

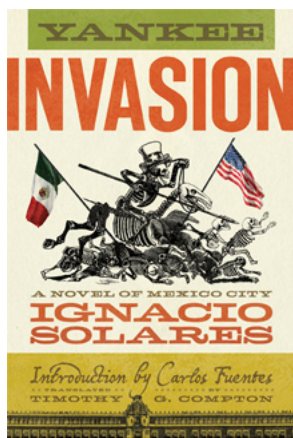
ForeWord

Reviews of

Good Books

Independently Published

MAY/JUNE 2009



Yankee Invasion

by: Ignacio Solares;
Timothy G. Compton,
translator

Category: Literary

Publisher: Scarletta Press

Softcover \$14.95 (300pp)

ISBN: 9780979824944

Yankee Invasion is a new novel from Ignacio Solares, essayist, playwright, and author of *There is No Such Place* and *Columbus*. Solares has written a dialogue between his protagonist, the writer Abelardo, and his intellectual wife Magdalena that unlocks a door to understanding Mexico's perspective on the United States. Abelardo and his "sickness" are metaphors for Mexico's self-loathing, confusion, and ambivalence towards the US's invasion of their great city. Magdalena paraphrases William Blake to describe her husband and a section of his manuscript that chronicles his life. Magdalena says, "I suppose I hadn't fully grasped how sick you really were at that point. Blake said it well: he who desired much but does not act engenders disaster."

The mysticism of Blake and his verse well describes Abelardo's emotional sickness. Clairvoyance and prophetic visions, the consequences of his definition of "man" and "Mexican"—all of these mingle in a festering born of Abelardo's political, romantic, and militant actions or inactions in the Petri dish of the Mexican–American War. Solares shows us that Blake's verse is also an excellent description of Mexico's people. They were torn between allowing themselves to be governed by corrupt

and self-serving generals or to be conquered by the United States to bring some kind of stability to their government and economy. Many fought for their freedom to maintain an ancient proud culture.

Yankee Invasion is historical fiction infused with an ontological and existential quest and a love story. There is no apparent loss of impact in Timothy G. Compton's English translation. Solares' prose contains a lyricism and a musicality that sings off the page. He writes, "I turned toward the window, where the face of night pressed against the glass. Threads of frost were starting to form next to the window frames. In the distance I saw the vague, expressionless sky."

Yankee Invasion is an existential novel in the same vein as Jean-Paul Sartre's *Nausea*, Fyodor Dostoevsky's *Notes from the Underground*, and Albert Camus's *The Stranger*. It also bears similarities to magical realist novels which are part of the literary movement called the "Latin American Boom." Examples include Jorge Luis Borge's *Labyrinths*, Gabriel García Márquez's *One-Hundred Years of Solitude*, and Carlos Fuentes' *Aura*. (May)

Lee Gooden