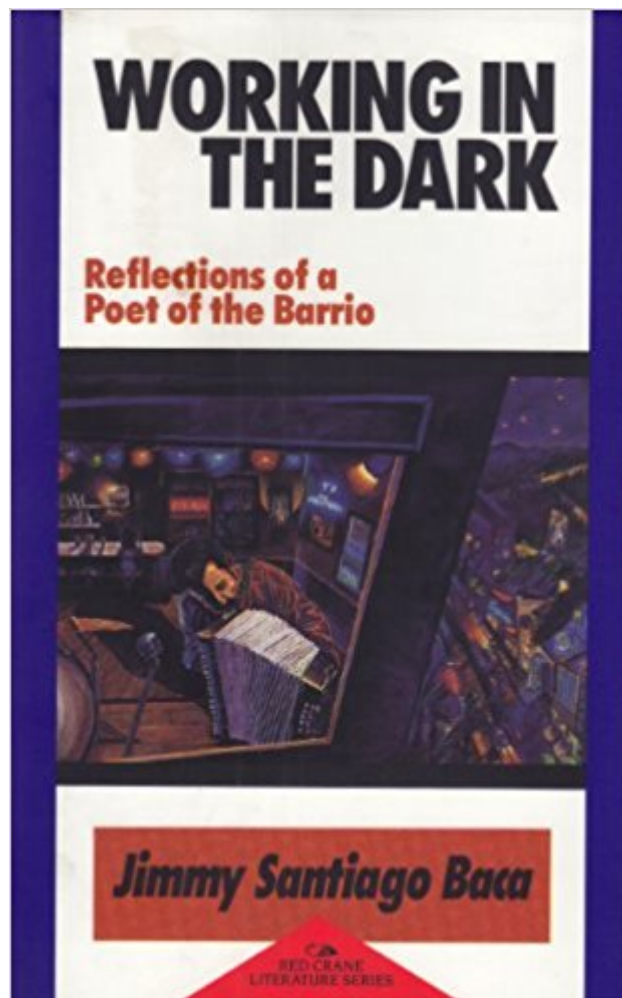




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Working In The Dark: Reflections Of A Poet Of The Barrio (Red Crane Literature Series)



Synopsis

Baca passionately explores the troubled years of his youth, from which he emerged with heightened awareness of his ethnic identity as a Chicano, his role as a witness for the misunderstood tribal life of the barrio, and his redemptive vocation as a poet.

Book Information

Series: Red Crane Literature Series

Hardcover: 182 pages

Publisher: Red Crane Books; 1st edition (January 1, 2008)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1878610082

ISBN-13: 978-1878610089

Product Dimensions: 5.8 x 0.9 x 8.8 inches

Shipping Weight: 14.6 ounces

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 5 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #598,943 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #134 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Ethnic & National > Hispanic & Latino #657 in Books > Literature & Fiction > United States > Hispanic #2562 in Books > Literature & Fiction > Essays & Correspondence > Essays

Customer Reviews

The story revealed in these mid-life recollections by Chicano poet Baca is absorbing: an orphan child in a New Mexican city or town name not given/MM barrio, poorly schooled, immersed in drugs and petty crime, he only discovered the power of language as a convict, on reading Neruda and Paz: "Their language was the magic that could liberate me from myself, transform me into another person, transport me to other places far away." This volume is less an autobiography than a romantic paean, taking form as a series of essays, to the redemptive, ecstatic capabilities of poetry. Baca sees his vocation in transcendental terms: "I became one with the air and sky, the dirt and the iron and the concrete"; he regards himself as a voice for the poor and oppressed in America. As a self-ordained spokesperson for Chicanos, he is at his best when evoking barrio culture: his stately grandmother, the village cantinas and the quiet solidarity of Mexican workers. The book finally disappoints, however; too many reflections are self-indulgent, gratuitously profane, incoherent or simply lost in torturous metaphors. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Baca is the author of several volumes of poetry, including *Martin* and *Meditations on the South*

Valley (LJ 10/15/87), the 1988 winner of an American Book Award. Baca learned to read and write as a young man in prison; his poetry focuses on prison, darkness, night, myth, and Chicanismo. This is a collection of autobiographical essays exploring his ethnic identity and the process and experience of creation and writing; the essays are permeated with Baca's intensely lyrical sense of the empowerment of literacy and language. Appropriate for comprehensive contemporary poetry collections as well as Chicano literature collections.- Mary Margaret Benson, Linfield Coll. Lib., McMinnville, Ore. Copyright 1992 Reed Business Information, Inc.

Defies description.

" Working In The Dark " by Jimmy Santiago is a full- blown self portrait of survival. It's as much a trip through the mind- jail of Baca's disadvantages and a tossed past as the tale of an autodidact who longs to save himself- through words. Jimmy is a young man working in a hospital on the night shift. Most of the time he is working all by himself, and he always hears weird sounds coming from all over the hospital. Jimmy consider himself to be in a gang in his younger days and as he grows older, he becomes a man and does not want anything to do with a gang. This book will have a great influence on Mexican American men and women because alot of them in this world are gang members and do not realize how much trouble they are getting themselves into. For instance Jimmy knew he would get in trouble with the law if he kept hanging out with gang members all of his life. All gang members should read " Working In The Dark". "Working In The Dark" is the best book I ever read written by an Mexican American author.

Jimmy Santiago Baca's "Working in the Dark" is a novel of extreme importance. Baca gives life and voice to imprisoned people who because of their ethnicity, language, culture, and imprisonment have ben reducaed to cultural and social marginality by the dominant white culture and by those foriegn to Southwestern culture. "Voices From the Dark" is a must read for students of Chicano culture and the Southwest. It is a modern classic which may not be realized as such for decades to come!

Jimmy Santiago Baca talks about his film Blood in Blood Out Bound By Honor. I consider him on the best Chicano Authors of our Time!

Jimmy Baca attempts to talk about his life and his poetry! If you own this book, get the movie, Blood in Blood Out Bound By Honor!

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