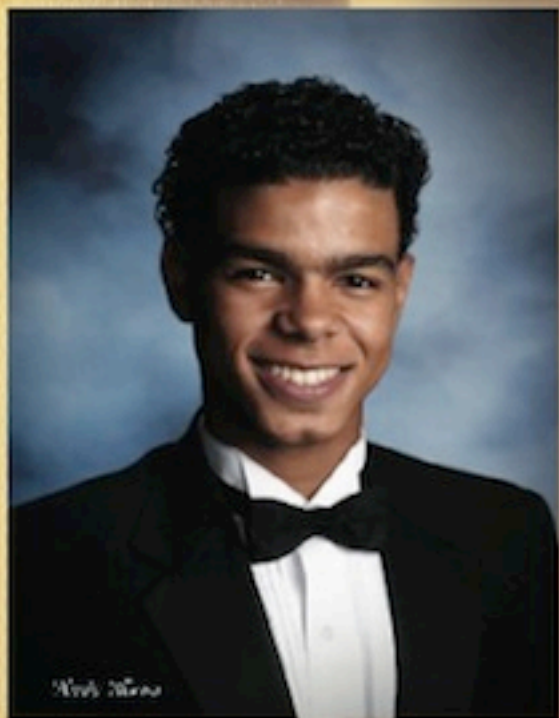


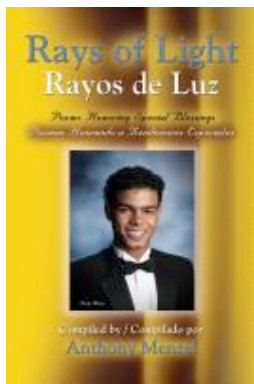
# Rays of Light

## Rayos de Luz

*Poems Honoring Special Blessings*  
*Poemas Honrando a Bendiciones Especiales*



Compiled by / Compilado por  
**Anthony Menzel**



*Rays of Light / Rayos de Luz is a Spanish-English bilingual poetry compilation written in honor of Rudy Mena, who died at age 17. Most of this book's poems are specifically dedicated to Rudy. The rest of the poems honor other people, who, like Rudy, have brightened many lives.*

## **Rays of Light / Rayos de Luz**

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**Rays of Light /  
Rayos de Luz**

**“Poems Honoring Special Blessings /  
Poemas Honrando a Bendiciones Especiales”**

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*Anthony Menzel*

## **After Rudy's Burial**

I had taken off  
the tie,  
but I was still  
in mourning black.

I came back  
to school  
because the District  
had indicated  
I already had  
too many  
absences.

In the office,  
the staff asked me  
about the burial,  
and even though  
they were taking  
their final exam,  
my students  
asked me –  
Everyone knew  
I had been there.

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I tried  
to respond  
politely,  
but words  
were scarce:  
My heart  
was only a stalk,  
withered,  
cut back,  
shaken –  
I wanted  
no glory  
for being  
in that procession;  
I just wanted  
to show Rudy  
and his family  
my love  
by sharing  
their sorrow  
one last time.

*Anthony Menzel*

## **A True Case of Mourning**

(Translation of "Un Luto Verdadero")

After a few days,  
they asked me  
at school  
if I still felt sad  
because of your tragic  
departure;  
at home  
they asked me  
if everything  
at school  
had gotten back  
to normal.

I responded  
without screaming  
only because  
the wrath of man  
is not productive:

How can healing come  
to such a deep wound,  
to this cut  
in the innermost part  
of my soul,  
in two days?

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How can school  
get back to normal  
this year  
when that affectionate,  
respectful,  
intelligent,  
and hardworking  
young man  
has been taken  
from us  
with such violence?

For now  
the only music  
I want to hear  
will be dirges.

For now  
a cloud  
follows me  
that periodically  
bursts  
into bitter tears.

My only comfort  
is that Rudy  
is my brother in Christ –



*Anthony Menzel*

If I continue  
on the narrow way  
of the Lord,  
in heaven  
I will see  
that cinnamon face,  
whose black eyes  
cheered my day  
each time  
I saw them,  
and then I will hug  
our beloved Rudy,  
a man so full  
of infectious laughter,  
a youth so strong  
and full of love.

## **What They Mean to Me**

(Translation of "Lo Que Significan para Mi";  
Dedicated to Rudy and all of Anthony Menzel's students, both past and  
present)

I do not think  
that you all understand  
how much  
I care  
about each one of you,  
that each one of you  
is very special  
to me.

I see you  
as nieces and nephews,  
and if I am strict  
sometimes,  
it is because  
I want you  
to receive  
the best  
education  
that I can impart.

Although the years pass,  
I will always see you  
as my students;  
eternally  
each one  
will own  
a piece  
of my heart.

*Anthony Menzel*

Although I may forget  
some of your faces  
or names,  
all of you  
as a group  
are always  
in my prayers.

That is why  
Rudy's death,  
especially  
in the strength  
of a youth  
so full  
of potential,  
is an open heart  
surgery  
without anesthesia,  
leaving cuts  
in me  
that take time  
to stop bleeding  
and that in this life  
can only  
scar  
instead of being  
completely healed.

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## **Take Care of Yourselfes**

(Translation of “Cuídense”;  
Dedicated to Rudy and all of Anthony Menzel’s students, both past and  
present)

The most special gift  
you all can give me  
is to take care  
of yourselves.

As a teacher,  
my best  
reward  
is to see  
your successes  
and be able to say  
that I was  
one of the pebbles  
in the foundation  
of those achievements.

I care  
about you all  
so much  
that what I want most  
from you  
is to see you right  
with Jesus Christ  
and satisfied  
with your lives:

*Anthony Menzel*

Always take care  
of yourselves,  
my students –  
If you feel depressed,  
get help;  
never think about  
harming yourselves  
or seeking  
temporary comfort  
in dangerous  
activities.

Let us learn  
from Rudy  
to be  
even more careful  
and thus avoid  
turning off  
more lights  
like Rudy,  
which are so needed  
in this dark  
and cruel  
world.

## **Plan “B” for My Memorial**

Perhaps they have not  
contacted me  
because their grief  
is too great.  
Perhaps other trials  
have obscured their view,  
making my memorial  
seem unimportant.  
Perhaps this tragedy  
has robbed  
their trust  
in other people,  
and they do not feel  
comfortable  
giving me  
written permission  
to build  
my sculpture of words,  
yet at the same time,  
they do not want  
to hurt my feelings,  
sensing  
that unlike others,  
I might be sincere.

Who am I planning this for?  
If it were just for me,  
then I could move forward  
with or without  
permission.

*Anthony Menzel*

I wait  
because this memorial  
is not just for me:  
I want to honor  
the Lord Jesus first,  
then Rudy,  
then those most affected  
by his loss –

So I give Rudy's family time –  
Maybe as it passes,  
their minds  
will heal some,  
and they will be able  
to process  
my request,  
realizing  
that it also wells  
from a heart  
that grieves,  
not one that seeks  
some selfish  
glory or gain.

If they never realize  
that my petition  
stems from such love,  
one day I will publish  
my sculpture  
for my own well-being –  
to complete my grieving  
and to avoid feeling  
that my words were wasted  
in total silence:

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Only God and Rudy  
would know for sure  
who my words  
were for –  
My book's dedication  
would be  
to all my students,  
and only certain poems  
would be in honor  
of an anonymous "R.,"  
just like I wrote  
for Orquidea  
without her last name  
and referred  
to her loved ones  
using  
their first initials.



*Anthony Menzel*

## **We Continue On**

(Translation of "Seguimos")

The female teacher  
with the 8 by 11  
photo  
in her office

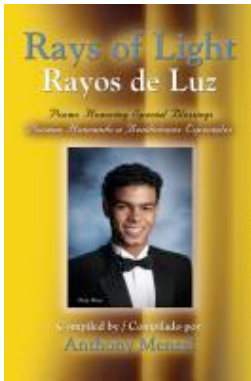
The male teacher  
with a small picture  
of you  
hanging  
from his neck

This book  
to pay homage to you,  
this poor attempt  
to remember  
your ray  
that was so special

We continue on,  
but we will not forget  
the warmth  
which you gave us  
with the brilliance  
of your black eyes,  
your wide smile,  
your intelligence,  
your respect for all,  
and your dedication.

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We will always love you  
and give thanks  
to the Lord Jesus  
for your ray  
that gave us light  
and continues  
to illuminate us  
every time  
we think of you.



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