



Beyond The Silver River: South American Encounters

Jimmy Burns

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During the five years Jimmy Burns was based in Buenos Aires, which resulted in his award-winning study of the Falklands War and its aftermath, *The Land That Lost Its Heroes*, he also embarked on further-flung journeys in Argentina, Brazil, Peru, Ecuador, Bolivia and Chile. 'Each South American country is idiosyncratic - it brings out our individual fantasies and forces us to interpret anew,' writes Burns. Certainly to travel with him is to trace the footprints of history - conquest and subjugation, defiance and hope - yet to encounter at each turn a fresh observation, the unexpected.

He conducts us by steam train up the Andes and down to the treacherous depths of a Bolivian tin mine. We find a hotbed of Argentine loyalties in Tierra del Fuego, beaches of bodies beautiful in Brazil and Peruvian streets where fanatical Sendero Luminoso guerrillas wage a permanent power struggle with the military.

Burns introduces us to Sixto Vazquez, Indian intellectual with an unshakeable faith in legend and animism; to Tina, White Russian Duchess of Platinov, who now presides over an eerie domain of enormous moths in the Ecuadorian rain forest; to Father Renato Hevia, the editor of a Jesuit magazine in Chile who is harassed and detained if he fails to mention Pinochet in even one edition.

To this journey of discovery Jimmy Burns brings all the clarity of vision and eloquence of expression for which he was awarded the 1988 Somerset Maugham Award for Non-fiction.

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