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Pinholes In The Night: Essential Poems From Latin America (Harriet Monroe Poetry Institute Poets In The World)



Synopsis

"[A] well-defined, important primer on Latin American poetics."#151;Booklist"When we read a book we put it in front of our eyes, not behind them, which is to say, more or less, that we open ourselves to a dimension of our future."#151;Raúl Zurita, from the introductionThis intensely focused bilingual anthology pinpoints the heart of Latin American self-identification. In selecting these fifteen essential poems, Chilean poet Raúl Zurita was guided by the question, "What poem, had it not been written, would have rendered the author another author and Latin American poetry something else?" This extraordinary gathering of talent#151;from Jorge Luis Borges and Pablo Neruda to Ernesto Cardenal and César Vallejo#151;spans the twentieth century.From "The Heights of Macchu Picchu":How many times in the wintry streets of a city or in a bus or a boat at dusk, or in the deepest loneliness, a night of revelry beneath the sound of shadows and bells, in the very grotto of human pleasureI've tried to stop and seek the eternal unfathomable lode that I touched before on stone or in the lightning unleashed by a kiss . . . Raúl Zurita, winner of the Chilean National Prize for Literature, survived arrest and torture during Augusto Pinochet's dictatorship. He co-founded CADA (Colectivo de acción de arte), and has created huge poetic art pieces, including poems carved into cliffs that can only be read from the sky.Forrest Gander is a poet, translator, and professor at Brown University. His books have been named finalists for the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Award.

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Customer Reviews

These 18 poems selected by Zurita, and translated by a variety of people represent Zurita's personal taste, and represent, for me, the greatest poems written in Castilian in America. Many of the poems focus on death (eg. Hospital Británico by Hector Viel Temperley, or Pablo de Rokha's 'The Old Man's Song', Jaime Sabines' 'A Few words of the death of Major Sabines') and Zurita writes 'The price is that it falls on the reader to bear the death the poems contain'. There are some striking likes such as Rokha's 'I peck at my final evenings, |. Glands fail' or Sabines' 'No one shall say he knew no more of life/ than the oxen, nor any less than the swallows'. Zurita views 'The Heights of Macchu Picchu' by Pablo Neruda as the greatest poem in the history of the Spanish Language ('And so I scaled the ladder of the earth / amid the atrocious maze of lost jungles'). He also considers 'Prayer for Marilyn Monroe' by Ernesto Cardenal as one of the most widely read poems in Latin America ('For her sadness that we are not saints / she was prescribed Psychoanalysis'). Personal favorites included Jorge Luis Borges' 'Conjectural Poem' ('The complicated labyrinth of steps / that I have traced since one day in my childhood/ led me to this disastrous afternoon'), and Hector Viel Temperley, Christus Pantokrater ('In front of the postcard I am like a shovel that digs in the sun, in the /Face and in the eyes of Christus Pantokrater (which offers to me my postcard collection as an idea of poetry). The title comes from Alejandra Pizarnik from Diana's Tree 'A pinhole in the night/ invaded suddenly by an angel'.

This is a beautiful anthology, the result of a collaboration between Forrest Gander and Raúl Zurita. The poets and poems chosen are exquisite examples of the vast range of brilliant poetry from Latin America.

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