

América in Letters

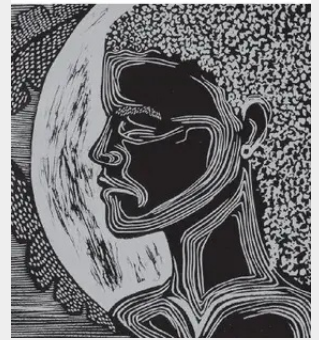
Literary Interventions from Mexico to the Southern Cone

The present historical moment is allowing Black peoples and scholars of Afrodescendancy to produce timely discussions of narratives about Blackness, language, and ideas across the western hemisphere. Despite research interventions in the disciplines of history, anthropology, and sociology, however, there is a relative paucity of research on Black letters in Latin American contexts. One reason for this lack of research is that the Latin American literary "canon" does indeed include a handful of Afrodescendant writers—we know, for example, that the seminal poet Rubén Darío was an Afrodescendant, and Nicolás Guillén's poetry is included in virtually any literary anthology. A different reason, and the driving force behind this anthology, is that the themes of the great Black writers who have been ignored fall outside canonical themes. *América in Letters* brings together new research on Black literary history in the crucial period of the late twentieth and early twenty-first century—a period that saw the consolidation of Black power movements and human rights struggles across the Americas. The Black writers examined here have left an enduring legacy in *nuestra América*, particularly in mainland Latin America—even while their prose and poetry challenge the overarching theme of mestizo-imagined multiculturalism that endures in Latin America's publishing industry.

Traditional histories of Black letters in Latin America have delimited their geographic scope to the Caribbean while also omitting intertwined Afro-Indigenous discourses. Inspired by the legacy of American thinker Lélia Gonzalez, *América in Letters* highlights the Black poets, songwriters, novelists, essayists, and bloggers who have created a counter-multiculturalist literary history on the Latin American mainland. To capture a sense of the variety of their contributions, this book spans Mexico, Central America, the Andes, and the Southern Cone—highlighting the transcontinental nature of the legacy of Black writing and its impact beyond national boundaries. The writers examined in the volume engage with regional intellectual frameworks while putting into circulation a demand for a recalibration of the Hispanophone and Lusophone contexts in which they and other Afrodescendants reside.

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