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## Dario, Ruben (1867-1916)

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About this Person

Full Text:

## Dario, Ruben (1867-1916)

**PERSONAL:** Born Felix Ruben Garcia y Sarmiento, January 18, 1867, in Metapa, Nicaragua; died February 6, 1916, in Leon, Nicaragua; married Rafaela Contrera, 1890 (died, 1892); married Francisca Sanchez; children: two sons (one from each marriage). **Education:** Attended a Jesuit school.

**CAREER:** Writer and poet. Began work as a journalist for newspapers in Santiago and Valparaiso, Chile, and Buenos Aires, Argentina, c. 1881. Became correspondent for *La Nacion*, Buenos Aires, and other Latin American papers in Latin America; Paris, France; and Madrid, Spain. Founder, with Gilberto Freyre, of *Revista de America*, 1896. Also served in various diplomatic and representative posts for Colombia and Nicaragua.

### WRITINGS:

*Epistolas y poemas* (title means "Epistles and Poems"), 1885.

*Abrojos* (poetry; title means "Thorns"), 1887.

*Canto epico a las glorias de Chile* (poetry; title means "Epic Song to the Glories of Chile"), 1887.

(With Eduardo Poirier) *Emelina* (novel), 1887.

(With Ruben Rubi) *Las rosas andinas: Rimas y contra-rimas* (title means "Andean Roses: Rhymes and Counter-Rhymes"), 1888.

*Rimas* (title means "Poems"), 1888.

*Primeras notas* (title means "First Notes"), Tipografia Nacional, 1888.

*Azul* (poetry and short prose; title means "Blue"), [Chile], 1888, reprinted, Espasa-Calpe (Madrid, Spain), 1984.

*Los raros* (literary biography and critical essays; title means "The Rare Ones"), 1893, reprinted, Universidad Autonoma Metropolitana (Mexico), 1985.

*Prosas profanas* (title means "Profane Prose"), 1896, introduction and notes by Ignacio M. Zuleta, Castalia (Madrid, Spain), 1983.

*Castelar*, B. R. Serra (Madrid, Spain), 1899.

*Peregrinaciones* (travel writings; title means "Journeys"), 1901.

*España contemporanea* (title means "Contemporary Spain"), Garnier (Paris, France), 1901, reprinted, Lumen (Madrid, Spain), 1987.

*Cantos de vida y esperanza, Los cisnes, y otros poemas* (title means "Songs of Life and Hope, The Swans, and Other Poems"),

[Madrid, Spain], 1905, reprinted, Nacional (Mexico), 1957.

*Oda a Mitre* (poetry; title means "Ode to Mitre"), 1906.

*El canto errante* (poetry; title means "The Wandering Song"), M. Perez Villavicencio (Madrid, Spain), 1907, reprinted, Espasa-Calpe (Madrid, Spain), 1965.

*El viaje a Nicaragua; e, Intermezzo tropical* (travel writings), Biblioteca Ateneo (Madrid, Spain), 1909, reprinted, Ministerio de Cultura, 1982.

*Poema del otono y otros poemas* (title means "Poem of Autumn and Other Poems"), Biblioteca Ateneo, 1910, Espasa-Calpe (Madrid, Spain), 1973.

*Canto a la Argentina y otros poemas* (title means "Song to Argentina and Other Poems"), c. 1910.

*Historia de mis libros* (title means "The Story of My Books"), 1912.

*Caras y caretas* (title means "Faces and Masks"), 1912.

*Muy antiguo y muy moderno* (poetry; title means "Very Old and Very Modern"), Biblioteca Corona (Madrid, Spain), 1915.

*Vida de Ruben Dario, escrita por el mismo* (title means "The Life of Ruben Dario, Written By Himself"), 1916.

*El mundo de los sueños: Prosas postumas* (title means "The World of Dreams: Posthumous Prose"), Libreria de la Viuda de Pueyo (Madrid, Spain), 1917, 2nd edition, MED (Managua, Nicaragua), 1992.

*Sol del domingo* (title means "Sunday Sun"), Sucesores de Hernando (Madrid, Spain), 1917.

*Alfonso XIII y sus primeras notas* (addresses, essays, lectures and biographical text; title means "Alfonso the Thirteenth and His Principal Notes"), R. Dario Sanchez (Madrid, Spain), 1921.

*Baladas y canciones* (title means "Ballads and Songs"), prologue by Andres Gonzalez-Blanco, Biblioteca Ruben Dario Hijo (Madrid, Spain), 1923.

*Edelmira* (fiction), edited by Francisco Contreras, c. 1926.

*Sonetos* (title means "Sonnets"), Biblioteca Ruben Dario (Madrid, Spain), 1929.

*En busca del alba* (poetry; title means "In Search of Dawn"), Aristides Quillet (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1941.

*Brumas y luces* (poetry; title means "Fogs and Lights"), Ediciones Argentinas S.I.A., 1943.

*Wakonda: Poemas*, Guillermo Kraft (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1944.

*El ruiseñor azul: Poemas ineditos y poemas olvidados* (title means "The Blue Nightingale: Unpublished and Forgotten Poems"), prologue by Alberto Ghirardo, Talleres Graficos Casa Nacional del Niño, c. 1945.

*Quince poesias* (title means "Fifteen Poems"), illustrated by Mallol Suazo, Argos (Barcelona, Spain), 1946.

*Cerebros y corazones* (biographical sketches; title means "Minds and Hearts"), Nova (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1948.

*La amargura de la Patagonia* (novella; title means "The Grief of Patagonia"), Nova (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1950.

*El manto de nangasasu* (novella; title means "The Cloak of Nangasasu"), S.A.C.D.I.C., 1958.

*El sapo de oro* (novella; title means "The Golden Toad"), G. Kraft (Buenos Aires, Argentina), 1962.

*El Oro de Mallorca: Novela Inconclusa* (title means "The Gold of Majorca: Unfinished Novel"), J. Pastor (Madrid, Spain), 1991.

Pedro Pablo Zegers and Thomas Harris, compilers, *Epistolario selecto* (correspondence), Direccion Bibliotecas (Chile), 1999.

José Jiron Teran, compiler, *Cartas desconocidas de Ruben Dario, 1882-1916*, Academie Nicaraguense de la Lengua (Managua, Nicaragua), 2000.

Also author of *El hombre de oro* (title means "The Golden Man"), Zig-Zag. Fiction and verse also published in numerous anthologies and collections.

## IN ENGLISH

*Eleven Poems*, introduction by Pedro Henriquez Urena, translation by Thomas Walsh and Salomon de la Selva, Putnam (New York,

NY), 1916, revised edition published as *Eleven Poems of Ruben Dario: Bilingual Edition*, Gordon, 1977.

*Selected Poems of Ruben Dario*, introduction by Octavio Paz, translated by Lysander Kemp, University of Texas Press (Austin, TX), 1965, reprinted, 1988.

*Ruben Dario y Nicaragua: Bilingual Anthology of Poetry*, compiled and translated by Helen Wohl Patterson, American Literary Accents (Washington, DC), 1966.

*Stories and Poems; Cuentos y poesias: A Dual-Language Book*, edited and translated by Stanley Appelbaum, Dover (Mineola, NY), 2002.

## COLLECTIONS

*Obras completas* (title means "Complete Works"), twenty-two volumes, edited by author's son, Ruben Dario Sanchez, illustrations by Enrique Ochoa, Mundo Latino (Madrid, Spain), Volume 1: *La caravana pasa* (poetry; title means "The Caravan Passes"), prologue by Ghirardo, 1917; Volume 2: *Prosas profanas*, 1917; Volume 3: *Tierras solares* (travel writings; title means "Lands of the Sun"), 1917; Volume 4: *Azul*, 1917; Volume 5: *Parisiense*, 1917; Volume 6: *Los raros*, 1918; Volume 7: *Cantos de vida y esperanza, Los cisnes, y otros poemas*, 1920; Volume 8: *Letras* (addresses, essays, lectures), 1918; Volume 9: *Canto a la Argentina, Oda a Mitre, y otros poemas*, 1918; Volume 10: *Opiniones*, 1918; Volume 11: *Poema del otoño y otros poemas*, 1918; Volume 12: *Peregrinaciones*, 1918; Volume 13: *Prosas políticas: Las repúblicas americanas* (title means "Political Prose: The American Republics"), 1918; Volume 14: *Cuentos y crónicas* (title means "Stories and Chronicles"), 1918; Volume 15: *Autobiografía*, 1918; Volume 16: *El canto errante*, 1918; Volume 17: *El viaje a Nicaragua, e historia de mis libros* (title means "The Trip to Nicaragua and the Story of My Books"), 1919; Volume 18: *Todo al vuelo* (title means "All On the Fly"), 1919; Volume 19: *España contemporánea*, 1919; Volume 20: *Prosa dispersa* (title means "Random Prose"), 1919; Volume 21: *Lira postuma* (title means "Posthumous Verse"), 1919; Volume 22: *Cabezas: Pensadores y artistas, políticos* (biographical essays; title means "Heads: Thinkers, Artists, Politicians"), 1919.

*Obras poéticas completas* (title means "Complete Poetic Works"), twenty-one volumes, edited by Ghirardo and Gonzalez-Blanco, [Madrid, Spain], 1923-29, new edition edited by A. Mendez Plancarte, [Madrid, Spain], 1952.

*Cuentos completos* (title means "Complete Stories"), edited with notes by Ernesto Mejia Sanchez, preliminary study by Raimundo Lida, Fondo de Cultura Económica (Mexico), 1950, reprinted, 1983.

*Poesías completas* (title means "Complete Poems"), two volumes, edited by Alfonso Mendez Plancarte, 1952, revised edition edited by Antonio Oliver Belmas, 1967.

*Poesía erótica*, Hiperion (Madrid, Spain), 1997.

Several volumes of Dario's *Obras completas* were reissued separately during the 1980s. Works collected in other volumes, including *Obra poética* (title means "Poetic Works"), four volumes, 1914-1916; *Textos socio-políticos*, [Managua], 1980; *Poesías escogidas*, 1982; *Cuentos fantásticos*, Alianza (Madrid, Spain), 1982; *Ruben Dario: El Modernismo y otros ensayos*, Alianza (Madrid, Spain), 1989; *Ruben Dario esencial*, Taurus (Madrid, Spain), 1991; *Los limos mas hondos y secretos: Poemas ausentes en sus poesias completas*, Fundacion Internacional Ruben Dario (Managua, Nicaragua), 1992; *Poesias: Edición Facsimilar y con variantes*, Biblioteca de Textos Universitarios (Salta, Argentina), 1993; *Poesias desconocidas completas*, Ediciones Aitana (Altea, Spain), 1994; *Poesía selecta*, Visor (Madrid, Spain), 1996; *Quince prologos de Ruben Dario*, Instituto Nicaraguense de Cultura (Managua, Nicaragua), 1997; *Ruben Dario y Cesar Vallejo, heraldos del nuevo mundo: Antología*, Banco Central de Nicaragua (Managua, Nicaragua), 1999; and *Poesía religiosa*, Instituto de Estudios Modernistas (Valencia, Spain), 1999.

**SIDELIGHTS:** Nicaraguan writer Ruben Dario ranks among the most esteemed and enduring figures in twentieth-century South American literature. A journalist, critic, poet and author of short stories, Dario is credited with both founding and leading the *modernista* literary movement, which ended a period of creative latency among Spanish-language writers. Dario is probably best remembered for his innovative poetry, noted for its blending of experimental rhymes and meters with elements of French and Italian culture, classical literature, and mythology.

A bright and inquisitive child, Dario displayed a propensity for poetry while he was still quite young. His aunt, who raised him after the separation of his parents, nurtured his literary aspirations, and his early interest in journalism led to his association with members of the European and South American intelligentsia. By the turn of the twentieth century, Dario had taken his place among the literary and cultural elite and, as a foreign correspondent and diplomat, had become a symbol of a new bohemianism in Latin America. Stephen Kinzer, writing in the *New York Times*, summarized the author's career as that of a "vagabond poet who . . . influence[d] Latin American and Spanish literature forever and dazzle[d] Europe as no provincial ever had."

Though generally dismissed by critics as an uninspired and predictable contribution to the romance genre, *Emelina*—one of Dario's earliest writings and his only novel—offers a glimpse at the artistry that the poet would perfect in his 1888 volume *Azul*, a work that revolutionized Spanish letters. The poetry and short prose in *Azul* marks a deliberate break with the conventions of Romanticism, a bold experimentation with line and metre construction, and an introduction to Dario's celebration of literature as an *alcazar interior*—"tower of ivory"—a dreamlike shelter dedicated to pure art.

Another collection, *Prosas profanas*, first published in 1896, is a masterful, melodic display of the poet's fascination with Symbolism. The 1905 volume *Cantos de vida y esperanza*, however, reveals a change in Dario's orientation as an artist—a move away from the idealistic "ivory tower" toward the global concerns of political and humanistic unity and nationalism among Hispanics. In *Studies in Spanish-American Literature*, Isaac Goldberg asserted: "*Cantos de vida y esperanza* is the keystone of Dario's poetical arch. It most

exemplifies the man that wrote it; it most reveals his dual nature, his inner sincerity, his complete psychology; it is the artist at maturity."

Dario remains largely unknown among English-speaking readers, mainly because of the difficulty in translating his poetry while preserving the unique rhythms and linguistic nuances that the works possess in their original form. However, two volumes of the author's poems are available in English, and several critics have noted that the universality of Dario's themes precludes the problem of accessibility. Commenting on Dario's widespread appeal, Goldberg rated the poet among "the consecrated few who belong to no nation because they belong to all." And S. Griswold Morley, writing in *Dial*, concluded: "What cannot be denied is that Dario, single-handed, initiated a movement in Spain that affects today nearly every branch of literary art; that he renovated the technique of both poetry and prose; that he made his own many diverse styles; and that his verse is often so inevitable as to touch the finality of art."

## BIOGRAPHICAL AND CRITICAL SOURCES

### BOOKS

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Ellis, Keith, *Critical Approaches to Ruben Dario*, University of Toronto Press (Toronto, Ontario, Canada), 1974.

Fiore, Dolores Ackel, *Ruben Dario in Search of Inspiration: Greco-Roman Mythology in His Stories and Poetry*, Las Americas Publishing Co., 1963.

Fitzmaurice-Kelly, James, *Some Masters of Spanish Verse*, Oxford University Press (Oxford, England), 1924.

Goldberg, Isaac, *Studies in Spanish-American Literature*, Brentano's, 1920.

Peers, E. Allison, *A Critical Anthology of Spanish Verse*, University of California Press (Berkeley, CA), 1949.

*Twentieth-Century Literary Criticism*, Volume 4, Gale (Detroit, MI), 1981.

Watland, Charles D., *Poet-Errant: A Biography of Ruben Dario*, Philosophical Library, 1965.

### PERIODICALS

*Dial*, June 14, 1917.

*Hispania*, March, 1919; May, 1966.

*Latin American Literary Review*, spring, 1973.

*New York Times*, January 18, 1987.

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