

# *The poem is an extraordinary place*

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**Andrea Cote Botero**

From: Miladys Borges

She can travel to the small island of San Simón, in the Ría de Vigo, Galicia, for a meeting on literature and translation related to minority languages and territories, or visit the Instituto Cervantes in Albuquerque to present her latest book, or be in a classroom as a professor at the University of Texas, El Paso; this describes the busy life of Colombian Andrea Cote Botero, winner of the XXIV Casa de las Américas Prize for Ibero-American Poetry.

Poetry is an extraordinary place and often takes us to other extraordinary places, she has said in this coming and going of the literary world.

Her book *Querida Beth* reveals a precise and emotional poetry, full of constant stylistic discoveries, in a markedly contemporary tone, according to the minutes of the jury that awarded her the prestigious Havana Prize.

It is a work that revolves around emigration, poems that tell the story of a Colombian woman whose life as a migrant in the United States implies the progressive loss of her name and her heritage.

Poetry can fill these gaps, Cote said in an interview with the press, pointing out that today poetry comes to restore a part of memory, to offer the consolation that only language can give in the face of the wounds of reality.

I am a writer in the diaspora, she stressed, recalling the double emigration she herself experienced, first within her country in the 1990s, when she went to live with her family in Bogotá because of the violence generated by the territorial conflicts in the Magdalena Medio region. Later, when he traveled to the United States after winning a writing fellowship.

"I have always longed for this relationship with the lost territory, a relationship that every Colombian has inside and outside the country, and I have sown my poetic writing in it".

In her pilgrimage through the complexities of poetry, Andrea Cote has come to the conclusion that poetry cannot be defined with certainty, because it is always changing. However, she perceives it as a way of saying things that cannot be said in any other way.

For those who think that poetry is difficult or lacks popularity, the renowned Colombian also has her own definition: "Poetry is a bit like love and religion, in order to enjoy it you have to accept that you do not want to understand it completely. It is from this sensible perspective that Andrea Cote calibrates her verses every day.

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