

C H O I C E  
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**DELIBES, Miguel.** *La mortaja*, with intro. by Miguel Angel Pastor. Alianza Editorial (dist. by Center for Curriculum Development, Inc., 401 Walnut St., Philadelphia, Pa., 19106), 1970. 197p. .90 pa.

Delibes himself admits to four invariables or ever-present elements in his work: nature, death, childhood, and one's fellowman; all of these constants are manifest in the title story, "The shroud," the longest and best of this selection written 1948-63. The shorter sketches, or plotless monologues and dialogues, are of interest as themes-in-embryo eventually developed and incorporated into lengthier works of more substance and greater maturity. In "Johnny Osuna's self-esteem," the reader detects an early essay at the interior monologue which years later was enlarged in "Five hours with Mario." Filled with etchings of the Castilian countryside and the mores of provincial life are "El conejo," a vignette of children; "La perra" and "Navidad sin ambiente"; while a touch of the supernatural characterizes "La fe." The author's mastery of popular speech-forms saturates "La visiones." While hardly comparable to some other contemporary short stories written in Spanish, especially those of certain Spanish American writers, this collection enhances one's understanding of Delibes' world view and of his total output.



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