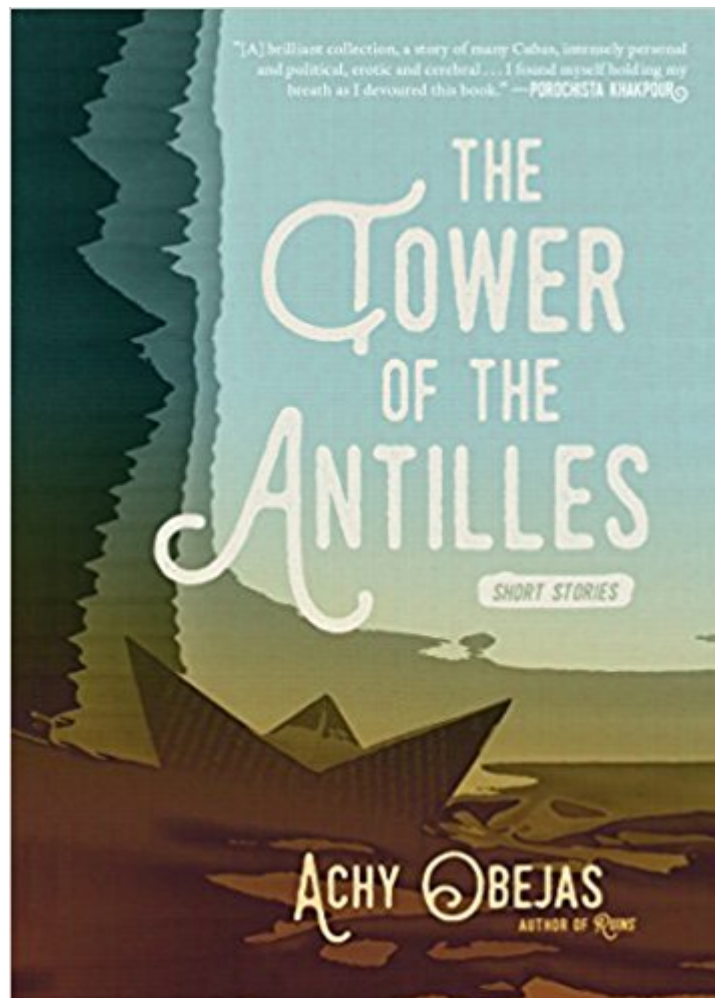


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# The Tower Of The Antilles



## Synopsis

"Questions of personal and national identity percolate through the stories in Obejas's memorable short fiction collection, most of which is set in Cuba, the author's birthplace...These 10 stories show Obejas's talent, illuminating Cuban culture and the innermost lives of her characters."--Publishers Weekly

"By turns searing and subtly magical, the stories in Obejas' vividly imagined collection are propelled by her characters' contradictory feelings about and unnerving experiences in Cuba...For all the human tumult and deftly sketched and reverberating historical and cultural contexts that Obejas incisively creates in these poignant, alarming tales, she also offers lyrical musings on the mysteries of the sea and the vulnerability of islands and the body. Obejas' plots are ambushing, her characters startling, her metaphors fresh, her humor caustic, and her compassion potent in these intricate and haunting stories of displacement, loss, stoicism, and realization."--Booklist

"Obejas's stories demonstrate an acute understanding of being caught between two places and cultures as different as America and Cuba."--Library Journal

"Achy Obejas's collection is about fictional Cuban migrants who never quite escape the land they've left."--Electric Literature

"It's a joy to return to Obejas's work; her prose, crisp, crystalline, and controlled, covering the wide spectrums of anger, desire, longing, and wonder in the face of immigration...Obejas sneaks under the skin, revealing emotions tied up at the dock, cuts the rope, and sets them free. The Tower of the Antilles proves, once again, why Achy Obejas is one of the most important Cuban writers of our time."--The Miami Rail

"This summer is the perfect opportunity to get to know the work of this Cuban-American writer. The stories collected in her new book tell the story of various Cubas--Cuba throughout the ages, Cuba from different perspectives, but always Cuba in all its vibrant, troubled, conflicting beauty."--Barnes & Noble/B&N Reads, included in "12 Must-Read Indie Books Coming This Summer"

"Praise for Achy Obejas: 'Obejas writes like an angel, which is to say: gloriously...one of Cuba's most important writers.'"--Junot Diaz

The Cubans in Achy Obejas's story collection are haunted by islands: the island they fled, the island they've created, the island they were taken to or forced from, the island they long for, the island they return to, and the island that can never be home again. In "Superman," several possible story lines emerge about a 1950s Havana sex-show superstar who disappeared as soon as the revolution triumphed. "North/South" portrays a migrant family trying to cope with separation, lives on different hemispheres, and the eventual disintegration of blood ties. "The Cola of Oblivion" follows the path of a young woman who returns to Cuba, and who inadvertently uncorks a history of accommodation and betrayal among the family members who stayed behind during the revolution. In the title story, "The Tower of the Antilles," an interrogation reveals a series of fantasies about escape and a history of futility. With language that is

both generous and sensual, Obejas writes about existences beset by events beyond individual control, and poignantly captures how history and fate intrude on even the most ordinary of lives.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"Obejas has created some of her most unforgettable characters for the 10 stories that make up this latest release."--*Palette Magazine*, Miami Herald's LGBTQ magazine "Obejas's sentences often glisten with sparkling images."--*Sinkhole Magazine* "Captivating...These conflicts of identity, selfhood, and belonging are braided with lush phrasing and a penchant for details and observations."--*Atticus Review* "Obejas presents heartbreaking dramas in the most elegant language...Obejas strung ten story islands together in *The Tower of the Antilles* to create an archipelago, persuasively articulating the contrast between power and the lack of it--her tales fluently translating the Cuban search for identity."--*Woven Tale Press* "Obejas' deft hand and free-wheeling imagination craft ten stories to be read, then read again out of delight, perplexity, surprise, admiration."--*La Bloga* "For twenty years I've been a fan of the genius Achy Obejas--since I first read *Memory Mambo* in 1996. Obejas has been the model of a writer for me in every way--a master in her aesthetics, an inspiration in her politics, fearless and vital in every page. *The Tower of the Antilles* is another brilliant collection, a story of many Cubas, intensely personal and political, erotic and cerebral. I found myself holding my breath as I devoured this book, as I navigated the various avenues of the body, the blood, and all those seemingly impossible roads that lead to a place we try to call home."--*Porochista Khakpour*, author of *The Last Illusion* "These

stories are like a long dream of many parts, mixed desire, love, longing, anger" Obejas is a master of the human, able to conjure her characters' heartbeats right under your fingertips, their breaths in your ears."--Alexander Chee, author of *The Queen of the Night*"Achy Obejas's new story collection begins and ends with a question: what is your name? The answer is an abounding one. Counterrevolutionaries, the witnesses to the arrival of Columbus's caravels, poets, Superman" the characters in these stories, in all their riveting variety, name themselves as Cuban and are bound in complex ways by the geography of their hearts, if not the geography beneath their feet. An audacious and remarkable read!"--Chantel Acevedo, author of *The Distant Marvels*

Achy Obejas is the author of the critically acclaimed novels *Ruins*, *Days of Awe*, and three other books of fiction. She edited and translated (into English) the anthology *Havana Noir*, and has since translated Junot Diaz, Rita Indiana, Wendy Guerra, and many others. In 2014, she was awarded a USA Ford Fellowship for her writing and translation.

Achy Obejas' slim volume of short stories is a mammoth gift of just 158 pages. Magical, provoking, and different, *THE TOWER OF THE ANTILLES* is bookended by two stories that both introduce and end the author's tales in a kind of mind-boggling and sly way. And, what lies between that first and last story! Obejas writes about the immigrant experience, gay and lesbian life, the Cuban revolution, reality and speculation - all through truly enchanting short stories that twist and turn and surprise. Obejas starts a most traditional sounding tale of a relationship and ends up writing a magnificent piece of noir (not really surprising considering that she was the editor of *HAVANA NOIR*.) She begins another tale with heavily erotic overtones only to end up writing history. The best part about reading this book is discovering Obejas. She has written other books of short stories as well as novels. One can't help but finish *THE TOWER OF THE ANTILLES* without wanting to order more of her books or requesting that the local library stock them. She also has the power to inspire. A creative individual cannot finish her book without feeling inspired to write one; a visual artist will want to paint her words; a dancer may want to choreograph them for the stage. Although Obejas' work may appeal most to lovers of immigrant literature or works by Latin Americans, she will also appeal to the LGBTQ community, and, it is hoped, to just about anyone who values what it is like to be slightly on the edge of the establishment of anything. Is her work "outsider art?" Perhaps. But the more one reads of her, the more one realizes how all of us in some way are on the outside of something. A universal sense of belonging is almost impossible to have, but, through her words,

Obejas comes painfully - and with incredible talent - as very close as possible.

The prose is crystal clear and direct, but the accumulative effect is haunting and moving in ways that you can't always decipher right away. These stories get into your blood stream and stay with you, lingering with you. Add this collection to the list of great literary works about exile and the dark gravitational pull that history exerts on our lives. This is a book you will want to press into the hands of people you love and convince them to read it.

Amig@s, this book will be the standard of short stories de la patria for years to come. It conveniently spans el tiempo de mis abuelos with the contemporary day, el exilio con la isla. I have adopted it for my lit and Latin@ studies courses at Southern Oregon University.

Brilliant, evocative writing by the supremely gifted Achy Obejas.

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