Someday, today
Author:
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Algún día, hoy (Someday, Today) is Ánglea Becerra's sixth novel. It was published by Planeta in 2019. The writing is stunningly beautiful, and this novel deserves a fine translation.

Ángela Becerra was born in Colombia in 1957 and has lived for some time in Spain. She has also published three poetry collections, receiving more than half a dozen awards for her writing, including the Fernando Lara Novel Award for *Algún día, hoy*. She has stated in interviews that it took her six years to write this novel.

The story is based on the life of Betsabé Espinal, a woman of humble origins about whom very little is known until 1920, when, at the age of only 23, she led a successful strike in protest of the abysmal working conditions of the female employees at a textile factory in Bello, Colombia. As a result of the strike, the employees benefitted from improvements in pay, hours and management, although Betsabé Espinal herself lost her job. Espinal became a symbol of the fight for women's rights, and the novel *Algún día, hoy* includes a photograph of Espinal as well as a thoughtful commentary by author Ángela Becerra on the available facts of the protagonist's life, as well as the manner in which information about this historical period were included in the novel.

Ángela Becerra took the historical background information she gained in her research and then weaved a sublimely poetic story of friendship, love, and the struggles of life, including economic inequality and the effect of social constraints and physical illness on individuals and their families.

Even as the story progresses and draws the reader closer and closer to each character, the writing itself is revealed to be extraordinary. Many of the descriptions of place and the vignettes of daily life could stand alone as prose poems. Ángela Becerra's third-person, non-intrusive narration manages to make even the most difficult characters fascinating, giving each one depth and context.

The novel includes carefully placed elements of magical realism as well as a strong emphasis on the ties that bind humans to the earth and to their environments. Even without the driving story of Espinal's life, this book would be worth reading for the poetic sections showing women in their relationship to nature and the physical aspects of human life.

South America is at this time offering the world an amazing group of female novelists. Ángela Becerra has more than earned her place among these talented women. Becerra's writing is fully mature, strong and humane, tied to the earth, and unflinching in its description of human failings, yet Becerra's eye never loses sight of the best that talent, character, friendship and love can offer.

U.S. audiences would find much to appreciate in *Algún día, hoy* (816 pages in the Spanish version). The story of Espinal's ability to move through the circumstances of her life is absorbing. She was, after all, a poor woman who managed to make her mark on history by fighting for justice. What makes this novel a masterpiece is Ángela Becerra's historical research and her craft and skill in connecting the story of Betsabé Espinal to nature, the experience of women in the early 20th century, the social history of Colombia, and the enduring and limitless power of human relationships.