

Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100 Poem Analysis

Posted on August 26, 2021

View this essay online:

<https://academic-master.com/alabanza-in-praise-of-local-100-poem-analysis/>

Introduction:

This poem is written by Martin Espada, who pays tribute to the forty-three members of Local 100 who were killed in the 9/11 attacks. These workers were working in the North Tower, and they were present in the World Restaurant of the World Trade Center Building (Espada, 2003).

BODY-A

In the first two stanzas, the poet describes the fast and quick actions of the workers and their dedication to the work. The poet has animated the workers' actions with the metamorphic music of eggs and bread by the cook from Fajardo. The poet has linked the blue eyes of the chef with the Spanish and American invasion of Puerto Rico. [Martin Espada](#) has also likened the "oye" inscribed on the shoulder of the chef to a scream that has shared its color with several languages across the globe. The poet didn't limit the phrase "oye" to a nation or culture, as he thinks it is widespread.

MAIN THEME:

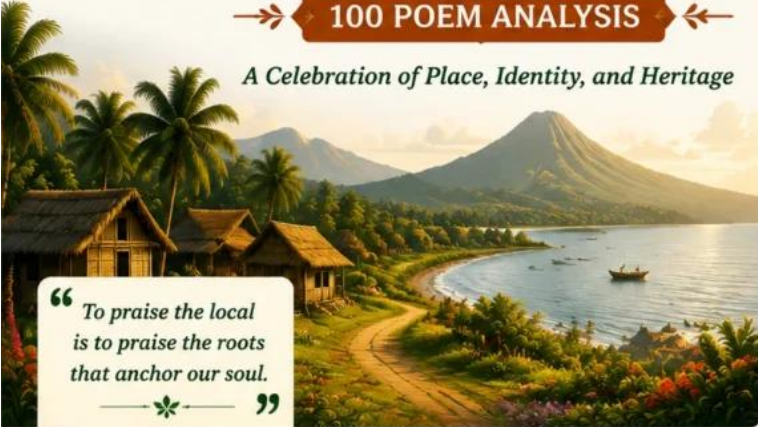
The poet wishes to direct our attention from the deceptive and tragic attack toward a deeper sense of determination and sacrifice of the laborers in that attack. Martin Espada wanted us to direct our attention to the fact that it was the workers who actually suffered in most of the military campaigns, business, or agrarian contracts. By fusing the multiplicity of workers, the poet is trying to highlight that the main struggle for labor is universal on the whole, and it must be appreciated.



ALABANZA IN PRAISE OF LOCAL

100 POEM ANALYSIS

A Celebration of Place, Identity, and Heritage



“To praise the local is to praise the roots that anchor our soul.”

OVERVIEW

“Alabanza (In Praise of Local)” is a powerful 100-line poem that honors the beauty, wisdom, and strength found in local culture, traditions, and everyday life. The poet celebrates the local as a source of identity and pride, reminding us that greatness begins at home.

MAJOR THEMES

- LOVE OF PLACE**
 The poem expresses deep affection for the local environment—its landscapes, people, and simple joys.
- CULTURAL PRIDE**
 It highlights traditions, language, music, food, and values that define the community's unique identity.
- HERITAGE & TRADITION**
 The poet honors ancestral wisdom and customs passed down through generations.
- UNITY & BELONGING**
 The poem emphasizes togetherness, community spirit, and the strength of local connections.
- RESILIENCE & HOPE**
 Despite challenges, the local spirit endures, shining with hope for a better tomorrow.

KEY TAKEAWAY

The poem teaches us that the local is not small—it is essential. By praising our local, we honor our past, strengthen our present, and build a brighter future.

STRUCTURE & STYLE

 100 LINES The poem's length allows for a rich exploration of ideas and images.	 LYRICAL TONE Written in a lyrical and rhythmic style that flows like a song of praise.	 VIVID IMAGERY The poet uses powerful imagery to bring local life vividly to life.	 PERSONAL VOICE The first-person voice creates intimacy and authenticity.	 CELEBRATORY LANGUAGE The language is rich, musical, and full of admiration.

SIGNIFICANCE

“Alabanza (In Praise of Local)” is more than a poem—it is a tribute to the power of the local. It inspires readers to value their roots, preserve their heritage, and take pride in the beauty of their own community.



“Celebrate the local, cherish the roots, and honor the place you call home.”

Discussion

The poem “Alabanza” is divided into seven parts, of which the first six parts are included from the previous section written by Espada. As one of the most famous and renowned Latino poets of his time, Espada has written his emotional response to the 9/11 attacks. Especially when he realized that the attack had killed so many immigrant workers at the World Trade Center restaurant, the poet pictured the emotional situation and conveyed his feelings in the form of Alabanza and paid tribute to the workers. The poem’s structure is divided into many parts, and each part presents a distinctive viewpoint to keep the reader engaged with the scenario created in each of the stanzas. Each stanza has a new rhythm that forces the reader in a new direction. The title of the poem, “Alabanza,” is a Spanish word that means “praise.” The poet is actually praising the immigrant workers who remained dedicated and lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks. The poet also signified the importance of life by stating that the lives that were lost on that day were as valuable as those of firemen or soldiers who dedicated their lives to their country. “Praise the cook with a shaven head and a tattoo on his shoulder that said Oye, a blue-eyed Puerto Rican with people from Fajardo, the harbor of pirates

centuries ago.” Martin Espada, *Alabanza* p. 433 In the above quotation, the form of free verse has directed the readers to understand several key points. The poem interlinks the use of rhyme and rhythm and exhibits numerous purposes by explaining the attack, which has affected the life of every citizen of the United States. The quotation also illustrates the life of every individual in the United States and portrays it in free narratives. “Praise the kitchen in the morning, where the gas burned blue on every stove,” Martin Espada, *Alabanza* p. 433 (Espada, 2003). In this stanza, the poet is relating the sadness that came to the people of the United States on that day, the horror the families of the fatalities have gone through, and the fear that remained in the hearts of the American people for those workers who were working on that day. “The thunder wilder than thunder” Martin Espada, *Alabanza* p. 434 In the above stanza, the poet says that, as though struck by lightning, many people who were working that day lost their lives. Martin Espada is so horrified by the brutality of the condition that he is unable to express it more easily. In the end, the poet leaves a message to his readers to plead for humanity and locate a sense of solidity in the tragedy. The poem is unique in its style as it is not written on the basis of a continuous rant, and it conveys its message in a very realistic and emotional way. The poet has awakened human potential and provided a very interesting approach to all the readers, explaining the impact of the tragedy of 9/11 on the people of the United States.

Conclusion

The poem’s structure is divided into many parts, and each part has its own perspective, and each stanza has its own rhythm that attracts the reader in a different direction. The poem transforms itself from mourning into praise in a very beautiful manner and praises the dedication and hard work of the workers who lost their lives in the 9/11 attacks. The poet has drawn meaning from the attack and focuses on the long-term effects of the tragedy on the people of the United States. By closely analyzing the poem, one has found that the poet has used many tragic, dark, and harsh words. The poet has also related the misery that has befallen the American people on that day, and the horror that the families of the victims have gone through..

Work Cited

Espada, Martín. “Alabanza: in praise of local 100.” *Labor History* 44.4 (2003): 433-434.