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Jiménez, Juan Ramón (1881-1958)

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Jiménez, Juan Ramón (1881–1958)

One of 20th-century Spain's most noted poets, he was born in Moguer, Andalusia. When the Spanish Civil War broke out (1936), Jiménez and his wife, Zenobia Camprubí, left Spain and spent the rest of their lives in Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the United States. In 1956, he received the *Nobel Prize in Literature.

For Jiménez, poetry provided the means to reach beauty, knowledge, and eternity. He dedicated his life to revising his work, which he wrote for a selected minority, not the general public. His first poems show the influence of Gustavo Adolfo *Bécquer's postromanticism in recurring themes of solitude, melancholy, time, and death. Important titles of this period include *Arias tristes* (1903; Sad Arias) and *Jardines lejanos* (1904; Distant Gardens). Between 1908 and 1915, poetry collections like *La soledad sonora* (1911; Audible Solitude) continue his introspective and meditative tone, but embrace **modernismo* with the use of colors, rich adjectives, and lengthy lines in his verse. In this period he writes the lyrical prose *Platero y yo* (1914; *Platero and I*, 2004), where the main character, a little donkey, symbolizes the simple joys of life.

Diario de un poeta recién casado (1916; *Diary of a Newlywed Poet*, 2004) starts a new phase in his poetry. He has eliminated sensory figures, rhyme, and anecdotes to convey his spiritual experiences in short poems. Subsequent books, such as *Piedra y cielo* (1919; Stone and Sky) and *La estación total* (1923–1936; Total Season), continue this simplification of form along with the search for the universe's essence.

In the last period of his poetry, Jiménez tends toward mysticism or metaphysics, using free verses and hermetic vocabulary. In *En el otro costado* (1936–1942; In the Other Side) and *Dios deseado y deseante* (1948–1949; *God Desired and Desiring*, 2000), the poet looks for God, who represents nature and eternity. For Jiménez, God exists in the universe and also inhabits his being, for he creates God within himself. "Espacio" (1941–1954; "Space," 1988), an outstanding poem of this period, employs lyrical prose and free associations to recount many memories of the poet's life.

Jiménez's poetry became an exemplary model for "pure poets" who understand poetry as the search for beauty and the absolute. He also exerted decisive influence on the first poem collections by Spain's *Generation of 1927.

Iker González-Allende

See also Exile Literature by Spanish Civil War Émigrés.

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