

PROSPECTUS
for a deluxe illustrated edition of a classic of Mexican literature

Pedro Páramo

by
JUAN RULFO

Translated by Margaret Sayers Peden
with an introduction by Alfred Mac Adam
and ten two-color two-sided prints by
ENRIQUE CHAGOYA

The Arion Press is proud to announce the publication in September 2016 of *Pedro Páramo*. The brief and sparely-told tale of the hero's search for his long-dead father, Juan Rulfo's novel is a classic of Latin American literature and the acknowledged precursor of magic realism. Published in 1955 and soon hailed as a work of genius by Jorge Louis Borges and others, it would be the only novel of a man who otherwise lived modestly outside the culture of professional writers.

Susan Sontag expresses the common view that: "Rulfo's novel is not only one of the masterpieces of twentieth-century world literature, but one of the most influential of the century's books." She praises its "sentences, of a bewitching concision and directness that pull the reader into the book," and "have a burnished, already-told quality, like the beginning of a fairy tale." Gabriel Garcia Márquez could recite *Pedro Páramo* by heart. He said that when blocked as a novelist after his first four books, it was only his life-changing discovery of *Pedro Páramo* in 1961 that enabled him to write his masterpiece *One Hundred Years of Solitude*. He noted that all of Rulfo's published writing, put together, "add up to no more than 300 pages; but that is almost as many and I believe they are as durable, as the pages that have come down to us from *Sophocles*."

THE AUTHOR

Juan Rulfo was a screenwriter, a photographer, and a writer known for two books, *El Llano en Llamas*, a collection of short stories published in 1953, and the 1955 novel *Pedro Páramo*. He was born in Apulco, in the Mexican state of Jalisco, in 1918, and died in 1986 in Mexico City. Jalisco's past was violent; virtually the entire Native American population was wiped out during the Spanish Conquest. Likewise, during Rulfo's childhood his family was killed in the revolt of the Cristeros, the ultra-conservative Catholics who rose up against President Plutarco Elías Calles' anti-Church legislation in 1926, murdering teachers to prevent lay education, burning schools, and blowing up railroads. Rulfo spent four years in an orphanage, between his tenth and fourteenth years, then moved at the age of fifteen to Mexico City. Except for occasional visits, he never again lived in Jalisco, which is, significantly, the setting of all of his fiction. He was trained to be a bookkeeper in elementary school but never practiced that profession. He attended secondary school and in 1936 entered the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México, where he studied law and audited courses in literature. For most of his life he supported his wife and four children with jobs unrelated to his artistic vocation, travelling throughout Mexico as an immigration agent and selling tires for Goodrich Euzkadi. From 1952 to 1954 he was enabled to write his two books by a fellowship from the Centro Mexicano de Escritores, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation. He then worked as a civil servant and editor until his death at age 68. Having published his first novel in his forties, to great acclaim, Rulfo never produced another. The Juan Rulfo Foundation, established after his death by his family, holds more than 6,000 negatives of his photographs.

THE ARTIST

Enrique Chagoya is a painter, printmaker, and Professor of Art at Stanford University. Drawing from his experiences living on both sides of the U.S.-Mexico border in the 1970s and in Europe in the 1990s, Chagoya juxtaposes secular, popular, and religious symbols to address the cultural strains between the United States and Latin America, as well as other parts of the world. He uses pop iconography to create deceptively friendly points of entry for serious discussion.

Born in Mexico City, Chagoya studied printmaking at the San Francisco Art Institute and received a MFA from the University of California, Berkeley, in 1997. In 2007 a major survey of his work, “Borderlandia”, was exhibited at the UC Berkeley Art Museum and the Palm Springs Art Museum. In 2013 he had his first traveling survey in Europe. His print retrospective was shown at the Museo Nacional de la Estampa in Mexico City in early 2016. Chagoya is the recipient of awards from the National Endowment for the Arts and National Academy of Arts and Letters.

THE INTRODUCTION

Alfred Mac Adam has contributed a new introduction to this edition of *Pedro Páramo*. Professor of Latin American literature at Barnard College/Columbia University, Mac Adam is an expert on twentieth-century Latin American narrative and has translated novels by Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, José Donoso, Alejo Carpentier, Reinaldo Arenas, Julio Cortázar, Juan Carlos Onetti, Osvaldo Soriano, Alfredo Bryce Echenique, and Jorge Volpi. In 2010, he published an anthology of Jorge Luis Borges’ writings on Argentina, *The Argentine Borges*. His most recent translation, from 2015, is Alejandro Jodorowsky’s memoir-novel *Where the Bird Sings Best*. In 1988, Arion Press commissioned his translation for its edition of the satiric Brazilian novel *The Alienist* by Joaquim Machado de Assis.

THE PRINTS

Enrique Chagoya has made ten prints for the book. They are highly unusual in that they are printed on both sides of thin translucent handmade Japanese paper of a tan-brown color. On the front (recto) are portraits of Mexicans from the late nineteenth to early twentieth centuries, printed in a dark blue. On the back (verso) are backgrounds, printed in dark green. The prints are mounted within sheets of the book paper containing die-cut rectangles suspending the images in mats, so that the viewer sees first the portrait with a ghostly presentation of the background, then turns the page and sees second the background with a ghostly presentation of the portrait. To give you an idea of the effect, we have reproduced

one of the prints, with a tan tint block indicating the exposed area of the Japanese paper that is overprinted, with a portrait in dense blue ink and diluted green ink for the ghostly background. The print reproduction faces a sample page from the novel. The use of translucent paper also allows the text to appear through the images. As Chagoya has written in his artist statement contained in the book, “The drawings are not an illustration of *Pedro Páramo* because the story does not need illustrations. It is more like a visual duet, an instrument playing a counterpoint parallel to the novel.”

THE BOOK

The book is large octavo in format, 12 by 8-1/4 inches, 152 numbered pages (by coincidence the same number of pages as the first edition) for the text and ten unnumbered signatures for the prints, consisting of a sheet folded at the fore-edge, with die-cut windows and an inserted sheet of Japanese handmade paper, making three leaves, which adds six “pages” for a total of 212 pages. The paper is Italian mouldmade Magnani Ingres laid. The Japanese paper for the prints is handmade Arakaji kozo. The type, printed by letterpress, is Kennerley Old Style, designed by Frederic W. Goudy, composed and cast in Monotype, with handset type for display. An unusual feature of the design of this book is that all chapters end at the bottom of a page. Each chapter also begins at the bottom of a page. The binding is Smyth-sewn with handsewn silk endbands, with a three-piece cloth cover, green on the sides and blue on the spine, foil stamped on the sides with roundels designed by Enrique Chagoya and stamped on the spine with titling. The book is presented in a slipcase. Each book is signed by the artist.

THE EXTRA PRINT

An extra print has been made by Enrique Chagoya to accompany the book. It is entitled “Nahui Olin”, the name of the twentieth-century Mexican painter and poet whose head is depicted in the print. The paper is handmade Japanese Yame Kozo Hadaura. It is a nine-color relief print, printed from photopolymer plates in black, blue, green, and white inks. The image size is 20-1/2 by 14 inches; the sheet

size is 24 by 18 inches. The print is presented in a tube with documentation on the front. Each print is signed by the artist.

THE EDITION

This is the one hundred and seventh publication of the Arion Press. The edition for sale is three hundred numbered copies and twenty-six lettered copies for complimentary distribution. The price of the book is \$850. The extra print is in an edition of thirty for sale, numbered 1/30 to 30/30, and five artist proofs, numbered AP 1/5 to AP 5/5. The price of the extra print is \$1,500. The extra print is sold with a copy of the book, making the total price \$2,350. A portion of the edition is reserved for Arion Press subscribers, individuals, and institutions committed to purchasing the annual series of publications and receiving a 30% discount. For further information on this publication and subscription terms, contact:

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