

Quito Nicolaas

Argus

poems

bilingual Dutch / English

Aruba /The Netherlands

English translation Mildred Antonius

Introduction Sara Florian, Ph. D.

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In this visceral collection, *Argus*, Quito Nicolaas aims at leading his poetic persona as well as his readers, closer to his quest for a sense of belonging to the world and closer to his lucid observation of the society. His poetic voice is both social and sociological, it is imbricated in his second skin to get closer to the margins of society and to describe them. In *Argus* Nicolaas also tends to shift between the different stages of life from his childhood to adulthood, reflecting in the collision between emotions and logic. In his poems there are, especially, eyes, to account for the giant with a hundred eyes that gives name to the collection, Argus Panoptes. His poetic voice creates an imaginary world, inspired by his experience and observation – at times cynical – of the society.

In *Argus* Nicolaas also tends to shift between the different stages of life from his childhood to adulthood, reflecting in the collision between emotions and logic. The linguistic glossing and gliding of Dutch, English, Spanish and Papiamentu words – mirroring a social transformation of the individual and the society – can be heard as well. The poet's roots lie in his strong connection with Aruban nature, yet his urbane voice is embedded in the wet streets of some Nordic European cities, smoky coffee shops and window brothels in Amsterdam. In this collection we follow the poet, *flâneur*, walking down the streets of a metropolis and its suburbs, the centre and the periphery, balancing his two skins, dressing the clothes of the outcasts or those of other *flâneurs* like Rubén Darío or Fernando Pessoa.

Quito Nicolaas has published thirteen books: seven poetry collections, including two with In de Knipscheer, three novels, a collection of short stories and a collection of columns. His short stories and poems appeared in ten different anthologies in the Caribbean and the Netherlands. Also his essays on Caribbean literature were published in a variety of international publications. In 2006, the handbook of literary history of Aruba and the former Netherlands Antilles, dedicated attention to his work. His poems appeared in different anthologies in Albania, Argentina, Chile, Columbia, China, New York and Romania. In June 2016, his entire work was included in the prestigious *Dictionary of Caribbean and Afro-Latin American biography* from the Oxford University.