

Walking Around with Fante and Bukowski: art, sex, politics and the ups and downs of cultural displacement

Patricio Maya



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Maya's riveting debut collection of essays takes the reader by the heart and throat, and never lets go. Part poetic autobiography, part harbinger of a new critical sensibility to emerge from colliding world cultures, Walking Around with Fante and Bukowski fuses a poet's fire and a journalist's unblinking eye. The essays here unfold as entertainingly as novels. The title piece, "Walking Around with Fante and Bukowski," is a gripping quest to find a remnant of a lost-and-found L.A. literary masterpiece. "Staring into Vaginas," looks at the photographic legacy of a seedy Hollywood strip club and lays bare the rite of strip-tease hidden inside the male psyche. The haunting "It's Always Quiet in the End" celebrates poetry and friendship, and brings us face to face with one of life's deepest secrets. "The New Democracy Struggle" tells the story of three pioneering world bloggers as they fight for democracy in Cuba, China and Iran. "The Brightest, Bluest Swimming Pool Water," is an evocative mosaic-memoir of the writer's cultural dislocation: a one-way jet flight from Ecuador to California at an early age. These and several other pieces written in a prose that charms and dazzles while tackling the big issues of death, ethics, freedom and the purpose of life, make this book an electrifying journey not to be missed.

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