



The Child Poet

Homero Aridjis

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Homero Aridjis has always said that he was born twice. The first time was to his mother in April 1940 and the second time was as a poet, in January 1951. His life was distinctly cleaved in two by an accident. Before that fateful Saturday he was carefree and confident, the youngest of five brothers growing up in the small Mexican village of Contepec, Michoacán. After the accident - in which he nearly died on the operating table after shooting himself with a shotgun his brothers had left propped against the bedroom wall - he became a shy, introspective child who spent afternoons reading Homer and writing poems and stories at the dining room table instead of playing soccer with his classmates. After the accident his early childhood became like a locked garden. But in 1971, when his wife became pregnant with their first daughter, the memories found a way out. Visions from this elusive period started coming back to him in astonishingly vivid dreams, giving shape to what would become *The Child Poet*.

Aridjis is joyously imaginative. *The Child Poet* has urgency but still takes its time, celebrating images and feelings and the strangeness of childhood. Readers will love being in the world he has created. Aridjis paints the pueblo of Cotepec -- the landscape, the campesinos, the Church, the legacy of the Mexican Revolution -- through the eyes of a sensitive child.

From the Trade Paperback edition.

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