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4:10 p.m.

STEPS, Room 280

“Becoming Julia de Burgos: The Making of a Puerto Rican Icon”

The poet's life and her place in Puerto Rican culture

While it is rare for a poet to become a cultural icon, Julia de Burgos has evoked feelings of bonding and identification in Puerto Ricans and Latinos in the United States for over half a century. In the first book-length study written in English, Vanessa Pérez Rosario examines poet and political activist Julia de Burgos's development as a writer, her experience of migration, and her legacy in New York City. Pérez Rosario situates de Burgos as part of a transitional generation that helps to bridge the historical divide between Puerto Rican nationalist writers of the 1930s and the Nuyorican writers of the 1970s. Focusing on the poet's contributions to New York Latino/a literary and visual culture, she moves beyond the tragedy-centered narratives of de Burgos's life to examine her place within a nuanced historical understanding of Puerto Rico's peoples and culture. Pérez Rosario unravels the cultural and political dynamics at work when contemporary Latina/o writers and artists in New York revise, reinvent, and riff off of Julia de Burgos as they imagine new possibilities for themselves and their communities.