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✱ José Cardoso Pires. *Jogos de Azar*. Lisboa. Arcádia. 1963. 240 pages. 40\$.

Cardoso Pires is a novelist and dramatist who has an important place in modern Portuguese belles-lettres. If I am not mistaken, *Books Abroad* in speaking of Portuguese literature has overlooked his work, at least as far as partially doing justice to his book of nine stories, rather nine *écits*, masterfully handled and whose profoundly human and almost always social subjects do not at all prevent giving them the total dimension of man himself, of the thread in the needle, nor from endowing them with a rich writing, unsentimental, full of nuances, witty. Speaking of nuances, I understand nuances as belonging to composition, let us say structural, but also linguistic: they underline even more the authenticity of his characters, usually miserable but drenched with an almost remedial dramatic quality that in any case gives to the episodes a semblance to life and sometimes a tragic poetry as if it could recapture the unity that the world lacks, something like destiny.

Cardoso Pires knows how to look at people and their respective environments; he knows how to listen to them as few of his colleagues do who constantly invoke fidelity to realist concepts. But the author of *Jogos de Azar* likewise knows also how to give free rein at the right moment to his pen, to his style, to his intoxicating enthusiasm, to his imagination which is never devoid of intelligence, lucidity, and balance.

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