

bones of small animals clog his incinerator. Soon he has her drinking his blood. It's more than merely unappetizing—it's histrionic.

Words, smells, and flesh, human and otherwise, reverberate through all of her stories, which push the boundaries of modern fiction. Despite Fragoulis' in-your-face approach, however, there is an undercurrent of fragility in her work. Her come-hither dares and her flaunting of bodily fluids don't preclude emotional vulnerability and the search for meaningful relationships amongst modern chaos.

and a body to remember with

Carmen Rodriguez—Arsenal Pulp Press, 1997.

THE ROAD FROM CHILE to Vancouver is littered with painful memories for Carmen Rodriguez, and she uses her personal experiences to paint lurid but lyrical vignettes that speak of torture and torment and political turmoil but also of love and redemption.

Rodriguez narrowly escaped Chile with her life during the 1973 military coup, when she came to Canada with her husband and two daughters. The sadness of separation from her family and homeland and the building of a new life in a foreign country infuse her writing as she synthesizes the experiences of two continents.

But it's not just her plots and themes that are influenced by two cultures, her prose is as well. As Rodriguez writes in her introduction, these stories were created through a unique linguistic exercise. She wrote most of them in Spanish, then began to translate them herself into English. As she searched for the perfect English word, new associations and images came to mind and the stories changed, so she had to re-translate them back to Spanish. She went back and forth like this until she perfected the stories in both languages. The result is sensuous and provocative prose.

There is madness in these stories: military machines, tanks,

terror. Chile is beautiful and rich with warm images, but it is a place of chaotic malevolence. Rodriguez makes her political points gracefully despite the graphic subject matter of revolutionaries and the disappeared, rapists and the dictatorship.

Then she turns to the personal and the warm rain of Vancouver, where her characters are exiled and estranged, far from family and old friends. Loneliness and hopelessness are prevalent but they give way to a sense of renewal with the forging of new ties and new friends. Rodriguez's characters hang on and grow, despite their heavy nostalgia.

Rodriguez writes that "...life is sometimes purple, other times amber or translucent blue, but often grey, like fog." Her stories are all of these colours and more. They burst quietly from the pages, promising and vibrant, and leave a vivid trail from one continent to another.