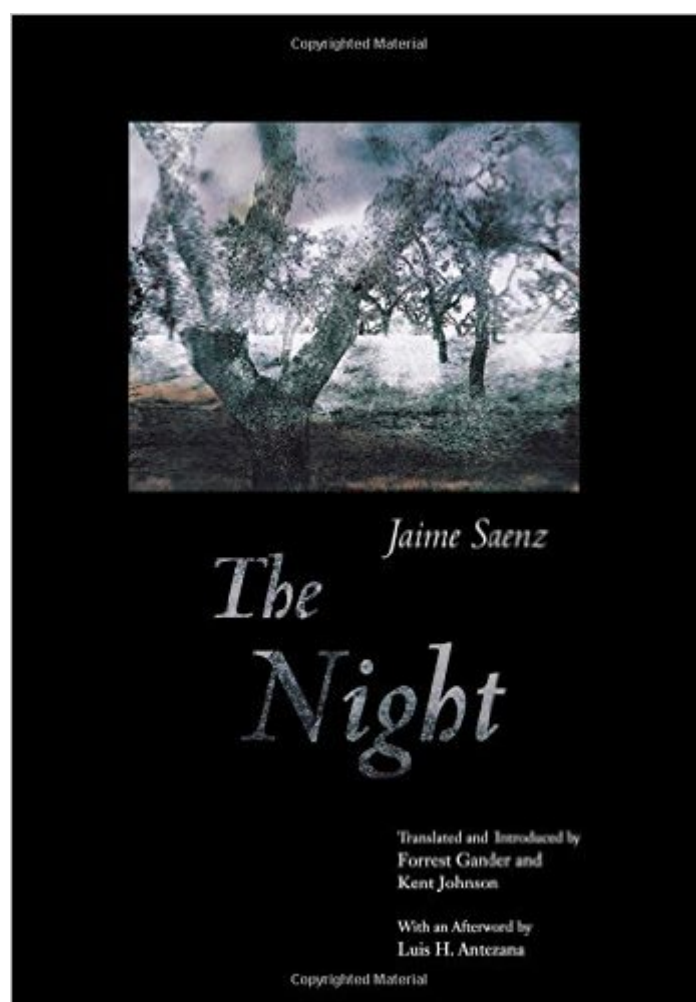


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The Night (Facing Pages)



Synopsis

Jaime Saenz is arguably the greatest Bolivian writer of the twentieth century. His poetry is apocalyptic, transcendent, hallucinatory, brilliant--and, until recently, available only in Spanish. Forrest Gander and Kent Johnson's translations of Saenz's work have garnered much-deserved attention and acclaim. Here for the first time in English they give us his masterpiece, *The Night*, Saenz's most famous poem and the last he wrote before his death in 1986. An unusual man, Saenz lived his whole life in La Paz, Bolivia, seldom venturing far from the city and its indigenous culture that feature so prominently in his writings. He sought God in unlikely places: slum taverns, alcoholic excess, the street. Saenz was nocturnal. He once stole a leg from a cadaver and hid it under his bed. On his wedding night he brought home a panther. In this epic poem, Saenz explores the singular themes that possessed him: alcoholism, death, nightmares, identity, otherness, and his love for La Paz. The poem's four movements culminate in some of the most profoundly mystical, beautiful, and disturbing passages of modern Latin American poetry. They are presented here in this faithful and inspired English translation of the Spanish original. Complete with an introduction by the translators that paints a vivid picture of the poet's life, and an afterword by Luis H. Antezana, a notable Bolivian literary critic and close friend of Saenz, this bilingual edition is the essential introduction to one of the most visionary and enigmatic poets of the Hispanic world.

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Customer Reviews

Aside from the fascinating Byronic legend of Saenz, the brooding and evocative work simply stands on its own. Bilingual editions are a must, particularly when discovering a poet for the first time, and Saenz' work lends itself to the English tongue in this laudable translation. Both hallucinatory and visionary, Saenz' poetry traverses the dark cthonic landscapes of the psyche. The Night begins and ends with the speaker of the poem, in the back of the skull, drunk on both alcohol and 'I', longing, bleeding for the revelations of the beyond.

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