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LAIIP provides readers with a portrait of twentieth-century Indonesia as seen through the lens of its poetry. Each section of the book embodies the particular and changing interests of the decades of the last century as they were articulated and negotiated by Indonesian voices. The work's two organizing themes, "plurality and continuity," provide a frame within which many of the important topics of the last century—for example, decolonization and the emergence of national consciousness; the deconstruction of ethnic and gendered identities; and the environmental and social effects of modernization—were experienced and expressed by the inhabitants of the Indonesian archipelago.

Unlike all previous anthologies of Indonesian poetry in translation, which are limited in scope either because the poems were selected according to the preferences of a particular editor or because the selected works were limited to those that were widely known and easily available, LAIP represents a complete range of poetic expression published in Indonesian during the twentieth century. In addition to poems written by all major poets, this anthology also includes poems by many authors who have been successful locally but whose work has not previously been introduced to national or global audiences. In most cases their work was not published in the country's main publishing centers, which are generally located on the island of Java. This anthology is unique because the poems were selected based on both their literary merit and also their ability to