



Sentimental Songs

Felipe Alfau

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Almost lost to literary history, Felipe Alfau was rediscovered in 1988 with the republication of his proto-postmodernist novel *Locos*; in 1990 his only other novel, *Chromos* (written in 1948), was published for the first time, winning great critical acclaim and a nomination for the National Book Award. His published work is now complete with *Sentimental Songs*, his collection of poetry.

Written between 1923 and 1987 (thus predating and postdating his novels), these poems represent a lifetime's reflections and personal experiences. Unlike the novels, the poems were written in Alfau's native tongue of Spanish and look back to classic Spanish poetry of late nineteenth century. But like his novels, the mocking note of parody is frequently heard. As translator Ilan Stavans writes in his introduction, *Sentimental Songs* "is a rebuttal of Romanticism, but it emerges from the very ranks of the Romantic movement and its sense of life."

This is a bilingual edition, with Alfau's Spanish facing Stavans's English translations (made in consultation with the author). A substantial introduction places the poems in the context of Alfau's fiction and in the larger context of Spanish poetry in general.

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