In 2012, Gávea-Brown brought out a handsome and valuable anthology of Portuguese-American poetry. At 266 pages, it contains an enormous variety of poets: the nineteenth-century Emma Lazarus, a descendant of the first Portuguese Jewish population in the United States, as well as younger contemporary poets such as Carlos Matos and Millicent Borges Accardi. The selection also includes the more established names of Frank X. Gaspar, Sam Pereira, Lara Gularte, Art Coelho, and George Monteiro himself. The authors from towns, cities, and regions as diverse as New Bedford and Fall River, Massachusetts, New York, and California form an entire chain whose associations can eventually be discerned within the construct of a common Lusophone heritage. As generation succeeds generation, this communal bond develops from adaptations or adjustments to fluctuating circumstances. Just like an atoll of islands in the mid-Atlantic, new and previously hidden floes emerge from within the American continent. A poetry of subtle connections and at the same time complex disjunctions furnish the utterances of a new reality.

What is especially striking is not simply the appearance of these talented younger writers or the presence of the more distinctive and established ones, but the criterion used to make the selection in the first place. More specifically, Alice Clemente and George Monteiro have given prominence to works conceived and fashioned on the basis of aesthetic merit rather than relying on the more specifically cultural anchor of identity with all its attendant complexity. While such systematic integrity does run the risk of omitting
certain poets of note, it also renders the service of underscoring many of the
more significant voices in over a hundred years of American-Portuguese
poetry, revealing a measure of sensitivity to the assorted clusters of both
personal and social memories and experiences.

In this manner a clear vantage point for genuine poetry is established.

Given the extraordinary richness of the poems and poets selected, it
should be said that the compilers have chosen to represent poets whose native
language by birth or early acquisition is English. The anthology has thus
excluded such names as Jorge de Sena, José Rodrigues Miguéis, Alberto
Lacerda, João Teixeira de Medeiros, José Baptista Brites, Alberto Machado de
Rosa, José Costa and Luís Amorim de Sousa, some of whom have written in
Portuguese on themes of import related to American topics. However, this
exclusion is not intended to underestimate the importance of such figures but
rather to restrict the selection to those poems composed in the English
language. One reason for this focus is that they are also asking the question:
how does one write Portuguese-American poetry in the twenty-first century?
Many of the poets still recognize their ancestry as a significant part of a
perspective that frequently adds intensity to the feelings evoked and also
establishes a strong bond in terms of its interpretive sense of continuity.
However, the main vehicle for their communication is no longer Portuguese
itself even as the English language is clearly enriched by the Portuguese echos
and resonances.

We owe a debt of gratitude to Alice Clemente and George Monteiro for
such an outstanding work. Their own commitment to good poetry with its rich
account of varied experiences succeeds in expressing the palpable substance of
the Portuguese-American poetic accomplishment. The collection is able to
eschew the dangers of more fossilized or overly sentimental poetry or out-
dated traditionalism in order to provide a more creative and critical nuance and
depth. The basis is established for a historically changing and evolving group of
poets linked by a series of common historical memories and unmistakable
deserves to find its way to the poetry sections of libraries everywhere.
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