



The Dog and the Fever

A Perambulatory Novella

Pedro Espinosa

Translated from the Spanish by William Carlos Williams
Edited and with an Introduction by Jonathan Cohen

*First full publication of translation and
commentary by famed American modernist*

The legendary modernist poet William Carlos Williams described this seventeenth-century book as “far more ‘modern’ than ever Hemingway or even Gertie ever thought of being” and “hot as hell besides.” Williams translated this Spanish novella, originally published in 1625, with the help of Raquel Hélène Williams, his Puerto Rican mother. Williams recalled that its biting satire targeting the corruption of the court, the church, and society and driven by comic double entendre made them laugh out loud and amused them tremendously as they worked on the translation. In Williams’s hands, the novella becomes a daring modernist experiment with the poetry of prose and the American idiom. This edition includes Williams’s as-yet unpublished running commentary on the narrative, and an illuminating introduction from editor Jonathan Cohen that contextualizes the work in Williams’s canon.

Pedro Espinosa (1578–1650) was a Golden Age Spanish poet and fiction writer whose works include a famed 1605 anthology of contemporary poets called *Las flores de poetas ilustres de España* (Flowers of Spain’s Illustrious Poets).

William Carlos Williams (1883–1963) is widely recognized as one of the greatest American poets of the twentieth century and as an influential founder of literary modernism. He published some twenty books of poetry as well as seventeen books of prose. His *Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems* won the Pulitzer Prize.

Jonathan Cohen is an award-winning translator of Latin American poetry and scholar of inter-American literature.

“We owe Jonathan Cohen a debt of thanks for bringing to the center of our attention this unexpectedly modern seventeenth-century whirlwind of imagistic language. The accomplished, proto-surreal, avant-garde experimental-ism is helped along by William Carlos Williams’s keen eye and sympathetic ear, and Cohen’s sensitive editing.”

—Edith Grossman, author of *Why Translation Matters*

“William Carlos Williams’s vital English version mirrors Pedro Espinosa’s unsurpassed dog novel related by an eloquently talkative canine.”

—Willis Barnstone, author of *ABC of Translation*

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