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Elena Poniatowska: An Intimate Biography

Michael Schuessler

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Descended from the last king of Poland, born in France, educated at a British grade school in Mexico and a Catholic high school in the United States, Hélène Elizabeth Louise Amelie Paula Dolores Poniatowska Amor—otherwise known as Elena—is a passionate, socially conscious writer who is widely known in Mexico and who deserves to be better known everywhere else.

With his subject's complete cooperation (she granted him access to fifty years of personal files), Michael Schuessler provides the first critical biography of Poniatowska's life and work. She is perhaps best known outside of Mexico as the author of *Massacre in Mexico* (*La noche de Tlatelolco*) and *Here's to You, Jesusa!* (*Hasta no verte, Jesús mío*). But her body of published books is vast, beginning with the 1954 publication of *Lilus Kikus*, a collection of short stories. And she is still writing today.

Schuessler, who befriended Poniatowska more than fifteen years ago, is a knowledgeable guide to her engrossing life and equally engaging work. As befits her, his portrait is itself a literary collage, a "living kaleidoscope" that is constantly shifting to include a multiplicity of voices—those of fellow writers, literary critics, her nanny, her mother, and the writer herself—easily accessible to general readers and essential to scholars.

Available in English for the first time, this insightful book includes 40 photographs and drawings and an annotated bibliography of Poniatowska's works—those that have already been translated into English and those awaiting translation.

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