



Se habla español (Spanish Edition)

By Edmundo Paz Soldán

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Se habla español smells like french fries, tastes like Coca-Cola and hamburgers, but it also has the flavor of nachos and salsa, and of mango-guava smoothies. This collection of short stories reflects the Latin American experience in the United States. These are works by 36 young writers who entered the literary world during the '90s with a style described as serious, yet irreverent. Edited by Edmundo Paz Soldán and Alberto Fuguet, it explores the space occupied by the United States within the Latin American cultural imagery. It illustrates the contradictions presented by the dream of material progress and the nightmare of ruthless capitalism, and the fulfillment of all desires over the mirage of a never-attainable promise.

Blurb in Spanish: Se habla español tiene el aroma de french fries, el sabor a Coca-Cola y hamburguesas, pero también a nachos y salsa, a cortaditos y smoothies de mango-guayaba. Esta colección de cuentos muestra la experiencia latinoamericana en Estados Unidos. Son piezas escritas por 36 autores jóvenes que irrumpieron en el mundo literario de los años noventa, con una propuesta seria pero irreverente. El libro, compilado por Edmundo Paz Soldán y Alberto Fuguet, explora el lugar que ocupa Estados Unidos en el imaginario cultural latinoamericano. Asimismo, ilustra las contradicciones del sueño del progreso material y la pesadilla del capitalismo salvaje, y cuestiona la satisfacción de los deseos a la luz del espejismo de una promesa que no cesa de alejarse.

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

There was a time when exotic locations found in stories by Manuel Puig, Gabriel García Márquez, and Isabel Allende novels were exciting to U.S. readers. But now the tables have turned. Latin Americans want to read about foreign places like Denny's, New York's El Barrio, and East L.A. This collection features the works of well-known writers such as Junot Díaz, Mayra Santos-Febres, Ilan Stavans, and Ernesto Quiñonez. While based in Ithaca, NY, Edmundo Paz Soldán and Alberto Fuguet gathered essays from some of the most recognized U.S. Latino voices into one collection, including essays in their original Spanish, in translations from English, and in the now omnipresent Spanglish. The short stories are broken up into sections corresponding to U.S. regions, with titles such as "Welcome to Miami," "California Dreamin'," and "New York, New York." Through this format, the reader is able to navigate the vast cultural differences among Latino experiences. The story that will surely garner the most attention is Junot Díaz's "Instrucciones para citas con trigueñas, negras, blancas o mulatas" ("How To Date a Brown Girl, Black Girl, White Girl, or Halfie"), which introduced the art of Spanglish to the mainstream when it was originally published in The New Yorker. It's not an easy task to translate Díaz's story about a Dominican teen coming of age in New Jersey, known for its East Coast street poetics and slang, but translator Eduardo Largo is able to relay his comical posturing quite smoothly. Other entries worth reading are Silvana Paternostro's sarcastically chilling essay, "Northern Ladies," about the fad of revirginizing oneself through clitoral surgery in the hope of marrying in Queens, NY, and Ernesto Quiñonez's mysterious tale, "El niño blanco" ("The White Baby"), about an urban legend in an El Barrio botánica. By acquainting themselves with these quirky stories, the South will learn that the North, with all its complexities, is speaking español in ever-growing numbers. Recommended for public and academic libraries and all booksellers. --Adriana Lopez, "Críticas"

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