

Cholla Needles Arts & Literary Library

a non-profit literary corporation

Our publications are available locally at Raven's Book Shoppe, 69225 29 Palms Highway, Twentynine Palms CA 92277

send your poetry/short stories/photos/art/essays to editor@chollaneedles.com

(Move to ...)

FRIDAY, APRIL 17, 2026

Review: Eternidades by Juan Ramón Jiménez / A. F. Moritz

[Eternidades / Eternities \(1916-1917\)](#)

Juan Ramón Jiménez

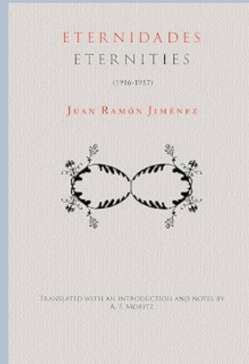
Translated by A. F. Moritz (2026)

The Bitter Oleander Press

4983 Tall Oaks Drive

Fayetteville, New York 13066-9776

ISBN 979-8990822825 (330 pages, \$28.00)



In 3rd year High School Spanish the class was given a wonderful prose poem to translate into English, with the directive to make sure the English could be easily read by an eight year old. That was well over 55 years ago, but the lessons still live close to my heart. The lines were magic and turning magical Spanish into magical English was great fun as well as interesting. The first line will give you the flavor – and don't allow your browser to translate this for you, it's important you read this aloud in the original Spanish:

Platero es un burro pequeño, peludo, suave; tan blando por fuera, que se diría todo de algodón, que no lleva huesos. Sólo los espejos de azabache de sus ojos son duros cual dos escarabajos de cristal negro.

You can see why the assignment was made, and why the students loved the challenge. The book is called *Platero y yo* by Juan Ramón Jiménez (1914). My next meeting with Jiménez was in a college English lit class, with a group of "translations" by W. S. Merwin. The work was flat, dry, and close to meaningless. Instead of seeking out the original work, as a student I trusted that the great W. S. Merwin had done his best to bring the poetry to life, and I set Jiménez aside and focused on

other poets to investigate and study. *Platero y yo* was so magical that I simply assumed Jiménez had lost his desire to bring magical enchantment to the page.

Which brings us to this brand new translation of poetry by Jiménez by A. F. Moritz. The English is fervent and alive, and this printing includes the original language on the facing page. I am sorry I had neglected Jiménez for all these years, and I am very happy to be re-introduced to his power in my elder years.

I went back to my stored boxes of college papers and found the class assignments, and discovered that in the early 1950's Merwin was what we now term a dictionary translator. Today Google translate does not do a great job, but does do a better job than Merwin did because Merwin had a very rudimentary knowledge of Spanish grammar, and was simply translating word by word from a dictionary instead of feeling by feeling from the heart. At that time Merwin was translating famous world poets for the major magazines from 7 different languages. I forgive my ignorant young self, and now know that it was foolish to not follow up and discover the brilliance of Jiménez in his original work.

Poem 69:

*How I hate the me of yesterday!
How I'm sick and tired of tomorrow
in which I have to hate the me of today!*

*Oh what a heap of dried up flowers,
this whole life!*

Sounds a bit depressing, but look close – self-realization – and watch how just a few pages later –

from Poem 87:

*I live free
in the center
of myself.*

The entire volume is teaching me to focus not simply on Eternity, but on Eternities! The poems evolve and

bring me to a truer understanding of myself, and the ups and downs of self-realization. Thus, I can forgive the young man who did not investigate further, and be enthused to meet the work of A. F. Moritz and be thankful for this volume which has spent 30 days with me already, and is smiling as I plan to keep it close by for the next few years re-reading the journey Jiménez laid out for his readers.

from Poem 103:

*Come, come to me, I want to give you life
with my memory, as I die!*

And from Poem 137:

*fed by the light with my memory,
alone and fresh in the air of life!*

[Click here to purchase on-line.](#)

at 2:33:00 PM

Share

No comments:

[Post a Comment](#)

Note: Only a member of this blog may post a comment.



Home



[View web version](#)

Powered by Blogger.