

# DGLAB

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## PROMOTES PORTUGUESE AUTHORS ABROAD

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*'Everything useless needs to die before it can create its own will,'* muses José Homem, 60, the son of an authoritarian colonel who committed suicide when he was a boy and an alcoholic and distant mother, as he spends his days cleaning his revolver, preparing to go to his death without dwelling on memories or wallowing in nostalgia.

Antonino is one of the boys taken in by an orphanage in the same village, one of the many Angolan children maimed by landmines scattered throughout the region during the Civil War. Obeying a request by the priest, José Homem welcomes the boy into his home every day. *'José looked at the boy and thought how much more complete he seemed in comparison to himself. Antonino might have a fake leg, but he could say this of his whole existence.'* The story grows from this unlikely encounter.

Set in the recent past, the era of Portuguese rule in Africa, the novel uses almost aphoristic and magical language, suggesting ancestral wisdom that almost seems to emanate from the land itself, the kind of knowledge common to every country.

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### ***A Vida Inútil de José Homem***

***The Useless Life of José Homem* by Marlene Ferraz / Gradiva, 2013; pp. 176 /  
Agustina Bessa-Luís New Literary Talent Prize**

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*'The Useless Life of José Homem is an exquisitely wrought tale. It is an intelligent and unusual piece of writing. As a novel, it is imbued with a sense of compassion, generosity and an immeasurable kindness. Marlene Ferraz is a remarkable new writer.'* Sandra Gonçalves in *Diário Digital*

*'A story written with considerable aplomb and a creative take to the Portuguese language.'* Jury of the Agustina Bessa-Luís New Literary Talent Prize

*'This is a great book. A wonderful discovery.'* Julieta Monginho *Writer*

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*Viana do Castelo, 1979*

A psychologist by training and profession, Marlene Ferraz started her literary career by publishing short stories. *Na Terra dos Homens* [*In the Land of the Men*] was awarded the Miguel Torga Literary Prize for short stories in 2008. Four years later her first book has won the Agustina Bessa-Luís New Literary Talent Prize. This novel draws on her reflections on the Angolan Civil War.

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