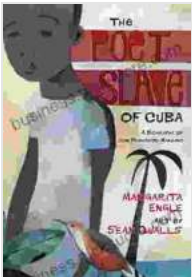


# The Poet Slave of Cuba: Juan Francisco Manzano, a Voice for the Oppressed



## The Poet Slave of Cuba: A Biography of Juan Francisco Manzano (Pura Belpre Medal Book Author (Awards))

by Margarita Engle

★★★★☆ 4.2 out of 5

Language : English  
File size : 1556 KB  
Text-to-Speech : Enabled  
Screen Reader : Supported  
Enhanced typesetting : Enabled  
Word Wise : Enabled  
Print length : 193 pages



Juan Francisco Manzano was born a slave in Cuba in 1797. He was the son of an African slave and a white Spanish plantation owner. Manzano's early life was marked by hardship and brutality. He was forced to work long hours in the fields and was often beaten by his master. Despite these hardships, Manzano developed a love of learning and poetry. He secretly taught himself to read and write, and he began to write poems about his experiences as a slave.

In 1821, Manzano's poems were published in a collection entitled *Poesías líricas*. The poems were a critical success, and they brought Manzano to the attention of the Cuban literary community. Manzano's poems were praised for their beauty and their powerful indictment of slavery. He became a leading voice for the abolition of slavery in Cuba.

In 1835, Manzano was granted his freedom by his master. He continued to write poetry and to speak out against slavery. He also became involved in the Cuban independence movement. In 1844, he was exiled from Cuba for his political activities. Manzano spent the rest of his life in exile, but he continued to write poetry and to advocate for the freedom of his people.

Juan Francisco Manzano was a remarkable man. He overcame tremendous adversity to become a poet, an abolitionist, and a voice for the oppressed. His poetry is a powerful testament to the human spirit and to the indomitable will for freedom.

## **Manzano's Poetry**

Manzano's poetry is characterized by its beauty, its emotional intensity, and its powerful indictment of slavery. His poems are often written in a simple, straightforward style, but they are filled with vivid imagery and powerful emotions. Manzano's poetry gives a voice to the voiceless, and it offers a glimpse into the horrors of slavery.

One of Manzano's most famous poems is "El Esclavo" ("The Slave"). The poem describes the life of a slave in Cuba. The slave is forced to work long hours in the fields, and he is often beaten and mistreated. The poem ends with a powerful cry for freedom:

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***“Oh, my God! when will this enslavement cease? When will justice reign in this unfortunate land? When will the chains of slavery fall? When will the Cuban slave be free?”***

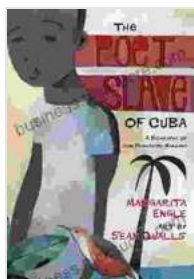
Manzano's poetry had a profound impact on the Cuban literary community. His poems helped to raise awareness of the horrors of slavery, and they inspired other Cuban poets to write about the issue. Manzano's poetry also played a role in the Cuban independence movement. His poems helped to unite Cubans against Spanish rule, and they inspired many Cubans to fight for their freedom.

## Manzano's Legacy

Juan Francisco Manzano is considered one of the most important poets in Cuban history. His work was instrumental in the abolition of slavery in Cuba, and it continues to inspire people around the world. Manzano's poetry is a powerful reminder of the horrors of slavery, and it is a testament to the human spirit's capacity for freedom.

Manzano's legacy is not only literary, but also political. He was a tireless advocate for the abolition of slavery, and he played a role in the Cuban independence movement. Manzano's work helped to shape Cuba's history, and he is considered a national hero in Cuba today.

Juan Francisco Manzano is a towering figure in Cuban history. He was a poet, an abolitionist, and a voice for the oppressed. His work has had a profound impact on Cuba, and it continues to inspire people around the world. Manzano's legacy is one of freedom, justice, and human dignity.



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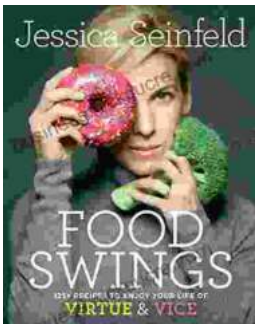
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