



The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano

Margarita Engle

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A lyrical biography of a Cuban slave who escaped to become a celebrated poet.

Born into the household of a wealthy slave owner in Cuba in 1797, Juan Francisco Manzano spent his early years by the side of a woman who made him call her Mama, even though he had a mama of his own. Denied an education, young Juan still showed an exceptional talent for poetry. His verses reflect the beauty of his world, but they also expose its hideous cruelty.

Powerful, haunting poems and breathtaking illustrations create a portrait of a life in which even the pain of slavery could not extinguish the capacity for hope.

The Poet Slave of Cuba is the winner of the 2008 Pura Belpre Medal for Narrative and a 2007 Bank Street - Best Children's Book of the Year.

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