

WOODWORM

Layla Martínez, translated from Spanish by Sophie Huges and Annie McDermott

1. In an [interview](#), Layla Martínez locates the house’s “origin story” within the aftermath of the Spanish Civil War. How do the house’s beginnings reflect the overlapping religious, gender, and class oppressions of General Franco’s regime?
2. *Woodworm* adopts many conventions of the horror genre including the haunted house, ghosts, and witches. What does the novel’s context and history add to the canon of horror literature?
3. The female characters in *Woodworm*, as well as the saints they pray to, all suffer “at the hands of angry men” (pg. 16). What does the novel say about the role of patriarchy, especially religious patriarchy, in women’s suffering?
4. What is the effect of using two narrators in the novel? As a reader, do you find the narrators trustworthy?
5. Describing her police testimony the granddaughter says, “I [used] the short sentences and full stops and commas they love so much” (pg. 84). How does the novel portray the relationship between language and class and state power, and what are its strategies for disrupting that relationship?
6. *Woodworm* compares the hatred of the Jarabos family fueled by “contempt” with that of the working-class townspeople fueled by anger, the elite family’s “disgust” creating a “poison so deep down [in their employees] we start thinking it’s ours” (pg. 66, 111). How does the novel understand the relationship between emotions like hatred, contempt, and anger, and what does it suggest causes “rage...like woodworm” (pg. 111)?
7. Consider who is entrapped in the house at the beginning of the novel versus its end. How does *Woodworm* understand justice, and is justice achieved in the story?



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