



El deli latino (Spanish Edition)

Judith Ortiz Cofer

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This is a Spanish-language edition of *The Latin Deli*, Judith Ortiz Cofer's prizewinning collection of short stories, personal essays, and poems. A work rich in longing, love, and remembrance, *El deli latino* opens a door into the lives of the Puerto Rican immigrants who live in or near an urban New Jersey tenement known as "El Building." The book was selected by Rita Dove, Ashley Montague, and Henry Louis Gates Jr. to receive the Anisfield-Wolf Book Award, which recognizes work that has made "important contributions to our understanding of racism or our appreciation of the rich diversity of human cultures."

In the poem from which the book takes its title, a "woman of no-age" presides over a small store whose wares--Bustelo coffee, jamón y queso, "green plantains hanging in stalks like votive offerings"--must satisfy, however imperfectly, those who hunger for their island home. In the story "Nada," an anguished mother whose son has been killed in Vietnam refuses the consolation of her neighbors and the medals offered by the government ("Tell the Mr. President of the United States what I say: No, gracias."). Cofer's essay "The Paterson Public Library" recalls how, in books, she found refuge and solace from the outside world.

El deli latino transcends the particulars of the expatriate experience to speak universal truths about the mysteries of desire, the quest for knowledge, and the struggle to reconcile opposing selves.

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