



A Literary Map of Barcelona

Map 10



Area 5: Sarrià Old Town

Tour duration: 1h 00
How to get there: **FFCC** (Sarrià), Bus 22, 66, 68, V7

BARCELONA **Barcelona** **Junta de Cultura**

- 1. Calligram**
- 2. Patisserie Foix**
- 3. Church of Sant Vicenç**
- 4. The House of Josep Maria de Sagarra**
- 5. Les Serve de Maria Nunnery**
- 6. Carrer de Setantí, 9**
- 7. The House of Gabriel García Márquez**
- 8. The House of Mario Vargas Llosa**
- 9. Birth House of J.V. Foix**
- 10. The House of Ribar Arderiu**
- 11. Sarrià Cemetery**
- 12. The Childhood House of José Agustín Goytisolo**
- 13. Bar Bang-Bang / Bar Pennsylvania**
- 14. The House of Joan Vinyoli**

1. Calligram

Via Augusta/Passeig de la Bonanova. Tour starting point

Calligram of the poem **POEMA DE CATALUNYA** (Poem of Catalonia), (1920) by poet **J.V. Foix** (1893–1987), written on the pavement on the uphill side of the street.

“March 1919. Salvat [the poet Joan Salvat-Palau] said to me at the door: ‘You upper-class people who get up at eleven o’clock and go bask in the midday sun along Passeig de Gràcia, you cannot understand those of us who leave home every day at a set time, putting up with the rain, raising the collars of our jackets to avoid freezing to death.’ I did not tell him, of course — I don’t like to defend myself unless it’s truly necessary —, that today I had woken up at four in the morning and had already worked my eight hours, all of them arduous and taxing and shamelessly poetic. Because I, who am young, I carry the weight of all the legends with a fresh and good-natured sportsmanship.”

(J. V. Foix, *Catalans de 1918*.)

2. Patisserie Foix

Plaça de Sarrià, 12

Founded in 1886, this pastry shop has belonged to the Foix family for generations, and it is where the poet worked for many years. Today his grandchildren run the business. During the Franco dictatorship, as Catalan was forbidden, the poet searched for words that spelt the same in Spanish as in Catalan for the shop’s placards. Four of these placards still remain on the shop’s façade, reading: **SUPREME DRY PASTA, COUNTRY DESSERTS, SELECT CHOCOLATES, CONFECTIONARY**. Inside the pastry shop, there is a bronze bust of the poet. Beside it, there is always a fresh red rose.

“If I were a trader in Prades — in the mists of autumn — to keep you warm I would give you big blankets and fur coats. And, to add to the decoration of the crèche, the clay figurines. Where you are dressed as a Shepherd [...] But I’m not! I have a hut And books everywhere, on loan; I pretend not to hear the bell — Or I write on the other page Of the law that you dictate. I only carry the hope That, When Judgment Day Comes, You raise your eyes and you look at me.”

(*Onze Nadals i un Cap d’Any*)

3. Church of Sant Vicenç

Carrer Rector Voltà, 5

The funeral of poet **J.V. Foix** was held at the church of Sant Vicenç. He died on January 29th, 1987, the day after his 94th birthday. In his memory, the following poem was read:

IF I WERE A TRADER IN PRADES (excerpt)

“Yesterday, after lunch, I left home as usual (this humble servant lives in Sarrià) and I went to catch the train, this electric train that is a marvel, and aside from merely honouring our city, it takes us to Plaça de Catalunya in the time it takes to say ‘Oh my!’ and smoke a cigarette.”

(*Converses femenines* from *Cafè, copa i puro*.)

4. The House of Josep Maria de Sagarra

Bridge of la Reina Elisenda

Poet and writer **Josep Maria de Sagarra** (1894–1961) lived for a time in Sarrià in a house belonging to his family, as far up as the bridge of La Reina Elisenda. The poet moved in to live with his father following the demolition of the family villa on Carrer de Mercaders due to the opening of the Via Laietana road.

“I am a comic tyrant who never knew where the reverse side was and where the right of this life which we loved with an insatiable passion that you never dared even to imagine out of the fear of knowing what we knew only too well that it was arduous and ephemeral but there wasn’t any other, general, because we knew who we were while he was left never knowing it forever with the soft whistle of his rupture of a dead old man cut off at the roots by the slash of death, flying through the dark sound of the last frozen leaves of his autumn toward the homeland of shadows of the truth of oblivion...”

(*The Autumn of the Patriarch*)

5. Les Serve de Maria Nunnery

Carrer del Clos de Sant Francesc, 13-15

“Pepa, the milkmaid, has the finest legs in the world. Eight days ago, at the dance in Sant Vicenç Street, all the girls told her so. She went to bed so late, that her brother, who’s an early riser, was already repairing his bicycle. When two hours later she was walking up to the Enclosure, with two enormous milk cans in each hand, her eyes kept shutting. She saw ten thousand couples dancing, each of them with a lustring carnation on their foreheads; from splintered Japanese lanterns, flames shot out towards the sky and filled it with countless stars. The houses on both sides had disappeared. And, all of a sudden, the dancers. Pepa was alone in the world, facing the luminous sky. Opening her eyes just a little, she found herself in front of the nuns’ convent. Sister Roser told her off it was so late! She put the milk cans down on the steps and, as she was being told off, her eyes shut again. Then, all the balconies and the windows of the Enclosure opened wide; the gentlest flapping of wings was heard, and an angel came out of each opening.”

(J. V. Foix, *Gertrudis*.)

6. Carrer de Setantí, 9

The House of J.V. Foix from 1931 until his death on January 29th, 1987.

J.V. Foix (1893–1987), Catalan poet

“The street the house was on was an unexpected museum of boxes and bundles, with a written note beneath each one with a detailed inventory, like that of the abbesses, of the sacristies of their temples. I looked up, to the roofs, to the balconies: there was no one there. [...] In the tragic silence of my street, beyond the memory of the vexatious laughter of the neighbours along the grand avenue, I experienced the beauty, and the moment.”

(*Darrer Comunicat*)

7. The House of Gabriel García Márquez

Carrer dels Caponata, 6

Let’s leave poetry aside and concentrate on narrative for a moment. On the ground floor of number 6 Carrer dels Caponata, the famous Colombian writer **Gabriel García Márquez** lived and wrote from 1967 and during the years of the so-called **Latin American Boom**, a literary movement. He lived for eight years in this house and here he wrote the novel *The Autumn of the Patriarch* (1975).

“a comic tyrant who never knew where the reverse side was and where the right of this life which we loved with an insatiable passion that you never dared even to imagine out of the fear of knowing what we knew only too well that it was arduous and ephemeral but there wasn’t any other, general, because we knew who we were while he was left never knowing it forever with the soft whistle of his rupture of a dead old man cut off at the roots by the slash of death, flying through the dark sound of the last frozen leaves of his autumn toward the homeland of shadows of the truth of oblivion...”

(*The Autumn of the Patriarch*)

8. The House of Mario Vargas Llosa

Carrer d’Osi, 50

One of **García Márquez**’s neighbours, he was another of the **Latin American Boom** authors. Peruvian writer **Mario Vargas Llosa** lived on the third floor, flat 2 at number 50 Carrer d’Osi, for four years in the early 1970s.

“I was very young and lived with my grandparents in a villa with white walls in the Calle Ocharán, in Miraflores. I was studying at the University of San Marcos, law, as I remember, resigned to earning myself a living later on by practicing a liberal profession, although deep down what I really wanted was to become a writer someday. I had a job with a pompous-sounding title, a modest salary, duties as a plagiarist and flexible working hours: News Director of Radio Panamericana. It consisted of cutting out interesting news items that appeared in the daily papers and rewriting them slightly so that they could be read on the air during the newscasts.”

(*Aunt Julia and the Scriptwriter*)

9. Birth House of J.V. Foix

Carrer Major de Sarrià, 57

The house was also the original headquarters of the family pastry business.

J.V. Foix (1893–1987), Catalan poet

VII
“I like to roam at random by the walls of ancient times and, with the advent of darkness, beneath a laurel-tree or by a rustic spring, to bring to mind, thickbrowed, and battles.”

In the morning I like, with pincers of iron and box-spanners, to probe for the clutch’s hidden part, or the bearing’s which encircles the axle, and set off down the asphalt without mishap.

And to drive up through coils and on through shady valleys, to cross fords, heading, O new-born world! I also relish the lime-tree and its soft shade.

The ancient museum, faded madonnas and the extreme painting of today! A candid whim: I’m exalted by the new, enamoured of the old.”

(*Alone, and in Mourning*)

10. The House of Ribar Arderiu

Carrer Major de Sarrià, 163

Other distinguished residents of Carrer Major de Sarrià were the poets and couple **Clementina Arderiu** and **Carles Riba**. There is a house on number 163 Carrer Major where they lived from 1930 up until the end of the Civil War. The poets now rest together in a tomb at the old Sarrià Cemetery.

Carles Riba (1893–1959), Catalan poet

I
“Let the kiss be sober in its song and the heart shrewd in its embrace: the heart desires more, desires in excess, and in the gift received is degraded.”

Before your eyes, beloved, is there a love that, tender, would create them for me, that would open for me paths in the waves? Eyes for the love to follow?

Give yourself so that all is renewed spun in perils of silence, purified by an absolute fire;

like one who, beyond the unheard-of island, rises impassioned to the desired dream in the burning pearl that feigns it.”

(*Salvatge cor* (Savage Heart))

11. Clementina Arderiu

(1889–1976), Catalan poet

AS... (excerpt)
“tranquillity returns to the streets when the uproar has passed, my life is asking very little now that the heart is empty and no longer commands. Faint and pale memories — oh panorama of a Miró! — like iron threads intertwine, volutes and low shadows pass by...”

(*L’esperança encara*)

12. Sarrià Cemetery

Carrer Doctor Rieux

Here the poets **Carles Riba** and **Clementina Arderiu** were laid to rest. It is also the place where poet **J.V. Foix** was buried. It is an ideal spot to read the poem that **Joan Vinyoli** dedicated in memory of **Carles Riba** (who Vinyoli considered his teacher) on the anniversary of Riba’s death.

Joan Vinyoli (1914–1984), Catalan poet

E THE SILENCE OF THE DEAD (excerpt)
“The Earth collects a tithe. Let us not speak of the dead, however, let us instead slowly imagine that some part of them is very close. Let us live accompanied, as if a mere wall of smoke is all that separates us and prevents us from seeing each other. Their silence makes it easier for us to feel, often intensely, about a memory.”

Keep surrounding yourself with images of them. Every day place flowers next to them, in case they can smell the roses.”

(*Vent d’aràim*, *Poesia completa*)

13. Bar Bang-Bang / Bar Pennsylvania

Plaça de Joaquim Pena and Carrer de Castellnou/Rosari

Bars frequented by **Joan Vinyoli** and his friends. The first part of the book *Passeig d’aniversari* is entitled “Evening at the café” and refers to these two bars. According to the poet’s biography, he dictated this poem to a friend at Bar Pennsylvania:

PYRAMID (excerpt)
“I am on the landing of letting the years go by, with a glass in hand of a violet liqueur that makes me feel thick-headed. There is no way to get lost in the open: life is too burdensome in a comfortable cage.”

(*Tot és ara i res*)

14. The House of Joan Vinyoli

Carrer de Castellnou, 46, 1r 2a

Flat number 2 on the first floor of Carrer de Castellnou was the home of poet **Joan Vinyoli** from 1952 until his death.

I DON’T KNOW (excerpt)
“From a land that I do not know, from a sea that I do not know, I arrived one day at this place called home, family: parents, wife, children, and absurdly so, it has been growing in importance, like a plant that keeps sprouting enormous leaves, flowers of countless value.”

(*Encara les paraules*, *Poesia completa*)