



Zama (New York Review Books Classics)

Antonio Di Benedetto

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Zama (New York Review Books Classics) Antonio Di Benedetto
An NYRB Classics Original

First published in 1956, *Zama* is now universally recognized as one of the masterpieces of modern Argentine and Spanish-language literature.

Written in a style that is both precise and sumptuous, weirdly archaic and powerfully novel, *Zama* takes place in the last decade of the eighteenth century and describes the solitary, suspended existence of Don Diego de Zama, a highly placed servant of the Spanish crown who has been posted to Asunción, the capital of remote Paraguay. There, eaten up by pride, lust, petty grudges, and paranoid fantasies, he does as little as he possibly can while plotting his eventual transfer to Buenos Aires, where everything about his hopeless existence will, he is confident, be miraculously transformed and made good.

Don Diego's slow, nightmarish slide into the abyss is not just a tale of one man's perdition but an exploration of existential, and very American, loneliness. *Zama*, with its stark dreamlike prose and spare imagery, is at once dense and unforeseen, terse and fateful, marked throughout by a haunting movement between sentences, paragraphs, and sections, so that every word seems to emerge from an ocean of things left unsaid. The philosophical depths of this great book spring directly from its dazzling prose.

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