

## Board of Regents of the University of Oklahoma

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Review

Author(s): Judith Hinshaw Leach

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cries out in terms of the simplest of all names—the pronoun *tú* (you). One poem with a classroom setting has the poet wishing to write his name on the board a thousand times and finally crying out, “I have a name. I am I. Recognize me!”

Moments of tender understanding are not frequent in Beltrán, but their possibility is inherent in his vision. One poem, finally, captures such a moment, brief and even trivial as it may be. To the eternal demand of the boar hog rising within him, she replies demurely on one occasion, saying, “Not today. Tomorrow is First Friday.” After he ponders this curious but unappealable rejection, she continues, “Tomorrow . . . , if you still want to . . . .” The poet recognizes the rightness of this situation in the typically ingenious statement, “Me apretaba tu viernes contra el mío” (roughly: your Friday against mine), and goes on to phrase both his comprehension and his love. It is on such fragile moments that Beltrán builds his hope.

Charles Olstad  
University of Arizona

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Carlos Rafael Duverrán, comp. with Laureano Albán, Carlos Luis Altamirano, Arturo Montero Vega. *Poesía contemporánea de Costa Rica: Antología*. San José. Editorial Costa Rica. 1973. 443 pages. \$15.

On a street wall in San José was scrawled the terse command, “Read Poetry,” which prompted editor Duverrán to compile this anthology, thus filling a much recognized void in Costa Rica’s literary anthologies.

Fifty-three poets and 225 poems, the earliest dating from 1907, are brought together for the first time. Many of the poems were previously unpublished. The ordering is strictly chronological, but in no way arbitrary, commencing with Brines Mesón, who inaugurated the modernist tradition in Costa Rica, and including, admirably, many of that country’s youngest and less widely acclaimed poets.

Costa Rican poetry may lack in rigor and density, but the ordering within the text decidedly demonstrates that a poetic consciousness does, in fact, exist, and that a poetic evolution, although at times torpid, did occur during this century. The spontaneous predominates, with little adherence to “schools” or “generations,” which lends no uniformity for a representative view of 20th-century Costa Rican poetry. Don Abelardo Bonilla, in his *Historia de la literatura costarricense*, has observed this chaotic nature and individuality

in Costa Rican poetry. Nevertheless, Duverrán maintains a sense of coherence and evolution through his perception of subtle esthetic and stylistic changes approximately every ten years. It is precisely this developmental criterion which gives a structuring to the anthology.

Of noteworthy merit is the appendix of “poetics,” comments by 35 of the poets, who confront problems of defining poetry or relate to the reader their personal struggles to grasp inspiration and meaning and give it a structure. In addition, each poet is preceded by a brief but precise biographical sketch, including a list of his published works.

Any anthology is difficult and will promote controversy. One may wish that folkloric poetry had been included here, or the more lyrical selections of the *costumbristas*, Echeverría and Arturo Agüero. It has been said that all anthologies are a mistake, but if so, *Poesía contemporánea de Costa Rica* is a necessary mistake and fills an important gap, not only by being the first anthology of this century’s poetry in that country, but by its merging of selections with the authors’ poetics.

Judith Hinshaw Leach  
University of Evansville

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## essays

Ricardo Gullón, Allen W. Phillips, eds. *Antonio Machado*. Madrid. Taurus. 1973. 498 pages.

One of the first of a new series entitled “El escritor y la crítica,” this volume collects thirty-six previously published essays and studies on Machado. It is excellently organized in a gradually narrowing focus. It begins with vignettes of the author and his surroundings, moves on to studies of his relationships with other writers, and goes on from there to essays on his ideas, to examinations of the themes of his works, to articles about his individual books, and finally to detailed analyses of individual poems.

Although necessarily anecdotal in nature, the early essays offer very good insights into the poet and his milieu. (I found the essays by Alberti and Paz and the interview with Prats most useful.) The articles on Machado and Juan Ramón (by Gullón) and on Machado and Darío (by Phillips) give an excellent view of the “intimista” nature of Machado’s poetry and of its situation in the literary currents of its time. In the next sections, studies by Sánchez Barbudo, López Morillas and