



Elegy for Cesar Chavez

Rudolfo A. Anaya

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The heroic life of labor and civil rights activist César Chávez greatly influenced the political and creative thinking of famed Chicano novelist Rudolfo Anaya. After Chávez' death in 1992, Anaya wrote this poem eulogizing the man and his life's work. Echoing Shelley's elegy on the death of John Keats, the poem expresses the grief of la gente, but closes by calling all peoples together to continue the non-violent struggle for freedom and justice. The book—endorsed by the César Chávez Foundation—includes an essay by Anaya detailing the effect that Chávez had on his own vision and a chronology of Chávez' life. Powerful super realistic illustrations by Gaspar Enriquez bring home the significance of César Chávez to the American cultural landscape.

"This elegy captures the love of farm workers and the Latino community, all who yearn for justice, for this irreplaceable hero. César's life is the *lucero*, the light that provides vision to the path, with the glow of energy generated by the struggle. This elegy invites all to march in César's path, to attain the hope and promise of his legacy—a legacy made simple by César so everyone can participate in the quest for justice. César's *lucero* spotlighted the attainable victory, the solution to end the suffering of farm workers, a union, "the farm workers' house of justice" where those that feed the world can end their suffering and have a final voice over their lives and destinies." —Dolores Huerta, *co-founder of the United Farm Workers*

Rudolfo Anaya (his classic novel *Bless Me, Ultima* has 1,000,000-plus in print) has earned international acclaim for his skillful mingling of realism, fantasy and myth while exploring the experiences of Hispanics in the American Southwest. Besides being the author of numerous novels and children's books, Mr. Anaya has been called "the godfather of Chicano literature" and "un hijo del pueblo" for his work as an activist for the literature of his people and his region. He lives in Albuquerque, New Mexico.

Artist **Gaspar Enriquez** is nationally known for his super-realistic, airbrush paintings of young men and women from the barrios of his hometown El Paso. Using the same technique, he collaged images of César Chávez, farm workers, police, newspaper article, fields of grapes and icons of La Raza and Aztlán to create the ambiance of the life and times of this hero.

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