



## ★ The Horseman's Song

*Ben Pastor. Bitter Lemon, \$14.95 trade paper (376p) ISBN 978-1-912242-11-5*

Set in 1937, Pastor's outstanding sixth mystery featuring German investigator Martin Bora (after 2017's *The Road to Ithaca*) makes effective use of the death of Federico García Lorca, the celebrated poet, during the Spanish Civil War. Bora, who's serving as a lieutenant in Franco's Spanish Foreign Legion, discovers Lorca's body on the edge of a mule track in the Aragon region. Bora doesn't recognize the dead man, who has a bullet hole in the back of his head. Bora's commanding officer, Col. Jacinto Costa y Serrano, identifies Lorca from a photograph Bora retrieved from the body, but when soldiers are dispatched to retrieve the corpse, it's no longer there. Serrano fears that the Reds will use the killing against the Nationalists. Bora's inquiries parallel those of American Philip Walton, a volunteer with the anti-Franco forces, who's also opposed to the murder being used as political propaganda. Pastor does an excellent job of creating a backstory for her lead that fits in well with the previous books.

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