

Behind the vignette...: The Edge of the Storm

By: Magdalena García Ramírez

Note: The translation into English is carried out through the use of software, so there may be discrepancies with the usual use of this language, we appreciate your understanding in this regard.

“At the edge of the storm” is a peasant expression that means the moment when the rain starts, and—in a very common figurative sense—the imminence or beginning of an event. Those who prefer can title this book In a Place of the Archbishopric, The Old Regime, or in any similar way. Its pages have no prior plot; These are lives – one of the protagonists calls them marbles – that roll, that are left to roll in a narrow limit of time and space, in a place in the Archbishopric, whose name it is not important to remember.” Agustín Yáñez

In 1997, Correos de México distinguished with a stamp (Fig.1) the 50th anniversary of the first edition of the book *The edge of the storm*, by Agustín Yáñez.



Fig.1 SC#2033 (1997)

On the stamp, the author's face stands out in a left lateral close-up and in the middle, in the background, the illustration of the original cover of the book (Fig.2), the work of Julio Prieto (1), as well as the interior illustrations.

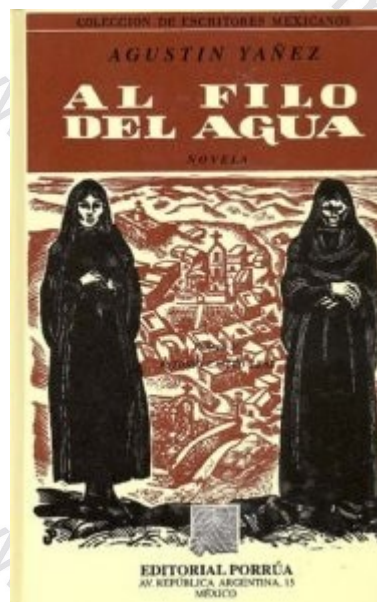


Fig.2 Original book cover

The book was published for the first time in 1947, by Editorial Porrúa. The second edition was 8 years later, in 1955. The third edition was in 1962, with a circulation of 3,000 copies. The range of time elapsed between editions indicates that in its beginnings the book had a slow acceptance, something understandable in the context of Mexican society in 1947, but it is considered "a decisive novel for contemporary Mexican literature... Fifty years later the novel legitimizes its importance for today's reader" (2).

The novel takes place in a lost town in the state of Jalisco where apparently nothing ever happens, in a period of time between Easter 1909 and November 1910, hence the title, because it is on the verge of change, of a devastating and very long event like the Mexican Civil War that would mark a before and after in the lives of many people; "...A novel of transition, where the revolution only occurs very, very late in the book, not only a revolution of the peasants but a revolution against the church, the entrenched way of life. A complex study of the times and conditions of the early 20th century..." (3).

"*The edge of the storm* is the most harmonious novel written in Mexico so far in the 20th century. The story of men and women who confuse religion with fanaticism, virtue with the death of desire and sin with common life and current... The style, the structure, the creation of characters, the atmosphere in which the events take place are perfect." (4).

According to the reading blog *goodreads.com* *The edge of the storm*, it has an edition in French (1961), another in Croatian (2020), and multiple editions and reprints in English, the most recent edition in the English language being the Kindle edition (5), on May 18, 2011; in the literary circles of the United States of America it aroused a lot of interest and continues to arouse it.

The author.-

Agustín Yáñez, author of this book was born in Guadalajara, Jalisco in 1904, his family had roots in Yahualica (Fig. 3), Jalisco and because of that it is said that the novel is set in this place.



Fig. 3 Memorial in Yahualica, Jalisco for *At the edge of the storm*

He obtained a law degree in 1929 from the School of Jurisprudence in his native Guadalajara and a master's degree and doctorate in Philosophy from the National Autonomous University of Mexico in 1951. His professional career spanned between politics and literature. He was Secretary of Public Education throughout the six-year term (1964-1970) of President Gustavo Díaz Ordaz. Without a doubt, his emblematic and most recognized work as a writer is *The edge of the storm*. He died at age 76 in Mexico City in January 1980 (Fig. 4).



Fig. 4 Agustín Yáñez

Conclusion.-

Reading this book in the current era will have a very different meaning and analysis than that of its first readers at the end of the 1940s of the twentieth century, because they were still close to the social and religious stereotypes of the beginning of the century and strongly subordinated to informal power of religious representatives. This work has transcended time and is undoubtedly worth rereading or reading for the first time.

Notes.-

- 1 Julio Prieto (1912-1977) is distinguished as an illustrator, set designer and academic. He received multiple awards and distinctions for his professional career; the Xola theater in Mexico City was renamed in his honor with his name.
- 2 Op. Cit. in: Memoria e interpretación de Al filo del agua (YJB) en Enciclopedia de la Literatura en México.
- 3 Op. Cit in: <https://messybooker.wordpress.com/2020/06/15/the-edge-of-the-storm-agustin-yanez-tr-ethel-brinton/>
- 4 Emmanuel Carballo (1929-2014) in Protagonistas de la literatura mexicana
- 5 A Kindle edition refers to digitized content, accessible for reading through Amazon's proprietary format on its electronic readers (called Kindle) and other authorized devices.

Bibliography.-

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