
Editor's Note

Between 1957 and 1965 Octavio Paz published three collections of essays, articles, and reviews, mainly on poets and poetry, that had appeared in journals and elsewhere. Shortly before and after those dates he published two editions of a book of sustained reflections on the poetic phenomenon, *El arco y la lira* (Mexico City: Fondo de Cultura Económica, 1956; revised and enlarged edition, 1967). The second edition of that book has been published in English, in the translation of Ruth L. C. Simms, as *The Bow and the Lyre* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1973). *The Siren and the Seashell*, which is made up of selections from those three collections, is intended as a companion volume to *The Bow and the Lyre*. It contains ten essays in which Paz turned his attention to individual poets, followed by two others of a more general nature.

In the first section, the poets under discussion are Latin American, all but Rubén Darío Mexican; the essays are arranged chronologically according to the birth dates of the poets. In the second section, the poets are from other parts: two from the United States, one from France, and two from Spain. In the third section, the two essays are in order of composition. One of these, "Poetry of Solitude and Poetry of Communion," written in 1942, was the seed that grew to be *The Bow and the Lyre*, which, Paz has said, in his foreword to the first edition, "is merely the maturing, the development, and, here and there, the correction of that distant text." For the reader who wishes to read all the essays in the order in which they were written, the place of composition and date are given in brackets under each title.

The essays on Darío and López Velarde are from *Cuadrivio* [Quadrivium] (Mexico City: Editorial Joaquín Mortiz, 1965); those on Sor Juana, Tablada, Frost, and Machado, and "Poetry of Solitude and Poetry of Communion," are from *Las peras del olmo* [Pears from the elm tree] (Mexico City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1957); the rest are from *Puertas al campo* [Doors to outside] (Mexico

City: Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, 1966). "A Literature of Foundations" was published in translation in *TriQuarterly* 13-14 (Fall-Winter 1968-1969). A much abbreviated version of the essay on Darío was published as a prologue in *Selected Poems of Rubén Darío* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1965).

The selection and arrangement of the essays in this volume were made with the assistance and approval of the author.

L.K.