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**Sinopsis**

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"Mr. Allan Burns, I am here to tell you an example, the example of the Hunchbacks." So said Paulino Yamá, traditionalist and storyteller, to Allan Burns, anthropologist and linguist, as he began one story that found its way into this book.

Paulino Yamá was just one of several master storytellers from the Yucatán Peninsula of Mexico from whom Burns learned not only the Mayan language but also the style and performance of myths, stories, riddles, prayers, and other forms of speech of their people. The result is *An Epoch of Miracles*, a wonderfully readable yet thoroughly scholarly set of translations from the oral literature of the Yucatec Maya, an important New World tradition never before systematically described.

*An Epoch of Miracles* brings us over thirty-five long narratives of things large, small, strange, and "regular" and as many delightful short pieces, such as bird lore, riddles, and definitions of anteaters, rainbows, and other commonplaces of the Mayan world. Here are profound narratives of the Feathered Serpent, the mighty Rain God Chac and his helpers, and the mysterious cult of the Speaking Cross. But because these are modern, "Petroleum Age" Maya, here too are a discussion with Cuba's Fidel Castro and a greeting to former president Richard Nixon.

All pieces are translated ethnopoetically; examples of several genres are presented bilingually. An especially valuable feature is the indication of performance style, such as pauses and voice quality, given with each piece.