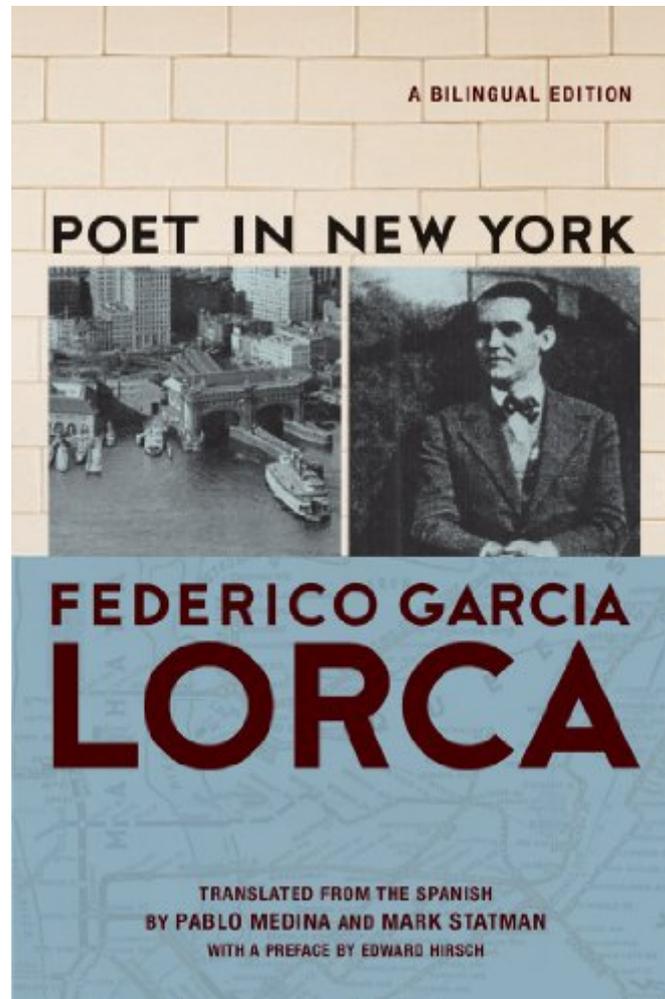


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Poet In New York: A Bilingual Edition



Synopsis

The definitive version of Lorca's masterpiece, in language that is as alive and molten today as was the original. John Ashbery Newly translated for the first time in ten years, Federico Garca - a Lorca's Poet in New York is an astonishing depiction of a tumultuous metropolis that changed the course of poetic expression in both Spain and the Americas. Written during Lorca's nine months at Columbia University at the beginning of the Great Depression, Poet in New York is widely considered one of the most important books Lorca produced. This influential collection portrays a New York City populated with poverty, racism, social turbulence, and solitude; a New York intoxicating in its vitality and beauty. After the tragedy of September 11, 2001, poets Pablo Medina and Mark Statman were struck by how closely this seventy-year-old work spoke to the atmosphere of New York. They were compelled to create a new English version using a contemporary poet's eye, which upholds Lorca's surrealistic technique, mesmerizing complexity, and fierce emotion unlike any other translation to date. A defining work of modern literature, Poet in New York is a thrilling exposition of one American city that continues to change our perspective on the world around us.

Book Information

File Size: 410 KB

Print Length: 209 pages

Publisher: Grove Press; Bilingual edition edition (January 15, 2008)

Publication Date: January 15, 2008

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B008V43NW4

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Not Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #527,356 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #36

in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Spanish #214 in Books >

Literature & Fiction > Poetry > Regional & Cultural > European > Spanish #427 in Books >

Literature & Fiction > World Literature > European > Spanish & Portuguese

Customer Reviews

Fredrico Garcia Lorca did no wrong with Poet in New York, it is the translators who do him wrong in this edition. Desperate to make Lorca's abstract and haunting images accessible, Simon and White lose the poetic element in Lorca's writing. Not to mention the translation is not even literal. (i.e. "Carne" is translated "skin" instead of "flesh," or "meat." "Asesinado" is translated "cut down" instead of "murdered.") So what we end up with is a vain attempt to make Lorca more easily understood--a task which insults the intelligence of the reader and the creativity of the poet--which in turn results in a loose translation that reads too much like prose with line breaks. If you are looking to buy Poet in New York, do yourself a favor and buy the Medina and Statman translation. It is much truer to the spirit of the original, as well as the language.

John Ashbery blurbs this translation of Poet in New York with, "Pablo Medina and Mark Statman have produced the definitive version of Lorca's masterpiece, in language that is as alive and molten today as was the original in 1930." I couldn't agree more, and happen to think that quote says it all. This translation is true to the Spanish, translated pretty much literally, while still maintaining the poetics, stylings, and spirit of Lorca. If you have to read the poems in English, highly recommend this translation. There's really nothing more to be said.

Federico GarcÃ- a Lorca is among the most celebrated Spanish poets of all time. The beauty of his writing has given him a place in the gallery of the best Spanish writers. This book he wrote when he was a student at Columbia University relies on the influence he got from the surrealistic movements that were running on Europe at the time. Thus, it gets far from the poetic language used in his other books, most notably in Romancero Gitano: verses leave the regularity of the romance to explore new and rich arrangements; the metaphors grow more complex and elaborate, making a delicious challenge to the reader; one can read a poem time and again for days and will still be unsure of its real meaning. Besides this some of the poems reach a new height on Lorca's poetry. To anybody just seeking to discover Lorca and his world, Romancero Gitano seems to be a best approach in my opinion, but if you know it and like it, I can't help recommending Poet in New York as a new horizon to discover. If your approach to this book is open-minded, you won't be disappointed.

After reading "A Poet in New York," I can say this much:"I don't think I am planning a trip to New York very soon." Lorca's account of the city was so visceral, raw and cruel, I could feel the hauntingly dead interactions between people, and those people's relationships to the material world

around them. The accounts of violence in the streets are equally as cold and boldly unapologetic as his observations of the early morning hours when the city is first waking up. Gabriel Garcia Lorca truly shows that when it comes to the movements as a city with ties to industry, capitalistic gain and material wealth, there is no division between the life of the human being and the life of the machine. There is almost an automated, "conveyor belt" feeling to the mechanical movement of life in the city. As soon as energy is poured into an endeavor, it is also poured out just as easily. People are as disposable as sheet metal. Their blood, their organs and their instruments of movement could be ripped away and demolished as quickly and non-emotionally as one would destroy the framework of a building and it would be of no concern to anyone else. I believe that Lorca's observations and journal entries are a reflection of not only the mindset of one of the most well known cities in the world, applicable to the 1930s, but is also quite accurately a reflection of the state of the world today.

Federico Garcia Lorca arrived in New York just in time to witness the chaos created by the 1929 stock market crash. Lorca was totally unprepared for what he found in New York, as Pablo Medina and Mark Statman point out in their excellent and thrilling new translation of "Poet in New York": "Coming to rid himself of grief, he encounters an abundance of grief; coming to witness the power of human endeavor, he finds inhumanity, tragedy, failure." From this extreme culture shock poured the phantasmagoric poems of "Poet in New York," in this bilingual edition featuring both Lorca's originals and Medina and Statman's fine, faithful, idiomatic translations. This was the first translation of "Poet in New York" to be done after the tragedy of 9/11, published early in 2008; what Medina and Statman couldn't foresee, however, was how the current Wall Street meltdown--the worst since 1929--would further underline the pertinence and urgency of Lorca's apocalyptic vision of the city. After the collapse of Lehman Brothers and WaMu, these lines from "Dance of Death" sound as if Lorca could have written them for a CNN report: In time the cobra will hiss in the final floors, the nettles shake patios and porches, the Market become a pyramid of moss, the reeds follow the rifles, and soon, very soon. Oh, Wall Street!

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