
they are inextricably tied, unnatural poetics defiantly expands environment's definition. Nolan's widening of textual spaces worth ecocritical exploration offers not simply a fresh approach, but perhaps a view toward conceptualizing daily possibilities that exist within the material world in which we dwell and extends no less than an invitation to explore what it means to live in perpetual *natureculture*.

Gustavo Pérez Firmat. *Sin lengua, deslenguado*. Editors Yannelys Aparicio and Ángel Esteban. Madrid: Cátedra, 2017. 292p.

JOY LANDEIRA
UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING

The sophisticated black covers of Spain's Cátedra editions always convey a classy and classical message. Further enhanced with Humberto Calzada's watery painting, *The Collapse of an Island*, with its layers of placid aquamarine ocean water rising and engulfing the interior of a stately, but abandoned, stain-glass windowed and cathedral-ceilinged Cuban mansion, *Sin lengua, deslenguado* anthologizes one of the most influential 1.5 generation Cuban exiles to lift anchor when his island, and his world, collapsed. Now, almost sixty years after landing on U.S. shores and setting up a lifelong residence, Pérez Firmat has gathered selected poetry and poetic prose essays into a volume whose whole is greater than the sum of its parts.

In their panoramic introduction, editors Aparicio and Esteban, using a characteristic bilingual neologism, explore Pérezfirmatian *Writinerarios*—the written wonderings and wanderings of the hybrid paths that he has travelled, always thinking that he'd spend "next year in Cuba," but always facing the reality that his place and language would forever be perched on the hyphen that sits between Cuban-American. Their informative "life and works" traces his sojourn and the shifting constants and consonants that have always been his trademarks: tensions between what language to write in, what nationality to claim, and what tongue defines him. "Sin lengua" translates as "without a tongue," but also as "without language." Despite that negative claim, what he has done with both languages isn't a minus sign at all - not a hyphen - but a plus sign.

The anthology's pluses that add to our understanding of his lifelong oeuvre include Spanish translations of poems originally written in English, beginning with his first published verse in *Carolina Cuban* (1987). Welcome footnotes disclose that the author loves to rework his poems, always seeking the precise word, as well as the precise wordplay, his exceedingly diffi-

cult-to-translate signature technique. For example, we learn that “*pertenecer a*” means both “belongs to” and “belongs in”—a key to understanding that the poet resides in a language: he may not belong in English even if he belongs to it. The same equivocation holds in Spanish, with the switch to “*encontrarse*”—“no me encuentro en inglés”: he may find himself located in English, but he doesn’t find himself—his true nature—there.

Similar equivocations characterize *Equivocaciones*, his second book of poetry published in 1989, as well as the other six collections excerpted here. Since one of the goals of the anthology is to include translations of all English poems into Spanish (but not vice versa), Pérez Firmat has translated his own verses. When he writes in English, his stock-in-trade is equivocations, better known as puns. But translating a pun isn’t fun, since equivocations don’t have equivalents, so the editors and the author have collaborated to explain the meaning of the English puns in the Spanish footnotes. These insightful translation notes greatly expand our understanding of the poems and wordplays, making sense of the translations and interpreting the original double entendres. Think about it—a bilingual double entendre multiplies two meanings in two languages...double the pleasure, double the fun, or quadruple it. . . now you’re talking his language.

Or you might be singing his language. His musical signature—maybe that should be sing-nature--technique is the diegetic soundtrack that plays a continuous loop of background music throughout—be it the bilingual blues lament that includes references to two songs: the Gershwin brother’s duet “Let’s call the whole thing off,” counterpointed with “Consider yourself [part of the family]” from the musical *Oliver*, based on the Charles Dickens novel *Oliver Twist*. Aware that language was music before it was words, essay 39 of *Cinuenta lecciones de exilio y desexilio* delves into the musicality of identity, noting that the sounds that cradled us composed auditory voice prints in our language patterns even before we learned words or lyrics. Whether it is the “Star Spangled Banner” or Stephen Foster’s “I dream of Jeannie with the light brown hair,” or Puerto Rican Jeannie Cruz singing “Zarabanda,” music continually accompanies Pérez Firmat in his writing, liting behind his poetry, harmonizing his essays, and adding grace notes to his foot notes. Together with editors Yannelys Aparicio and Ángel Esteban, he has orchestrated a masterful anthology of his greatest hits.