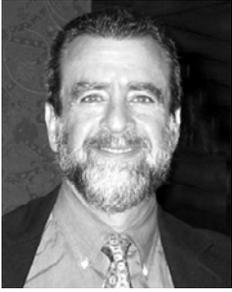


## ABOUT JONATHAN COHEN



Jonathan Cohen is a poet, translator of contemporary Latin American poetry, essayist, and independent scholar. He published his first collection of poetry, *Poems from the Island*, in 1979 with Street Press. About this documentary poetry based on Long Island history, critic

Paul Dolan said: “Jonathan Cohen has re-created a sense of place, given a ‘local habitation and a name’ to an island too often seen as simply a wide shoulder for a highway on which people with no history hurry toward no future.” A current work-in-progress, “Open-Heart Poetry,” is a collection of personal lyrics. Another work-in-progress, “American Journeys,” is a sequence of poems intermixed with translations and prose, which explores the American experience in both historical and contemporary terms.

Cohen’s translations of Latin American poetry include Roque Dalton’s *Small Hours of the Night* (Curbstone, 1996), winner of a 1997 Outstanding Translation-of-the-Year Award presented by the American Literary Translators Association; Pedro Mir’s *Countersong to Walt Whitman & Other Poems* (Azul Editions, 1993), the first—and long overdue—collection of translated poetry by the Dominican Republic’s late poet-laureate; Ernesto Cardenal’s *From Nicaragua, With Love: Poems 1979–1986* (City Lights, 1987), winner of the 1987 Robert Payne Award of the Translation Center at Columbia University; Cardenal’s *With Walker in Nicaragua and Other Early Poems, 1949–1954* (Wesleyan, 1985), about which critic Robert Hass said in *The Washington Post*, “There could hardly be a better introduction to Cardenal than Jonathan Cohen’s beautifully edited and really brilliant translations of his early poems”; Cardenal’s *Zero Hour and Other Documentary Poems* (New Directions, 1980); and Enrique Lihn’s *The Dark Room and Other Poems* (New Directions, 1978). His translation work will appear in Cardenal’s forthcoming *Pluriverse: New and Selected Poems* (New Directions), of which he is editor.

In 1987, Cohen directed actor Edward Asner in a dramatic reading of his translation of Cardenal’s “With Walker in Nicaragua,” which was recorded in Los Angeles and aired nationwide on National Public Radio. The

previous year, Cohen successfully adapted this poem for the stage, and directed actor William Bruehl in a solo performance—as the character of the poem’s Clinton Rollins—at Stony Brook University’s Staller Center for the Arts.

As an essayist, Cohen has explored diverse American topics ranging from natural history to cultural history—from the biological marvel of the horseshoe crab (*Limulus polyphemus*), the “marine scorpion” that’s a living fossil found along the shores of Long Island, to the historic verse of the colonial slave, Jupiter Hammon, whose “Evening Thought” composed on Christmas 1760 became the first African-American poetry publication. Cohen’s collection of essays, “Studies in Pan-American Literature,” earned him a 1989 fellowship in creative nonfiction from the New York Foundation for the Arts. For his study, “William Cullen Bryant: Premier Translator of Latin American Poetry,” he was awarded a grant from the American Council of Learned Societies. His latest work of nonfiction, *A Pan-American Life: Selected Poetry and Prose of Muna Lee* (Wisconsin, 2004), presents his biography of Muna Lee—the first biography of this brilliant figure in the modern cultural history of the Americas—and elucidates the prominent role she played as a poetry translator in the development of Pan-American literature.

Cohen’s poems, translations, and essays have appeared in *MultiCultural Review*, *The New York Times*, *American Poetry Review*, *The Nation*, *The American Voice*, *New Directions in Prose and Poetry*, *Street Magazine*, *Review: Literature and Arts of the Americas*, and *City Lights Review*, among numerous other periodicals. He has received several awards for his writing, including grants from the New York State Council on the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Arts, in addition to those grants and prizes mentioned above. He is a graduate of Columbia University (MFA, Creative Writing, 1976) and Stony Brook University (PhD, English, 1980).

A longtime resident of Long Island and now of Manhattan, Cohen is writer in residence of the surgery department at Stony Brook University, and also a member of the affiliated faculty of Stony Brook’s Latin American and Caribbean Studies Center.

