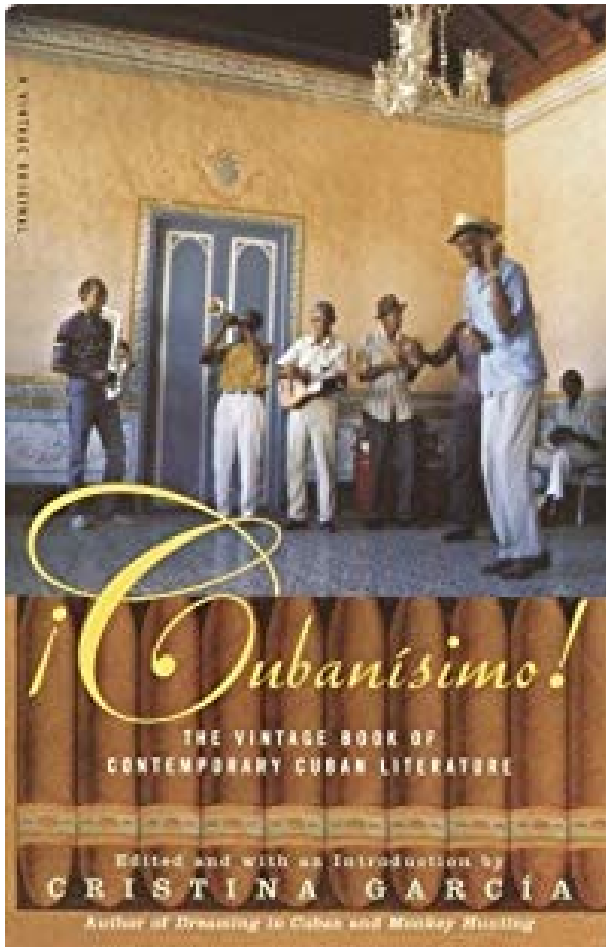


# Cubanísimo!: The Vintage Book of Contemporary Cuban Literature



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¡Cubanísimo! is the first book to gather Cuban stories, essays, poems and novel excerpts in one volume that summarizes the richness and depth of a great national literature. From the turn of the century to the present, from Havana to Miami, New York, Mexico City, Madrid and beyond, the spirit and diversity of Cuban culture converge in one vibrant literary jam session. Cristina García has ingeniously grouped her selections according to “the music of their sentences” into five sections named for Cuban dance styles. ¡Cubanísimo! begins with an elegant classical danzón section that includes poems and diaries from the father of Cuban literature, José Martí, and Antonio Benítez-Rojo’s hallucinatory story *A View from the Mangrove*. As it moves to more contemporary dances, the book offers, among other delights, the essay by Alejo Carpentier that was the first to define magical realism; the scandalously sensual eighth chapter from José Lezama Lima’s controversial 1966 novel *Paradiso*; Ana Menendez’s Little Havana-inspired story, *In Cuba I was a German Shepherd*; a passage from Reinaldo Arenas’s acclaimed memoir *Before Night Falls* and six witty musings—or mambos—on language from Gustavo Pérez Firmat’s *Life on the Hyphen*. A brilliant introduction for readers who want to explore Cuban literature, as well as a collectible volume for those who love Cuba, ¡Cubanísimo! is a celebration of Cuban culture, from the island to its farthest flung voices.