodies and the imaginary worlds those desires create. Here is a vital fusion of Latin American magical realism with the geometric and mystical imagery of Arabic literature, written in a style the author calls a "prose of intensities."

Alberto Ruy Sánchez has written several works of fiction in addition to his well-known art and literary criticism. He was an editor of Octavio Paz's *Vuelta* and is now the Editor-in-Chief of *Artes de México*.

This extremely talented Mexican writer assumes his own Islamic roots in one of the best written novels of recent years. He is truly a painter of dreams, who manages to fuse the most unblemished sensuality with the most transparent spirituality.