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OCT '91 De Nicolás, Antonio T. The sea tug elegies; Of angels and women, mostly. Paragon House, 1991. 207p index afp ISBN 1-55778-375-6, \$18.95

HUMANITIES
Language and
Literature
English and
American

An acclaimed translator of St. John of the Cross, De Nicolás is also a philosopher, whose *Remembering the God To Come* (1988) demanded interest and praise. "The Sea Tug Elegies" is a long poem to children to claim their crucial position in the world; "Of Angels and Women, Mostly" is a gathering of frankly sensual (but unselfconscious) poems treating the places(s) where flesh and spirit convene, "trying to eroticize religion or redeify Eros," in sections named for the four elements. His versification, highly reminiscent of the sadly underrated Jay Wright, is less urgent, less compact; it operates as supremely rich soliloquy; the turns are not only of speech but of thought. With individual lines incandescent, the poems generally amble, some at length. The method is exegetical; the tone considerative with lyrical elements. The reader is left to mine the dispersed wealth. Erotic/sensual but never febrile, adult but never crude, these poems could not have been produced by a mainstream American. They are illuminated from within by a gift, a skill, a mission, missionary-pagan in a sense. Unlike the critico-prosaic American norm and not for the young, these poems are for anyone adult enough to want vital poetry and willing to meet a fresh new poet halfway.—J. N. Igo Jr., *San Antonio College*

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