

# Praise for Ruins of Redemption

*¡Qué interesantes poemas!*

*Oigo la música y el sentimiento de Lorca con un toque de Neruda en tu poema "Una noche cualquiera". Verdaderamente bello. Tu poema*

*"Lluvia" es un aguacero que le falta clavos en el mundo concreto.*

*Muchas ideas, y pocas imágenes, pero me gusta la imagen del techo de zinc. Tu poema "Lágrimas" tiene mucha pasión y emoción, pero también le falta clavos en la vida real. Es más bien una oración que un poema.*

*Gracias por darme la oportunidad de leer tu exitoso trabajo.*

*¡Buena suerte!*

*What interesting poems!*

*I hear the music and the feeling of Lorca with a touch of Neruda in your poem, "Una Noche Cualquiera." Truly beautiful. Your poem, "Lluvia" is a*

*downpour missing nails in the real world. Many ideas, and few pictures,*

*but I like the image of the tin roof. Your poem "Lágrimas" has a lot of passion and emotion, but also lacks nails in real life. It's more like a*

*prayer than a poem.*

*Thank you for the opportunity to read your successful work.*

*Good luck!*

Eddie Vega

Author of *Awake Now, Sailor*

[www.eddievega.com](http://www.eddievega.com)

# Ruins of Redemption

Poetry in English & Spanish  
by  
Alvaro Vega



Open Door Publications

Ruins of Redemption  
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By Alvaro Vega

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Nora H. Añaños,  
Translator/Proofreader for poems in Spanish

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## **Dedication**

*To my family and friends close and distant,  
the Saints and Angels that walk among us, and the  
unknown for keeping us vigilant.*

## A Note to the Reader

I began writing long ago; it started as just a few lines on paper, a poem here and there, usually very sad. Yet I enjoy that wretched feeling of getting it on paper.

Oh well.

This book was driven by so many things. Growing up in Cuba... suddenly leaving in 1973... not being ready to go... my upbringing in its social, economic, and political quagmire...two staunch Catholic grandmothers...arriving in the States...the old policeman on the bus to the Red Cross office calling me a monkey, a word I remembered almost a year until I translated it in the Spanish to English dictionary. All of these things have influenced me, shaped the way I think and feel about everything in my life.

This book, I hope, tells a story about how I see life and how events have shaped the way in which I embrace it. How, with just a few words, people have influenced me, society's impact, and my family's. Because I am Cuban-born it's impossible not to feel in certain ways about politics or religion.

If I have not interested you by now, don't go past this point. Why get aggravated? Just move on to another book; this one is just sad, please don't read on rainy days.

Thanks to all my friends, enemies, acquaintances, distant family, the crazy and somewhat sane people who have brushed up against me, even if by accident, my parents, my brothers both, my children all, my grandsons whom I adore...and finally my wife.

Every person I know has influenced me. The places I have visited, things I have seen, a glance with a stranger, a word that has inspired or imprisoned me. Please don't assume the poem is about you unless I tell you it is. Sometimes it is coincidence that binds us in this world. Direction in life can have parallels and similarities, either in fortune or despair. Cry and cleanse your soul. I hope it helps you feel better about your own life.



## Madness

Your black hair shines with the glow of Europa  
Your dress is that of an ice warrior  
You lean over and pick up your gloves  
And I maintain silence

I see an Angel dressing you  
The steel breastplate fits you perfectly  
It glimmers and you make it spark with your sword  
in a poor effort to make me smile  
You're leaving  
Will I see you again?  
Perhaps next time it will be in a peaceful world  
Or in a world surrounded by a single pulsar  
I just don't know it's too early to tell  
I will miss you; my body will tell me often  
My mind will tell me in my sleeplessness  
My reality sometimes is altered without warning  
In waking dreams of us  
Sometimes I know you steal my soul  
And bring it to places far away  
My only hold to sanity is you  
And now you're gone  
Gone with no possible logical return

Alvaro Vega

## A Sad Day

What am I going to do? When I am no longer useful  
When neither my shoulder strength nor influence will help the  
Ones I love it will be a very sad day to know  
Will they have compassion?  
Will they feel sad for me?  
Will I be cast aside?  
Like an old dog will I die and go back to the earth?  
Will I be remembered?  
Will I still be loved?  
Will they feel sad for me?  
Who will kiss my face?  
And say a kind word  
To be useless will be a sad day to know



## Presidio

Here inside these castle walls I find an unbearable boredom  
Not far from these walls you can find my friends and  
Comrades in games, hunting, laughing and sharing life  
You can find my emissary  
out there, my foe he hunts for me  
So I must be here  
He will never cease to look for me; he is cunning and able  
His strength is not of this world  
I know  
I have confronted him in battle  
I am acquainted with his blade  
Death  
I have been so very close to it  
I still remember the smell  
He will someday meet his hunger for me  
The inevitable will come to pass

Alvaro Vega

## The Hand of God

Same as the Phoenix my heart rose  
From the amber and dust to meet the love that you  
So kindly place upon me.  
And the Angel smiled and then laughed  
She asked why I was so sad  
I said I love you more than life itself  
Then I saw the same tears of a million colors taken  
By the wind, same as I saw in that mountain this winter  
She said it's easy to forget that I belong in heaven  
That you are much greater than what I will ever be  
My beauty and strength is heavenly and that I can't help  
My stay here ends now and I am joyful that you are safe now  
My mission is a success

I am pleased that I was chosen to walk some time with you  
Joy that through me the Universe sees  
I bow to you and thank you  
You share the brotherhood of humanity and you are kings  
When placed at our side  
I said  
Will I see you again?  
Yes  
At life's end so you have no fear

## A Storm Is Coming

Life has not been easy today  
It squeezed me hurtfully hard yesterday  
Broken and disconnected I move through the spider web  
To my credit I am moving  
I will not stand still  
Fully knowing the imperative  
I know that I will find Atlantis, it's not far now

The tightness of the death embrace,  
the sound of bones breaking  
The hard gasp for air, the tears and questions of why  
I fall today far and deep  
I am not desperate but I am not at peace  
I am accepting of what is coming  
I have taken it—I will be brave  
My turn will come  
I will take the form of a hurricane  
On an unexpected season  
Paint myself with fury and hate  
The colors of war  
Life is good now you say  
Good and God will prevail  
Like He always does in my life  
Everyone is saying be calm, be cool

Alvaro Vega

## Three Stars

Three stars ignored by time and great distance  
Hang in the northeast sky  
Like diamonds or demons always in December  
As I gaze the heavens  
For something lost that I can't explain or point to  
I gaze with the wonder of a child forcing my eyes to get closer  
As I gather light of a billion years  
and pour it into the deepest recesses of my eyes  
And command them to bring me there  
My fingers play with the light and I bend it up and down  
on this cloudless dark night  
and as I look true north the faint smoke of your fire  
brings me closer to you  
you hunt the wolf and keep us safe, I hear his howls  
your cape, hard and weathered, has held out children  
lovingly many times, magically soft when near a fire  
I close my eyes and I see your boots  
gauche on the Earth and ground cover

Leaving behind the mark of iron and hammer  
and your steady confidence  
to complete the hunt  
Your heart lives here along with your soul  
as your spirit soars far above us all  
we share it, we will never cage it—it is free  
like the falcon that roams this mountain  
that screams whenever you are gone.

## Human Us

Oh mighty Lord, how is it that  
I find myself here at your feet?  
Tell me?  
Your hand has been my guide,  
my sword free to bring pain and death  
To those who will not yield to your will.  
How is it that I find myself here at your feet?  
Is it that I am weak?  
Is it that I can no longer be your angel of death?  
Or is it that I am becoming human?

## I Beg for Time

Every word I know I run through my rusty mind  
Can't find the true expression for this moment  
So only tears will I offer

On my knees my hands open to heaven  
Much more I can't give  
I am lost in despair and deep sadness  
Please don't look upon me  
Oh mighty God. don't look to me  
Your gaze will hurt  
Time, I beg for time  
I beg for death  
I beg for life  
I beg for mercy  
Only tears will I offer

Alvaro Vega

## El Español Bizco

El amigo de él odia a la criada,  
la criada odia a la Señora María.  
María odia a don José, y el joven Carlos odia a María  
Ese odio profundo que se surge sin querer.  
Y al final todos odian al español Francisco,  
que anda medio bizco y odia a todo mestizo,  
ya que él es “Castellano”  
Y nadie más, que no pertenezca a su casta,  
es digno de entrar a su casa.

## The Cross-Eyed Spaniard

His friend hates the maid  
the maid hates Mrs. Maria.  
Maria hates Don Jose and young Carlos hates Maria.  
That hate is strong when it is found suddenly  
and at day's end everyone hates the Spaniard, Francisco

Who looks at you crossed-eyed and is a racist, as he hates  
everyone. He is “Castellano”  
And none of it can be shared in conversation  
Because if not of the same tribe don't dare enter  
his home.

## All This Crying

Thanks for asking. I did cry today  
For all of those vistas that we were part of  
I cried for all of those smiles that my eyes caressed in you  
Your coquette gazes that made me want you so  
My desire in seeing you made my heart warm with love  
I cried all of those distant times that  
I so much want to return to  
I cried all the rainy days we spent on the coast of Greece  
I cried your white dress  
I cried your silk skin  
I cried the day you lost yourself and  
I showed you the way to me  
I cried the day you found me  
I cried the trust and passion that you had for me  
Now you're not here and I cry  
In the distance I see that Peace can be acquired and I ask  
Almighty God to bring it to you  
And I ask only mercy for myself

## What From Here?

I ask Gods any and all to forge my heart in a bath of steel  
and make it as strong as a second century spear  
and then you say something so beautiful  
my heart sings  
What am I going to do with this diamond, you?  
Sweet, sweet woman what awaits me?  
I am dusty, broken; am old, I have an enormous ache  
that swims in a sea of uncertainty; and discontent  
Drowning me slowly in the most peculiar way

Alvaro Vega

## The Condor's Flight

At sunset I kneel here, my eyes overlooking centuries past  
Gazing at these ruins under my feet  
the ones that hang on the side of this mountain  
My tears flow and fall upon this land  
I pray and weep for the tormented ones,  
for the ones that felt the whip of the Master  
that live to suffer in a set task to survive  
my eyes burn  
It's the cold wind of the mountain  
What of the condor? Riding the thermos of the canyon walls  
The souls of the long departed  
command me to be strong, consuming precious living time  
they also weep and plead to me to move on  
to look at history and learned lessons.  
I conclude my prayers as a Cardinal stands  
and asks all to be seated  
Pope Saint Francis awakes to thoughts of today,  
the Eucharist front and center  
The heaviness and hounding thoughts of children hungry  
Pressed by the urgency of humanity's thirst for Christ  
Average Joe reading books of fantasy, some academia,  
detective stories  
Today I think of bringing bread to my mother  
hoping the sky stays up,  
Well knowing in advance how perfect my days are planned  
and how insignificant it all is  
made not the world better today, no Sir



## Always Loved

I saw you adding flowers to your hair today  
I stopped and admired in silence  
You saw me and smiled

Your face has a radiant beauty  
You leave me breathless every time I look at you  
Your dress flows over your body like silk in the wind  
I want you with all my heart  
Don't ever leave  
Stay here with me forever  
Always on a throne  
Always on my mind  
Always loved.

## Suppression of Reality

With hearts of lions we take the hill,  
my eyes burn and I miss clarity  
It could be dirt or dust or simply suppression of reality.  
Some of us fall in this hell that we have surely created;  
I sense fever and fear, can't seem to get all the flies  
and bugs off my wounds.  
As we reach this sad summit my eyes clear and I find  
myself  
looking over a valley of palms,  
then the stretch to the edge of  
beautiful emerald green waters with gentle surf.  
I see how this is as close as I will ever get to such paradise  
hell is between us

Alvaro Vega

## The Dark Room

In the dark room he sits tied down without rope  
He can't get up  
He certainly has legs  
From time to time in the darkness light reflects on a face  
Sometimes a face that is angry  
All these faces have voices  
Stern voices  
Soothing voices  
Screaming voices  
Castigating voices  
Voices without any remedy to silence  
This will send terror through his very being  
Some of these voices make him smile while others  
Give him outstanding advice  
But he is always paralyzed without ability to get out  
A prisoner of himself  
Many times knowing that the room has no windows or doors  
The unparalleled terror of knowing he is in a box  
A box where he can feel his breath  
A place where his throat can speak  
but will never let him scream  
In part he cries to God in a beggar's voice  
Why me? What have I done? Have I shamed you, God?  
What is wrong with me?  
The surroundings of his world is a painful silence  
Without real voice, people move behind glass  
Only the cold wind passes and caresses his beautiful face  
His body asks for rest unknowingly,  
with very little significance  
His voices are the only things that have any importance  
He knows it is evil to hear and pay attention  
But to pay complete attention is a matter of life and death

## Bring Time In

I come from Enceladeus to see the carousel of infinite time  
as it flicks on the flexible metal teeth of reality  
and the owl sends the carnival music in,  
all happy tones that serpentine around the red and brown  
leaves of Autumn on Earth

I know that the Gypsy girl will run to meet her family  
on the promenade,  
she knows that time changes everything,  
everywhere, without permission or parade  
She is perfectly at peace with that rule  
because her life has just begun  
The tells of the old woman's cards and dried bones  
promised her that only good fortune awaits.

## Always With Me

These days whenever I am galloping in my mind  
through the plains of Mongolia usually in the mornings  
then later following the flight of an Angel far into the  
mountains of Coconda, Angola  
or simply completely detaching and going for a walk on the  
warm sands of an island  
You're always in my sky, in the air I breathe,  
on every carbon fiber  
deep inside my metallic, robotic heart  
just before I arrive at true reality  
that is my hellish life  
these days

Alvaro Vega

## I Feel Pain

With great disdain I will ignore it  
I will shake it off because I can

My world shatters  
No relief and I will ignore  
My frontal mind begs for peace  
And I ignore  
I raise my arm, the palm of my hand open  
I will ignore  
I will set up the traps for the wolf and his companion  
Sustaining the pain because I can  
The moon will be absent soon  
And darkness will fall upon the face of earth here  
Darkness with its steel teeth and suffocating reach  
Sustaining pain because it can  
If you can't you will be sad  
If you can't you will be dead  
If you can't you're erased  
If you can't the world moves away.