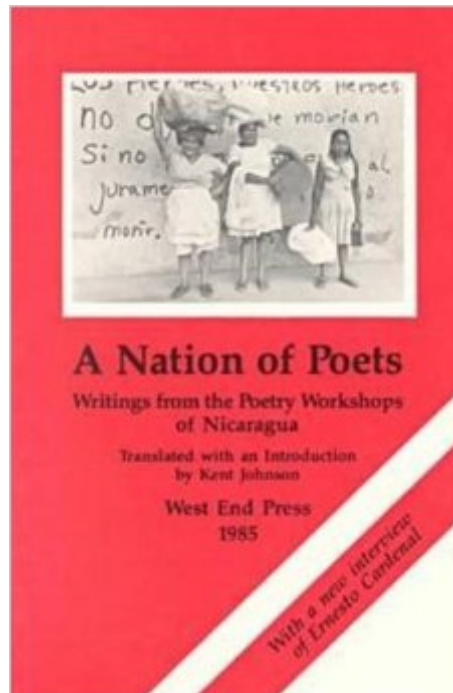


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A Nation Of Poets: Writings From The Poetry Workshops Of Nicaragua



Synopsis

anthology, bilingual

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

After the Sandinistas took control of Nicaragua from the Somoza family's dictatorship, they named the country's most famous poet, Ernesto Cardinal, as Minister of Culture. One of the most ambitious programs Cardinal created was a series of poetry workshops that would bring teachers and poets to every corner of Nicaragua. In the towns and cities of a nation torn apart by years of oppression -- and, indeed, years of illiteracy -- suddenly, poetry began to be written. The people gained a voice. This book is a bilingual collection of the people's poems. Here are the voices of the everyday -- voices of hope, of pain, of yearning. Here are images of war and suffering, but also images of daily life in an extraordinary place. In Nicaragua, to call someone a poet is a high form of praise and respect. Within these pages, you can read the words of people who once were allowed no words at all, but who briefly, for a revolutionary moment, each earned the title of poet. While Nicaragua may not have actually become a nation of poets, there was a time when that vision didn't seem so idealistic. This book is a vivid testament to that vision and that time.

I am a filmmaker from Nicaragua and I just want to say that I agree with Mr Espinal. Nicaragua is known as the land of poets. I personally like to read Mr Cardenal's books, but I would say that there are at least over 50 other Nicaraguan writers that I like to read and that also are significant in the Nicaraguan literature.

I haven't read this book, so I cannot make any judgements about it. However, I do want to comment on Matthew Cheney's review; they are wrong. I cannot possibly believe that he stated Ernesto Cardenal was the country's most famous poet. Does he really know what he is talking about? Cardenal is an excellent poet, yet his is not among Nicaragua's greatest. Ruben Dario is the most famous Nicaraguan poet ever, and one of the greatest in Spanish language poetry and literature. Dario's poems such as "Lo Fatal" and "Azul" are usually included in any advance Spanish course anywhere. Also, poetry workshops didn't occur for the first time after the Sandinistas take-over. Nation-wide poetry workshops have been running since the beginning of the 20th century. You can go to any village (except non-Spanish speaking ones in the Atlantic coast), and you will find elders that don't know how to read and write, but can recite Dario's poetry by heart. Poetry has always been a core component of our culture, regardless of all the years of poverty and repression that not only continued, but increased under Sandinista totalitarianism. Certainly, Cheney's reviews seem totally disconnected from Nicaragua's culture, history and tradition of poetry. The one star rating is not for the book, but on Mr. Cheney's reviews. Luis Espinal.

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