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In Search Of Duende (Second Edition) (New Directions Pearls)



Synopsis

An excellent compilation of Lorca's poetry and prose, emphasizing Lorca's notion of the duende, the "earth spirit of irrationality and death." The notion of "duende" – a demonic earth spirit embodying irrationality, earthiness, and a heightened awareness of death – became a cornerstone of Lorca's poetics. *In Search of Duende* gathers Lorca's writings about the duende and three art forms susceptible to it: dance, music, and the bullfight. A bilingual sampling of Lorca's poetry is also included, making this an excellent introduction to Lorca's poetry and prose for American readers.

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Customer Reviews

As much as this book will help you understand Lorca's passion for literature, music and artistic expression, it is the history of the development of flamenco as an art and culture. There are poems by Lorca in this small collection, but this is not the book you want if you want to read his poetry. Lorca explains the multicultural influences on the poetic tradition within flamenco. He spends a lot of time expounding on natural themes and morbid imagery. Duende is about giving in to the moment and connecting with the universe. Letting grief wash over you is a form of therapy and liberation. He introduces the concept of duende as the counterpart of the muse. When the muse's work is done the duende comes in and takes over your self. Duende is both strong and flexible, conniving and gullible. It is a part of the soul of Spanish culture and picking up this book is the easiest way to

getting close to understanding what it means.

Federico Garc a Lorca was captivated by song, music, and dance that pushed beyond conventional forms and gave voice to conditions at the brink of existence. Much of what intrigued him was native Andalusian, such as "cante jondo" or "deep song" (which Garc a Lorca insists is distinct from and more ancient than flamenco) and the bullfight. He came to identify this special quality or mysterious power as "duende". And he tried to incorporate duende into his later poetry. This brief book contains a variety of Garc a Lorca's writings relating to duende. Among those materials are two lectures he gave and about twenty poems that, according to the editor Christopher Maurer, "arise from traditional Spanish verse forms". The poems are presented in both Spanish and in English translation, which translations are by distinguished poets in their own right, including M.S. Merwin, Langston Hughes, and Stephen Spender and J.L. Gili. In general, however, the poems do not speak to me - as was the case in my previous encounters with Garc a Lorca's poetry. Of more interest to me were the two lectures. (As an aside, based on the evidence of these two examples, Garc a Lorca was a superb, inspired lecturer.) The first concerns Andalusian "deep song" and, building on the writings of Manuel de Falla, argues that it was heavily influenced by the songs and music of Gypsies originally from India. A footnote states that the theories Garc a Lorca advances in this lecture are now questioned by scholars. Still, the lecture is helpful in outlining what Garc a Lorca was trying to capture with the notion of duende. More helpful is the second lecture, "Play and Theory of the Duende". But even there, duende is an elusive concept. For Americans of my generation, the closest term probably is "soul". To expand on that, I sense that duende is performance (or art) that is on the edge, is unique (in the sense that it cannot be replicated), does not adhere strictly to the conventions of the particular art form, is unabashedly expressed, and is driven more by death than by love. *IN SEARCH OF DUENDE* can be recommended for admirers of Garc a Lorca who wish to gain a deeper understanding of his poetics.

This little book evolved from Lorca's lifelong quest in pursuit of truth and beauty, both on a mystical plane and in reality. A concept that first crystallized as a lecture to preserve a traditional form of flamenco music came to define Lorca's artistic philosophy, a philosophy that can be extended to all art forms. Duende is like soul. James Brown's music has duende, for example. So does the music of Mozart and Emmylou Harris, as well as the writing of Khaled Hosseini and the art of Picasso. Today, as in Lorca's time, much popular culture does not have it. As a poet, Lorca was uniquely situated to understand and describe duende. Using his own poems, as well as verses from the folk

music he fought to keep alive, Lorca passionately implores his audience to appreciate the importance of duende. Grasping the meaning of duende is far from a dry academic exercise. Lorca's lectures and essays provide a framework for appreciating and perhaps even making great art. Highly recommended for anyone aspiring to create.

Lorca's essay, "the Play and Theory of the Duende", should be required reading for artists in any field. A life-changing concept, rendered beautifully in poetic prose.

Duende, that magical ingredient that makes the difference in the arts. Lorca's essays are fantastic, and this small volume is a lovely introduction to the history and development of Flamenco, as well as to some of Lorca's work, though not nearly as much of his poetry as I'd like to have encountered. Don't let that sway you, however - this book is a gem, one of the best I've read to date. If you were to buy one book on this topic, this would be the one....however, I suspect you may well fall in love with Flamenco, with Lorca, with the history, the passion, the music, the beauty, the truth. Dancing through Lorca's mind, you will experience the arts in a new way, and better understand how Truth and Passion are made manifest in the presence of duende. Definitely a worthwhile read. I'm sure I will revisit this work time and again. In the meantime, I'm here today to order more of Lorca's work....I'm utterly enchanted!

Lorca lives up to his reputation as a poet and a man of duende.....the parallels he draws between poetry and feeling reach the reader in a way that mere words of prose cannot. It is true that often poets give their best in youth, but what a loss the world suffered in his early murder!

Inspiring, moving, insightful. This book should be standard reading for Flamenco aficionados. Particularly those struggling for inspiration within the art form itself.

It's great to experience the poet's understanding of the source of inspiration, especially in poetry and dance (I can't speak about the bullfight).

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