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## Cool Auditor

### Poems by Ray Gonzalez

*Cool Auditor* features Ray Gonzalez's particular brand of magical realism. His vision of the natural world, human relationships, and the difficulties of language reveals itself in memorable and surprising ways in every poem. Loose and circumfluent, this collection of prose poems employs rich imagery and repetition of phrase and sound to create a seemingly-effortless incantatory power.

Humor also plays a large role in these prose poems. His rollicking poem "Affordable Aphorisms" features many bright, humorous insights, including "If you had a normal childhood, your biographers will label it The Age of Reason." and "To exile yourself in writing is to wear the wrong deodorant for years." However, this levity is always counter-balanced by his deep empathy with his subjects, with animals, humans, and their surroundings. Ray Gonzalez's poetry reminds us that the mysteries of the everyday may not be solved, but through the careful use of syllable and silence they might reveal, if only momentarily, their totemic power.

#### THE SMALL SEARCHLIGHT

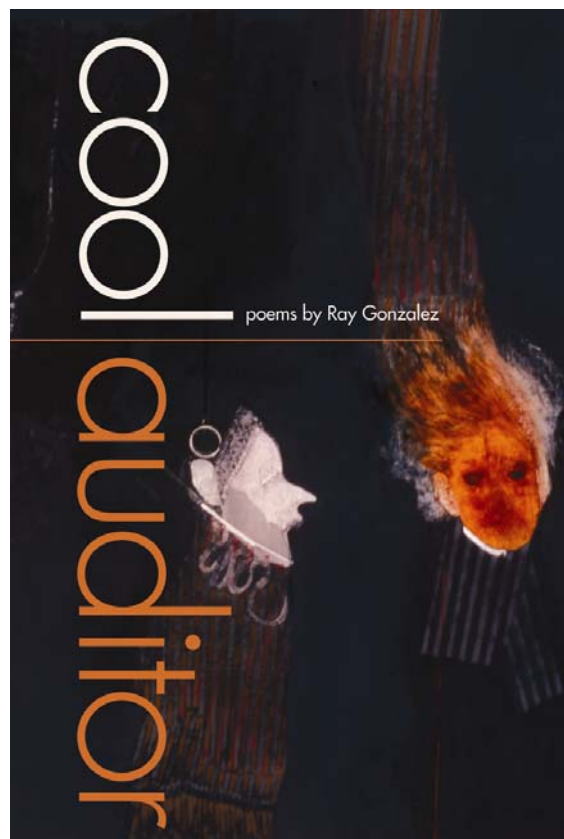
The small searchlight comes out of nowhere and scans my brain. When I open my eyes, it is yesterday and I am innocent of every crime, the beam searching that far back to see what makes me afraid. The light explores all possibilities, even takes apart my desert landscape and rearranges it to resemble the planet Mars. The searchlight pinpoints the places where I refuse to go, or even think about, areas of my guilty life silhouetted in the stark beam, my secrets and hidden ideas refusing the illumination, this small light acting as if probing is everything— all matter and existence narrowed down to a touch of fire directed from unknown sources, my attempts to dodge it futile because the laser is already inside my head and escape would mean I would not be there the moment the torch lights the fuse and I become a different man.

#### About the Poet

Ray Gonzalez is the author of ten books of poetry, and his other titles from BOA include *Consideration of the Guitar: New and Selected Poems* (2005); *The Hawk Temple at Tierra Grande* (2002), which won the 2003 Minnesota Book Award in Poetry; *Cabato Sentora* (1999); and *The Heat of Arrivals* (1996), winner of the 1997 PEN/Josephine Miles Book Award. He is the author of two books of nonfiction: *Memory Fever* (1999), a memoir about growing up in the Southwest, and *The Underground Heart* (2002), which received the 2003 Carr P. Collins/Texas Institute of Letters Award for the Best Book of Nonfiction. He is also the author of two books of short stories: *The Ghost of John Wayne* (2001) and *Circling the Tortilla Dragon* (2002). His poetry has appeared in the 1999, 2000, and 2003 editions of *The Best American Poetry* and in *The Pushcart Prize: Best of Small Presses 2000*. He received a Lifetime Achievement Award in Literature from the Border Regional Library Association in 2003 and is a Full Professor in the MFA Creative Writing Program at the University of Minnesota in Minneapolis.



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