# This World Does Not Belong to Us

**Natalia García Freire**
**Victor Meadowcroft, Translator**
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A wronged, bitter young man welcomes his fate in Natalia García Freire's novel *This World Does Not Belong to Us*.

Lucas was just a child when his father sold him to another farmer as a laborer. Years later, Lucas returns, full of resentment and burning for revenge. As he bides his time, familiarizing himself with the home that strangers and loved ones alike have defiled, he recalls the events that led him to this moment. Lucas comes to realize that there is only one way to set the situation right.

The story, told from Lucas's perspective, takes the form of a monologue directed at his departed father, who not only sold Lucas into slavery, but sent his mother to a sanatorium. Using the cudgels of religiosity and respectability, the entire community conspired to rob Lucas and his mother of all that they loved, and all that made them unique and human. Making matters worse were the two strange men whom Lucas's father invited to stay with them and soon lost control of, leaving the family at their mercy, with deadly consequences. All of this sets Lucas on a path which no one in his household will be able to turn back from.

Visceral prose captures Lucas's obsession with death, bugs, and other unpleasant aspects of life. Even as a child, these subjects held a grim fascination, even comfort, for him. Now, as an adult, Lucas again turns to his beloved insects for consolation and insight as he grapples with his traumatic past and uncertain future. There is a strange, unconventional beauty to his morbid world—a beauty that helps him endure pain and humiliation and achieve an unnerving final calm.

*This World Does Not Belong to Us* is a bleak exploration of how all ends in death and decay.

EILEEN GONZALEZ (May / June 2022)

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