Palabras de lluvia
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eodosia Maceda (Teo) was born in a rain storm in the middle of the jungle at the end of the 19th Century. When we first meet her, she is about to embark on a journey with her husband, from her native Peru to Asturias in Spain. Her anxiety leads her to reminisce about her early life; the years she spent as a novice in a nunnery, her first love, Saulo who was enraptured by words, the fever that would have killed her had her grandmother, a wise woman and healer, not rescued her, returning her to the jungle where she was nursed back to health.

We travel with Teo on her voyage across the ocean during which she suffers a traumatic miscarriage – one of a series – and into her new country. Here, Teo puts down roots – with the permission of the local Apus (mountain spirits). She finally has the children she hoped for. The family thrives until the Spanish Civil War intervenes and exacts its toll by taking two of her four children. The story ends with Teo reconciling herself with life, and her graceful acceptance death.

Told from the viewpoint of an indigenous Peruvian, Palabras de Lluvia offers a unique perspective into the experience of imperialism and colonization in the Americas. Teo's grandmother and mother represent two extremes of this experience – the former completely assimilates to "civilized" colonial ways whilst the latter steadfastly keeps to her traditions and the jungle. Teo herself treads the uncomfortable boundary between these worlds pulled in both directions and not able to settle in either.

Alongside the presence of this tension the novel is remarkable in the way that it emphasizes communality rather than division …

Palabras de Lluvia is beautifully written and many readers will be attracted by the fact that it is told from the point of view of an indigenous Peruvian woman. The novel is complex and both challenges and delights. Teo's story is astonishing and both she and the people she meets on her journey are very much brought to life. In addition, the seamless mix of spiritual and physical realities is entrancing. There are difficult themes, but overall the book is a very uplifting read in the way that it emphasises the bonds between people. I think the book has potential and that it could have a significant readership in English