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Roberto Fernández Retamar, the Poet

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Roberto Fernández Retamar (1930-2019) bequeaths a huge work: in verses, in prose... also in the fertile commitment to a Revolution to which he devoted his best efforts.

One doesn't need to read Roberto Fernández Retamar's poems twice to understand him. This is not a virtue in itself, but in his case it says a lot of lyrical calling: Retamar wrote to share. That's why his verses seem as something from of each one of us. That is: they speak of our dreams, of our goals, of the ups and downs of our lives. And they also speak, , with our words, those we use every day. The way of "spinning" those poems is already something else: one has the impression that even oneself could not say better what the poet puts before us... and it's, in the end, what we had needed to say.

The poet brings together two environments, the romantic daydreaming and everyday life, and when he brought them together he made them a single thing. That is, in the end, one of the wins of poetry: that the lyrical work becomes "tangible" nature. The transparency of what he proposed never became simplicity in the thinking. Roberto Fernández Retamar was born from a perfectly identifiable landscape and he "returned" it without alterations, marvelously recreated. It was not adorning the context, it was to discover its essential beauty.

It's exactly for that reason that the scope of his themes is so wide. He wrote of love and also of the issues in the construction of a new society that were many and far more pressing. Seem like that, it sounds as socialist realism, but Retamar never allowed a functional and dogmatic exaltation, more propaganda rather than poetry. It were remarkable the critical vision and the

lyrical bravado.

In his more epic and social poetry, Roberto Fernández Retamar was always an optimist. More than a thousand times he called to see a better future... and fight to attain it. The Revolution of 1959 showed him the road of that possibility. No one (much less him) said that it would be an easy road. He pointed out contradictions many times, he was involved in polemics... and his work is abundant in recollecting. He never tried to simplify the reach (and obstacles) of a renovating political process. He neither tried to sweeten history.

But he always offered the other side of the coin, the most intimate, and the personal history that so many times depends on the great history:

The time and memory, it's known are key elements of poetry. In Retamar's poetry also appear, of course. Here and there he outlines a game of apparent opposites, past against future to finally explain the convergence: we are always consequence. Nevertheless, the poet doesn't go on what he lived, he prefers to wait a new morning:

The feats or horrors of the past don't exist. / The present is faster than the reading of these very words. / The poet greets the things to come / With a salvo in the dark night. (Excerpt of the poem ***A Salvo of Future***).

The death of a lucid poet is not just that of the man, but of the possible work, the one a lifetime wasn't enough to do. Roberto Fernández Retamar has bequeathed an impressive lyrical body that is fortunately saved. What he took with him was that other poetry, patrimony of the dreams.

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