



The Other Side/El Otro Lado

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La revisión de libro de los tiempos de Nueva York ha elogiado la ficción de Alvarez's mientras que "powerful... captura maravillosamente la experiencia del umbral del nuevo inmigrante donde no está todavía una memoria el pasado y el futuro sigue siendo un dream." ansioso; Estas mismas calidades caracterizan su poesía - del "Making encima del Past" poemas, que exploran una vida del exilio según lo vivido por una muchacha joven, a los poemas de Joe del "The, " una serie maravillosamente de poemas sensual y divertidos del amor que celebran un romance de mediana edad. La colección culmina en el poema del título de la veinte-uno-parte sobre la vuelta de poet's a su República Dominicana nativa y a la afirmación interna del conflicto y última que el viaje ocasionó. La innovación y la invención en negrilla, la interacción del sonido, el sentido, y el ritmo de dos idiomas, todas caracterizan el arte de Julia Alvarez's en transformar memoria preciosa en poesía unforgettable.

The Other Side/El Otro Lado Details

Date : Published December 1st 1996 by Plume (first published 1995)

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Author : Julia Alvarez

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From Reader Review The Other Side/El Otro Lado for online ebook

Sharon says

On my mind, Alvarez is one of the queens in Latina literature. Love her poetry, prose and fiction. As I am learning the Spanish language, reading poetry and listening to music in the language helps it 'stick'.

Micahlibris says

A beautiful work, but her transitions are a tad jarring. I had a hard time deciding whether this was a work of prose fiction or poetry. That may be the kind of tension that makes it great however.

Betty says

julia alvarez always comes through. most of her poetry was more like short stories or vignettes. but love love love her writing.

Fernanda Bueno says

Great poems on Latino culture, immigration experience, assimilation, and struggling to find an identity between two languages. A must for bilingual writers who need help expressing their foreign feelings but can't find the words.

Tristan says

Actual Rating 4.5 rounded up for moments of absolute brilliance.

This book was a beautiful exploration of exile and the meaning of home. *The Other Side/El Otro Lado* (from now on referred to by either of its titles) is far more focused than Alvarez's later *The Woman I Kept to Myself*, really zeroing in on her experience as a Dominican-American and her discovery of who she is and how she fits into both/either/neither of her worlds. This comes in part, from the presence of longer poems and more focused sequences. This book is divided into six sections, three of which are single poems and one of those "El Otro Lado" goes for nearly forty pages of this fairly short collection. "El Otro Lado" tells the story of a trip back to the Dominican Republic, beginning at an "Artist Colony" where she wants to end her writers' block, and then spending the bulk of the poem in the poor fishing village of Boca. Alvarez comes out of Boca with greater understanding of her identity and her relationship to the world around her. This poem had some fantastic sections, like section eighteen, which narrates a young boy begging this monied stranger for alms. Here is a piece of it:

"Un peso, un peso, un peso,"
no coaxing, no sob story,
the need obvious,

his sugar-sack shift peeled
over a skinny shoulder,
his nose running.

I peel off my glasses,
look him in the eye.
"Give me peace," I say
in a voice as plaintive as his,
"Peace, please."
He stops, the needle lifting
from its groove
as he goes back over his few years,
recollecting
if this has ever happened before?
The tables turned--
the *patrona* begging him back!

But it also contains some of the weakest sections of the book. Alvarez's poetry often is in a very soft free verse, the rhythm and music there, but rolling and bubbling gently at the surface--once in a while, she loses control of her words just enough for the poetry to slip back down to the bottom, leaving only clear, strong prose telling a beautiful story. Often these bits last only for a few lines within an otherwise strong poem or section and so are difficult to find, but they showed up more than once or twice in "El Otro Lado".

I thought the weakest section was "The Gladys Poems", about her early childhood in the Dominican Republic; the poems of immigration and exile (particularly "Sound Bites" and "Between Dominica and Ecuador") of "Making Up the Past" and the narrative captured in "The Joe Poems" were more musical, although all three contributed to the comprehensive image of exile and the slow discovery of home and adult identity.

El Otro Lado is best encapsulated by the fabulous first poem "Bilingual Sestina" (one of my four favorite poems), which captures the push and pull of both languages and thus both homes, in which Alvarez has lived.

Judy says

The Other Side is a nice sampling of Alvarez's autobiographical poetry. It is divided into 6 sections:

I Bilingual Sestina

II The Gladys Poems - A reflection of Alvarez's childhood in the Dominican Republic and the singing maid, Gladys.

III Making Up the Past - These poems are about the melting into the American life.

IV The Joe Poems - I really liked this collection of poems. The reader could see the exciting beginning of the relationship fade to the destined breaking off.

V The Other Side - The story of Alvarez's return to the Dominican Republic during the time when she is unsure of her future holds for her. There are parts of this poem that are beautifully descriptive of the culture.

VI Estel - a lovely poem about a mute girl.

The things I love most about Alvarez's poetry are the vivid scenes that it conjures up in my mind along with the autobiographical nature. I will re-read this book at some point down the road. I only give it four stars because *The Woman I Kept to Myself* is my gold standard for Alvarez's poetry. While most poems in this collection were gold, there were some that *only* rated silver. :-)

Bibliomama says

I enjoyed *The Gladys Poems* and *Making Up the Past*. Other sections not so much.
