

## Pedro López Adorno Remembering Miguel



How can one forget Miguel Algarín's big smile showing two rows of perfect teeth, right hand touching the back of the head as if ready to say hello to someone behind the camera or beyond or ready to jump at you reciting lines from a Shakespeare play or, this happened a few years later, proudly announcing that his poetry was going to be translated into Japanese: a first for a Puerto Rican writer.

I met him (must have been during the Fall of '88) while doing the final editing of *Papiros de Babel* (Antología de la Poesía Puertorriqueña en Nueva York), published a few years later in 1991 by the editorial house of the University of Puerto Rico. After a number of calls, he reluctantly agreed to meet me in the apartment he shared with his sister on the Grand Concourse. He called it a penthouse and it certainly looked that way due to its size. I remember the clear view to Yankee Stadium from where we sat to talk. He inquired about my credentials and my reasons for taking on a project as complicated as that of including multi-generational Puerto Rican poets from both sides of the linguistic divide. It was a lively, stimulating, and challenging conversation. I had gone prepared with some of his books (*Mongo Affair*; *On Call*) by my side. As we talked about poetry and the roles identity and experience play in the craft of writing, he revealed to me his love of Shakespeare. He was a Shakespearean scholar and the translator of Pablo Neruda's, *Canción de gesta/ Song of Protest*. He read his unforgettable, "In Memoriam," a poem he dedicated to Miguel Piñero and Lucky Cienfuegos. He was very generous with the time spent discussing some of the poems that I, immediately, decided to include in the anthology.

Ironically, Miguel never gave me sufficient information in order to incorporate the poetry of his dear friend (and lover) Miguel Piñero into the anthology. I believe to this day that he didn't have the authorization nor the clear-headedness (Piñero had died a few months earlier) to release the work. So be it. We have Algarín's poems, one of them unpublished at the time, about the love for Mikey and the passions (love, death, time) that brought a spark to his poetry.

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**Pedro López Adorno** (1954) is a Puerto Rican poet, literary critic, anthologist, and novelist. He is the author of eighteen books. His most recent being: *Opera ardiente* (2009); *Pedro Pietri/Selected Poetry* (2015); *Terapia perpetua* (2018); *Arca de la desmesura* (2019); *Versión del que surgía* (2020), and *Más allá de un bolero* (2021), his second novel. Adorno was a professor of Spanish and Latin American literature from 1984 to 2012.