

Odes to Public Libraries

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Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico. June 20, 1995

Dedicated to Carolina Muela Rodríguez

I

The blind person would like to see
the one who sees would like to read
and you who are not blind
and are able to read
come to the public library,
from its books a lot more
you will learn
even if you see a little
or cannot read.

II

My parents learnt
from their teachers
their teachers learnt
from other teachers.

And where have all the teachers learnt from?

From schools and libraries.

III

When kid she/he drank from its waters
When younger she/he drank from its waters
When grownup she/he drank from its waters
When older she/he is still drinking from its waters
Finally she/he died, but the waters kept uprising
from the eternal spring source of knowledge:

the library

let us drink from its waters!

satisfy our thirst!

IV

In Ancient Era

it lived in its houses.

In Modern Era

still lived in its houses.

In the Nuclear Era

still keeps on living in its houses.

Today like in History

knowledge lives in the libraries

let us go after it.

V

Out of clay, papyrus or wax

in boards, rolls or tables,

out of palimpsestus

in duplex, triplex or multiplex codices

out of manuscripts or printed paper

hard or softbounded

out of celluloid

in microformats or diskettes

out of silica and laser

in CD-ROM or online

in any time

in any form or material

but the book keeps on being the king.

VI

At home we learn to walk and to speak

at school we learn to read and write

but in the library we learn

to fly to outer space

to travel through time

to know about our planet,

people and nature around us

from here and far away.

VII

I opened the doors from the past,
also I opened the ones from the present
and I am also able to open the doors from all
the rivers and seas, hills and mountains
jungles and forests from all over the Earth;
also I am able to open the ones
from all the planets, satellites and galaxies
I could open them yesterday,
I can do it today,
and I can do it tomorrow
since I am immortal
I am the key of knowledge
I am your library
come and take me
and open all the doors
your imagination wants.

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Poem written originally in Spanish --on the 20 of June 1995-- to participate in radio and television spots of Monterrey, Nuevo Leon, Mexico to attract children and their parents to visit and read in the public libraries of the Nuevo Leon State Public Libraries Network at the invitation of its coordinator of that time, Mr. Bernardo Flores Flores (ex head of the School of Philosophy and Letters of the University Autonomous University of Nuevo Leon).

History of publications of **Odas a las Bibliotecas Públicas: = Odes to Public Libraries**

complete in English at:

Muela Meza, Zapopan Martin (2000). "Odes to Public Libraries". **The One-Person Library**. Cleveland, OH: Information Bridges International, (Section Around the World 3), Vol. 17, No. 4, August 2000, p. 9 & 10.

complete in English at:

Muela Meza, Zapopan Martin (2001). "Odes to Public Libraries." **Library Juice: On the Intersection of Libraries, Politics, and Culture..** Vol. 4, No. 13, 11 abril 2001. [En línea]

http://libr.org/juice/issues/vol4/LJ_4.13.html#11.

partially in Spanish at:

Muela Meza, Zapopan Martin (2001). "Odas a las Bibliotecas Públicas." **La Polilla: Publicación Mensual de la Biblioteca Nacional José Martí, La Habana, Cuba**, Año 4, No. 38-39, mayo-junio 2001, p. 14. [Accesible en línea] <http://www.bnjm.cu/polilla/2001/05-06/bibliotecario.htm>.

Last update of reprints up to: 2006091301.