

# A New Voice in Latin American Literature

*Cuban-born author Jorge Armenteros takes us into the unexplored rooms of the human mind in his debut novel*

## The Book of I by Jorge Armenteros

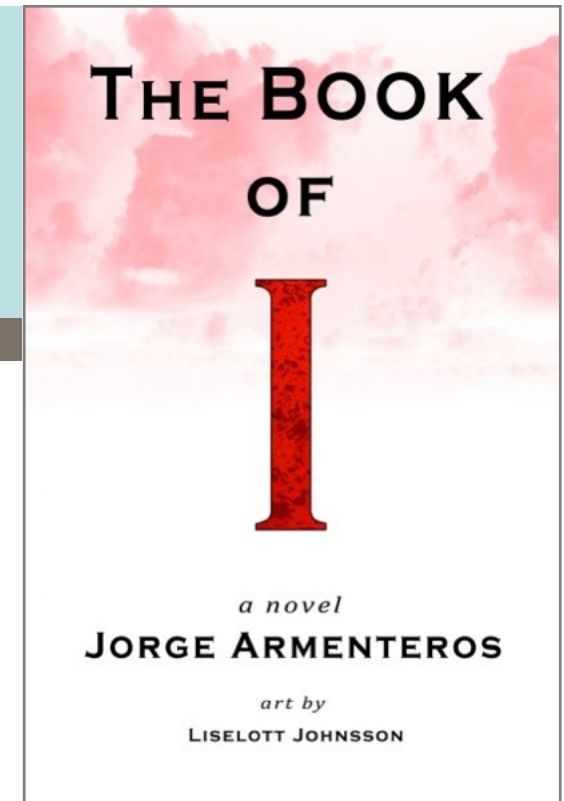
*The Book of I* is the story of Teaston, a painter struggling with schizophrenia, who finds himself at the edge of a cliff, at the edge of his life. Set in the seaside village of Cassis, in the south of France, the novel explores our fragmented human nature through the distorted lens that Teaston provides.

The novel is written by Cuban-born author Jorge Armenteros, a Harvard grad, who during his twenty-year career as a psychiatrist has gained a profound knowledge of the workings of the mind. In *The Book of I*, Armenteros offers a deep meditation on the confines of human nature, intimately revealing the mind of Teaston, a person who struggles to understand what is real, what is unreal, and what defines self-identity.

Readers will find the narrative influenced by the formal spontaneity of Cortázar's *Hopscotch*, the shifting levels of reality of Kafka's *The Trial*, the iconoclastic characterization of Bolaño's *The Savage Detectives*, and the interiority and lyricism of Rilke's *The Notebooks of Malte Laurids Brigge*. A proponent of experimental literary fiction, Armenteros says, "I have a high esteem for my readers so I invite them to the creative party. Easy prose is akin to baby food. It is time to take the spoon out of the reader's mouth."

Armenteros completed *The Book of I* while attending the MFA program at Lesley University. He splits his time between his private psychiatry practice in Florida and his home in Georgia and wrote much of the novel from 30,000 feet, flying between cities. He says, "I write like a jaguar, to the neck, all at once. I find those moments in the plane, all the way up in thin air, to be exceptional moments for writing. Without terrestrial interruptions, I let the mind loose."

The novel is published by Jaded Ibis Press in Seattle, an avant-garde publisher who produces multi-dimensional collaborations between authors and artists. Both the color and the black-and-white editions of *The Book of I* contain original images by international artist and architect Liselott Johnsson. The book is also accompanied by an original full-album soundtrack by Sarah Wallin Huff, a violinist and composer who performs as Concertmaster of the Southern California Philharmonic.



### BOOK DETAILS

[Jaded Ibis Press](#)

November 2014

B&W paperback

ISBN-13: 978-1-937543-70-9

224 pages, \$16.99

All editions are illustrated with original artwork by Liselott Johnsson

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## Who is the book for?

Readers of literary fiction, readers of experimental fiction, avant-garde artists/musicians, students in MFA programs, families of patients with schizophrenia, families of patients with autism, Francophiles

## Who wrote it?

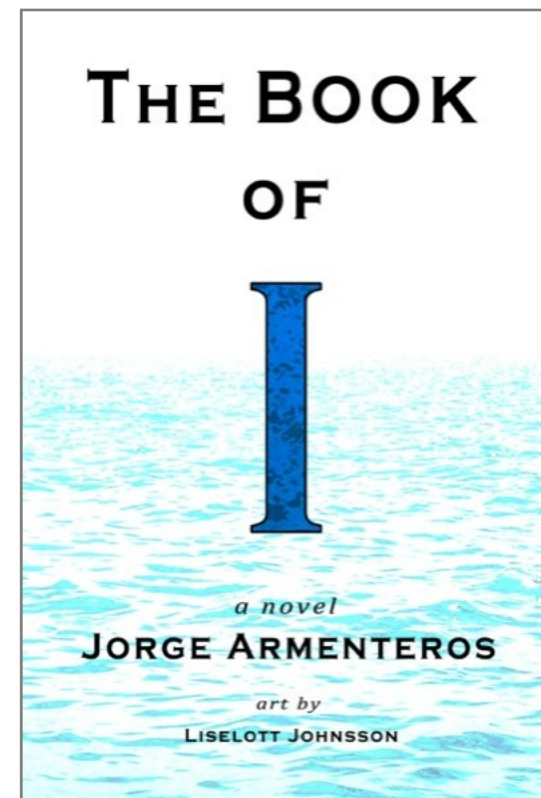
Jorge Armenteros ([www.jorgearmenteros.net](http://www.jorgearmenteros.net)) was born in 1961 in Havana, Cuba, two years after the revolution led by Fidel Castro. He and his family became political refugees in Madrid, before finally settling in San Juan, Puerto Rico. He was the first student in his high school to be accepted to Harvard University, even when he only had rudimentary knowledge of English. There, he took several electives in Spanish and Latin American Literature from notable scholars, like Juan Marichal, while completing his biomedical engineering degree. After graduating cum laude, he went back to San Juan to study medicine at The University of Puerto Rico.

In addition to his medical training, he completed an MA in Spanish and Latin American Literature from New York University, and an MFA in Creative Writing from Lesley University. He has written three novels since the start of the MFA program. *The Book of I* is his first novel. The next two, *The Civet* and *The Roar of the River*, are ready to be presented to agents/publishers.

A practicing psychiatrist, Armenteros now divides his time between Georgia, Florida, and the south of France. And when there is a free minute in the day, he practices the violin. Coincidentally, the violin is the subject of his fourth novel now in progress.

## Story Ideas:

- Exploring the Rooms of the Mind Through Fiction: A psychiatrist's intimate look at schizophrenia and autism
- Jorge Armenteros: A New Voice in Latin American Literature
- A Writer's Muse: How the landscape – in this case, the cliffs in the south of France – informs a novel
- Taking the Spoon Out of the Reader's Mouth: Exploring why readers are more integral to a text than its writer
- Authors and Publishers Who Are Going Beyond the Book: Combining Words, Sounds and Visuals to Create a Multi-Sensory Reader Experience



## BOOK DETAILS

[Jaded Ibis Press](#)

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Color paperback

ISBN-13: 978-1-937543-71-6

224 pages, \$49.99

Also available in ebook format:

[Jaded Ibis Press](#)

November 2014

ISBN-13: 978-1-937543-72-3

224 pages, \$7.99

## Reviews:

"In this lyrical and assured debut novel, Jorge Armenteros navigates us through the labyrinthian struggles of the mind of a schizophrenic painter wading through the edges of reality and fantasy. Part existential puzzle and part hypnotic meditation, *The Book of I* is as much about the language we have—or yearn to have—to hold our identities as it is about the search for the core of our innermost selves. This is a haunting debut by a bold new talent."

—Laurie Foos, author of *Ex Utero* and *Before Elvis There Was Nothing*

"In a French village, painter Teaston has witnessed a woman's fatal jump off a nearby cliff. Growing lost in the 'whiteness' of his schizophrenia, he paints out the faces on his canvases, searching for the 'holes where eyes could fall in.' Dipped in the ink of South American surrealists like Julio Cortázar, Jorge Armenteros' *The Book of I* slowly and achingly unveils Teaston's tormented inner life. For Teaston, 'the existence of normalcy is a primordial question.' This stark, poetic and haunted novel makes it ours as well."

—Susanne Paola Antonetta, author of *A Mind Apart: Travels in a Neurodiverse World*

"In this powerful novel, Jorge Armenteros takes us deep, deep and deeper still into the mind of a painter who has come to the edge of his cliff. *The Book of I*'s fierce, fresh language buoys us through the many-textured darkness, shoots the whole through with crucial light. Cortázar is an apt analog here. So is Artaud."

—Laird Hunt, author of *Kind One*, the 2013 PEN/Faulkner Award finalist and winner of the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award

"How our minds evolve and determine our identities and how these identities can shift over time remains a fascinating topic for the novelist. When a mental illness interferes with the 'normal' brain function that we all take for granted, the challenges to the individual and those around him multiply exponentially. His training and experience as a psychiatrist gives Jorge Armenteros a special perspective on the mysteries of the human mind and his character Teaston reminds us that somewhere between reality and delusion lies the unconquerable world of uncertainty. A terrific achievement for a first novel."

—John Kane, M.D., Vice President for Behavioral Health Services of the North Shore - Long Island Jewish Health System and Chairman of Psychiatry at The Zucker Hillside Hospital

"A startling vision of the world from the perspective of a schizophrenic painter, a man balanced on the edge of his self and his life, and on the way to a crisis. This is a finely crafted and clearheaded book, at once sympathetic and unwilling to give any alibis, and well worth the read."

—Brian Evenson, Royce Professor of Teaching Excellence, Brown University Literary Arts Department, and author of *Immobility*, *Last Days*, and *The Open Curtain*



**Jorge Armenteros**

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