



# Old Man Goya

*Julia Blackburn*

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## **Old Man Goya** Julia Blackburn

In 1792, when he was forty-seven, the Spanish painter Francisco de Goya contracted a serious illness that left him stone deaf. In this extraordinary book, Julia Blackburn follows Goya through the remaining thirty-five years of his life. It was a time of political turmoil, of war, violence, and confusion, and Goya transformed what he saw around him into visionary paintings, drawings, and etchings. These were also years of tenderness for Goya, of intimate relationships with the Duchess of Alba and with Leocadia, his mistress, who accompanied him to the end.

Blackburn's singular distinction as a biographer is her uncanny ability to create a kaleidoscope of biography, memoir, history, and meditation—to think herself into another world. In Goya she has found the perfect subject. Visiting the towns Goya frequented, reading the revelatory letters that he wrote for years to a boyhood friend, investigating the subjects he portrayed, Julia Blackburn writes about the elderly painter with the intimacy of an old friend, seeing through his eyes and sharing the silence in his head.

With unprecedented immediacy and illumination, *Old Man Goya* gives us an unparalleled portrait of the artist.

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