Historical Dictionary of U.S. Latino Literature

Donaldo W. Urioste, Francisco A. Lomelí, and María Joaquina Villaseñor
The historical dictionaries present essential information on a broad range of subjects, including American and world history, art, business, cities, countries, cultures, customs, film, global conflicts, international relations, literature, music, philosophy, religion, sports, and theater. Written by experts, all contain highly informative introductory essays on the topic and detailed chronologies that, in some cases, cover vast historical time periods but still manage to heavily feature more recent events.

Brief A–Z entries describe the main people, events, politics, social issues, institutions, and policies that make the topic unique, and entries are cross-referenced for ease of browsing. Extensive bibliographies are divided into several general subject areas, providing excellent access points for students, researchers, and anyone wanting to know more. Additionally, maps, photographs, and appendixes of supplemental information aid high school and college students doing term papers or introductory research projects. In short, the historical dictionaries are the perfect starting point for anyone looking to research in these fields.
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Editor’s Foreword

In a series of books on national literatures, one may question the addition of that from a minority. True, we already have a volume on African American literature. But U.S. Latino/a literature as well? This overlooks the fact that this particular minority is the fastest growing one in the United States, and with a population of 55.4 million as of 2014, according to the Pew Research Center, it is indeed the largest U.S. minority. This literature is certainly one of the liveliest, best written, and most varied, since it is the creation of men and women (which explains the o/a), most of whom are already second, third, fourth, and even more generation Americans and have their origins in 21 Latin American countries, some born here and others coming as immigrants, exiles or refugees, braceros, and undocumented workers. The most important thing they have in common is that they write in English, or Spanish, or a combination thereof, most unusual in a staunchly monolingual country. Also, many of them are very talented, and all have something interesting to say, not only on topics that concern them specifically, such as immigration and alienation, but also on issues that interest us all. Moreover, these authors are increasingly well known by the public, Latino or not, and their works are increasingly studied in academia.

Like all our other books, this Historical Dictionary of U.S. Latino Literature starts with a list of important acronyms and moves on to a chronology. Should anyone doubt its credentials, this part reaches back centuries, predating the creation of the United States, and becomes denser and more significant as the years pass. The introduction then offers a broad view of this literature, again proceeding chronologically, passing through one generation of writers after the other until the present day. The details are provided in the dictionary section, with 110 entries on significant authors such as Rudolfo Anaya, Sandra Cisneros, Junot Díaz, and Sandra María Esteves, as well as U.S. poet laureate Juan Felipe Herrera, and another 60 entries on important trends, issues, and concepts as well as terminology, since this is sometimes also known as Hispanic or Chicano/a literature. This book can obviously only say so much, but its last section is particularly precious, since it is a long—very long—bibliography of other writing on Latino/a literature in general and on specific authors in particular.

It would be difficult, and probably impossible, to find a better team of authors for this volume. Donaldo W. Urioste is a professor of Spanish language and Hispanic literature at California State University, Monterey Bay, and prior to that taught at Colorado College and California Lutheran Univer-
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sity. He is a founding member of the Chicano/Latino Faculty Staff Association at CSUMB. He has written many scholarly articles and with Francisco A. Lomelí has coauthored or coedited two works. Francisco A. Lomelí has been teaching Chicano/a literature at the University of California at Santa Barbara since 1978, largely in the Department of Chicano/a Studies, of which he was chair. He has written, edited, or coedited a string of specialized studies, reference works, translations, and bibliographies on this branch of literature. María Joaquina Villaseñor is an associate professor of Chicano/a-Latino/a studies at California State University, Monterey Bay. She also teaches comparative ethnic studies. These authors’ ability to meld this unusually varied and variegated literature into a very comprehensible—and in some ways exciting—whole will certainly be appreciated by readers, whether they are new to or already familiar with it.

Jon Woronoff
Series Editor
Although U.S. Latino/a literature within the last few decades has made considerable strides in terms of acceptance and visibility, a vexing question still frequently recurs: “What is U.S. Latino literature?” The question seems to imply curiosity, perhaps disbelief, or simply unfamiliarity. The literature’s origins are not readily known, even by its practitioners, and its trajectory as a literary tradition proves at times difficult to document and categorize. Awareness about what constitutes Latino/a literature often remains a moving target. There is also the issue of viewing it as a single body or a conglomeration of branches that somehow have come together in modern times. In other words, are we referring to one U.S. Latino literature, or several? This is more than an academic question, because Puerto Ricans, as well as Mexican Americans/Chicanos or Cuban Americans and other Latinos, often saw their literary efforts as isolated, individual, “national” ruminations. But this situation has changed fundamentally since the 1960s, when parallels and commonalities were discovered by each group about the other, thanks to the construction of points of contact, shared experiences, and a sense of cross-ethnicity. Given that this body of literature has gained prominence, momentum, and credibility nationally and across the globe, it is far easier to refer to one Latino literature within the United States that embraces the heterogeneous intergroupings of Latinos. If any doubts still exist about its basic makeup, one can be reassured that a new stage of evolution is in place, as illustrated by the appearance of The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature (Ilan Stavans et al. 2011), a landmark publication of legitimacy and canonization.

Many assumptions about Latinos plague this critical-literary landscape because before the 1950s they mainly wrote in Spanish, thus making it seem as if they were not engaged in, or accepted by, American (meaning English-language) literary circles. If they wrote in a mixture—either code switching or Spanglish—they were considered unwanted anomalies, existing in isolation or estrangement. It has only been since the 1980s, when Latinos showed a penchant for writing in English, that greater acceptance became the norm. That is when mainstream publishers “rediscovered” U.S. Latino writers, as a demand was forming and a market was created. For too long, U.S. Latino literature has not been thought of as an integral part of the overall shared American literary landscape, but that is slowly changing. This dictionary aims to rectify some of those misconceptions by proving that Latinos do
fundamentally express American issues, concerns, and perspectives, with a flair in linguistic cadences, familial themes, distinct worldviews, and cross-cultural voices.

The dictionary brings together up-to-date, critical renderings of both well-known and forgotten authors within this pan-Latino pantheon as a way of condensing a massive volume of information into a practical reference tool while providing analytical insights into the authors’ upbringing, their stages of development, and their subsequent literary production. It is not composed as a traditional guide, because the information provided is not simply organized in a detached manner; instead, the objective is to exercise succinct critical resolve in order to delineate the authors’ strengths, areas of predilection, genius, importance and contributions in the broadest sense possible. In that regard, this collection attempts to satisfy multiple and varied didactic interests and therefore includes (1) a comprehensive chronology of the social-historical context from which the literature has emerged; (2) a broad introduction to the historical background and the central issues that define it; (3) entries on authors, assessments of each author’s trajectory, his or her overall oeuvre, and specific interpretive evaluations of individual works and a thorough compilation of the authors’ works, listed by genre; (5) a general but copious bibliography on U.S. Latino literatures, followed by a select bibliography for each individual author; and (6) definitions of terms to explain particular phenomena, ideas, events, persons, or concepts that have contributed to the overall understanding of Latinos and their literary production. The dictionary provides information on 110 representative U.S. Latino/a authors and 60 terms relevant to the nature of U.S. Latino literature in order to illustrate and corroborate its foundational bearings within the overall American literary experience.

A project of this magnitude does not reach fruition unless a number of people contribute to it directly or indirectly, including our respective families and editor Jon Woronoff at Rowman & Littlefield. We wish to acknowledge our respective spouses, Laura Urioste, Sonia Zúñiga-Lomelí, and Ernest Stromberg. We also wish to mention our children, Rafael and Marcelino (Nino) Urioste; Natasha G., Carlos F., and Yazmin S. Lomelí; and Annalise and Luna Stromberg-Villaseñor, and our respective grandchildren, Tylar Ziegler-Urioste and Olivia Rose Urioste-Dodge and Kaili Marie Kauka-Lomelí.

Another key person is librarian Gabriel Contreras at the Colección Tloque Nahuaque in the Davidson Library at the University of California at Santa Barbara. Also, many of the authors were great collaborators, and we wish to acknowledge their contributions and accessibility. We also wish to thank our friends and colleagues at our respective universities (California State University, Monterey Bay, and University of California, Santa Barbara), who have encouraged us and been supportive of our work. Finally, we wish to ac-
knowledge Latin American and Chicano literature scholar Don Luis Leal (1907–2010) for his unwavering support and profound interest in our work over the years.

This project has provided us with a greater perspective on U.S. Latino literature’s development and proliferation, which have occurred at a rate we had not anticipated. We are especially gratified to be a part of this process exactly 40 years after *Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography* set the stage for this newest endeavor.

To facilitate the rapid and efficient location of information and to make this book as useful a reference tool as possible, extensive cross-references have been provided in the dictionary section. Within individual entries, terms that have their own entries are in **boldface type** the first time they appear. Related items that are not discussed in the annotation but have their own entries are provided as *See also* cross-references.
# Acronyms and Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ANLE</td>
<td>Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Eapañola (North American Academy of the Spanish Language)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BAW/TAF</td>
<td>Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BFA</td>
<td>Bilingual Foundation of the Arts</td>
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<tr>
<td>CAA</td>
<td>Cuban Adjustment Act</td>
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<tr>
<td>CARA</td>
<td>Chicano Art Resistance and Affirmation</td>
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<tr>
<td>CLASP</td>
<td>Consortium for Latin American Studies Programs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CSO</td>
<td>Community Service Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ICE</td>
<td>Immigration and Customs Enforcement</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>INS</td>
<td>Immigration and Naturalization Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IRCA</td>
<td>Immigration Reform and Control Act</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LGBTQ</td>
<td>lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LULAC</td>
<td>League of United Latin American Citizens</td>
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<tr>
<td>MAYA</td>
<td>Mexican American Youth Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAYO</td>
<td>Mexican American Youth Organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MEChA</td>
<td>Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (Chicano Student Movement of Aztlán)</td>
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<tr>
<td>NALAC</td>
<td>National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NFWA</td>
<td>National Farm Workers Association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RAE</td>
<td>Real Academia Española (Royal Spanish Academy)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCAF</td>
<td>Royal Chicano Air Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SALT</td>
<td>San Antonio Little Theater</td>
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<tr>
<td>SOS</td>
<td>Save Our State initiative</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFW</td>
<td>United Farm Workers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UFWOC</td>
<td>United Farm Workers Organizing Committee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UMAS</td>
<td>United Mexican American Students</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YCCA</td>
<td>Young Chicanos for Community Action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YDI</td>
<td>Youth Development Incorporated</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Chronology

1325–1345 The Aztecs establish their capital, Tenochtitlán (today Mexico City). The first to establish the Aztec empire are migrants from the north, people from a mythical place called Aztlan. Beginning with the Chicano Movement in the 1960s and 1970s, Aztlan would come to occupy an important place in the consciousness and imagination of Chicano/a artists.

1472 Aztec poet Nezahualcóyotl, one of the most renowned pre-Hispanic poets, dies. Well-known types of poems from this period are called “in xóchitl in cuicatl,” or “flower and song.” During the Chicano Movement of the 1960s and 1970s, Chicano poets would invoke these types of poems in their poetry, asserting their significance as antecedents to their own work.

1492 Christopher Columbus arrives at Hispaniola, the island of what would become the Dominican Republic and Haiti; he also arrives at the Island Juana, later called Cuba.

1493 Christopher Columbus arrives at the island he names Isla de San Bautista, which later would become Puerto Rico.

1508 Juan Ponce de León begins colonization of Puerto Rico; he later becomes governor of the island and subsequently searches for the fountain of youth in Florida.

1519–1521 Hernán Cortés enters Mexico with his army and meets with Motezuma; he later sets out to conquer the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan.

1525 Cuauhtémoc, last emperor of the Aztecs, dies. He would become an early cultural icon of identity for Mexicans and later served as a symbol of resistance during the Chicano Movement of the 1960s.

1528–1536 Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, Andrés Dorantes, Alonso de Castillo y Maldonado, and Estebanico make the journey on foot along the Gulf of Mexico coastline from Florida to New Mexico and then back to Mexico City.

1539 Fray Marcos de Niza embarks on an expedition in search of the Golden City of Quivira.

1540 Francisco de Coronado embarks on an exploratory expedition into la Nueva México in search of the Seven Cities of Cibola.
1542 Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca publishes La Relación, his account of eight years of traveling across what is now the U.S. Southwest and living among various Native American tribes before reconnecting with Spanish colonial forces in Mexico in 1536.

1554 The Popol Vuh, sacred text of the Maya, is written. The text contains Mayan creation stories, history, and cosmology and is considered the most important example of pre-Columbian Maya literature to have survived the Spanish Conquest.

1565 The Spanish establish San Agustín, Florida, the capital of Spanish Florida for more than 200 years, and the oldest continuously occupied European-established settlement in the continental United States.

1598 Los moros y los cristianos, a performance of mock battles between Moors and Christians, is staged along the Río Grande as the Spanish begin the colonization of New Mexico. Juan de Oñate establishes Santa Fe as a province of New Spain after completing an expedition from Zacatecas north into New Mexico.

1607 Don Pedro de Peralta founds the new city of Santa Fe (Villa Real de la Santa Fe de San Francisco de Asís), which becomes the provincial capital in 1610.

1610 Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá publishes Historia de la Nueva México, an epic poem that describes the events of the Oñate expedition into New Mexico, ending with the Spanish conquest of Acoma Pueblo in 1599.

1666 San Antonio de los Llanos, which later became San Antonio, Texas, is founded.

1680 The Pueblo people revolt against the Spanish occupation, and the Spaniards are forced out of New Mexico.

1693 Don Diego de Vargas reestablishes New Mexico as a Spanish territory.

1700 Mission San Xavier del Bac is established in Tucson, Arizona.

1732 New Mexican poet Miguel de Quintana’s personal poetry is discovered as a result of an investigation by the Mexican Office of the Inquisition.

1766 The presidio of San Francisco, Spain’s northernmost settlement, is founded.

1769 Captain Gaspar de Portolá and Fray Junípero Serra explore and begin to settle Alta California (now California).
1780 The play *Los comanches* is presented for the first time in New Mexico. It is a conquest drama that reenacts the Spanish army’s historic defeat of the Comanche Indians on the Staked Plains in 1777 in what is now New Mexico. A manuscript of the play was discovered by Aurelio Espinosa in 1907, and in that same year a critical edition was published by the University of New Mexico *Bulletin*.

1803 The Louisiana Purchase nearly doubles the size of the United States, marking a key moment in the process of U.S. expansion.

1810 The Mexican War of Independence begins as Mexico struggles to become one of the first independent nations in Latin America.

1811 Anastacio Céspedes y Monroy publishes *La paisana virtuosa* (The virtuous countrywoman) and *La presumida orgullosa* (The presumptuously proud woman), the first Spanish-language novels published in the United States, both issued by Mathew Carrey in Philadelphia.

1821 Mexico and some Central American countries achieve independence, which spreads as movements throughout Latin America contribute to the establishment of various republics.

1823 President James Monroe proclaims the Monroe Doctrine, stating that European nations cannot interfere in the affairs of the Americas. Erasmo Seguin, a Texas delegate to the U.S. Congress, helps to pass the National Colonization Law, designed to facilitate Anglo settlements in Texas. Anglo settlers continue to settle what was then northern Mexico and is now the U.S. Southwest.

1824 In New York City, the separatist newspaper *El habanero* is established by Cuban independence leader Félix de Varela. José María de Heredia writes his poem “Oda al Niágara.”

1825 Cuban exile José María Heredia publishes *Poesías de José María Heredia*, his first collection of poetry, in New York.

1826 Félix de Varela publishes in Philadelphia what is believed to be the first Hispanic historical-indigenous novel, titled *Jicoténcal*. Originally published anonymously in Spanish, this historical novel follows Hernán Cortés and his conquest of the Aztecs in 1521, in alliance with the people of Tlaxcala.

1828 *Pastorelas en dos actos*, attributed to M. A. de la C., appears in New Mexico and is performed regularly. Anastasio María de Ochoa y Acuña publishes *Poesías de un mexicano* (Poetry of a Mexican) in New York.

1829 Slavery is officially abolished in Mexico.
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1836 The pivotal Battle of the Alamo is fought between Texas rebel forces and the Mexican government’s army, led by Antonio López de Santa Anna. This eventually leads to Texas becoming an independent state from Mexico, forming the Republic of Texas until 1845, when it joined the United States.

1846–1848 The Mexican–American War is fought and concludes with the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848, establishing the present-day border between the two countries and fulfilling the expansionist vision of a United States that stretches from the Atlantic to the Pacific coasts. The treaty is supposed to protect Mexican Americans as new citizens, including their language and land rights.

1848 On 4 July, Don Antonio Coronel opens the first Spanish-language theater of record in the U.S. Southwest as an addition to his home in Los Angeles.

1853 The popular Mexican social bandit, Joaquín Murrieta, known as a Robin Hood figure for defending Mexicans’ rights, is killed by Captain Love and his posse while they are pursuing him as an outlaw and bandit.

1855 The state of California passes the “greaser laws,” which discriminate against Mexican Americans and Native Americans. El trovo del Viejo Vilmas (The song of old man Vilmas), a folkloric play, is performed.

1858 Juan Nepomuceno Seguín releases The Personal Memoirs of Juan N. Seguín, the first autobiography written by a Mexican American in the English language.

1868 The revolt for independence, the Grito de Lares, begins in Puerto Rico, ending unsuccessfully in defeat after a few days. Spain also puts down Cuban independence fighters when their Grito de Yara insurrection begins shortly thereafter. A significant number of Cubans and Puerto Ricans migrate to the United States and other countries as exiles.

1872 María Amparo Ruiz de Burton publishes her first novel, Who Would Have Thought It?, under her husband’s name, “H. S. Burton.” Ruiz de Burton is considered the first Latina to publish a novel written in English.

1879 Hispanic newspapers experience a resurgence as vehicles of cultural interests, intellectual exchange, and literary expression.

1885 María Amparo Ruiz de Burton publishes her second novel, The Squatter and the Don, under the pseudonym “C. Loyal.” It deals with the systematic disenfranchisement of Mexican Americans in California.
1887 Cuban exile Néstor Ponce de León, along with fellow Cuban exile José Martí and Colombian immigrant Santiago Pérez Triana, establish the influential literary club La Sociedad Literaria Hispanoamericana de Nueva York (The Hispanic American Literary Association of New York).

1892 Eusebio Chacón publishes his two seminal short novels, *Hijo de la tempestad* (The son of the tempest) and *Tras la tormenta la calma* (The calm after the storm), in New Mexico.

1895 José Martí is killed in a battle at Dos Ríos, Cuba, in the struggle for Cuban independence from Spain. In New York City, the Puerto Rican flag is designed by Puerto Rican exiles struggling to end Spanish colonial rule on their island.

1896 Manuel C. de Baca’s historical novel of New Mexico, *Historia de Vicente Silva y sus cuarenta bandidos, sus crímenes y retribuciones* (History of Vicente Silva and his forty bandits, his crimes and retributions), is published.

1898 The Spanish–American War takes place, establishing the independence of Cuba, the Philippine Islands, and Puerto Rico from Spain, but linking the United States and those nations in a colonial relationship. *Historia de un cautivo* (History of a captive) by Porfirio Gonzales is published in New Mexico. Eugenio María de Hostos creates the Liga de Patriotas Puertorriqueños (League of Puerto Rican Patriots) in New York City, advocating for Puerto Ricans to determine their own political fate. At this time, New York City is a hub of intellectual production and political engagement of Puerto Ricans and Cubans, many of whom saw themselves as engaged in a common struggle against Spanish colonialism and U.S. imperialism.

1900 The Foraker Act makes all U.S. federal laws the law of Puerto Rico and establishes a civilian government there.

1901 Gregorio Cortez, an outlaw and eventually a Chicano folk hero, is captured in Texas. Recounting the narrative of his capture and defiance of a Texas sheriff, “The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez,” a Mexican border ballad/*corrido* is sung throughout Texas, becoming an anthem to resistance against racist law enforcement.

1904 Political activists and exiles from Mexico Enrique and Ricardo Flores Magón establish in San Antonio, Texas, the militant newspaper *Regeneración*, in which they promote revolution against the Porfirio Díaz regime in Mexico.

1910–1920 The Mexican Revolution breaks out, overthrowing the dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz. The aims of the revolution include obtaining greater political participation and representation, more social mobility, enhanced ec-
onomic opportunities, agrarian land reform, effective suffrage for all, and no reelection. Over the course of the next 20 years, 900,000 Mexicans (approximately 10 percent of Mexico’s population) cross the border into the United States.

1913 María Cristina Mena publishes her short stories in *The Century Illustrated Magazine* in New York, sharing images and views of her home country with an audience of predominantly middle- and upper-class white Americans.

1914 In the midst of poor diplomatic relations between Mexico and the United States during the Mexican Revolution, the United States invades the port city of Veracruz and occupies it for more than six months. The Panama Canal, connecting the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, is completed.


1916 Vicente Bernal’s *Las primicias* (First fruits) is published posthumously, one of the first collections of poetry written in both Spanish and English.

1917 The Jones Act is passed by the U.S. Congress, establishing that Puerto Ricans are U.S. citizens, but ensuring that Puerto Rico’s colonial status remains intact.

1923 The play *Ramona* is performed for the first time, in Hemet, California. Written by Garnet Holme, the play is based on a novel by human rights author Helen Hunt Jackson. There is also a Spanish-language adaptation by playwright Adalberto Elías González, titled *Los amores de Ramona*. The *Ramona* phenomenon becomes a highly popular representation due to the idealization of Indian life, evolving into a pageant.

1924 In Albuquerque, New Mexico, author Felipe Maximiliano Chacón publishes his book of poetry and short stories, *Poesía y prosa: Obras de Felipe Maximiliano Chacón* (Poetry and prose: works by Felipe Maximiliano Chacón), at the same time that the Immigration Act imposes the first quota system against Latinos.

1925 José Vasconcelos publishes his influential philosophical work, *La raza cósmica*, which promotes the concept of racial mixing (*mestizaje*) as the “fifth race” as a future for humanity. Spanish-born poet and philosopher Jorge Agustín Nicolás Ruiz de Santayana y Borrás, a.k.a. George Santayana (1863–1952), is awarded the Royal Society of Literature Benson Medal in London. The border patrol, eventually to be known as “la migra” by Mexican immigrants, is created by the U.S. Congress.
1926 *La Opinión*, the largest and longest-running Spanish-language newspaper in the United States is founded in Los Angeles, California.

1927 La Liga Puertorriqueña e Hispana (The Puerto Rican and Hispanic League) is founded in New York City to unite Latinos and promote their social, political, and civic welfare. The league’s periodical *Boletín Oficial de la Liga Puertorriqueña e Hispana* is also established to promote its causes, its activities, and Hispanic culture in general.

1928 Newspaper editor Daniel Venegas releases his novel *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamen* (*The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parakeets Suckle Their Young*) in Los Angeles, California. Puerto Rican nationalist Gonzalo O’Neill’s play *Bajo una sola bandera* (*Under a Single Flag*) premieres at the Park Place Theater in New York.

1929 The League of United Latin American Citizens (LULAC) is founded in Corpus Christi, Texas, as a community-based service organization to combat the discrimination faced by Hispanics in the United States.

1930 General Rafael Leonidas Trujillo becomes the leader of the Dominican Republic, supported by the U.S. government. He remains the country’s dictator until he is assassinated in 1961. The Trujillo regime is responsible for widespread violence and repression, including the so-called Parsley Massacre of 1937, in which thousands of Haitians living in the Dominican Republic are killed.

1930s Due to the “Mexican scare” during the Great Depression, between 300,000 and 400,000 Mexicans and Mexican Americans are rounded up and deported from the United States.

1931 Mexican anthropologist Manuel Gamio publishes *The Mexican Immigrant: His Life Story*, “life histories” of a wide range of Mexican immigrants who entered the United States between 1900 and 1930 to work. This work is now considered foundational for U.S./Mexican border studies and Chicano/a studies.

1933 The Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS), commonly known as “la migra” by Latinos, is created to police the border between the United States and Mexico.

1934 In Los Angeles, Jorge Ainslie publishes his novel *Los pochos* (*The Americanized Mexicans*), considered to be the first Mexican American immigration novel and a precursor to such works as *Pocho* (1959), by José Antonio Villarreal, and *Chicano* (1970), by Richard Vásquez, among others.
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1935 Miguel Otero publishes his autobiography, *My Life on the Frontier, 1864–1882*. John Steinbeck publishes the novel *Tortilla Flat*, which presents patronizing portrayals of local Monterey, California, Mexicans—called *paisanos*—that are subsequently countered by Chicano authors and critics. George Santayana’s first novel, *The Last Puritan: A Memoir in the Form of a Novel*, is nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

1936 Nina Otero-Warren releases her book *Old Spain in Our Southwest*, nostalgically recording her memories of the family hacienda in Las Lunas, New Mexico.

1937 Many Puerto Rican nationalists are killed or wounded at a rally in what is called the Masacre de Ponce (Ponce Massacre), as the U.S. colonial government in Puerto Rico escalates its attacks on Puerto Rican nationalists.

1938 Josefina Niggli presents *Mexican Folk Plays*, an anthology of five plays exposing and interpreting Mexican border culture to American audiences.


1940 Miguel Otero publishes the third part of his autobiography, *My Nine Years as Governor of the Territory of New Mexico, 1897–1906*. In a collection of short fiction, *New Mexico Triptych*, Fray Angélico Chávez portrays a uniquely New Mexican Hispano perspective on the Nativity, the Madonna, and the Crucifixion.

1942 The Bracero Program is established, providing work for five million Mexican laborers, due to labor shortages in the United States during World War II. The immigration agreement with Mexico legally allows Mexican workers to fill wartime labor shortages, bringing tens of thousands of Mexicans into the United States each year. María Cristina Mena publishes her novel *The Water-Carrier’s Secret*. The Sleepy Lagoon incident takes place in East Los Angeles, resulting in the conviction of 22 Chicano zoot-suiters for murder (overturned in 1944), the basis of Luis Valdez’s *Zoot Suit* (1978).

1943 The Zoot-Suit Riots, in which Chicano youth (called *pachucos*) dressed in zoot-suits were profiled, beaten, and disrobed, take place in Los Angeles. These attacks are later memorialized in works of literature such as Luis Valdez’s play *Zoot Suit* (1978) and Graciela Limón’s novel *Memories of Ana Calderón* (1994). *Spanish Folk-Poetry in New Mexico*, by Arthur León Campa, offers a critical anthology of Spanish folk poetry and ballads (*romances, corridos, décimas, and canciones*) as they developed and were adapted to the New Mexican landscape.
1945 Josefina Niggli publishes *The Mexican Village*, a novel chronicling the life, traditions, and folklore of the Mexican borderlands for an English-speaking American public. Mexicans earn the most Congressional Medals of Honor of any other ethnic group.

1947 The United States initiates Operation Bootstrap, bringing Puerto Rican contract laborers to the United States and setting off one of the largest waves of Puerto Rican migration to the United States in its history. The publication of the two short stories “El Hoyo” and “Señor Garza” by Mario Suárez in the *Arizona Quarterly* establishes him as one of the precursors of contemporary Chicano letters. Luis Pérez publishes his autobiographical novel *El coyote: The Rebel*, an early chronicle of immigration and success in pursuit of the American dream. Josefina Niggli releases *Step Down, Elder Brother*, a novel that exposes English readers to the aftermath of the Mexican Revolution in Mexican border society.

1948 Carey McWilliams’s extensive historical study, *North from Mexico: The Spanish-Speaking People of the United States*, is published; it has a major impact because of its empirical treatment of Mexican Americans.

1952 Puerto Rico is officially established as the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico.

1953 René Marqués’s foundational play *La carreta* (The oxcart), which captures a vivid sense of the immigration experience of Puerto Ricans in New York, premieres at the Church of San Sebastián in New York. María Cristina Mena Chambers releases *Boy Heroes of Chapultepec: A Story of the Mexican War*, once again informing American readers about life and culture in her native country.

1954 The U.S. Supreme Court determines that the legal protections extended to African Americans in the Fourteenth Amendment guaranteeing “equal protection under the law” apply to Latinos/as as well. This case establishes a precedent in legal challenges to racial/ethnic discrimination against Latinos/as. Fabiola Cabeza de Baca writes her nostalgic novel on the “good old days” about New Mexican cultural practices, titled *We Fed Them Cactus*, and Fray Angélico Chávez presents his historical account of the conquest of New Mexico through the Catholic virgin icon of La Conquistadora in a novel of the same name. Operation Wetback is enacted in the United States by the Immigration and Naturalization Service, designed to apprehend and deport undocumented Mexican immigrants. There are 1,078,168 apprehensions made in the first year of the program and 242,608 in 1955.

1955 Cleofas Jaramillo publishes her autobiographical novel, *Romance of a Little Village Girl*. 
**1956** Pedro Juan Soto publishes *Spics: Stories*, about the Puerto Rican experience in New York City.

**1957** Juan Rael publishes his *Cuentos de Colorado y Nuevo México*, which serves to solidify the area’s Hispanic tradition of literature, both written and oral.

**1958** Américo Paredes publishes his classic scholarly study on folk hero Gregorio Cortez, “*With His Pistol in His Hand*: A Border Ballad and Its Hero”, proposing the *corrido* (ballad) as the possible origin of Chicano expression.

**1959** The iconic Mexican American epic novel *Pocho*, by José Antonio Villarreal, is released by Doubleday Press. José Timoteo López, Edgardo Núñez, and Robert Lara Vialpando publish *Breve reseña de la literatura hispana de Nuevo México y Colorado* (Brief overview of Hispanic literature from New Mexico and Colorado), one of the first attempts at a literary history of proto-Chicano letters. *The Evergreen Review* literary magazine devotes an entire special issue to Mexican authors, “The Eye of Mexico,” bringing attention for the first time to Mexican authors (i.e., Carlos Fuentes, Octavio Paz, Elena Poniatowska, Jaime Sabines, and Juan Rulfo) in such a mainstream venue. The borough of Manhattan in New York City observes the first National Puerto Rican Day Parade in honor of the people of Puerto Rican heritage residing in the mainland United States. After six years of armed revolt in Cuba headed by Fidel Castro’s 26th of July Movement, the rebels finally oust President Fulgencio Batista from power on 1 January 1959. Dissatisfied with the Cuban Revolution, large numbers of middle- and upper-class Cubans subsequently migrate to the United States as dissidents and exiles.

**1961** *The Labyrinth of Solitude*, by Mexican poet and philosopher Octavio Paz, is translated into English, an attempt to explain the Mexican mind and psyche. Paz attempts to capture an essentialist Mexican by focusing on what he calls a “Mexican extreme” in the Chicano figure of a *pachuco*. Jesús Colón releases *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches*, in which he addresses issues of racism and class in the Puerto Rican community.

**1962** The National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), a precursor to the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), is founded by two young Chicanos named César Chávez and Dolores Huerta.

**1963** John Rechy publishes the first Chicano gay novel, *City of Night*, a landmark novel describing the life of a male hustler, which revolutionizes a new aesthetics. William Carlos Williams’s last book, *Pictures from Brue-
ghel, wins the Pulitzer Prize for poetry. Cuban American writer José Yglesias publishes his first novel, *A Wake in Ybor City*, about Cubans who immigrated to Florida in the wake of the Cuban Revolution.

**1964** Sabine R. Ulibarri releases *Tierra Amarilla: Stories of New Mexico*, his regional stories about the lifestyle, characters, and customs of New Mexico. *Cuadernos Desterrados* (Exiled notebooks), a literary journal for Cuban expatriates, is founded by Mauricio Fernández in Miami, Florida.

**1965** César Chávez and Dolores Huerta cofound the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC) as a vehicle to promote greater labor equities for agricultural workers. Luis Valdez, with his Teatro Campesino (Farmworkers Theatre), sparks the urgency of self-representation by using characters who lived the experience of field-workers, thus establishing one of the pillars of a social movement and a cultural nationalist literature. The Crusade for Justice is established in Denver, Colorado, by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales. This period is considered a literary renaissance. For all these reasons, 1965 is a breakthrough year of converging factors that help create the Chicano Movement and by extension propels the contemporary production of Chicano letters with a cultural nationalist agenda. Avant-garde Cuban American playwright María Irene Fornés wins the Distinguished Plays Obie Award for her plays *Promenade* and *The Successful Life of Three*. Over the course of her career she wins nine Obie Awards (in 1965, 1977, 1979, 1982, two in 1984, 1985, 1988, 2000). Ediciones Universal, the first publishing house to serve the Cuban exile community, is founded in Miami, Florida, by Juan Manuel and Marta O. Salvat.

**1967** Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales releases his classic epic poem *I Am Joaquin*, one of the earliest and most widely read works associated with the Chicano Movement. It is later turned into a film, produced and narrated by Luis Valdez, to mobilize the masses through its strongly cultural, nationalist message and images. A pioneer writer of the Nuyorican Movement, Piri Thomas publishes *Down These Mean Streets*, an autobiographical coming-of-age novel that brings to life the harsh realities of barrio life, documenting the psychological impact of racism and violence on the young male protagonist; it is considered by many to be the work that launches the Nuyorican Movement. Luis Valdez produces his emblematic play about how to negotiate identity in modern times, *Los vendidos* (The sell-outs). *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought*, the first Chicano academic and literary journal ever published in the United States, is created by Octavio Romano at Berkeley. El Teatro de la Esperanza is established at the University of California, Santa Barbara. Miriam Colón establishes the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater on West 47th Street in Manhattan, New York.
1968 *Exilio: Revista de Humanidades* (Exile: Journal of Humanities), a literary journal for Cuban exiles, is founded in New York by Victor Batista Falla and Mauricio Fernández.

1969 The Chicano Youth Liberation Conference takes place in Denver, Colorado, which issues the Plan Espiritual de Aztlán, a proclamation of a new identity and Chicano independence that presents the concept of Aztlán as the Chicano mythic homeland. Also, a conference called the Plan de Santa Bárbara takes place at the University of California at Santa Barbara, at which the blueprint for creating Chicano studies programs in other universities is created. Raymond Barrio publishes *The Plum Plum Pickers*, a novel that describes the hardships and exploitation of fruit pickers in California. Abelardo “Lalo” Delgado releases his collection of Chicano Movement poetry, *Chicano: 25 Pieces of a Chicano Mind*. One of the first anthologies of Mexican American literature, *El Espejo The Mirror: Selected Mexican American Literature*, is edited and published by Octavio Romano via Quinto Sol Publications. Nuyorican poet Victor Hernández-Cruz releases his first full-length collection of poetry, *Snaps*, published by Random House. El Teatro Campesino is honored with an Obie Award for “demonstrating the politics of survival.”

1970 The first Quinto Sol Literary Award is granted to Tomás Rivera for his novel “... y no se lo tragó la tierra (... And the Earth Did Not Part),” subsequently published in a bilingual edition in 1971 by Quinto Sol Press. Richard Vásquez’s novel *Chicano* is published by Doubleday.

1971 Ricardo Sánchez publishes his first collection of poetry, *Canto y Grito Mi Liberación . . .* (I sing and shout my liberation . . .), a work of angry and inventive Spanglish writings about identity, liberation, and barrio realities. Alurista releases *Floricanto in Aztlán*, a tour de force of Spanglish creations, barrio aesthetics, and Amerindian sensibilities. A collection titled *Actos by Luis Valdez and Teatro Campesino* brings together some of the most inventive plays on Chicanos and their social circumstances through humor, satire, and outrageous depictions. Estela Portillo Trambley writes one of the first contemporary plays by and about a Chicana, *The Day of the Swallows*. Ernesto Galarza produces an autobiographical novel, *Barrio Boy*, which chronicles the journey of an immigrant boy into California. Cuban American playwright Ivan Acosta’s play *Abdala-Jose Marti* debuts at the Lincoln Center Theater Festival in New York, the first Hispanic play to achieve such an honor. Cuban American novelist Celedonio González publishes his novel *Los Primos* (The cousins), shifting the narrative away from Cuba and Castro and focusing on Cuban exiles living in the United States.
1972 Rudolfo A. Anaya releases *Bless Me, Ultima*, a novel of magical realism and a bildungsroman, about a boy who struggles with external influences, his identity, and his spirituality; it garners the Premio Quinto Sol literary award and becomes a classic. *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* by Oscar Z. Acosta makes a major splash with a character who indulges in self-hate and eventually discovers his Chicano identity. The anthology *La literatura chicana: Texto y contexto*, edited by Antonia Castañeda-Shular, Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, and Joseph Sommers, contributes to diversification and intertextual relations with other Latino literatures.

1973 *La Revista Chicano-Riqueña* is founded in Bloomington, Indiana, by Nicolás Kanellos and Luis Dávila; it establishes literary collaboration between Puerto Ricans and Chicanos. The first Festival de Flor y Canto (Festival of Flower and Song) takes place at the University of Southern California (USC), bringing together the major Chicano writers of the time. KCET-TV in Los Angeles, California, presents “Cantos de Aztlán/Poets of Aztlán,” a half-hour poetry reading featuring Alurista and Ricardo Sánchez, two of Chicano literature’s leading poets of the time. Rolando Hinojosa-Smith wins the third annual Premio Quinto Sol for his novel *Estampas del Valle y otras obras/Sketches of the Valley and Other Works*. In Manhattan’s East Village, Miguel Algarín, Miguel Piñero, Pedro Pietri, and others found the Nuyorican Poet’s Café, which becomes a forum for promoting Nuyorican literature, music, visual arts, comedy, and theater. Pedro Pietri releases his poetry collection *Puerto Rican Obituary*, an epic poem that sketches the lives of five Puerto Ricans who come to the United States with dreams that are never fulfilled. José Angel Figueroa comes out with his collection of poetry *East 110th Street*, memorable for its Afro-Taino nationalism. Nicholasa Mohr presents her coming-of-age novel *Nilda*, which relates life in the Bronx through the eyes of a 10-year-old, second-generation Puerto Rican girl. The Bilingual Foundation of the Arts (BFA) is founded by two Latina personalities in the world of theater, Mexican American actress Carmen Zapata and Cuban-born actress and playwright Margarita Galbán. The BFA has a history of commitment to all people in the greater Los Angeles area, presenting the finest Hispanic literary culture for both Spanish- and English-speaking audiences.

1974 Miguel Méndez M. publishes his landmark novel about the mythic border region, *Peregrinos de Aztlán* (Pilgrims in Aztlán), a totalizing work that shows influences from the Latin American boom. *The Fifth Horseman* by José Antonio Villarreal makes connections with pre-revolution Mexico to emphasize how that historical event directly impacted Chicanos. Juan Felipe Herrera publishes his innovative collection of poetry *Rebozos of Love/We Have Woven/Sudor de Pueblos/On Our Back*. The San Antonio, Texas, journal *Caracol* begins publication. *The Bilingual Review/La Revista Bilingüe* is
founded by Gary Keller to promote studies on linguistics and literary criticism of Latino literature. Miguel Piñero’s play *Short Eyes* premieres off-Broadway at the Joseph Papp Public Theater on 28 February. The play is nominated for six Tony Awards and wins the 1974 New York Drama Critics Circle Award, an Obie, and a Drama Desk Award for the “best play of the year.” *Short Eyes* is later published in book form and adapted for film. Julia Alvarez is awarded the Lamont Prize by the Academy of American Poets.

**1975** Alejandro Morales publishes his experimental novel *Caras viejas y vino nuevo* (Old faces and new wine). Ron Arias’s *The Road to Tamazunchale* also appears, introducing fantasy and magical realism to assuage the harsh reality of death. The Department of Spanish and Portuguese at the University of California, Irvine, establishes The Chicano Literary Prize, the first of which is awarded to Ron Arias for his story “The Wetback.” Estela Portillo Trambley’s collection of short stories, *Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings*, is instrumental in presenting proto-feminist topics concerning Chicanas. Juan Rodriguez creates *Carta Abierta*, a collection of personal letters of reflections, opinions, and bibliographical data pertaining to literary happenings of the day. In New York City, Miguel Algarín and Miguel Piñero edit and publish *Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings*, introducing a variety of Nuyorican voices writing about their experiences bilingually, in Spanish and English. Nicholasa Mohr releases her collection of short fiction, *El Bronx Remembered: A Novella and Stories*, a *New York Times* Outstanding Book of the Year Finalist and winner of the Best Book Award from the *School Library Journal*.

**1976** Grito del Sol: A Chicano Quarterly, promoting Chicano letters, begins publication in Berkeley, California. Mango Press is established by Lorna Dee Cervantes to introduce the poetry of such writers as Alberto Ríos, Orlando Ramírez, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Bernice Zamora, Luis Omar Salinas, and Sandra Cisneros. Rudolfo Anaya releases *Heart of Aztlán*, the second novel of his coming-of-age trilogy. *Hechizospells* by Ricardo Sánchez introduces his landmark collection of poetry, and Aristeo Brito issues his border novel *El diablo en Texas* (The devil in Texas). Alurista comes out with his neo-indigenist poetry collection *Timespace Huracán*. Rolando Hinojosa-Smith publishes his epic novel *Klail City y sus alrededores* (Klail City and Its Surroundings) and becomes the first Chicano author to receive the prestigious Premio Casa de las Américas award. *The Elements of San Joaquín* by Gary Soto wins the United States Award of the International Poetry Forum and is published a year later.

**1977** Sabine Ulibarri publishes his collection of unforgettable New Mexican stories, *Mi abuela fumaba puros/My Grandma Smoked Cigars*. John Rechy examines sexuality in his documentary novel *The Sexual Outlaw*. In *The
Elements of San Joaquín, published in the Pitt Poetry Series, Gary Soto chronicles life in California’s San Joaquin valley and the futility of trying to recapture the innocence of childhood. In her collection of poetry Bloodroot, Alma Villanueva employs images from Aztec and Mexican history and mythology to construct a feminist ideology. Cuban American playwright María Irene Fornés is presented with an Obie Award for playwriting for Fefu and Her Friend.

1978 The play Zoot Suit by Luis Valdez is presented at the Taper Forum in Los Angeles to sold-out audiences for months, marking the first time a Chicano play had made a major splash in a mainstream theater venue. (The Broadway production of Zoot Suit debuts at the Winter Garden Theater in 1979 but is short-lived.) Gary Soto releases his second collection of poetry, The Tale of Sunlight, which is nominated for the Pulitzer Prize and also for the National Book Award. Ricardo Sánchez publishes his book of poetry, Milhues Blues and Gritos Nortenos, while Rolando Hinojosa comes out with his only collection of poetry, Korean Love Songs: From Klail City Death Trip, a series of poems based on the author’s experiences in the Korean War. Nuyorican Piri Thomas draws from his past experiences and gives readers a vivid slice of the life in the barrio in his collection of stories, El Barrio. The Spanish-language journal La Palabra: Revista de Literatura Chicana, edited by Justo Alarcón, appears for the first time. Miguel Algarín publishes A Mango Affair, a collection of poetry that attacks the misconceptions and the American Dream–inspired thoughts that some islanders may have about life in the United States.

1979 Arte Público Press, publisher of Chicano/Latino literature, is founded and establishes its base at the University of Houston. Jorge Huerta and Nicolás Kanellos edit and release Nuevos Pasos: Chicano and Puerto Rican Drama, an important collection of five Chicano and three Puerto Rican plays. Luis Omar Salinas presents his poetry collection I Go Dreaming Serenades. José Antonio Burciaga introduces his vanguard poetry collection Cultura. The anthology Modern Chicano Writers: A Collection of Critical Essays, edited by Joseph Sommers and Tomás Ybarra-Frausto, offers a series of analytical essays on various Chicano authors. Rudolfo Anaya issues Tortuga, the third novel in his New Mexico coming-of-age trilogy. Francisco Jiménez’s anthology of critical essays, The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature, also makes its appearance. On the eastern seaboard, Puerto Rican poet Luz María Umpierre’s collection Una puertorriqueña en Penna (A Puerto Rican woman in Pennsylvania) appears, offering poems that comment on the discrimination that the Puerto Rican community experiences in Philadelphia. Tato Laviera releases his first collection of poetry, La Carreta Made a U-turn, a canonical work of poetry written for a bilingual audience, de-
scribing the Puerto Rican experience in the United States. Cuban American playwright María Irene Fornés is presented with an Obie Award for directing *Eyes on the Harem*.

1980 In *Inventing a Word: An Anthology of Twentieth Century Puerto Rican Poetry*, Julio Marzán offers original poems and their English translations of 23 different modern poetic voices addressing contemporary issues and the culture of Puerto Rico. In *Yerba Buena*, a first collection of poetry by Sandra María Esteves, she presents a revolutionary urban-Latina aesthetic and thematic. Gary Soto publishes yet another poetry collection, *Father Is a Pillow Tied to a Broom*. Lucha Corpi presents poetry of feelings and sensuality in *Palabras de mediodía/Noon Words*. Miguel Méndez releases *Tata Casehaua y otros cuentos*, a bilingual collection of nine stories. Juan Bruce-Novoa presents *Chicano Authors: Inquiry by Interview*, in which 14 leading Chicano authors respond to questions about their personal and educational backgrounds; their perceptions of the role of the Chicano writer; and their evaluation of the literary, linguistic, and sociocultural significance of Chicano literature. Tino Villanueva introduces *Chicanos: Antología histórica y literaria* (Chicanos: A historical and literary anthology), intended for Mexico, which explains much of the social, historical, and linguistic background of Chicano/a writings. In addition, Marcienne Rocard introduces *Sons of the Sun* (translated from the French, *Les Fils du Soleil: La Minorité Mexicaine à travers la Litterature des Etats-Unis*), one of the first modern critical looks at Chicanos from abroad. Chicano poet Luis Omar Salinas is given the Earl Lyon Award for poetry writing by Fresno State University for his collection *Afternoon of the Unreal*. Rudolfo Anaya wins the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for his novel *Tortuga* (1979), the third book in a trilogy including *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972) and *Heart of Aztlán* (1976). Acclaimed Nuyorican poet Jesús Abraham “Tato” Laviera is invited to a White House gathering of American poets by President Jimmy Carter in acknowledgment of his collection *La Carreta Made a U-Turn*. The Mariel boatlift brings approximately 125,000 Cubans to Florida from the port of Mariel, Cuba, within the span of a few months, constituting one of the largest waves of Cuban migration in U.S. history.

1981 Lorna Dee Cervantes comes out with her first collection of poetry, *Emplumada*, in which the poetic voice projects a sense of alienation from both the dominant culture and her own; she wins the American Book Award for this in 1982. Alurista releases *Spik in Glyph*, a collection of poems written between 1975 and 1979. Rolando Hinojosa publishes his novel *Mi querido Rafa* (Dear Rafe), in which he experiments with the epistolary form. Jaime Sagel brings out *Tunomás Honey*, a bilingual short story collection for which he is awarded the 1981 Premio Casa de las Américas literary prize. Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga edit and publish *This Bridge Called My*
Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, a best-selling feminist anthology that helped create a shift in feminist consciousness, acknowledging the important contributions of Latinas and African American, Asian American, Native American women, as well as other women of color. Puerto Rican author Benito Pastoriza releases his first poetry collection, *Lo coloro de lo incoloro* (The color of the colorless), and wins the Chicano/Latino Literary Prize (second place) from the University of California at Irvine for 1979–1980. Cuban American playwright Dolores Prida premieres *Coser y Cantar: A One Act Bilingual Fantasy for Two Women*, a play about the experience of being Hispanic in the United States, at the INTAR Theater in New York. Nuyorican writer Nicholasa Mohr wins the American Book Award for her children’s book *Felita* (1979).

1982 Luis Omar Salinas introduces his poetry in *Darkness under the Trees/Walking behind the Spanish*, which is filled with dark, surreal imagery. Ernestina Eger offers her extensive annotated bibliography *Criticism of Contemporary Chicano Literature*. Jorge Huerta edits the anthology *Chicano Theater: Themes and Forms*, which offers a comprehensive overview of Chicano drama from its inception as agitprop to its more recent mainstream trends. Salvador Rodríguez del Pino publishes his unique study *La novela chicana escrita en español: Cinco autores comprometidos*. Richard Rodríguez contributes his autobiography *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodríguez*, stating controversial positions on affirmative action and bilingual education. Leroy Quintana wins the American Book Award for his first collection of poetry, *Sangre* (1981). Víctor Hernández Cruz introduces surreal bilingual poetry in *By Lingual Wholes*, in which linguistic code switching is the norm. Martín Espada comes out with his first book of poetry, *The Immigrant Iceboy’s Bolero*, wherein he describes the difficulties experienced by immigrants as they attempt to make a new life in a new and hostile environment. Luz María Umpierre’s new collection of poetry, *En el país de las maravillas* (In the country of wonders), uses irony to challenge and resist the notion that the United States can be a wonderland and at the same time develop citizens who would want to modify her, restrain her, and mark her as foreign and a minority. Eugene V. Mohr introduces an important study to the literary canon with *The Nuyorican Experience: The Literature of the Puerto Rican Minority*. In addition, Nuyorican poet Jesús Abraham “Tato” Laviera wins the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for his collection of poetry *Enclave* (1981), the first Latino to win this award for poetry.

1983 Cuban American Oscar Hijuelos publishes his first novel, *One House in the Last World*, setting the stage to later win the Pulitzer Prize. *Reto en el paraíso* (Challenge in paradise) by Alejandro Morales represents an ambitious experiment in creating the first Chicano “totalizing novel.” Edward
Rivera releases *Family Installments: Memories of Growing Up Hispanic*, a fictionalized family chronicle spanning several generations. Prior to the official establishment of the National Medal for the Arts, playwright Luis Valdez had received a comparable medal from President Ronald Reagan, arranged by the President’s Committee on the Arts and the Humanities. Lionel G. García wins the PEN Southwest award for his novel *Leaving Home*. Evangelina Vigil (Piñón) is presented with the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for her collection of poetry *Thirty an’ Seen a Lot*, the first Latina to receive this award for poetry. Nash Candelaria wins the American Book Award for his novel *Not by the Sword*. Pat Mora wins the National Association for Chicano Studies’ Creative Writing Award.

1984 *The House on Mango Street* (winner of the American Book Award in 1985), a coming-of-age novel by Sandra Cisneros, has an immediate impact because of its character depictions and poetic resonances. Pat Mora’s *Chants* is presented with the Southwest Book Award by the Border Regional Library Association and the Best Book of Poetry award from the *El Paso Times*. In the arena of short fiction, *The Iguana Killer: Twelve Stories of the Heart*, by Alberto Alvaro Ríos, introduces new insights into a series of desert symbols. *Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide*, edited by Julio A. Martínez and Francisco A. Lomeli, presents an exhaustive collection of critical treatments on a broad range of authors and literary concepts. Nicolás Kanellos edits *Hispanic Theatre in the United States*, which provides a historical overview of Hispanic theater. And Ana Castillo in *Women Are Not Roses* further contributes to new definitions of Chicana feminisms. This year marks the first international conference on Chicano literature and culture, which takes place in Germersheim, Germany, spearheaded by Renate von Bardeleben, Juan Bruce-Novoa, and others. In New York City, César Andreu Iglesias edits *Memoirs of Bernardo Vega: A Contribution to the History of the Puerto Rican Community in New York*, a unique and often humorous firsthand account of the life of an immigrant, as well as of the concerns and activities of the Puerto Rican community in New York in the period between the world wars. María Irene Fornés wins two Obie Awards, for playwriting and directing, for *The Danube*, *Sarita*, and *Mud*. Jesús Colón, one of the founding fathers of the Nuyorican movement, receives the American Book Award posthumously for *A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches* (1961). The English-language translation of the widely read *I, Rigoberta Menchú* is published. The book recounts the early life of Rigoberta Menchú, her father’s violent assassination, and her brother’s torture by the Guatemalan army. For her activism on behalf of the rights of the indigenous people of Guatemala and globally, Menchú will win the Nobel Prize for Peace in 1992, the quincentennial of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas.
1985 The year is a literary happening; a sizable group of Chicana writers publish some of their first or most notable works up to this time, forming what some have called the Chicana postmodern generation or a Chicana literary boom. Winner of the Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction, awarded by the American Academy and Institute of Arts and Letters, Cecile Pineda’s debut novel *Face* addresses issues having to do with identity and the quest for community. *Puppet: A Chicano Novella* by Margarita Cota-Cárdenas is a highly experimental novel filled with bilingual episodes in search of an enigmatic protagonist. Rolando Hinojosa releases his mystery novel *Partners in Crime*, part of the Klail City Death Trip series featuring Lieutenant Detective Rafe Buenrostro. *Living up the Street* (also winner of the 1985 American Book Award) by Gary Soto recounts the common trials of growing up in a large urban city, and the poems in *Black Hair* reflect a growing maturity in the poet’s imagination as he ponders such themes as marriage and parenthood. *The Moths and Other Stories* by Helena María Viramontes focuses on the lives of Chicana women of various ages and backgrounds struggling with issues of religion, adolescence, sexuality, family, and aging. María Herrera-Sobek’s edition of *Beyond Stereotypes: The Critical Analysis of Chicana Literature* offers timely discussions on a variety of authors and topics. Marta Sánchez also offers an in-depth examination of a group of Chicana poets in her *Contemporary Chicana Poetry: A Critical Approach to an Emerging Literature*. In addition, Arte Público releases two collections of poetry by Tato Laviera, *AmeRícan* and *Enclave* (second edition), establishing him as a significant Nuyorican poet. Cuban American novelist Oscar Hijuelos is awarded the prestigious Rome Prize from the American Academy in Rome as an emerging artist in the area of literature. María Irene Fornés is presented with an Obie Award for best new American play for *The Conduct of Life*.

1986 *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, an epistolary novel by Ana Castillo, garners her national recognition and establishes her path to fame; she will receive the prestigious American Book Award in 1987. Denise Chávez releases *The Last of the Menu Girls*, a coming-of-age story comprising seven interrelated stories about Rocío Esquibel, a young Mexican American woman in southern New Mexico who seeks an understanding of herself, her family, and her community. *Trini* by Estela Portillo Trambley chronicles the life of Trini, a young Tarahumara woman who gives up her *indígena* life and crosses the border as an *indocumentada* to give birth to her child in the United States. *Martin and Meditations on the South Valley* by Jimmy Santiago Baca represents a highly personalized view of a region south of Albuquerque that contains many of his past memories. Michael Nava publishes *The Little Death*, the debut of his mystery novels in the Henry Ríos series about an openly gay Latino criminal defense lawyer in Los Angeles. The series continues with *Goldenboy* (1988), *Howtown* (1990), *The Hidden Law* (1992), *The Death of
Friends (1996), The Burning Plain (1997), and Rag and Bone (2001). Renate von Bardeleben’s edition of Mission in Conflict: Essays on the U.S.-Mexican Relations and Chicano Culture marks a milestone for bringing together a large international group of scholars in an endeavor to apply a wide variety of critical approaches to Chicano literature. Pat Mora’s Borders examines linguistic as well as culturally philosophical borders. Chicano poets Lorna Dee Cervantes, Sandra Cisneros, Alberto Ríos, and Luis Omar Salinas read from their works at the Library of Congress for an evening of Chicano poetry on 8 April. Dominican American novelist and poet Julia Alvarez garners the General Electric Foundation Award for Younger Writers and the Third Woman Press Award, first prize in narrative. Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga win the American Book Award for This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color. Miguel Algarín wins the American Book Award for Time’s Now/Ya Es Tiempo.

1987

Martín Espada publishes Trumpets from the Islands of Their Eviction, a new collection of poetry influenced by his Puerto Rican background. Puerto Rican native Judith Ortiz Cofer offers two collections of poems, Terms of Survival and Reaching for the Mainland, chronicling her attempts at negotiating her life between two cultures. Luz María Umpierre-Herrera releases The Margarita Poems, wherein she discusses her lesbianism and offers highly erotic poems about lesbian love. My Wicked, Wicked Ways by Sandra Cisnero is a coming-of-age collection of poetry telling of her growing up Chicana, the sole daughter among six brothers, of her self-discovery, her solitary fate as a poet, and her attempts to negotiate personal relationships as an adult. Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza becomes an instant classic for its theorization on gender, borders, Spanglish, mythology, and poetics.

1988

Alma Luz Villanueva releases her debut novel The Ultraviolet Sky, an engaging exploration of the troubled relationships between women and men, for which she wins the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1989. The Brick People by Alejandro Morales reenvisions the history of southern California. Josefinna López’s first play, Simply María, or The American Dream, an autobiographical, satirical comedy about a young immigrant girl trying to reconcile traditional Mexican values with those of the United States, is produced by the Gaslamp Quarter theatre in San Diego, California. Cuban American Elias Miguel Muñoz contributes an important scholarly book on Cuban exile poetry, Desde esta orilla: Poesía cubana del exilio (From this shore: Cuban poetry of exile). Cuban American novelist Roberto G. Fernández publishes his first novel in English, Raining Backwards, wherein he offers an entertaining satire of the Cuban community in Miami; it is given a favorable critical reception.
1989 Nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, Judith Ortiz Cofer’s novel *The Line of the Sun* moves from a rural Puerto Rican village to a tough immigrant housing project in New Jersey, telling the story of a Hispanic family’s struggle to become part of a new culture without relinquishing the old. Winner of the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1990, *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* by Oscar Hijuelos tells the story of César and Nestor Castillo, two Cuban brothers and musicians who immigrate to the United States and settle in New York City in the early 1950s. The novel makes an immediate impact and is subsequently turned into a feature film. Guy García releases *Skin Deep*, a mystery novel about coming of age in the new America. Virgil Suárez’s first novel, *Latin Jazz*, chronicles an emigré family’s hopes and sorrows in making a new home in Los Angeles. Francisco A. Lomeli and Carl R. Shirley release the first of their three volumes of *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Chicano Writers* (vols. 2 and 3 are released in 1993 and 1999, respectively). Cuban American poet Carolina Hospital compiles and publishes *Los Atrevidos: The Cuban American Writers*, the first anthology of Cuban American literature. Chicano poet Jimmy Santiago Baca is the recipient of the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature. Nicolás Kanellos is the recipient of the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in the category of publishing and editing. Isabel Allende wins the American Book Award for her novel *Eva Luna* (1987), her fourth novel. Mexican American poet Ivan Argüelles receives the Poetry Society of America’s William Carlos Williams Award.

1990 In this memorable year, Nicolás Kanellos spearheads the founding of the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, housed at the University of Houston, whose objective is to locate, preserve, and disseminate Hispanic culture of the United States in its written form from colonial times until 1960. *George Washington Gómez: A Mexicotexan Novel* by Américo Paredes, originally from the 1930s, is one such example. Judith Ortiz Cofer publishes her memoir *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood*, describing her childhood spent between Puerto Rico and New Jersey. Sandra Maria Esteves publishes *Bluestown Mockingbird Mambo*, her third collection of poetry, which is a powerful account of the realities of the urban poor. *Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference* by Ramón Saldívar is praised for its meticulous scholarship and theories about the novel. Gloria Anzaldúa edits and releases *Making Face, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color*, a bold collection of creative pieces and theoretical essays by and about women of color. Nicolás Kanellos’s *A History of Hispanic Theatre in the United States: Origins to 1940* documents important periods of theatrical production. Aristeo Brito’s classic novel *El Diablo en Texas* (1976), which chronicles Anglo Texan oppression of Chicanos and Mexicans in Presidio, Texas, is translated and reissued in English as *The Devil in Texas* and garners
the Western States Book Award. Charles Tatum edits and releases *Mexican American Literature*, a textbook anthology of Chicano literature directed toward high school students. Naomi Quiñónez wins the American Book Award for the anthology *Invocation L.A: Urban Multicultural Poetry*.

**1991** *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez* by John Rechy offers an in-depth glimpse into the life of a poor woman who reflects on family, spirituality, and identity. Héctor Calderón and José David Saldivar edit and publish *Criticism in the Borderlands: Studies in Chicano Literature, Culture and Ideology*, marking an important stage in publishing cultural and literary criticism on Chicanos via a major university publishing house (Duke University Press). Arturo Islas’s *The Rain God* presents a serious look into self, family, and sexuality. Sandra Cisneros releases *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories*, focusing principally on the social role of young girls and women and their relationships with the boys/men in their lives. Victor Villaseñor issues *Rain of Gold*, a memoir in which he chronicles the life stories of his parents, Lupe Gómez and Juan Salvador Villaseñor, beginning in 1911. Julia Alvarez releases her debut novel, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*, a fictionalized account of her own experience growing up in the United States as a Latina immigrant. Set over a period of three decades, the novel depicts the survival strategies of an exiled Dominican family in New York City and the coming-of-age of four sisters. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* is also the winner of the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award for works that present a multicultural viewpoint. Bryan Ryan edits and publishes *Hispanic Writers: A Selection of Sketches from Contemporary Authors*, which contains more than 400 entries on 20th-century Hispanic writers, all originally written or updated for this volume. Alejandro Murguía wins the American Book Award for *Southern Front*, a collection of stories that describe the experiences of the international volunteers who went to Nicaragua to join the Sandinistas in their overthrow of the Somoza regime. Charley Trujillo also wins the American Book Award for *Soldados: Chicanos in Viet Nam*, 19 oral histories about the Chicano/Latino experience in the U.S.–Vietnam war.

**1992** Cristina García publishes her outstanding novel *Dreaming in Cuban*, which provides in-depth reflections about Cuba and a Cuban identity as it explores the impact that exile has on those in exile and those left behind. Lucha Corpi introduces her detective novel, *Eulogy for a Brown Angel: A Mystery Novel*, the first in a quartet of novels that have come to be known as the Gloria Damasco Mystery Series, and for which she garners the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award. The series continues with *Cactus Blood* (1995), *Black Widow’s Wardrobe* (1999), and *Death at Solstice* (2009). *The Squatter and the Don: A Novel Descriptive of Contemporary Occurrences in California* by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (originally from

Diana Rebolledo and Eliana Rivero release *Infinite Divisions: An Anthology of Chicana Literature*, the first major anthology devoted exclusively to the works of Chicana writers. On the eastern front, Esmeralda Santiago publishes her memoir *When I Was Puerto Rican*, which narrates her journey from the barrios of Puerto Rico to the urban world of New York City and explores the themes of immigration and assimilation and their effects on family, culture, and identity. Abraham Rodríguez Jr. contributes his coming-of-age novel *Spidertown*, which narrates the intellectual and spiritual growth of Miguel, a 16-year-old Puerto Rican American crack runner in the South Bronx and his struggle to escape his dead-end path. Tino Villanueva publishes his poetry collection *Scene from the Movie “Giant”*. Cuban American television screenwriter and playwright Luis Santeiro is the Hispanic Heritage Award Honoree for Literature. Three Chicano poets win the American Book Award in this year: Francisco X. Alarcón, for his collection of poetry *Snake Poems: An Aztec Invocation*; Ray González, for Excellence in Editing; and Leroy Quintana (his second), for his collection of poetry, *The History of Home*, which tells about growing up in a small town during the 1950s.

1994 Ana Castillo releases *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*, wherein she examines Chicana feminism and addresses issues of identity, racism, and classism as related to the Chicana experience in U.S. society. *The Memories of Ana Calderón* by Graciela Limón offers new insights into the immigrant experience. Denise Chávez publishes *Face of an Angel*, which from a feminist perspective tells about the unfortunate and tragic relationships that the protagonist—a waitress—has with men. Winner of the 1994 Western States Book Award for fiction, *Mother Tongue* by Demetria Martinez tells of the love between a young, naïve Mexican American woman and a refugee from the war in El Salvador in the 1980s. Sandra Cisneros publishes *Loose Woman*, a collection of feminist, erotic, and introspective poems. California passes Proposition 187 (also known as the Save Our State [SOS] initiative), a 1994 ballot initiative prohibiting undocumented immigrants from using health care, public education, and other services in the state of California, giving rise to such creative literary works as *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can’t Cross the Border* by Juan Felipe Herrera. Gustavo Pérez Firmat’s *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban-American Way* is an engaging book that chronicles what it means to be Cuban in America and explores how both famous and ordinary Cubans who came to the United States as children or adolescents have lived “life on the hyphen,” neither fully Cuban nor fully American, but a combination of both. Julia Alvarez introduces her historical novel *In the Time of the Butterflies*, which tells of the persecution, imprisonment, and murder of the Mirabal sisters in the Dominican Republic during the time of the Trujillo dictatorship. Miguel Algarín wins the American Book Award for the anthology *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*, a
collection of 260 poems by 145 different voices. Chicana novelist Graciela Limón wins the American Book Award for her first novel, In Search of Bernabé (1993), whose story occurs in El Salvador during the civil strife of the 1980s. Tino Villanueva wins the American Book Award for Scene from the Movie “Giant”, the poet’s personal reactions to the classic movie Giant, focusing on one scene in which three Mexicans are subjected to blatant and violent racism.

1995 Sandra Cisneros becomes the first Hispanic writer to be awarded the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Norma Elia Cantú releases Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera, a fictionalized memoir about growing up on the U.S.–Mexican border in South Texas, incorporating family photographs from her personal collection and a map of the area for authenticity. Benjamin Alire Sáenz issues his debut novel Carry Me Like Water, a series of interconnected and touching stories that candidly confront divisions of race, gender, and class. Rudolfo Anaya releases Zia Summer, his first mystery novel featuring the Albuquerque private detective Sonny Baca, in a Southwest setting blending Spanish, Mexican, and Indian cultures. The Sonny Baca mystery series continues with Rio Grande Fall (1996), Shaman Winter (1999), and Jémez Spring (2005). Editors Elyette Benjamin-Labarthe, Yves-Charles Grandjeat, and Christian Lerat publish Confrontations et mé- tissages (Bourdeaux, France), offering an international perspective on Chicano literature and culture. Rafael Pérez-Torres examines Chicano/a poetry from a postmodern perspective in Movements in Chicano Poetry: Against Myths, Against Margins. Ilan Stavans releases The Hispanic Condition: Reflections on Culture and Identity in America, wherein he ponders the cultural differences and similarities of the major Hispanic groups in the United States. Tomás Rivera’s classic novel “... y no se lo tragó la tierra” (“... And the Earth Did Not Devour Him”) is adapted and released as a film titled And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him, written and directed by Severo Pérez. Chicano artist, poet, and writer José Antonio Burciaga, who explores issues of Hispanic identity in American society, is the recipient of the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature. Abraham Rodriguez Jr. wins the American Book Award for Spidertown, a novel about urban life in the South Bronx, where drugs and guns are commonplace and death is part of everyday life. Denise Chávez wins the American Book Award for Face of an Angel, whose protagonist, Soveida Dosamantes, narrates her spiritual journey from a shy introverted young woman to a strong, self-determined woman ready to meet life’s challenges. The Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project from Arte Público Press republishes Felix Varela’s historical novel Jicotén-cal (1826), edited by Luis Leal and Rudolfo J. Cortina.
1996 Monserrat Fontes publishes the novel *Dreams of the Centaur*, which exposes the deportation, enslavement, and slaughter of thousands of Yaqui Indians in the Sonoran Desert by Porfirio Díaz’s regime at the turn of the 20th century. It wins the American Book Award. *Song of the Hummingbird* by Graciela Limón offers a fictional history of the Spanish Conquest of the Aztecs from the perspective of the local indigenous people and enriches our view of this critical encounter between Europe and America. Chicana playwright Josefina López publishes her first full-length stage play, *Real Women Have Curves*, a comedy that celebrates real women’s bodies and the incredible bond of women working together, while also bringing to the stage issues of gender inequities and the Latina immigrant experience. *The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems, and Loqueras for the End of the Century* by Guillermo Gómez-Peña revolves around the disorienting reality of living in a multilingual, multicultural society. Dominican American writer Junot Díaz, one of the best new voices to emerge in American literature, releases *Drown*, his debut short story collection of interrelated stories that explore the struggle of Dominican Republic immigrants as they strive to fulfill their vision of the American Dream. Willie Perdomo, a new voice from the Nuyorican Poets Café, presents his debut collection of poems, *Where a Nickel Costs a Dime*, in which he blends images of street life, drugs, and AIDS with hope and determination. Puerto Rican novelist Alba Ambert wins the Carey McWilliams Award for Multicultural Literature for her novel *A Perfect Silence* (1995), which narrates the story of a Puerto Rican immigrant living in poverty in the South Bronx. Novelist Isabel Allende wins the prestigious Harold Washington Award for literature and is also the Hispanic Heritage Award Honoree for Literature. Nuyorican novelist and short story writer Nicholasa Mohr is the Hispanic Heritage Award Honoree for Literature.

1997 Luis Leal receives the National Humanities Medal from President Bill Clinton. Yxta Maya Murray’s debut novel *Locas* explores the coming-of-age of two teenage Chicanas from East Los Angeles as they struggle to define themselves in a brutal, male-dominated world of gang warfare. Pat Mora contributes *House of Houses*, a collective memoir spanning several generations of Mora ancestors in the Chihuahuan desert of northern Mexico and western Texas. Mora garner the 1998 Southwest Book Award from the Border Regional Library Association and the Premio Aztlán Literary Prize in 1997 for this publication. José David Saldívar interrogates the philosophical ramifications of borders through a postmodern lens in *Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*. Francisco Jiménez’s *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* offers an empathetic view of migrant life. Virgil Suárez releases *Spared Angola: Memories from a Cuban-American Childhood*, a powerful collection of autobiographical stories, essays, and poems detailing the psychological pressure of male expectations,
family gender battles, emigration, and adjusting to a new culture in Los Angeles. Nicolás Kanellos edits Reference Library of Hispanic America: Hispanic American Almanac, which presents information on all aspects of Hispanic American life, including literature. Chicano poet Alurista wins the American Book Award for his collection of poetry, Et Tú... Raza?, in which he continues to explore racism and other forms of bigotry. Nuyorican poet, essayist, and editor Martín Espada is presented with the American Book Award for Imagine the Angels of Bread: Poems (1996), a collection concerned with socially, economically, and racially marginalized individuals. Montserrat Fontes earns the American Book Award for her novel Dreams of the Centaur, a historical novel whose action occurs on the U.S.–Mexican border at the turn of the 20th century. Guillermo Gómez-Peña wins the American Book Award for The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems, and Loqueras for the End of the Century, an anthology of his performance art, poems, and essays.

1998 After 14 years of inspiring performance, Culture Clash releases its first volume of plays, Life, Death, and Revolutionary Comedy, which contains three of its most important works: The Mission, A Bowl of Beans, and Radio Mambo. Lauro Flores edits and releases The Floating Borderlands: Twenty-Five Years of U.S. Hispanic Literature, an anthology celebrating the 25th anniversary of The Americas Review: The Journal of the Hispanic Literary Arts, featuring 27 prose writers and 52 poets in three distinct stages (nationhood messengers: prose, nationhood messengers: poetry, and new navigators of the floating borderlands), meant to show the development of Latino writing, from its early concerns for cultural representation and social justice to its more recent formal experiments. Flores wins an American Book Award for his efforts. María Herrera-Sobek and Virginia Sánchez Korrol edit and release the third volume of Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage, featuring 27 articles by leading scholars on a broad range of literary topics. Notable Hispanic American Women: Book 2 is edited and published by Joseph M. Palmisano, offering 200 biographical profiles of contemporary and historical Hispanic women who have achieved local, national, and international prominence in a broad range of professions, including literary creativity. Gary Soto releases his first young adult play, Novio Boy, a coming-of-age juvenile drama directed toward young adults that tells of a teenage Chicano boy’s preparation for his first date. Carla Trujillo edits Living Chicana Theory, a critical anthology featuring 21 Chicana scholars and writers, offering feminist literary theory through fiction, performance, and essays. Edward James Olmos, actor and community activist, launches the annual Latino Book & Family Festival in Los Angeles, California, to promote literacy, culture, and education and to provide people of all ages and backgrounds with the opportunity to celebrate the diversity of the multicultural commu-
nities in the United States in a festival atmosphere. Luis J. Rodriguez, one of the premier Chicano authors, with works ranging from fiction to poetry, is the recipient of the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature. Yo! by Julia Alvarez is selected as a notable book by the American Library Association. Sandra Benítez wins the American Book Award for her novel Bitter Grounds, which follows three generations of the Prieto family and the wealthy coffee-plantation family for whom they work.

1999 Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamen by Daniel Venegas is reissued as part of a recovery project (originally from 1928). Sor Juana’s Second Dream by Alicia Gaspar de Alba offers a new fictionalized and controversial portrait of the iconic 17th-century nun. Faults by Terri de la Peña focuses on the myriad of cultural and social issues that Chicana lesbians face, such as a search for identity, cultural assimilation, class-consciousness, historical awareness, internal and external racism, and homophobia. Capirotada: A Nogales Memoir by Alberto Alvaro Ríos describes his experiences growing up along the U.S.–Mexican border in Nogales, Arizona, and Nogales, Mexico. Gods Go Begging by Alfredo Véa is a murder mystery that depicts the post-traumatic pain of the Vietnam War; the novel’s protagonist, a Vietnam War veteran and now defense attorney living in San Francisco, is assigned to a case that brings back a lot of war memories. The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History by Emma Pérez challenges the historical methodology that has created Chicano history, arguing that the historical narrative has omitted the voices of Chicanas, and proposes new tools for uncovering the hidden voices of these women who have been relegated to silence. Focusing on the dynamic writing published in the 1980s and 1990s by Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Cuban American, and Dominican American women writers, New Latina Narrative: The Feminine Space of Postmodern Ethnicity by Ellen McCracken illustrates how these writers have redefined the concepts of multiculturalism and diversity in American society. Esmeralda Santiago recalls her extraordinary journey into womanhood in Almost a Woman, a tale of transformation and survival, as well as a search for independence and cultural identity. Hispanic Writers: A Selection of Sketches from Contemporary Authors, edited by Scott Peacock, contains alphabetically arranged entries that provide biographical and bibliographical information about approximately 550 authors who are a part of 20th-century Hispanic literature and culture in the Americas, including literary, social, and political figures, as well as scholars, historians, and journalists. Known for a body of work including poetry, novels, short stories, and memoirs that deal with the realities of growing up in poverty in the Mexican American barrio, Gary Soto receives the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature. Lauro Flores wins the American Book Award in the editing category for The Floating Borderlands: Twenty-Five Years of U.S. Hispanic Literature, an anthology
that celebrates the coming-of-age of contemporary Chicano/Latino writers. Luis Alberto Urrea receives the American Book Award for *Nobody's Son: Notes from an American Life*, a story about a family that comes from Tijuana and eventually settles into a San Diego barrio, looking for the American Dream.

**2000** *Puro Teatro: A Latina Anthology*, edited by Alberto Sandoval-Sánchez and Nancy Saporta-Sternback, showcases Latina theater through the works of established playwrights such as Cherrie Moraga and Dolores Prida, as well as talented new playwrights and performers. *Hispanic Periodicals in the United States, Origins to 1960: A Brief History and Comprehensive Bibliography*, by Nicolás Kanellos and Helvetia Martell, is the first comprehensive and authoritative source on the production, worldview, and distribution of Hispanic periodicals. The bibliography includes 1,700 entries in standard bibliographic annotation, including annotated entries, notes, and three indexes: by subject, by date, and by geography. In his first novel, *As Our Barrio Turns . . . Who the Yoke B On?*, Alurista (a.k.a. Alberto Urista) explores the burgeoning Chicano Movement in San Diego, California. Pat Mora, in *My Own True Name: New and Selected Poems for Young Adults, 1984–1999*, offers a good cross-section of poetry for a young audience. In *Elegy on the Death of César Chávez: A Poem*, illustrated by Gaspar Enriquez, Rudolfo Anaya mourns the death of César Chávez. Endorsed by the César Chávez Foundation, the book also includes an essay by Anaya detailing the effect that Chávez had on his own vision and a chronology of Chávez’s life. *El Coyote, the Rebel: A Nonfiction Novel by Luis Pérez* (originally published in 1947) is re-released by Arte Público’s Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage series. Michele Serros publishes *How to Be a Chicana Role Model*, a poignant defense of her craft, while also portraying a Chicana writer who is trying to come to terms with her dual Mexican/American cultural heritage without losing touch with who she is. Winner of the 8th Annual Premio Aztlán Chicano Literary Award for Outstanding Bio-Bibliography, *A Sense of Place—Rudolfo A. Anaya: An Annotated Bio-bibliography*, by César González-T. and Phyllis S. Morgan, comprehensively chronicles writings by and about Rudolfo A. Anaya. Spanish critics from Granada, Rosa Morillas Sánchez and Manuel Villar Raso, edit a significant collection of critical essays, *Literatura chicana: Reflexiones y ensayos críticos*. In *Feminism on the Border: Chicana Gender Politics and Literature*, Sonia Saldívar-Hull examines a range of Chicana feminist writing from several disciplines, which she collects under the phrase “feminism on the border.” *Methodology of the Oppressed* by Chela Sandoval marks a key moment in theorizing about women of color feminism in terms of oppositional consciousness and power relations. The first American-born Hispanic to win the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction, Oscar Hijuelos is the recipient of the Hispanic Heritage Award for
Literature. Elva Treviño Hart wins the American Book Award for *Barefoot Heart: Stories of a Migrant Child*. Andrés Montoya wins the American Book Award for *The Ice Worker Sings and Other Poems*, a collection that deals with race, faith, urban decay, poverty, police brutality, and the individual search for hope.

**2001** Diana García wins the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for her collection of poetry *When Living Was a Labor Camp* (2000). María Teresa Fernández, a.k.a. Mariposa, releases *Born Bronxeña: Poems on Identity, Love & Survival*, a collection of Spanish/English code-switched poems, in which she explores themes of empowerment, family, and identity. Luis J. Rodríguez comes out with *Hearts and Hands: Creating Community in Violent Times*, a collection of essays in which the poet addresses America’s gang problem, with a focus on healing through community building. *Loving Pedro Infante* by Denise Chávez tells about new ways to appreciate border dwellers from El Paso and Ciudad Juárez as the novel’s protagonist, a Chicana, seeks a real-life version of the sexy Mexican film star. *Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Bandit Joaquín Murrieta: His Exploits in the State of California* is released by Arte Público’s Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project, with an introduction by Luis Leal that clarifies for the first time some important historical facts about the famed bandit. The conference proceedings from the Basque Country, *Aztlán: Ensayos sobre literatura chicana*, edited by Federico Eguíluz, Amaia Ibarra- ran, María Felisa López-Liquete, and David Ríos, contains new critical essays relative to Chicano letters. *Chicana Literary and Artistic Expressions: Culture and Society in Dialogue*, edited by María Herrera-Sobek, brings together the works of scholars, fiction writers, and artists to offer new perspectives on Chicana contemporary cultural production. *Chicana Ways: Conversations with Ten Chicana Writers* offers compelling interviews by Karin Rosa Ikas with 10 Mexican American writers; the interviews fill a void in Chicana studies, women’s studies, and ethnic studies scholarship. German scholar Klaus Zilles introduces *Rolando Hinojosa: A Reader’s Guide*, the first comprehensive interpretation of the 15 works in Rolando Hinojosa’s Klail City Death Trip series. The life of Nuyorican poet and playwright Miguel Piñero is celebrated in the Hollywood production *Piñero*, starring Benjamin Bratt as Piñero. The film script has been written and directed by the Cuban filmmaker Leon Ichaso. Cuban American writer Liz Balmaseda is the Hispanic Heritage Awards Honoree for Literature. Chicano detective novelist Michael Nava is given the Bill Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement from Publishing Triangle, a LGBTQ professional group within the publishing industry.
2002 Jimmy Santiago Baca releases *C-Train and Thirteen Mexicans*, a new collection of poetry in which he takes a radically different approach to his earlier work by experimenting with form and serious political issues. *Caramelo, or, Puro Cuento* by Sandra Cisneros offers a transnational and fictionalized history of her multigenerational Mexican/American family. Angie Cruz publishes her debut novel *Soledad*, which chronicles Dominican life and culture in Washington Heights, Manhattan, the Dominican American neighborhood where Cruz was born and raised. Stella Pope Duarte’s debut novel *Let Their Spirits Dance*, the first Vietnam War novel written by a Chicana, connects its readers with the men and women who served in Vietnam. *Herencia: The Anthology of Hispanic Literature in the United States*, edited by Nicolás Kanellos, is the first anthology to bring together literature spanning the entire history of Hispanic writing in the United States, from the age of exploration to the present. Richard Rodríguez releases *Brown: The Last Discovery of America*, completing his trilogy, which also includes *Hunger of Memory: The Education of Richard Rodríguez* (1982) and *Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father* (1992), and attempts to redescribe the American predicament through his own carefully examined experience. In *The Republic of East L.A.*, Luis J. Rodríguez publishes his first collection of short stories about life in East Los Angeles. Miguel Méndez releases *El circo que se perdió en el desierto*, once again demonstrating the desert as an endless fountain of storytelling. Written in the form of a diary, Alma Luz Villanueva’s novel *Luna’s California Poppies* captures the voice of a streetwise 12-year-old as she struggles to come to terms with being deserted by her mother and having to adjust to a new environment. Dominican American poet, novelist, and essayist Julia Alvarez receives the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature. María Irene Fornés wins the PEN/Laura Pels International Foundation for Theater Award for a Master American Dramatist. Chicano poet Aaron A. Abeyta wins the American Book Award for *Colcha* (2000), a collection of poetry that explores political and societal issues as well as the individual experiences of family and friends.

2003 Alvina E. Quintana launches her critical work *Reading U.S. Latina Writers: Remapping American Literature*. Cuban American playwright Nilo Cruz is awarded the 2003 Pulitzer Prize for Drama and the Steinberg Award for Best New Play for *Anna in the Tropics*, which had its Broadway premiere a year later with Jimmy Smits in the lead role. Carlos Eire’s first memoir, *Waiting for Snow in Havana: Confessions of a Cuban Boy*, won the National Book Award for nonfiction in 2003. This story chronicles his life as a child in Cuba until the Revolution and his life in the United States as one of the 14,000 children airlifted to Florida in Operation Pedro Pan (Peter Pan). Francis A. Day publishes *Latina and Latino Voices in Literature: Lives and Works*, an award-winning resource that celebrates the lives and works of
Latina and Latino authors who write for today’s young readers. Sandra Cisneros is awarded the Texas Medal of the Arts. Chicana fiction writer, playwright, and stage director Denise Elia Chávez garners the Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature. Alejandro Murguía wins the American Book Award, his second, for *This War Called Love*, a collection of nine stories that focus on contemporary Latino men, their strength and vulnerability, and their fears and deepest desires. Rick Heide wins the American Book Award for editing *Under the Fifth Sun: Latino Literature from California*, an anthology of memoirs, essays, poetry, short stories, testimonials, plays, and fiction covering more than two centuries of Latino presence in California.

**2004** In *Serafina’s Stories*, Rudolfo Anaya’s tales return to 17th-century Santa Fe, New Mexico, and tell of the relationships between Spanish colonists and Pueblo Indians. In his debut collection of short fiction, *The Importance of a Piece of Paper*, Jimmy Santiago Baca offers character studies of people (drug addicts and convicts, absentee mothers and runaways) that he encountered in the Southwest. Out of California’s Great Central Valley comes the new voice of Tim Z. Hernandez with *Skin Tax*, a poetry collection that won the 2006 American Book Award and the Zora Neal Hurston Award for writers of color dedicated to their communities. Francisco A. Lomelí, Cecilia Cota-Robles Suárez, and Juan José Casillas-Núñez compile and edit *Chicano Sketches: Short Stories by Mario Suárez*, one of the earliest of Chicano writers. Most of the stories take place in “El Hoyo” (The Hole), the Mexican American barrio in Tucson, Arizona, where Suárez was raised. *The Devil’s Highway: A True Story* by Luis Alberto Urrea, the winner of the Lannan Literary Award and a finalist for the 2005 Pulitzer Prize in nonfiction, chronicles the journey of 26 men who attempted to cross the U.S.–Mexican border into the desert of southern Arizona through the Devil’s Highway, the deadliest region of the continent. *Dancing with Ghosts: A Critical Biography of Arturo Islas* by Frederick Aldama considers the Chicano poet’s life—his sexuality, racial identification, and political personality—and the events of his everyday existence, from his childhood in the borderlands of El Paso to his adulthood in San Francisco and at Stanford University. Alan West-Durán edits *Latino and Latina Writers*, a two-volume set that provides in-depth biographical and critical essays on more than 50 U.S. Latino/a writers. Sandra Benítez, Puerto Rican fiction writer and memoirist, is the Hispanic Heritage Award Honoree for Literature. *Before We Were Free* by Julia Alvarez wins the Pura Belpré Medal. Renato Rosaldo wins the American Book Award for *Prayer to Spider Woman/Rezo a la Mujer Araña*, his first collection of poetry.

**2005** In *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders*, Alicia Gaspar de Alba provides an incisive mystery that delves into the plague of violent deaths of young women on the U.S.–Mexican border. Ana Castillo’s *Psst . . . I Have Some-
thing to Tell You, Mi Amor: Two Plays offers a one-act and a two-act play that both center on Sister Dianna Ortiz, who was kidnapped, raped, and tortured by U.S.-sponsored Guatemalan security forces in 1989. Lorna Dee Cervantes releases Drive: The First Quartet—New Poems, 1980–2005, the fifth major collection of poetry from the iconic Chicana Native American poet. Angie Cruz’s second novel, Let It Rain Coffee, alternates back and forth between New York City in the 1990s and the Dominican Republic in the 1960s as the story reveals the dreams of two generations of Dominican characters. Juan Felipe Herrera publishes Cinnamon Girl: Letters Found Inside a Cereal Box, an experimental young adult novel for which he received the 2005 Americas Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature at the 13th annual award presentation hosted by the Library of Congress. Luis J. Rodriguez publishes his first novel, Music of the Mill, chronicling three generations of the Salcido family, spanning 60 years from the end of World War II to the present, providing an epic story about steel production in southern California and the people who worked the steel mills. Luis Alberto Urrea releases The Hummingbird’s Daughter, a historical novel based on Urrea’s real great-aunt Teresita, who had healing powers and was acclaimed as a saint. Mummified Deer and Other Plays brings together three plays by Chicano playwright Luis Valdez, two of which are new. In Chicano Detective Fiction: A Critical Study of Five Novelists, Susan Baker Sotelo offers discussion and analysis of this relatively new Chicano genre. Similarly, in Brown Gumshoes: Detective Fiction and the Search for Chicano/o Identity, Ralph E. Rodríguez examines the recent contributions to the genre by writers such as Rudolfo Anaya, Lucha Corpi, Rolando Hinojosa, Michael Nava, and Manuel Ramos. Suzanne Oboler and Deena J. González edit The Oxford Encyclopedia of Latinos and Latinas in the United States, a four-volume set offering more than 900 articles that address such broad topics as art, identity, history, literature, and politics. Ralph M. Flores wins the American Book Award for the Horse in the Kitchen: Stories of a Mexican American Family.

2006 Winner of the American Book Award, Across a Hundred Mountains by Reyna Grande presents an enthralling story of immigration and puts a human face on the epic story of those who make it across the border, those who never make it across, and those who are left behind. Newcomer Rigoberto González’s Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa is a coming-of-age story about a first-generation Chicano growing up among poor migrant Mexican farmworkers, who also faces the pressure of coming-of-age as a gay man in a culture that prizes machismo. Gary Soto in A Fire in My Hands: A Book of Poems (revised and expanded from 1990) continues to draw from his own youth in California’s Central Valley to portray the joys and sorrows of young people. In Spilling the Beans in Chicanolandia: Conversations with Writers and Artists, Frederick Luis Aldama presents far-ranging interviews
with 21 “second wave” Chicano/a poets, fiction writers, dramatists, documentary filmmakers, and playwrights. Angie Chabram-Dernersesian edits the theoretical work *The Chicana/o Cultural Studies Reader*, bringing together key writings from experts and contributors in this newly emerging field. Charles Tatum releases *Chicano and Chicana Literature: Otra Voz del Pueblo*, which examines the important social, historical, and cultural contexts in which the writing evolved, paying special attention to the Chicano Movement and the flourishing of literary texts during the 1960s and early 1970s. Salem Press publishes *Notable Latino Writers*, a compilation of 120 essays on Latino novelists, poets, playwrights, and short story writers of the Western Hemisphere. David P. Díaz wins the American Book Award for *The White Tortilla: Reflections of a Second-Generation Mexican American* (2005). Tim Z. Hernandez wins the American Book Award and the Zora Neal Hurston Award for *Skin Tax* (2004), his debut collection of poetry in which he focuses on the farmworker communities of the San Joaquin Valley and the land on which they live, love, die, and breathe.

2007 Junot Díaz publishes his universally acclaimed novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, for which he wins the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2008. Winner of the PEN West Poetry Award and the PEN Oakland National Literary Award for 2008, Juan Felipe Herrera’s *187 Reasons Mexicanos Can’t Cross the Border: Undocuments 1971–2007* gathers 36 years of writings that speak to his activism as a voice for the Chicano community. Helena María Viramontes releases her second novel, *Their Dogs Came with Them*, and once again demonstrates her talent for narration as she tells the story of urban renewal and community destruction in East Los Angeles in the 1960s. *Hecho en Tejas: An Anthology of Texas Mexican Literature*, edited by Dagoberto Gilb, a historical anthology that establishes the canon of Mexican American literature in Texas, offers close to 100 selections from some 80 authors dating back to the 16th century. Héctor Torres’s *Conversations with Contemporary Chicana and Chicano Writers* includes interviews with 10 popular Chicano/a writers, plus a brief biography of each author and a concise examination of his or her writings. Jamie Martinez-Wood publishes *Latino Writers and Journalists*, a volume that profiles the valor and tenacity of the Latino experience—from daily life to fighting prejudice and small-mindedness—teaching children pride in La Raza and the need for assimilation. Rigoberto González wins the American Book Award for *Butterfly Boy: Memories of a Chicano Mariposa*. Reyna Grande wins the American Book Award for *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006), a moving novel about a young girl who leaves her small town in Mexico to find her father, who left his family to seek work in the United States 10 years earlier.
2008 Winner of the 2008 National Book Critics Circle Award in Poetry, *Half of the World in Light: New and Selected Poems* by Juan Felipe Herrera begins with early material and moves through 13 subsequent collections into new, uncharted territory. Published posthumously, *The Last Supper of Chicanos Heroes: Selected Works of José Antonio Burciaga* features 38 illustrations and incorporates previously unpublished essays and drawings, including selections from his manuscript “The Temple Gang,” a memoir he was writing at the time of his death. Stella Pope Duarte’s *If I Die in Juárez* is the author’s account of the mutilation, rape, and murder of young women in Juárez and on the U.S.–Mexican border since the early 1990s. *Reaching Out* by Francisco Jiménez describes the challenges he faces in his efforts to continue his education as he leaves his family behind to attend Santa Clara University. Elizabeth Martinez releases *500 Years of Chicana Women’s History/500 años de la mujer Chicana*, a rich celebration of images and information about Chicanas, past and present. Anna Marie Sandoval releases *Toward a Latina Feminism of the Americas: Repression and Resistance in Chicana and Mexican Literature*, which offers a new perspective on the oppositional nature of Latina writers and emphasizes the ways in which national literatures have privileged male authors, whose viewpoint is generally distinct from that of women. Ilan Stavans edits *Latina Writers*, a collection of 10 articles, essays, and interviews that encourage readers to examine Latina writers from a wide variety of theoretical perspectives, including feminism, postmodernism, post-colonialism, gender, border, linguistic, and pan-American studies. Nicolás Kanellos edits *The Greenwood Encyclopedia of Latino Literature*, which surveys the vast landscape of Latino literature from the colonial era to the present with entries covering writers, genres, ethnic and national literatures, movements, historical topics and events, themes, concepts, associations and organizations, and publishers and magazines. L. Luis López wins the American Book Award for *Each Month I Sing*, his third book of poetry, an experimental collection reflecting the 12 months of the year.

the story of a group of Mexican and Central American people struggling to cross the dangerous Sonoran Desert into the United States. *Forgetting the Alamo, or, Blood Memory* by Emma Pérez follows the story of a Tejana lesbian cowgirl after the fall of the Alamo who witnesses the violence against Mexicans, African Americans, and indigenous peoples after the infamous battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto, both in 1836. Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, in *Gaspar de Villagrá: Legista, soldado y poeta*, offers a groundbreaking study on an early writer who wrote *Historia de la Nueva México* (1610; History of New México), the first epic poem of the continental United States. AnaLouise Keating edits the canonical *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, which offers fresh insights into crucial aspects of Anzaldúa’s life, career, and writings. Juanita Heredia’s *Transnational Latina Narratives in the Twenty-First Century: The Politics of Gender, Race, and Migrations* makes a significant contribution to Latina literary criticism by examining 21st-century narratives by Latina writers from various cultural backgrounds (Chicana, Dominican American, Puerto Rican, and Peruvian American). The American Book Award is posthumously bestowed on José Antonio Burciaga for *The Last Supper of Chicano Heroes: Selected Works of José Antonio Burciaga* (2008), edited by Mimi R. Gladstein and Daniel Chacón. Stella Pope Duarte wins the American Book Award for *If I Die in Juárez*. Patricia Santana wins the American Book Award for *Ghosts of El Grullo* (2008), the story of a young woman’s initiation into womanhood and her fierce struggle to make sure her family does not disintegrate after the death of her mother. Miguel Algarín wins the American Book Lifetime Achievement award from the Before Columbus Foundation.

Award for Children and Young Adult’s Literature from the Consortium for Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) for her young adult novel Return to Sender. Stephen D. Gutiérrez wins the American Book Award for Live from Fresno y Los, a collection of stories about growing up Chicano in Fresno and Los Angeles during the 1970s.

2011 The historical compilation The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature (Ilan Stavans, general ed.) makes a major contribution to consolidating Latino literature’s legitimacy on a national and international scale. Alurista’s Xicano Duende: A Select Anthology gathers some of the author’s more recent poetry and commemorates the prolific career of one of Chicano literature’s most enduring poetic voices. Jimmy Santiago Baca publishes Breaking Bread with the Darkness: Book 1, The Esai Poems, in which he celebrates parenthood and presents the complexities of adult life. Lorna Dee Cervantes offers new appreciations of love poems in Ciento: 100 100-Word Love Poems through word experimentations and nostalgic recollections. Blowout! Sal Castro and the Chicano Struggle for Educational Justice by Mario T. García and Sal Castro represents the testimonio (testimony) of the American educator and activist, relating his life story and his involvement in the March 1968 “blowouts,” when 20,000 students walked out of 15 Los Angeles schools. Dagoberto Gilb releases Before the End, After the Beginning, a collection of short stories in which the author addresses the themes of mortality and identity after having suffered a stroke at his home in Austin, Texas. In his collections of poems Black Blossoms, Rigoberto González explores the private lives of working-class women of color and their difficult life journeys. In From This Wicked Patch of Dust, Sergio Troncoso portrays a family’s four-decade-long struggle to become American and not be pulled apart by cultural conflict. In Crossing Borders: Personal Essays, also by Troncoso, the author offers 16 personal essays in which he seeks to connect the ethos and humanity of his Mexican family to people he meets on the East Coast, including his wife’s Jewish relatives. In Queen of America, Luis Alberto Urrea continues the life story of his great-aunt, Teresita Urrea, also known as the Saint of Cabora, who has been exiled to the United States, where she continues her healing work in such cities as El Paso, Los Angeles, San Francisco, St. Louis, and New York. Ivan Argüelles wins the American Book Award for The Death of Stalin: Selected Early Poems 1978–1989. Carmen Giménez Smith wins the American Book Award for her memoir Bring Down the Little Birds: On Mothering, Art, Work, and Everything Else (2010), a work that explores issues affecting the lives of women, including Latina identity. Miriam Jiménez Román and Juan Flores win the American Book Award for The Afro-Latin@ Reader: History and Culture in the United States (2010), whose focus is on the large, yet oddly invisible, Afro-Latino community in the United States. Luis Valdez receives the American Book
Lifetime Achievement Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. Tim Z. Hernandez garners the Premio Aztlán Prize in Fiction from the National Hispanic Cultural Center for his novel *Breathing, in Dust* (2010), which provides a portrayal of the poverty, drug abuse, and desperation that plague the lives of a farming community in California’s San Joaquin Valley. 

2012 Jimmy Santiago Baca presents *Breaking Bread with the Darkness: Book 2, The Lucia Poems*, in which he continues to celebrate parenthood and present, with brutal honesty, the daily complexities of adult life. In *Have You Seen Marie?*, Sandra Cisneros presents a story about a pair of women who embark on an emotional journey to find a pet cat that disappears in the wake of the narrator’s death. Junot Díaz releases his second collection of short stories, *This Is How You Lose Her*, featuring Yunior as the protagonist narrator focusing on the beginnings and endings of romantic relationships and the emotional cost of the choices made by the characters. In *Mariposa Gown*, a sequel to *The Mariposa Club*, Rigoberto González continues the adventures and coming-of-age story of Maui, Trini, and Liberace as they discover that the drama of life as a senior in high school is never-ending. In her memoir *The Distance Between Us*, Reyna Grande once again publishes an eye-opening narrative about life before and after illegally immigrating from Mexico to the United States. Demetria Martínez publishes *The Block Captain’s Daughter*, a story about survival for which she was presented with an American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation as well as the International Latino Book Award for best Latino-focused fiction. Editors Julio Cañero and Juan Elices present *The Chican@ Literary Imagination: A Collection of Critical Studies by Francisco A. Lomelí*, a collection of 20 articles from the subject’s career trajectory. Gabriel Meléndez and Francisco A. Lomelí edit and translate *The Writings of Eusebio Chacón*, a collection of Chacón’s published and written materials, displaying his versatility with samples of his work as an accomplished orator, translator, essayist, historian, novelist, and poet. Juan Felipe Herrera is named California’s poet laureate by Governor Jerry Brown. Junot Díaz is awarded the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship. Suzanne Bost and Frances R. Aparicio edit *The Routledge Companion to Latino/a Literature*, a resource that presents more than 40 essays by scholars of Latino/a literature and analyzes regional, cultural, and sexual identities, worldviews, and traditions of Latino/a cultural creation. 

2013 Cuban American poet Richard Blanco delivers the poem “One Today” at the ceremony inaugurating President Barack Obama into his second term as the U.S. president. Blanco, age 44, is the first Latino, first immigrant, first gay writer, and youngest ever inaugural poet. Playwright Luiz Valdez introduces his new play, *Valley of the Heart*, at El Teatro Campesino in San Juan Bautista, a drama that addresses one of the areas most important chapters: the link between Mexican and Japanese American families on California farms.
before, during, and after World War II. Organized mostly in chronological order, *Reyes Cárdenas: Chicano Poet 1970–2010* is a 40-year retrospective of Reyes Cárdenas’s life and work from 1970 to 2010. Reminiscent of her earlier poems, *Sueño: New Poems* by Lorna Dee Cervantes flows with memories and dreamlike imagery of her community, her culture, and her family. Alex Espinoza’s second novel, *The Five Acts of Diego León*, explores the journey of a peasant Mexican boy who leaves Mexico during the Mexican Revolution and comes to Hollywood to prosper as a Latin lover in second-rate films. Rigoberto González publishes *Unpeopled Eden*, his fourth collection of poetry and winner of the Lambda Literary Award and the 2014 Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize from the Academy of American Poets, presented to the most outstanding book of poetry published in the United States. González also launches *Red-Inked Retablos*, a collection of personal essays and speeches. In *Mañana Means Heaven* by Tim Z. Hernandez, the author reconstructs the life of Bea Franco, the “Mexican girl” of Jack Kerouac’s classic 1957 novel *On the Road*, and her passionate, life-changing encounter with the famous writer in autumn 1947. Alma Luz Villanueva’s latest novel, *Song of the Golden Scorpion*, tells of a highly erotic love affair of 12 years that extends beyond into the Mayan Sixth World. Tino Villanueva’s most recent collection of poetry, *So Spoke Penelope*, which wins the Grolier Established Poets Award, is a book-length poem that pays tribute to endurance and to faithful love. Richard Rodríguez publishes *Darling: A Spiritual Autobiography*, a group of 10 personal essays centered on the theme of spirituality. Ricardo F. Vivancos-Pérez launches his critically acclaimed study *Radical Chicana Poets*, which focuses on some of the most important writers, such as Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherrie Moraga, Sandra Cisneros, and Alicia Gaspar de Alba. Rudolfo Anaya’s classic novel *Bless Me, Ultima* is released as a film with the same name, with a film script written and directed by Carl Franklin. Demetria Martínez wins the American Book Award for *The Block Captain’s Daughter*, which narrates the story of six activists who seek to create a better world and find meaning in their own lives. Chicano poet Ivan Argüelles and Chicano novelist Floyd Salas earn the American Book Lifetime Achievement Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. Rolando Hinojosa-Smith wins the Ivan Sandrof Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Book Critics Circle for his contributions to American arts and letters.

**2014** Jimmy Santiago Baca releases *Singing at the Gates: Selected Poems*, a collection of new and previously published poems that reflect back over four decades of Baca’s life. Ana Castillo’s latest novel, *Give It to Me*, explores themes of race, sexuality, and gender, as its storyline follows the adventures of Palma Piedras, a bisexual Latina woman. Denise Chávez releases her latest novel, *The King and Queen of Comezón*, a humorous mystery love
story set in the fictional village of Comezón (Itch), on the U.S.–Mexican border. In her memoir, *Confessions of a Book Burner: Personal Essays and Stories*, Lucha Corpi writes about the pivotal role reading and writing have played in her life. Alejandro Morales offers *River of Angels*, a unique view into how the Los Angeles River represents the heart of the city from time immemorial. Michael Nava releases *The City of Palaces*, a historical novel set in late 19th-century Mexico City, when Mexico was governed by a small elite of Europeanized Mexicans, while the vast majority of the Mexican population was Indian or mestizo who were politically disenfranchised and lived in poverty. In *This River Here: Poems of San Antonio*, the city’s poet laureate, Carmen Tafolla, celebrates the community of her ancestors for the past three centuries. In the area of literary criticism and history, Manuel Martin-Rodriguez edits the book *With a Book in Their Hands: Chicano/a Readers and Readerships across the Centuries*, diverse accounts of reading drawn from several research projects aimed at documenting Chicana and Chicano reading practices and experiences. Juan Delgado and Thomas McGovern win the American Book Award for *Vital Signs*, wherein the poet (Delgado) and the photographer (McGovern) join together to celebrate the harsh conditions and rough beauty of their hometown, San Bernardino, California. Alex Espinoza wins the American Book Award for *The Five Acts of Diego León* (2013), an immigration novel about a young man who leaves Mexico for Hollywood in the late 1920s, determined to pursue his dreams. Tim Z. Hernandez receives the 2014 International Latino Book Award for his historical novel, *Mañana Means Heaven*. Rudolfo Anaya garners the Lifetime Achievement Award in Literature from the Paul Bartlett Ré Peace Prize for promoting world peace and harmony through his masterful creations. Luis J. Rodriguez is named poet laureate for the City of Los Angeles, California.

**2015** Juan Felipe Herrera is appointed national poet laureate by the U.S. Congress. Francisco Jiménez publishes *Taking Hold: From Migrant Childhood to Columbia University*, the fourth installment of his fictional memoir, focusing on his temporary abandonment of his family, his girlfriend, and the culture that shaped him to attend Columbia University in New York City. In *Gracias: New Poems*, Alma Luz Villanueva documents her travels and experiences throughout Mexico, Costa Rica, France, and the United States, her country of birth. Sandra Cisneros releases *A House of My Own: Stories from My Life*, a collection of writings spanning nearly three decades, including never-before-published work on topics ranging from the very personal to the very political and including the very literary. Manuel Luis Martinez wins the American Book Award for *Los Duros* (2014), which offers a portrayal of the dire poverty, ignorance, exclusion, racism, and invisibility experienced by Chicano inhabitants of Los Duros, a fictional community in California’s
Mojave Desert. Carlos Santana, with Ashley Kahn and Hal Miller, wins the American Book Award for *The Universal Tone: Bringing My Story to Light*, the memoir of the legendary guitarist. Chicana poet Carmen Tafolla is named poet laureate of Texas for 2015. John Morán González edits and releases *The Cambridge Companion to Latina/o American Literature*, wherein leading scholars in the field contribute critical analyses of key texts, authors, themes, and contexts, from the early nineteenth century to the present. *Hamilton*, a hip-hop musical with music and lyrics written by Nuyorican Lin-Manuel Miranda, inspired by the 2004 biography of Alexander Hamilton by historian Ron Chernow, makes its off-Broadway debut at The Public Theater in February 2015 and is transferred to the Richard Rodgers Theatre on Broadway in August. For this innovative musical, Miranda wins the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best Musical, the Off Broadway Alliance Award for Best New Musical, an Obie Award for Best New American Theatre Work, and the Edgerton Foundation New American Play Award. He is also awarded the MacArthur Fellowship by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation.

2016 The San Antonio–based Chicana poet Laurie Ann Guerrero is named poet laureate of Texas for 2016. Ana Castillo publishes *Black Dove: Mamá, Mi’jo, and Me*, a collection of life stories on her own life as a “single, brown, feminist parent of a son in a world of mass incarceration, racial profiling, mother-blaming, and the scapegoating of immigrants.”
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WHAT IS U.S. LATINO/A LITERATURE?

The question “What is U.S. Latino/a literature?” is more dynamic and complex than may be readily apparent, and the answer requires engagement with another, equally rich question: “What is a Latino/a?” Put most simply, a Latino/a is a person who lives in the United States and has origins in any of the 21 countries considered to be part of Latin America. Countries designated as comprising Latin America are in North, South, and Central America and the Caribbean, and include Mexico, Puerto Rico, the Dominican Republic, Guatemala, Cuba, and Argentina, to name only a few. Latinos/as can be new immigrants, U.S.-born second- or third-generation or more immigrants, individuals with family ties preceding U.S. occupation of lands previously held by Mexico and indigenous lands previous to that, and/or exiles from the distinct Latin American countries. As a group, then, Latinos/as are colonized subjects, immigrants, and ethnic Americans, and these identities are born out of the fraught historical relationship between the United States, Latin America, and their descendants.

As products of Latin American and U.S. histories and the intersections of the two, Latinos/as are a radically multiracial group. Because of the Americas’ rich indigenous past, the history of European colonization therein, as well as the presence of African and Asian heritage people in the Americas, Latinos/as are a predominantly racially mixed people whose varied phenotypes reflect this reality. Latinos/as are also linguistically diverse, including monolingual Spanish speakers; monolingual English speakers; people who are completely English-Spanish bilingual; and a large number of people who speak using mixtures of Spanish and English languages, employing linguistic code switching and seamlessly blending the two. In addition, a growing number of Latinos/as speak indigenous languages, particularly in communities where there are immigrant populations who speak primarily indigenous languages rather than Spanish or English (e.g., Mixteco in New York and Zapoteco in parts of southern California). This is particularly true in rural parts of the United States where Mexican or Central American immigrant laborers from rural communities of origin are employed. Of course Latino/a linguistic complexity is reflected in Latino/a literature, in which works of literature range from being all in English, to being all in Spanish, to employing a great deal of linguistic mixture. Indeed, a particularly interesting aspect
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of Latino/a literature is its use of language(s) and the way that in endeavoring to evoke the multiple realities of Latino/a communities, Latino/a authors have blended languages in innovative and dynamic ways.

We use “Latino/a” rather than “Latino” to highlight the importance of gender inclusivity as a growing number of scholars have done since the 1990s when the “/a” became more widely used. A gendered language, Spanish uses an ending of “o” to denote a male subject, and as the default to refer to both male and female subjects; however, the inclusion of the “/a” visibly foregrounds the inclusion of female subjects. This term “Latino/a” emerged in the context of Third-Wave feminism in the 1990s, a movement that articulated the interconnection of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class with feminist ideologies and politics and subsequently fomented an increase in the prominence of Chicana/Latina feminisms. Similarly, the term Chican@ is also used to accentuate the importance of gender inclusivity in scholarship in a Chicano context.

In 2014, the U.S. Census Bureau reported that there are approximately 55 million Latinos/as in the United States, constituting 17 percent of the U.S. population. Latinos/as are thus the largest minority group in the United States. As the group grows in size and influence, it is increasingly incumbent on readers to learn more about the group whose literary history is an important part of the fabric of U.S. cultural history writ large. While 20th- and 21st-century authors, works, and concepts are featured in this book much more prominently than those that existed in the first 400 years of Latino/a history, at least a schematic understanding of the literary culture of the time periods that came before is necessary to provide adequate grounding in the subject.

THE COLONIAL ERA

In the introduction to The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature (Ilan Stavans et al., 2011, lxx), the editors wrote, “Latinos: people of many colors, unified by a single language: Spanish.” Although not all Latinos/as speak Spanish, as a primary linguistic background of origin, the Spanish language is a strong unifying force for Latin American origin people in the United States. The first Spanish explorers arrived on what today would be considered the American East Coast in the 1500s. This unquestionably indicates that Spanish was spoken in what is now the United States a full century before the British settlers arrived on the Mayflower in 1620. Because Latino/a identity is most commonly defined as a Latin American mixture of Spanish, indigenous, and African heritages as rooted in, combined with, and transplanted to a U.S. context, the tendency is to consider the earliest period of
literature studied as Hispanic in the Spanish colonial era from the 16th century, when Europeans arrived in the Americas, to the 19th century, when Latin American independence movements resulted in an official break from Spanish rule. In particular, writings that documented the early years of Spanish colonization of the Americas are considered foundations in what has been delineated as the Latino/a literary tradition. While indigenous writers such as the poet Nezahualcóyotl of Texcoco, Mexico, who wrote in the classical Náhuatl language (an indigenous language in central Mexico) in the 15th century, are clearly historically significant, Latino/a literary scholars have traditionally placed greater emphasis on the study of the Spanish writers who chronicled the expeditions and settlements that furthered the project of colonization.

The most commonly read writings from the colonial period are usually referred to by their Spanish names: relatos, relaciones, and crónicas (in English, narrations, accounts, and chronicles, respectively). These texts recount the initial travels of the Spanish to the New World, as well as documenting the incidents, events, and attitudes that contributed to the project of colonization of the Americas, including everything from descriptions of the landscape and fauna of the New World to accounts of initial contact between indigenous peoples and Spaniards, as well as Christian conversion narratives, detailed accounts of bloody battles, and everything in between. When Christopher Columbus arrived in the Caribbean and its islands in 1492, what are now the island of Hispaniola (today the Dominican Republic and Haiti are the two nation-states that make up the island), Puerto Rico, and Cuba were the first lands in which he and his men encountered the Taíno people, setting the stage for countless other explorers or conquistadores (conquerors), as they are often called, to travel to the Americas in search of wealth, power, fame, social mobility, and opportunities for Christian conversion.

Of the Spanish chroniclers, three of the most noteworthy are Fray Bartolomé de las Casas (1484–1566), Bernal Díaz del Castillo (ca. 1492–1581), and Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca (ca. 1490–1560). De las Casas is most well-known for his *La brevísima relación de la destrucción de las Indias* (A brief account of the destruction of the Indies, 1552), a narrative that systematically recounts the process of colonizing the indigenous peoples of the Americas in explicitly critical terms and seeks to humanize the natives who had so ubiquitously been depicted as barbarous. Indeed, de las Casas is one of the earliest and most famous of the Spanish missionaries who decried the brutality against the native peoples. His works were foremost tools of advocacy, documenting the violence and atrocities committed against the native peoples in order to persuade the Spanish Crown to intervene to stop the brutality and to galvanize public support for indigenous rights.
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The most noteworthy section of Díaz del Castillo’s famous chronicle Verdadera historia de la conquista de Nueva España (True history of the conquest of New Spain, 1568) chronicles the fall of the Mexica (Aztec) people at the hands of the army of famed conquistador Hernán Cortés, who led the charge against the Mexica until they were finally defeated in 1521. Although the work was not completed until almost 50 years after the bloody battles described therein, the chronicle is well-known for the vivid detail and dramatic style with which the violence of the conquest was rendered. Díaz del Castillo’s chronicle also provides a first-person account of encounters between the Spanish conquistadors and the Mexica people, elaborately describing the Mexica and their culture, including a detailed description of La Malinche, who served as Cortés’s translator.

Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca was one of a very few survivors of the Narváez expedition (1527), a Spanish expedition intended to establish settlements in Florida that lasted nine years, but ended with several deadly disasters and insurmountable challenges, including a hurricane. Cabeza de Vaca’s most widely read text is La relación in 1542 (later republished as Naufragios or Shipwrecked). It is said that Cabeza de Vaca originally wrote the text to recount the hellish nature of the doomed trek as a way to make a case for why he should become the governor of La Florida, but the king named Hernando de Soto governor of the region instead. The chronicle, which contains many novelistic elements, provides rich detail about a number of aspects of the places he saw on the voyage, including the flora (e.g., herbs and plant medicines); the fauna (e.g., the first description of the buffalo by a European); and the many different indigenous groups, rituals, and customs he encountered. The perils and adventures seemed at the time extraordinary, because Cabeza de Vaca, along with Andrés Dorantes, black slave Estebanico, and Alonso de Castillo Maldonado, traveled by foot from 1528 to 1536 along the Gulf Coast from Florida to New Mexico and eventually south to Mexico. As an extension of such explorations, San Agustín (St. Augustine) in Florida was founded, 8 September 1565, the first Hispanic city and oldest permanent settlement on the eastern coast.

It is Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, then, who first introduced a literary tradition in Spanish, for he is the first colonial writer to produce novelized work relevant to what eventually became the Southwest United States. But later, in 1610, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá published his notable and unparalleled epic poem Historia de la Nueva México, which deepened the keen interest and intrigue in the region. This text clearly belongs more to what was then northern Mexico and is now the southwestern United States, given that it had virtually no resonance in central Mexico. His long poem is considered to be the forerunner of U.S. Latino literature by critic Luis Leal because it reintroduced a literary tradition during the colonial period. At the same time, Manuel Martín-Rodríguez claims that the work is key to three literary histo-
ries: of Mexico, Spain, and the United States. The poem recounts in detail the expedition into New Mexico between 1598 and 1604, including military drama, battles and skirmishes against the Indians, and finally a realization—much in the tradition of a moral play—that excessive force had been exercised. Clearly, a consciousness among the Spanish was emerging about subjugation and power struggles in the voluminous epic poem of 34 chants.

In addition to chronicles documenting the initial contact between indigenous peoples and the Spanish and the subsequent conquest, the colonial period yielded a substantial body of folk songs, folk drama, and folklore in what we know today as the U.S. Southwest. Primarily, these works were preserved through oral tradition. As described by numerous scholars, including Luis Leal and Raymond Paredes, the plays that flourished during this period were often used for religious instruction and composed by priests who retained their anonymity. The folklore, legends, and songs of the period began to express the mestizaje—or cultural mixing between the Spanish and indigenous peoples—that was occurring. Along with Spanish chronicles, letters, accounts, and travel narratives, these varied forms would become foundational for the building of the Latino/a literary tradition.

While this volume does not substantially highlight colonial period authors, genres, and concerns, the kinds of narratives described briefly in this section are important for all those interested in Latino/a literatures, in that they reveal some of the defining questions, contradictions, and tensions of Latina/o identities and cultural production. For example, what does it mean that Latinos/as are for the most part multiracial descendants of both the colonized and the colonizers? In the 20th century and beyond, a number of writers, including Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, Angela de Hoyos, Gloria Anzaldúa, Rosario Morales, and Aurora Levins Morales, have famously engaged this and other related questions, revealing the legacy of Spanish colonization, the traces of which live on in Latino/a literature.

For Mexico, there was an interlude between 1821 and 1848, after it gained its independence from Spain, in which it defined its own mestizo identity by grounding a literary tradition in its own lived experiences of folklore, popular culture, and social elements unique to Mexico. The new national identity was short-lived on its northern frontier; the United States was victorious in the Mexican–American War of 1846–1848.

**U.S. EXPANSION AND IMPERIALISM**

In the 19th century, Latin American nations broke from Spanish colonial rule and fought to establish themselves as autonomous republics in wars for independence all over Latin America. At the same time, the United States, as a
relatively new nation-state, was committed to advancing its nation-building project through territorial expansion. In his classic text *Occupied America* (1988), Rodolfo Acuña writes that Benjamin Franklin “marked Mexico and Cuba for future expansion” as far back as 1767. Acuña continues, “The Louisiana Purchase, in 1803, stimulated U.S. ambitions in the Southwest; six years later, Thomas Jefferson predicted that the Spanish borderlands ‘are ours the first moment war is forced upon us.’” The Texas War (1836), the Mexican–American War (1846–1848), the Spanish–American War of 1898, and the subsequent Caribbean wars for independence were all military conflicts that emerged from this dual context of struggles for Latin American independence and against U.S. occupation. From such conflicts, the United States expanded its borders while also contributing to the independence of Puerto Rico and Cuba, with conditional ties, eventually creating an Estado Libre Asociado or Commonwealth with Puerto Rico and a long-standing vigilance with a vulnerable but independent Cuba. Thus, those writers whom we consider as belonging to Latino/a literary history often wrote to contest either the authority of the Spanish crown, the dominance of the United States, or both. The writings of the period also sometimes expressed ambivalence, as people of Latin American origin sought to negotiate ever-changing social identities in a rapidly changing social structure and political climate.

Much of what we study as the Latino/a literature of the 19th century could broadly be categorized under the rubric of life writing. A notable example of life writing from this period is the book *The Personal Memoirs of John N. Seguín, 1834–1842*, written by Juan Nepomuceno Seguin (1806–1890). Published 10 years after the signing of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo in 1848—the treaty that officially ended the Mexican–American War and that established the current border between the United States and Mexico, making Arizona, Texas, California, New Mexico, and Nevada (in all, Mexico lost 51 percent of its territory in this war) a part of the U.S. Southwest and no longer Mexican territory—the memoirs recount Seguin’s experiences in the years 1834–1842, the period in which he was a well-known politician who worked to end Mexican rule of Texas. Joining forces with Texas Mexican landowning elites and Anglo settlers, including Stephen Austin and Sam Houston, Seguin fought in the infamous Battle of the Alamo against the Mexican army led by General Antonio López de Santa Anna and survived. He went on to be politically influential in the Texas Republic, but eventually became disheartened as elite Texas Mexicans in a new racial lost ground to Texas Anglos. Seguin’s book explains his actions, decisions, and allegiances in a way that reflects the complexity of his position and the loss experienced by Texas Mexicans after Mexico lost Texas.

Another significant example of life writing in the 19th century that we count as a part of the Latino/a literary tradition are the oral histories collected from Mexican Californians under the direction of Hubert H. Bancroft in the
1870s. As a part of this major project, the testimonies of approximately 150 Mexican Californians were collected and commissioned, including an 1875 memoir by Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (1807–1890) titled Recuerdos históricos y personales tocante a la Alta California (Historical and Personal Collections with Respect to Alta California). These oral histories and testimonies (including Vallejo’s) have been analyzed extensively by scholars, including Genaro Padilla, Beatrice Pita, Rosaura Sánchez, Amelia María de la Luz Montes, and more recently, Marissa López, who argues that Vallejo’s Recuerdos “are crucial to understanding the new order of class and race consciousness emerging in late nineteenth-century California.” Indeed, in the aftermath of the Mexican–American War, class and race hierarchies realigned in California, and Mexican elites who became U.S. citizens as a consequence of the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo lost significant ground as they began to tenuously occupy their positions in the U.S. nation. Like Seguín’s memoir, Vallejo’s Recuerdos and the other California Mexican oral histories that were a part of the Bancroft project vividly bring these complexities and contradictions to life.

The social upheaval created by the Mexican–American War and its aftermath was also famously explored in two novels by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (1832–1895): Who Would Have Thought It? (1872) and The Squatter and the Don (1885). Ruiz de Burton is considered the first Latina to publish a novel written in English and originally published the novels under the pseudonyms C. [Citizen] Loyal and H. S. Burton (her husband’s name). The novels are historical romances that intertwine romantic plots between Anglo and Mexican characters with critiques of racism and the disenfranchisement and dispossession of Mexicans after the Mexican–American War. The Squatter and the Don is also highly critical of the California (and U.S.) emergent economic structure in the mid-19th century and the land grabbers and railroad magnates who transformed it. Significantly, Ruiz de Burton’s work had not been studied until the 1990s when, as a part of the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, it was edited by scholars Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita and reissued and published by Arte Público Press.

A substantial body of literature exists that was written by exiled revolutionary Puerto Rican and Cuban writers in New York, among other places, in the second half of the 19th century. Ramón Emeterio Betances (1827–1898) was repeatedly forced out of Puerto Rico as a result of his struggle against Spanish rule. In 1867, the last time that he was exiled, never to return to Puerto Rico, he went to New York City, where he founded the Comité Revolucionario de Puerto Rico (Puerto Rican Revolutionary Committee), which planned the armed rebellion against Spanish rule in Puerto Rico that would come to be known as the Grito de Lares (Cry of Lares, 1868). While the insurrection was ultimately unsuccessful in removing the Spanish from rule, it provided ideological and political fuel for a growing movement.
Betances is best known for his political writings—declarations such as “The Antilles for Antilleans,” “Arriba, Puerto Ricans!,” and “You Shall Be Free”—all works that decried the tyranny of Spain, and he sought to foment unity and solidarity among other Caribbean people, most notably Cubans.

Lola Rodríguez de Tió (1843–1924), a fervent advocate for Puerto Rican nationalism and solidarity between Puerto Rico and Cuba, is the most distinguished of the Puerto Rican women writers and intellectuals of the 19th century. Like the other famous Caribbean Latino/a writers of this period, her writing was ardently revolutionary, challenging Spanish colonial rule in both prose and poetry. Beginning with lines that called readers to action, “Awake, Borinqueños, / for they’ve given the signal! / Awake from your sleep / for it’s time to fight!,” her poem, “La Borinqueña” (“The Song of the Borinquen Woman”), was set to music and used as an anthem for the Lares uprising in 1868; it eventually became Puerto Rico’s anthem. Rodríguez de Tió also advocated for women’s rights and was outspoken in support of women having the opportunity to become educated. As a result of her work on behalf of nationalism and revolution, Rodríguez de Tío lived for many years in exile in New York and in Cuba, and her later writings reflected longing for her homeland.

Undoubtedly, the 19th-century Caribbean Latino writer whose work has been the most influential in Latino/a literary history is José Martí (1853–1895). Born in Havana, Cuba, Martí was a prolific writer who also published magazines, newspapers, and pamphlets. As a writer, his most important works were essays and poems, which were widely published, including his collections Versos libres (Free Verses, published posthumously in 1913) and Versos sencillos (Simple Verses, 1891). While exiled in New York City, where he lived for the last 14 years of his life, he wrote for the newspaper New York Sun, as well as for numerous Latin American newspapers. Like his counterparts during this period, he wrote a great deal about the importance of Cuban independence from Spain. However, as a prominent 19th-century Latino writer, his most influential contribution was his early articulation and exploration of Latino/a identity as pan-ethnic, as he celebrated the shared language and links among the cultures of the Americas. For example, his essay “Nuestra America” (“Our America”) was groundbreaking in its call for pan-Latino ethnic unity, positing the connections between the United States and Latin America, the beauty and importance of indigenous cultures, and the need to challenge racism and U.S. imperialism. Martí also wrote extensively about his experiences in exile and his observations of New York City and its culture. He died in combat, shot by the Spanish army in a Cuban independence battle in 1895, not living to see his dream for Cuban independence realized.
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The struggle for independence from Spain, and later from U.S. dominance, was a core issue that emerged in the published writings of Latino writers of Cuban and Puerto Rican origin in the late 19th century and left an indelible mark on Latino/a literature. Just as early colonial writings reveal the violence of colonization and help the reader understand how the clash of colonizer and colonized is embedded in the collective psyche of Latinos/as and brought vividly to life in Latino/a literature, 19th-century writings give the reader a window into some concerns that would remain central in Latino/a literature thereafter. Namely, it is clear that as the political and military project of territorial expansion in the U.S. Southwest was completed, countless disposessed and disenfranchised Mexicans became American within a socially unstable, and indeed violent, context that undermined their cultural identities and challenged much of the existing social order. The origin of the popular late 20th- and early 21st-century Latino/a refrain—found in the song by the famous band Los Tigres del Norte, “Somos más americanos” (We are more American), “I didn’t cross the border, the border crossed me”—becomes painfully clear within this context. Moreover, as Caribbean Latinos/as fought mightily against Spanish tyranny, only to face U.S. occupation in the aftermath of the Spanish–American War (1898), the enduring nature of the struggle for autonomy becomes ever more apparent.

IMMIGRATION AND ADAPTATION

With the development of the Mexican corrido (ballad) in the Southwest in the early to mid-1800s; the continued proliferation of other traditional Hispanic folk tales and folk poetry; and the emergence of a writing tradition by Mexican American intellectuals such as Juan Nepomuceno Seguín (1806–1890), María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (1832–1895), and Eusebio Chacón (1869–1948), by the 20th century, according to Chicano critic Raymond Paredes, “Mexican American literature had already emerged as a distinctive part of the literary culture of the United States.”

On the one hand, a large number of Mexicans immigrated from México to the United States to escape the violence and turmoil of the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920. Among these were several established Mexican writers (José Vasconcelos, Martín Luis Guzmán, and Mariano Azuela), journalists, and other Mexican intellectuals who continued to embrace their Mexican culture from afar, though many dreamed of returning home, including Julio G. Arce (a.k.a. Jorge Ulica), Adolfo Carrillo, Daniel Venegas, and Jorge Ainsle. Arce, for example, was a newspaper publisher from Guadalajara who went into exile in San Francisco and from 1916 to 1926 published sketches satirizing the customs of the Hispanic community there in La Crónica (The
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chronicle), a local newspaper. Newspaper editor Daniel Venegas contributed his picaresque novel *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamen* (*The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parakeets Suckle Their Young*, 1928), which narrates the unfortunate journey of the poor rural farmer Don Chipote de Jesús María Domínguez, who leaves his family in Mexico to seek riches in the United States. Adolfo Carrillo, also a newspaperman, was forced into exile from Mexico because of his harsh criticisms of Porfirio Díaz and the Mexican government. Eventually settling in California in 1922, he published *Cuentos Californios*, a collection of nine stories that portrays the pastoral life of California prior to the U.S. annexation in 1848 and the cultural loss experienced by Mexicans and Californios living in the area as a result of the takeover. Also, in California in 1934 Jorge Ainslie published his novel *Los pochos*, which is considered the first Mexican American immigration novel and a precursor to other works, such as *Pocho* (1959) by José Antonio Villarreal and *Chicano* (1970) by Richard Vásquez, among others.

Early in the new century, Mexican American writers also began publishing quite regularly in American magazines. Between 1913 and 1931, for example, María Cristina Mena (1893–1965) published 11 short stories in several U.S. magazines, which were later collected and reprinted with others in *The Collected Stories of María Cristina Mena* (1997). She also published five novels between 1942 and 1953: *Boy Heroes of Chapultepec: A Story of the Mexican War* (1953), *The Bullfighter’s Son* (1944), *The Three Kings* (1946), *The Two Eagles* (1943), and *The Water-Carrier’s Secret* (1942). While her short stories offer images of life and society in Mexico during the 34-year dictatorial regime of Porfirio Díaz (1876–1911), including the changing role of women in Mexican society, her novels reflect the history, mythology, and legends of Mexican culture.

A contemporary of Mena was the New Mexican poet Vicente J. Bernal (1888–1915), whose collection of poetry and short prose pieces, *Las primicias* (*The first fruits*), published posthumously in 1916, bears the distinction of being one of the first literary works by a Mexican American to be directed to an English-speaking audience. Common themes in the writings of Bernal are religion, death, friendship, and love. In his writings in Spanish, he also embraces topics on Hispanic cultural practices prevalent in New Mexico and the Southwest.

One of the more prolific writers of this generation of Mexican American writers is Fray Angélico Chávez (1910–1996), a New Mexican Hispano who, over the course of his lifetime, published some 24 books of poetry, short stories, historical fiction, and nonfiction. A Catholic priest, Chávez was initially a religious poet, with five collections of verse (*Clothed with the Sun*, 1939; *Eleven Lady Lyrics and Other Poems*, 1945; *Selected Poems: With an Apologia*, 1969; *The Single Rose: Poems of Divine Love*, 1948; and *The Virgin of Port Ligat*, 1959), some of which offer sketches of his inner life
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and his most profound religious beliefs. In his first collection of short fiction, *New Mexico Triptych: Being Three Panels and Three Accounts*—1. *The Angel’s New Wings*; 2. *The Penitente Thief*; 3. *Hunchback Madonna* (1940), Chávez re-creates three religious legends, offering New Mexican portrayals of the Nativity, the Crucifixion, and the Madonna. The seven stories in *From an Altar Screen/El Retablo: Tales from New Mexico* (1957) portray the relationships between New Mexican villagers and their patron saints. Chávez also offers two works of religious historical fiction, *La Conquistadora: The Autobiography of an Ancient Statue* (1954) and *The Lady from Toledo* (1960), the first of which narrates the story of the statue of the Virgin Mary (la Conquistadora) and the impact she has had on generations of New Mexicans. Chávez is also the author of several works of nonfiction, the most significant of which is *My Penitente Land: Reflections on Spanish New Mexico* (1974), a personal meditation on his cultural heritage and a spiritual autobiography of the Hispano people of New Mexico.

A contemporary of Angélico Chávez is Josefina Niggli (1910–1983), a Mexican-born immigrant who came to the United States as a three-year-old child to escape the violence of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). At age 15, Niggli entered the College of the Incarnate Word, a woman’s Catholic college in San Antonio, where she discovered a love of writing. Her first publication, *Mexican Silhouette* (1931), is a collection of poems written entirely in English, revealing her first attempt at describing Mexican life and culture from an insider’s perspective to an English-speaking American audience. In the mid-1930s, while studying for an advanced degree in theater at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, she wrote some of her best “Mexican-themed” plays, centered on themes of the Mexican Revolution and the portrayal of mestizo consciousness, including *Tooth or Shave, Soldadera, Azteca, The Red Velvet Goat, Sunday Costs Five Pesos*, all produced in 1936, and *This Is Villa*, produced in 1938. In 1945, Niggli published the work for which she is best known, *Mexican Village*, a novel made up of 10 interrelated stories chronicling the life, traditions, and folklore of San Nicolás Hidalgo, Nuevo León, Mexico—the same village in which she was born and lived as a child. After *Mexican Village* she published two additional novels, *Step Down, Elder Brother* (1947) and *A Miracle for Mexico* (1964), both of which emphasize Mexico as a mestizo nation.

Another important literary voice during the pre-Chicano period was Mario Suárez (1923–1998), whose published works are relatively few but whose perspective on the evolution of Chicano literature is important; so important in fact, that he has been referred to by Raymond Paredes as the “first Chicano writer” (Baker, 58). Suárez produced 20 short stories and two drafts of novel-las, but only published 11 of the stories, the first 8 of which appeared in the *Arizona Quarterly* from 1947 to 1952. The remaining three were published after 1969 in two Chicano journals: *Con Safos: Reflections of Life in the*
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*Barrio* and *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*. Suárez has the distinction of being one of the first Mexican American writers to focus on developing Chicano characters and to also portray the barrio as a unique cultural milieu. His ultimate goal was to describe the people whom he knew intimately from the Tucson barrio, known as El Hoyo, and to describe their mannerisms, language, customs and habits, racial composition, aspirations, and eccentricities. All of Suárez’s stories were collected and published in *Chicano Sketches: Short Stories by Mario Suárez*, edited by Francisco A. Lomelí, Cecilia Cota-Robles Suárez, and Juan José Casillas-Núñez in 2004.

With the publication of the novel *Pocho* in 1959, novelist José Antonio Villarreal has the unique distinction of being “the pivotal transitional link between ‘Mexican American’ and ‘Chicano’ literature—and, hence, of pre-and post-Renaissance era” (Candelaria, 2004, *Encyclopedia of Latino Popular Culture*, 152). One of the first Latino novels to be published in English by a major publishing house (Doubleday), *Pocho* is a coming-of-age novel detailing the life of Richard Rubio, whose father, Juan Rubio, a colonel in the revolutionary army of General Francisco “Pancho” Villa, is forced to flee Mexico for the United States when General Villa is assassinated in 1923. *Pocho* then recounts the lives of Juan Rubio, his wife, and their nine children as they attempt to hold the family together, survive the Great Depression, and adjust to the American way of life. In this light, *Pocho* can also be perceived as a novel of immigration. After *Pocho*, Villarreal published two more novels: *The Fifth Horseman* (1974), about the Mexican Revolution, and *Clemente Chacón* (1984), a story of survival from the most impoverished barrios of Ciudad Juárez to the power centers of the American business world.

Also contributing to this early manifestation of Mexican American letters were Felipe Maximiliano Chacón’s *Obras de Felipe Maximiliano Chacón, “el cantor neomexicano”: Poesía y prosa* (Works of Felipe Maximiliano Chacón, the New Mexican bard: Poetry and prose, 1924), which documents the author’s pride in his Mexican American heritage; Nina Otero-Warren’s retrospective chronicle *Old Spain in Our Southwest* (1936); Robert Félix Salazar’s “The Other Pioneers” (1939); Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Gilbert’s historical memoir *We Fed Them Cactus* (1954), wherein she celebrates the Spanish heritage of the Southwest; and Cleofas Jaramillo’s *Spanish Fairy Tales/Cuentos De Hogar* (1939), *Shadows of the Past/Sombras del Pasado* (1941), and *Romance of a Little Village Girl* (1955), which offers a portrait of daily life and customs in New Mexico from the late 19th through the early 20th centuries.

While the creative and publishing activity of other Latinos during the first half of the 20th century was not as prolific as that of Mexicans and Mexican Americans in the American Southwest, it was by no means absent. In fact, at the turn of the 20th century there were many exiles from the last of Spain’s Caribbean colonies, Cuba and Puerto Rico, living in New York and other
parts of the United States. As previously elucidated, many of these Cuban and Puerto Rican expatriates and intellectuals wrote extensively about the newly acquired independence of Cuba and Puerto Rico and continued to do so as these countries became protectorates of the United States. Latino immigrant newspapers and newsletters, such as *Gráfico* and *El Boletín Oficial de la Liga Puertorriqueña e Hispana*, began to emerge, publishing the writings and speeches of political activists such as Lola Rodríguez de Tió, who was notorious for her patriotic poetry about the sovereignty of Puerto Rico and Cuba.

Other Latino expatriate writers also emerged out of New York and other American cities during this early period. Well-recognized Nicaraguan poet Santiago Argüello (1871–1940), who lived in New York, was very critical of the U.S. occupation of his homeland in the 1920s in *The Fatherland’s Aching Soul*, wherein he “invokes Latin America’s American-Hispanic heritage and pleads for Latin American solidarity against the United States’ voracious imperialism” (Kanellos et al., *Herencia*, 2002, 587). Another such writer was Salvadoran poet and playwright Gustavo Solano (1886–?), who was exiled for some time in southern California and published and produced, among other works, the play *Sangre, crímenes de Estrada Cabrera* (Blood, crimes of Estrada Cabrera, 1910), a scathing condemnation of the Salvadoran dictator.

While much of the writing of these expatriates focuses on political issues of their particular homelands, others write about their experiences in the United States. Alberto O’Farrill, for example, an Afro-Cuban immigrant in 1925, later worked as an editor and writer for New York’s Hispanic newspaper *Gráfico* and published a column titled “Pegas Suaves” (“Easy Jobs”), which narrated the daily adventures of a young Latino rogue who traverses the city in search of easy jobs. Like the picaresque tales of old, the story is narrated in the first person and, as the protagonist seeks his “pegas suaves,” he also observes and comments on the social conditions of other Latino immigrants in the city. Bernardo Vega, a Puerto Rican immigrant and community activist in New York, where he arrived in 1916, later wrote his memoirs, an account of his life in the United States through the end of World War II (*Memoirs of Bernardo Vega: A Contribution to the History of the Puerto Rican Community in New York*, edited by César Andreu Iglesias, 1984). Vega also addresses such themes as unemployment, social alienation, and discrimination against Latinos in New York City. Another key figure in the cultural life of the Latino community in New York in the 1920s and 1930s was the Puerto Rican poet and playwright Gonzalo O’Neill, who published several books in the 1920s: *Sonoras bagatelas o sicilianas* (Sonorous bagatelles or Sicilian verses, 1924), a compilation of poetry and an extended dialogue in verse meant to be dramatized on stage; *La indiada boricuénéa* (The Indians of Puerto Rico, 1922); and two full-length dramas, *Moncho*
Reyes (1923) and Bajo una sola bandera (Under just one flag, 1928), both of which took up the Puerto Rican nationalist cause and promoted Puerto Rican sovereignty (Kanellos et al., 2002, 389).

Perhaps the most famous of these early Latino writers was William Carlos Williams, the famed American modernist and imagist poet and essayist who is not readily recognized as an ethnic writer, yet his mother was Puerto Rican. The son of immigrants from the Caribbean (his father was from the West Indies), Williams lived most of his life in Rutherford, New Jersey, and was a practicing obstetrician and pediatrician. Scholars such as Julio Marzán and Lisa Sánchez González have claimed Williams as a Latino author. Williams authored 49 books in his lifetime, publishing his first book in 1909. Also key to this generation was the legendary Puerto Rican poet Julia de Burgos, who only published two books of poetry in her short lifetime: Poema a veinte surcos (Poem in twenty furrows, 1938) and Canción de la verdad sencilla (Song of the simple truth, 1939). Her third collection, El mar y tú (The Sea and You), was published posthumously in 1954. Burgos lived for many years in New York City and died there in 1953 at age 39. She is considered enormously influential and a foremother to the artists of the Nuyorican Movement for her political and poetic expressions of the beauty of Puerto Rico and its culture, the desire for Puerto Rican sovereignty, her vibrant feminism, and her rebellious spirit.

Also contributing to this early manifestation of Latino letters were Puerto Rican playwright René Marqués (1919–1979), whose play La Carreta (The oxcart, 1951) dramatizes the immigrant experiences of a group of Puerto Rican jíbaros (rural peasants) who move to the Bronx, New York, in search of a “better life,” only to encounter misery and tragedy, and Pedro Juan Soto (1928–2002), whose collection of short fiction Spiks (1956) addresses the poverty, discrimination, social alienation, and other struggles that he and other Puerto Ricans faced in New York City during the 1950s.

**PROTEST, POWER MOVEMENTS, AND LIBERATORY SPACES IN THE POSTMODERN ERA**

The 1960s and 1970s was a tumultuous period of what some historians have called “historical indigestion” in the United States, due to the many ethnic uprisings nationwide and emerging political philosophies that demanded true group equality, greater institutional access, and the acknowledgment of cultural difference. If the 1960s marked dramatic shifts in cultural lifestyles and the pursuit of civil rights, the 1970s can be associated with social experiments through multiple “isms” and a revolutionary zeal for fundamental change. Latinos/as up to that time had remained relatively invisible and
marginal within the American social fabric. Perception was key: they were generally grouped as laborers, especially farmworkers, domestic workers, or part of an unskilled labor market. Latinos/as did not form part of the mainstream, sometimes derided as interlopers, “illegal immigrants,” underachievers, nonassimilating, a social burden, and generally backward. The literature by Latinos/as during this period aimed at rectifying such impressions and correcting the record to show how they had in their own way been an integral part of the Americanization process. A messianic spirit manifested itself via cultural nationalism in order to first reconstruct a cultural self and declare, parallel to African American expressions, that “Brown Was Beautiful” and that Latino culture (Mexican American or Chicano, Cuban American, Puerto Rican, Dominican American, or any Latino) was the foundation of our being. They sought to carve out their respective ethnic identities at the same time that they began to focus on excavating the Latino/a literary past, a cultural history that could be documented as far back as the 1520s with Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca.

The year 1965 marks a key moment when Chicanos, thanks to César Chávez and later Dolores Huerta, were organizing farmworkers in California for the sake of better wages, improved working conditions, and other protections against pesticides through union organization and solidarity. At that point, Luis Valdez with his Teatro Campesino joined forces with César Chávez’s labor movement, and from there the Chicano Movement was born as a multipronged phenomenon that was later both bolstered and strengthened by the student movement around 1968. Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales from Denver founded the Crusade for Justice to deal with urban, working-class, and educational issues, composing the epic poem *I Am Joaquin/Yo soy Joaquin* in 1967, which encapsulated a brief but powerful history lesson of Chicanos’ origins and their struggle to survive in a hostile social environment. Reies López Tijerina from New Mexico advanced a cause to recover some of the Hispanic land grants (called *mercedes*) that had been either illegally appropriated or deviously usurped. At the same time, José Angel Gutiérrez proposed the creation of an ethnic political party called La Raza Unida Party, which would more directly address Chicanos’ political needs. Octavio I. Romano, who was instrumental in leading the charge to challenge scholars about the preconceived notions and stereotypes within academic circles, in 1967 established the key publishing house Quinto Sol, responsible for *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought*. The magazine *Con Safos: Reflections of Life in the Barrio*, founded in Los Angeles in 1968, sought to anchor its view on barrio characters and other antiestablissement figures.

At the Chicano Youth Conference in Denver in 1969, organized by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales’s Crusade for Justice, catharsis and revelation gelled as part of a cultural nationalist agenda: Chicanos claimed Aztlán as the land of
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their ancestors and mythic homeland; they also declared once and for all their identity as “Chicano” in order to avoid the previous fragmentation of labels; and they proclaimed bilingualism or Spanglish as their preferred form of speech and writing. Thus, the triangle of a community profile was instantly created: a homeland, an identity, and a language. The mentioned leaders collaborated with such artists as poet Alurista, who offered neo-indigenism and Amerindia as a philosophical alternative; he is also given credit for resurrecting the mythic homeland of Aztlán as equivalent to the American Southwest. Ricardo Sánchez from Texas brought together an underdog poetics of overcoming Anglo-American homogenization, and José Montoya created an urban hero (“El Louie”) to express cultural pride and resilience. Feminist voices, such as Bernice Zamora in Restless Serpents (1976) and Angela de Hoyos in Arise, Chicano, and Other Poems (1975), also emerged from within the Chicano Movement to claim a space for feminist issues, which had greater resonance in the 1980s.

Another Latino group whose writing gained prominence in the 1960s was Puerto Ricans. Historian Virginia Sánchez Korrol (1994) has noted: “Following the Second World War, the number of Puerto Ricans in the United States escalated from 69,967 individuals in the decade of the 1940s to 887,662 in the 1960s . . . with visible concentrations forming in New Jersey, Pennsylvania, Connecticut, Michigan, Illinois, Ohio, Massachusetts, California and Florida,” while the largest Puerto Rican communities in the United States were in New York City. As the Puerto Rican population in the United States grew significantly, their writing documented their experiences and the emergence of dynamic new literary voices. In 1961, Jesús Colón published A Puerto Rican in New York and Other Sketches, a collection of nonfiction essays that is considered to be the first book written in English by a Puerto Rican about Puerto Ricans in New York City. The autobiographical novel Down These Mean Streets by Piri Thomas (1967), a coming-of-age narrative that explores themes of racism, poverty, and violence, as well as the psychological toll these take, was one of the first works to feature life in the New York barrio from a Puerto Rican perspective. Thomas wrote the book after having been imprisoned for a number of years, and the novel became a classic text that many scholars see as an important beginning point for what came to be known as Nuyorican writing.

Nicholasa Mohr is considered the first Puerto Rican woman to have her work published by a major publishing house. Mohr is known for her subtle depictions of life in New York City’s barrio, emphasizing the resilience of Puerto Rican families and communities, representing women’s agency, and women’s struggles to create art within the confines of traditional gender roles. Her novel Nilda (1973) takes place during World War II and features a girl protagonist, chronicling the girl’s life from age 10 to age 14. Nilda, the protagonist, is a creative child who longs to express her creativity and must
contend with many difficulties, including the deaths of her parents, poverty, and racial prejudice. *Nilda* was a departure from several of the male-authored coming-of-age narratives of the time, and Mohr has said that she faced some difficulty getting the novel published because of the expectation by publishers of the time that Puerto Rican writing about the barrio should take a grittier approach, including more violence and sexuality, for example.

Beginning in the late 1960s, New York Puerto Ricans reappropriated the term “Nuyorican,” a Hispanicized combination of New York and Puerto Rican that had previously been used to refer to them pejoratively, and the Nuyorican Movement emerged in the political, social, and cultural realms. The literary arts were a central component of the Nuyorican Movement, and coming-of-age novels like Thomas’s and Mohr’s are seen as important precursors to the explosion of Nuyorican writing in the 1970s. A great deal of Nuyorican poetry was published and performed during this time, drawing influence from radical African American poetry, as well as the poetry of the Beats. A notable aspect of the Nuyorican poetry scene was the importance of community and public performance, and in recognition of this, Miguel Algarín, along with others, established the now famous Nuyorican Poets Café on New York’s Lower East Side, the heart of New York’s Puerto Rican barrio, in 1973. Early Nuyorican poets such as Algarín, Víctor Hernández Cruz, Sandra María Esteves, Tato Laviera, Pedro Pietri, and Miguel Piñero were at the forefront of this literary movement, which promoted cultural nationalism and challenged “American Dream” ideologies. Nuyorican poets gave voice to their collective experiences and the multiplicity of their identities as multiracial people and immigrants who had been officially recognized as U.S. nationals since the U.S. Congress passed the Jones Act of 1917, but who lived in the United States as perpetual outsiders.

By the 1970s, Chicano literature had produced a vanguard that came of age with such textured works as Tomás Rivera’s “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra” (“. . . And the Earth Did Not Part,” 1971), Alurista’s *Floricanto en Aztlán* (1971), Rudolfo A. Anaya’s *Bless Me, Ultima* (1972), Oscar Zeta Acosta’s *The Brown Buffalo* (1972), Rolando Hinojosa-Smith’s *Estampas del Valle y otras obras/Sketches of the Valley and Other Works* (1973), Ron Arias’s *The Road to Tamazunchale* (1975), Miguel Méndez’s *Peregrinos de Aztlán* (Pilgrims in Aztlán, 1974), Estela Portillo Trambley’s *Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings* (1975),Alejandro Morales’s *Caras viejas y vino nuevo (Old Faces and New Wine, 1975)*, and others. The literature reached new heights and began following the path of acceptability and accessibility, consequently broadening its readership and impact as a new kind of American literature with stories to tell and experiences to share. In addition, pivotal journals emerged to spread the word while promoting a Chicano/Latino aesthetics: *Aztlán: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts*, from UCLA in 1971; *La Revista Chicano-Riqueña*, from Bloomington,
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Indiana, in 1973; El Caracol, from San Antonio, Texas, in 1974; Bilingual Review/Revista Bilingüe, from Binghamton, New York, in 1974; De Colores: Journal of Emerging Raza Philosophies, from Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1973; Grito del Sol: A Chicano Quarterly, from Berkeley, California, in 1976; Mango, from San José, California, in 1976; Maize, from San Diego, California, in 1977; and numerous others. Efforts were made to confront issues and concerns that Chicanos had lived with for years when they lacked the resources or venues to contest or question what they considered to be sources of their long-standing oppression. They now felt greater freedom to openly express subjects that were generally not tolerated by mainstream society: their own history, readaptations of what they considered their culture, an examination of where they came from and who they were, problems related to barrios and farmworker communities, regional differences, a connection with Mexican and Southwest legends and myths, and symbolic elements of protest and social vindication.

The first prominent wave of U.S. Cuban writers in the 20th century began to publish work reflecting on the situation of Cubans in the United States in the late 1960s and early 1970s. Scholar Marc Zimmerman (U.S. Latino Literature, 1992) notes, “Octavio Armand, Isel Rivero, José Sánchez Boudy and Matías Montes Huidobro are four key writers who managed to write prose and poetry capturing major ‘ethnic’ and ‘Latino’ aspects of the U.S. Cuban situation.” Zimmerman adds that Armand’s journal Escandalar (1978–1984) was “a conduit for U.S. Cuban writing on displacement, loss, confusion and reidentification.” Throughout the 1970s and 1980s, Cuban writers including Virgil Suárez, Roberto Fernández, Ricardo Pau-Llosa, and later Reinaldo Arenas, Guillermo Rosales, and Roberto Valero, came to the United States as exiles (particularly as a result of the Mariel boatlift), and their writing continued to explore these themes, as well as being marked by shifting ethnic and regional identities. Literary critic and poet Gustavo Pérez Firmat (2012) notes that of these Cuban exile writers, some wrote in English, some wrote in Spanish, and others wrote in a combination of the two languages. Pérez-Firmat asserts that the writing of these exiled Cuban writers in the United States “reflects their anger at the persecution and betrayal they suffered in Cuba and their difficulty in adjusting to exile in a new country.”

Chicano/a literature produced during the 1980s was characterized by an expanded scope into new areas, themes, and subjects. If in the previous decades it struggled to gain a broad readership, it also fought to gain legitimacy and acceptability vis-à-vis both the United States and Mexico. By this period, cultural nationalism and the politics of ethnic affirmation were on the wane, supplanted by other trends, namely to transcend immediate locales of barrios or harvest fields. The epic or muralistic realism of Tomás Rivera, Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, and Miguel Méndez served a specific function in the 1970s by exploring identity, collectivity, and historical agency. The
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1980s, targeted by the government as the “Decade of the Hispanic” under President Ronald Reagan, soon propelled an unprecedented development whereby Chicanas generated what has been termed a Chicana literary boom or the Chicana postmodern generation. If women were hardly noticed before 1980, they now blossomed into full view as viable voices of sophisticated articulations that pushed the literature into new areas of human experience: women as complex subjects who possess a particular vantage point within culture and outside of it. Succinctly stated, the 1980s became the “Decade of the Chicana Writer” through recovery and self-affirmation.

Chicanos/as during the decade also made a push to internationalize the literature’s influence as a way of challenging the Anglo-American status quo and canon. The key moment was the first international conference, held in 1984 in the small town of Germersheim, Germany, which was followed by another in Paris in 1986, plus another in 1988 in Barcelona. But in the midst of such internationalization, Chicanas exploded onto the literary arena mid-decade as a group by publishing a number of key works: Sandra Cisneros’s *House on Mango Street* (1984), Ana Castillo’s *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (1986), Denise Chávez’s *The Last of the Menu Girls* (1986), Cecile Pineda’s *Face* (1985), Cherrie Moraga’s *Giving Up the Ghost* (1985), Helena María Viramontes’s *The Moths and Other Stories* (1985), and Gloria Anzaldúa’s groundbreaking *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987). Such contributions altered the landscape in Chicano/a literature forever. They introduced new vistas and experiences into the fold, with timely innovations and aesthetic prowess, ranging from focusing on women as theoretical subjects; to the development of the “herstorical” approach as a viable and legitimate lens; to experimentation with traditional and nontraditional genres; to the concept of producing genderized texts, a challenge to or defiance of traditional binary boundaries or borders of any kind (physical but also textual and sexual); to experiential inwardness; to a recovery of women’s voices; and to a commitment to promote a new category known as “Chicana literature.”

With the contributions by these women and others, Chicano/a literature was never to be quite the same, noticeably changing its landscape and what we now consider to be Chicano/a literature. The emergence and promotion of postmodern hermeneutics made some of this possible because any author, male or female, could provide a story or a set of characters that came from lived experience or the imagination. Social realism was not forgotten altogether, but its role in central stage was teetering. Chicanas explored themselves, what they valued most, and how they felt and saw the world, and from there let their imagination expand and fill in the blanks through their petites histoires, personal inquiries, and reflections as well as self-representations. The axis of their musings was modified in a fundamental way, thus enriching and intensifying the literature overall.
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Puerto Rican and Cuban American literature also continued to thrive and flourish in the 1980s. Building on the robust foundation established by 1970s Nuyorican poets, notable Puerto Rican poets Martín Espada and Sandra María Esteves published their respective debut collections, *The Immigrant Iceboy’s Bolero* (1982) and *Yerba Buena: Dibujos y poemas (The Good Herb: Drawings and Poems, 1980)*, to substantial critical acclaim. In their poetry, Espada and Esteves centered the lives of working-class people in their own families and communities, writing about personal, political, and social transformations, often using their art as activism. Moreover, just as Chicana feminist writers were experiencing a rapid increase in the publication of their work, other Latina literature was standing at the vanguard of Third-Wave feminism, which understood women’s social identities to be formed not only by their gender, but, importantly, also by the other aspects of their social identities, including race, ethnicity, class, and sexuality. Noteworthy examples of Latina texts from this time period engaging multiple identities in groundbreaking ways include *Getting Home Alive* (1986) by Aurora Levins Morales and Rosario Morales and *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians* (1987), an anthology edited by Juanita Ramos. *Getting Home Alive* is a mixed genre text that includes poetry, essays, and stories by Aurora Levins Morales and Rosario Morales, a Puerto Rican/Jewish mother and daughter. As feminist Jewish Latinas, they write about their experiences as members of a predominantly Catholic ethnic community, and in general, about what it means to inhabit identities that are so radically multiple. *Compañeras* includes essays, poems, oral histories, and artwork created by Latina lesbians of varying ethnic backgrounds. Like *Getting Home Alive*, the book centers on the intersectional aspect of the authors’ social identities—what it means to be Latina and lesbian—sharing experiences of coming out, sexism, and homophobia.

For Cuban American literature, the late 1980s and 1990s gave birth to what Pérez Firmat claims is the first generation of Cuban American writers whose literature “may be properly labeled ‘ethnic literature.’” He adds, “These writers write solely in English, and in their work Cuba may figure only as a shadowy unseen presence or atmosphere.” The early works of these writers, including Richard Blanco, Rafael Campos, Oscar Hijuelos, and Ana Menéndez, were published to critical acclaim and were relatively widely read, giving Latino literature perhaps the broadest exposure it had ever had. Hijuelos’s novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love* (1989) was an international best seller and the first Latino novel to win a Pulitzer Prize. The novel went on to become a popular feature film. While some criticized the novel for being “apolitical,” others heralded the arrival of Latino literature in the literary mainstream, arguing that it challenged traditional approaches taken by ethnic authors and instead highlighted the way that Latino cultures, in particular music and dance, have been influential in American popular culture.
The 1990s represents a definite continuation of what Chicanas had started as a modus operandum at the same time that both genders became involved in the further internationalization of the literature, sometimes attracting writers (i.e., Ana Castillo) to receive a PhD abroad (Germany) and in other cases publishing their works abroad, including translations (e.g., Sandra Cisneros). The series of international conferences in Spain (Barcelona, Madrid, Granada, Castilla-La Mancha), Germany (Berlin, Gersmersheim again, Bremen), Holland (Groningen), England (London), Mexico (Taxco, Mexico City, and Juárez), and France (Marseille, Bordeaux, Paris) all contributed to the marketability and, by extension, greater acceptance by English, American studies, comparative literature, and Spanish academic departments across the United States. If the 1980s witnessed another kind of rebirth, the 1990s definitely cemented their reputation as Chicana writers while they created works of undeniable literary value: Gloria Anzaldúa’s *Making Face, Making Soul, Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Women of Color* (1990), Graciela Limón’s *The Memories of Ana Calderón* (1994), Sandra Cisneros’s *Woman Hollering Creek* (1991), Lucha Corpi’s *Eulogy of a Brown Buffalo: A Mystery Novel* (1992), Josefina López’s *Real Women Have Curves* (1992), Yxta Maya Murray’s *Locas* (1997), and Pat Mora’s *House of Houses* (1997).

This decade also witnessed an infusion of other outstanding works by Chicanos in preparation for the next century and millennium: Víctor Villaseñor’s *Rain of Gold* (1991), John Rechy’s *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez* (1991), Alejandro Morales’s *The Rag Doll Plagues* (1992), Guillermo Gómez-Peña’s *The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems, and Loqueras for the End of the Century* (1997), and the key critical works by José David Saldívar (*Border Matters: Remapping American Cultural Studies*, 1997), Rafael Pérez-Torres (*Movements in Chicano Poetry: Against Myths, Against Margins*, 1995), and Ramón Saldívar (*Chicano Narrative: The Dialectics of Difference*, 1990). Some of the notable trends were the development of the mystery novel (Lucha Corpi, Rudolfo Anaya, Manuel Ramos, Michael Nava); an increase in immigration-oriented works (Graciela Limón, Pat Mora, Helena María Viramontes); sophisticated literary renditions that symbolically contest political questions (Alejandro Morales, Benjamin Alire Sáenz); significant recovery projects (Daniel Venegas’s *Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamen [The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parakeets Suckle Their Young]*, originally from 1928); María Amparo Ruiz de Burton’s *The Squatter and the Don* from 1885 and *Who Would Have Thought It?* from 1872; Américo Paredes’s *George Washington Gómez: A Mexicotexan Novel*, originally written in 1936); new barrio representations (Yxta Maya Murray, Luis J. Rodríguez); and many other trends that have transcended American literary circles.
A NEW DAWN AND REAFFIRMATION OF U.S. LATINO LITERATURE

The 21st century has seen the proliferation of an endless list of works by Chicanos/as and other Latinos/as as their internationalization spreads. Literary production continues at a robust rate as their works receive many national and international awards, while sometimes becoming an integral part of university requirements and reaching a global readership. More and more works by Latinos intersect and share multiple connections as part of uniquely American ethnic production. The publication of *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* in 2011 marks a landmark of unparalleled proportions because it is the first time that a single work contained samples of the vast umbrella collection of what is now referred to as “U.S. Latino literature(s).” If the literatures encompassed by this rubric prior to the first decade of the 21st century had existed somewhat separately and apart, now they constitute a body of literature that has cross-relations and commonalities in depicting ethnicity in a broader sense, and they provide a more nuanced picture of Latinos’ presence in the national arenas. Up through the 1990s, it was common to discuss works by the various Latino groups in isolation (either as Chicano literature, or Puerto Rican, or Cuban American, etc.), but a certain degree of integration has occurred, including collaboration across ethnic lines that now functions under the classification U.S. Latino/a literature.

The process of internationalization persists as the literature’s points of contact multiply exponentially: Spain (Málaga, Tenerife, Seville, Madrid, León, Vitoria, Alcalá de Henares, Alicante), Germany (Würzburg, Berlin), Mexico (Mexico City, Ciudad Juárez), France (Bordeaux, Paris), Italy (Naples), and Russia (Chita in Siberia). At the same time, more diversified production is expected, while fresh voices are emerging with substantial contributions that break original ground and continue some of the same themes with new approaches. To this growing list of writers we include Reyna Grande for *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006), Stella Pope Duarte for *If I Die in Juárez* (2008), Salvador Plascencia for *The People of Paper* (2005), the theatrical group Culture Clash for *Culture Clash in America* (2003), and Manuel Ramos for *The Ballad of Gato Guerrero* (2004). While this growing list of writers begin to leave their stamp, there is another cohort of authors who had their beginning in previous decades but who again offer landmark works, such as Sandra Cisneros in *Caramelo, or, Puro Cuento* (2002), Juan Felipe Herrera in *187 Reasons Mexicans Can’t Cross the Border: Undocuments, 1971–2007* (2007), Lucha Corpi in *Death at Solstice: A Gloria Damasco Mystery* (2009), Cherrie Moraga in *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness: Writings, 2000–2010* (2011), Ana Castillo in *The Guardians* (2007), Luis Alberto Urrea in *The Devil’s Highway: A True Story*
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(2004), Alicia Gaspar de Alba in Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders (2005), Emma Pérez in Forgetting the Alamo, or, Blood Memory (2009), and Pat Mora in Nepantla: Essays from the Land of the Middle (2008). Together, they form a prominent and diverse group of writers who have intensified and heightened the reputation of Chicano/a letters nationally and internationally through the mastery of language, techniques, and dramatic content while further expanding what has been termed the “postmovement thematics.”

While Chicano/a writers and writers of Puerto Rican origin continue to have more robust representation in the literary world, partially as a result of constituting a larger proportion of the Latino/a population, the last two decades have given rise to the emergence of important literary voices of more Caribbean Latino/a writers and those of Central and South American origins. Dominican American writer Junot Díaz published his first collection of short stories, Drown, in 1996, followed by the novel The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao 11 years later in 2007. An exhaustively researched familial saga grounded in the complex history of the Dominican Republic and the 30-year dictatorship it endured from 1930 to 1961 under Rafael Trujillo, The Brief Wondrous Life established Diaz as one of the most important American writers of our time. Angie Cruz, another Dominican American writer, has published two novels about Dominican American immigration experiences, Soledad (2002) and Let It Rain Coffee (2005). Her novels feature powerful women characters and the everyday urban life of the Dominican American families about which she writes. While Diaz and Julia Alvarez, who has published numerous books, including How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents (1991) and In the Time of the Butterflies (1994), are perhaps the most well-known writers of Dominican American origin in the United States, writers like Angie Cruz and Nelly Rosario have established themselves as noteworthy in their own right, particularly for their masterful renderings of Dominican American women’s lives.

Twenty-first-century writers such as Guatemalan American Francisco Goldman and Daniel Alarcón, a Peruvian American, are also expanding the boundaries of Latino/a literature, as they not only write in the tradition of Latino/a ethnic literature, but live and work in transnational contexts. Born in Boston of Jewish and Guatemalan parents, Goldman now splits his time between Mexico City and Brooklyn, New York. He has published several books—novels, memoirs, and investigative nonfiction—set in the United States, Guatemala, and Mexico. Alarcón immigrated from Perú at the age of three, was raised in Alabama, and returned to Perú on a Fulbright scholarship in 2001. He published his first collection of fiction in English, War by Candlelight, in 2005. Alarcón writes and publishes his work in both Spanish and English, and writes about Latin America and the United States, on a myriad of themes including war, exile, political dysfunction, and intimacy. In 2012, Alarcón cofounded a popular Spanish-language podcast, “Radio Ambu-
lante,” which he has compared to a Spanish-language version of *This American Life*, work that is richly emblematic of the contemporary impulse in Latino/a cultural production to create dynamic, intellectually and socially engaged content for a broad audience. While the work of writers like Goldman and Alarcón represents a departure in terms of what was most common in 20th-century Latino/a letters within a more traditional “ethnic literature” framework, the current moment in Latino/a literary arts interestingly hearkens back to 19th-century writers like José Martí, who were public artists and intellectuals whose voices were heard across and beyond nation-state boundaries.

The literature produced in the 21st century is cognizant of broadening its scope and landscape by examining situations and characters that have been overlooked, underestimated, or minimally treated. For example, more works confront the many facets and problematics surrounding immigration (whether defined as legal or illegal), with more complicated representations than before, the back-and-forth movements within the borderlands, death in the form of femicide or extreme dehydration, memoirs that unveil a deep sense of personal trauma, historical topics in reassessing icons and myths, new stages of a Chicana consciousness, unexpected truths contained within mystery novels, and the changing roles of family and gender. Activism is either overt or suggested with compelling literary representations to demonstrate that the literature has not lost its political edge and social focus. But subtlety is of utmost importance so as not to dismiss it as facile or cursory social realism. “Home” is often reexamined to determine its effect on family members as characters who seek some semblance of normalcy and continuity vis-à-vis the pressure to survive by any means. Then there are other authors who push the envelope of poetic eclecticism to new heights, such as Juan Felipe Herrera, who in 2014 was named the poet laureate for California and in 2015 was appointed the U.S. poet laureate—the first time any Latino has received such a distinction. In other cases, we encounter literary depictions of globalization in which people would seem to have an easier opportunity to cross borders, but where in fact it has become more difficult and challenging, while commodified products crisscross borders with relative ease.

So, many questions remain about where U.S. Latino/a literature might go in the coming years: Will it cuddle up to the mainstream, or seek its own path of autonomy, or—just like the products do—traverse cultures as well as boundaries? There appears to be a spirit among Latino writers of reinventing themselves with new approaches and new subjects in dealing with their relationships with Anglo America, except that the ante has been risen: they no longer seek an intra-ethnic isolation in their pursuit of connecting more broadly with the whole of the United States. The trend is inter-ethnicity that dialogues with and contributes to whatever future the United States is trying to carve out for itself. The old politics of assimilation, economic vulnerabil-
ity, and political disenfranchisement have been targets of Latinos/as through a process of interrogating them while exercising their new social and economic clout in sheer numbers. The literature produced by Latinos/as directly reflects that confidence as it prepares for greater challenges at the same time that it cultivates a Latino/a readership unlike any moment in history.

NOTES

1. We resort to the term Latino instead of Hispanic for a variety of reasons. While the latter has been used extensively, it demarcates a stage of acknowledging that Latinos had to prove they were acceptable Americans. The term was used in the 1980s as a safe compromise among the individual nationalistic terms of identity (Puerto Rican, Chicano/Mexican American, Cuban American, etc.), in great part stimulated by the federal government’s efforts to categorize them. However, it was also perceived to be an attempt to sanitize our Latino background. Therefore, Latino has become the general term to embrace all the mentioned ethnic groups as an extension of Latin America within the United States and not a colonizing Spain. Latinos, then, are not just Hispanic, because they are a result of cultural and racial admixtures deriving from the Iberian Peninsula (mainly Spain), including other parts of Europe, and also significantly Native American or indigenous and African descent.

2. In certain situations, the poem was shared and read much like an ethnic anthem, gaining such popular momentum that many had a copy in mimeographed form before it was finally published. Comparable to a “call for arms,” the poem encouraged Chicanos to act on the conditions of economic poverty, political disenfranchisement, educational handicaps, housing discrimination, stereotyping, and social prejudice. Chicanos/as were in the process of re-creating an ethnos at the same time that they were reevaluating their place within the United States, while challenging the politics of assimilation and what they considered Anglo normativities.

3. This marked a national campaign to homogenize all Latinos/as of various backgrounds into one label, except that this label undermined the diversity Latinos sought due to their multiple cultural backgrounds. Being called “Hispanic” was strategic for some (in particular Cuban Americans), but for Chicanos, Puerto Ricans, and others this described another kind of blanket miscegenation or melting pot that Latinos/as resisted. For that reason, people of Mexican descent proclaimed themselves as either Chicano/a or Mexican American.

4. This is mentioned because Donaldo W. Urioste and Francisco A. Lomelí, in Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography (Albuquerque, NM: Pajarito Publications, 1976), attempted to gather every work of Latino/a literature up to that point in history in order to delineate its parameters as well as define its content and range. As a result, they assembled critical reviews on 127 works, which many people had no idea existed. Since that time, Urioste has compiled a bibliography of 3,400 items as of 2015 to show its development and evolution.

5. Since 2000, Spain has been one of the central countries with a keen interest in Latinos, particularly Chicanos, with their biennial conferences, thanks in great part to the Franklin Institute at the Universidad de Alcalá de Henares under the leadership of José Antonio Gurpegui and Julio Cañero Serrano, who have generated a host of collaborating scholars, including Carmen Flys, Amaia Ibarrañan Bigalondo, Manuel Villar Raso, Imelda Martín-Junquera, Juan Antonio Perles Rochel, Federico Eguituz, David Rios, and others. Other countries have provided status reports on the literature’s reception; for example, José Antonio Gurpegui from Spain, Axel Ramírez from Mexico, Erminio Corti and Stefania Conrieri from Italy, and Tatyan Voronchenko from Russia.
6. As a side note, Professor Tatyana Voronchenko at the Zabaikalsky State University in Chita, Siberia, had under her tutelage in 2006 six graduate students who were studying Chicana/o literature or something related among Latinos, including translations. This included either master’s theses or dissertations, representing one of the largest groups of students in the world engaged in such research.
ACOSTA, OSCAR “ZETA” (1935–1974). Lawyer, social activist, novelist. Born on 8 April 1935 in El Paso, Texas, Oscar Acosta was raised in the small community of Riverbank, near the city of Modesto, in California’s San Joaquin Valley. After completing high school (Oakdale Joint Union High School), Oscar entered the U.S. Air Force and served a four-year term. Upon completing his military service, he returned to California and attended Modesto Junior College, then San Francisco State University (SFSU), where he studied creative writing and became the first member of his family to earn a college degree. After completing his BA degree at SFSU, Acosta immediately went on to law school at the University of San Francisco and completed his JD in 1966. The following year, he began working as an antipoverty lawyer for the East Oakland Legal Aid Society in Oakland, California. After one year of practicing law in Oakland, Acosta moved to Los Angeles, where he became an activist attorney within the Chicano Movement and figured prominently in several high-profile civil rights cases in Los Angeles in the late 1960s and early 1970s, including defending the Chicano 13 of the East LA walkouts (1968), the Saint Basil 21 (Católicos por La Raza or Catholics for the People, 1969), Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales and members of the Brown Berets in the aftermath of the National Chicano Moratorium against the war in Vietnam (1970), and others.

Upon his arrival on the Los Angeles scene, Acosta also became involved with the Con Safos writers’ group, a literary group that published Con Safos magazine, a literary magazine that featured the writings of Chicano/Latino writers, including Oscar Acosta’s short story “Perla Is a Pig” (Con Safos 2, no. 7 [1971]: 34–46), a story about racial exclusion and marginalization. Set in the Mexican barrio (community) of Riverbank, “Perla Is a Pig” tells the story of el huero (el güero/the blond one), a peddler of corn, who over time becomes marginalized from his Mexican community because of his “light skin, green eyes and yellow hair,” and because he chooses to do things differently. For example, after reading a magazine article that stated it was good for the soil, he plants his corn in circular rather than in straight furrows. Labeled “el gringo” by his barrio community because of his physical fea-
tures, he is further alienated from the community as rumors begin to circulate that he urinates in his cornfield to help the cornstalks grow. As a consequence of the rumor, he is unable to sell his freshly harvested corn and must dispose of it. As the story develops, el huero employs Nico to help him make himself and his goods more appealing to the community; however, their efforts are to no avail, and he is forced to exit the community in defeat.

In light of this theme of alienation and social rejection, “Perla Is a Pig” is an excellent prelude to Acosta’s first novel, *The Autobiography of a Brown Buffalo* (1972). As the title indicates, the narrative is a fictionalized autobiography of Oscar, an estranged Chicano lawyer who scrutinizes his life story with uninhibited and unnerving candor. Working as an attorney in an Oakland antipoverty agency with little sense of purpose or identity, with bleeding ulcers and heavily dependent on drugs and alcohol, the first-person narrator suffers a breakdown upon learning that his secretary, Pauline, has died of cancer. Despondent over her death and his sense of alienation, he walks away from his life and takes to the road in search of his cultural, ethnic, and psychological self. His quest takes him on a six-month journey from California through the Southwest to Colorado and on to El Paso, Texas, his birthplace. He then heads to Juárez, Mexico, where he hits rock bottom and ends up in a Juárez jail. However, due to the humiliating experience and the condemnation of the woman judge assigned to his case, who tells him to “go home and learn your father’s language,” he returns to California with a true sense of his mestizo or mixed-blood identity: “What I see now, on this rainy day in January, 1968, what is clear to me after this sojourn is that I am neither a Mexican nor an American. I am neither a Catholic nor a Protestant. I am a Chicano by ancestry and a Buffalo by choice . . . [and] sometime later I would become Zeta, the world-famous Chicano Lawyer who helped to start the revolution—but that . . . is another story.”

The other “story” to which the above quote refers is *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (1973), a fictionalized account of the 1970 Chicano moratorium. Essentially a sequel to the aforementioned novel, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* documents Chicano Movement activities in Los Angeles between the years 1969 and 1972. Here the protagonist, now known as Buffalo Zeta Brown, tells of his militant participation with other well-known Chicano activists such as César Chávez and Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales; describes his experiences as a super attorney defending various Chicano protest groups, such as the Saint Basil 21, The East L[os] A[ngeles] 13, and the Tooner Flats Seven; and raises challenges about the schools, the Catholic church, and the courts. The narrative also delineates his Raza Unida (United People’s Party) candidacy for sheriff of Los Angeles County in 1970. Buffalo Zeta Brown, a.k.a. Oscar Zeta Acosta, left Los Angeles for San Francisco in the spring of 1972, with the intention of writing his memoirs before going
“totally crazy. Or totally underground.” As a literary work, *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* is a very engaging story and is the Chicano novel that best describes and captures the belligerent spirit of the early Chicano Movement.

Oscar “Zeta” Acosta mysteriously disappeared while traveling in Mazatlán, Mexico. His son, Marco Federico Manuel Acosta, believes that he was the last person to talk to his father. In the afterword to the First Vintage Books edition of *The Revolt of the Cockroach People* (July 1989) he writes: “I was fourteen when he disappeared from Mazatlán, Mexico, via a friend’s sailing boat, in June 1974. I was the last person, as far as I know, to speak with him. Literally moments before he got on the boat that he was planning to ride back to the United States, I told him I hoped he knew what he was doing by going back on such a small boat. He said he hoped I knew what I was doing with my life.” No trace of Acosta’s whereabouts has ever been found.

In 1996, Ilan Stavans edited and published *Oscar “Zeta” Acosta: The Uncollected Works*, a milestone collection that gathers unpublished stories, essays, letters, poems, and a teleplay written by Acosta between the early 1960s and shortly before his mysterious disappearance in Mazatlán, Mexico, in 1974. (DWU)

**AFRO-LATINO/A.** This label of identity acknowledges the African presence and heritage in many Latinos/as, and it gained prominence and acceptability, being generally embraced more openly in the latter part of the 20th century. Many Latinos/as have some African background, even though they denied it for centuries. (FAL)

**AGÜEROS, JACK (1934–2014).** Poet, essayist, playwright, fiction writer, activist. Agüeros was born in East Harlem to parents who had migrated to New York City from Puerto Rico. In “Halfway to Dick and Jane,” an essay he published in 1971, Agüeros recalled that his parents always encouraged his love of books and reading. Agüeros received a BA in English at Brooklyn College and went on to earn an MA in urban studies at Occidental College in Los Angeles.

In the 1970s, Agüeros published a number of poems and essays, but he did not publish his first book, *Correspondence Between Stonehaulers*, until 1991, at the age of 57. He published two additional books of poetry: *Sonnets from the Puerto Rican* (1996) and *Lord, Is This a Psalm?* (2002). Martín Espada has noted that Agüeros is one of the few Latino poets to use the sonnet form. Indeed, the title of his book, *Sonnets from the Puerto Rican*, is a playful allusion to Elizabeth Barrett Browning’s *Sonnets from the Portuguese*. Agüeros’s sonnets depart somewhat from the traditional form, but faithfully maintain several of its elements. The poetry in his third book, *Lord,
Is This a Psalm?, does take the form of psalms, addressing God with humor, insight, and irreverence. In matters of form, Agüeros’s poems are attentive to traditional forms, yet inventive. In content, his poems are varied; he published love poems, political poems that decry social injustice, historical poems, and poems that captured landscapes and individual portraits. Of Agüeros’s poems of portraiture, Espada admiringly writes, “Where else will we find a sonnet for a middleweight boxer killed in the ring? Or for a Puerto Rican cab driver? Has there ever been another sonnet written for an accused criminal nicknamed ‘Maddog?’”

Agüeros is also a well-known translator of poetry. In 1997, he published the first and only Spanish-English bilingual edition of the complete works of Julia de Burgos, one of the most famous and beloved Puerto Rican poets of all time. The book, Song of the Simple Truth, contains more than 200 of Burgos’s poems, including never-before-published poems discovered by Agüeros through extensive research. Agüeros also translated the poems of the 19th-century Cuban revolutionary José Martí in Come, Come, My Boiling Blood: The Complete Poems of José Martí, a book that was never published.

Agüeros published one collection of short fiction, Dominoes and Other Stories from the Puerto Rican (1995), and numerous essays. He also wrote many plays that were staged off-Broadway and wrote for television as well, including for the show Sesame Street.

Agüeros was awarded the McDonald’s Latino Dramatist Award (1989) and the Asan World Prize for Poetry (2012). However, overall his work has not been widely recognized, studied, or critically appraised for several possible reasons, including the limited distribution of his writing, as it has been published by small presses. Yet Espada convincingly writes that “what ultimately matters is not literary reputation but the work itself, and Jack Agüeros has created a body of work that will last, that will tell future readers the sad, angry, funny truth about being Puerto Rican, and being human, at the end of a troubled century.”

In addition to his writing, Agüeros was a lifelong activist and local leader in New York City. In 1968, he was appointed deputy commissioner of New York’s main antipoverty agency, making him the highest-ranking Puerto Rican in city government at the time. After earning his master’s degree in Los Angeles, he returned to New York City and worked for seven years in a Lower East side antipoverty program. Agüeros was director of El Museo del Barrio (The Museum of the Neighborhood), one of the most prominent Latino art museums in the United States, for nearly 10 years beginning in 1977. He died of Alzheimer’s disease–related complications in 2014. (MJV)

ALAMO, THE. Originally the Franciscan mission San Antonio de Valero, located near the present-day city of San Antonio, the site was occupied by some 200 Texan and Tejano volunteer soldiers in December 1835, during
Texas’s war for independence from Mexico. On 23 February 1836, a Mexican force led by General Antonio López de Santa Anna began a siege of the fort. Though vastly outnumbered, the Alamo’s defenders managed to hold out for 13 days before the Mexican troops finally overwhelmed them. Among the Texan dead were the well-known frontiersmen James Bowie and Davy Crockett and the soldier William Travis. The Battle of the Alamo became a symbol of the Texans’ struggle for independence, which they achieved on 21 April of that year at the Battle of San Jacinto, where the battle cry “Remember the Alamo!” was heard as Texans and Tejanos advanced on the Mexican Army.

Although in Mexico the Battle of the Alamo is overshadowed by the overall Mexican–American War (1846–1848), in Texas it became known as a battle site rather than a former mission. In 1905, the Texas legislature purchased the land and buildings and designated the Alamo as an official Texas State Shrine. In 1936, in celebration of the centennial of the original battle, the entire Alamo complex was renovated and converted into a park-like setting as a memorial to those who died there, and it is now one of the most popular tourist sites in Texas. Many Mexican officers who participated in the battle left memoirs, although some were not written until sometime later. Among those who provided written accounts of the battle were Antonio López de Santa Anna and Francisco Becerra. Tejano Juan Seguín also left a memoir about the battle.

The focus of the Alamo as a symbol of Texas heroism and as a sacred national site is often denounced in Chican@ letters, whose writers view the original conflict as a warranted response to an illegitimate independence movement. One such work is Laura Esparza’s “I DisMember the Alamo: A Long Poem for Performance,” wherein the poetic voice dismisses the so-called heroes such as Bowie, Crockett, and Travis as myths and makes her great-great grandfather Gregorio the protagonist hero of the story. Another such story is the novel Forgetting the Alamo, or, Blood Memory (2009) by Emma Pérez, wherein Micaela Campos, the protagonist, witnesses and seeks justice for the violence against Mexicans, African Americans, and indigenous peoples after the infamous battles of the Alamo and San Jacinto. (DWU)

ALARCÓN, DANIEL (1977–). Writer, journalist, editor. Alarcón immigrated to the United States from Perú at the age of three and was raised in Birmingham, Alabama. In a 2012 interview published in the journal Latino Studies, Alarcón reflected, “Immigration has defined my life. . . . My upbringing was, at least spiritually, between two places.” Indeed, as a child Alarcón frequently spent summers in Perú, where he returned in 2001 on a Fulbright scholarship. Alarcón earned a BA from Columbia University and an MFA from the Iowa Writers’ Workshop.
Alarcón’s first published short stories appeared in Harper’s, the Virginia Quarterly Review, and the New Yorker magazine. Those stories received a great deal of critical praise, particularly “City of Clowns,” published by the New Yorker as “Début Fiction” in June 2003. The story centers on the protagonist, Oscar, a journalist in Lima, Perú, who is tasked with writing an article about the city’s clowns and eventually dons a clown costume himself during his investigation, becoming unrecognizable even to his own mother. The story is rich in details of the gritty social realities of urban Latin America and explores themes of invisibility, grief, and longing in ways that are representative of some of the larger concerns of Alarcón’s work. Indeed, much of the content of Alarcón’s writing is deeply informed by his time living in Lima in the early 2000s, which he says “changed [him] and changed [his] writing. The spectacle of human survival there is overwhelming, potent, and raw.”

Alarcón has published work in English and Spanish and writes in both languages. His first collection of short fiction in English, War by Candlelight (2005), was a finalist for the 2006 PEN/Hemingway Foundation Award and consists of nine stories that take place in New York City and Lima. The stories cover a range of topics but are unified in their prizing of the cityscape as a site for exploring themes of war, exile, and intimacy. Alarcón’s second book, the 2007 novel Lost City Radio, was named a Best Novel of the Year by the San Francisco Chronicle and the Washington Post, and its German translation earned him an International Literature Award from the Haus de Kulturen der Welt Institute (House of World Cultures Institute) in 2009. The novel takes place in an unnamed Latin American city a decade after the end of a brutal civil war. The nation’s most popular radio show, Lost City Radio, claims to reunite families who have been separated by the war and employs actors to play the roles of family members when the real family members cannot be found. His third novel, At Night We Walk in Circles, was a finalist for the 2014 PEN/Faulkner Award for Fiction and similarly takes place in an unnamed Latin American city ravaged by war and its aftermath, including severe political dysfunction. In interviews, Alarcón has articulated that he draws extensively from his knowledge of his city of origin, Lima, in creating these imaginary, unnamed nations, but that his choice to leave the nations unnamed allows him a greater imaginative space, in which he is free from being faithful to the social or geographical realities of any one specific place. He also makes the point that the larger truths explored in his work are relevant and applicable to many cities in the world.

His major Spanish-language works are El rey está por encima del pueblo (The King Is above the People; 2009), a collection of short stories, and Ciudad de Payasos (City of Clowns), a graphic novel published in 2010 in collaboration with graphic artist Sheila Alvarado. Alarcón is also a regular contributor to the award-winning Peruvian literary magazine Etiqueta Negra (Black etiquette) and has edited special issues of that magazine. As an editor,
Alarcón has published broadly, including The Secret Miracle: The Novelist’s Handbook (2010), which features insights on writing from a range of well-known authors, and a special issue of the literary journal Zoetrope: All Story featuring emerging Latin American writers in translation.

With his wife, Carolina Guerrero, Alarcón cofounded a Spanish-language podcast called “Radio Ambulante” (Traveling radio) in 2012. He has compared it to the radio show This American Life, but in Spanish, and he also serves as the show’s executive producer. Alarcón lives in the San Francisco Bay area, where he has been a Distinguished Visiting Writer at Mills College and a Visiting Scholar at the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. (MJV)

ALARCÓN, FRANCISCO X. (1954–2016). Writer, translator, activist, educator. Born to cannery worker parents in Wilmington, California, Francisco X. Alarcón grew up in both California and Guadalajara, Mexico, and has lived in California since the age of 18. Alarcón was an undergraduate at California State University, Long Beach, and pursued doctoral study in Latin American literature at Stanford University, where his mentor was Arturo Islas. At Stanford, he edited the journal Vórtice from 1978 to 1980 and won a Fulbright Fellowship to study Mexican literature in Mexico City from 1982 to 1983. While studying in the archives at the National Museum of Anthropology in Mexico, Alarcón discovered a manuscript completed in 1629 by a Catholic priest, Hernando Ruiz de Alarcón, hired by the Spanish Inquisition to record indigenous Mexican spells and myths. Believing the priest to be a distant relative of his, Alarcón went on to write a number of poems inspired by that manuscript, in what is considered to be one of his most important collections of poetry, Snake Poems: An Aztec Invocation (1992), for which he won the Before Columbus Foundation’s 1993 American Book Award. The collection renders a Chicano social world situated within layers of history that crosses borders, exploring themes ranging from Mexico’s colonial period under Spain to spirituality, women’s freedom, nature, and Chicano worker identities. Significantly, Alarcón’s poetry appears in this volume written in English, Spanish, and Náhuatl, the languages of all of his poetry.

Alarcón’s poetic explorations of identity crucially also give voice to Chicano gay subjectivities. His poetry engaging these issues ranges from activist expressions of the right to existence of Chicano gay sexuality, as in his poem “Amor Zurdo”; to laments and protests about the way the AIDS epidemic has ravaged gay communities, as in his poem “AIDS Blues”; to celebrations of homoerotic love in poems like “Cuerpo en llamas/Body in Flames,” which is also the title of his 1992 collection, a collection that was also translated into Gaelic and published in Ireland.
ALGARÍN, MIGUEL (1941–). Poet, scholar, editor, playwright, translator. Miguel Algarín was born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, and migrated to New York City in 1950. Algarín, his parents, and two siblings settled in the Lower East Side of Manhattan, a community that was dubbed “Loisaida” by the area’s Spanish speakers, a term that gained popularity in the 1970s during the height of the Nuyorican Movement. Algarín is perhaps best known for co-founding the Nuyorican Poets Café in 1973 and is considered one of the key figures of the Nuyorican Movement, along with poets like Pedro Pietri and Miguel Piñero. Algarín has said that the world-famous café was opened after his own East Village apartment became too small to accommodate the multitude of poets who gathered to share their cutting-edge work. The Café was and is a dynamic urban atmosphere emphasizing experimentation and community consciousness. The creation of the Café is emblematic of the way Algarín sought to transcend the traditional barriers between poetry and theater and to feature performance as a key element in his style of Nuyorican poetry.

Algarín has published more than 10 books of poetry, including Mongo Affair (1978); On Call (1980 American Book Award winner); Time’s Now/Ya Es Tiempo (1985 American Book Award winner); and Love Is Hard Work: Memorias de Loisaida (1997). Like other poetry of the Nuyorican Movement, Algarín’s early poetry was concerned with the social, political, and economic realities of Puerto Rican migrants in New York and gave voice
to the everyday struggles of this marginalized community. His later col-
clections, while still experimental in form, have a broader thematic scope, ad-
dressing such widely divergent themes as spirituality, US foreign policy, and
love in the era of HIV and AIDS. In 2009, Algarín published an auto-
biographical collection of poetry and prose called *Survival Supervivencia*. The
book builds on his previous work, continuing to explore the experiences of
Puerto Ricans in New York, but also reflects on love, loss, and global con-
licts.

In addition, Algarín is an accomplished playwright, scholar, and translator,
earning a BA in Romance languages from the University of Wisconsin, an
MA from Penn State University, and a PhD in comparative literature from
Rutgers University. He has written numerous plays, including *Olú Clemente,
the Philosopher of Baseball* (1973), a play that celebrates the memory of
Puerto Rican baseball player Roberto Clemente. In 1976, he published a
translation of Pablo Neruda’s *Song of Protest*. Algarín has also coedited three
anthologies, including *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*, for
which he won the American Book Award in 1994.

Algarín has an impressive list of awards. He received the Larry Leon
Hamlin Producer’s Award at the 2001 National Black Festival and in all has
been awarded three American Book Awards. In 2009, Algarín became the
first Latino to win the American Book Award for Lifetime Achievement.

He is currently professor emeritus at Rutgers University, where he has
taught Shakespeare, creative writing, and U.S. ethnic literature. (MJV)

**ALLENDE, ISABEL (1942–).** Writer, journalist. Allende was born in Lima,
Perú, and raised in Santiago de Chile. Her father was a Chilean diplomat.
When she was age three her parents divorced, and Allende was subsequently
raised in her maternal grandparents’ home. She became a well-known femi-
nist journalist and columnist and lived in Chile until her uncle (her father’s
first cousin), President Salvador Allende, was assassinated in a CIA-backed
coup. Fifteen months after her uncle’s assassination on 11 September 1973,
Allende fled to Venezuela, fearing for her safety and opposing the violence
and press censorship under Augusto Pinochet’s regime. Allende lived in
Venezuela in exile until 1989, when she immigrated to the United States after
marrying her second husband, Willie Gordon, an attorney and novelist in the
San Francisco Bay area. Her first husband was Michael Frías, to whom she
was married from 1962 to 1987.

In recognition of her more than 30-year literary career, Allende was
awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom in November 2014. In his speech
awarding her the medal, President Barack Obama noted that Allende’s “nov-
els and memoirs tell of families, magic, romance, oppression, violence, re-
demption—all the big stuff. But in her hands, the big beco[m]e] graspable and
familiar and human. . . . ‘Write to register history,’ she says. ‘Write what
should not be forgotten.’’ Yet as Zoe Brigley Thompson and Sorcha Gunne note in an article about Allende that appeared in Contemporary Women’s Writing journal in 2013, “Despite—or maybe because of—her popular success, opinions on Allende as a writer of merit vary greatly.” Still, lack of critical agreement notwithstanding, Allende is a prolific and widely read author. All of her books have been written in Spanish and translated into English, most of them by the translator Margaret Sayers Peden, who has also translated the writing of Pablo Neruda. According to her website, Allende has published 20 books that have been translated into 35 languages and sold more than 65 million copies since her debut novel The House of Spirits in 1982. In 2009, The Times (London) named The House of Spirits one of the “Best 60 Books in the Last 60 Years.”

Allende began writing The House of Spirits as a letter to her 99-year-old, dying maternal grandfather, who in the absence of her own father was the central paternal figure in her life. She wrote the novel while exiled in Venezuela, and numerous publishers rejected it before it was finally published in Spain, becoming a literary sensation. Allende has said that she used her family members as models for the characters in the novel, and like much of her writing, The House of Spirits is semiautobiographical. A multigenerational family saga that takes place in an unnamed Chile, its two primary narrators are Esteban and Alba Trueba—grandfather and granddaughter—but as the novel unfolds, it is clear that the women of the novel are its focal point and source of power, and Clara and Blanca’s stories (grandmother and mother) also figure prominently in the matrilineal story. For her writing in this novel and beyond, Allende’s style has been compared with Gabriel García Márquez’s magical realism, and the novel grounds its fantastical reality in the turbulence of revolution and counterrevolution. The family stories reveal love, hatred, and social complexity, making the lives of women central. Alluding to the coup that killed Allende’s uncle and exiled her from Chile, The House of Spirits also confronts violence, torture, and political repression and speaks to the importance of “writ[ing] to register history” and as a way “to come to terms with traumatic political events,” as Susan Frick has written.

After the success of The House of Spirits, Allende published three more books in the 1980s: Of Love and Shadows (1985), Eva Luna (1987), and The Stories of Eva Luna (1989). All three of these stories take place in Latin America, and they have other clear similarities to Allende’s first novel. These books remain grounded in the social realities of violence and political repression of the Latin American dictatorship of the period, while also featuring colorful, magical imagery of that same place. And like The House of Spirits, these books similarly feature strong women protagonists and passionate plots and subplots. In ‘‘Un Puñado De Críticos’: Navigating the Critical Readings
of Isabel Allende’s Work,” Beth E. Jorgensen estimates that approximately 80 percent of the published critical essays about Allende’s work are about her first three novels.

The Stories of Eva Luna is the only short story collection that Allende has published. The premise of the book is that the 23 stories that comprise the collection are the product of the imagination of Eva Luna, protagonist of the novel of the same name. The Stories of Eva Luna was the last book Allende published before her immigration to the United States.

Since coming to the United States, Allende has published in a broad range of genres, including historical fiction, memoir, young adult literature (her young adult novel Maya’s Notebook [2013] earned the Latino Book Award), and mystery. The Infinite Plan (1991) was Allende’s first novel set in the United States, a semibiographical account of her husband, Willie Gordon’s, life that unfolds within the context of a historicized family saga. Paula (1994), a memoir that intertwines Allende’s own autobiography with a moving account of the decline and death of her daughter Paula, is Allende’s most critically well-regarded book of this period of her career. Paula suffered from porphyria and fell into a year-long coma after being hospitalized for complications from the disease; she died at the age of 28. In interviews, Allende has said that she began writing the book while in the hospital, thinking that the stories about her own childhood and early life would help orient Paula once she awoke from the coma. The second half of the book reflects on Allende’s process of realizing that Paula would not wake up again, and the memoir poignantly ends with Allende bidding farewell to Paula, the woman, and welcoming Paula, the spirit. Thus, Paula ultimately becomes a meditation on questions of life and death and the power of motherhood and daughterhood.

Allende’s work has been adapted extensively into other forms, including film, theater, opera, ballet, and radio programs. There is a feature film based on Allende’s novel The House of Spirits and another film based on Of Love and Shadows. In addition, a television documentary film and two plays are based on Paula. The numerous stories in The Stories of Eva Luna have been the most widely adapted.

Allende’s honors and awards are extensive. In all, she has received 14 honorary doctorates and more than 50 awards from organizations around the world. In addition to her Presidential Medal of Freedom, other notable awards include a Gabriela Mistral Inter-American Prize for Culture (1994); Feminist of the Year Award from the Feminist Majority Foundation (1994); a Books to Remember Award from the American Library Association (1996); a Hubert Howe Bancroft Award from the Bancroft Library at the University of California, Berkeley; a National Literature Prize (Chile, 2010); a Carl Sandburg Literary Award (2013); and a Gabriela Mistral Foundation Humanitarian Award (2014).
ALURISTA (ALBERTO BALTAZAR URISTA HEREDIA, 1947–)

Allende founded the Isabel Allende Foundation in 1996 to honor Paula, who in her short life was a dedicated humanitarian. The foundation supports nonprofit organizations in California, Chile, and around the world that are dedicated to the health, well-being, safety, and education of women and children. The vision of the foundation is of “a world in which women have achieved economic and social justice,” and it issues grants to nonprofit organizations furthering this vision.

Isabel Dulfano has written that Allende’s “cosmovision predicates optimism and survival even in the face of a predominantly violent and destructive world.” Certainly, Allende’s writing and the rest of her work is a testament to this enduring “cosmovision.” (MJV)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

ALURISTA (ALBERTO BALTAZAR URISTA HEREDIA, 1947–).

Poet, novelist, critic, community organizer, cultural leader, social activist. Generally known by his nom de plume Alurista, he was widely recognized as the leading Chicano Movement poet of the 1960s and 1970s for his revolutionary manifestos legitimating a bilingual or Spanglish poetics, thus influencing a generation toward cultural nationalist ideals. Born in Mexico City on 8 August 1947, he moved to Tijuana at a young age and then as an adolescent to San Diego, where he had an immediate impact by proposing Aztlán as the mythic Chicano homeland in 1968 and offering an alternative worldview founded on Aztec mythology and a neo-indigenist aesthetics. Alurista’s philosophical claim was that Chicanos needed to reconnect with their indigenous roots to become whole, thus rediscovering their identity and language within the term “Chicano.” He also embarked on producing children’s literature (Colección Tula y Tonán: Textos Generativos, 1973; The Tula and Tonán collection: Generative texts) and a play (Dawn, 1974), and edited the journal Maize (1977–1983).

Alurista was a key figure in what became known as the Chicano Renaissance after 1965, playing a leadership role thanks in great part to his poetry about ethnic rediscovery, deeply inspired in Aztec and Mayan mythology and symbolism. He functioned much like a social conscience about Chicanos’ contemporary plight while finding a raison d’être in an indigenous past. His early experimentations with language (especially a mixture of Spanish, English, Náhuatl, Mayan, and a barrio slang called caló) directly contributed to a new form of poetry beginning in 1968, for which he was considered the first unofficial Chicano poet laureate.

Much of his reputation rests on his first book, Floricanto en Aztlán (1971), a definite landmark in Chicano poetry for challenging conventional monolingual modes. The outstanding collection of 100 poems represents an extended manifesto of the ills Chicanos have suffered, but he also resurrects numerous indigenous symbols, images, and metaphors that he considers life-sustaining.
In a search for self-discovery, he suggests reliving Amerindian cultural values as a way of avoiding the modern forms of alienation and dehumanization. The concept of “flower and song” serves as the apex of such a philosophical orientation, which in the Aztec world comprised the notion of “poetry” by combining a biological thing of beauty with the timelessness of a song. Floricanto en Aztlan became a fundamental benchmark for cultural nationalism within the context of Chicanos’ rebirth.

Alurista, as cultural leader, became highly solicited for poetry readings and literary festivals, such as Festival Flor y Canto (flower and song) and Festival Canto al Pueblo (song to the people). He then produced an important collection, El Ombligo de Aztlan: An Anthology of Chicano Student Poetry (coedited with Jorge González), followed by a series of individual works, including Nationchild Plumarajo, 1969–1972, an obscure, metaphor-laden expression that is both aggressively social and cosmic; Timespace Huracán (1976), an immersion in myth-building while propagating the orality of poetry; and A’Nque: Collected Works 1976–1979 (1979), a renewed push for challenging genres by collapsing various forms. His fascination with the infinite potential of language—calligraphy, rhythm, and sound—allows him to embark on highly stylized works of sometimes hermetic meanings, such as the new trendsetter Spik in Glyph? (1981), a collection of boundless creativity, extensive play on words, and a cutting-edge innovation that takes his social commitment to new heights. A groundbreaking work, the latter pushed Chicano poetry into a new phase of experimentation with performance, syllabic connotations, and echoes of orality. In 1972, his collection Return: Poems Collected and New reprinted Nationchild Plumarajo in its entirety as a way of reviving a long-lost indigenous expression, accompanied by image-driven haikus and reflections on his numerous international travels.

Alurista then returned to works based on multiple puns, lyricism, and literary intertextuality in Z Eros (1995) and Et Tú . . . Raza? (And you . . . our people?; 1996), with stylized alliterations and internal rhyme. These were followed by his anti-novel As Our Barrio Turns . . . Who the Yoke B On? (2000), a fictionalized testimonial about the Chicano Movement in San Diego, California, which becomes self-reflective and self-critical. In his last work, titled Tunaluna (Cactus pear-shaped moon; 2010), the poet attempts to find his language and message in the 20th century. Alurista’s creative spirit clearly marks a long-standing poetic tradition of seeking a new language as well as promoting a sense of creating a new world. (FAL)

See also BARRIO; SPANGLISH.
father’s work with the underground movement challenging the 1930–1961 dictatorship of General Rafael Leónidas Trujillo resulted in his being sought by the secret police, and the family was forced into exile. Alvarez has attributed her becoming a writer to coming to the United States without fully understanding English, an experience that she says forced her to pay close attention to language. Alvarez’s Dominican American identity has also heavily shaped her motivations for writing. In the essay “Entre Lucas y Juan Mejía,” Alvarez muses on the impact of her ethnic identity on the inter- and cross-cultural experiences, about which she writes: “I am a Dominican, hyphen, American. As a fiction writer, I find that the most exciting things happen in the realm of that hyphen—the place where two worlds collide and blend together.” Alvarez earned a BA from Middlebury College and a creative writing MFA from Syracuse University.

Alvarez is a prolific multigenre writer. She has published six novels, three nonfiction books, three collections of poetry, and numerous books for children and young adults. Her first novel, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* (1991), was selected as a Notable Book by the American Library Association (1992) and by the *New York Times Book Review* (1992). Four young sisters from the Dominican Republic are the focus of the novel, and their lives are narrated in a backward chronology, from their American adulthood in the beginning of the novel, to their lives as girls in the Dominican Republic of the 1950s. The novel uses bilingualism as a vehicle for exploring broader questions of acculturation and the complexities of being bicultural. The novel is autobiographical, and the main character, Yolanda, is modeled on Alvarez herself. Yolanda is also the protagonist of Alvarez’s third novel, *¡Yo!*.

*How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* reveals the sense of dual identity ethnic Americans feel as perpetual outsiders, exposing Yolanda’s reality as one in which she feels neither fully Dominican nor fully American, though she feels deeply connected to both of these aspects of her identity.

*In the Time of the Butterflies* (1994), Alvarez’s second novel and a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award in fiction, is a fictionalized account of the story of the Mirabal sisters, Dominican women who were active in the underground movement against the dictator Trujillo and were killed by Trujillo’s henchmen in 1960. The novel is named for the sisters’ code name, “Las Mariposas,” or “The Butterflies,” and Alvarez has explained that she wrote the novel in order to render the women, made larger-than-life heroes and revered by so many Dominicans, more fully human. Having come to the United States in 1960, and having a father who was involved in the underground movement, Alvarez had long been fascinated by the story of the sisters. In the early 1990s, Alvarez discovered that one of the Mirabal sisters was alive and living in the Dominican Republic, and she subsequently went to interview her. The inspiration for writing the novel emerged from that experience. As with many of Alvarez’s other novels, *In
*The Time of the Butterflies* is told by multiple narrators. The four sisters—Dédé, Minerva, Patria, and Maria Theresa—all narrate different sections of the novel, and their differing perspectives, personalities, and experiences come to life through Alvarez’s vivid characterization and bold narrative choices. *The Time of the Butterflies* was adapted as an award-winning film of the same name, a stage production of Repertorio Español, New York’s main Spanish-language theater company, as well as a dance theater production of Eveoke Dance Theater.

Alvarez’s other novels include *¡Yo!* (1997), *In the Name of Salomé* (2000), and *Saving the World* (2006). The concerns explored in Alvarez’s novels are varied, but include identity, specifically the multiple identities of Latinos/as and bilingualism, women’s strength and agency, and history. Alvarez’s own reflections best encapsulate the threads that run through her work. Describing her approach to writing about history and identity in her novel *In the Name of Salomé*, Alvarez writes: “The Salomé and Camila you will find in these pages are fictional characters based on historical figures, but they are re-created in light of questions that we can only answer, as they did, with our own lives: Who are we as a people? What is a patria? How do we serve? Is love stronger than anything else in the world?”

In addition to her novels for adult readers, Alvarez has written multiple volumes of nonfiction, poetry, and children’s books. Her book *Once upon a Quinceañera: Coming of Age in the USA* was selected as a 2007 finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. It explores the cultural significance and history of the Latina/o tradition of the *quinceañera*, a coming-of-age celebration for girls that marks their symbolic entry into womanhood. Her numerous children’s books explore family, Latino/a and Dominican American cultures, and contemporary social issues. Her book *Before We Were Free* (2002), about a girl growing up under the dictatorship in the Dominican Republic, won a number of awards, including the American Library Association’s Pura Belpré Award (2003) for an outstanding work of literature for children and youth that portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience, and an Américas Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature from The Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (2002).

Alvarez’s substantial recognition and numerous honors also include the F. Scott Fitzgerald Award for Outstanding Achievement in American Literature from Montgomery College (2009) and the Hispanic Heritage Award in Literature (2002). She was named Woman of the Year by *Latina Magazine* in 2000 and has been granted several honorary doctorates from institutions such as the University of Vermont, Union College, and the City University of New York.
ANAYA, RUDOLFO A. (1937–). Novelist, short story writer, poet, playwright, children’s literature writer, editor, educator. Rudolfo Anaya was born in the small village of Pastura in northeastern New Mexico and raised in nearby Santa Rosa. It is these surroundings and the memories, images, and myths of his childhood there that brought Anaya to the limelight of Chicano letters in 1972 with the publication of his celebrated novel Bless Me, Ultima. During his preadolescent years, the Anaya family moved to the city of Albuquerque, where Rudolfo attended Albuquerque High School, graduating in 1956, and the University of New Mexico, from which he received a BA and an MA in English in 1963 and 1968, respectively, and an additional MA in guidance and counseling in 1972. It is during these preliminary years of his academic career that Anaya began to nurture the narrative voice that later gave light to his New Mexico trilogy Bless Me, Ultima (1972), Heart of Aztlán (1975), and Tortuga (1979), all of which are somewhat autobiographical and are geographically set in New Mexico, develop their plots around young male protagonists who are themselves sensitively nurtured and mentored by bigger-than-life shamanic figures and mentors, and use symbols related to the natural world and accentuate the need for balance and harmony with the environment.

In addition to this New Mexican trilogy that promotes his New Mexican heritage, Anaya also embraces the Chicano pre-Columbian legacy via his two short novellas, The Legend of La Llorona (1985) and Lord of the Dawn: Legend of Quetzalcóatl (1987), the first of which narrates the tragic story of la llorona, the “weeping woman” of Chicano folklore, and merges her story with that of La Malinche or Doña Marina, the Indian interpreter and lover of Hernán Cortés during the Spanish Conquest of Tenochtitlán. The latter novella explores the legendary figure and cosmology of Quetzalcóatl or “Feathered Serpent,” the Mesoamerican deity who was believed to have brought knowledge, wisdom, and art to humanity.

During the decade of the 1990s, and into the new millennium, Anaya wrote in the detective fiction genre, first Albuquerque (1992), then a cycle of four Sonny Baca mystery novels—Zia Summer (1995), Rio Grande Fall (1996), Shaman Winter (1999), and Jémez Spring (2005)—in which private detective and Chicano crime fighter Sonny Baca and the forces of Good
battle el brujo Raven and other forces of evil on the New Mexican landscape. During this decade, Anaya also published *Jalamanta: A Message from the Desert* (1996), a contemporary allegory set in and around the fictional “Seventh City of the Fifth Sun,” whose essential message promotes universal fellowship, enlightenment, and harmony with nature.

Anaya continues the detective genre with *Curse of the Chupacabra* (2006) and *Chupacabra and Roswell UFO* (2008), wherein he introduces sleuth heroine Professor Rosa Medina, a folklorist teaching at a southern California state university. As she investigates the folklore of the chupacabra (a blood-sucking monster rumored to inhabit Mexico and the U.S. Southwest), the protagonist engages in a series of mysterious events that bring her face to face with the chupacabra and other powers of evil. In both novels, the presence of the chupacabra is a metaphor for those forces that enslave and suck the life force out of our Chicano youth.

In *Randy López Goes Home: A Novel* (2011), Anaya presents the theme of man’s quest for meaning as the novel’s protagonist returns to Agua Bendita, his place of birth, to reconnect with his past and cultural heritage after many years of living in the Anglo world. In his latest novel, *The Old Man’s Love Story* (2013), Anaya addresses the issues of aging and death, as he narrates the story of an old man who loses his wife, his lifelong companion, to old age. The aging protagonist struggles to comprehend and cope with the emptiness she leaves in his life. Early in the story the narrator describes the old man’s grief: “An anguish deep in his soul sprouted and set loose suffocating tentacles. He had not cried since childhood, but now he cried. The loss he felt wracked his days and nights. He had entered a time of grieving, not knowing if it had an end” (5). Anaya’s latest novel, *The Sorrows of Young Alfonso* (2015), is a fictional memoir that charts the life journey of "Alfonso from childhood through his education and evolution as a writer.

The recipient of many awards and honors for his literary prowess, Anaya received the second Premio Quinto Sol in 1972 for Bless Me, Ultima. He was also awarded the American Book Award by the Before Columbus Foundation in 1980 for Tortuga. In 1984, he received the distinguished Award for Achievement in Chicano Literature from the Hispanic Caucus of the National Council of Teachers of English. He was also presented with the Mexican Medal of Friendship from the Mexican Consulate (1986) and the Western Literature Association’s Distinguished Achievement Award (1997). In addition, his novel Albuquerque won the PEN Center West Award for Fiction in 1992, and in 2001 Anaya was presented with the National Medal of Arts for literature by President George W. Bush.

Rudolfo A. Anaya currently resides in Albuquerque, New Mexico, and is professor emeritus of English at the University of New Mexico. (DWU)

See also CHICANO DETECTIVE FICTION.

ANZALDÚA, GLORIA E. (1942–2004). Cultural theorist, writer, editor, educator. Gloria E. Anzaldúa was born in South Texas’s Rio Grande Valley to sharecropper parents, the eldest daughter in her family, and began to work in the fields with her family at the age of 11. When she was 14 her father died, and she continued to work in the fields throughout high school and college in order to provide for her family. She earned a BA in English, art, and secondary education from Pan American University in 1969 and an MA in English and education from the University of Texas. At the time of her death from diabetes complications in 2004, she was completing a doctoral dissertation at the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Anzaldúa’s publications were diverse in scope, including autobiographical narratives, poetry, children’s literature, edited collections, and anthologies, as well as theory. In 1981, she coedited This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color with Cherríe Moraga. The anthology was foundational within the burgeoning movement of “U.S. Third World feminism” and was grounded in a transformative vision of cross-racial and cross-ethnic women’s coalition building that changed the face of feminism within academia and beyond. Anzaldúa’s first major publication, Bridge was an embodiment of what would be some of the major political and social commitments of her life—namely, the vision of what she famously termed “El Mundo Zurdo (the Left-Handed World)” that sought to embrace and liberate “Third World women, lesbians, feminists, and feminist-oriented men of all colors.”

Anzaldúa is perhaps best known, however, for her book Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza, published in 1987. The book combines autobiographical and theoretical prose with poetry and is written in what she called “the language of the Borderlands” and “Chicano Spanish,” combining a number of languages and dialects, including English, standard Spanish, Tex-
Mex, and Náhuatl. Anzaldúa’s notion of the “borderlands” encompassed both the material realities of the U.S.–Mexican border and a metaphorical “borderlands,” which she conceptualized as a psychological liminality born from the experience of embodying mestiza and/or queer identities. The book was also significant for the way it engaged questions of spirituality, challenging the patriarchal legacies of Catholicism and Aztec-Mexica religion while celebrating female Aztec deities like Coatlicue, “Lady of the Serpent Skirt,” who, she observed, “contained and balanced the dualities of male and female, light and dark, life and death” (Borderlands, 54). Both the Utne Reader and the Hungry Mind Review named Borderlands/La Frontera one of the 100 Best Books of the Century.

In addition to her most well-known texts, Anzaldúa also edited the anthologies Making Face, Making Soul/Haciendo Caras: Creative and Critical Perspectives by Feminists of Color (1990) and this bridge we call home: radical visions for transformation (2002) (coedited with AnaLouise Keating). In collaboration with AnaLouise Keating, she published Interviews/Entrevistas in 2000, and Anzaldúa also authored two illustrated children’s books: Friends from the Other Side/Amigos del otro lado (1993) and Prietita and the Ghost Woman/Prietita y la Llorona (1995).

Anzaldúa’s work impacted a number of scholarly fields, contributing significantly to women’s studies, Chicano/a-Latino/a and ethnic studies, queer studies, and literary studies, among others. Her substantial contributions to the field of American studies were honored with an American Studies Association Lifetime Achievement Award in 2001. Her numerous awards also include the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award, the Lambda Lesbian Small Book Press Award, a National Endowment for the Arts Fiction award, the Sappho Award of Distinction, and the Lesbian Rights Award. After her death in 2004, a collection of scholars, activists, and artists created the Society for the Study of Gloria Anzaldúa, a group that has begun to hold an annual international conference honoring Anzaldúa’s intellectual and cultural legacies and seeking to further her vision and her work. (MJV)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

ARIAS, RONALD FRANCIS (1941–). Novelist, essayist, journalist, short story writer. Arias was born in Los Angeles, California, on 30 November 1941. Because his stepfather was in the U.S. Army, the family traveled extensively throughout the United States and Europe, providing Arias with unique opportunities to experience a variety of cultures and countries. He later worked as a volunteer in the Peace Corps in Perú, further enhancing his contact with Latin America’s social classes and some of its writers, such as Jorge Luis Borges, Gabriel García Márquez, Juan Rulfo, Carlos Fuentes, and others. In addition, his voracious reading of European and American writ-
Goethe, Miguel de Cervantes, William Faulkner, and Ernest Hemingway—directly helped instill in his writings a cosmopolitan bent uncommon for Chicanos of his generation. He joined the Chicano literary circles after the Chicano Renaissance was in full swing, with his delightful and unforgettable novel *The Road to Tamazunchale* (1975), as part of what critic Francisco A. Lomeli termed the Isolated Generation, well after the Renaissance period of 1965. Instead, Arias represents an individual case of forging his own writing style, thanks to many international influences and his eclectic tendencies.

Arias’s literary production cannot be described as prolific because he focuses more on precise character development, fanciful plots, and elements of magical realism. His only novel, *The Road to Tamazunchale*, is a light-hearted examination of an old man who is literally on his deathbed but who defies death through his imaginary wanderings. The reigning ambiguity throughout the story, whether Don Fausto is more dead than alive, leads to a rich text of philosophical overtones with a Mexican view of death. Highly symbolic and technically captivating, the novel expounds and reifies the relationship between the real and the magical through an infinite number of examples. Objects are constantly altered from their original function, reminding us of how Don Quixote did not perceive objects as they were but as he wished them to be. Ultimately, the novel offers a tongue-in-cheek reading of a serious subject while leaving the reader guessing. *The Road to Tamazunchale* is without a doubt one of the most enjoyable novels in Chicano literature, while cultivating intertextuality as a device to entice readers to make international connections among the readings.

Arias also stands out as a distinguished short story writer in terms of quality, although again, the stories are limited in number. He usually concentrates on a humorous situation, as in “The Interview”; on elements of the absurd, as in “Stoop Labor”; on experimentation with narrative sequence and plot shifts; or on odd depictions of an old trickster via magical realism or unexplained phenomena, as in “El mago” (The magician). Other stories develop the last category further by focusing on the uncommon and zany, such as “The Castle” and “Chinches” (bedbugs).

With his journalistic training, Arias has also written a testimonial (*Five Against the Sea: A True Story of Survival*, 1989) and a memoir (*Moving Target: A Memoir of Pursuit*, 2003), which deals with general interest topics. But his place in Chicano literature is well established thanks to his masterpiece *The Road to Tamazunchale*. (FAL)
through its varied formats: Piñata Books, which offers works for children and young adults; the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage Project; and the publication of contemporary authors. The press also houses the largest database of literary production by Latinos from colonial times through the present. (FAL)

AZTLÁN, CONCEPT OF. According to Aztec mythology, Aztlán was the place whence the Mexica or Aztecs came, presumably from northern Mexico, known as the “place of seven caves.” The Aztecs wandered south from there to find a specific location defined by their god, Huitzilopochtli. They sought a place where an eagle perched on a cactus would be devouring a serpent in the middle of a lake. Here they were destined to construct their city of Tenochtitlán in order to found their empire. However, in 1968 the poet Alurista proposed that Aztlán was a representation of the American Southwest, the territories that had been taken by the United States as a result of the Mexican–American War (1846–1848). He defined it as the mythic homeland or cultural space for Chicanos. It shortly became a rallying symbol of cultural nationalism for the Chicano Movement starting in the late 1960s, as a form of demanding a rightful place within American culture. Alurista proposed the concept as a means to invoke Chicanos’ indigenous past with the objective of reconnecting with what he considered their authentic self.

The term has inspired various notions about its geographical location because the Aztec myth did not exactly specify where it was. Luis Leal has proposed that it may also be within the heart, where a sense of identity emerges. The term has also spawned a widespread trend of creativity in book titles (e.g., Heart of Aztlán by Rudolfo Anaya and Peregrinos de Aztlán by Miguel Méndez), journals (Aztlán: Chicano Journal of the Social Sciences and the Arts), and other critical collections (Aztlán and Mexico: Perfiles literarios e históricos by Luis Leal [Aztlán and Mexico: Literary and historical profiles] and Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland by Rudolfo Anaya and Francisco Lomelí). (FAL)
BACA, JIMMY SANTIAGO (1952–). Poet, novelist, essayist, screenplay writer, memoirist, short story writer, film producer. Born on 2 January 1952 in Santa Fe, New Mexico, to an Apache father and Chicana mother, Jimmy Santiago Baca was abandoned at an early age and sent to live with a grandparent. He was then shuttled between relatives and orphanages. By the time he was age five, his parents had died; he was sent to St. Anthony’s Home for Boys in Albuquerque and later was in and out of detention centers in New Mexico and Arizona, until he became a permanent street child out of control. Such instability impacted his self-esteem, and he was arrested for possession of a controlled substance with the intent to distribute. For six years, he was locked up in federal prison in Florence, Arizona, where he was forced to grow up and where he overcame his illiteracy. Facing an existential pit, he found ways to reinvent himself by getting his general equivalency diploma (GED) and learning the power of language and, thanks to a fellow inmate, he submitted pieces to the poetry magazine Mother Jones, edited by Denise Levertov.

Baca discovered the magic of poetry, developing a passion for the resonance of each word. Suddenly his world acquired significance, and his phoenix-like trajectory from hell provided him with a new compass of regeneration, ultimately becoming a masterful word virtuoso. He represents a unique case of personal transformation from a rogue—an antisocial bato loco (a street-smart dude)—to a literary prodigy. He, along with Juan Felipe Herrera, is one of the more outstanding Chicano poets, whose breadth and range are unprecedented for their ability to capture situations with unparalleled precision and verve. The perfection of his language usage is noteworthy and unforgettable for his uncanny gift to express new truths.

Baca has garnered almost every major poetry award, grant, or fellowship. In 1987, he was awarded the National Endowment for the Humanities Grant; in 1988 the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award; in 1989 the International Hispanic Heritage Award, the Berkeley Regents Award, the Pushcart Prize, the Southwest Book Award, the Champion of the International Poetry Slam, and the International Award for his memoir A Place to Stand;
and in 1990 the Wallace Stevens Fellowship at Yale University and the Ludwig Vogelstein Award. These are clearly the credentials of an exceptional writer within the national literary scene.

He is a voice to reckon with because his language has bearing and meaning. His metaphors tend to avoid the abstract and concentrate on concrete images from actual experience with thoughts and feelings turned into visual words. Baca is rooted in the landscape of his mestizo people, a Nerudian desert genius from the American Southwest who evokes echoes of shared tragedies and invokes redemption and deliverance. He dwells on paradoxes and contradictions by turning meaning in language inside out.


His poetry both masks hurt and unveils the secrets of hushed voices and, by extension, of his Hispanic people from marginal places of New Mexico, where the dust covers layers of family history. He embraces his people to remake connections with a past he never really had. Nostalgia and melancholy ooze from his verses while he re-creates what could have been. In the process, he discovers his culture, his identity, and his place in the world as a moving window that captures the petite histoire of a quiet existence he never got to enjoy until his poetry unlocked that treasure chest, a Pandora’s box of renewed possibilities to refashion a Jimmy Santiago Baca who never had the opportunity to unleash his demons. Much of his literature is a pursuit of unbridled freedom and exploration to rebuild his self-image out of the noth-
ingness that plagued him for so long, thus now creating a new persona. One can sense his solitary confinements, his forced and voluntary solitudes, his self-destruction, his self-doubts and abnegations, his penitential hardships, the angst he carried like a cross.

His first five books (Jimmy Santiago Baca, Swords of Darkness, Immigrants in Our Own Land, What’s Happening, and Poems Taken from My Yard) all directly reflect the prison experience, somewhere between self-loathing and shedding his troubled past while growing wings of a new selfhood. He addresses solitude, confusion, “timeless days,” a “love-freedom,” and enclosed walls that he transcends with his imagination. Beyond this first stage, he became more meditative and daring on the subjects he presented, busy constructing both a past and present. He also began to appreciate the strands of a cultural fabric that gave him a social context beyond his immediate family. For the first time, he started sensing that he belonged to a larger cause of marginalized people who sought redemption. His angry poetic voice is now seen channeled into something more tender and redemptive, thus claiming victory for overcoming a “dark side” that made him an alien to himself. His experiences are turned into life lessons—a rebirth or what he calls “the freedom of a new beginning”—in Martin and Meditations on the South Valley and Black Mesa Poems, in which areas around Albuquerque become the foundation of what he could have been by traversing the landscape that speaks to him. In Set This Book on Fire! he revisits some of his old obsessions to declare that he is now positioned “where dream fragments smolder.”

Baca devotes a considerable part of his literature to exploring nuances in language, much like a sculptor defines forms. In Healing Earthquakes, he realizes he has much to mend and repair while subjecting himself to existential therapy to make up for lost time. His voice becomes more critical on social issues in such works as C-Train (Dream Boy’s Story) and Thirteen Mexicans: Poems by Jimmy Santiago Baca, marking a key moment when the “I” more readily shares his themes with a “we.” In the seasonal poems of Spring Poems along the Río Grande and Winter Poems along the Río Grande, he unveils a renewed spirituality unlike other stages of his writings, in which his indigeneity soothes his nerves. As a parent addressing his children, in Breaking Bread with the Darkness: The Esai Poems, Book 1 and Breaking Bread with the Darkness: The Lucía Poems, Book 2, Baca strives to be an example for his children to find their own path, not from where he originates but from what he has built: a foundation of hope.

His prose is also distinctive, particularly because poetic language permeates every sentence. He does not overwrite, openly examining his soul at every turn. This is made poignantly clear in his memoir A Place to Stand: The Making of a Poet and his self-portrait Working in the Dark: Reflections of a Poet of the Barrio, in which he provides brutally candid depictions of his
inner turmoil and restlessness. A dual process can be seen: his creation of a poetic voice and how being a poet assisted in remaking himself. He thus crafts a confident voice of authority on hardship, stigmatization, and alienation. He shows how his days of darkness forced him to seek out light and a new transformation of self: both destiny and purpose. He states more than once that he “inherited the darkness” and that he has turned it into a glimmer of hope and dreams. He reiterates his struggles for survival against all odds; he was probably destined for an early death or annihilation. His salvation, then, has been language and the oracular qualities he could seize and assimilate. In effect, these works illustrate how his Chicano story, much like *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, represents the triumph of the spirit.

With his first novel, *A Glass of Water*, Baca does not disappoint, for once again he offers a multilayered story, of two migrant brothers who confront infinite obstacles in their pursuit of survival. The novel condenses many of the themes found in other immigration novels, except that his is action-packed and filled with every conceivable experience over a period of one calendar year: extended intrigue, injustice, violence, romance, epiphanies, yearning, and wondering if their dreams of progress are worth it.

Jimmy Santiago Baca stands out as an astonishingly fresh poetic voice, a tour de force who writes with his bare knuckles and an open heart, including in his screenplays *Blood In, Blood Out* and *A Place to Stand*. The sincerity of retelling his life experiences is unlike other self-affirmations; we come to admire the depth of his recovery and how far his spirit has learned to soar without apologies. (FAL)

**BARRIO.** Barrio in Spanish literally refers to a neighborhood, but outsiders tend to perceive it as a ghetto, a downtrodden and depressed inner-city district or an imprecise synonym for slum. For Latinos, it can be both a positive, even romanticized, place of community and traditions or a negative zone of socioeconomic tensions. Either way, it can be viewed as a place of fulfilled survival or a place where survival is a challenge. Identity plays an important part in the kind of experience the barrio dweller may have: it can define the person or challenge him or her to escape it. The barrio has played a prominent role in the maturation process of Chican@s, while others see its influence as too harsh and devastating due to gang violence, drugs, unemployment, forced segregation, and poor housing conditions. According to Cordelia Candelaria in *Encyclopedia of Latino Popular Culture*, “In . . . cities, the term *barrio* has come to designate a lower-income, mostly immigrant, and geographically bounded community to most of the town’s residents”; that is, they can be centers of discrimination, racial hostility, and instability.
In literature, Chicanos have alluded to the barrio in a variety of ways: as an obsession, as hellish, as a source of nostalgia, as a place to be reckoned with, as a matrix of our urban experience, as the origins of social marginalization, and as a locus where we learn to negotiate the modern world with the past. Writers such as Alurista, Ricardo Sánchez, Abelardo “Lalo” Delgado, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, Alejandro Morales, Luis Rodríguez, Luis Valdez, Yxta Maya Murray, and Helena María Viramontes have developed different perspectives and representations of the barrio. In most cases, the attitude is one of contradiction or dichotomy, effectively a love and hate relationship with what the barrio is and how it affects its inhabitants. The range is broad and intense and highly subjective, and it requires reconciliation in one form or another. Chicanos do not deal with the barrio in a dispassionate manner because it will swallow them, push them out, or simply challenge them to survive. In the period of the Chicano Movement, talking about the barrio tended to elicit strong opinions and impressions, often serving as a central metaphor of the literature. (FAL)

BARRIO, RAYMOND (1921–). Novelist, essayist, visual artist, playwright. Raymond Barrio was born in West Orange, New Jersey, on 27 August 1921, of Spanish parents who immigrated to New Jersey. Barrio subsequently moved to California in 1936 and married Yolanda Sánchez from Mexico in 1957. Despite being an accomplished visual artist and lecturer on the subject at numerous universities and colleges, his art books, *Experiments in Modern Art* (1968), *Art Seen* (1968), and *Mexico’s Art and Chicano Artists* (1975), are little-known treatments and explanations of modern forms of art. They nonetheless illustrate his deep vocation for the arts in a frank, unpretentious way that later transferred well into his best-known novel, *The Plum Plum Pickers* (1969), which brought him considerable distinction.

In the absence of verified novels by Chican@s up to that point—which was later proven inaccurate—some critics baptized this novel as “the first Chicano novel.” Clearly, it emerged out of the tumultuous 1960s along with the labor strikes led by César Chávez and the degrading working conditions of migrants and other field laborers. As a documentary novel, it presents the regrettable situation in which conditions have not improved, thus setting the stage for a scathing indictment of an economic system, and those who uphold it, that exploits and destroys a vulnerable sector of society. A number of aspects are salient in this work: the journalistic techniques of incorporating reports and accounts to enhance its verisimilitude, its deeply sardonic tone toward the agents of exploitation, the mockery of misusing technology for pure profit at the expense of farmworkers’ labor, and the rich and nuanced symbolic constitution of the narrative. Even though the novel is purported to be an overt novel of protest, its subtleties defy what some might consider its propagandistic style. If it is a more modern Chicano *Grapes of Wrath*, it goes
beyond depicting a simplistic social realism through its representation of dreams, multidimensional characters, insistence on dawn and dusk as a portrayal of a vicious cycle, and clever style of infinite puns and play on words. In other words, the novel was originally read as a counter text to political-economic ideologies of exploitation, but it can also be read as a story of affirmation and redemption, thanks to Lupe and his immediate family members, who slowly but affirmatively begin to rebel against their surroundings, called Western Grande Compound, a modern form of a medieval fortress of feudalism. The novel therefore acquires redeeming qualities that it did not appear to have back in the rebellious 1960s and 1970s.

Barrio has also written one sarcastic play (The Devil’s Apple Corps: A Trauma in Four Acts, 1976), on the reclusive billionaire Howard Hughes; other overt critiques of political conditions in 1985 (A Political Portfolio); and an esoteric piece titled Barrio’s Estuary (1981). Despite some of these loose and relatively unknown works, Raymond Barrio holds a special place within Chicano fiction for his daring prose and techniques while echoing the older proletarian literature of the 1930s and 1940s. (FAL)

BERNAL, VICENTE J. (1888–1915). Poet. Originally from Costilla, New Mexico, Bernal was born on 16 December 1888. He lived in Colorado for about three years. He died at the young age of 26, on 28 April 1915, from a brain hemorrhage, in Dubuque, Iowa, where he was attending Dubuque German College and Academy (now University of Dubuque). As part of a generation of Hispanic poets at the turn of the century who were educated under Presbyterian tutelage, he too made the transition from Spanish to English verses. Given his premature death, his brother Luis E. Bernal and professor Robert N. McLean from his college gathered his poetry, prose, and oratorical pieces into a collection that they published posthumously in 1916, under the title Las primicias, meaning “first fruits.”

Bernal possessed a unique sensibility for literature, language, oratory, and translations. Aside from writing Dubuque College’s alma mater, he delved into philosophy, religion, classical themes, nature, and responses to Lord Alfred Tennyson, Omar Khayyam, and Rubén Darío. Much of his poetry is predictably rhymed, with the playful eloquence of a young man exploring topics of love, friendship, the twists of life, and an impending death that would appear to foreshadow his own. On the other hand, his poetry in Spanish tends to be more popular in its themes, exhibiting considerable humor and mischievousness. Again, he mentions the fleeting nature of life and how death seems to rule. His idealism is represented by the paradox of a young maiden living in a golden cage—an allusion to Rubén Darío. He also engages Pedro Calderón de la Barca’s Life Is but a Dream by suggesting that a dream must be well measured; otherwise, it turns into a nonsensical aspiration. He includes some mention of Hispanic cultural practices in his writings in Span-
ish, while he indulges in universality in those written in English. His work represents a young man’s exploration of a burgeoning sensitivity that was cut short by his early death. (FAL)

BLANCO, RICHARD (1968–). Poet, autobiographer. Blanco was born in Madrid, Spain, to Cuban-exile parents who migrated to the United States 45 days after his birth. Reflecting on the significance of his birth and early migration, the biography on Blanco’s website reads: “Only a few weeks old, Blanco already belonged to three countries, a foreshadowing of the concerns of place and belonging that would shape his life and work.” Blanco was raised in the Cuban-exile community of Miami, Florida, and earned a bachelor’s degree in engineering from Florida International University, where he went on to earn an MFA in creative writing.

Blanco has published several books of poetry and two memoirs. His first book, City of a Hundred Fires (1998), won the Agnes Lynch Starrett Poetry Prize from the University of Pittsburgh Press. The title of the book is from a translation of “Cienfuegos,” the name of the city in Cuba from which his parents and family originate. In the book, Blanco evokes his quest for and discovery of the meaning of his Cuban American identity, recalling his childhood growing up in Miami. The poems vividly recount stories of Blanco’s coming-of-age, as well as travels in Cuba, exploring nostalgia and the complex nature of home for Cuban Americans. Blanco’s second book, Directions to the Beach of the Dead (2005), won the PEN/American Beyond Margins Award and engages with some of the themes of his earlier work, namely the nature of home, cultural identity, and the importance of place. However, the poems in the second collection explore these concerns within the context of global travel. Looking for the Gulf Motel (2012) won the Tom Gunn Award, the Maine Literary Award, and the Paterson Prize. Its themes and concerns align with those established in his first two books, but significantly, the poems also explore his gender and sexual identities and how those intersect with his identity as a Cuban American.

Despite his considerable success as a published poet, Blanco was not well known before becoming the fifth inaugural poet, commissioned by President Barack Obama to write a poem for the occasion of his inauguration in the second term of his presidency in 2013. Blanco followed previous inaugural poets Robert Frost, Maya Angelou, Miller Williams, and Elizabeth Alexander in the honor. Blanco was the first Latino, first immigrant, first gay writer, and youngest ever inaugural poet—he was 44 at the time of the inauguration. His inaugural poem, “One Today,” is a sweeping and complex portrait of a heterogeneous, multicultural United States, capturing its landscape and its people in ways that are celebratory, somber, and in short, bittersweet. Near the end of 2013, Blanco published a short memoir, For All
of Us, One Today: An Inaugural Poet’s Journey, about the experience of being the inaugural poet and his reflections on the significance of the experience.

Blanco published the memoir The Prince of Los Cocuyos in 2015. This memoir focuses on his life as a child and young man and elaborates on the topics explored by Blanco in his poetry: his coming-of-age, growing up in Miami, his identity as a Cuban American, and the burgeoning of his sexuality. The narrative comes alive in vibrant characterizations of his family and of Miami as a place, and is tender, vulnerable, and humorous.

Blanco’s recognition includes an honorary doctorate from Macalester College and numerous fellowships, including the Woodrow Wilson Visiting Fellowship, a Florida Artist Fellowship, and a Bread Loaf Fellowship. He has taught at Central Connecticut State University, Georgetown University, and American University. For many years, he maintained an active and successful dual career as an engineer and poet, designing numerous town revitalization projects while he completed his first three books of poetry. He lives in Bethel, Maine. (MJV)

See also GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE.

BORDERLANDS. The term “borderlands” generally refers to the southern border of the United States adjacent to northern Mexico. Gloria Anzaldúa, in her Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987), gave it new meaning by theorizing the concept as a cultural battleground of difference between two unique cultures, two genders, and two lifestyles (heterosexual and homosexual). This new conceptualization allows us to more fully comprehend its hybridity and its conflictive nature in grappling with a new identity, particularly for Chicanas. (FAL)

BRACERO. Known as a legally hired workhand from Mexico, the bracero officially operated under the auspices of the Bracero Program, which was in operation from 1942 to 1964, coinciding with the need for labor during and shortly after World War II and into the period of economic prosperity in the United States. Many were first hired to work in the railroad industry in the Midwest, and they were even more in demand in the agricultural fields throughout the American Southwest. (FAL)

BRITO, ARISTEO (1942–). Novelist, poet, short story writer, professor, real estate broker. Born on 20 October 1942 in Ojinaga, Chihuahua, Aristeo Brito grew up across the border in Presidio, Texas. His parents left Chihuahua during the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) to settle in the border region. Brito worked the fields as a farmworker as a young man, when his father was a sharecropper. He has noted that his hometown is one of the
hottest towns in the United States, or what he called a “Devil’s hole.” He received his BA in English in 1965 from Sul Ross State University in Alpine, Texas, eventually continuing for an MA and a PhD in Spanish literature from the University of Arizona in 1970 and 1978, respectively. He has taught at Pima Community College in Tucson.

Brito contributed to the Chicano literary scene in the mid-1970s with two books, mainly in Spanish: Cuentos i poemas (Short stories and poems; 1974) and El diablo en Texas (1976). He never published again. His first work, a collection of eight short stories and 17 poems, addresses a number of issues that sometimes hint at the philosophy of cultural nationalism that was in vogue at that time. The short stories in part serve as a preamble for his later novel by examining a wide array of topics that hint at the soul of an unknown place, which eventually surfaces as Presidio, precisely the same location of his border novel. His first collection was meant as an exercise in creative writing, focusing on a form of hazing in “Pedro el tragaplumas” (Peter, the pens swallower); a dialogue between a father and son about going to war in “Delito”; an unexpected dead child in the back seat of a car in “The Arrival”; and a commentary on what the border means to his grandmother in “Recuerdo.” His poetry is strongly philosophical in dealing with religiosity; the significance of Aztlán, the Chicano mythic homeland; identity; and inner turmoil; and includes a lyrical piece on disenchantment with love.

But Brito’s novel El diablo en Texas is his major work, involving intricate experimentations in style and ambience, a work that could easily fit within the literary boom of Latin America during the 1960s and 1970s. He presents the Ojinaga-Presidio connection as a two-headed town divided by the Rio Grande, a symbol of the bitter divisions between Anglos and Chicanos throughout history. The novel is both mythic and historic, focusing on three periods—Presidio in 1883, 1942, and 1970—which trace the internal tensions of a town with irreconcilable differences. Narrative fragmentation prevails to show the social disintegration caused in great part by Ben Lynch, the Anglo landowner who manipulates the townspeople. The work reads much like Juan Rulfo’s Pedro Páramo and somewhat like Gabriel García Márquez’s Cien años de soledad, in that death reigns and repressed voices speak in a vacuum. Slowly, the novel acquires phantasmagoric qualities, because most characters are like errant souls lamenting their exploitation. Since the work was written originally in Spanish, the insinuation is that language becomes a tool of rebellion to give the people their own voice. This begins to occur in the second section, titled “1942.” There is a scene in which an unborn fetus is preparing to bring some form of salvation as a messiah, underscoring some of the magical realistic elements. From here, the narrative becomes a litany of internal monologues, infinite dialogues, flashbacks, echoes, and ruminations that accumulate to produce the sense of a social crescendo about a town that critically needs redemption from oppressive
forces. Thus, the central symbol of the devil marks the destructive element of evil that has to be defeated in order for the town to regain a sense of its original self. The last section, labeled “1970” and consisting of only three pages, is part of an epiphany and a new consciousness to remove “the crown of thorns” placed on Presidio; notice the many biblical allusions. Such commentary coincides with Aristeo Brito’s involvement in the Chicano Movement for the sake of real social change, a realization he reached upon returning to his hometown during his graduate student days.

*El diablo en Texas* was translated into English by David William Foster and republished in a bilingual edition with the title *The Devil in Texas/El diablo en Texas* (1990). The new publication garnered the Western States Book Award that same year. Brito is an important voice in Chicano literature, for he combined social commitment with artistry in his novel at a key historical juncture. (FAL)

**BROWN BERETS.** This group of Chican@ militants began as a group of high school students in East Los Angeles who saw inequities around them in the classroom, their communities, housing, work, and other areas. They organized in 1966 as the Young Chicanos for Community Action (YCCA) and later started wearing brown berets, from which their name was officially derived in September 1968. They were a paramilitary group who dressed in khaki pants and shirts along with their brown berets, consequently seeing their principal function being to complement and work with any Chicano Movement activities by providing protection, security, and assistance. They saw themselves as politically motivated within what they termed the Third Movement of Liberation. During the height of the Chicano Movement between 1968 and 1975, they supported ethnic community groups who protested against police brutality and advocated for educational equality, improved health care, job opportunities, and greater political representation. As a support group for others, they contributed to the unity of communities and resistance to unfair practices. They also marched against the Vietnam War because of the unfair representation of minorities in the infantry. The Brown Berets still exist, and many of their concerns are much the same, but their visibility has diminished considerably. (FAL)

**BURCIAGA, JOSÉ ANTONIO (1940–1996).** Poet, essayist, humorist, satirist, graphic artist, muralist. Born and raised in the border city of El Paso, Texas, José Antonio Burciaga was the son of a synagogue custodian and schoolteacher. José Antonio was first exposed to literature at an early age, when the Burciaga family lived in the basement apartment of the synagogue where his father worked as a caretaker, and where his schoolteacher mother read to him and shared traditional stories with him. As José Antonio matured,
one of his favorite pastimes was reading biographies and the local newspapers. After completing high school, Burciaga joined the U.S. Air Force and spent three years in Zaragoza, Spain, where he was introduced to Spanish literature, particularly to the writings of Federico García Lorca. After returning to the United States and completing his military service, José Antonio enrolled in the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP), where he earned a degree in fine arts in 1968.

After graduating from the university, Burciaga’s first job as an illustrator and graphic artist for the army took him to the community of Mineral Wells, Texas, where he began writing poetry and nonfiction journalism on a regular basis. However, it was not until after he married (Cecilia Preciado) and moved to California in 1974 that he began to publish his writings in Chicano journals (Mango, Revista Chicano-Riqueña, Grito del Sol, among others) and local newspapers such as the San José Mercury News.

While living in Menlo Park, California, Burciaga established Diseños Literarios, the publishing house through which he copublished his first collection of poems, Restless Serpents (1976), in a single volume with Bernice Zamora. Written in Spanish or English, and sometimes code switched in a combination thereof, Burciaga’s portion of the collection comprises 29 poems and short prose pieces, many of which deal with social and political issues of the time and are powered by a biting sense of irony and satire. As the volume was published in 1976, the bicentennial of U.S. independence, Burciaga focused much of his condemnation on the bicentennial celebration. These poems contrast and compare the fervor of the 1776 revolutionary ideals of freedom and democracy with the 1976 reality of oppression and discrimination experienced by many Chicanos in the United States. The poems and prose pieces are complemented by witty illustrations, also crafted by the author.

In 1992, Burciaga published a second collection of poetry and illustrations, Undocumented Love/Amor Indocumentado: A Personal Anthology of Poetry, for which he was granted the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. Like the previous collection, some of the poems of Undocumented Love are composed in Spanish, others in English, and others bilingually with frequent insertions of caló, an exclusively Chicano dialect, giving the poetry a unique sense of orality. Dating back to 1974, some poems in the collection highlight Burciaga’s instinctive wit and humorous usage of language for ironic effect, while others are intrinsically engagée in nature, speaking to some of the major political and social issues facing the United States (its involvement in Central America, the horrendous tragedies of war) and the Chicano community (immigration and la migra, the plight of the farmworker, cultural exploitation and assimilation, etc.).
José Antonio Burciaga also published a wide assortment of journalistic essays disseminated via the Hispanic Link News Service in a range of newspapers and later collected and published in three anthologies: *Weedee Peepo* (1988), *Drink Cultura c/s: Chicanismo* (1993), and *Spilling the Beans: Lotería Chicana* (1995), and posthumously in *The Last Supper of Chicano Heroes* (2008). Generally marked by a witty sense of humor replete with historical, social, and/or cultural references, these short essays draw on a vast array of subjects and experiences, from the most commonplace and ephemeral to the complexities of cultural identity, social injustice, and political inequity. On the one hand, he ponders in tongue-and-cheek fashion such topics as the joys of the tortilla and the jalapeño (“This side of the Tortilla,” “Joy of the jalapeño”), or humorous effects of language misuse or mispronunciation (“¡Ay Caramba!,” “What’s in a Spanish Name?”). In other instances he satirically addresses issues of a more serious nature, such as racism and the adoption of English as the official language in a northern California community (“Mineral Wells, Texas 1968,” “The Tall Ones Are Ganging Up on Me”), and the ironic and sometimes tragic consequences of history (“The First Thanksgiving,” “Reasons to Celebrate El Cinco de Mayo”). However, regardless of the theme and the narrator’s viewpoint, Burciaga’s principal objective is to inform the reader about the history, the culture, and the unique perspective of Chican@s in the United States.

For his writings, Burciaga was recognized with many awards, including the 1992 American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for *Undocumented Love* and The Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature in 1995; in 1997, he was honored posthumously as a Texas Treasure by the 75th Texas legislature for his “exceptional contributions to the history and culture of the Lone Star State.” José Antonio Burciaga died on 7 October, 1996, after a prolonged battle with stomach cancer. (DWU)

**BURGOS, JULIA DE (1914–1953).** Poet, journalist. Burgos was born in Carolina, Puerto Rico, the eldest of 13 children, 6 of whom died from malnutrition. Although she was born into rural poverty, her academic abilities earned her a scholarship; coupled with the support of her parents, she was able to attend the University of Puerto Rico, where she earned an elementary school teaching certificate. Attending the university in the 1930s, a time of intense poverty and political strife in Puerto Rico, also prompted her initial involvement with a newly revitalized Nationalist Party, demanding sovereignty for Puerto Rico and social justice, topics that, along with feminism, became hallmarks of her poetry. In 1939, Burgos left Puerto Rico for Havana, Cuba, where she pursued graduate studies. She subsequently migrated to New York City in the early 1940s, where she lived until her death in 1953.
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Burgos only published two books of poetry in her short lifetime: Poema a veinte surcos (Poem in Twenty Furrows) in 1938 and Canción de la verdad sencilla (Song of the Simple Truth) in 1939. Her third collection, El mar y tú (The Sea and You), was published posthumously, in 1954, and includes many of the poems she wrote during her years in New York, including her last poem, “Farewell in Welfare Island,” which she wrote in 1953 in English, foreshadowing her death and revealing a dark and depressive psychic state. In 1997, the Puerto Rican poet Jack Agüeros published the first bilingual edition of her poetry, a complete volume called Song of the Simple Truth: Obra poética completa/The Complete Poems of Julia de Burgos that contained more than 200 poems.

Consuelo López Springfield writes, “During the era in which Burgos published (1937–1946), literary traditions compelled women who aspired to literary careers to accommodate to male constructions of gender. To establish her reputation as a poet, Burgos negotiated her own space between female aesthetics and male-constructed literary conventions. Her foremost ‘text’ was the romance; but within its margins, she demanded female empowerment” (56). Perhaps nowhere is López Springfield’s assertion more evident than in Burgos’s poem “A Julia Burgos,” the first poem in her debut collection Poema a veinte surcos. The poem, addressed to herself, features a dual conception of who that self is—“Julia Burgos” as perceived by others, complying with bourgeois, patriarchal social structures, and the “yo”/“I,” speaker of the poem, a “true” authentic self who defies social conventions in an assertion of womanhood free from repression. The couplet “You are only the ponderous lady very lady; / not me; I am life, strength, woman,” exemplifies this duality and includes what may be Burgos’s most famous line.

Burgos’s “Pentachromatic” similarly asserts a challenge to traditional femininity and rigid gender norms for women, but does so with the woman speaker of the poem expressing repeatedly, “Today I want to be a man,” and eschewing the passivity that convention demanded from women of the time by identifying with iconic male figures like Don Quijote and Don Juan. The poem ends with a shocking turn—an image of self-violation, which scholars have asserted represents the ultimate symbolic resistance to feminine passivity and an expression of Burgos’s desire for power.

“Río Grande de Loíza,” a poem named for a river in northeastern Puerto Rico that Burgos frequently visited as a child, is her most acclaimed poem. With rich, sensuous imagery, the speaker of the poem visits a metaphysical past—“since the maternal petal lifted [the speaker] to the world”—progressing on to childhood, to adolescence, and into mature adulthood. The poem metaphorically parallels the speaker’s emergence of a poetic voice with her emergence as a joyful sexual being bathing in the river and ends with a connection between the river as place and the “flood of tears” that “come
BURGOS, JULIA DE (1914–1953)

from eyes of [the speaker’s] soul for [her] enslaved people.” Thus, the poem infuses a lyrical, life-affirming reflection on nature and womanhood with nationalist sentiment.

In her poem “Ay, ay, ay the Black’s Kinky Hair,” Burgos celebrates Puerto Rico and Latin America’s African heritage, with her feminist sensibility exhorting, “Ay ay ay wash the sins of the white King / in forgiveness black Queen,” alluding to the legacy of African slavery and the need for reconciliation. Burgos was the first published Puerto Rican woman writer to claim a “mulatta” identity (a light-skinned, mixed-race woman of African and European heritage), having a “mulatta” mother and white Puerto Rican father of German descent. This mixed-race identity is affirmed in the final stanza of the poem: “Ay ay ay my black race flees / and with the white runs to become bronzed; / to be one for the future, / fraternity of America!”

In addition to her poetry, Burgos also published extensively as a journalist and was the art and culture editor for the New York City–based, progressive, Spanish-language newspaper Pueblos Hispanos.

Burgos died in 1953 at age 39 after suffering from alcohol problems and poor health for several years. She died in poverty after collapsing on a Harlem street, and her unidentified body was buried in a common plot in New York’s Potter’s Field until it was identified by friends and relatives, who had her remains shipped to her hometown in Puerto Rico.

Today, Burgos’s legacy has been honored by numerous schools, cultural centers, streets, and parks throughout the United States and Puerto Rico bearing her name. She is considered a foremother to the artists of the Nuyorican Movement, for her political and poetic expressions of the beauty of Puerto Rico and its culture, the desire for Puerto Rican sovereignty, her vibrant feminism, and her rebellious spirit. (MJV)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
CABEZA DE BACA GILBERT, FABIOLA (1894–1991). Folklorist, educator, novelist, nutritionist, folk historian, community worker. Born on her family’s ranch, called La Liendre, in northeastern New Mexico, Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Gilbert is revered for her nostalgic view of ancient Hispanic New Mexico, her contributions to the quality of education in her state, and her extensive home economics program to assist rural folks in food-processing and fish-drying techniques. She was raised by her grandmother, Estefanita Cabeza de Baca, and her father, Graciano Cabeza de Baca, after her mother died when Fabiola was four. Her ties to the area are deep-rooted, dating back to the first European explorer of the region in the 1530s named Alvar Núñez Cabeza de Vaca, as evidenced in his Relaciones... (Narrations; 1542).

Most notable is her sense of history, language, and culture as Hispanic pillars to be preserved in the face of changing times. She is an important voice of transition, given Anglo America’s incursion into her region, and felt a sense of urgency to safeguard and document Hispanic practices, rituals, and traditions. She graduated in 1921 from New Mexico Normal school—later called Highlands University—dedicating herself to teaching domestic science in rural areas in an effort to raise the level of educational development. In 1929, she earned another BA degree, in home economics, from New Mexico State University. She later embraced the duties of home demonstration agent in order to spread new educational techniques and findings to Hispanic as well as Native American towns and villages. She emphasized nutrition as the core to cultural survival.

Cabeza de Baca Gilbert garnered multiple distinctions for her achievements in promoting best food practices, such as the National Home Demonstration Agents Association Distinguished Award for Meritorious Service and a U.S. Department of Agriculture Superior Service Award. Her participation in community and civic organizations is quite noteworthy, including, among others, the Girl Scouts, Red Cross, Santa Fe Opera, School of American Research, La Sociedad Folklorica de Santa Fe (Folkloric Society of Santa Fe), and New Mexico Museum Board.
Her best-known work with literary aspirations is *We Fed Them Cactus* (1954), a retro chronicle of Hispanic New Mexico, which she felt was on the verge of disappearing. She captures the spirit, tone, and worldview of a quintessential New Mexico through her characters, especially poet cowboy and storyteller El Cuate, who re-creates for Fabiola (the main narrator and also the transmitter of all stories collected) times past of hardy, resourceful men who lived with nature. In this way, Fabiola evokes and contextualizes loss and memory of a past that she considers worthy of reliving, but which is slowly eroding into oblivion. This is at the heart of her chronicle, which contains numerous novelistic techniques to provide suspense, fascination, and awe as the storms of change are imminent. She also wrote pamphlets in Spanish about food preparation (*Los alimentos y su preparación* [Foodstuff and its preparation; 1934]), a cookbook (*Historic Cookery*, 1936 and 1956), folkloric renditions (*The Good Life*, 1949), and a general tribute to her people and ancestors. Ultimately, she laments the tragedy of a Hispanic New Mexican culture that once dotted the landscape that is being forgotten and erased despite its heroic qualities. (FAL)

See also WOMEN'S LITERATURE.

**CALIFORNIOS.** These are the peoples of Hispanic/Mexican background who grew up in California after it was settled by Spanish subjects after 1769. They were the land-grant owners from the time of Spanish colonization up to 1821, and under Mexican control between 1821 and 1848, when Mexico ceded the territory to the United States after losing the Mexican–American War. Californios generally occupied the areas near the 21 missions that were accompanied by presidios (fortified Spanish military settlements), their haciendas, ranchos, and Indian villages of Catholic converts and servants. They came to be glorified and idealized in the 20th century in Hollywood films, such as *Zorro*, but their demise was rather sudden after 1848, when at the turn of the century most Californios became peons or dispossessed landowners. Perhaps the best-known Californio to experience such a downward spiral trajectory was Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo (1807–1890), from northern California. (FAL)

**CALÓ.** While some linguistics view it as a possible dialect, caló is closer to a variety of slang particular to *pachucos* (urban Chicanos of elegance and flair from the early 1940s and their descendants to this day), which consists of a Mexican underworld argot inflected by southwestern U.S. speech. The use of this encoded language is common among urban youth to express camaraderie and in-group affiliation, having become a common staple in some Chican@ literary works for a popular and sometimes humorous or pungent effect. Although it was originally considered the secret language of
gypsies, from the term *zincoaló*—in part from the poor and sometimes criminal element—Chicanos have been resourceful in mixing archaic terms from Spanish (e.g., *chavalo/a* for boy/girl and *chusma* for riff-raff) with some derivations from the indigenous language *Náhuatl* (the native language of the Aztecs, still used in parts of Mexico), such as *calcios* for shoes, along with English terms (e.g., *wáchale* or “watch out”). The result is an admixture or commingling of languages into one variant for a social insular group that serves in part to both identify and also distinguish them. *Caló* is generally regarded as part of male speech inventiveness, but recently females have also demonstrated their affinity for and ingenuity with this speech. (FAL)

**CANDELARIA, NASH (1928–2016).** Novelist and memoirist. Born and raised in California, Nash Candelaria is a descendant of one of the pioneer families that founded Albuquerque, New Mexico, in 1706. Primarily a writer of fiction, Candelaria has authored five novels, two collections of short fiction, and a memoir. Considered the “historical novelist of the Hispanic people of New Mexico,” his novels introduce and develop their story lines around various descendants of the Rafa family, a founding family of Albuquerque in the 1700s, and they reflect historical events and themes that affected New Mexico beginning in the mid-19th century: the Mexican–American War (1846–1848), territorial annexation into the United States, the encroachment of Anglos into Hispanic New Mexico and the cultural and social hostilities that followed, statehood, and the Great Depression.

*Memories of the Alhambra* (1977), the first novel in the series, tells the story of José Rafa as he explores his ancestral heritage. Driven by a deep-rooted aversion to his Mexicanness, upon the death of his father, José Rafa abandons his home and family to search for his true “Spanish” origins, as a descendant of conquistadores. His quest first takes him to Mexico, then on to Spain where, unfulfilled, he dies of a heart attack while traveling on a bus from Merida to Seville. *Not by the Sword* (1982), the second novel in the Rafa family saga, for which Candelaria was awarded the 1983 American Book Award, situates the family in mid-19th-century New Mexico in the period leading up to and during the turmoil of the Mexican–American War of 1846–1848, as New Mexicans deal with annexation and forcefully becoming citizens of the United States. *Inheritance of Strangers* (1985), the third novel in the saga and a sequel to *Not by the Sword,* is set in New Mexico following the Mexican–American War and reveals the hostilities between local *Hispanos* and Anglos as they compete for political power and local control. *Leonor Park* (1991), the fourth of Candelaria’s novels, is set in Albuquerque in the late 1920s during Prohibition and narrates the story of Magdalena Soto and her brother, Nicolás Armijo, as they battle over the legacy and inheritance left by their father, a descendant of the Rafa family. The fifth novel in the series, *A Daughter’s Daughter* (2008), portrays three generations of Rafa
women (Liberata, María, and Irene) over six or seven decades, revealing how women traditionally dealt with courtship and the oppressive men in their lives. Each of the women repeats the life of her mother, until Irene, María’s daughter, breaks the pattern and rebels against the oppressive gender roles of the previous generations.

Candelaria’s literary output also includes two collections of short stories: *The Day That the Cisco Kid Shot John Wayne and Other Stories* (1988) and *Uncivil Rights and Other Stories* (1998). The first collection fondly reminisces about growing up as a Mexican American in a cultural milieu comprising both the Mexican and the American worlds, and the second explores border culture and portrays the lives of the downtrodden along the U.S.–Mexican border. Candelaria’s *Second Communion* (2009), is a memoir in which he discloses his literary aesthetics and his raison d’être. Until his death on 5 January 2016, Candelaria lived in Santa Fe, New Mexico, with his wife, Doranne Godwin Candelaria. (DWU)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

**CANTÚ, NORMA ELIA (1947–).** Educator, critic, novelist, short story writer, poet, activist, folklorist. Born on 3 January 1947 to Florentino and Virginia Cantú in Nuevo Laredo, Mexico, Norma E. Cantú immigrated with her family to Laredo, Texas, in 1948. Her upbringing took place on both sides of the border, although she received her education on the American side. Hired as a professor in 1980 at Texas A&M International University, where she remained for 25 years, she received a PhD in English from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln in 1982. She moved to the University of Texas at San Antonio in 2005 and subsequently was hired at Kansas State in 2010. She has been active as a presenter at conferences and has participated extensively in professional associations and organizations (e.g., American Association of University Women, National Association of Chicano/a Studies, Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social, and Literacy Volunteers of America).

Cantú is widely known for her professional activities and two books: the novel *Canícula: Snapshots of a Girlhood en la Frontera* (1995) and her coedited work with Olga Nájera-Ramírez, *Chicana Traditions: Continuity and Change* (2002). She has also contributed articles, poems, stories, and reviews to periodicals and books, such as *Nebraska Humanist, Huehuetitlán, Journal of Popular Folklore, New Chicano/a Literature, Mito y leyenda*, and *Feasts and Celebrations in U.S. Ethnic Communities*.

Her fictional centerpiece, *Canícula*, aims to capture, through a bildungsroman structure, the life of Nena, a border inhabitant. The experimentation with genre, narrative voice, multiplicity of forms, and deceptive narration contributes to what the author herself labels as “fictional autobiographic ethnography.” The title “Canícula” is key in that it represents the asphyxiating period
of heat of the Texas/Mexican border summers or what might be termed the “summer dog days,” when it is difficult to move or plan anything. That is the background, but what matters most is Nena’s 86 vignettes, usually brief self-reflections on a wide variety of daily, even humdrum, activities or events, contributing to a social kaleidoscope of border life. The novel’s apparent simplicity soon unfolds into a complex network of subjectivities that have to be fleshed out to better capture the different levels of meaning. Thanks to the use of family photographs, the narrations appear to be chronologically organized, but linear time is freely shuffled. One of the main innovations rests on the narration’s attempt to re-create the photograph and, particularly, what occurred behind the scenes before or after the snapshot. However, the main narrator, Nena, clearly manipulates impression with fact and fiction, creating a suggestive sequence of anecdotes, rituals, fiestas, and character profiles that challenge the reader who wishes to indulge in easy deductive notions about truth or absolutes. The work contains mirage-like qualities through its parchment, sepia-tinted photographs that, according to Claire Joysmith, “live suspended in time inside an old shoebox tied with faded ribbon, enclosed in near-oblivion until the miracle of sight, memory and articulated words restore them to life—to a life of their own.” Theory and technique about how to create a story dominate the work, particularly how people and events can interface via new appreciations of both reality and remembered recollections. In the end, the work contains much more narrative substance than initially appears to be the case.

*Chicana Traditions* brings together a wide selection of authors to discuss folklore, anthropology, sociology, gender, culture, and other subjects as a way of advancing new critical foci on Chicanas. Norma Cantú is both a writer and a scholar who indulges in interdisciplinarity in order to explore the complexities of ethnicity, gender, and identity. (FAL)

*See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.*

CASTILLO, ANA (1953–). Writer, poet, essayist, editor. Castillo was born and raised in Chicago, Illinois, and earned a BA in art from Northwestern Illinois University, an MA in Latin American and Caribbean studies from the University of Chicago, and a PhD in American studies from the University of Bremen in Germany.

Castillo’s publications are extensive and cover a broad range of genres. In all, she has published six novels, four books of poetry, one book of plays, one children’s book, and one book of critical essays, in addition to editing and coediting a number of books of scholarly essays. She has also contributed to numerous journals, online publications, and national magazines, as well as being the editor and publisher of the online arts and literary ‘zine *La Tolteca*, a publication dedicated to “promoting the advancement of a world without borders and censorship.” Much of Castillo’s work centers on the identities
and experiences of *Chicanas*, Mexican American women whose feminism Castillo terms *Xicanisma*, addressing the intersections of their social identities in terms of race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and gender. Significantly, Castillo’s writing also introduces spirituality and religion as constitutive dimensions of Chicana identities.

Castillo’s debut novel, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* (1986), comprises a series of letters written by a young Chicana narrator, Teresa, to her friend Alicia, reflecting on their identities, friendship, and the travels through Mexico that provide a fertile ground for exploring the former. The letters between the friends are written over the course of 10 years, as Teresa grapples with the complexities of her friendship with Alicia. Thematically, the book primarily engages the young women’s struggles in relationships with men within the confines of the patriarchal structures and ideologies of both Mexico and the United States and the growth of their friendship and bonding as women as they navigate the challenging terrain of gendered power relations.

Scholars have written about a number of formal elements of *The Mixquiahuala Letters* as quintessentially postmodern; for example, the letters in the novel are numbered, but Castillo instructs the reader in the beginning to choose the sequence that most suits that reader depending on whether he or she is a “conformist,” “cynic,” or “quixotic.” The letters themselves offer different greetings from Teresa to Alicia and different forms of signature. In general, the text has a nonlinear chronology and development, and Erlinda Gonzales-Berry has written that Castillo uses the epistolary form, but at times omits its conventions so that “ambiguity shows her tantalizing face.” For its formal inventiveness and its honest engagement with feminist themes, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* received wide critical praise, exemplified by winning the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation.

Perhaps the most studied of Castillo’s novels is the 1993 novel *So Far from God*, set in Tome, New Mexico, which draws from a variety of genres, including the family saga; Pueblo, Apache, and Aztec myth; and perhaps most notably, the *telenovela*. Indeed, in a 1993 *Los Angeles Times Book Review* of the novel, Barbara Kingsolver famously wrote that *So Far from God* “could be the offspring of a union between *One Hundred Years of Solitude* and ‘General Hospital’ . . . a sassy, magical, melodramatic love child.” The novel challenges the gendered conventions of family sagas, centering the lives of women characters and lending authority to the matrilineal family structure of Sofi and her four daughters: Esperanza, Caridad, Fe, and Loca (in English, “Hope,” “Charity,” “Faith,” and “the Crazy One”). As in Castillo’s other works, feminism, sexuality, religion, spirituality, and legacies of colonization are centrally explored in *So Far from God*, and the novel also engages critical questions related to militarism, environmentalism, economic justice, the power of community, and American Dream ideologies. The scope of the novel is ambitious in its breadth, but the depth of Castillo’s
character development and the engaging and indeed outrageous nature of the plot are apt vehicles for the exploration of the novel’s many concerns. For all these reasons, at the time of its publication and for years afterward, the novel was celebrated as a Chicana feminist tale of postmodernity, ripe with political, cultural, and social complexity and narrated with humor and honesty.

The most influential of Castillo’s nonfiction texts was her 1994 book of critical essays, *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*. Early in the collection, Castillo notes, “As a mestiza born to the lower strata, I am treated at best, as a second class citizen, at worst, as a non-entity. I am commonly perceived as a foreigner everywhere I go, including in the United States and in Mexico.” This subject position of the Chicana as “countryless woman,” a perpetual outsider and foreigner, is the point of departure for *Massacre of the Dreamers*, in which Castillo aims to articulate what constitutes Chicana identity and Xicanisma, denoting Chicana feminism rooted in a shared indigeneity and specifically what she calls “Mexic Amerindian” identity. The identity proposed by Castillo is an alternative feminist one based on indigenous beliefs and spirituality, whereas C. Alejandra Elenes explains, “the Xicanista creates a synthesis of inherited beliefs with her own instincts.”

In a 1999 interview published in the *South Central Review*, Castillo discusses both the central question that guided her writing of the book and her focus on religion and spirituality: “When I was doing the research for *Massacre of the Dreamers*, I asked myself, “what is a Chicana . . . ? It was a pragmatic search, and what I discovered . . . was that the Mexican woman, in terms of both pre-Hispanic culture and afterwards, is defined by society in a very religious way. . . . With the Catholic Church, culture and tradition are mixed with religion.” As are her other major works, *Massacre of the Dreamers* is broad in the themes it explores, and it borrows from diverse source material; a few chapter titles—“A Countryless Woman: The Early Feminista,” “The 1986 Watsonville Women’s Strike: A Case of Mexicana Activism,” “The Ancient Roots of Machismo,” “La Macha: Toward an Erotic Whole Self,” and “Brujas and Curanderas: A Lived Spirituality”—provide a glimpse into the breadth of the book’s topics.

In 1997, Castillo published *Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe*, a literary anthology combining original essays, short fiction, poetry, drama, and historical writings by a number of celebrated authors, including Gloria Anzaldúa, Sandra Cisneros, Cherríe Moraga, Guillermo Gómez-Peña, Luis Rodríguez, and Castillo herself. An expression of Castillo’s keen interest in the spirituality and religions of Chicanas/os, the volume explores and celebrates the Virgin of Guadalupe, icon of Mexican and Mexican American Catholicism and ubiquitous symbol of Mexican womanhood, who has been said to be the Christianized embodiment of the Aztec goddess Tonantzin. As Irene Lara explains, Castillo’s anthology “mark[ed] for the literary world [a] discursive shift, which already existed in
the imaginations of many devotees: from Tonantzin-Guadalupe as the ‘mother of God,’ to Tonantzin-Guadalupe as a Goddess in her own right.” Castillo’s most recent work of nonfiction is Black Dove: Mamá, Mi’jo, and Me (2016), a collection of stories “on her own life as a single, brown, feminist parent of a son in a world of mass incarceration, racial profiling, mother-blaming, and the scapegoating of immigrants.”

Castillo’s first publications were chapbooks and books of poetry, but her poetry has received considerably less critical attention than her prose. Of her poetry collections, the most widely read are My Father Was a Toltec (1988) and Women Are Not Roses (1984). The entire My Father Was a Toltec was reissued in 1995 as part of a larger volume, My Father Was a Toltec and Selected Poems.

Castillo has received numerous forms of recognition, including a Carl Sandburg Award, a Mountains and Plains Booksellers Award, the Sor Juana Achievement Award from the Mexican Fine Arts Center in Chicago, fellowships in fiction and poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the Gloria Anzaldúa Prize to an independent scholar from the American Studies Association in 2013. She has held numerous teaching positions, including the Lund-Gil Endowed Chair at Dominican University in Illinois in 2014. She is also a painter. (MJV)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

CERVANTES, LORNA DEE (1954–). Poet, professor, publisher, editor, feminist, activist. A fifth-generation Californian of Mexican and Chumash ancestry, Lorna Dee Cervantes was born on 6 August 1954 in San Francisco’s Mission District and raised in San José, California. After the divorce of her parents in 1959, she, along with her mother, Rose, and her brother, Stephen, moved into the home of her maternal grandmother in the Mexican neighborhood known as Barrio Horseshoe in East San José, where poverty, drugs, and street violence were pervasive. As a child, she often accompanied her mother, a house cleaner, to the upper-class homes she cleaned, and it is in this environment that young Lorna was first exposed to such writers as William Shakespeare, Lord Byron, John Keats, and Percy Bysshe Shelley, and became fascinated with the world of letters. She began writing verses when she was a mere eight years of age.

As she matured, Cervantes continued writing and fine-tuning her craft as a poet, and while attending Abraham Lincoln High School in San José she contributed writings to the school paper. Moreover, while in her teens she also became very interested in prevalent social and political issues and became involved in several civil rights movements and in the environmentalist movement, all of which eventually contributed to the thematic content of her poetry. According to an autobiographical entry in her blog, Lorna Dice,
“From the age of fifteen, Lorna was active in the ‘Women’s Liberation Movement,’ the Chicano Moratorium, the anti-war effort, the American Indian Movement and the anti-nuclear peace movement. At age 16, she was a regular member of the San José and Stanford poetry community,” attending poetry readings and workshops throughout the greater San Francisco Bay region. Poetry was to become her weapon of denunciation against racism, sexual abuse, violence against women, and oppression of minorities and the disempowered.

Following her graduation from Lincoln High School in 1972, Cervantes attended San José Community College, from which she received an AA degree in 1976. More important, however, is that during this period that she began to receive public recognition as a blossoming poet. In the summer of 1974, while attending the Quinto Festival de los Teatros Chicanos (Fifth Annual Festival of Chicano Theatre) in Mexico City, she was asked to present one of her poems. The poem she selected to read on that occasion, “Barco de refugiados” (“Refugee Ship”), was subsequently published in El Heraldo de México, a major daily newspaper in a metropolitan area of 10 million inhabitants. From this point forward, her career as a poet accelerated, and in the winter of 1975 five of her poems (“Refugee Ship,” “Para un revolucionario,” “You Turn My Pages,” “You Are Like a Weed,” and “Grandma”) appeared in Revista Chicano-Riqueña, a quarterly published by Indiana University whose primary mission was to offer a forum for Latinos throughout the United States to publish their literary works and art. Following this publication, her poetry began to appear regularly in other literary journals, poetry periodicals, and anthologies.

Motivated by her early literary successes, Cervantes founded Mango Publications in 1976, home of the literary magazine also known as Mango. Via Mango Publications she introduced the writings of such poets as Alberto Ríos, Orlando Ramirez, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Ray González, Bernice Zamora, and Sandra Cisneros, and promoted the early works of other eminent poets, such as José Antonio Burciaga, José Montoya, Luis Omar Salinas, and Gary Soto, among many others, including herself. Her celebrity as a poet, editor, and publisher continued to develop, and at decade’s end Cervantes was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship Grant for Poetry (1978) and the Hudson D. Walker Fellowship (1979). The endowments provided by these awards enabled her to attend the Fine Arts Work Center in Provincetown, Massachusetts (1979–1980) and to complete the poems for her first collection of poetry, Emplumada (1981).

Rendered from the perspective of a feminist woman of color and a Chicana, Emplumada is composed of 39 poems, mostly narrative in form and in a language that is direct and almost conversational. While many of the poems in the collection are strategically autobiographical and deal with the world in which Cervantes grew up (an all-female household under the guidance of two
strong female figures, in the midst of a very poor, bigoted, and violent community); others speak to the everyday world of Latinas, revealing some of the social realities and subordinate roles to which they are often relegated because they are Latina. And whereas some of the poems communicate the poet’s pride in her Native American heritage; others reveal a sense of ambivalence as she considers her Mexican/American legacy. Following its publication in 1981, *Emplumada* garnered considerable critical praise from scholars and writers alike, and the following year it was honored with the American Book Award. Today it remains a fundamental text in Chican@/Latino/a studies.

In the fall of 1982, while she was on a promotional tour for *Emplumada*, Cervantes’s life was shattered by the tragic murder of her mother. Feeling that poetry was not possible in such a violent atmosphere, she withdrew from writing it and returned to the university to cope with her sorrow. She received her BA in creative arts from San Jose State University in 1984 and immediately pursued graduate studies in philosophy at the University of California Santa Cruz, receiving an MFA in history of consciousness in 1989 and a PhD in philosophy and aesthetics in 1990. Upon completion of her studies at UCSC, Cervantes landed a faculty position at the University of Colorado in Boulder, where she held the positions of professor of English and director of the Creative Writing Program until 2007.

Five years after the death of her mother, Cervantes started writing poems again, resulting in the publication of her second book of poetry, *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger* (1991). While this collection continues to address some of the themes found in the first book, it focuses on the poet’s experiences with personal loss brought on by divorce, her mother’s untimely death, and historical discontinuity. In an interview with Sonia V. González, the poet stated: “This is a grief book. That’s how I refer to it, privately. It’s my grief book because my mother was murdered, and raped, and battered. Then they burned the house down. I was dealing with that and with my divorce, and all of that stuff. . . . When we experience grief, every grief is a layer. You lose someone, and then you lose someone again. It’s layered, the feelings, a hone” (González 2007, 173–174). The poet’s style in *From the Cables of Genocide* is much more complex, and the poems are much more abstract and hermetic than those in the first book, and though this collection was not as celebrated as *Emplumada*, it did receive several awards, including the Paterson Poetry Prize (1992), the Latino Literature Prize (1993), and a Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Writers’ Award (1995).

A project of 15 years, Cervantes next publication was *Drive: The First Quartet; New Poems, 1980–2005* (2006). A volume of 310 pages with 152 new and previously published poems, the collection is arranged in five books and covers many topics: war, poverty, genocide, violence, love, suicide, play,
motherhood, and more. Book one “How Far’s the War?” examines incidents of domestic and global violence and genocide against different peoples of the world, with a focus on the indigenous societies of the Americas. In book two, “BIRD AVE,” the poetic voice returns to the neighborhood of her childhood and evokes images and relationships from her youth, while pachucando or “growing up” on the streets of Barrio Horseshoe. In “Play,” book three, Cervantes offers a sequence of seven-minute experimental poems that highlight the poet’s skill at spontaneity. Though each poem was written in seven minutes and is unrevised except for punctuation, the poems do demonstrate Cervantes’s skills at manipulating language and imagery. Book four, “Letters to David: An Elegiac Mass in the Form of a Train,” is a sequence of 14 poems dedicated to David A. Kennedy, son of assassinated Senator Robert Kennedy. In “Hard Drive,” the fifth and final book of the collection, Cervantes once again returns to the autobiographical mode and provides a self-portrait of personal experiences relative to being a woman, a lover, a mother, a daughter, a granddaughter, a woman of color, and a Chicana. Drive was awarded the Balcones Poetry Prize and an International Latino Book Award in 2006.

In her next collection of poetry, Ciento: 100 100-Word Love Poems (2011), Cervantes explores many facets of love (romantic, intimate, passionate, erotic, sensual, sexual, etc.) while addressing an anonymous you. Experimental in style, the collection originated in a writing experiment the poet established for herself: write a 100-word love poem every week, based on a word she received from the website “One Word” (http://www.oneword.com). Once again Cervantes demonstrates her masterful ability to manipulate language, metaphor, and imagery.

Cervantes’s most recent collection of poetry is titled Sueno (2013). It is divided into two parts (“Thirty Something of the Cruelest” and “A Bit of Grace”), each of which is further fragmented into smaller segments. The first part is divided into “One” and “Two,” and the latter into Trey, Cuatro, Quinto. Reminiscent of her earlier poetry, Sueno abounds with memories and dreamlike imagery of her community, her culture, and her family. While she lovingly remembers her grandmother (Gra’mu), mother (mom), and father (daddy), and gently pays homage to deceased poets and other associates from her greater Chicano community (Gloria Anzaldua, Alfredo Arteaga, Jim Sagel), she also condemns violence against women of color, the intolerance and lack of compassion for immigrants, and other social injustices that permeate the American landscape. A magnificent contribution, Sueno was awarded second place for Best Poetry Book written in English by a single author at the 16th Annual International Latino Book Awards in June 2014.

Recognized as one of Chicano literature’s preeminent poets, Lorna Dee Cervantes has had a very prolific career. In addition to the five collections discussed above, her poetry has also appeared in 300 anthologies and text-
books. She currently resides in Olympia, Washington, where she is self-employed crafting Native American–style jewelry out of beads and continues to create verse and post it directly to her blog (http://lornadice.blogspot.com) or to Facebook (https://www.facebook.com/lornadee.cervantes). (DWU)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

CHACÓN, EUSEBIO (1869–1948). Novelist, civic leader, essayist, orator, newspaper editorialist, lawyer, manuscript archivist. Born on 16 September 1869 in a small town in northern New Mexico to Hispanic pioneer parents (Captain Rafael Chacón and Juanita Páez), Chacón spent most of his life in Trinidad, Colorado, where he had a distinguished career as a lawyer and as translator-interpreter for the U.S. Court of Private Land Claims. As a civic figure of prominence in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, he exercised considerable influence in the formation of a Hispanic literary culture in the region spanning southern Colorado into northern New Mexico. He studied law at Notre Dame University and later formed part of a group of literati and intellectuals engaged in propagating Hispanic culture in the midst of a changing society wherein Anglos were becoming more dominant.

Chacon defended Hispanic culture for its long-standing presence and particularly its literary legacy, which was unacknowledged. In the introduction to his two novelettes from 1892, El hijo de la tempestad y Tras la tormenta la calma: Dos novelitas originales (Son of the storm and the calm after the storm: Two original novelettes), he claimed to have planted the seed of “recreative literature” via the novel genre in the region. The first novelette suggests a political allegory on the lawlessness of the era, and the second is a love story that blends Spanish literary qualities with local characters and concerns. But his importance transcended his two modest novelettes; he promoted a Hispanic legacy through iconic works such as Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá’s Historia de la Nueva México (History of New Mexico, 1610), early chronicles, and other works. He possessed some of these works and made them available by inserting sections in a weekly column in the newspaper El Progreso from Trinidad, Colorado, and Las Dos Repúblicas from Denver, Colorado.

In addition, in 1896 he published some of the first in-depth essays that meticulously documented the importance and relevance of many of the Spanish chronicles from the northern frontier of the Spanish empire, “Descubrimiento y conquista de Nuevo México por los españoles en 1540: Disertaciones sobre la historia patria” (Discovery and conquest of New Mexico by the Spanish in 1540: Treatises on the history of the homeland). He also stood out for his oratorical prowess, as exhibited in his famous manifesto of 1901, “Elocuente Discurso” (Eloquent speech), delivered in downtown Las Vegas, New Mexico, in defense of Hispanic culture at a time when certain Protestant missionaries were attacking the local people in New Mexico. Chacón is
regarded as a key example of an early Hispanic literary conscience; he wrote novels, significant historical essays, and key speeches in an attempt to put Hispanics on the American literary map. He died on 3 April 1948. (FAL)

CHÁVEZ, CÉSAR ESTRADA (1927–1993). César Chávez was a Mexican American farmworker, labor leader, and civil rights activist who dedicated his entire adult life to improving the working conditions and destiny of farmworkers. Generally recognized as the first leader of the Chicano Movement, Chávez was born in Yuma, Arizona, to Juana Estrada and Librado Chávez, owners of a small homestead in the North Gila River Valley outside Yuma. However, during the Great Depression the Chávez family lost their property and moved to San José, California, settling in the barrio called Sal Si Puedes (Leave If You Can). For the next decade, Chávez worked alongside his parents as they moved up and down the state, laboring in the fields, orchards, and vineyards as migrant farmworkers. It is during this period of his life that he was exposed to the hardships and injustices of farmworker life, which he would dedicate his life to changing. After a brief stretch in the U.S. Navy (1946–1948), Chávez returned to San José and that same year married Helen Fabela, whom he had met while working in fields and vineyards around Delano, California. The young couple moved to Delano and started their family, only to return to San José in the early 1950s, where he met Father Donald McDonnell, an activist Catholic priest who taught him about St. Francis, Mahatma Gandhi, and the use of nonviolence in civil disobedience. Shortly thereafter, Father McDonnell introduced Chávez to Fred Ross, a social organizer in the Community Service Organization (CSO), who recruited him to join his group and under whose guidance he began community organizing. Within a few years, Chávez became the national director of CSO, but in 1962 he resigned his position to dedicate his time and energies to organizing a union for farmworkers.

That same year, César was joined by Dolores Huerta, another social activist with roots in Frank Ross’s CSO, and together they founded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA). In 1965, the NFWA joined with the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee in its strike against grape growers in California, and the two unions merged into the United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), which was renamed the United Farm Workers (UFW) in 1972. As Chávez began building the farmworker movement, he was very cognizant that a strong union was necessary to remedy the injustices and hardships that farmworkers suffered in the workplace. Adopting strategies and tactics he had learned from the careers of Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Martin Luther King Jr., he demanded that farmworkers adhere to a strategy of nonviolence during union actions such as boycotts, marches, picket lines, and hunger strikes. At union rallies, marches, and picket lines, farmworkers and supporters carried red flags bearing the
image of the black eagle and the words *Huelga!* (Strike!) and/or *Viva La Causa!* (Long Live Our Cause!). Though these nonviolent tactics met with resistance from some followers, who wanted to be more forceful against the growers, by 1970 UFWOC claimed 50,000 members, and millions of people across North America rallied to *la Causa* (the Cause) by boycotting grapes and other products, forcing growers to bargain for union contracts and agree to California’s pioneering farm labor law in 1975.

On several occasions (1968, 1972, 1988), Chávez himself resorted to hunger strikes to make people aware of the struggles of farmworkers. In 1968, he went on a water-only, 25-day fast to emphasize the nonviolent focus of the farmworkers’ union movement. He repeated another fast in 1972 for 24 days in Phoenix, Arizona, opposing the state’s punitive law making it impossible for farmworkers to organize. And in 1988 he again engaged in a fast, this time for 36 days to protest the exposure of farmworkers to pesticides. Relative to his employment of the fast or hunger strike as a labor tactic, Chávez commented:

> A fast is first and foremost personal. It is a fast for the purification of my own body, mind, and soul. The fast is also a heartfelt prayer for purification and strengthening for all those who work beside me in the farm worker movement. The fast is also an act of penance for those in positions of moral authority and for all men and women activists who know what is right and just, who know that they could and should do more. The fast is finally a declaration of non-cooperation with supermarkets who promote and sell and profit from California table grapes. During the past few years I have been studying the plague of pesticides on our land and our food. . . . The evil is far greater than even I had thought it to be, it threatens to choke out the life of our people and also the life system that supports us all. This solution to this deadly crisis will not be found in the arrogance of the powerful, but in solidarity with the weak and helpless. I pray to God that this fast will be a preparation for a multitude of simple deeds for justice. Carried out by men and women whose hearts are focused on the suffering of the poor and who yearn, with us, for a better world. Together, all things are possible. (http://www.ufw.org)

It is commonly believed that these hunger strikes, especially the last one, during which he lost 30 pounds, caused Chávez health problems and may have contributed to his death. He died of cardiac arrest on April 23, 1993, in San Luis, Arizona, while helping UFW attorneys defend the union against a lawsuit brought by Bruce Church Inc., a giant Salinas, California–based lettuce and vegetable producer. (DWU)

*See also CHICANO MOVEMENT, THE.*
CHÁVEZ, DENISE (1948–). Novelist, playwright, actor, short story writer, director, professor, essayist. Born on 15 August 1948 in Las Cruces, New Mexico, Denise Chávez grew up in a family of women. Her father, Epifanio Ernesto Chávez, was a lawyer, who was absent due to bouts with alcoholism; and her mother, Delfina Rede Faver, exercised great influence as a school-teacher for her storytelling prowess. From a young age, Denise exhibited precocious qualities as a writer and actor, eventually calling herself a performance artist. She received her BA in drama from New Mexico State University in 1971 and later completed an MA in dramatic arts from Trinity University in San Antonio in 1974. She earned a second MA in fine arts in creative writing from the University of New Mexico in 1984.

During the course of her career, she has produced plays such as Novitiates (1973), The Mask of November (1975), Hecho en México (Made in Mexico; 1987), The Novena Narratives y Ofrendas Nuevomexicanas (The nine-day ritual narratives and New Mexican offerings; 1987), The Flying Tortilla Man (1990), and 35 other works. Her reputation was first established in theater, where she employed her uncanny ear for colloquial speech and a penchant for representing New Mexican women within social circumstances that require them to regroup to find their identity. She also received various honors (National Endowment for the Arts, Rockefeller Foundation, the Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Fund, New Mexico State University Steele Jones Fiction Award, etc.). In the 1990s, she served as artistic director of the Border Book Festival in Las Cruces, New Mexico.

In 1986, she ventured into fiction with The Last of the Menu Girls, which some critics have considered a collection of short stories and others a novel, and for which she received the Premio Aztlán Literary Award. Her keen interest in women’s lives is expressed by portraying common women via what Alvina Quintana calls “domestic orality,” in this case waitresses juggling workplace and identity plus the strains of growing up. She is best known for her character development and witty dialogue, something she excelled in due to her theater background. She then published Face of an Angel (1994), a work filled with symbolism surrounding milagros or amulets of protection. The story-within-a-story structure provides dimension and echoes of signification in the string of stories held together by novelistic elements. In 2001, Chávez published Loving Pedro Infante, another novel dedicated to common women’s lives, in this case to those who venerate such Mexican male figures as iconic singer Pedro Infante. Teresina and Irma indulge in fantasies about this matinee film idol. The novel resembles a telenovela (TV soap opera) of intrigue, humor, and failed romances at the same time that the characters negotiate friendships and relationships. Women’s lives appear much like a tapestry of dilemmas, ambiguities, and failed attempts at acquiring agency, but not without a laugh. In 2006, Chávez published A Taco Testimony: Meditations on Family, Food and Culture, a
memoir about her family’s trajectory, including a recipe book on the ubiquitous Mexican tacos, similar to Laura Esquivel’s Como agua para chocolate (Like Water for Chocolate; 1989) without magical realism. Her fiction is the other side of the coin of her theater, in that she develops tensions, transitions, and paths for overcoming negativities. Much of her writing is testimony about family and friends, but mostly working women who strive to find a niche for themselves as they grapple with tradition and modern social customs as dictated by mainstream society.

Chávez also coedited with Linda Feyder the theater collection Shattering the Myth: Plays by Hispanic Women (1991), and cowrote Descansos: An Interrupted Journey (1995) with Rudolfo Anaya and Juan Estevan Arellano. The former is considered the most representative collection of dramatic writings by Latinas up to the 1990s, and the latter stands out for its insightful focus on New Mexican cultural and ritual practices related to death. Denise Chávez is prominent for her keen and profound sensibilities about women, New Mexico culture, family, maturation, and personal conundrums. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS. While Chicanas/Latinas can look to Latin America for examples of women writers and activists expressing feminist ideologies throughout the 20th century and even earlier, in the U.S. context, Chicanas/Latinas became more active and prominently involved in feminist organizing and writing in the late 1960s and early 1970s. As the Chicano Movement and Nuyorican Movement flourished in the late 1960s and 1970s, Chicanas/Latinas articulated a challenge to the gendered oppression they experienced. Some Chicana/Latina feminist discourse during this period mirrored the discourse of the contemporaneous, predominantly white and middle-class feminist movement. For example, in a 1971 letter to the editor in the Chicano magazine La Raza, the following powerful assertion appeared: “The Chicana Women’s Lib is here and here to stay. It is for every Chicana who wants to be treated as a human being.”

Chicanas/Latinas who were at the forefront of these Latina “women’s lib” movements created their own movement after their involvement in the Chicano and Nuyorican Movements and the feminist movement revealed that as Chicanas/Latinas, their experiences were not adequately understood by either movement, and they would need to be leaders in challenging their oppression. In Chicanas Speak Out: Women—the New Voice of La Raza (1971), Mirta Vidal explained the concept of “triple oppression”: “The oppression suffered by Chicanas is different from that suffered by most women in this country. Because Chicanas are part of an oppressed nationality, they are subjected to the racism practiced against La Raza. Since the overwhelming majority of Chicanos are workers, Chicanas are also victims of the exploitation of the working class. But, in addition, Chicanas, along with the rest of
women, are relegated to an inferior position because of their sex. Thus, Raza women suffer a triple form of oppression: as members of an oppressed nationality, as workers, and as women.” Vidal notes that in a survey conducted at a 1971 gathering of Chicanas, 84 percent of respondents “felt that ‘there is a distinction between the problems of the Chicana and those of other women.’” The idea of the specificity of their oppression as Chicanas/Latinas, articulated during this period, is a foundational characteristic of Chicana/Latina feminisms.

The issues that concerned Chicana/Latina feminist activists and writers during this time were varied and included many of the same crucial concerns facing women of other ethnicities, including inequality in the workforce, discrimination in education, and the need for access to legal abortions and contraception. However, Chicana/Latina feminists identified and challenged systems and ideologies that they felt were particularly oppressive to them as Chicanas/Latinas, such as racism; oppressive patriarchal norms with regard to marriage and family as experienced within the context of Latino/a cultures; and ideologies of the Catholic Church toward women and sexuality, since Chicanas/Latinas are from predominantly Catholic backgrounds. In addition, the issue of reproductive rights differed for Chicanas/Latinas, in that many had also been subjected to sterilization without informed consent. Thus, reproductive rights struggles for Chicanas/Latinas have involved not only access to abortion and contraception—the right to not have children or to limit the number of children they have—but also the right to have children, should they choose to do so.

Chicana/Latina feminists in the 1980s, 1990s, and into the 21st century have continued to address many of the concerns that initially galvanized their social movement and intellectual production, with notable additions and changes in emphasis over time. Significantly, their movements and discourse have maintained an intersectional emphasis, focusing not only on gendered issues, but also on class, race, sexuality, and other social identity categories simultaneously. In 1981, Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherrie Moraga coedited the landmark anthology This Bridge Called My Back, featuring the writing of radical feminist women of color. The text was emblematic of their commitment to coalition building with other women of color, which continued to be important in furthering Chicana/Latina feminist causes. The anthology also prominently featured lesbian feminist voices, highlighting the importance of the issues and experiences of Chicana/Latina lesbians, who had also suffered exclusion and marginalization in Chicana/Latina feminist work and discourse where heterosexual Chicanas/Latinas had been dominant. In ways that would have a lasting impact, Chicana/Latina lesbian feminists challenged the assumption that the roles of wife and mother were inherent in being a Chicana/Latina.
An engagement with spirituality and religion has also been an important element in Chicana/Latina feminist thought and practice. Gloria Anzaldúa’s highly influential *Borderlands/La Frontera* (1987) asserted the need for reclaiming Mexican indigenous spirituality and specifically indigenous goddesses, representing women’s power as a part of a “*mestiza* consciousness,” a Chicana feminist consciousness that integrates parts of Chicana cultural identity that would be empowering. In the 1990s, Ana Castillo published *Massacre of the Dreamers*, in which she uses the term *Xicanisma* to name an alternative feminist identity rooted in “Mexic Amerindian” beliefs and spirituality. In the realm of spirituality and religion, Chicana feminists have also written about and appropriated the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Lady of Caridad del Cobre, the Virgin of Providencia, and the Virgin of Altagracia, among others. These different manifestations of the Virgin Mary are considered patrons of Mexico, Cuba, Puerto Rico, and the Dominican Republic, respectively, and have sometimes been reclaimed by Chicana/Latina feminists to celebrate women’s power and rewrite patriarchal ideologies that discursively force women into a virgin–whore dichotomy.

The enduring definition and legacy of Chicana/Latina feminisms are in its intersectional and collaborative approach to activism and cultural and intellectual production. Since the 1990s, hundreds, and indeed thousands, of women have been killed or disappeared along the U.S.–Mexico border in the Ciudad Juárez region, a phenomenon that the popular media have termed a “femicide.” In response, Chicana/Latina feminists have worked in coalition with leaders local to the area, forming a transnational coalition to work for justice for the dead and/or missing women and their families. Moreover, movements for environmental justice; immigration rights; and labor organizing for domestic, service, and agricultural workers have all had strong Chicana/Latina feminist leaders and organizers. (MJV)

_Chicana (Chican@)_.

This term has a long and complicated history because it is sometimes understood and misunderstood at the same time. It basically represents people of Mexican descent, who since the 1960s have wanted to express a new social consciousness about their condition within the United States. According to Tino Villanueva in *Chicanos: Antología histórica y literaria* (1980), who is probably the most reliable authority on its etymology, “Chicano” derives from the word “Mexica” (pronounced “Mex-ee-ca”), which was what the Aztecs called themselves when the Spaniards invaded Mexico in 1519. As one can see, the words “Mexico” and “Mexican” directly derive from the same term, and thus “Chicano” is a shortened form of “Mexicano.” It is sometimes written “Xicano” by some groups to make the connection that much more obvious while emphasizing the indigenous roots.
“Chicano” has probably existed for centuries, but its folkloric origins made it an unofficial term that floated sometimes undetected, until it acquired a political connotation in the 1960s with the civil rights and ethnic movements. The youth then adopted the term to synthesize and collapse all the previous labels used, such as Hispanic, Hispano, Latin American, Mexican American, Spanish speaker, and pocho. Those in older generations have been more reluctant to adopt it, often considering it too political or too pejorative for its class consciousness; others see it as a way of distancing themselves from being Mexican or for being too fixated on their indigenous roots. No doubt the term gained notoriety as an identity label within the Chicano Movement (1965–1980) in pursuing progressive social issues while challenging the kind of assimilation policies that had tried to erase their Mexican background. Therefore, at times it counted as a badge of courage or a label of pride to remind American society of the ethnic origins of people of Mexican descent. “Chicano” became one of the central concepts of self-identity that propelled a new consciousness in connection with embracing “Aztlán” as a mythic homeland and Spanglish as the most viable form of language expression. Together, Chicano, Aztlán, and Spanglish formed the foundational triangle of a unique community that had hopes of reinventing itself. It should also be noted that both Mario Suárez in “El Hoyo” (1947) and José Antonio Villarreal in Pocho (1959), use the term Chicano to refer to the Mexican and Mexican American inhabitants of the local barrio.

In the contemporary context, we use “Chicano/a” or Chican@ in contrast to just “Chicano” to highlight the importance of gender inclusivity, as a growing number of scholars have done since the 1990s, when the “/a” became more widely used. A gendered language, Spanish uses an ending of “o” to denote a male subject and as the default to refer to both male and female subjects; however, the inclusion of the “/a” visibly foregrounds the inclusion of female subjects. This term “Chicano/a” first emerged with the new field of Chicana feminist theory and criticism in the late 1970s, but did not become widely used until the emergence of Third-Wave feminism in the 1990s, a movement that articulated the interconnection of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class with feminist ideologies and politics, and subsequently fomented an increase in the prominence of Chicana/Latina feminisms. (FAL/MJV/DWU)

CHICANO DETECTIVE FICTION. Though detective fiction has existed in American letters for more than a century, it did not emerge as a subgenre of Chicano fiction until the late 1970s with the novel The Waxen Image (1977) by Rudy Apodaca. However, the cultural context and setting of this novel are international—African—and the protagonist detective of this mystery novel is not Chicano. Several years later, well-known Chicano novelist
Rolando Hinojosa-Smith began to experiment with detective fiction and published *Partners in Crime: A Rafe Buenrostro Mystery* (1985)—the eighth title in his Klail City Death Trip Series—wherein he introduces and features investigator Rafe Buenrostro of the Belken County Homicide Squad and his official counterparts across the Rio Grande as they endeavor to keep the Texas–Mexico borderlands of the lower Rio Grande valley free of crime. Though Hinojosa follows the conventional patterns and motifs of detective genre in this novel, his introduction of a Chicano detective protagonist and southwestern cultural and physical settings became the model for other Chicano detective novels that followed. Hinojosa continued the genre with *Ask a Policeman* (1998), also a Rafe Buenrostro mystery set in the U.S.–Mexican borderlands of the lower Rio Grande valley.

During the decade of the 1990s and the beginning of the new millennium, Rudolfo A. Anaya, who established himself as a pioneer of Chicano fiction in the early 1970s, also ventured into the mystery genre, first with *Albuquerque* (1992), then with a cycle of four Sonny Baca mystery novels—*Zia Summer* (1995), *Rio Grande Fall* (1996), *Shaman Winter* (1999), and *Jémez Spring* (2005)—in which private eye and Chicano crime fighter Sonny Baca and the forces of good battle el brujo Raven and other forces of evil on the New Mexican landscape. In the narratives of this series, Anaya incorporates imagery, characters, and a spiritual setting replete with Chicano and Native American myth and magic analogous to that of his earlier fiction. Anaya continued the gumshoe genre with *Curse of the Chupacabra* (2006) and *Chupacabra and Roswell UFO* (2008), where he introduced sleuth heroine Rosa Medina, a folklorist teaching at a southern California state university. As she investigates the folklore of chupacabra (a bloodsucking monster rumored to inhabit Mexico and the U.S. Southwest), the protagonist engages in a series of mysterious events that bring her face to face with the chupacabra and other powers of evil. In both novels, the presence of the chupacabra is metaphorical for those forces that enslave and suck the life force out of our Chicano youth.

In 1992, Lucha Corpi, a Chicana poet who emerged in the late 1970s, took on the detective genre with the publication of *Eulogy for a Brown Angel*, her first detective novel in what was to become the Gloria Damasco Detective Series, and gave birth to Gloria Dasacco, the first Chicana feminist detective. In *Eulogy for a Brown Angel*, the somewhat clairvoyant Dasacco solves the mysterious murder of a young child that occurred during the 1970 Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War in Los Angeles. Like *Eulogy*, each of the three other novels in the Gloria Damasco series (*Cactus Blood*, 1995; *Black Widow’s Wardrobe*, 1999; and *Death at Solstice*, 2009) is somehow linked to a significant moment or event of the Chicano Movement. Such is the case also for *Crimson Moon* (2004), a Brown Angel Mystery, in which private detectives Dora Saldaña and Justin Escobar investigate a crime
that leads them back to the Chicano Movement struggles and student upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s. In each of these detective novels, Corpi addresses many social and political issues relative to the experience of Chican@s within the context of contemporary American society.

A fourth major representative of Chicano detective fiction is Manuel Ramos, an attorney by profession and a detective novelist by craft, who has published eight novels, seven of which are in the detective genre. Five of these works, including *The Ballad of Rocky Ruiz* (1993), *The Ballad of Gato Guerrero* (1994), *The Last Client of Luis Móntez* (1996), *Blues for the Buffalo* (1997), and *Brown-on-Brown* (2003), constitute a series of sleuth fiction featuring Luis Móntez, a street-smart but somewhat burned-out legal aid attorney “near the end of his rope,” and a former activist heavily immersed in the politics, history, and culture of the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. While each of the novels in the Luis Móntez crime series is quite different in story line and time, they do share some commonalities. Though the novels cover a span of 10 years (1993–2003), they share a common protagonist, Luis Móntez, and a common setting, metropolitan Denver, Colorado, and its surroundings. Typical of the genre, each of these novels is a compelling thriller and at the same time offers sharp social commentary about what is occurring in metropolitan Denver during the time of the action.

Of his detective fiction, Ramos states: “I write crime fiction—stories set within the Latino/Chicano community of North America that involve a crime and some type of injustice, . . . [M]y protagonists come from that community, so the culture, traditions, history, politics, and mythology of that community appear in my stories.” This statement can also be applied to the novels *Moony’s Road to Hell: A Mystery* (2002) and *Desperado: A Mile High Noir* (2012), both of which follow the “whodunit” format but portray different sleuth protagonists than the previous works do.

difficult topics, such as the protagonist’s battle with alcoholism, his psychological struggles with being rejected by his family for his sexual orientation, and the trauma of losing a partner to AIDS.

As an author, Nava utilizes the written word to create a vision that did not exist when he was a youth. In an interview with critic María Lucero Ortiz, he explained his motives for creating Henry Rios by citing a comment from Toni Morrison: “She once said that she wrote the kind of books she wished she could have had to read when she was growing up as an African American. I wish that I had read books with characters like Henry Ríos when I was growing up as a gay Latino.”

While the 26 mystery novels of these five authors represent the vast majority of the Chicano detective fiction in Chicano letters, other writers of the genre can also be cited. Some of the other salient writers of this genre are Rudy Apodaca (The Waxen Image, 1977; Pursuit, 2003), Alicia Gaspar de Alba (Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders, 2006), Martín Limón (Buddha’s Money, 1998), Ricardo Means Ybarra (Brotherhood of Dolphins, 1997), Sheila Ortiz Taylor (Coachella, 1998), and Sergio Troncoso (The Nature of Truth, 2003). For a complete overview and critical analysis of the genre, see Chicano Detective Fiction: A Critical Study of Five Novelists, by Susan Baker Sotelo, and Brown Gumshoes: Detective Fiction and the Search for Chicana/o Identity, by Ralph E. Rodríguez. (DWU)

CHICANO MOVEMENT, THE. An extension of the U.S. civil rights movements of the 1960s, the Chicano Movement, also known as el Movimiento Chicano, refers to the political, social, and cultural unrest that exploded in Chicano communities for a decade across the United States, from the mid-1960s through the late-1970s. Bound to earlier Mexican American activism dating back to the World War II era, the Chicano Movement encompassed a broad section of issues, including the organization and unionization of farmworkers in California and across the U.S. Southwest, headed by César Chávez, Dolores Huerta, and United Farm Workers Organizing Committee (UFWOC), which also fought for better working conditions and better pay for farmworkers; the land grant movement, led by Reies López Tijerina in New Mexico, which demanded restoration of New Mexican land grants to the descendants of their Spanish colonial and Mexican owners; the movement for justice and equality for Mexican Americans in the Southwest and the plight of urban Chicanos, headed by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales and his Crusade for Justice in Colorado; the Chicano student movement in high schools and on university campuses throughout the Southwest, demanding a better and more culturally relevant education via curricular reform and Chicano studies programs, for which El Plan de Santa Bárbara: A Chicano Plan for Higher Education (1969) served as a blueprint; the founding of La Raza Unida Party by José Angel Gutiérrez as a third-party force for political power
and political rights; and Chicano opposition to the U.S. war in Vietnam. The Chicano Movement also opened space among Chicanas to reflect on their role and place within the larger movement. Although the opposition to the war was generally viewed as masculine-oriented, this was also a time when Chicanas began to demand equity and egalitarianism, thus paving the way for early manifestations of a Chicana feminist movement parallel to but somewhat autonomous from the male social agenda.

The Chicano Movement also gave rise to many other organizations, which advocated for its causes throughout the country. For example, the Brown Berets, a militant nationalist organization founded in 1967, sought to improve the Chicano community through civic involvement, radical political action, and community mobilization. Chicano student groups such as the United Mexican American Students (UMAS), Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA), Mexican American Youth Association (MAYA) in California, and Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO) in Texas were established in universities and colleges in the mid-1960s.

The Chicano Movement also launched a Chicano cultural renaissance, which spawned a literary and art explosion among Chicanos in the 1960s and 1970s. It is during this era that El Teatro Campesino was founded by Luis Valdez to take the plight of the farmworker to the American public, and that the first works of contemporary Chicano literature were published (e.g., I Am Joaquín; Chicano: 25 Pieces of a Chicano Mind; Floricanto en Aztlán; Canto y Grito mi liberación; ‘. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra’; Bless Me, Ultima; Arise, Chicano!: And Other Poems). As Cordelia Candelaria notes in the Encyclopedia of Latino Popular Culture, “these Chicano-identified writers made important contributions to the common language of cultural pride and political solidarity in the face of ongoing inequities against Mexican-origin people in the United States” (150). (DWU/FAL)

See also CHICANO RENAISSANCE.

CHICANO RENAISSANCE. Originally coined by Philip Ortego in a 1970 article, the term “Chicano Renaissance” indicates that Chicano literature up to that point in history had experienced a dormant stage not in and of itself, but as perceived from the outside. The general notion was that Chicano@s had not been generators of literary expression, but upon close examination examples could be readily identified all the way back to 1848. It referred to the period from 1965 to about 1980 as a way of declaring that the previously ignored literary expression had reached a point of starting a whole new stage of renewed production by generating keen interest and the cultivation of new styles, themes, and subjects.

The Chicano Renaissance set the stage for a coming-of-age body of works that impacted American literary circles by challenging the canon and proclaiming the dawn of a new kind of writing. At the same time, this spurred an
unparalleled level and quantity of works that clearly attested to the creation of a new brand of literature that examined the Chicano experience via a working-class lens, the legitimacy of Spanglish as a viable vehicle of expression, and characters who experienced an in-betweenness. An examination of Chicano culture propelled much of the literature to vindicate Chicanos’ social position while making claims of self-affirmation and pride about content and substance. Consequently, the Chicano Renaissance became a modern literary movement wherein Chicanos and Chicanas reclaimed their voice, redefined their position as agents of history, and asserted their life experiences as legitimate sources of literary construction. (FAL)

**CHUPACABRA(S).** Literally meaning “goat sucker” for its blood-thirsty habits, the chupacabra’s somewhat reptilian extraterrestrial origins and whereabouts are still shrouded in mystery and intrigue. Originally sighted in Puerto Rico in 1995, this figure, which many biologists regard as urban legend, has spread through most of the Americas, even reaching Russia and the Philippines. Puerto Rican comedian Silverio Pérez first coined the name, and its sightings have spread to many obscure parts of the globe. On the other hand, cultural critic William Calvo claims that the chupacabra is a popular phantasmagoric creation of those along the U.S.–Mexican border who have experienced the wrath of neoliberal policies. In addition, Rudolfo Anaya’s mystery science fiction novels, *Curse of the Chupacabra* (2006) and *Chupacabra and Roswell UFO* (2008), have contributed to a literary representation, further expanding its influence in the imagination while associating it with extraterrestrials. (FAL)

**CINCO DE MAYO, EL (THE FIFTH OF MAY).** Often confused by people outside of Mexico as the celebration of Mexico’s independence from Spain, Cinco de Mayo actually commemorates Mexico’s victory over invading French forces at Puebla de Los Angeles, a small city near Mexico City, on 5 May 1862. The French invasion occurred primarily because in 1860, when Benito Juárez was elected to the presidency, Mexico was still suffering financial ruin as a result of the Mexican–American War (1846–1848) and the Mexican Civil War of 1858, and President Juárez was forced to declare a temporary moratorium on Mexico’s debts to several European governments. While England and Spain chose to negotiate with Mexico, France, ruled by Napoleon III (1808–1873), decided to use the opportunity to colonize Mexico. So late in 1861, a well-armed French fleet invaded the gulf coast of Mexico along the state of Veracruz and began to march toward Mexico City, 600 miles away. While the invading French forces lost that initial battle on 5 May 1862, they were not really defeated. The Mexican victory at Puebla merely delayed the French seizure of the Mexican government, which even-
tually occurred on 10 April 1864, when the reinforced French army seized Puebla and entered Mexico City, driving President Juárez and his government into retreat and installing Ferdinand Maximilian Joseph as the emperor of Mexico (1864–1867). Nevertheless, that initial battle at Puebla was indeed a great victory.

As a holiday, Cinco de Mayo is observed primarily in the state of Puebla, where the original battle occurred, although other parts of the country also commemorate the event. Celebrations include military parades, re-creations of the Battle of Puebla, and other festive events. For the Mexicans, however, Cinco de Mayo is not a federal holiday, so offices, banks, and stores remain open.

In the United States, Cinco de Mayo, like 16 de Septiembre, has traditionally been one of the fiestas patrias (patriotic holidays) among Mexican immigrants for celebrating and encouraging pride in their Mexican culture and heritage, particularly in areas with substantial Mexican and Mexican American populations. However, with the Chicano Movement in the 1960s the date took on an additional significance. For Chicano activists, it became a symbol of resistance against social, political, and cultural oppression and was celebrated with marches and rallies, including political speeches, Mexican folk dancing, and traditional foods. Since the 1980s, major beer companies and other commercial interests in the United States have appropriated the Mexican holiday, with their products and amenities focused on Mexican food, beverages, and other festivities, thus minimizing its original significance. (DWU)

CISNEROS, SANDRA (1954–). Poet, novelist, essayist, short story writer, and children’s literature writer. Born on 20 December 1954 and reared in Chicago, Illinois, Sandra is the only daughter and third child in a working-class Mexican family of seven children. As a child, she lived in various parts of Chicago because the family frequently migrated from one neighborhood to another, until 1966, when her parents purchased a two-story bungalow in Humboldt Park. She attended local Catholic schools and continued her education at Chicago’s Loyola University, where she majored in English and graduated with a BA in 1976. She then enrolled in the Writers’ Workshop at the University of Iowa and was awarded an MFA in creative writing in 1978.

Cisneros’s interest in literature and writing began at a relatively early age, as her mother insisted that she have a library card and encouraged her to develop her intellect and imagination by reading. As a result of this encouragement, she began to read extensively, enjoying such works as Lewis Carroll’s Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland and Virginia Lee Burton’s The Little House, among others. At Josephinum High School, she wrote her first poems
“amidst the tumult of the Vietnam War and ecological awareness . . . and began to be known around the school as the poet.” And later she also served as editor of the school’s literary magazine.

Cisneros did not find her true literary voice until she attended the University of Iowa’s Writers’ Workshop in the late 1970s. She was in a graduate seminar on memory and the imagination, and during a discussion of Gaston Bachelard’s *Poetics of Space* and his metaphor of a house, she had a literary epiphany. In the introduction to *The House on Mango Street* she observes:

> The conversation I remember was about the house of memory—the attic, the stairwells, the cellar. . . . Then it occurred to me that none of the books in this class or in any of my classes, in all the years of my education, had ever discussed a house like mine. My classmates had come from real houses, real neighborhoods, ones they could point to, but what did I know? . . . I asked myself what I could write about that my classmates could not. I didn’t know what I wanted exactly, but I did have enough sense to know what I didn’t want. I didn’t want to sound like my classmates; I didn’t want to keep imitating the writers I had been reading. The voices were right for them but not for me. . . . [It] was out of this negative experience that I found something positive: my own voice. (xiii–xiv)

As a result of her participation in the Iowa Workshop and in particular the *Poetics of Space* discussion, Cisneros began to write about topics and conflicts directly related to her immediate cultural milieu and barrio upbringing, including her dual cultural identity, feelings of alienation, degradation associated with poverty, and a Chicana feminist identity. We first observe this “innovative” voice in *Bad Boys* (1980), a small chapbook of childhood memories in which she recalls individuals, themes, and issues associated with the Latino barrio community in which she was nurtured.


*My Wicked Wicked Ways*, Cisneros’s first major collection of poetry, was originally written as her master’s thesis at the University of Iowa in 1978. Revised and enlarged, the thesis was published as a book in 1987. In addition to the poems published earlier in the chapbook *Bad Boys*, the volume also contains other poems that had previously appeared in literary journals and anthologies, such as *Nuestro, Revista Chicano-Riqueña, Quarterly West, The Spoon River Quarterly, Mango, Third Woman*, and *Banyon Anthology 2*. 
The volume of 60 poems is divided into four sections, each of which deals with a particular stage in the poet’s life-journey. Section I, “1200 South/2100 West,” is a compilation of childhood memories linked to the Chicago neighborhood in which she was raised. With little exception, Cisneros projects it as a place of poverty, despair, and violence, as opposed to the nostalgic safe haven of childhood so often portrayed in childhood memories. In a 1997 interview with Martha Statz, she observes, “To me the barrio was a repressive community. I found it frightening and very terrifying for women. The future for women in the barrio is not a wonderful one. You don’t wander around ‘these mean streets.’ You stay at home. If you do have to get somewhere, you take your life in your hands.” Section II, “My Wicked Wicked Ways,” establishes the context for her “wickedness,” and she begins to define herself as a sexually liberated, feminist voice whose destiny or “Solitary Fate” it is to “write poems.” In Section III, “Other Countries,” she recounts her travels and experiences abroad, in various countries of Europe. She describes her delight at her freedom to experience unfamiliar lands: “To wander darkness like a man, Ilona. / My heart stood up and sang.” Section IV, “The Rodrigo Poems,” is a sequence of poems in which the poetic voice reflects on her long-term amorous but deceitful relationship with Rodrigo, who unbeknownst to her is married: “What you said was / I do not love you. / Simply. / Not once. / Not ever. / Not now. / Never” (87).

Loose Woman: Poems, Cisneros’s second major volume of poetry, is a collection of 60 poems in which the poetic voice is a high-spirited, liberated female who takes pride and pleasure in her womanhood and sexual autonomy. The work’s title comes from a poem of the same name that projects the overall defiant tone of the collection and speaks to Cisneros’s vigorous sexual independence: “They say I’m a beast. / And feast on it. When all along / I thought that’s what a woman was. / They say I’m a bitch. / Or witch. I’ve claimed the same and never winced. / . . . / I’m an aim-well, / shoot-sharp, / sharp-tongued, / sharp-thinking, / fast-speaking, / foot-loose, / loose-tongued, / let-loose, / woman-on-the-loose / loose woman. / Beware, honey” (112–114). Loose Woman is divided into three parts. Part 1, “Little Clown, My Heart,” consists of 17 poems that celebrate the passion and pleasures of love and sex from the perspective of a powerful and fiercely independent woman. Part 2, “The Heart Rounds Up the Usual Suspects,” consists of 21 poems that express a woman’s need for male companionship and affection which, when absent, leads to moments of loneliness and despair. The poems collected in “Heart My Lovely Hobo,” the final part of Loose Woman, express a much more defiant and independent viewpoint on feminine sexuality and womanhood. Poems such as “Black Lace Bra Kind of Woman,” “Down There,” “Los Desnudos: A Triptych,” “A Man in My Bed Like Cracker Crumbs,” and “Loose Woman” all project powerful images that celebrate a femininity that rejects patriarchal, societal, and/or cultural approval.
Cisneros has also excelled as a writer of fiction, having successfully published two novels and a collection of short stories with mainstream presses. The first of these works is her novel *The House on Mango Street*, originally published by *Arte Público Press* in 1984, which was subsequently taken over and reprinted by *Vintage Books* in 1991. Since its introduction in 1984, the work has been very well received and is widely read in classrooms of all levels throughout the U.S. educational system, probably her most widely read work. To date, nearly six million copies have been sold in English, and the work has been translated into many different languages, including Catalan, Chinese, Croatian, Dutch, French, Galician, German, Greek, Iranian, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Norwegian, Serbo-Croatian, Spanish, Taiwanese, and Thai. *The House on Mango Street* was granted the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1985.

Narrated in the first person from the perspective of a preadolescent child, *The House on Mango Street* is a coming-of-age novel that tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, a 13-year-old Chicana growing up in a predominantly Latino barrio in the city of Chicago during the 1960s. Divided into 44 interrelated literary sketches ranging from two paragraphs to four pages in length, each of the short narratives describes different experiences of Esperanza as she matures and discovers life and self-identity within her community. Young Esperanza first tells of her family’s recent move to the house on Mango Street, a far cry from the dream house she wished for: a house with “running water and pipes that worked . . . with real stairs, not hallway stairs, but stairs inside like the houses on T.V. . . . with a basement and at least three washrooms . . . a white house with trees around it, a great big yard and grass growing without a fence” (8). Instead, their “new” house on Mango Street is small, run-down, and overcrowded, and Esperanza doesn’t want to stay there. However, the house on Mango Street is now indeed her new home, and Esperanza must come to terms with it and adapt to her new community.

In 2002, Cisneros published her second novel *Caramelo, or, Puro Cuento*, and dedicated the work to her father, Alfredo Cisneros del Moral, an immigrant from Mexico City to the city of Chicago, where he became an upholsterer and raised a family of seven children, including the writer. This tour de force quickly became a literary landmark in 2002 for its ambitious structure, filled with multiple layers of meaning. Considered a totalizing narrative, it traces the various generational strands of the Reyes family’s journey between the United States and Mexico. The main narrator, Celaya, serves as the epicenter of the narrative that shares story lines with other characters, namely, her parents, her grandmother, siblings, other relatives, acquaintances, and peripheral characters. On many occasions, Celaya speaks for them, but in other cases they impose their will by telling their point of view, thus altering and sometimes contradicting—even undermining—the hegemonic position that Celaya holds in the novel. The saga’s epic nature becomes the driving
CISNEROS, SANDRA (1954–)

force of showing how a Chicano family lives between two worlds, how they shift and adapt, how they defy the perceptions of normativity in both the United States and Mexico, and, most important, how they carve out a unique existence between two cultural-historical spaces. The richly nuanced narrative juggles numerous issues, such as self-identity; concepts of nationality within an “invented country” caught between here and there; various forms of Mexicanness, methods of expression—thanks to Spanglish; how machismo and femininity are negotiated; creating a fictive voice (the “hocicona” or loud-mouthed female speaker versus the passive narrator); and acquiring legitimacy and authority. Cisneros’s text centers on how to weave a multi-layered story, thus using the Mexican shawl, a “caramelo rebozo,” as a many colored “caramel” shawl that brings all stories together, much in the form of a narrative matrix. Such a complex family story and history cannot be told in simple terms while also concentrating on recovering personal memory, which together constitute a sense of history. The novel does not only concentrate on telling a family’s history, it also focuses on how to capture such a trajectory and how to tell it. This self-referentiality and textual self-consciousness serve to introduce many theoretical questions on narrativity; for example, what is a singular view, what is truth, what is perception, what is recalled, what is filtered, and ultimately what is divulged—through screens of realism that in effect point to narrative constructions understood in postmodern terms. The result is a high level of interaction within the novel that posits possibilities of portraying a meta-story, in which the main story line is interrupted, sometimes disjointed, or clarified by recollections and footnotes. Caramelo, then, becomes various stories in one that highlight the sophisticated development of the Chicano novel in the 21st century, bringing notoriety and fame to the author and, by extension, Chicano literature.

Cisneros’s third work of fiction comes by way of Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories (1991), a collection of short fiction echoing many of the themes and topics presented by Cisneros in her other works. The collection features 22 narratives ranging in length from several paragraphs to 29 pages, with a general focus on interpersonal relationships between the sexes. Narrated primarily in the first person, the stories are divided into three distinct sections, each of which is preceded by a quote from a well-known Mexican song that sheds light on the general subject of the section; the stories show a developmental progression from childhood to adulthood.

Introduced by a quote from a child’s song written by Cri-Cri, the first section, “My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn,” features seven narratives that reflect memories of innocent prepubescent females who are able to perceive the “wonder in life” despite their poverty and living in the barrio. The section’s title story, for example, introduces an unnamed only-child narrator and her best friend, Lucy Anguiano (from Bad Boys and Mango Street), the “Texas girl who smells like corn,” as they innocently engage in unadulterated
childhood games and activities. The girls jump off an old pissy mattress, “scratch each other’s mosquito bites so they’ll itch, trade shoes and wear them on their hands, run home backwards and run home frontwards, look under the house where the rats hide, pick at their scabs and eat them, sneeze at the cat, cut paper dolls they themselves draw, and color in their clothes with crayons” (3).

The collection’s second section, “One Holy Night,” is preceded by a quote from the popular Mexican song “Piel Canela” (“Me importas tu, y tú, y tú, y nadie más que tú” = I love you, and you, and you and no one else but you), suggesting that there is nothing in life more important than love and passion. This section contains two narratives that portray the sexual coming-of-age of the young women under very unfortunate circumstances. The title story, “One Holy Night,” introduces the reader to an innocent teenage girl who sells fruit from a pushcart in the streets of Chicago and is deceived into having sex by one of her customers, a 37-year-old man named Chato, a violent serial killer. Chato, a.k.a. Boy Baby, tells the girl that his name is Chaq Uxmal Paloquín, from an ancient line of Mayan monarchs, and entices her into becoming “Ixchel, his Queen” after undergoing a particular initiation or rite of passage. Needless to say, the 13-year-old falls for Chato’s lie, and he has his way with her.

Section 3 of Woman Hollering Creek, “There Was a Man, There Was a Woman,” is preceded by the words “Me estoy muriendo / y tú como si nada” (I am dying of love and you seem unaffected) from the Mexican song “Puñalada Trapera,” which suggests that the stories therein deal in one way or another with unrequited love and/or insufferable pain in the face of indifference. Indeed, such is the case in the section’s title story, “Woman Hollering Creek,” which narrates the story of Cleófilas Enriqueta Hernández, a young Mexican woman who marries Juan Pedro Martínez Sánchez, a Mexican American, in the hope that her life will be transformed into the kind of romance she knows only from telenovelas (Latino soap operas), magazines, and romance novels. However, early in their marriage, “when they were barely man and wife” (48), Juan Pedro begins to physically abuse her, and the dream marriage she fantasizes never materializes. Instead she experiences several years of continued beatings, infidelity, despair, and loneliness; and she begins to understand the reality of her marriage: that there was “no happy ending in sight” (52). In light of this intuition, Cleófilas resolves to seek a way to escape from Juan Pedro and return to her father’s home.

In Have You Seen Marie? (2012), Cisneros collaborates with illustrator Ester Hernández in a lyrically narrated, richly illustrated fable for adults about a woman’s search for a missing cat in the wake of her mother’s death. Narrated in the first person, the story involves two women searching for a missing cat over a period of three days and touches on themes of loss and grief in a way that all ages can relate to. In the afterword to the story,
Cisneros explains that she was inspired to write the book while dealing with the personal grief of losing her own mother. “I knew as I wrote this story that it was helping to bring me back to myself. It’s essential to create when the spirit is dying. It doesn’t matter what. Sometimes it helps to draw. Sometimes to plant a garden. Sometimes to make a Valentine’s card. Or to sing, or create an altar. Creating nourishes the spirit” (93).

*A House of My Own: Stories from My Life*, represents another accomplishment of self-reflection in the form of a memoir. The work is key because she returns to the trope of “home,” which she developed so effectively in her first major novel, *The House on Mango Street*. She now explains and qualifies many points not originally made clear in her landmark book. In mainly essays with a poet’s edge, she writes about family and her struggles, both as an emerging writer and later as a writer with fame. She opens up to reveal many unexpected aspects about dealing with such extremes, including a period of depression only she can articulate. Her dazzling style once again invites us into her personal space to understand one of her central concerns, home, and how she has dealt with it, shaped it, and been inspired by it. In the process, Cisneros offers aphorisms to learn by, and other times she tells how her aesthetics crystallized. But perhaps the greatest truth we can extract from the book along with her evolution as a writer is her Mark Twain-esque philosophy: “The book is the sum of our highest potential. Writers, alas, are the rough drafts” (208).

Cisneros has received numerous awards for her work, including the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation (1985) and the Paisano Dobie Fellowship (1986) for *The House on Mango Street*, the PEN Center West Award for Best Fiction and the Lannan Foundation Literary Award for *Woman Hollering Creek and Other Stories* in 1991, the MacArthur Foundation Fellowship in 1995, the Texas Medal of the Arts Award in 2003, and the Premio Napoli for *Caramelo* in 2005. In addition, she is the founder of two organizations that serve writers, the Macondo Foundation (now administered by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center) and the Alfredo Cisneros del Moral Foundation. She is also the founder of the Latino MacArthur Fellows (Los MacArturos). She currently lives in central Mexico, where she continues to write. Her latest work, *A House of My Own: Stories from My Life*, was released in October 2015. (DWU/FAL)

*See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.*

**CODE SWITCHING.** A linguistics term, code switching refers to the practice of alternating between two or more languages or varieties of language in the context of a single conversation. A common occurrence among the children of immigrants and other bilingual or multilingual speakers and inhabi-
tants of border regions and ethnic communities where different language communities tend to overlap and intermingle, the practice occurs far more often in conversation than in writing. While the practice of code switching is complex and depends on a variety of factors (e.g., location, class, age, relationship between speakers), it certainly is a reality for many Latino/as in the U.S. Southwest and other regions of the United States (e.g., New York City, Miami, Chicago) where there are large pockets of bilingual Hispanics. In such areas, it is also very common to hear Spanglish, a hybrid vernacular comprised of a mixture of Spanish and English. In their use of Spanglish, Latino speakers naturally and fluidly switch back and forth between Spanish and English as if they encompassed a single language. Because the speakers are Spanish/English bilingual, they have no problems understanding and actively participating in these conversations. However, such would not be the case for monolingual Spanish and/or English speakers.

Although not as widespread in writing as in conversation, code switching via the use of Spanglish is also present in Chicano/Latino literature, especially in poetry and theater. Early Chicano poets such as Alurista, Angela de Hoyos, José Montoya, Ricardo Sánchez, and Raúl Salinas, and Nuyorican writers including Sandra María Esteves, Tato Laviera, Pedro Pietri, Miguel Piñero, and Piri Thomas, readily utilized the code-switching technique. For bilingual writers such as these and others, switching between Spanish and English is not a capricious act. On the contrary, it is a very conscious decision on the part of the writers to promote the legitimacy of the Spanish language in American society and to generate a desired literary effect. Of the early Chicano writers, this artistic use of Spanglish is best realized in the works of José Montoya and Alurista. While the former employs code switching in poems such as “La jefita,” “El Louie” (1969), and “El sol y los de abajo” (1972) to evoke his sociocultural and linguistic realities within the context of American society, Alurista does so more experimentally and metaphorically to provide stylistic contrast or to convey particular information regarding his own cultural and/or social values. See, for example, “Mis ojos hinchados,” “Must be the season of the Witch,” and “We’ve played Cowboys,” from his first collection, Floricanto (1971).

For other writers, code switching or the use of Spanglish in their literary works is more political and rhetorical. Gloria Anzaldúa, for example, in the preface of Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987), explains:

The switching of “codes” in this book from English to Castilian Spanish to the North Mexican dialect to Tex-Mex to a sprinkling of Nahuatl to a mixture of all of these, reflects my language, a new language—the language of the Borderlands. There, at the juncture of cultures, languages cross-pollinate and are revitalized; they die and are born. Presently this infant language, this bastard language, Chicano Spanish, is not approved by any society. But we Chicanos no longer feel that we need to beg
entrance, that we need always to make the first overture—to translate to Anglos, Mexicans and Latinos, apology blurring out of our mouths with every step. Today we ask to be met halfway. (DWU)

See also CALÓ.

CON SAFOS. Although ambiguous, this expression appears with considerable regularity as a signature in Chicano graffiti. Its origins are unknown, suggesting that the graffiti “artist” is both reclaiming the space and challenging whomever might want to erase it. The expression implies that the artist who writes it possesses authority and the ability to escape from any reprisals by “safarse” or “slipping away.” (FAL)

CON SAFOS: REFLECTIONS OF LIFE IN THE BARRIO. Published quarterly whenever possible, this journal, at times called a magazine, took Chicano journals into unexplored, daring, uninhibited discursive terrains of highly vanguard and sometimes wacky, free-spirited, and unorthodox aesthetics in the midst of the Chicano Movement. It was founded in Los Angeles, California, in 1968 and ended with volume 8 in 1972. Its physical presentation is comparable to a Chicano Mad Magazine, with its street-smarts and uncompromising layout. The journal emerged out of an impulse to depict barrio peoples and their perspectives in a straightforward manner with few ornaments. The result is a hard-core barrio soul, as characterized by Chicano caló (argot or slang), graffiti, art, barriology exams, soul-searching articles on identity, and other relevant social issues, while including samples of early outstanding writings by many later canonized authors (such as Oscar Zeta Acosta, Joe L. Navarro, and Mario Suárez). Curiously, the editors tried to be as inclusive as possible toward their readership, providing an extensive glossary of either Spanish or Chicano slang. Despite its unconventional and zany humor, the journal contained several serious essays on the unfolding Chicano Movement, providing intimate insight into its sociology, politics, philosophy, and language. The journal became a benchmark for unbridled Chicano creativity in terms of style and focus while representing a Chicano Movement zeitgeist and lifestyle. (FAL)

CORPI, LUCHA (1945–). Novelist, poet, educator, and children’s book writer. A retired teacher of adult education in the Oakland, California, Unified School District, Lucha Corpi was born and spent her formative years in Jáltipan, Veracruz, Mexico, a small tropical village on the Gulf of Mexico. In 1964, she married and emigrated to the United States with her new husband, Guillermo Hernández. The couple settled in Berkeley, California, where Hernández attended the University of California. It was through this relationship that Corpi was first introduced to the world of literature, including the
classics and literary works from the European literary tradition, as well as the classics from Mexico and Latin America. After six years of marriage the couple divorced, and Corpi continued her own education, eventually completing both a BA and an MA in comparative literature from the University of California at Berkeley (1975) and San Francisco State University (1979), respectively.

While studying at the University of California at Berkeley in the 1970s, Corpi became engaged in and actively participated in the Chicano civil rights movement. She was a founding member of Aztlan Cultural, a cultural arts service, and worked with the Comité Popular Educativo de la Raza to build a network of bilingual child-care centers in Oakland. Though she had already experimented with writing short prose (she wrote an autobiographical sketch titled “Tres mujeres” as early as 1970, though it was not published until 1977), it was during this period that Corpi also embarked on her literary journey as a creative writer, mostly in the genre of poetry.

Corpi’s published poetry first appeared in the anthology *Fireflight: Three Latin American Poets* (1976) and was followed by a complete collection titled *Palabras de mediodía/Noon Words* (1980). Written in Spanish, the language in which she was nurtured and the language of her feelings, with English translations provided by Catherine Rodriguez-Nieto, Corpi’s early poetry is generally characterized by a profound sense of lyricism and personal reflection, as she explores memories and experiences from her Mexican past and Berkeley present. On one level, her early work contemplates vanished love and the feelings of loneliness and isolation caused by its absence, and it also reveals intimate feelings of ambivalence about her status as an immigrant living in a society that rejects her. In addition, the early poems evoke moments and images of her previous existence in Mexico and the traditional values and social mores instilled in her by that culture.

However, as she nostalgically reminisces about the places and Mexican culture that nurtured her, Corpi also questions the limitations placed on her as a woman by the traditions and culture of her mother country. This is particularly evident in a sequence known as the “Marina Poems” (“Marina madre/Marina Mother,” “Marina virgen/Marina Virgin,” “La hija del diablo/The Devil’s Daughter,” “Ella [Marina ausente]/She [Marina Distant]”), in which she examines the role of women throughout Mexican history. In her third collection of poetry, *Variaciones sobre una tempestad/Variations on a Storm*, published in 1990, 10 years after *Palabras de mediodía/Noon Words*, Corpi continues to explore many of the same ideas seen in her earlier writings. Written entirely in Spanish like the previous works, the poetry of this work is especially lyrical and personal in its nature and highlights the poet’s innermost thoughts relative to her marginalized identity as a Mexican, a Chicana, and principally as a woman.
In 1989, almost 20 years after having written “Tres mujeres,” her first endeavor at writing prose, Corpi published her first novel, *Delia’s Song*. Reminiscent of her own personal journey at the University of California at Berkeley, the narrative tells the story of Delia, a young Chicana who begins to forge her own identity at the university after having been reared in a traditional, male-oriented family where her needs were always second to those of her male siblings. However, even though the ambiance of her new setting is culturally and socially alienating, she copes by becoming involved in the student politics of the Chicano Movement and eventually emerges as an empowered, self-reliant Chicana, ready to impose her own image on reality.

In 1992, the literary journey of Lucha Corpi went in a new direction as she published *Eulogy for a Brown Angel*, her first detective novel in what was to become the Gloria Damasco Detective Series, and gave birth to Gloria Damasco, the first Chicana feminist detective. In *Eulogy for a Brown Angel*, the somewhat clairvoyant Damasco solves the mysterious murder of a young child that occurred during the 1970 Chicano Moratorium against the Vietnam War in Los Angeles. Like *Eulogy*, each of the three other ensuing novels in the Gloria Damasco series—*Cactus Blood* (1995), *Black Widow’s Wardrobe* (1999), and *Death at Solstice* (2009)—is somehow linked to a significant moment or event of the Chicano Movement, be it the United Farm Workers Movement in California, the traditional Day-of-the-Dead celebration in the Mission District of San Francisco, or the reemergence of the legendary figure Joaquin Murrieta. Such is the case also for *Crimson Moon* (2004), a Brown Angel Mystery, in which private detectives Dora Saldaña and Justin Escobar investigate a crime that leads them back the Chicano Movement struggles and student upheaval of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Moreover, in each of these detective novels, a genre that allegedly only has entertainment value, Corpi addresses many social and political issues relative to the experience of Chican@ within the context of contemporary American society. In this light, the novels are about much more than just the particular mystery being investigated.

In addition to the poetry collections and novels previously cited, Corpi is also the author of two delightful children’s books, *Where Fireflies Dance/Ahi, donde bailan las luciernagas* (2002) and *Triple Banana Split Boy/El niño goloso* (2009), each of which narrates a lesson relative to Mexican culture or history. Whereas the former nostalgically recalls her small-town childhood in Mexico, the latter introduces children to El Coco, a fearsome creature with a huge mouth and sticky hair that haunts a young boy’s dreams as he struggles to balance healthy eating habits with the natural desire for sweets.
Corpi has been acknowledged with various awards and citations for her literary production, including a National Endowment for the Arts fellowship (1980), the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literacy Award and the Multicultural Publishers Exchange Award for Eulogy for a Brown Angel (1992), the Texas Bluebonnet Award for Where Fireflies Dance (2000–2001), the Latino Book Award for mystery fiction for Crimson Moon (2005), and the International Latino Book Award for mystery fiction for Death at Solstice (2009). Corpi currently resides in the San Francisco Bay area, where she dedicates much of her time to her craft as a writer. (DWU)

See also CHICANO DETECTIVE FICTION; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

CORRIDO. The corrido is a ballad of popular origin, that is, a song (or poem) intended to be transmitted orally. According to Américo Paredes in “With His Pistol in His Hand”: A Border Ballad and Its Hero (1958) and other essays, the corrido is the foundation for literary expression by Chicanos within what he calls Greater Mexico, that is, the southwestern United States and northern Mexico. Early corridos in the Mexican American tradition are the “corrido de Kiansis,” which describes a cattle drive from South Texas to Kansas (circa 1870), and the famous “Corrido de Gregorio Cortez” (Ballad of Gregorio Cortez; 1901), which tells of the escape and 12-day flight of Gregorio Cortez from the notorious Texas Rangers after he shot and killed a sheriff in Karnes County, Texas, in self-defense in 1901. (FAL/DWU)

CORTÉS, HERNÁN (1485–1547). Best known as the conqueror of Mexico, Cortés was a savvy military strategist who defeated the Aztecs between 1519 and 1521 by allying himself with Totonac and Tlaxcalan Indians. His 500 men first marched from the eastern coast of Mexico, but he quickly realized the magnitude of the Aztec empire that was in power under the leader Moctezuma. By the time he reached the Aztec capital of Tenochtitlán (present-day Mexico City), Cortés was also accompanied by 1,000 Indians. He learned to manipulate in his favor the myth of Quetzalcóatl (the plumed serpent), the god of culture venerated by the Aztecs and expected to return from the east. He was fortunate to have been given a young Indian maiden named Malinalli, later called La Malinche, who knew the language of the Aztecs (Náhuatl), Mayan, and Spanish, thus facilitating the conversations between Moctezuma, the Aztec emperor, and Cortés while the latter to overthrow the former. His overthrow in 1521 was the coup de grâce for the Aztec empire, and Cortés’s reputation soared, eventually earning the title “First Marquis of the Valley of Oaxaca.”
Latinos, however, especially Chicanos, do not see him in such a positive light. Rather, they view him as an abuser who took advantage of La Malinche by impregnating her and eventually casting her aside, giving her away to one of his soldiers. Their son together, Martín, is symbolically considered the first mestizo, and Cortés therefore helped produce the mestizo nation. As evidence of Mexicans’ disregard for what Cortés represents, there is no public statue or street named in his honor in Mexico. (FAL)

CRUZ, ANGIE (1972–). Novelist. Cruz is a Dominican American writer, born and raised in New York City’s Washington Heights neighborhood. Her parents divorced when she was six years old. In a 2003 interview with Silvio Torres-Saillant, Cruz explained, “After the divorce the whole maternal side of the family came to NY [from the Dominican Republic]: my grandmother, my grandfather, and my mother’s five brothers and sisters. We did all the very common things in an immigrant family, a lot of people in one apartment until my mom’s siblings established themselves and they went to college. So it was crowded.” Cruz studied at the Fashion Institute of Technology while working full time before transferring to SUNY Binghamton and earning a BA. She received her MFA from New York University.

Cruz has published two novels, Soledad (2002) and Let It Rain Coffee (2005). Her debut novel, Soledad, takes place in Washington Heights, the Dominican American neighborhood to which the novel’s protagonist, Soledad, must return when an aunt convinces her that her mother needs “twenty-four-hour care and supervision.” Torres-Saillant asserts that the novel’s richness is to be found in its very powerful women characters, “low-income urban Amazons” who “put... up a courageous fight against adversity... and confront demons that come from society and from their souls,” and in the “landscape of the quotidian, [the] canvas of urban, inner city everyday life” that Cruz renders.

Let It Rain Coffee takes place in the 1990s and narrates the journey of the Colón family from the Dominican Republic to the United States, then eventually back to the Dominican Republic. Esperanza, the first member of the family to leave the Dominican Republic, is shown to have a particularly harrowing journey, traveling first to Puerto Rico on a makeshift raft in a dangerous trip across the Mona Passage in order to use Puerto Rico as a stepping-stone to immigrate to the United States. Esperanza is obsessed with the television show Dallas, even naming her daughter after the show. Cruz uses Esperanza’s obsession with the television show to explore the power of television, popular culture, and consumer culture in shaping immigrants’ ideas about the United States and their aspirations. Indeed, Marisel Moreno writes: “One of the most significant achievements of Cruz’s novel lays in its exploration of the role that American media plays in fomenting the fictions of success associated with the myth of the Dominican dream.”
CRUZ, ANGIE (1972–)

Cruz has received numerous awards and grants and much recognition for her work, including the Barbara Deming Award, the New York Foundation of the Arts Fellowship, the Camargo Fellowship, the Bronx Writers’ Center Van Lier Literary Fellowship, and the NALAC Fund for the Arts Fellowship. She is the editor of Aster(ix), a journal of literature, art, criticism, which Cruz founded with other scholars/artists after realizing that “there weren’t that many journals that we knew of dedicated to social justice and the arts with women of color central to the conversation.” Cruz is a professor at the University of Pittsburgh. (MJV)

See also ALVAREZ, JULIA (1950–); DÍAZ, JUNOT (1968–); WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
DE LA CRUZ, SOR JUANA INÉS (1651–1695). Known as the “tenth muse of Mexico,” Sor Juana was Mexico’s remarkable 17th-century baroque poet, scholar, playwright, Catholic nun, and women’s rights activist long before the term or concept of feminism came into existence. Born in 1651, Juana Inés de Asbaje y Ramírez de Santillana was a child prodigy whose intelligence and scholarship became known throughout the country during her teen years. Juana Inés entered the convent in 1667, not so much because she was had the vocation for being a nun, but because the convent provided her with a venue to avoid marriage and to study at will and dedicate her time to writing, the calling for which she had a passion and for which she argued she was placed on this earth. In her writings, she questioned the patriarchal society into which she was born and defended the right of all women to study and attain knowledge.

Sor Juana has been reappropriated by Chican@s as a reference point for an early feminist and what women can strive for in literature and discourse. She is now viewed as a model of a woman’s potential for creativity as a renaissance spirit and an agent of free will. Much of her literature is highly intellectual, with the baroque penchant for unraveling paradoxes, but especially in terms of indulging in mythology and classical characters with an eye to defending women’s rights to write. Her versatility in cultivating poetry, theater, prose, and the epistolary genre made her one of the outstanding voices in Latin American literature while advocating for equality and women’s rights and exhibiting a taste for the sciences and humanities. (FAL)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GASPAR DE ALBA, ALICIA (1958–); WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

DELGADO, Abelardo “Lalo” (1931–2004). Poet, social activist, educator. Born in La Boquilla de Conchos, Chihuahua, Mexico, on 27 November 1931, Delgado spent his early childhood in this rural village and in the cities of Parral and Juárez in northern Chihuahua. In 1943, at the age of 12,
DELGADO, ABELARDO "LALO" (1931–2004)

he immigrated to El Paso, Texas, and settled in the impoverished neighborhood known as el segundo barrio (the second neighborhood), where he lived until 1969, when he moved to and settled in metropolitan Denver, Colorado.

Known as the “abuelito” (the grandfather) of Chicano poetry, Abelardo Delgado was one of the first writers to emerge from the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and early 1970s. Mostly known for his poetry, Delgado also experimented with fiction and the essay. Like the writings of many of his contemporaries in the Chicano Movement (e.g., Alurista, Sergio Elizondo, José Montoya, Luis Omar Salinas, Raúl Salinas, Ricardo Sánchez, Raymundo Pérez, and Tino Villanueva), much of Delgado’s early poetry is social in its content and focus and reflects the ideological concerns of the movement. He takes up the cause of the economically poor and the socially disenfranchised such as the campesino (farmworker), the undocumented immigrant, and the barrio dweller. He also explores Chicano identity and devotes himself to themes and concepts of a more cultural nature, such as chicanismo, carnalismo, machismo, el compadrazgo (family links through godparents), la tierra (the earth), and the Virgin of Guadalupe.

With the exception of his essay The Chicano Movement: Some Not Too Objective Observations (1971) and the novel Letters to Louise (1982), most of Delgado’s works were self-published by Barrio Publications (a publishing house he established in 1970) and quite often published in photocopy form with limited runs of 100 to 200 copies. Though this resulted in limited exposure for Delgado’s own work, he still managed to develop a following through his many personal appearances at readings throughout the United States.

Delgado’s first and perhaps best-known collection of poetry is Chicano: 25 Pieces of a Chicano Mind (1969). Published during the height of the Chicano Movement, the collection is composed of 25 poems that generally promote social change and aspire to arouse social awareness among Chicanos. Delgado is at his best when he advocates social justice, human dignity, and equality for Chicanos, and when he angrily condemns those forces—be they social or cultural, Anglo or Chicano—that work against these ideals. His poetry is typically written in a bilingual (Spanish and English) format with a resonant, declamatory style, and reflects the struggles, hopes, feelings, desires, and dreams of the Mexican American people. For example, in “Stupid America,” the most acclaimed of all of his poems, he censures Anglo-America’s unwillingness to recognize the intellectual and artistic abilities of the Chicano.


Abelardo “Lalo” Delgado died on 23 July 2004 in Denver. He was 73. In addition to his legacy as a writer, Delgado spent much of his adult life working on behalf of migrant farmworkers and immigrants and teaching Chicano studies. (DWU)

DÍAZ, JUNOT (1968–). Born in the Dominican Republic, Díaz migrated with his family to New Jersey at age six. In interviews, Díaz has shared that as a child he had an insatiable love of reading and that he read indiscriminately, in part as a refuge from the cruelty of other children and the challenges of being a new immigrant. Díaz earned a BA from Rutgers College and an MFA from Cornell University, where one of his professors and mentors was Helena María Viramontes. Díaz wrote the bulk of his first book, Drown, a collection of short stories, while completing graduate school.

Díaz has published two collections of short stories, Drown (1996) and This Is How You Lose Her (2013). He has published one novel, The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao (2007), rated the Best Novel of the 21st century in a BBC culture poll of U.S. critics, which earned many prizes and much recognition, including the John Sargent Sr. First Novel Prize, the National Book Critics Circle Award, and the Pulitzer Prize (2008). Díaz’s work explores Dominican immigrant, working-class experiences and the complex intersections of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and gender in the lives of his characters. His protagonists are primarily young men, and the realities and limitations of Latino masculinities figure prominently in his work.

Díaz has noted that his first book, Drown, is autobiographical. Yunior, the narrator of most of the stories in this collection (and in all three of his books), and his brother, Rafa, have ambivalent relationships with their father, who for a portion of their young lives is in the United States while their mother takes care of them in the Dominican Republic. Several of the stories in Drown take place in the Dominican Republic during this time of separation. Eventually the family reunites in New Jersey, and Yunior grapples with what it means to be a young man in his working-class community. One of the most powerful, and most anthologized, of the collection’s stories is “Ysrael,” about a boy with a disfigured face and Yunior and Rafa’s desire to unmask him. Another of the stories, “How to Date a Browngirl, Blackgirl, Whitegirl, or Halfie,” presents instructions on how to seduce “girls” of various racial and ethnic backgrounds with humor and poignancy. Daniel Bautista writes that through the story, “Díaz subversively reveals the limits of stereotypes by treating race and ethnicity as performative, provisional, and even strategic roles that individuals assume or take off according to the demands of the
moment.” In a review of the book, the writer Francisco Goldman stated that in *Drown* readers see “places and voices new to our literature yet classically American: coming-of-age stories full of wild humor, intelligence, rage, and piercing tenderness.” Critical reception of the book was overwhelmingly positive, with critics asserting that Díaz’s writing showed great promise.

Published 11 years after *Drown*, Díaz’s second book, *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, was received extraordinarily well by the literary world. The extent of the novel’s success is a testament to Díaz’s deft use of language and humor, his masterful use of popular culture and literary references, the richness of the historical research that grounds the novel, his keen insight into Dominican history, and what in an interview Díaz has called “the solitude of being an immigrant” (an allusion to Gabriel García Marquez’s classic novel *One Hundred Years of Solitude*). The critic and author Rigoberto González asserts that Diaz’s novel “re-energised these questions: Who is American? What is the American experience?”

*The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* takes place in the Dominican Republic and in New Jersey. It narrates the experiences of three generations of the Cabral/de León family, including the title character, Oscar, a nerdy, overweight young man who is obsessed with two things: science fiction and love. As in *Drown*, the narrator of *Oscar Wao* is Yunior, who in a signature description in the novel says that Oscar “wore his nerdiness like a Jedi wore his light saber.” A key feature of the novel is Díaz’s use of footnotes, included for the benefit of “those who missed their mandatory two seconds of Dominican history.” The footnotes include some of the fruits of the historical research Díaz did in preparation for writing the novel, as well as witty asides, jokes, and explanations that shed light on everything from Dominican culture to science fiction to comic books. *Oscar Wao* addresses the historical traumas of slavery, colonialism, and the more than 30-year dictatorship of Rafael Trujillo, which began in 1930 in the Dominican Republic, and how the legacies of these persist. In a 2010 interview discussing the intersections of the historical questions engaged by his work and the influence of different genres on *Oscar Wao*, Díaz remarked: “In comic books there is more of the New World than in the literary fiction, and so therefore, if I’m writing a book about the deep history of the Caribbean, I had to find its echoes where they reside, and I would argue that that would be in all of the marginal, hybrid forms like comics, science fiction, apocalyptic movies, and even role playing games.” Díaz skillfully weaves together these multiple strands to tell a rich, multifaceted story about a Dominican family that illuminates some of the larger concerns of the Dominican diaspora.

Díaz’s most recent book, *This Is How You Lose Her*, is his second collection of short stories and was a *New York Times* best seller, as well as a finalist for the National Book Award. As in *Drown* and *Oscar Wao*, the narrator of the stories is Yunior, and the stories are explorations of love and loss, primar-
DUARTE, STELLA POPE (1948–)

Short story writer, novelist, human rights advocate, and college professor. One of eight siblings, Stella Pope Duarte was born 3 November 1948, in Phoenix, Arizona, and raised in the Sonorita Barrio in South Phoenix. She attended Lowell Elementary School and Phoenix Union High School, then continued her higher education at Phoenix College and Arizona State University, from which she subsequently graduated with a BA in education and an MEd in educational counseling.

The author of four books of fiction and a memoir, Duarte did not begin her literary career until 1995, after she had a prophetic dream in which her deceased father informed her that it was her destiny to become a writer. In “The Aha Experience: Writing Fragile Night,” she states, “The dream of my father . . . started an avalanche of stories inside me. It seemed that all the stories I had somehow locked up within myself for so many years were clamoring to be heard and written down. . . . During that time I began to see

ily focusing on the beginnings and endings of romantic relationships and the emotional cost of the choices made by the characters. Diaz is sensitive to the social contexts within which the relationships in his stories unfold, and the characters are revealed to be painfully entangled with each other, enmeshed in racial, ethnic, class, gender, and sexual identities that contribute to shaping their experiences. The language and thematic content of the stories are raw, honest, and unflinching in the treatment of relationships, yet the stories retain their humor and simultaneously reveal joy and vitality in their portrayals of love.

Diaz’s short stories have appeared in the New Yorker, African Voices, Best American Short Stories, and The O’Henry Prize Stories (2009). He is the recipient of numerous awards, including the MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship (2012), the PEN/Malamud Award, the Dayton Literary Peace Prize, a Guggenheim Fellowship, and the PEN/O. Henry Award. In 1999, Diaz co-founded the Voices of Our Nation Foundation, which provides writing workshops and mentorship for writers of color across the United States. Diaz is a professor of writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and is currently the fiction editor at Boston Review. (MJV)

See also ALVAREZ, JULIA (1950–); CRUZ, ANGIE (1972–).

16 DE SEPTIEMBRE (16 SEPTEMBER). This date in 1810 signifies Mexico’s declaration of independence by the priest Miguel Hidalgo y Costilla in the town of Dolores. He delivered what is called the “Cry of Dolores” (el Grito de Dolores), which declared Mexico’s independence from Spain, but independence was not completely gained until September 28, 1821. (FAL)

See also CINCO DE MAYO, EL (THE FIFTH OF MAY).
my life as clearly as if I was looking at things through a sparkling window pane. Everything was alive, and standing on end, so to speak, themes, ideas, characters, plots, everything, as my father had pointed out to me in the dream were all, ‘right there, mija, right in front of you’” (www.stellapopeduarte.com/fragilenight.htm).

Two years after this prophetic dream, Duarte published her first collection of short stories, *Fragile Night* (1997), which explore the hearts and minds of their characters with humor, lyricism, and tragedy. While Chicano/Latino tradition and cultural beliefs are central to many of the stories, Duarte often utilizes these elements to introduce such themes as spousal and paternal abuse, betrayal, infidelity, and male violence toward women. “What La Llorona Knew,” for example, tells the story of a contemporary llorona who was violently raped by a military captain during the Mexican Revolution, then was subsequently punished and banished from her home by her authoritarian father. And “Fragile Night,” the collection’s title story, chronicles the spousal abuse of three generations of women: Alma, her mother Gloria, and her Abuelita (Grandmother) Minerva. “The Remedy,” on the other hand, humorously tells of a sibling rivalry that requires the attention of a curandera (herb healer) for a remedy.

Duarte’s next major publication was a novel, *Let Their Spirits Dance* (2002). Dedicated to the memory of “Sgt. Tony Cruz and all la Raza who died in Viet Nam,” *Let Their Spirits Dance* is the story of a family’s journey across the United States—from Phoenix, Arizona, to Washington, D.C.—to visit the Vietnam Veterans Memorial to pay homage to Jesse Ramírez, a son and brother, who had been killed in the Vietnam War 30 years earlier and whose death caused much disruption in the Ramírez family unit. Having heard her son’s voice in a dream, Alicia, the ailing 80-year-old matriarch of the Ramírez family, makes a vow to touch his name on the Vietnam Memorial Wall. The story of the family’s cross-country pilgrimage to the nation’s capital is narrated from the perspective of Jesse’s sister, Teresa. She recalls the joys of family life when Jesse was still alive and the grief and agony that devastated the family after his untimely death. As a result of the journey, however, the family is finally able to make peace with his death, and old wounds begin to heal.

Duarte’s second novel, *If I Die in Juárez* (2008), is the author’s account of the mutilation, rape, and murder of young women in Juárez and on the U.S.–Mexican border since the early 1990s. In memory of three friends who died together in 2000 (Esmeralda Juárez Alarcón, age 16; Juana Sandoval Reyna, 17; and Violeta Mabel Alvidrez, 18, all of Ciudad Juárez, Mexico), *If I Die in Juárez* traces the interconnected lives of three young women: Evita Reynosa, a street child forced into prostitution; Petra de la Rosa, Evita’s cousin and a maquiladora worker; and Mayela Sabina, a Tarahumara Indian girl also living in extreme poverty who attains international recognition as a
painter. The book is divided into 38 chapters and an epilogue, and the chapters alternate between the lives of these protagonists and the struggles that they encounter living in a city that is full of adversity and dangers. The story lines converge at the novel’s end with the kidnapping and subsequent rescue of Petra. *If I Die in Juárez* received the 2009 American Book Award, the 2008 Southwest Book of the Year Award, the 2008 Arizona Book Award for Best in Popular Fiction, and was also nominated for a Pulitzer Prize for Fiction.

In 2010, Duarte published a second collection of short stories, *Women Who Live in Coffee Shops and Other Stories*. Like her first collection, *Fragile Night*, the setting of these stories is a multicultural, urban neighborhood “of seedy motels and dilapidated houses next to industrial buildings and railroad tracks,” in Phoenix, Arizona, known as the Van Buren Street neighborhood. Narrated primarily in the first person from the perspective of prepubescent or young adolescent girls, the stories feature particular inhabitants of the community, “giants in their own times, Goliaths, who have now vanished from the streets of Phoenix,” but who obviously left an impression on the author. “Women Who Live in Coffee Shops,” for example, features Andrea, the narrator’s mother, and a host of other women from Van Buren Street who hang out or “darken the doors of Sal’s diner” and come to the owner’s defense when he is accused of a crime. “One of These Days I’m Gonna Go Home” is about Peggy Wolf, a 27-year-old religious and lonely woman who, despite her bigoted views, adopts Emma Benites, an 11-year-old child from a Mexican orphanage sponsored by her church. And “Devil in the Tree” remembers Inocente, a nine-year-old child who is blamed for the accidental death of his younger brother, but Sarita, a fourth-grade classmate of Inocente, doubts his culpability. Similarly, the remaining stories celebrate an array of other Van Buren Street inhabitants, all of whom create a sense of a community in the collection.

Presented with the Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature in 2014, Duarte continues to live in Phoenix, just a few miles from the Sonorita Barrio of her birth and childhood. (DWU)

*See also* CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GASPAR DE ALBA, ALICIA (1958–).
ELIZONDO, SERGIO (1930–2014). Poet, short story writer, novelist, educator, critic. Sergio Danilo Elizondo Domínguez was born in El Fuerte, Sinaloa (Mexico) on 29 April 1930. His early formative years were difficult due to his parents’ death when he was young, making it necessary for him to live among various relatives. He immigrated illegally to the United States, and in 1953 he formally submitted an application to become a legal resident. Thereafter he studied at Findlay College in Ohio, where he earned his BA in 1958 and MA in 1961, and he earned a PhD in 1964 at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill.

Elizondo was one of the pioneer educators in Chican@ literature, along with his specialization in Golden Age Spanish literature. As a poet in the Chicano Movement, he first wrote *Perros y antiperros: Una épica chicana* (Dogs and anti-dogs: A Chicano epic; 1972), a highly metaphorical interplay of Anglos (dogs) and Chicanos (anti-dogs). Binaries prevail within an environment of oppression wherein Chicanos are reminded to learn about their heritage and culture as a way of overcoming the impositions of assimilation. The didactic work presents the conflictive relationship of culture politics and the fundamental differences in power. He presents the history of two cultures clashing within an epic mode. He in great part glorifies Chicanos’ culture due to their suffering and struggles, but a sublime rage takes the poetic narrator into ironic outbursts. His language moves with ease from the colloquial to the lyrical or from the critical to the laudatory.

His book of poetry, *Libro para batos y chavalas chicanas* (A book for Chicano dudes and gals; 1977), offers more code-switching experimentations while giving advice. He also develops a poetic lullaby song, which appears childlike but actually blends in topics of religion, politics, and socio-economic realities. The work is filled with contemplative pieces that mix wisdom with love and a sense of abandonment. In *Rosa, la flauta* (Rose, the flute; 1980), Elizondo mixes short stories within a novel structure: various narrators, mostly anonymous, manifest deep feelings and perceptions about not fitting in socially. In his complex protest novel *Muerte en una estrella* (Death on a star; 1984), filled with stream of consciousness narrations and
constant dialogues, Elizondo develops two second-generation Chicano characters who are shot in a bank by police. However, a third narrator, resembling more of an epic voice, brings in social issues about identity, sexuality, and liberation. He creates an ethnocentric narration to show that such narrations have their validity. Finally, in *Suruma* (1990) he presents a critical view of a mythic place, which he calls Suruma, embodied by three characters whose interactions unveil both the place and the conflictive human interactions.

Elizondo stands out as an experimental writer who started out as part of a poetry cohort of the Chicano Movement and then moved into more metaphorical representations of critical perspectives on culture, hegemony, and the trappings of identity within an ethnocentric modality. Sergio D. Elizondo died of natural causes on 16 October 2014. (FAL)

ESPADA, MARTÍN (1957–). Poet, essayist, editor, translator. Born in Brooklyn. Espada’s father was Frank Espada, a well-known and respected photographer and community activist who migrated to the United States from Puerto Rico in 1939. Espada’s Jewish mother was born in Brooklyn and later became a Jehovah’s Witness. Espada has said that his political consciousness and sense of social justice were born largely out of what he saw and learned as he accompanied his father to rallies, protests, and community meetings.

Espada studied at the University of Wisconsin, Madison, where he earned a BA in history, then earned a law degree from Northeastern University in Boston. After law school, Espada practiced law, advocating for the poor and for tenants’ rights. A self-described “poet-lawyer,” Espada was a supervising tenant lawyer at Su Clínica Legal after completing his law degree, working with Spanish-speaking clients in eviction defense and related housing cases. In his 2011 essay “Through Me Many Long Dumb Voices: The Poet-Lawyer,” Espada points out that in his six years of employment at the legal clinic, he published three books of poetry. The essay describes his poetic work as “poetry of advocacy,” noting that as a lawyer, he “sp[oke] on behalf of those who don’t have an opportunity to be heard . . . which is what [he] continues to do as a poet.”

Espada has published more than 15 books, and his work touches on a broad range of topics, including ethnicity (primarily Puerto Rican and Latino/a more broadly), colonialism, history, public memory, language, and urban life. At the center of his work is also a focus on working-class lives and experiences. In a 2007 interview published in the journal *Latino Studies*, Espada explained, “It’s important for us to return to the idea that I am writing about working people. When I write about my family, I’m writing about working people. When I write about my own experiences, I write about myself as a working-class individual. I describe my roots when I write about my various working experiences—as a bindery worker in a printing plant, a
bouncer in a bar, a night desk clerk in a flophouse, a gas attendant, a door-to-door encyclopedia salesman. Now I have an education. I am a lawyer, I am a professor, I am part of the middle class, but I have working-class roots. I never forget that. It influences the way I see the world and it always will."

Espada has identified Pablo Neruda and Walt Whitman as two poets with a major influence on his work, both for the poetic form of their poems as well as for their political content. Indeed, aligning himself with Neruda and Whitman in his essay “Poets of the Political Imagination,” Espada writes, “Poetry of the political imagination is a matter of both vision and language,” and he argues for the importance of moving “beyond protest to articulate an *artistry* of dissent.”

Espada has authored eight collections of poetry, including *The Immigrant Iceboy’s Bolero* (1982), *Trumpets from the Island of Their Eviction* (1987), and *Rebellion Is the Circle of a Lover’s Hands/Rebelión es el giro de las manos del amante* (1990), a Spanish-English bilingual collection that won the PEN/Revson Foundation Poetry Prize and the Paterson Poetry Prize. In 1996, he published *Imagine the Angels of Bread*, winner of the American Book Award and finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Including a chronological series of autobiographical snapshots in poetry, *Imagine the Angels of Bread* reveals reflections on and memories of schooling, family, and work while still maintaining his signature political consciousness. Espada has expressed that the poem “Imagine the Angels of Bread,” published in the collection of the same name, “act[s] as a summation,” adding that the poem “is a statement about who [he is] as a person, as an artist, as a political activist, it’s a statement about [his] particular vision, about [his] hope for the future.”

His other books of poetry are *A Mayan Astronomer in Hell’s Kitchen* (2000), *Alabanza: New and Selected Poems 1982–2002* (2003), *The Republic of Poetry* (2006), and *The Trouble Ball* (2011). *Alabanza* (“praise” in Spanish) won the Paterson Award for Sustained Literary Achievement and was named a Notable Book of the Year by the American Library Association. The topics in the collection have greater breadth than Espada’s previous collections and evoke San Juan, Mexico, the Arab World, as well as the United States and the plight of oppressed people in all those places. An especially moving poem, the title poem of the collection, “Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100,” offers praise to the 43 members of the labor union Hotel Employees and Restaurant Employees Local 100, who lost their lives in the attack on the World Trade Center in New York City on 11 September 2001. César Salgado writes that particularly in this collection, “Espada shows us that poetry exercised as praise for the exploited and the ignored helps us realize the multi-directional interconnectedness of all human experience in space and time.”
Espada’s two most recent books have been the subject of much critical acclaim. *The Republic of Poetry* was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. The collection celebrates the power of poetry and the global legacy of poets, particularly those who are politically outspoken in their advocacy for social justice. Following the success of *The Republic of Poetry*, his collection *The Trouble Ball* won multiple awards, including the Milt Kessler Award, a Massachusetts Book Award, and an International Latino Book Award.

While he is most well-known for his poetry, Espada has also published two collections of his own essays and has edited several noteworthy texts. He edited *Poetry Like Bread: Poets of the Political Imagination* from Curbstone Press (1994), an anthology of politically engaged poetry, and *El Coro: A Chorus of Latino and Latina Poetry* (1997), which won the Gustavo Myers Outstanding Book Award. In addition, he has two published collections of his own essays, *Zapata’s Disciple* (1998) and *The Lover of a Subversive Is Also a Subversive* (2010). *Zapata’s Disciple* won the Independent Publisher Book Award and was one of the books banned in the controversial wave of censorship that occurred in Tucson as part of the politically conservative movement to dismantle Mexican American studies programs in Arizona public schools. Espada also edited *The Blood That Keeps Singing* (1991), a collection of poetry by Puerto Rican nationalist poet and former political prisoner Clemente Soto Vélez, which Espada translated into English from Spanish.

Espada is a poet of international renown, and his work has been widely translated. His collections of poems have been published in Spain, Puerto Rico, and Chile. He is the recipient of numerous awards and much recognition, including the Shelley Memorial Award from the Poetry Society of America, the Robert Creeley Award, the National Hispanic Cultural Center Literary Award, the PEN/Revison Fellowship, and a Guggenheim Foundation Fellowship. He is a professor of English at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. (MJV)

**ESTEVES, SANDRA MARÍA (1948–).** Poet, playwright, essayist, cultural activist, visual artist. Esteves was born and raised in the Bronx, New York, the daughter of a Puerto Rican father and a Dominican mother who separated before she was born. She was raised by her mother and a paternal aunt.

As one of the few well-known women artists of the Nuyorican Movement, Esteves has been called “the Godmother” of Nuyorican poetry. Miriam DeCosta-Willis has written that she is “undoubtedly, the most significant woman writer—in the movement,” and that she “helped to formulate the [movement’s] poetics.” Esteves has six published poetry collections, including *Yerba Buena: Dibujos y poemas* (The good herb: Drawings and poems; 1980), *Tropical Rains: A Bilingual Downpour* (1984), *Blustown Mockingbird Mambo* (1990), *Contrapunto in the Open Field* (1998), *Finding Your
Way (2001), and Portal, a Journey in Poetry (2007). She also has made spoken word audio CDs, including Wildflowers (2009) and DivaNations (2010).

Esteves’s poems are primarily in English, but include Spanish and Spanglish, employing code switching as a mode of expression reflective of Nuyorican ways of speaking and being. Esteves’s poetry is dynamic, woman-centered, and socially and politically engaged, and reflects the cultural history of Puerto Ricans, including references to Afro-Latino and African American music and culture. The topics of her poems are broad ranging, but include themes of personal transformation, Nuyorican cultural identity and accompanying dilemmas, racial prejudice, and struggles for social justice.

DeCosta-Willis asserts that what separates Esteves from other Nuyorican writers is not her militance but the lyricism and sensuality of her poetry and her powerful explorations of memory and beauty. In interviews and in her own reflective prose, Esteves has related the visual, lyrical aspect of her writing to her training and work as a visual artist. Indeed, her first collection of poetry, Yerba Buena: Dibujos y poemas, includes 20 line drawings. Published in 1980, Yerba Buena was named best small press publication of the year by Library Journal and was among the first poetry books published by a Latina in the United States. The collection contains poems about family, cultural identity, and spirituality. A signature poem of the collection, “Here,” asserts: “I am two parts / a person / boricua / spic / past and present / alive and oppressed / given a cultural beauty / . . . and robbed of a cultural identity,” illustrating some of the fundamental concerns of Esteves’s poetry and shedding light on the dilemmas of cultural identity for Puerto Ricans in the United States.

In addition to her numerous published collections of poetry, Esteves’s poems have been widely anthologized in collections such as Breaking Ground: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Women Writers in New York 1980–2012 (2012); The Afro-Latin Reader: History and Culture in the United States (2010); and Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café (1994), edited by Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman.

Esteves has received numerous awards, including a Pregones Theater/National Endowment for the Arts Master Artist Award in 2010 and recognition from the New York Foundation for the Arts, the Bronx Council on the Arts, Acentos Poetry Collective, and Blind Beggar Press.

Esteves is also a well-regarded performance artist, playwright, and visual artist. She is a past executive director/producer of the African Caribbean Poetry theater and in that capacity produced several seasons of full-length off-Broadway plays, as well as poetry series, touring productions, multimedia spoken word performances, and theater workshops. She has performed poetry at the famous Nuyorican Poets Café and for a time was a member of the consciousness-raising socialist musical ensemble El Grupo.
Esteves continues to be active as a poet, performer, artist, and teacher. She has conducted poetry workshops for the New York City Board of Education, the Caribbean Cultural Center, and el Museo del Barrio, among others. She lives in New York City. (MJV)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
FESTIVAL FLOR Y CANTO. The Flower and Song Festival alludes to the Aztec concept of “poetry” whereby two aesthetic notions of beauty come together through a flower as an ephemeral object and a song as a timeless element. The concept exists in poetry by the Aztecs, but it was Alurista who revived it in a Chicano context; consequently, the literary festivals attempted to reconnect with that tradition. The first Festival Flor y Canto, a historical event, occurred in 1973 at the University of Southern California (USC) in Los Angeles, and it continued in other locations (e.g., Austin in 1975 and Albuquerque in 1977) until 1979. In commemoration of the historical event, USC hosted an anniversary of the literary festival called “Festival de Flor y Canto: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow” in September 2010. (FAL/DWU)
GALARZA, ERNESTO (1905–1984). Historian, labor activist, economist, educator, novelist, poet, children’s literature writer. Born in Jalcocotán in the state of Nayarit (Mexico) on 7 August 1905 to Henriqueta and Ernesto Galarza, he fled north with his family to avoid the violence of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920), stopping first in northwestern Mexico and ending up in Sacramento, California, where the author grew up and attended schools. By the time young Galarza graduated from high school, he had become quite a jack-of-all-trades as a farmworker, newsboy, gardener, camp counselor, social work aide, stock clerk, and court interpreter. In 1923, he attended Occidental College in Los Angeles, where he studied Latin American history, publishing his senior thesis as a book, The Roman Catholic Church as a Factor in the Political and Social History of Mexico (1928). He received his MA in history and political science from Stanford University in 1929 and a PhD from Columbia University in 1944, having also published his dissertation in Mexico under the title La industria eléctrica en México (The electric industry in Mexico).

For many years, Galarza worked with a variety of organizations related to educational and labor issues, putting into practice some of his progressive views on dissecting entrenched practices. For example, between 1936 and 1947, he worked with the Organization of American States, then known as the Pan American Union. He served as a researcher and consultant on Bolivian miners’ rights, for which he received the Order of the Condor, the highest decoration for a civilian. In 1942, when the Bracero Program (the official program to hire seasonal workers from Mexico) was created, he became intensely involved in reconciling the paradox of unfairness and exploitation: the program was viewed by some as an opportunity to take advantage of a cheap Mexican workforce after World War II, but by others as a strikebreaking vehicle. He dedicated much of his life to unraveling possible contradictions in labor practices, while also writing his first collection of poems, Thirty Poems (1935), and later the Latin America for Young Readers Series (1942–1949).
Galarza continued his activism in such books as *Strangers in Our Fields* (on the Bracero Program) and *Merchants of Labor: The Mexican Bracero Story—An Account of the Managed Migration of Mexican Farm Workers in California, 1942–1960*, the latter a highly critical treatise on labor groups’ manipulation of salaries and lack of interest in the improvement of working conditions. His studies contributed in some form to the emergence of Chicanos’ efforts to unionize, particularly thanks to the labor leader César Chávez, who galvanized a movement by 1965. After he retired, Galarza published his last work on labor practices, *Spiders in the House and Workers in the Field*, which detailed activities of collusion, strikebreaking strategies, and other methods to undermine workers’ efforts to unionize.

He is best known for his memoir *Barrio Boy* (1971); a long list of books of children’s short stories and poetry, which he called Mini-Libros or mini-books (*Rimas tontas para niños listos* [Silly rhymes for smart children; 1944], *Zoo-risa* [Zooy smile; 1968], *Aquí y allá en California* [Here and there in California; 1971], *Historia verdadera de una gota de miel* [The true story of a drop of honey; 1971], *Poemas párulos* [Kindergarten poems; 1971], *Zoo-fun* [1971], *La historia de una botella de leche* [The story of a bottle of milk; 1972], *Más poemas párulos* [More kindergarten poems; 1972], *Poemas pe-que pe-que-ñitos* [Teensy weensy poems; 1972], *Chogorrom* [1972], *Todo mundo lee* [The whole world reads; 1973], and *Temas escolares* [School topics; 1976]); and the poetry collection *Kodachromes in Rhyme: Poems* (1982).

*Barrio Boy* became an instant hit because it focused on young Ernie’s journey from Mexico to Sacramento while poignantly recounting the challenges of an epic journey via the process of acculturation, the issues of identity, cultural allegiance, family adjustments, work obligations, and dealing with a hyphenated world. The not so thinly veiled autobiography became a tribute to his Mexicanness and how the family struggled but achieved cultural autonomy within the family unit. It is a story of survival against the odds and pressures of assimilation on how to keep intact his Mexican identity and Spanish language, as Julian Samora has described, “while resisting complete ‘Americanization.’” Perseverance pays for Ernie, but also dignity and family pride, two elements that no one can deny. His *barrio*, which others might consider a cross to bear, is seen by the narrator as a sanctuary, a place he can consider his own, a small part of Mexico on American soil. The autobiography, impregnated with novelistic techniques, aims to remind readers that Ernie has developed within the barrio but that he will transcend it to show us a new kind of American.

Galarza’s children’s books have the specific didactic, cultural objective of instilling a positive sense of themselves by principally resorting to Spanish as the main vehicle to anchor sentiments of pride and self-esteem. His use of humor and Mother Goose–style rhymes is crucial to facilitating the chil-
GARCÍA, CRISTINA (1958–). Novelist, editor, poet. García is one of the most widely read contemporary Latina novelists and an acclaimed Cuban American author. Born in Havana, Cuba, García came to the United States with her parents in 1960 after the Cuban Revolution and grew up in New York City. She earned a BA in political science from Barnard College and an MA in European and Latin American studies from Johns Hopkins University. García worked for 10 years as a journalist, writing for United Press International and a number of newspapers before working at Time magazine, where she became bureau chief for the magazine in Miami.

García has published six novels, a collection of poetry, and some children’s and young adult literature. Primarily, her novels explore issues of family, history, violence, and Cuban and Cuban American cultures and identities. In a 2007 interview in the journal Contemporary Literature, García said, “I am interested in how Cubans are constantly defining each other and what it means to be Cuban.” García has explained that her interest in historical events has to do with “how they filter down to individuals and relationships between individuals, particularly in a familial context.”

García’s first novel, Dreaming in Cuban (1992), was a National Book Award finalist. The novel was highly acclaimed and influential in terms of exposing a wide American readership to Cuban American and Cuban exile lives and experiences. Ylce Irizarry notes: “Beyond simply propelling its author’s renown, the book increased the visibility and acceptance of Latina/o writing within the mainstream American literary canon.” The novel is told from the multiple perspectives of three generations of women in the del Piño family, recounting the impact of the Cuban Revolution and exile. The family is divided between Cuba and New York, and García recounts how aside from geography, the family is divided by the political and ideological structures of the revolution and its aftermath. One of the novel’s main characters, Pilar, is born in New York City in 1959 (the year of the Cuban Revolution) and grows up longing to reconnect with her grandmother in Cuba. Thus the novel...
poignantly explores the alienation and longing of Cuban Americans, and ultimately, the power of family to bridge geographic, political, and ideological chasms.

In *The Agüero Sisters* (1997), García’s second novel, the author also explores the impact of the Cuban Revolution on a family, as well as questions related to family and history. The sisters who are the focus of the novel and for whom the novel is named, Constancia and Reina, are separated; one lives in Florida, and the other in Cuba. Constancia and Reina are half sisters, daughters of the same mother and different fathers, with one daughter a product of an extramarital affair. Eventually, the sisters reunite in Miami to investigate the circumstances of their mother’s murder. A key aspect of the novel is its incorporation of Santería, the Afro-Cuban religion of Yoruban origin, to structure the narrative. Indeed, the word “agüero” in the title is a word from Santería meaning “omen.” In an interview, García has called Santería “a cultural cornerstone of Cuban identity” and asserts that the religion is inextricably linked to the everyday lives of Cubans. The narrative in the novel begins to unfold retrospectively, and as in her previous novel, the voices are women’s voices. While in the beginning of the novel, the sisters are separated and haunted by their mother’s violent death, by the end of the novel, their bond is strengthened by their search for the truth about her. In this way, García asserts the primacy of familial, and indeed matrilineal, bonds.

Like her first two novels, García’s third novel, *Monkey Hunting* (2003), is also a multigenerational story. It takes place in Cuba, China, the United States, and Vietnam, and is focused on the Chinese Cuban experience. The protagonist, Chen Pan, is sent to Cuba in 1857 after signing a contract as an indentured servant. Eventually, he becomes a successful businessman in Havana. The lives of Chen Pan’s granddaughter, Chen Fang, who disguises herself as a boy to gain an education in China, and great-great-grandson Domingo Chen, who immigrates to the United States after Fidel Castro comes to power and eventually suffers due to his experiences in the Vietnam War, are also narrated in this multigenerational story. Sean Moiles calls *Monkey Hunting*, narrated with multiple voices and perspectives, a “metahistorical romance . . . interrogat[ing] the construction of history.” In contrast to García’s first two novels, which earned considerable critical acclaim, *Monkey Hunting* received mixed reviews.

Tragedy of Death (2010), and has edited two anthologies, Cubanismo! The Vintage Book of Contemporary Cuban Literature (2003) and Bordering Fires: The Vintage Book of Mexican and Chicano Literature (2006).

García has received a Guggenheim Fellowship, a National Endowment for the Arts Grant, a Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University, and many other honors and awards, including the Northern California Book Award (2008), the Frontizera Award from the Border Book Festival (2008), and the Whiting Writers Award (1996). She has taught in universities all over the country, most recently at Texas State University–San Marcos and at the Michener Center for Writers at the University of Texas–Austin. García leads workshops on creative writing and diversity all over the country. She lives in the San Francisco Bay area. (MJV)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

GARCÍA, DIANA (1950–). Poet, writer, editor, educator. García was born in the San Joaquín Valley in a California Packing Corporation–owned migrant labor camp. She studied at San Diego State University, where she earned a BA in English (1989) and an MFA in creative writing (1993).

Her collection of poetry, When Living Was a Labor Camp (2000), won the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 2001. The poems in her collection reveal the lived experience of migrant workers and their families, juxtaposing the cruelty of poverty and racism, for example, with the beauty and richness of the everyday and of enduring love between friends, spouses, lovers, and family. García’s Labor Camp poems are also firmly situated within ethnicity, history, and place, as demonstrated in, for example, “An Orchard of Figs in the Fall,” “Repatriation,” and “Operation Wetback, 1953.”


García is also considered a pioneer of “social action writing,” an emerging field within creative writing and literature with the specific aim of inspiring intellectual and imaginative engagement in the service of social justice. The anthology that she coedited with Frances Payne Adler and Debra Busman, Fire and Ink: An Anthology of Social Action Writing, was published in 2009 and received a Silver Medal from ForeWord Reviews’ Book of the Year competition. García is a professor in the Division of Humanities and Communication at California State University, Monterey Bay. (MJV)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
GARCÍA-CAMARILLO, CECILIO (1945–2002). Poet, artist, writer on Hispanic culture, activist, community organizer, publisher, editor, playwright, journalist, radio director, cultural attaché. Born in the small town of Big Wells near Laredo, Texas, Cecilio García-Camarillo’s grew up with an army father, Mónico García, and a migrant worker mother, Julia Camarillo. He is well known in Chicano literary circles for his extensive participation and contributions in social causes as well as prodigious production of culturally inspired writings, mainly poetry, but including essays, editorials, plays, children’s literature, and numerous edited works. He experimented with every conceivable kind of poetry form, from poemas concretos (concrete poems) to antipoetry, haikus to folkloric portraits, Spanglish pieces to mythical explorations, philosophical to nationalistic renditions, and children’s rhymes to surrealist works based on dreams. He grew up in Texas, but he moved to Albuquerque, New Mexico, in the 1970s, where he continued a prolific career until his death in 2002. He became a cultural icon for his early Chicano Movement poetry of social vindication, but he also developed a strong spiritual vein, invoking all humanity in his writings. He is regarded by critic Enrique Lamadrid as a renaissance man and community leader for his broad background and interests.

García-Camarillo majored in English at the University of Texas at Austin, graduating with a BA in 1971. He became an active protester against the Vietnam War and in the process sought other models, such as Latin American writers (i.e., Pablo Neruda, Japanese poets, and others writing socially committed literature). He founded numerous journals, including Magazín, and Caracol: Revista de la Raza (Snail: Journal of our people), which served as forums for a burgeoning ethnic consciousness to critically reflect upon and assess Chicanos’ place in American society. His sense of irony and satire are noteworthy as tools to instill social change at the grassroots level, often sparking controversy for the sake of achieving a higher level of social consciousness in the modern world.

He was relentless in his artistic activities as an advocate for the acceptance of Chicano writings. His first book, Get Your Tortillas Together (1976), cowritten with Carmen Tafolla and Reyes Cárdenas, marks his first stage of consciousness raising. Subsequent works, such as Ecstasy and Puro Pedo (Ecstasy and nonsense; 1981), Double-Face (1992), Carambola (1982), Boroletes mestizos (Mestizo rumors; 1984), and Zafa’o (Wacked out; 1992), fall within a similar line. He has to his credit a minimum of 11 other poetic collections, most in the form of chapbooks. He also participated with the theater company known as La Compañía de Teatro de Albuquerque, contributing bilingual translations and adaptations, and also creating plays such as La Virgen de Tepeyac (1992) and Spanish Fly (an adaptation of Niccolò Machiavelli’s Mandragola; 1989), among other plays.
GASPAR DE ALBA, ALICIA (1958–). Novelist, poet, short story writer, art and literary critic, professor, essayist, activist. Born on 29 July 1958 and raised in a Mexican immigrant family in El Paso, Texas, Alicia Gaspar de Alba lived along the U.S.–Mexican border most of her life, with memories of angst and feelings of cultural schizophrenia and living on the edge. She sensed she did not quite fit in among her peers and various social groups. Thanks to an early creative sensibility, she reflected on her many divisions culturally, socially, and sexually. She first tapped into her writing inclinations at the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEP) when attending poetry classes taught by James Ragan, her “guru of poetry who drew out of me a deep respect for the imagery of my Mexican-American heritage,” and a Chicano literature class taught by Theresa Meléndez, who “showed me my place in the genealogy of La Malinche and so introduced me to my identity as a Chicana” (Three Times a Woman, 3).

She received a BA in English in 1980 and an MA in English with a creative writing concentration in 1983. For her master’s thesis, she produced the first version of Beggar on the Córdoba Bridge, which would later be published in the anthology Three Times a Woman: Chicana Poetry (1989). After her studies at UTEP, she spent some time in Boston on a Massachusetts Artists Fellowship, working as a translator of children’s books while teaching part-time at the University of Massachusetts. Later she pursued graduate work at the University of Iowa, but it was at the University of New Mexico that she graduated with a PhD in American studies, in 1994.

While studying in New Mexico, Gaspar de Alba published her first collection of short fiction, The Mystery of Survival and Other Stories (Bilingual Press, 1993), for which she was awarded the Premio Aztlán in 1994. Among her prolific literary and critical production are the following works: poetry, Beggar on the Córdoba Bridge in Three Times a Woman: Chicana Poetry/Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Maria Herrera-Sobek, Demetria Martínez (1989); and La Llorona on the Longfellow Bridge: Poetry y otras Movidas (2003); novels, Sor Juana’s Second Dream (1999), Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders (2005), and Calligraphy of the Witch (2007); and critical essays, Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master’s House; Cultural Politics and the CARA
Gaspar de Alba’s first major publication was the collection of poetry *Beggar on the Córdoba Bridge*, which appeared as part of the anthology *Three Times a Woman: Chicana Poetry*, copublished with María Herrera-Sobek and Demetria Martínez. The collection features poetry reflecting childhood memories and her profound ties to the U.S.–Mexican border of El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, Mexico, and introduces her as a new voice in the genre of Chicana lesbian literature. In considering the binational, bilingual, and bicultural nature of the border, she also acknowledges the aspirations and violence present on both sides: “La *frontera* [border] lies / wide open, sleeping beauty. / Her waist bends like the river / bank around a flagpole. / Her scent tangles in the arms / of the mesquite. Her legs / sink in the mud / of two countries, both / sides leaking *sangre* / *y sueños* [blood and dreams]” (5). In several poems, such as “Making Tortillas,” she contemplates her lesbian sexuality.

Gaspar de Alba’s first work of fiction was *The Mystery of Survival and Other Stories*, a collection of 11 short stories, two of which are narrated in Spanish and the remainder of which are narrated in English or are *code switched* between the two languages. The collection is divided into two parts, “*Puros cuentos*” (a play on the words “Pure Stories” and “Pure Fabrications”) and “*Xóchitl’s Stories,*** the first set mostly on the border and the latter in the interior of Mexico. The stories of “*Puros cuentos*” reflect the complexities of living along the *borderlands*, within the confines of two nations, two languages, and two cultures, including spousal abuse and incest by violent and macho husbands and fathers who feel entitled by tradition to...
subjugate their women. “Xóchitl’s Stories” focuses on the mysterious arrival of the curandera/bruja (healer/witch) Estrella González in the village of La Subida de las Almas (The Rising of the Souls), Oaxaca, in 1891, and her 60-year relationship with the women villagers of that community.

Gaspar de Alba’s inaugural novel was *Sor Juana’s Second Dream*, a historical novel based on the life of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Mexico’s remarkable 17th-century poet, scholar, playwright, Catholic nun, and women’s rights activist long before the term or concept of feminism came into existence. Drawing on the most recent scholarship on Sor Juana and combining selections of the nun’s own poetry with references to actual events of the time, in addition to fictional journal entries invented by her own pen, Gaspar de Alba’s *Sor Juana’s Second Dream* is a fascinating account of a very complex life that makes a compelling case that Sor Juana was indeed a lesbian.

Set in 1998, Gaspar de Alba’s ensuing novel, *Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders*, is a fictional account of a very real and contemporary issue: the epidemic of femicides or murders of women that have plagued the Juárez–El Paso border since 1993. Between 1993 and 2003, when the manuscript of *Desert Blood* was submitted for publication, more than 350 mutilated female bodies were discovered, and those horrific murders remain unsolved. More tragic still, the femicides continued, and by 2005, the publication date of the novel, there were more than 430 known victims, with an additional 600 disappearances. In her “disclaimer” to the novel, Gaspar de Alba writes: “It is not my intention to sensationalize the crimes or capitalize on the losses of so many families, but to expose the horrors of this deadly crime wave as broadly as possible to the English-speaking public, and to offer some conjecture, based on research, based on what I know about that place on the map, some plausible explanation for the silence that has surrounded the murders” (vi).

Gaspar de Alba’s most recent novel, *Calligraphy of the Witch*, is a historical novel set in late 17th-century New England during the Salem witch trials. The novel mixes a number of genres to tell the story of Concepción Benavides, later renamed Thankful Seagraves, who lives various lives. Being of mixed race, she negotiates multiple social spaces to survive among pirates who capture her, then lives among Puritans, and she is perceived with suspicion for being literate and purportedly having witch-like tendencies. She is stolen from Mexico, taken as a slave, and impregnated by a merchant whose wife cannot bear children. In a story filled with intrigue and suspense, we follow Concepción in her dramatic close calls trying to keep her daughter and later defend herself from the accusation of witchcraft. This dense novel, filled with detailed insights into colonial life, taboos, and apprehensions, exposes the many factors that accumulate in creating a rationale (mainly based on fear and racial overtones) for disliking people of mixed heritage.
The Salem witch hunt is part of the background that gives the narration greater historical legitimacy, while judging the arbitrariness toward and the preconceived notions about women and race. The novel contains a wide variety of narration: legal documents, principally diary entries (which explains the title of the novel), theatrical scenes, courtroom proceedings, depositions, and letters written by Concepción.

In terms of her scholarship, Gaspar de Alba offers an extensive range, covering art criticism, cultural studies, popular culture studies, feminist and lesbian theory, border studies, literary investigative work on femicide, and literary criticism. Known for her strong, sometimes even strident opinions, she has progressively developed a well-articulated discourse for examining her areas of interest and expertise. In Chicano Art: Inside/Outside the Master’s House; Cultural Politics and the CARA Exhibition, she proposes that art created by Chicanos/as inherently possesses a political edge, given the social context in which it is produced and often marginalized. [Un]Framing the “Bad Woman”: Sor Juana, Malinche, Coyolxauhqui and Other Rebels with a Cause and other works present a number of theories about women, and lesbians in particular as a group unto themselves, independent of men, who share other sources of inspiration. And with The Maquiladora Murders; Or, Who Is Killing the Women of Juárez, Mexico? she has focused attention on the complex issues surrounding the femicide of women in Juárez, Mexico, who have died in what she terms the “maquiladora (assembly plants) murders.” As evidenced by this latter work, some of her research overlaps with her novels, for example, in Desert Blood: The Juárez Murders, illustrating a keen sense of the border and how sexuality factors into this social space.

Many of Gaspar de Alba’s works have been recognized with important awards: for example, in 1989 she received a Massachusetts Artists Foundation Fellowship Award in poetry for Beggar on Córdova Bridge; in 1992 she received a La Chicana Dissertation Fellowship at the University of California at Santa Barbara; in 1993 she was awarded a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellowship from the National Research Council; in 1994 her dissertation, “Mi Casa (No) Es Su Casa [My house is not your house]: The Cultural Politics of the Chicano Art, Resistance and Affirmation Exhibit” won the Ralph Henry Gabriel American Studies Association Award for Best Dissertation; in 1994 she also received the Rudolfo and Patricia Anaya “Premio Aztlán” for The Mystery of Survival and Other Stories; in 1999 she was awarded a Rockefeller Fellowship at the Smithsonian; in 2001 she won first place for Sor Juana’s Second Dream as Historic Fiction in the Latino Literary Hall of Fame; she won the Lambda Literary Foundation Award for Desert Blood as the Best Lesbian Mystery and a Latino Award for Best Mystery in English in 2005; and she received the UCLA Gold Shield Faculty Award for Academic Excellence in 2008.
Gaspar de Alba works at the César E. Chávez Center for Chicano and Chicana Studies Department at the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA), where she teaches courses on border consciousness, bilingual creative writing, Chicana lesbian literature, and barrio popular culture, as well as graduate courses on Chicana feminist theory, aesthetics of place, and Latin@ noir. She currently makes her home in Westchester, California, with her wife, digital artist and muralist Alma López, and their two cats, Rubí Tuesday and Luna Azul. Together, they have also started a new transnational writers’ and artists’ collective called Codex Nepantla, whose mission is to translate Chicana feminist and Chicana lesbian theory into Spanish and visual art and help facilitate access to Chicana critical thought for lesbian and feminist activists and academics in Mexico, Latin America, and the Spanish-speaking world.

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE. For the purposes of this entry, Latino/a gay and lesbian literature is literature written by authors who identify as gay and/or lesbian. Though these writers often include characters and themes that engage issues of sexuality and gender, we use the term to highlight the sexual identities of these authors themselves and to speak to the aesthetics and politics that often accompany their writing, rather than to characterize the themes in their writing. The term “queer” is sometimes used as well, in keeping with current usage. “Queer” is a more expansive term than “gay and lesbian,” in that it includes a broader range of sexual and gender identities, incorporating those who might identify as bisexual, pansexual, or transgender or who may be non-gender conforming. In the introduction to the collection Ambientes: New Queer Latino Writing (2011), Lázaro Lima describes queer Latino writing as “the name we give to an archive of feelings, traits, desires, urges, behaviors, and aspirations in an ‘American’ literary vernacular that can apprehend our relationship to the worlds we inhabit through our collective agencies” (10). Lima asserts that this literary expression works to construct “more inclusive futures” and envisions itself as part of the project of “queer Latino freedom” (10). Lima’s aspirational discussion highlights this body of literature as one that has been largely characterized by its visionary and transformative qualities, as queer Latino writers have challenged oppressive norms associated with gender and sexuality and sought to create and express alternative ways of being.

John Rechy is commonly thought to be the first gay Chicano writer to publish novels that were openly gay in authorial perspective, as well as in characterization and themes. Rechy also bears the distinction of being one of the first Chicanos to publish with an Anglo-American press; Grove Press published his first novels, City of Night (1963), Numbers (1967), This Day’s
Death (1969), The Vampires (1971), and The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary (1977). Of these novels, Rechy’s autobiographical debut, City of Night, is undoubtedly the most well-known, widely read, and celebrated. Rechy’s protagonist, a young gay man, tries to find himself and battles alienation as he travels through major urban centers (New York, New Orleans, Los Angeles, El Paso, San Francisco, and Chicago) engaging in sex work. City of Night was on the national best-seller list for over six months, has been translated into more than 20 languages, and was named one of the 25 “best lesbian and gay novels” of all time by the Publishing Triangle, the Association of Lesbians and Gay Men in Publishing. Many of Rechy’s subsequent novels built on the themes in City of Night, exploring sexuality, social norms and boundaries, and the cost of transgressing them. Critic Juan Bruce-Novoa is credited with being instrumental in arguing for the inclusion of Rechy as an important Chicano author, especially in his classic essay “Homosexuality and the Chicano Novel” (1986).

Despite the success of Rechy’s first novels, gay and lesbian literature was not commonly included or prominent within Chicano/a-Latino/a literature until the 1980s. Indeed, in “Building a Research Agenda on U.S. Latino Lesbigay Literature and Cultural Production,” Manuel de Jesús Hernández-G. calls 1981 the “Year of the Chicana/o Lesbigay Voice,” citing the publication of This Bridge Called My Back, edited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, as well as the publication of Hunger of Memory by Richard Rodríguez, as two watershed events for Chicano/a gay and lesbian literature. While Rodríguez did not discuss his identity as a gay man in his autobiography Hunger of Memory and was not thought of as a gay Chicano writer until well after his first book was published, he does name and discuss his sexuality more openly in his subsequent books, Days of Obligation: An Argument with My Mexican Father (1992) and Brown: The Last Discovery of America (2002). While Chicano/a-Latino/a critical reception of Rodríguez’s work has been ambivalent at best due to the perception of his work as somewhat socially and politically conservative, Hunger of Memory was widely read and studied and had some degree of influence at the time of its publication.

Arturo Islas, another prominent gay Chicano writer, published his first novel, The Rain God: A Desert Tale, in 1984, the first of a trilogy that also included Migrant Souls: A Novel (1990) and La Mollie and the King of Tears, published posthumously in 1996. Islas referred to his trilogy of novels as autobiographical fiction, and the family saga, particularly of the first two novels, is modeled after his own family, with the protagonist, Miguel Chico, appearing as a kind of alter ego to the author. In the grandmother/matriarch character, Mama Chona, Islas critiques repression and hypocrisy as embedded in Catholicism and culturally traditional thinking. Islas’s first novel was
especially acclaimed for its dense symbolism, evocative characterizations, and the multilayered nature of the narrative, and it won the Southwest Book Award in 1986.

While critics point out that there is more work that needs to be done to recover and analyze early Chicano gay literature, Francisco X. Alarcón “holds a secure place in the development of a specifically Chicano homoerotic writing,” according to David William Foster. Tomás Almaguer notes that Alarcón edited a collection of gay male Chicano poetry called *Ya Vas, Carnal!* (Way to go, brother!), in which his poetry appeared alongside the poetry of Juan Pablo Gutiérrez and Rodrigo Reyes in San Francisco in 1985 (the collection is now out of print). This collection is understood to be one of the first such collections and one of a few examples of collections focusing on gay Chicano men during this period. Moreover, Foster explains that Alarcón’s poetry, particularly the collections *Body in Flames/Cuerpo en llamas* (1990); *Snake Poems: An Aztec Invocation* (1992); *No Golden Gate for Us* (1993), and especially *De Amor oscuro/Of Dark Love* (1991), has played an important role, and indeed has been transformative: “[T]he depiction of homoerotic desire within the context of what is colloquial and immediately recognizable serves to naturalize it within the boundaries of Chicano life: the effect is to naturalize what must ostensibly be repudiated as alien to the barrio” (180). In the essay “The Poet as the Other,” Alarcón articulates his own sense of himself as a poet: “As a Chicano poet who also celebrates being gay, I have come to realize that I write desde afuera del margen mismo de la sociedad (from the outside of even the margin of society), and that for some, even my own gente (people), I represent the ultimate Other” (159).

Within the realm of Chicano/a-Latino/a gay and lesbian literature, Chicana lesbian writers have been the most widely published, widely read, and influential. *This Bridge Called My Back* (1981), an anthology coedited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga, was the first of several works that established Anzaldúa and Moraga as two of the most influential voices, not only in Chicana lesbian literature, but in Latino/a literature overall. Indeed, a mixture of theory, poetry, and autobiography, Anzaldúa’s *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (1987) is one of the most well-known texts in Chicano/a literature. In *Borderlands*, Anzaldúa discusses the “borderlands,” as the literal U.S.–Mexican border, with all its violent history, but famously also proposes the idea that the “borderlands” could also be a referent for the space inhabited by people whose identities are liminal, particularly those who embody mestizo/a mixed race and/or queer identities. Spirituality, sexuality, history, psychology, and culture are among the dimensions engaged by Anzaldúa, not only in *Borderlands* but in her other work as well.

Several of Moraga’s published works comprise an indispensable part of the Latino/a literature in general and Chicana lesbian literary production in particular. Her major publications have primarily combined prose and poetry
in radical political explorations of lived experience that express a “theory in the flesh.” Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó por Sus Labios (1983); The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry (1993); Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood (1997); and A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness: Writings, 2000–2010 (2011) all express a “Xican-aDyke consciousness”; that is, an embodied subjectivity that confronts sexism, racism, and homophobia and reflects moments of “queer heroism” in pursuit of “queer freedom.” Moraga has also made important contributions as a playwright; her plays, including Giving Up the Ghost: Teatro in Two Acts (1986), Heroes and Saints and Other Plays (1993), The Hungry Woman (2001), and Watsonville/Circle in the Dirt (2012), are among the few published plays in Latino/a literature with lesbian characters/protagonists. Crossing genres, Moraga’s evocations of a “Queer Aztlán” have left a lasting imprint on Latino/a literature. Other influential Chicana lesbian writers who began publishing in the 1980s and 1990s include Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Emma Pérez, and Carla Trujillo. Significantly, Trujillo’s novel What Night Brings (2003) is thought to be one of the only Chicana novels that is a coming-of-age narrative featuring a lesbian protagonist, a spirited working-class girl who wants to be a boy.

Two prominent Latina lesbian writers of the 1980s and 1990s are Luz María Umpierre and Achy Obejas. Umpierre published I’m Still Standing: Treinta años de poesía/Thirty Years of Poetry in 2011, drawing from the eight collections of poetry she wrote between 1979 and 2010 and including biographical essays that illuminate her personal and political truths as a lesbian, as a feminist, and as a woman of color from Puerto Rico. Indeed, Umpierre has cited African American writers Audre Lorde and Cheryl Clark as among her greatest influences, along with Adrienne Rich and Marge Piercy. Umpierre’s earliest collections, Una puertorriqueña en Penna (A Puerto Rican in Pennsylvania/Pain; 1979) and The Margarita Poems . . . Y otras desgracias . . . and Other Misfortunes (1987), have been among her most influential works. Umpierre’s poetic exchange with renowned Nuyorican poet Sandra María Esteves, “The María Cristina Poems,” has been published in The Heath Anthology of American Literature (2005), and these poems are considered important Latina feminist poetic works that contribute to Puerto Rican, Latino/a, and American literature as a whole. Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes’s book Queer Ricans: Cultures and Sexualities in the Diaspora (2009) makes an important contribution to the scholarship on queer Puerto Rican writers and artists in the United States and includes an important perspective on Umpierre and her work.

Achy Obejas is a Cuban-born writer who migrated to the United States with her family as a child in 1962. Her extensive body of work includes We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This? (1994), Memory Mambo (1996), Days of Awe (2001), and Ruins (2009). Much of her
writing is concerned with themes of exile and uprootedness and the complicated process of building a new home when struck by alienation and longing for the home that was. Obejas also engages themes of sexuality, featuring lesbian protagonists and characters in her several novels and short stories. In addition, her work explores what it means to be Sephardic/Jewish and Cuban/Latina when Latino/a cultures are predominantly Catholic. Memory Mambo and Days of Awe both won Lambda Literary Awards for Lesbian Fiction, and Obejas is also a renowned translator who translates both from Spanish to English and English to Spanish. Her translation into Spanish of Junot Díaz’s The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao was a finalist for Spain’s Esther Benítez Translation Prize from the national translator’s association.

Cuban American writer Rafael Campo is another gay Latino writer who has explored these identities, as well as themes related to illness, health, death, and healing, in a body of work that he began to publish in the 1990s. A poet, memoirist, practicing physician, and Harvard Medical School professor, Campo has published six collections of poetry, a memoir in the form of a collection of essays, and works in numerous journals and anthologies. His first collection of poetry, The Other Man Was Me (1994), won the National Poetry Series Award, and his second book, What the Body Told (1996), won the Lambda Literary Award for Poetry. Campo’s other poetry collections include Diva (1999), The Enemy (2007), and Alternative Medicine (2013). His memoir The Desire to Heal (originally published under the title The Poetry of Healing: A Doctor’s Education in Empathy, Identity, and Desire) (1997) also won a Lambda Literary Award for Memoir. Campo’s writing is known for its experimental approach to form, as well as its distinct merging of themes related to health and the body, identity, and desire.

Alfredo Villanueva Collado and Manuel Ramos Otero are well-known poets who were born in Puerto Rico and lived in New York City for many years, forming an important part of an artistic “Queer Rican” diaspora, according to LaFountain-Stokes. Collado began publishing his poetry in the 1980s and published his most recent collection, El jubilado (The Retiree), in 2006. In all, he has more than 10 published collections of poetry, all written in Spanish, and is also an accomplished literary critic. Collado has described “the closet as the preferred abode of Puerto Rico’s most prominent gay writers,” as well as criticizing the expectations imposed on Latino gay writers by American literary critics and his sense of himself as challenging those expectations: “[I]f one has a Spanish surname, one is fatally classified as an ‘ethnic’ poet, and one is expected to write dutifully of one’s ethnic grandfather/mother, one’s ethnic struggles, and one’s (newly found) ethnic pride. Being gay, one is expected to write pantingly of male body parts, of one’s gender struggles and one’s (newly found) gender pride. Excuse me. A plague on both your houses.” Ramos Otero published a number of volumes of prose
and poetry, also in Spanish, from the 1970s until his death in 1990. He has also had work published posthumously. Much of his fiction included semi-autobiographical characters in New York City, and both his prose and poetry explored gay U.S. Puerto Rican identities. His most well-known works are *Cuento de la mujer de mar* (Story about the Woman from the Sea; 1979) and *Invitación al polvo* (Invitation to Dust, 1991). Particularly at the time that they began publishing, Collado and Otero’s writing was groundbreaking for the way it challenged heterosexism, homophobia, and dominant notions of Latino masculinities.

Born in Colombia, Jaime Manrique has also made a lasting imprint on Latino literature, having published poetry, novels, a memoir, and criticism. His autobiographical debut novel, *Latin Moon in Manhattan* (1992), features a narrator and protagonist who is a Colombian immigrant in New York City, negotiating his multiple identities as a gay Latino within a familial context dominated by an overprotective mother. Manrique’s other novels include *Twilight at the Equator* (1997), *Our Lives Are the Rivers* (2006), and *Cervantes Street* (2012). He has also published several volumes of poetry, including *My Night with Federico García Lorca* (1995), and *Tarzan, My Body, Christopher Columbus* (2001). His memoir, *Eminent Maricones: Arenas, Lorca, Puig, and Me* (1999), was celebrated by critics and peers as an original, moving, and innovative exploration of his growing up gay in Colombia, as well as his journey to becoming an author. Significantly, Manrique intertwines his own story with a rendering of his relationship with his mentors, Manuel Puig and Reinaldo Arenas, and a discussion of the Spanish poet Federico García Lorca and his struggles with homophobia. By connecting his trajectory to Puig, Arenas, and García Lorca, Manrique creates a genealogical arc for gay Latino writers.

Queer Latino/a literature has flourished in the 21st century and has effectively transformed Latino/a literature. Discussing the significant contributions of gay and lesbian Latino/a writers in “The Criticality of Latino/a Fiction in the Twenty-First Century,” Theresa Delgadillo explains that writers such as Rigoberto González, Felicia Luna Lemus, Emma Pérez, Benjamín Sáenz, and Carla Trujillo “writ[e] beyond the question of ‘coming out’ and intra-Latino/a tensions around homosexuality . . . address[ing] roles, norms, and violence among queer communities and individuals; present[ing] lesbian and gay love and relationship stories; and imagin[ing] queer antecedents in Latino/a folklore, culture, or history.”

Other dynamic, contemporary voices include Emanuel Xavier, Charles Rice-González, and Richard Blanco. Of Ecuadorian and Puerto Rican heritage, Xavier is a well-known spoken word poet who has published the poetry collections *Pier Queen* (2012), *If Jesus Were Gay and Other Poems* (2010), and *Nefarious* (2013). His debut novel, *Christ Like* (1999), features a protagonist, Mikey X, a gay Latino native New Yorker and survivor of childhood
sexual abuse, who must rise above his self-destructive tendencies. Xavier is also a gay rights activist and longtime advocate for homeless youth. Bronx-based Puerto Rican writer Rice-González has published essays and fiction in several anthologies and published his debut novel, *Chulito (Cutie)*, in 2011. The novel won numerous awards, including a Stonewall Book Award-Barbara Gittings Literature Award from the American Library Association, and is a poignant coming-of-age and coming out story featuring Chulito, a young gay Puerto Rican man in the Bronx. A long-established, award-winning poet, Blanco published his memoir *The Prince of Los Cocuyos* in 2014. The memoir humorously and vibrantly depicts Blanco’s childhood in Miami as a son of Cuban immigrants, coming into his artistic and sexual identities as his parents long for the Cuba they left and he looks for a place to belong, given his multiple identities.

Anthologies and works of theory and literary and cultural criticism have been important in terms of solidifying Latino/a gay and lesbian literature as an area of study. Although scholars and artists note that considerably more work needs to be done in these areas, there are a number of titles that are important to highlight. Although now somewhat outdated, *Chicano/Latino Homoerotic Identities*, edited by David William Foster (1999), includes an impressive bibliography of work up through the end of the 20th century. Foster’s collection of essays is one of the most often cited texts in Latino gay and lesbian literary studies and includes considerable breadth in terms of writers and topics. Published much more recently, *Gay Latino Studies: A Critical Reader*, edited by Michael Hames-García and Ernesto Javier Martínez (2011), features a number of essays in Latino gay cultural studies, including theory and criticism related to literature, the performance arts, and notions of cultural citizenship. *Ambientes: New Queer Latino Writing*, edited by Lázaro Lima and Felice Picano and published in 2011, is an anthology. Lima’s introduction (cited earlier) is informative and insightful as it contextualizes and describes queer Latino writing as a genre.

Two classic anthologies of Latina lesbian literature are *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians (An Anthology)* (1987), edited by Juanita Ramos, and Carla Trujillo’s *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (1991). Ramos and Trujillo’s anthologies were the first to focus on Chicana and Latina lesbians, respectively. Ramos’s book features the writings and drawings of Latinas from diverse ethnic backgrounds. *Compañeras* includes poems, short stories, oral histories, and essays on a range of topics, including relationships, coming out to family, politics, and community organizing. Trujillo’s book features poetry, art, letters, and critical theory.

*Bésame Mucho: New Gay Latino Fiction* (1999), edited by Jaime Manrique and Jesse Dorris, is noteworthy in its ethnic diversity of writers, featuring 17 stories with writers whose roots are in several different countries, as well as because the editors chose to highlight emergent writers rather than
GOLDMAN, FRANCISCO (1954–). Novelist, journalist. Goldman is one of the best-known contemporary writers of Central American origin in the United States. Born in Boston, the son of a Catholic Guatemalan mother and a Jewish American father who was a chemist, he was raised in the Boston suburb of Needham and in Guatemala City, spending extended periods of time in Guatemala while he was growing up. Goldman has said that growing up, his life at home was difficult because of his parents’ tumultuous relationship, and his life at school was also difficult. Despite always being skilled as a writer, teachers considered him an underachiever, and his writing sometimes earned him accusations of plagiarism from teachers. Goldman studied at Hobart College and the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor.

In 1979, Goldman traveled to Guatemala during the height of the wars that had roots in the Central Intelligence Agency-sponsored coup that occurred in 1954, prompting intensely violent conflicts between guerrilla insurgents and state-sponsored army and death squads backed by the U.S. government. His exposure to the atrocities of war led Goldman to begin investigating and writing about the violence and politics in Central America during that time. In a 2008 article in The Guardian, Goldman linked what he sees as his purpose as a writer to the perspective he developed during this time: “My two parts of the world were at war. . . . I thought US policy in central America was criminal, and that I could maybe influence it. It’s partly what I do in fiction—give expression to voices that are not heard.” His first story was published in Esquire, and throughout the 1980s, Goldman covered the Central American wars, primarily in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Nicaragua, for the New Yorker, the New York Times, and other publications.

Building on his experience and expertise as a journalist in Latin America, Goldman’s works of nonfiction, The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop? (2007) and The Interior Circuit: A Mexico City Chronicle (2014), expose political corruption, violence, and the heroism of those who challenged those corrosive social phenomena in the region. The Art of Political Murder: Who Killed the Bishop? was the result of seven years of investigation into who murdered Bishop Juan Gerardi Conedera in Guatemala in April 1998. Gerardi was killed a few days after releasing a report documenting the atrocities committed during Guatemala’s 36-year war. Goldman has said that The Interior Circuit: A Mexico City Chronicle began as a celebration of Mexico City and the crucial role it played in his process of grieving for his
deceased wife Aura Estrada, but became another investigation of murder after 13 young people were kidnapped from a nightclub and subsequently killed. In his investigation and analysis, Goldman reveals drug-related violence and political corruption as destructive forces in Mexico City, a place he now calls home.

In addition to his influential work as a journalist and nonfiction writer, Goldman has published four novels: *The Long Night of White Chickens* (1992), *The Ordinary Seaman* (1997), *The Divine Husband* (2004), and *Say Her Name* (2011). Goldman’s debut novel, *The Long Night of White Chickens*, won the 1993 Sue Kaufman Prize for First Fiction and was a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award. Roger Graetz, the protagonist of the novel, is a character of dual heritage, modeled after Goldman, and the novel takes place in Guatemala in the 1980s. The novel is autobiographical, inspired by a real-life investigation into the murder of a Guatemalan young woman who had worked for his family when he was a boy.

Goldman’s second novel, *The Ordinary Seaman*, was also a finalist for the PEN/Faulkner Award. The novel is based on an actual occurrence about which Goldman read in the *New York Daily News* in 1982. Goldman remembers that the story’s headline was “Sailors Abandoned,” and it reported that “seventeen abandoned sailors have been living in a floating hellhole on the Brooklyn waterfront for months, aboard a rat-infested mystery ship without heat, plumbing, or electricity, an international seamen’s organization charged yesterday. . . . The sailors had been lured here from Central America with the promise of good wages but instead found themselves abandoned, unpaid, and trapped on a ship of horrors.” This sensational story became the basis for his novel, in which some seamen from Central America sign on with a cargo ship whose owner—unbeknownst to them—has gone bankrupt, and they are prevented from both other opportunities or returning home, unable to leave home, stateless individuals.

Goldman’s other two novels— *The Divine Husband* and *Say Her Name*—are also based on real occurrences. *The Divine Husband* is a historical novel based on a story about the dictator of Guatemala, Justo Rufino, at the time that José Martí, the 19th-century Cuban revolutionary leader, was in Guatemala. Goldman recounts that Rufino fell in love with an 11-year-old girl, María García Oranados, who became the subject of Martí’s poem “La Niña de Guatemala” (“The Girl of Guatemala”). The story takes place in both Guatemala and New York, and in an interview, Goldman said that in researching and writing the novel, “It was like the world of *One Hundred Years of Solitude* coming to the world of Edith Wharton!” *Say Her Name* is a critically acclaimed autobiographical novel about the death of Goldman’s wife, Aura Estrada, who died in 2007 at the age of 30 as a result of a bodysurfing accident on the Pacific Coast of Mexico. Estrada was a talented young writer, whose real-life diary writings and fiction were woven into the
fabric of Goldman’s narrative. The novel maintains the essential facts of Estrada’s life and youth, her relationship with Goldman, and her death, but Goldman fictionalizes some details and includes composite characters, providing a moving narrative that explores grief, and as Carolina de Robertis wrote in a review for the San Francisco Chronicle, “the most primal joy in the human repertoire—the joy of loving.”

Goldman was a Guggenheim Fellow in 1997 and received a fellowship from the New York Public Library’s Center for Scholars and Writers in 2000. His journalism and short stories continue to appear in publications such as the New York Times and the New Yorker, to which he is a frequent contributor. He is a professor of English language and literature at Trinity College in Hartford, Connecticut. Honoring the memory of his deceased wife, Goldman created the Aura Estrada Prize, awarded every two years to a young woman writing in Spanish in Mexico or the United States. The prize is the only Latin American literary prize specifically for female writers. He lives in Mexico City and Brooklyn, New York. (MJV)

GÓMEZ-PEÑA, GUILLERMO (1955–). Poet, anthropologist, artist, performer, theoretician, cultural critic, arts organizer. Born and raised in Mexico City, Guillermo Gómez-Peña studied linguistics and literature at the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México in Mexico City, where he was influenced by conceptual artists Felipe Ehrenberg and Maris Bustamante. In 1978, he immigrated to San Diego, California, where he studied post-studio art at the California Institute of Arts, a highly experimental and interdisciplinary approach. He has developed into an art theorist through the interplay among concept, material, and content as well as a vanguard figure in Latino performance public art and a culture critic on Spanglish and border phenomena. He is regarded as one of the most original and innovative public artists for his work that merges living and static art. He has been praised for his cutting-edge performances and linguistic virtuosity, having received numerous fellowships and awards, including the Prix de la Parole at the 1989 International Theatre of the Americas, the 1989 New York Bessie Award, and the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, known as the “genius” award. He received the Before Columbus Foundation’s 1997 American Book Award for The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems, and Loqueras for the End of the Century.

Gómez-Peña is well known for his wild, sometimes zany parodic art and multimedia performances that challenge conventional barriers among viewer, art, and message. He freely employs mixed media that includes recordings, self-props, video, and interactive websites. His published works include ‘Ocnoceni’: (In Some Other Place = En Algún Otro Lugar) (1985); Guillermo Gómez-Peña and Coco Fusco: The Year of White Bear (1992); Warrior for Gringostroika: Essays, Performance Texts, and Poetry (1993); The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems and Loqueras for the End of the Century
GÓMEZ-PEÑA, GUILLERMO (1955–)

One of Gómez-Peña’s most original pieces is Border Brujo (Witch doctor), a videotape performance that interrogates essentialism and authenticity in relation to identity and stereotypes. This monologue flashes a series of characters that are effectively deconstructed into atomic pieces. His use of multimedia adds to the sensory impact while deconstructing the various figures through humor and creatively bizarre associations. He was instrumental in founding the Border Arts Workshop/Taller de Arte Fronterizo (BAW/TAF), an arts collective in San Diego that created militant art performances on the U.S.–Mexican border. In one performance, participants placed a table on the border to share both American and Mexican companionship and “illegal” foods, rotating the table to bring into the question the supposed border. On another occasion, Gómez-Peña, along with his fellow performer Coco Fusco, dressed up as stereotypical but fictional “Indians” from a “Guatinaus” tribe (an invented term), locked up in a metal cage, again placed right on the border. The observations and comments by passersby increased the sense of controversy. He indulged in what he terms “reverse anthropology” in order to focus on the Third World as a place of convergence. His “reenactments” became more outrageous when he collaborated with Roberto Sifuentes through the multi-genre arts organization known as Pocha Nostra, when the two performed inside Plexiglas boxes to mock, according to Coya Paz Brownrigg, “colonialist practices of representation and display: freak shows, porn windows, museums, curio shops, and more.” The performance asked for confessions of all types, and the responses were varied and wildly unexpected.
Gómez-Peña is well known for his many anthropological inversions, but also for his word plays and puns, through which he creates new concepts that often refer to a border existence. His glossary of borderisms is sheer linguistic virtuosity, which through both soft and acerbic humor or tongue-in-cheek statements dissects border experiences to understand complexities that otherwise have no translation. Instead of “Free Trade Agreement” (a commercial arrangement between countries), consider Free Taco Agreement or Funkahuatl (funk with an Aztec ending) or Gringostroika (a pun on an Anglo peace pact echoing the Russian perestroika to institute “democratic” economic and political reforms). Both his inventive spirit and imaginative restlessness combine well to reinvent him through performances and a new language. (FAL)

See also BORDERLANDS.

GONZALES, RODOLFO “CORKY” (1928–2005). Professional boxer, political activist, community organizer, poet, and playwright. The youngest of eight siblings, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales was born on 18 June 1928 in Denver, Colorado, to Federico Gonzales and Indalesia Lucero Gonzales. His father was an immigrant from Buena Ventura, Chihuahua, Mexico, and his mother was born and reared in Colorado. His mother died when he was two years old, and he and his siblings were raised by their widowed father on Denver’s east side. He attended public elementary schools in metropolitan Denver, and when not in school, young Rodolfo toiled as a farmworker alongside his father and siblings, harvesting various crops (sugar beets, potatoes, melons, etc.) in the agricultural fields of Colorado. Gonzales graduated from Denver’s Manual High School at age 16 in 1944 and continued his studies at Denver University. However, because tuition and fees were too expensive, he was forced to withdraw from the university after only one term.

Gonzales’s first claim to fame came as a prizefighter. In 1944, at the age of 16, he became an amateur boxer, achieving an exceptional record. He won the local Golden Gloves and Diamond Gloves tournaments and became the Colorado Regional Amateur Flyweight Champion in 1946. One year later he attained national recognition by winning the National Amateur Athletic Union Bantamweight Championship, which catapulted him into the professional arena, where he fought in the featherweight division until 1955. Although he never fought for the world featherweight title, he did attain a number three world ranking in both the National Boxing Association and Ring Magazine. His professional boxing record was 65 wins, nine losses, and one draw. Gonzales was inducted into the Colorado Sports Hall of Fame in 1988.

However, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales is best known for his political activism and his contributions to the Chicano Movement. After fairly serious involvement in local Democratic Party politics in the late 1950s and early 1960s, he became disillusioned with the Democratic Party, and in 1966 he
founded the Crusade for Justice, a service-oriented cultural center that promoted the self-determination of the Chicano community and community control of all aspects of Chicano life in the Denver area. The organization also lobbied for improved educational and housing opportunities for Chicanos in Denver and pressed city government and local politicians to become more committed to battling poverty, racism, police brutality, and economic inequality.

In addition to his fundamental role as a political activist and as leader of the Crusade for Justice, Gonzales also became engaged in literary creation. In 1967, he self-published the long narrative poem *I Am Joaquín*, which very effectively articulates the tumultuous spirit of the Chicano Movement as it calls for cultural nationalism and links Chicano identity to their dual Indo/Hispanic cultural ancestries. Identifying the Chicano every-person with Joaquin, the poem’s central figure and poetic voice, the poem begins by portraying the social suppression of Chicanos in contemporary American society and urges Chicanos to resist acculturation and assimilation into Anglo-American society. Gonzales further advocates that contemporary Chicanos seek strength and guidance from their Indo/Hispanic mestizo heritage to survive their contemporary social persecution. In this light, the poem takes the reader on a symbolic journey into the historical and cultural past of Mexico, beginning with the Conquest of Tenochtitlán in 1519–1521, and establishes the mestizo identity of the Chicano: “I am Cuauhtémoc, / Proud and Noble / Leader of men, / King of an empire, / civilized beyond the dreams / of the Gachupín Cortez / Who is also the blood, / the image of myself.” As one of the earliest and most widely read literary works associated with the Chicano Movement, *I Am Joaquín* was well received by activists and scholars alike and in 1972 was published by Bantam Books. The poem resonated with Chican@s throughout the country and continues to be relevant and popular among young Chican@ activists today. It is one of the most important literary works of the Chicano Movement and Chicano literature.

Gonzales also wrote two plays and 13 other poems during the height of the Chicano Movement. These unpublished works, along with several major speeches and numerous pieces of correspondence, were collected and published in *Message to Aztlán: Selected Writings*, edited by Antonio Esquibel in 2001. As is *I Am Joaquín*, the poetry and two plays presented in this anthology are very reflective of the themes, issues, and concerns of the Chicano community and the Chicano Movement in the 1960s. *The Revolutionist*, a play written by Gonzales in 1966, portrays the trials and tribulations of an elderly Mexican revolutionary and his family as they attempt to adapt to life in a metropolitan city of the U.S. Southwest in the fall of 1950. *A Cross for Maclovio* (1967), Gonzales’s second play, is set in the home of Maclovio Gallegos, in the barrio of a city in the Southwest, and portrays the activities of Maclovio as he attempts to organize community support against
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police brutality that has resulted in the death of two young Chicanos. In the end, Macllovio himself falls victim to this violence when his car explodes as he attempts to start the engine.

In 1987, Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales suffered a heart arrhythmia while driving his car and was hospitalized and partially paralyzed as a result of the accident that followed. Never fully recuperating from the accident, Gonzales passed away in Denver, Colorado, on 12 April 2005 at age 76. (DWU)

GONZALES-BERRY, ERLINDA (1942–). Professor, critic, novelist, poet. Born on 23 August 1942, Erlinda Gonzales-Berry grew up in the rural northeastern town of Roy, New Mexico. Her parents, Carlota and Canuto Gonzales, a schoolteacher and rancher, respectively, instilled in her a strong sense of place. She studied at the University of New Mexico for her BS in education and her PhD in Romance languages (1978). She taught for a few years at New Mexico State University, then transferred to the University of New Mexico, where she became a renowned professor, garnering numerous teaching awards. She is best known for her critical studies and collections, such as Las Mujeres Hablan: An Anthology of Nuevo Mexicana Writers (1988) and Pasó por Aquí: Critical Essays on the New Mexican Literary Tradition, 1542–1988 (1989).

Gonzales-Berry also wrote the experimental novel Paletitas de guayaba (On a train called Absence; 1991), a fictional autobiography and a bold work of self-discovery and affirmation about her dual identity. Instead of portraying a typical trajectory from Mexico into the United States, she reverses the process whereby the protagonist, Mari, a daring bohemian, discovers the cultural contrasts from being both Mexican and New Mexican. This bildungsroman turns into a soul-searching quest while emphasizing gender issues about tradition, nationality, and female empowerment. The novel was quite innovative for its time for its composition in Spanish, because it went beyond a realistic portrayal to delve into inner sensibilities, particularly about language and culture. The result is a multitextured work in which nuance is more important than actual action, as the protagonist rejects her American assimilation while recovering part of her Mexican background. Gonzales-Berry adds a new dimension to some of the Chicano writings by offering an introspective view of a woman’s need to what Angie Chabram-Dernersesian calls reclaim “her cultural, ethnic, political, racial, and sexual identities.” Mari’s travel, then, becomes a metaphorical path toward self-liberation about revamped social roles and a newly developed self-consciousness. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
GRANDE, REYNA (1975–). Novelist, memoirist, ESL teacher, creative writing teacher. Born on 7 September 1975 in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico, Reyna Grande was two years old when her father migrated to the United States to find work. Her mother followed her father north two years later, leaving Reyna and her siblings behind in Mexico, where they lived in extreme poverty with their grandparents until the summer of 1985, when they were brought to California by their father as undocumented immigrants. In California, they shared a one-bedroom apartment in Highland Park, a Latino neighborhood in northeast Los Angeles, with their very strict, abusive, and alcoholic father Natalio, and an indifferent stepmother, Mila.

Once settled into her new home, Reyna attended Aldama Elementary School, then Luther Burbank Junior High School, where she learned and later perfected her English-language skills. Upon completing the ESL program at Burbank Junior High School, she developed an interest in reading fairy-tale collections, sometimes reading up to 10 books a week, then transitioned to young adult fiction. Among her favorite YA fiction writers was Virginia C. Andrews, with whose characters and their experiences she related. Inspired by the stories of Andrews and Francine Pascal, young Reyna wrote a short story midway into the eighth grade and entered a literary competition at Burbank Junior High. For her effort, Reyna was awarded the “first-place” blue ribbon along with two entrance tickets to the Queen Mary, a retired ocean liner permanently moored as a tourist attraction, hotel, museum, and event facility in Long Beach, California. More important, she developed a passion for writing and continued to nurture this craft while attending Benjamin Franklin High School.

However, it was not until she attended Pasadena City College (1993–1994), with the encouragement of her English professor, Dr. Diana Savas, that Grande began to consider writing more seriously. Dr. Savas introduced Reyna to the writings of Helena Maria Viramontes, Sandra Cisneros, Julia Alvarez, and other Latina writers who wrote about topics and ideas also of deep interest to Reyna. In her memoir, The Distance Between Us, she writes: “Those books like The House on Mango Street, provided a revelation. There were people out there who understood, who experienced the things I was going through. Diana planted a seed inside me, and through those books, the seed began to grow” (306).

After attending Pasadena City College, Reyna Grande became the first person in her family to graduate from college, obtaining a BA in creative writing and film and video from the University of California, Santa Cruz (UCSC), in 1999. She subsequently earned an MFA in creative writing from Antioch University of Los Angeles (2008).

Reyna Grande is the author of two novels, Across a Hundred Mountains (2006) and Dancing with Butterflies (2009). Narrated from two distinct points of view, Across a Hundred Mountains draws heavily on Grande’s
personal experiences growing up in poverty in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico, and her sense of abandonment after having been “left behind” by her parents when they immigrated to the United States. Similarly, *Across a Hundred Mountains* is the story of young Juana García, whose father leaves for the United States—*el otro lado*—as an illegal immigrant and is never heard from again. In this light, this novel portrays the “other side” of the immigrant experience and gives readers an insight into the lives of those family members who are left behind. *Across a Hundred Mountains* received the El Premio *Aztlán* Literary Award in 2006 and an American Book Award in 2007.

*Dancing with Butterflies*, on the other hand, centers around the challenges and ordeals of four Latinas, all friends and members of a struggling dance company called Alegría. Divided into 10 chapters, each of which is narrated from the viewpoint of each of these women, the novel tells the stories of these women as they experience problems of family strife, identity, love, womanhood, aging, death, and abuse. Nevertheless, bonded in friendship by their Mexican heritage and their passion for *ballet folklórico*, both of which also provide them with the strength to confront their personal misfortunes, they learn to heal their wounds together. *Dancing with Butterflies* was the recipient of an International Latino Book Award for Best Women’s Issues in 2010.

In 2012, *The Distance Between Us* was published by Atria Books. The memoir chronicles her life before and after coming to the United States as an undocumented child immigrant. In Book One, “Mi mamá me ama” (My mother loves me), she vividly depicts experiences growing up in poverty in Iguala, Mexico, and her feelings of abandonment and loneliness after being left behind by her parents when they went to the United States in search of work. In Book Two, “The Man behind the Glass,” Grande chronicles her illegal border crossing into the United States and her experiences as an undocumented child immigrant in this country. The essence of the second section, however, deals with complications and challenges of the Grande siblings as they attempt to adjust to living with a dysfunctional, abusive, alcoholic, and moody father whom they have not seen in eight years. Due to the physical and emotional abuse, the older siblings flee from home as soon as they are old enough and able. Reyna, on the other hand, dedicates herself to making her “Papi” proud by participating in school activities, by doing well in school and her writings; but it is all to no avail. Like the others, she eventually suffers her father’s wrath and also leaves. But she encounters Dr. Diana Savas, who guides her onto the road to academic and literary success and helps her to become the first person in her family to obtain a higher education.

When not engaged in writing, Reyna Grande is a writing instructor at UCLA Extension in downtown Los Angeles, where she lives with her husband, Cory, and her children. She is also a member of the prestigious Macon-
do Writer’s Workshop, founded by renowned author Sandra Cisneros and hosted by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center in San Antonio, Texas. (DWU)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

GRITO, EL: A JOURNAL OF CONTEMPORARY MEXICAN-AMERICAN THOUGHT. A brainchild of founder Octavio Romano—in conjunction with Herminio Ríos and Nick C. Vaca at the University of California, Berkeley—the journal first appeared in fall 1967, published by Quinto Sol Publications. El Grito made an immediate impact with its concerted efforts to generate readings by and for Chican@. It was soon catapulted into prominence and was considered the best and most respected journal up to the early 1970s. One of its central goals was to produce a regular readership, in which it was very successful. The journal became a landmark by balancing academic scholarly articles with artistic expressions (visual art, literature, and literary criticism). Its editorial and financial independence from any institution gave it greater freedom of expression and exploration into diverse topics without compromising its scholarly rigor. Its focus on contemporary issues meant to challenge the conventional wisdom of social scientists by properly disseminating, contextualizing, and redefining cultural phenomena from an authentic Chican@ perspective. A central core of its impetus was to provide a forum to counteract general misconceptions about Chican@s while building a new and alternative cultural ethos.

In the process of presenting a vehicle for self-reflection and identity, the journal served to analyze and mirror the contradictions faced by Chican@s in a society that had marginalized them historically as victims of American institutions that also systematically discriminated against them. If the editors were attempting to expose the trappings of sociology and anthropology in a political context that affected Chican@s, what soon emerged was an uncontrollable source and trailblazer to vent and manifest artistic renderings through poetry, short stories, chapters of novels, and drama. Soon the journal became a leader in promoting cultural nationalism in a practical but intellectual manner so as to influence the Chicano community.

The Quinto Sol Literary Awards, granted to Tomás Rivera in 1971 for his “. . . Y no se lo tragó la tierra”/“. . . And the Earth Did Not Part,” Rudolfo Anaya in 1971 for his Bless Me, Ultima, Rolando Hinojosa-Smith in 1972 for his Estampas del Valle y otras obras, and Estela Portillo-Trambley in 1975 for her Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings, clearly led to a full-fledged literary movement that revolutionized Chican@ writings in style, scope, thematics, and language. The editors had a vision and a prophecy that came true, although in the last couple of years of publication, the issues degenerated into quirky collections, including family writings. El Grito’s last issue was volume 8, number 4, in fall 1974. (FAL)
GRITO DEL SOL: A CHICANO QUARTERLY. After editorial differences were settled when *El Grito* became defunct in 1974, editors Octavio Romano and Herminio Ríos made a comeback with *Grito del Sol* to continue the success of the former journal, concentrating primarily on new and well-established literary voices in a larger, more expansive format. *Grito del Sol* first appeared in 1976 and ran until 1982. It was published in Berkeley, California, by Tonatiuh International, Inc. Most of the noteworthy issues contain a single author’s manuscript, such as *Portrait of Doña Elena* (1981) by Katherine Quintana Ranck, *Blue Mandolin, Yellow Field* (1980) by Olivia Castellano, *Letters to Louise* (1979) by Abelardo “Lalo” Delgado, and *Chicken Toons* (1980) by Octavio Romano’s son Branko E. Romano. The journal issues often offer a strong slant on Náhuatl writings in the design, including some poetry in that Aztec language, and some issues also focus heavily on art. Although the journal attempted to surpass its predecessor, *El Grito*, clearly it was not as avant-garde nor as innovative, with second tier authors. (FAL)
HERNÁNDEZ CRUZ, VICTOR (1949–). Poet. Cruz was born in Aguas Buenas, Puerto Rico, and migrated with his family to New York City in 1954, attending public schools in the city while growing up. One of the most anthologized poets of the Nuyorican Movement, Cruz has published numerous collections of poetry. He began his career as a poet early, publishing his first chapbook, Papo Got His Gun, in 1966. In 1968, he left New York and moved to the San Francisco Bay area, where he worked as an educator for years.

By the age of 20, Cruz had already published his second collection, Snaps (1969). Published by Random House, the collection features gritty “snapshots” of life in New York City, particularly in el barrio, the working-class Puerto Rican neighborhood where he grew up. While scholars have written that his work grew to be more refined in subsequent collections, his first major collection established some signature features of his poetry both stylistically and in content. In “The Poet in New York: Victor Hernández Cruz,” Barry Wallenstein writes, “The fine achievement of Snaps is the way the poet approximates his own life in the city through simple images and rhythms,” and adds that “Cruz does not falsify or color the life of the city’s poor people.” Commenting further on the poet’s stylistics, Wallenstein asserts that “Cruz’s work, when read aloud, sounds like jazz poetry. And it is like a jazz poet that Cruz triumphs.” In her writing about Cruz, Frances Aparicio builds on Wallenstein’s claims about the significance of the musicality of Cruz’s poetry and Cruz’s inclusion of musical themes and motifs in his poems. She writes, “Victor Hernández Cruz’s poetry is consistently systematic in its presentation of music and dancing as forms of knowledge,” adding that in Snaps, “[Cruz] attests to the continuity and survival of music as an ethnic symbol which holds the key to knowledge, self-knowledge and acknowledgment.”

Cruz’s other poetry collections include Mainland (1973), Tropicalization (1976), By-Lingual Wholes (1982), and Rhythm, Content, and Flavor (1998). His poetry is characterized by inventive, experimental explorations of the nature of language in general and issues of bilingualism for Latinos/as. As
with music, linguistic invention is both a theme and a formal aspect of his poems. Carmelo Esterrich asserts, “Much of Hernández Cruz’s poetry becomes more interested in language itself than in reproducing the Nuyorican or even Puerto Rican speech,” and that ultimately Cruz’s poetry “creat[es] a ruined, consciously bastardized language, intentionally destroying all possible linguistic barriers and frontiers, molding a literature that constantly questions its linguistic ancestors, and perhaps proposing a home in language.” While most explicitly a feature of his collection *By-Lingual Wholes*, this preoccupation with bilingualism and language is recurrent throughout his oeuvre.

Travel, food, and home are other themes that permeate Cruz’s poetry and are means for engaging the issues of immigration, displacement, and cultural difference that are central to his work. His more recent collections include *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965–2000* (2001), *The Mountain and the Sea* (2006), and *In the Shadow of Al-Andalus* (2011). *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965–2000* made the short lists of the Lenore Marshall Poetry Prize and the International Griffin Poetry Prize in 2002. The judges for the latter prize praised Cruz in their citation: “Victor Hernández Cruz has long been the defining poet of that complex bridge between the Latino and mainland cultures of the U.S. *Maraca: New and Selected Poems, 1965–2000* proves the extraordinary range of this great, enduring poet, whose articulate-ly persuasive humor and intelligence bear persistent witness to a meld of peoples.” His most recent book, *In the Shadow of Al-Andalus*, shares some similar themes and approaches to past work, but significantly, also speaks to the influence of Islam in Spain and evokes recent time spent by Cruz in Morocco.

Cruz is a recipient of the Guggenheim Fellowship and also received a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. From 2008 to 2013, he served as a chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. In 1976, he cofounded the Before Columbus Foundation, “a nonprofit educational and service organization dedicated to the promotion and dissemination of contemporary American multicultural literature.” Twice he has been crowned the World Heavyweight Poetry Champion in Taos, New Mexico, a testament to his dynamism and vibrancy as a performer of his poetry. He divides his time between Puerto Rico and Morocco. (MJV)

**HERRERA, JUAN FELIPE (1948–).** Poet, novelist, actor, musician, anthropologist, ethnographer, author of children’s books. Born the son of migrant parents in Fowler, California, on 27 December 1948, Juan Felipe Herrera stands out as one of the most experimental and prolific writers in Chicano literature since the early 1970s. He initiated his career alongside the famous Chicano poet Alurista in San Diego, where he first indulged in a neo-indigenist vein of writings, which was greatly inflected by a Spanglish
and cultural nationalist aesthetics. Highly eclectic and bohemian in terms of influences and styles, Herrera first participated intimately in the early literary renaissance as an offshoot of the Chicano Movement. Many critics claim he is one of the writers who has evolved the most since the early 1970s, covering a wide range of themes, forms, and styles. By 2008, his literary prowess had reached the point where critics, such as Francisco A. Lomeli, suggested that he can rightfully be considered a Chicano poet laureate. Justly so, his reputation as a writer catapulted him to the distinction of being named the poet laureate of the state of California between 2012 and 2014, and his literary fame reached new heights when he became the first Latino poet to be appointed U.S. poet laureate, for 2015 through 2017.

Herrera began publishing in 1974 with a mildly experimental collection titled *Rebozos of Love/We Have Woven/Sudor de Pueblos/On Our Back*, which sought to defy the traditional structure of a book, attempting to present a ying–yang relationship between text and image, form and content, and, explicitly, Spanish and English. His penchant for neologisms and free-flowing verses became his signature and trademark from that time on. His poems in this collection resemble more performed chants that propagate a new cosmology as well as an alternative to 20th-century materialism. Herrera clearly is inspired by some Latin American writers (Vicente Huidobro, César Vallejo), the Beat Generation, the Hippie Generation, Allen Ginsberg, picaresque literature, César Chávez, and street-smart punk. He can be both earthy and transcendental, rebellious and cosmic, theoretical and visual.

After writing his first book, Herrera took time to gain experiences through travel and study, frequently penetrating the jungles of southern Mexico and pursuing an MFA in creative writing and a PhD in anthropology (which he never completed). In 1983, he revived his career with a steady stream of books, such as *Exiles of Desire*, which deal with urban alienation with constant reflections on where he has been and how to shed negativity and solitude. He then entered a period of intense experimentation thematically as well as stylistically (from testimonies to haikus), particularly in *Night in Tunisia* (1985), *Facegames* (1987), and *Zenjosé* (1987), and this trend culminated in his large collection and tour de force *Akrílica* (1989). By the 1990s, his work had expanded into outrageously fanciful explorations into playful humor, embedded with serious commentary about his life trajectory, social concerns, existential contemplations, and highly metaphorical representations. This is evident in *Night Train in Tuxtla* (1994); *Calling the Doves/El canto de las palomas* (1995); *Love after Riots* (1996); *Border-Crosser with a Lamborghini Dream* (1999); *Lotería Cards and Fortune Poems: A Book of Lives* (1999); *CrashBoomLove: A Novel in Verse* (1999); and *Thunderweavers/Tejedoras de rayos* (2000), a bilingual edition in which the poet describes four Mayan women from Acteal, Chiapas (Mexico), who were killed in 1997. It is a moving account of violence against innocent women in the cross
fire in Chiapas, rendering them notable homage for their perseverance and struggle. This work was followed by Giraffe on Fire (2001) and Notebooks of a Chile Verde Smuggler (2002). In 2005, he published Cinnamon Girl: Letters Found inside a Cereal Box, another novel in verse, in which he offers a biography of a girl against the backdrop of the collapse of the Twin Towers in New York on 11 September 2001. Subsequently, he produced Skatefate (2011) and Senegal Taxi (2013), further expanding his subjects into unexplored thematic territories. In addition, he has written a series of children’s literature: Laughing Outloud, I Fly (1998; for which he received the Pura Belpré Honor in 1999), The Upside Down Boy (2000), Grandma and Me at the Flea/Los meros meros remateros (2002), Super Cilantro Girl (2003), Featherless (2004), and Downtown Boy (2005).

Herrera continued a rich vein of productivity with other stylized and re-fashioned poems, in collections such as 187 Reasons Mexicanos Can’t Cross the Border: Undocuments, 1971–2007 (2007), and Half of the World in Light: New and Selected Poems (2008), which accurately reflects Herrera’s seasoned poetics as he resorts to metaphorical language while still anchoring much of his poetry in social concerns while broadening his horizons. Herrera’s latest work, Notes on the Assemblage (2015), is divided into eight parts that reflect on the 43 disappeared students from the Ayotzinapa Rural Teachers’ College who went missing in Iguala, Guerrero, Mexico, on 26 September 2014, as the poetic voice ponders life and death and how to assemble a poem, an image, or a moment. Herrera also offers a section of his condolences for such poets as José Montoya, Jack Gilbert, and Jayne Cortez. In the section and the poem titled “Borderbus,” he discusses the perils of travel into dangerous regions, concluding that the value of the person is from within: “We are everything hermana / Because we come from everything” (63). In the poem “Soap Factory,” the enigmatic dialogue about soap echoes a discussion that transcends soap, and the poem disintegrates into fragments of percolated meanings.

A professor emeritus in creative writing from the University of California at Riverside and California State University at Fresno, Herrera has garnered many other important literary awards for his 29 books, including the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for the collection of poetry Facegames in 1987; the 1997 New Writer Award from the Ezra Jack Keats Foundation for Calling the Doves (El canto de las palomas); the Americas Award for Children’s and Young Adult Literature for Crash-BoomLove: A Novel in Verse in 1999; the Hungry Mind Award of Distinction for The Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza in 2000; the Focal Award, two Latino Hall of Fame Poetry Awards, and the PEN USA Literary Award for Poetry in 2008 for 187 Reasons Mexicanos Can’t Cross the Border; the National Book Critics Awards for Poetry in 2008; and a Guggenheim Fellowship for Creative Arts in 2010. His honors also include the UC Berkeley
Regent’s Fellowship as well as two fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts, the Bread Loaf Writers’ Conference, and the Stanford Chicano Fellows. He has also received several grants from the California Arts Council.

His originality seems boundless and his creativity seductive due to his innovative presentation of his subjects and the social and visual experiences he captures with an uncanny pathos, zaniness, originality, and verve. His stature has grown to the point where most critics consider Juan Felipe Herrera the leading poet among Chicano writers in the first decade of the 21st century. (FAL)

HIJUELOS, OSCAR (1951–2013). Novelist. Oscar Hijuelos was born in New York City, the son of working-class Cuban immigrants who came to the United States in the 1940s. In an essay published by the *New York Times* in 2011, Hijuelos stated that as a four-year-old child, he contracted a kidney infection and was subsequently hospitalized in a Connecticut rehabilitative hospital for one year. He recalled that when he went in to the hospital, he spoke the language of his home, Spanish, and that when he was discharged a year later, he spoke English, an experience that he said created a sense of ambivalence toward and disconnection from both Cuban and American cultures, giving him, in his words, “strange baggage . . . about [his] upbringing.” A second-generation Cuban American, Hijuelos mostly explores the nature of immigrant assimilation and its dilemmas, as well as immigrant nostalgia, in his novels. Hijuelos received a BA and an MFA from City College of New York, where he studied with Donald Barthelme and Susan Sontag.

Hijuelos published seven novels and one memoir over the course of his writing career. His debut novel, *Our House in the Last World* (1983), received praise from critics and established Hijuelos as a promising new voice in the literary world. Like Hijuelos’s own family, the Santino family featured in his novel come to the United States from Cuba in the 1940s, and the book follows the family for several decades, depicting the parents’ marriage, the birth of their two sons, migration to the United States, and the harsh conditions of their life in Spanish Harlem. The protagonist of the novel is the second son, Hector, whose perspective and experience embody some of the difficulties of second-generation Latino immigrants, particularly in regard to authenticity and belonging, as he struggles with not being as Cuban as his parents, yet not feeling “fully” or “truly” American.

By far, Hijuelos’s most well-known and widely read book is the 1989 novel *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, an international best seller for which he won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 1990. Hijuelos was the first Latino author to win the prize (the second was Junot Diaz in 2008). *The Mambo Kings* is the story of two Cuban brothers, Cesar and Nestor, and follows their journey from Havana to New York. Leaving Cuba in the 1940s,
they form a band in New York City shortly after their arrival, capitalizing on the New York Latin music craze of the 1940s and 1950s. In 1955, the brothers appear on the *I Love Lucy* show, a moment that occupies central importance in the novel, highlighting the mediocre and temporary nature of their fame and linking their existence and identities to the iconic actor, Desi Arnaz, and his most famous character, Ricky Ricardo. One of the brothers, Nestor, remains obsessed with his first love, Maria, throughout the novel, and is said to suffer an “eternal homesickness,” embodied by his longing for his lost love. In a review of the book in the *New York Times* soon after the novel was published, Michiko Kakutani wrote, “Oscar Hijuelos’s remarkable new novel is another kind of American story—an immigrant story of lost opportunities and squandered hopes. While it dwells in bawdy detail on Cesar’s sexual escapades, while it portrays the musical world of the ’50s in bright, primary colors, the novel is essentially elegiac in tone—a Chekhovian lament for a life of missed connections and misplaced dreams.”

The director of *Arte Público Press*, Nicolás Kanellos, called *The Mambo Kings* “the best Hispanic book ever published by a large commercial press,” arguing that the book is “not your typical ethnic autobiography which charts a protagonist’s search for the American dream, *The Mambo Kings* is instead an evocation of the period when one segment of Hispanic culture heavily influenced American popular culture, dancing its way right into the heart of the mainstream.” While overall the novel received many favorable reviews, criticisms of the book were sharp. Juan Flores found fault with Hijuelos’s apolitical stance, arguing that in the novel, “‘blackness,’ pressing poverty and other markers of social oppression” were excluded in a way that broke with the “contestatory and oppositional” nature of the Latinx literary tradition. Another major criticism was of Hijuelos’s representations of women and sexuality in the novel. Juan Bruce-Novoa argued: “We should not ignore . . . the novel’s misogyny,” pointing to hypersexual and objectifying renderings of women characters and descriptions of the male characters’ sexual exploits (particularly Cesar’s sexuality) that, though “hyperbolic” and “unrealistic” nonetheless “[are] offensive to many women.” Yet the critiques of the novel did not negate its tremendous success, and it was adapted as a feature film, as well as for the stage. In 2010, Hijuelos published a kind of sequel to the novel, *Beautiful Maria of My Soul*.

woman in New York who migrates to the United States from Cuba in the 1940s after she is disowned by her wealthy businessman father. In 2008, Hijuelos published the young adult novel *Dark Dude*, a Cuban American coming-of-age story that narrates the character’s search for ethnic identity.

His memoir *Thoughts Without Cigarettes* (2011) discusses Hijuelos’s own struggles with ethnic identity and his guilt about the times that he denied his ethnicity, growing up light skinned and without speaking Spanish well. The memoir also narrates his process of becoming a writer.

*Mr. Ives’s Christmas* (1995) and *A Simple Habana Melody (From When the World Was Good)* (2002) are significant departures from the themes explored in great depth in his other work. In *Mr. Ives’s Christmas*, Hijuelos explores compassion, mercy, and forgiveness, focusing on a man whose son has been murdered and his process of grieving, coming to terms with his profound loss, and eventually facing his son’s murderer. Like many of Hijuelos’s other novels, *A Simple Habana Melody* takes place in the 1940s. The novel features a protagonist, Israel Levis, who returns to Cuba after living in Europe for several years, including being imprisoned by Nazis during the occupation of France after he was mistakenly thought to be Jewish. The novel is also a love story.

Hijuelos lived in New York City for most of his life until he accepted a position at Duke University in 2008, joking in an interview that before taking that teaching position he had been “gainfully unemployed” as a fiction writer for 20 years. Between 2008 and 2013, Hijuelos divided his time between New York City and Durham, North Carolina, where he was teaching. In 2013, Hijuelos died suddenly of a heart attack. (MJV)

**HINOJOSA-SMITH, ROLANDO (1929–).** Novelist, short story writer, poet, translator, essayist, educator. Born in Mercedes, Texas, on 21 January 1929 to Manuel Guzmán Hinojosa and Carrie Effie Smith and raised in southeastern Texas, Hinojosa moved out of the border region to enlist in the U.S. Army during the Korean War and later earned a PhD in Spanish literature in 1969 from the University of Illinois at Urbana–Champaign. In his varied career, he has served as a radio announcer, editor of the Caribbean Army Defense Command, high school teacher, civil servant for the Social Security Administration, and eventually university administrator at Texas A&I. An original member of the first contemporary generation of Chicano writers from the *Quinto Sol* Generation of 1967, he is regarded as one of the most prominent and prolific Chicano writers to renovate his style and expand his literary focus. Among his greatest contributions is the creation of a fictitious mythic place called Belken County somewhere in Texas on the border with Mexico, comparable to William Faulkner’s Yoknapatawpha County in the South.
Hinojosa burst onto the scene as a gifted storyteller with a unique trilogy, which he later called *Klail City Death and Other Works* (1973), *Klail City y sus alrededores* (1976) (later reissued in a bilingual edition as *Generaciones y semblanzas*, 1977), and *Korean Love Songs: From Klail City Death Trip* (1978). He has a penchant for colorful dialogue, clever episodic fragmentation, an interwoven matrix of interconnected generations and narrators, a strong presence of orality and folklore, wit, and constant experimentation with characterization and humor. Together, his books form a body of novels that portray a people in their quotidian existence—not idealized but as humdrum characters manifesting vitality and cultural memory. The main narrators in his novels—Jehú Malacara, Rafe Buenrostro, and P. Galindo—take charge of the various narrations to add to and expand, sometimes through allusion, the sketches that constitute a larger chronicle of the region. As a witness and scribe of his community, he manages to put the southeastern Texas border on the literary map with what has now become standard reading. He also produced a voluminous body of work that expanded the mythic border space and his social/racial themes: *Mi querido Rafa* (1981), *Rites and Witnesses* (1982), *Claros varones de Belken/Fair Gentlemen of Belken County* (1986), *Becky and Her Friends* (1990), *The Useless Servants* (1993), and *We Happy Few* (2006). He has also been instrumental in the development and sophistication of the Chicano detective novel, with *Partners in Crime* (1985) and *Ask a Policeman* (1998). His writings include rewrites of his own works (not exactly translations), such as *The Valley* (1983), and the English rewrite of Tomás Rivera’s “... y no se lo tragó la tierra,” which he titled *This Migrant Earth* (1985).

Hinojosa stands out as one of the most celebrated contemporary writers in Chicano letters, having received numerous awards and accolades. His first breakthrough was being a recipient of the Quinto Sol Literary Award in 1973 for his work *Estampas del Valle*, which launched his career while introducing a collage style of portraying people as a collective body of folks with trials, tribulations, virtues, dysfunctions, questionable ethics, rogue personalities, critical perspectives, bad habits, and a social conscience. He later received the prestigious Casa de las Américas Literary Award from Havana, Cuba, for *Klail City y sus alrededores*, which clearly magnified his importance as an international writer of renown while furthering his command of a macro-chronicle of his region. Since then he has been named to the Texas Literary Hall of Fame and as a member of the North American Academy of the Spanish Language. He has also served as a distinguished visiting professor at various universities and has held the Ellen Clayton Garwood Professorship at the University of Texas at Austin. He has made more than 300 presentations of his work (readings, formal papers, workshops, consultantships) to universities in the United States, Latin America, and much of Europe. (FAL)
HISPANIC. This has been a widely used term since the “Decade of the Hispanic” was pronounced in the 1980s, as a result of the federal government’s attempts to impose one label while synthesizing the many used to describe Latinos of all origins. More common on the East Coast than in the West, it is also regarded by many Latinos as a more conservative, “safe” referent that does not suggest any political affiliation. Specifically, the term at times refers to a closer connection with Spain and less so with indigenous or African peoples of the Americas. Others consider it a vestige of Spanish colonialism that denies racial and cultural hybridity. (FAL)

See also CHICANO/A (CHICAN@); HISPANO.

HISPANO. The term refers to “Hispanic” in Spanish. In New Mexico, “Hispano” is usually the preferred term to describe ancestry that can date back to the 16th century, thus underscoring the fact that the people of European background—typically Spain—who came to New Mexico were Spanish subjects until 1848. The argument is that they had not been officially Mexican for very long (only between 1821 and 1848), so their background is more “Hispanic.” People in older generations tend to use it more often than younger generations. (FAL)

HOMIES. The term embodies a wide variety of meanings depending on where it is used and who uses it. For one, it can refer to someone who has a shared affinity in relation to turf or place or to someone in whom one has great trust and confidence. Homies can generally be barrio dwellers in the form of pals, intimate friends, partners, or companions with common values or ways of seeing the world. On the other hand, homies are also small plastic figurines between ¼ and 2 inches in size that try to capture a social type, an archetype, and even a stereotype from the barrio, considered a ghetto or a living space for community.

The term derives from the allusions to “home,” “hometown,” “homeland,” “homeboy,” “homegirl,” “brotherhood,” or “neighborhood.” It is part of colloquial speech to invoke shared experience generally within an environment of intense social relations, often plagued by poverty, drugs, poor housing, dropouts, unemployment, and inadequate institutional infrastructures. In another context, homies also evokes the “hood” as a tough place for survival, where the laws of a cement jungle rule.

Homies, then, can refer to a person with a fraternal bond, a confidant, can be a form of endearment, or can be a commodified pop culture figurine created by David Gonzales, who sells various editions in small plastic bubbles at markets where Latinos predominate. Some people consider them toys; others consider them dolls; while others perceive them pernicious representations of hoodlums or an outlaw sector closely related to “pachucos,”
“zoot suiters,” “gangbangers,” “gangsters,” “delinquents,” and other demonized, marginal characters. Gonzales’s Homies figurines, however, re-create certain social types with sympathy and/or empathy, a dose of respect, and considerable humor: either overt, subliminal, or subtle. Some of the sculptural figurines are Dopey, Sapo (toad), Chola (woman Homie), Papi Chulo (cool stud), Mr. Raza, Droopy, Smiley, Eight Ball, and La Chicana.

Such Homies attempt to avoid facile caricaturization of these social types, because part of the objective is to give them a face, a name within the context of a larger community. In this way, Gonzales sets out to single out certain characteristics—often exaggerated or inflated—with the idea of responding to official folkloric representations, but most of all, to suggest that such social types are not devoid of positive or objective representations. They thus fill a void by humanizing their characteristics in a fun, playful manner, avoiding blanket negative representations. They also fulfill the American fondness for collectible items, such as army men, cowboys and Indians, GI Joe, Barbie and Ken, and other objects of entertainment. These Homies also aim to satisfy a desire for possessing heroes or antiheroes in miniature form, especially figurines that cross from undesirables to “cute” commodifications.

The Homie figurine craze has opened up new configurations of communities that exist in the margins. Gonzales has brought them out of the shadows in a democratic way so that anyone can have one or a collection of various editions. They are so popular that they have crossed over to wider markets, even encompassing figures of Koreans, Puerto Ricans, African Americans, and others. The phenomenon has awakened a new awareness of what they mean, who they are, and how they contribute toward the eradication of stereotypes—at least vicious ones. In sum, Homies offer a spoof of themselves by not taking themselves too seriously; thanks to David Gonzales, their miniature size is nonthreatening, while their owners can enjoy their big ears, droopy eyes, funny hairdos, eccentric features, and other characteristics that clearly indicate personality, vitality, and uniqueness. (FAL)

HOYOS, ANGELA DE (1923–2009). Poet, songwriter, artist, publisher, editor. Born in Coahuila, Mexico, on 23 January 1923, Angela de Hoyos emigrated to the United States at the age of three, after having suffered severe burns all over her upper body from a gas heater flare-up. De Hoyos and her family settled in San Antonio, Texas, where she spent her formative years, attended school, and resided until her death in 2009.

De Hoyos’s first exposure to and interest in poetry began very early in life as she convalesced from her accident. During her lengthy period of recovery, her mother regularly read poetry to her and encouraged her to play with words and create rhymes of her own. However, it was not until entering high school that she began writing poetry in earnest, and she published some of her early verses in the school newspaper. After completing high school, de
Hoyos attended classes and workshops at local institutions (the University of Texas at San Antonio College, the Witte Museum, and the San Antonio Art Institute), where she continued her interest in creative writing and fine-tuned her craft as a poet. The fruits of these scholarly efforts began to see the light in the late 1960s with the advent of the Chicano Movement, when she emerged as one of the first women poets of the Chicano Renaissance.

*Arise, Chicano! And Other Poems* (1975) is Angela de Hoyos’s first published collection of poetry. Written in English with Spanish translations provided by Mireya Robles, the collection addresses some of the more significant social and economic inequities confronting the Chicano people (racial discrimination, exploitation, oppression, poverty) and exhorts them to rise up and empower themselves to overcome their disparate condition. In the collection’s title poem (“Arise Chicano”) she writes, “There is no one to succor you / You must be your own messiah” (12). As she bears witness to her people’s alienated state within Anglo-American society, she also portrays the Chicano Movement as a new hope for the Chicano community.

In her second collection of poetry, *Chicano Poems for the Barrio* (1975), de Hoyos projects her innermost concerns about the loss of Chicano identity and cultural traditions in the face of acculturation and assimilation into American society and culture. Written in a bilingual format, code switching between Spanish and English, with an underlying tone of irony, most of the poems of this collection condemn Anglo-America for its lack of understanding and acceptance of Chicano culture and history and its insistence on cultural assimilation and acculturation rather than cultural diversity. For example, in a poem titled “Small Comfort” she states, “En tierra del gringo / vamos poco a poco / sepultando todo” (In the land of the Anglo / little by little we are / burying everything). She, on the other hand, strives to preserve her people’s culture and traditions and embraces ethnic and cultural diversity as opposed to cultural dominance. However, she recognizes that the moment for acceptance is not yet at hand: “I was born too late / or perhaps too soon: / It is not yet my time; / this is not yet my home. I must wait for the conquering barbarian / to learn the Spanish word for love: HERMANO” (13).

De Hoyos’s third collection of poetry, *Selecciones*, was originally published in Vera Cruz, Mexico, in 1976, and was republished in a bilingual edition, *Selected Poems/Selecciones* in 1979, with Spanish translations provided by Robles. Contrary to the poems in her previous two collections, the poetry in *Selecciones* is more introspective and philosophical. Generally pessimistic in tone, the poetic voice speaks to the pains and treacheries of life, the inevitability of death, and forsaken love. For example, projecting life as a “Mortal Trap,” she writes: “Come into the boudoir / of my arms, Life purrs / to unsuspecting mortals. / And loving her, beguiled, / we enter. / Whereupon,
at every chance, / thereafter posturing good-will / in every glance, / with Brutus-fingered calm she stabs / and stabs / and stabs / and stabs / us unto death.”

In *Woman, Woman* (1985), de Hoyos pays tribute to the individual and social experiences of women. While most of the poems in the collection are written in English, some are in Spanish, and a few are code switched between the two languages. In the collection’s title poem, for example, she challenges the negative image of women as established by the story of Adam and Eve in the Bible’s book of Genesis and, in fact, suggests that it is woman “forever Eve / who rules / mere man / without / reprieve.” Moreover, the poems suggest the opposite viewpoint and propose that historically and socially, it is man who has been disloyal, untrustworthy, and deceitful toward woman. *Woman, Woman* was Angela de Hoyos’s last published work. She died of natural causes on 24 September 2009. (DWU)

*See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.*

**HUERTA, DOLORES (1930–).** Civil rights activist, labor leader, and feminist Dolores Clara Fernández was born on 10 April 1930 in Dawson, New Mexico, a small mining community located in the northern part of the state. Her parents, Juan Fernández and Alicia Chávez, divorced when Dolores was just age three, and her mother moved with her three children to Stockton, California, a farmworker community, where Huerta spent the remainder of her childhood and young adulthood. After graduating from Stockton High School, she continued her education at Stockton College (later to become San Joaquin Delta Community College), where she received an associate’s degree and a provisional teaching certificate, and she married Ralph Head, with whom she had two daughters. She eventually entered the classroom as an elementary schoolteacher; however, given the extreme poverty of her students, she soon realized that her calling was not in the classroom but in social and community activism, where she could indeed help correct the social and economic inequalities of her community.

Huerta began her career as a civil rights activist in 1955, when she joined veteran community organizer Frank Ross to start a Stockton, California, chapter of the Community Service Organization (CSO), a self-help organization that not only fought for economic improvements for Latinos and lobbied for better conditions for farmworkers, but also battled segregation and police brutality, led voter registration drives, and pushed for improved public services in impoverished communities. Early in her association with the CSO, she met and befriended César Estrada Chávez, executive director of the organization. As the pair discovered that they shared a common vision of organizing farmworkers, they resigned their positions with the CSO, and in 1962 cofounded the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA), the predecessor to the United Farm Workers (UFW) of America union, formed in
1965, for which Huerta served as vice president until 1999. In her role as vice president of the UFW, Huerta helped negotiate contracts for farmworkers, managed a hiring system to increase UFW jobs, and fought against the use of harmful pesticides and for unemployment and health-care benefits for agricultural workers. Since the early 1990s, she has also been a strong advocate for women’s rights. According to Gender and Women’s Leadership: A Reference Handbook, she was the Southwest coordinator for the Feminist Majority’s “Feminization of Power: 50/50 by the Year 2000” campaign, for which she traveled around the country inspiring women to run for office. She also served as national chair of the 21st Century Party, founded on the principles that women should make up 52 percent of the party’s candidates and that the nation’s ethnic diversity must be represented (213).

Currently in her mid-eighties, Huerta continues to advocate and work vigorously to improve the lives of immigrants, the working poor, farmworkers, women, and children. For her sustained activism, she was named one of Ms. magazine’s Three Most Important Women of 1997, and has received many accolades, including 11 honorary doctorates from universities throughout the United States, the Ellis Island Medal of Freedom Award (1993), the Eleanor Roosevelt Award (1998), the Ohtli Award from the Mexican Government (1998), the James Smithson Award from the Smithsonian (2001), and the Presidential Medal of Freedom (2012), the highest civilian award in the United States. An incomparable community organizer and social activist for more than 50 years and one of the most celebrated Latinas in the United States, Huerta is also the matriarch of a family of 11 children, 15 grandchildren, and 7 great-grandchildren. She presently lives in Bakersfield, California, where she presides over the Dolores Huerta Foundation. (DWU)

See also CHICANO MOVEMENT, THE; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
IMMIGRATION. A defining characteristic of Latinos/as as a group is the continuous presence of new immigrants as a constitutive element. That is, the existence of Latinos/as as a group has historically included both multigenerational U.S. ethnic families and new immigrants. In any discussion of immigration, a common and somewhat straightforward way to think about migration is in terms of what social scientists call “push-pull factors,” which occur within multiple realms: economic, political, and cultural. “Push factors” are those phenomena that drive people to leave their home country, given the reality that all things being equal, most would prefer to remain in their country of origin rather than endure the hardships of migration and adaptation to a new country. “Pull factors” draw migrants to immigrate to the chosen country; on what bases do people choose their migration destination?

Large-scale Mexican migration to the United States did not begin until the early 20th century, motivated by labor demands in the United States and political unrest in Mexico. The first great wave of immigration from Mexico occurred in response to the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). During this 10-year period of armed conflict, it is estimated that approximately 900,000 war refugees and political exiles fled to the United States to escape the violence and turmoil of the revolution. However, by this time the United States, the world’s leading industrial nation, had become involved in World War I (1914–1918) and was clamoring for labor (a pull factor) to meet the needs of agriculture, mining, and other labor markets such as construction, the steel mills, automobile factories, and meatpacking plants.

During this period the U.S. Congress passed the 1917 Immigration Act (also known as the Asiatic Barred Zone Act), new legislation that restricted the immigration of peoples from the area of Asia and surrounding countries, as well as those with mental and physical handicaps. The new legislation also imposed a head tax on every adult immigrant, expanded categories of “undesirable aliens,” and added a literacy test requiring immigrants over 16 years of age to demonstrate basic reading comprehension in any language. However, the literacy test alone was not enough to prevent most potential immigrants from entering, so members of Congress sought a new way to restrict
immigration in the 1920s. In 1924, the United States passed additional immigration legislation, known as the Immigration Act of 1924 (a.k.a. the Johnson-Reed Act). This legislation limited the number of immigrants allowed to enter the United States through a national origins quota. The quota provided immigration visas to 2 percent of the total number of people of each nationality in the United States as of the 1890 national census. It completely excluded immigrants from Asia. According to the Office of the Historian in the U.S. Department of State: “In all of its parts, the most basic purpose of the 1924 Immigration Act was to preserve the ideal of U.S. homogeneity.” While neither of these congressional acts had much effect on Mexican immigration, the Great Depression (1929–1939) did. With the Great Depression, U.S. unemployment reached 25 percent, and many Americans believed that Mexicans were taking away scarce jobs and government assistance from Americans during this economic crisis. In response, as observed by historians Francisco Balderrama and Raymond Rodríguez, “federal, state and local officials launched so-called ‘repatriation’ campaigns. They held raids in workplaces and in public places, rounded up Mexicans and Mexican-Americans alike, and deported them.” In total, between 1929 and 1936, 600,000 Mexicans were forced out of the United States across the border into Mexico, 60 percent of whom were actually Chicanos, that is, American citizens of Mexican descent.

The next wave of Mexican immigration to the United States was the Bracero Program (1942–1964), which was instituted as a response to growers’ requests and permitted Mexican nationals to perform temporary agricultural work. Over its 22-year life the Bracero Program pulled in more than 4.5 million Mexican nationals, who were legally contracted to work in the United States. During the second decade of the Bracero Program, the effects of World War II caused a massive exodus of undocumented immigrants from Mexico into the Southwest seeking employment in agriculture, thus giving growers the option of hiring cheap Mexican labor over bearing the costs of and utilizing the Bracero Program. To address the mounting problem of illegal immigration alongside the Bracero Program, the U.S. government responded with Operation Wetback (1951–1954), a collaborative effort by American and Mexican border patrol agencies to apprehend, remove, and deport undocumented Mexican immigrants (pejoratively referred to as “wetbacks”) from the Southwest back to the border or to the interior of Mexico. Those apprehended were handed this statement: “You have entered the United States illegally and in violation of the laws of your land and also those of the United States. For this reason you are being returned to your homeland. If you return again illegally you will be arrested and punished as provided by law. . . . We understand that the life of a wetback is difficult. Wetbacks are unable to work for more than a few hours before they are apprehended and deported. Remember these words and transmit the news to your families and
countrymen if you want to do them a favor” (K. L. Hernández, *Migra: The History of the Border Patrol*, 156). By 1956, some three million Mexicans had been deported as the result of Operation Wetback.

The Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965 (a.k.a. the Hart-Celler Act), which made it unlawful to have quotas from countries based on national origins and made “family reunification” a priority in terms of petitioning for residency and citizenship, inspired the next phase of Mexican migration—and Latino migration for that matter—to the United States. Needless to say, the new law initiated a new wave of legal immigration into the United States, and in the first five years after its passage, according to History.com, “immigration to the U.S. from Asian countries—especially those fleeing war-torn Southeast Asia (Vietnam, Cambodia)—would more than quadruple. (Under past immigration policies, Asian immigrants had been effectively barred from entry.)” Moreover, the report further asserts that by the end of the 20th century, the policies put into effect by the Immigration Act of 1965 had greatly changed the face of the American population. Whereas in the 1950s, more than half of all immigrants were Europeans and just 6 percent were Asians, by the 1990s only 16 percent were Europeans, and 31 percent were of Asian descent, while the percentages of Latino and African immigrants had also jumped significantly. Between 1965 and 2000, the highest number of immigrants (4.3 million) to the United States came from Mexico, in addition to 1.4 million emigrés from the Philippines, Korea, the Dominican Republic, India, Cuba, and Vietnam. Added to these figures were the more than three million undocumented emigrés collectively granted amnesty via the Immigration Reform and Control Act (IRCA) of 1986, which provided major stipulations for the legalization of undocumented aliens who had been continuously unlawfully present since 1982, legalization of certain agricultural workers, sanctions for employers who knowingly hire undocumented workers, and increased enforcement at U.S. borders.

In terms of immigration to the United States from other Latin American countries, geopolitics have always been highly influential. That is, push-pull factors most often can be observed in (1) the economic and/or political situations of the Latin American “sending” country and (2) the relationship between the “sending” country and the United States. For most Latin American immigration, the “pull factors” that bring immigrants to the United States are typically relative proximity, economic opportunity (real and perceived), other family or community members migrating before them, safety, democracy, and political freedom (real and perceived).

The history of Puerto Rican immigration to the United States is unique because of Puerto Rico’s distinctive relationship with the United States: Puerto Rico is a possession of the United States and has been since the end of the Spanish–American War of 1898, but it is not a state. After the war, Puerto Rico never gained full political sovereignty from the United States, and in
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1917, with the passage of the Jones-Shafroth Act, Puerto Ricans became citizens and as such were given the right to freely migrate throughout the then 48 states just like any other American citizens. However, during the first half of the 20th century there was very little migration from the island commonwealth to the mainland. In fact, statistics indicate that in the 1930s there were merely about 50,000 Puerto Ricans living in the continental United States, mostly in small enclaves in the cities of New York, Chicago, New Jersey, and Philadelphia, among other cities in the East. However, due to economic hardship and growing unemployment on the island and the need for cheap labor on the mainland, large-scale Puerto Rican migration increased after World War II. By 1946, the Puerto Rican population of New York had reached 50,000, and over the next decade, more than 25,000 Puerto Ricans came to the continental United States each year, peaking in 1953, when 70,000 arrived, primarily in New York, New Jersey, and Florida. These figures exploded by 1960, when the number of Puerto Ricans living on the mainland reached 893,000, with 69 percent of them living in New York and the others in various communities of the mid-Atlantic, the Midwest, and New England. According to a recent report from the Pew Research Center, with a 2012 state-side population of 4,930,000, Puerto Ricans (5,266,738 in 2014) are currently the second largest group of Latinos in the United States, following Mexicans. Compared with other U.S. Latinos, Puerto Ricans overall are somewhat worse off on several indicators of well-being. They have lower median household incomes and a lower homeownership rate and are more likely to be poor. However, Puerto Ricans overall (especially those born on the mainland) have higher educational levels than other U.S. Hispanics, according to the Pew Research Center.

As with Puerto Rico, Cuban immigration to the United States has its roots in the 19th century, first in the 1860s, when Cuban cigar companies relocated to Florida to avoid tariffs and trade regulations, and many Cuban cigar workers came to work in the relocated factories. In the 1880s, as Cuban patriots began to oppose Spanish colonial rule of the island, many moved to the United States as exiles in search of refuge and financial support for their independence movement, including the Cuban nationalist leader José Martí, who organized and sought the support of thousands of fellow Cuban exiles in New York and Florida. However, the first great wave of immigration from Cuba to the United States occurred in the wake of the Cuban Revolution (1959–1960), when Cuban revolutionaries led by Fidel Castro toppled the dictatorial regime of Fulgencio Batista. Approximately 120,000 supporters of the Batista government immigrated to Florida in the United States at that time. The vast majority of these first immigrants were from Cuba’s elite and middle classes: executives and owners of firms, big merchants, sugar mill owners, cattlemen, representatives of foreign companies, and other professionals.
A second wave of Cuban migration occurred from December 1960 to October 1962, when more than 14,000 unaccompanied minors were brought from Cuba to the United States. Labeled Operation Pedro Pan (Peter Pan), the program was created by Catholic Charities of Miami in December 1960 at the request of parents in Cuba to provide an opportunity for them to send their children to Miami to avoid “communist” indoctrination.

Eventually dubbed “Freedom Airlift” by the American government, a third wave of Cuban immigration began in the autumn of 1965, when Fidel Castro announced that all Cubans with relatives living in the United States would be allowed to leave through the port of Camarioca and opened the port to Cubans living in the United States to retrieve their relatives by boat. After a few weeks, 5,000 Cubans had left Cuba for Miami, and as more and more emigrés gathered at the port to leave the island, the United States and Cuba entered into negotiations to accomplish the migration in a more orderly fashion. Beginning in the winter of 1965, the United States organized and funded a massive airlift of Cubans, offering flights to Miami twice a day, five days a week. The airlift lasted until the spring of 1973 and, according to researchers from the Migrant Policy Institute, transported 300,000 Cuban emigrés to the United States. The “Freedom Airlift” immigrants were comprised mostly of small merchants, craftsmen, skilled and semiskilled workers, and relatives of middle-class Cubans who had immigrated earlier in the 1960s. It is also during this time period that Congress passed the Cuban Adjustment Act (CAA), which provides a pathway to permanent residence for Cubans who have been physically present in the United States for at least one year.

The mid-1980s brought about another massive migration from Cuba to the United States via an operation dubbed the Mariel boatlift, which was the result of a deteriorating Cuban economy that led to growing dissent in Cuba, and an effort by 11,000 Cubans to gain political asylum in the Peruvian embassy in early April. The Cuban government responded by removing all Cuban guards from the embassy perimeter and announcing that anyone who wanted to leave the island could do so, thus generating an exodus by boat that started on 15 April and lasted until 31 October 1980. During this period 125,000 Cubans made the journey to Key West, Florida. Unlike the previous waves of Cuban immigration, the vast majority of Marielitos were ordinary working-class Cubans, many of whom were Afro-Cuban, who lacked the fierce anti-Castro political attitudes that were prevalent during previous exiles.

In the wake of Mariel, Cuban immigration to the United States slowed to a trickle and has been limited mostly to balseros (rafters), who traveled from Cuba to the American coastline in makeshift rafts or other small craft. During the first three years of the 1990s, the balsero exodus exploded, and 8,000 emigrés reached the shores of the United States. However, in 1994 the number jumped to 39,000, prompting American policies that would promote
“safe, legal, and orderly immigration.” To this end the Clinton administration established the “wet-foot, dry-foot” policy, under which Cuban migrants seeking passage to the United States who are intercepted at sea (“wet feet”) are sent back to Cuba or to a third country, while those who make it to American soil (“dry feet”) are allowed to remain in the United States and may apply for permanent resident status after only one year. According to a 2015 report from the Pew Research Center, an estimated two million Hispanics of Cuban origin currently reside in the United States, but the population growth for this group is now being driven by Cuban Americans born in the United States rather than the arrival of new immigrants.

There was no large-scale migration of immigrants from the Dominican Republic to the United States until the 1960s, after the assassination of dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo. Trujillo’s regime was repressive and brutal, and although there are varied estimates, it is thought that he was responsible for approximately 50,000 deaths, including those of actual and perceived dissidents and those who threatened his authority. While Trujillo’s authoritarian rule was catastrophic, the end of his 30-year dictatorship in 1961 brought with it considerable economic and political instability. As a result, tens of thousands of Dominicans migrated to the United States, and the population grew from between approximately 12,000 in 1960 to approximately 170,000 by 1980. Due to challenging economic conditions in the Dominican Republic, the 1980s saw another large surge in immigration to the United States, with approximately 250,000 new immigrants arriving. By 2014, an estimated 1.4 million Dominicans resided in the United States according to the U.S. Census. The largest Dominican American communities are in New York (Washington Heights is one New York City neighborhood with many residents of Dominican ancestry) and New Jersey, but increasingly, there are also sizable Dominican populations in Massachusetts, Florida, and California. Dominican ancestry Latinos/as are the fifth largest Latino ethnic group after those of Mexican, Puerto Rican, Cuban, and Salvadoran ancestry.

Two-thirds of Central American immigrants are from El Salvador and Guatemala. While immigrants from Central America (also including Belize, Costa Rica, Honduras, Nicaragua, and Panama) had come to the United States prior to the 1970s and 1980s, that era was the first in which a major migration wave from that region to the United States occurred. Hundreds of thousands of immigrants came during that period, fleeing political turmoil and horrific violence that resulted from civil war, leftist countermilitary (guerrilla) groups, and authoritarian regimes (many supported by the U.S. government). High rates of migration from Central America to the United States continued into the 1990s and into the 21st century, fueled by extreme poverty in the countries of origin and continued violence despite more stable governments. In the past few years, tens of thousands of undocumented, unaccompanied minors have also attempted to migrate to the United States,
escaping gang violence and poverty. Many of these migration attempts have resulted in deportations, as well as migrants being confined in detention centers. These deportations and the proliferation of detention centers have increased significantly in the past few years in an American political climate that includes anti-immigrant sentiment, rhetoric, and policies and practices intended to curb undocumented immigration. An estimated 2.9 million Central American immigrants live in the United States today, of which almost half live in California, Texas, and Florida, according to the Migration Policy Institute.

Due to its geographic distance from the United States, Latino/a immigration from South America to the United States has historically been relatively small compared to the migration from the regions already discussed (Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean). While the 1900 census reported a mere 5,000 individuals of South American origin living in the United States, by 1960 the number of immigrants from the southern continent had grown to about 90,000, many of whom were from the Andean states (Venezuela, Colombia, Perú, Ecuador, and Bolivia), who migrated to the United States for various reasons. Whereas émigrés from Venezuela, Ecuador, Perú, and Bolivia were drawn to the United States mostly for economic and educational opportunities, those from Colombia came to escape political unrest and civil strife in their nation. In 1948, a civil war broke out in Colombia and initiated a decade of violence, remembered as la Violencia (The Violence), resulting in an estimated 300,000 civilian deaths. During that same period, people migrated to urban areas or emigrated from Colombia to escape the violence and turmoil in the countryside.

As South American immigration from the Andean region to the United States continued to rise in the 1970s, 1980s, and beyond, they were joined by new immigration waves from the Southern Cone countries of Argentina, Brazil, Chile, Paraguay, and Uruguay. Argentine immigration surged during the mid- to late-1970s because of political persecution during Argentina’s “guerra sucia” (dirty war), when Jorge Rafael Videla’s military junta detained college students, protesters, trade unionists, and civil rights activists, who often were made to “disappear.” Similarly, during the 1970s–1980s, a wave of 18,000 Chileans migrated to the United States, chiefly inspired by the overthrow of the Salvador Allende regime in 1973 by the Chilean military led by Augusto Pinochet, who then established authoritarian rule and repeatedly violated civil and human rights. Many journalists and other intellectuals were killed, imprisoned, or forced into exile. During this same period, economic decline and political instability in Brazil also prompted unprecedented emigration from that country, with approximately 1.4 million émigrés leaving the country, many of whom immigrated to the United States.
While the numbers of Latino/a immigrants from South America are relatively small compared to those from Mexico, Central America, and the Caribbean, the Latino immigrant population from the southern continent has grown the fastest. According to the Migration Policy Institute, the number of South American immigrants to the United States grew from 90,000 in 1960 to around 2.9 million in 2014, representing a thirty-two-fold increase. In 2014, the five South American countries with the largest numbers of immigrants of Latino origin were Colombia (707,000, or 25 percent of all South American immigrants), Peru (449,000, 16 percent), Ecuador (424,000, 15 percent), Brazil (336,000, 12 percent), and Venezuela (216,000, 7.6 percent). Together, they accounted for more than three-quarters (nearly 76 percent) of the total South American immigrant population. (DWU/MJV)

IMMIGRATION, NOVEL OF. This subgenre overtly deals with immigration issues, with an immigrant protagonist. The earliest manifestation of such narratives appeared in corridos or ballads in the 19th century, but it was Daniel Venegas’s Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamen (The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parakeets Suckle Their Young, 1928) that initiated the immigrant novel. Since then, there have been numerous novels that develop a similar theme of movement from one country to another, typically involving a male character, except for some of the novels published after 1995 by women. José Antonio Villarreal’s Pocho (1959) is another significant contribution, marking the basic structure: the immigrant’s difficulties crossing in the first generation, the second generation’s finding its niche in a new society, and the third generation’s grappling with the assimilation process.

Among the other works that reproduce some of these tendencies, we can point to Barrio Boy by Ernesto Galarza, Chicano by Richard Vásquez, Peregrinos de Aztlán by Miguel Méndez, Trini by Estela Portillo Trambley, Rain of Gold by Víctor Villaseñor, The Memories of Ana Calderón by Graciela Limón, The Guardians by Ana Castillo, The River Flows North by Graciela Limón, Under the Feet of Jesus by Helena María Viramontes, and Across a Hundred Mountains by Reyna Grande. Immigration, then, plays a central role in many novels by Chicanos/as as the authors grapple with the ever-changing landscape of massive movement from one country to another. Perhaps the most thorough book on the subject is Nicolás Kanellos’s Hispanic Immigration Literature: El Sueño del Retorno (The Dream of Returning, 2011). (FAL)

See also IMMIGRATION.
ISLAS, ARTURO (1938–1991). Novelist, professor, essayist, poet, short story writer. Born in El Paso, Texas, on 25 May 1938 to Arturo Islas Sr. and Jovita La Farga, in his novelistic trilogy Arturo Islas has captured a fictional family that resembles his own. He was raised in El Paso, excelled in school, and went on to study at Stanford University, where he received his degrees in English: a BA with distinction as a Phi Beta Kappa in 1960 and a PhD in 1971. At each level, he was one of if not the first Mexican American to earn those degrees in English from Stanford University, often feeling at odds with or at least different from his peers. He was the recipient of numerous fellowships that further solidified his interests in academia and writing: an Alfred P. Sloan scholarship to study for his BA, a Howard Foundation Fellowship for postgraduate work, and a Lloyd W. Dinkelspiel Award for his outstanding service to undergraduates. Shortly thereafter, Islas was hired permanently in the English Department at Stanford University, where he became a highly respected lecturer, frequently receiving standing ovations at the end of his classes. Although modest in rhetoric, he vigorously promoted affirmative action for minorities in opening up spaces of opportunity within Stanford as a private school.

Given his reserved disposition and illnesses, he did not participate much outside of Stanford University, according to Frederick L. Aldama’s exceptional biography, Dancing with Ghosts: A Critical Biography of Arturo Islas (2005), which elucidates much of his double life as a genteel professor by day and a flamboyant gay by night. He consequently experienced various fissures or binaries: racial (Mexican and American), sexual (straight and gay), regional (Bay Area and El Paso), cultural (reconciliation with his past and his present), affective (the politics of love), familial (pressures and expectations from family), and identity (the two sides of the border). Aldama describes such oppositions as the “ghosts” Islas grappled with in finding his place in so many concentric circles.


From a young age, he exhibited cerebral and creative qualities that both helped and burdened him within his family. His family history and the various characters (from strong to docile, from quirky to outcasts, from traditional to unorthodox) provided him with a backdrop of conflicting relations, contradictory personalities and confusing social roles, which all contributed to his sense of alienation and solitude. In addition, he experienced a series of personal traumas that had long-lasting effects: he had polio as a boy and scrapes with death in his thirties due to intestinal cancer. He succumbed to
complications due to AIDS on 15 February 1991. Islas lived a tormented life of strong feelings and sensibilities, aside from his physical disabilities—having to use a colostomy bag for years—and multiple illnesses.

Ilas’s three novels operate much like sequels in which he examines common elements in his family, his psyche, and his worldview, in what he referred to as “autobiographical fiction.” The three works parcel out portions of what the author wished to rewind like a videotape in order to better understand his life of quandaries and contradictions. His literature became a projection of trying to know himself.

His first novel, *The Rain God: A Desert Tale*, which received the Southwest Book Award for fiction in 1986, contains numerous meditations about influences, desires, and death. He originally titled it “Día de los Muertos” (Day of the Dead) and later “American Dreams and Fantasies,” but finally settled on *The Rain God* because it collapses symbolism into a vibrant text that expresses conflicting dilemmas: Tláloc, the Aztec rain god, vs. the dryness of the desert; fertility vs. impotence; a dual-cultural embodiment of the border region; Catholicism vs. pagan beliefs; the contrast between sinners and ghosts; damnation vs. redemption; his sexual orientation vs. social mores, and so forth. The protagonist Miguel Chico, the alter ego of Islas, conscientiously confesses his inner turmoil and the dysfunctionalities that surround him. This, coupled with his many physical ailments, reveals a tortured soul who seeks solace, love, and empathy in the midst of social regulations and rules that try to impose themselves on his vulnerable person. Thus, a discreet rebel emerges to break the multilayered shackles. His only vehicle is literature: a form of testimony, a way of leaving a record of the conflicting forces that tear him apart, a depository of self-revelation.

His matriarch grandmother, Encarnación Olmeca de Angel (known as Mama Chona), occupies center stage, for she personifies a nexus of contradictions: she denies, represses, and snobbishly disparages her Indian background by accepting only her Spanish lineage. Her family, then, is anything but angelic, as her fantasy family name “Angel” would seem to imply. Miguel Chico is engulfed in an environment that does not allow for individuality, provoking ghosts of his past to make themselves present. Here is where the motif of death plays a central role within a narrative structure of six parts, symbolizing, according to J. E. Cirlot in *The Dictionary of Symbols*, “ambivalence and equilibrium.” As Roberto Cantú notes, the symbol of six appears several times; in part, it alludes to the period of God’s creation, but when three sixes are combined, it refers to the creation of a monster. Even Mama Chona mentions it at the end, suggesting, prophetically, the downfall of her family. Miguel Chico and Felix (homosexuals), Tía Cuca (an unmarried eloper), Tía Mema (a former prostitute), and JoEl (an addict) together mark the revenge of the *malcriados*, or social brats, “sinners” or “monsters” who deviate from traditional social constructs.
His second book, *Migrant Souls: A Novel*, continues some of the family saga in *The Rain God*, but its emphasis changes considerably, becoming more philosophical about Christian values and Mama Chona’s perceptions of who is white or Indian, the only options in her worldview. Islas offers a veiled criticism of such thinking in order to liberate the mind from such anachronistic binaries. Again, metaphorical hierarchies of what is heavenly and what is hell appear with regularity, only to be debunked by the two cousin protagonists, Miguel Chico and Josie Salazar. The nonlinear novel of three generations is divided into two books, “Flight into Egypt” and “Feliz Navidad”; in the first the two cousins become two sides of the same coin, and in the second the inherent hypocrisy of the Angel family is critically exposed. By calling the book *Migrant Souls*, Islas associates biblical migrations with the trajectory of miscegenation, which Mama Chona denounces vociferously. This work does not elicit as much interest as Islas’s first novel did with its unforgettable characterizations and multiple narrative layers, but he clearly wants to extrapolate more meaning from his notions of religiosity and cultural beliefs. Again, he puts a particular stamp on a social realism that up to *Migrant Souls* was not commonly found in Chicano literature.

In the third book, *La Mollie and the King of Tears: A Novel*, published posthumously, Islas makes a quantum leap into a whole new narrative experiment, with autobiographical echoes from his other novels, except that the action is now situated in San Francisco. This complex work is condensed in time and space. Louie Mendoza, an ex-jazz player with a saxophone, while waiting for La Mollie, relates his life to an unknown person holding a record-player. The recorder subsumes the character holding it while also becoming the reader listening to Louie. The implication of layered listeners cannot go unnoticed when Louie tells, comments, confesses, evaluates, criticizes, wonders, philosophizes, reflects, and thinks out loud. It is an eerily literary and cerebral work, filled with theoretical undertones and intertextuality (Shakespeare, Beat Generation, Gabriel García Márquez, Carlos Fuentes, Manuel Puig, Hollywood films, etc.), in which Louie controls the narrative by divulging his likes, dislikes, and attractions at the same time that he develops new fascinations before our eyes. As an evolving protagonist, he represents anti-essentialism as he deals with his love for La Mollie, but he eventually becomes enchanted with what he initially disliked: gay subjects. He also becomes enthralled with love as it is represented in Hollywood films, realizing the confabulations of fantasy that condition heterosexuality. Little by little he complicates a simplistic picture of binaries and facile oppositions because he can be part of them all, debunking opposites by transcending them via syncretism and any means to combine, co-opt, or mix. The novel takes on the qualities of a tragic play, mentioning the epitome of the heterosexual love story *Romeo and Juliet*. As Louie would admit, neither love nor tragedy is that simple, which symbolically adds to the theme of locating
identities as more complicated constructions, thereby undermining the genderizing male/female. The simpático Chicano hipster has lots to say because he is in a hospital bed as if on his deathbed, perhaps paralleling Islas’s last days in 1991. This picaresque character is an unprecedented contribution to Chicano literature, who defies simple labels and facile perceptions.

Arturo Islas also wrote an insightful essay titled “On the Bridge, at the Border: Migrants and Immigrants,” which contains many principles that moved his characters and literature. In addition, the posthumous collection edited by Frederick L. Aldama, *Arturo Islas: The Uncollected Works*, reveals the range and extensiveness of his poetic sensibilities and short fiction. He left an everlasting impression as a writer who blossomed late in his career; he knew how to turn his inner demons into creative substance while providing nuance and a means to capture complex gay subjects, border topics, and the life of a conflicted personality. Islas managed to carve out a new kind of realism never before seen in Chicano literature. (FAL)

See also GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE.
JIMÉNEZ, FRANCISCO (1943–). Writer of autobiographical fiction and children’s literature, university professor. Francisco Jiménez was born in San Pedro, Tlaquepaque, Mexico, and immigrated with his family to California in 1947. Upon entering the United States, Francisco spent his childhood and much of his adolescence in a migrant setting, moving from one labor camp to another up and down the state of California, eventually settling in Santa María, California, where he attended junior and senior high school. After finishing high school in 1962, Francisco attended Santa Clara University, where he earned a BA in Spanish and history in 1966. He then went to Columbia University, from which he received an MA in Spanish language and literature and a PhD in Latin American literature, in 1969 and 1972, respectively. After a brief teaching stint at Columbia University (1972–1973), Jiménez returned to his alma mater, Santa Clara University, where he has taught and held various administrative positions, including director of the Division of Arts and Humanities in the College of Arts and Sciences (1981–1990), associate vice president for academic affairs (1990–1994), chair of the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures (1997–2000), and director of ethnic studies (2001–2005). Professor Jiménez is currently the Fay Boyle Professor in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at Santa Clara University.

Those early experiences of immigration and migration from one labor camp to another fill the pages of Jiménez’s stories and fictional autobiographies. He began publishing stories about these experiences as early as 1972, when “Muerte fría” (“Cold Death”) and “Un aguinaldo” (“Christmas Gift”) were published by El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought. A year later, he published another short piece, “The Circuit,” in the Arizona Quarterly (1973), which was subsequently translated and released as “Cajas de cartón,” in Bilingual Review (4 [1977]). As the original title implies, this story re-creates the early migrant experience of backbreaking work, constant separation, and abandonment of friends, school, and other familiar surroundings as the Jiménez family engages in the “circuit,” or the migrant stream.
This account also becomes the title story and the principal motif for *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* (1997), Jiménez’s first major work of autobiographical fiction. Narrated from the perspective of a young migrant child who longs for stability, an education, and a place he can call home, the 12 stories of this collection continue the story line introduced in “The Circuit”: a story of survival, faith, and hope in the face of a life of backbreaking work in the agricultural fields of California, of endless packing and continuous moving from one labor camp to another, of constantly having to abandon school and friends just as he is beginning to feel at home, of living in constant fear of *la migra*, a.k.a. the U.S. Border Patrol.

Francisco Jiménez continues the moving tale of his adolescence in *Breaking Through* (2001), the fictionalized memoir of his teenage years in the late 1950s, when the Jiménez family finally settled down in Bonetti Ranch, a migrant community of run-down army barracks with no potable water or indoor plumbing near Santa María, California. Now a family unit of 10, they not only suffer the humiliation of deportation, but continue to experience severe poverty, long hours of labor, and blatant prejudice, and Francisco and his brothers have to work long hours before and after school to help support the family. The ability to survive in the face of such disparagement and heartaches is rooted in the family’s love and strong familial bonds; in its capacity to maintain a sense of hope, good-heartedness, and resolve; and in Francisco’s capacity to find friends and employers willing to recognize his strength of character and talent.

*Reaching Out* (2008), the third work in this series of autobiographical sketches, portrays the experiences of Jiménez as he leaves his family and home in Bonetti Ranch to attend the University of Santa Clara. As narrator-protagonist, he relates his experiences as a college student from an immigrant Mexican family of migrant workers and describes the challenges he faced in his efforts to continue his education: coping with poverty, feeling torn between his responsibilities as a student and his sense of duty to his family, doubting his capacity of succeeding academically, and trying to adjust to an environment that was different from the community in which he was raised. He also tells of the sacrifices and support of his siblings and parents, which enabled him to attend the university, and introduces new people who befriended and supported him, as well as others who were bigoted and presented obstacles to his success. In this light, *Reaching Out* is a tribute to all first-generation college students and the many people who helped make a difference in his own personal success.

In the fourth book of the series, *Taking Hold: From Migrant Childhood to Columbia University* (2015), Jiménez leaves everything behind in California—a loving family, a devoted girlfriend, and the culture that shaped him—to study for a PhD in Latin American literature at Columbia University in New York City. Upon arriving at the Ivy League university a humble man of
23, he felt out of place and lonely: “Those in my group sipped wine and talked about their academic achievements and interests, foreign travels and alma maters: Harvard, Yale, Princeton. . . . I envied their self-confidence and was intimidated by their vast travel experiences in Europe and other parts of the world. Many wore Phi Beta Kappa lapel pins. I listened nervously, avoiding eye contact and feeling a dry, dusty taste in my throat” (14). Throughout the memoir, he describes how his faith, family, and fiancée, Laura, helped him manage and appease the loneliness and alienation he initially experienced.

Like his major works, Jiménez’s children’s literature also grew out of his personal experiences as an immigrant and a migrant child growing up in poverty. *La Mariposa* (1998) tells the story of a monolingual Spanish-speaking child coping with his first year of school. *The Christmas Gift/El regalo de Navidad* (2000) addresses a migrant child’s disappointment at not getting the red ball he wished for as a Christmas gift. Jiménez has also published and edited several books on Mexican and Mexican American literature, including *The Identification and Analysis of Chicano Literature* (1979) and *Mosaico de la vida: Prosa chicana, cubana y puertorriqueña* (1981). Moreover, his stories have been published in more than 50 textbooks and anthologies of literature.

Among the many awards Jiménez has received for his writing are the Boston Globe-Horn Book Award for Fiction, the California Library Association’s 10th annual John and Patricia Beatty Award, and The Américas Award for Children and Young Adult Literature for *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child*, as well as the Américas Award for Children and Young Adult Literature, the Pura Belpré Honor Book Award from the American Library Association, and the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award in 2002 for *Breaking Through*. (DWU)
LATINO/A. Put most simply, a Latino or Latina is a person who lives in the United States and has origins in any of the 21 countries considered to be part of Latin America. However, the term “Latino/a” is also used in contrast to “Latino” to highlight the importance of gender inclusivity, as a growing number of scholars have done since the 1990s, when the “/a” became more widely used. A gendered language, Spanish uses an ending of “o” to denote a male subject and as the default to refer to both male and female subjects; however, the inclusion of the “/a” visibly foregrounds the inclusion of female subjects. This feature of the term “Latino/a” emerged in the context of Third-Wave feminism in the 1990s, a movement that articulated the interconnection of race, ethnicity, sexuality, and social class with feminist ideologies and politics, and subsequently fomented an increase in the prominence of Chicana/Latina feminisms. (MJV)

See also CHICANO/A (CHICAN@); HISPANIC; HISPANO.

LAVIERA, JESÚS ABRAHAM “TATO” (1950–2013). Poet and playwright. Born in Santurce, Puerto Rico, Laviera and his family migrated to the United States when he was nine years old, and he grew up on the Lower East Side of Manhattan. As a child, Laviera studied in Catholic schools, and he later attended both Brooklyn College and Cornell University, though he never earned a college degree. After leaving his undergraduate studies, Laviera pursued community work for several years and later became an acclaimed poet and prolific playwright.

Published by Arte Público Press in 1979, Laviera’s first book of poems, La Carreta Made a U-Turn, offered a critical response to Puerto Rican author René Marques’s play La Carreta (The Oxcart), published in 1952. Considered a classic of Puerto Rican literature, Marques’s play ends with a Puerto Rican migrant family returning to Puerto Rico after being traumatized by what Juan Flores et al. (1981), in their essay “La Carreta Made a U-Turn: Puerto Rican Language and Culture in the United States,” refer to as a “hostile, technocratic Anglo-Saxon society.” Instead of returning to an idealized homeland—and an accompanying singular Puerto Rican identity—that La-
viera’s poetry suggests is unrecoverable, Laviera’s “u-turn” affirms the multiplicity of identity for Puerto Ricans in the United States, and in New York in particular. This multiplicity of identity can be seen both in the thematic content of his poems, as well as in the linguistic and stylistic elements in his first book and subsequently in his other published works. Moreover, like other literature of the Nuyorican Movement, Laviera’s poetry expressed a strong connection to Afro-Caribbean traditions and culture as an aspect of Puerto Rican identity, as well as affirming Puerto Ricans’ relationship to African American culture and people in the United States, particularly in the context of urban New York. Indeed, Laviera’s work reflects a sense of Puerto Ricans’ cultural unity and solidarity with African Americans.

Laviera published his second book of poetry, *Enclave*, in 1981; for this book, he became the first Latino winner of the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation. Poems from his third book of poetry, *AmerIcan* (1986), have been published in more than 30 anthologies. His other published books of poetry, *Mainstream Ethics* (1988) and *Mixturao and Other Poems* (2008), feature themes that build on his earlier works, critiquing the marginalization of people of color in the United States while including celebrations of the United States as a culturally heterogeneous place. In addition to these books of poetry, Laviera also published numerous plays. One of his most successful plays, *Olú Clemente* (1978), was based on the life of baseball legend Roberto Clemente; it was published in *Nuevos Pasos: Chicano and Puerto Rican Drama* by Arte Público Press in 1989 and was performed more than 40 times in New York City. Laviera’s other well-known plays include *AmerIcan* (1986), *Can Pickers* (1995), and *Mixturao Review* (2004); his plays *The Spark* (2006) and *77 P.R. Chicago Riot* (2007) were published in the *Afro-Hispanic Review*.

Laviera’s oeuvre is marked by a distinctive linguistic style that combines English, Spanish, and Spanglish. In a 2006 interview published in the *Afro-Hispanic Review*, Laviera described his linguistic approach: “I know I have been called code-switching, and I am respectful of all the terminologies, and in the laboratory of my thinking, it really represents the reality. I am an archeologist de lo que oigo en la acera, en la cocina, en el cuarto, en el social club, en la esquina (of what I hear on the sidewalk, in the kitchen, in the bedroom, in the social club, on the corner) . . . whether it’s in Spanish or English or it is bilingual” (Martínez Diente, “Words without Borders”). This statement is reflective of his distinct style, highlighting the form that Laviera’s language takes, the philosophical underpinnings of his linguistic choices, and his view of himself as someone committed to unearthing the realities of Nuyorican lived experiences through his writing.

In 2004, Laviera became legally blind as a complication of acute diabetes. After that, he became active with the American Association for Diabetes, particularly advocating for and working with Latino/a diabetics. Laviera’s
efforts to educate the public about diabetes and advocate for Latino diabetics led him to develop the Jesús A. Laviera One-Day with Diabetes Project, whose signature events were “Sugar Slams,” in which poets gathered to perform work about the effects of diabetes on Latino communities. Laviera died of diabetes complications in New York in 2013. (MJV)

LIMÓN, ADA (1976–). Poet. Limón is originally from Sonoma, California, and her paternal grandfather was from San Juan de los Lagos, Mexico. When she was eight years old, her parents divorced, and she was raised in two homes with two sets of parents—with her mother, an artist who currently designs the art for her book covers, and her stepfather; and with her father and stepmother—a living arrangement that she says led to her identification with “the divided self.” Reflecting on her ethnic identity in an interview for the online journal Compose, Limón said, “I have always identified with Mexican culture, but like many of us, I am not only one thing. I’m many things. I’m Irish, and Scottish, and German too. Part lion. Part dragon. Depending on the day.” Limón earned an MFA from Columbia University.

Limón has published four collections of poetry: Lucky Wreck (2006), This Big Fake World (2006), Sharks in the Rivers (2010), and Bright Dead Things: Poems (2015). In a brief review of Lucky Wreck, her poetic voice has been described by Jean Valentine as “smart, jaunty, musing, quirky” (http://adalimon.com/reviews.html) and she often uses humor and whimsy to broach grave topics. Indeed, in describing the subject matter of her poems, Limón has mused, “I write about the same things all the time: love, death, how to be alive, horses, birds, love, death, and then those things all over again.” Her first collection, Lucky Wreck, won the 2005 Autumn House Poetry Prize, and her second collection, This Big Fake World, published the same year, won the 2005 Pearl Poetry Prize. This Big Fake World is a narrative related in poetry, and the linked poems follow four characters, exploring their connections with each other and their longing for connection in their lives.

Sharks in the Rivers was widely and favorably reviewed, receiving substantial critical acclaim. In a review essay, poet Rigoberto González calls Sharks in the Rivers Limón’s “most ambitious book,” highlighting her exploration of “natural elements as metaphors for the body, its desires, wants, furies, and flaws.” Gonzalez also praises a 15-poem sequence in the book that uses the story of the Aztec war god Huitzilopochtli to create an autobiographical allegory about “love, loss, and sexuality.” The book was named to a list of Top 30 Books of 2010 by Coldfront Magazine and received two other awards from the same magazine.
Limón’s poems have been published in magazines and journals such as the *New Yorker* and the *Harvard Review*. She has received fellowships from the New York Foundation for the Arts and the Provincetown Fine Arts Works Center and has won the Chicago Literary Award for Poetry. Limón divides her time among Kentucky, California, and New York City. (MJV)

**LIMÓN, GRACIELA (1938–).** Novelist, professor, critic, chronicler. Born in Los Angeles to Mexican immigrant parents, Jesús Limón and Altagracia Gómez Limón, Graciela Limón has become one of the most prolific Chicana novelists since 1990, with a string of works that spans a broad thematic spectrum of feminist issues (identity and status), Aztec culture, indigenous concerns, social mores, political justice in Central America, popular religious beliefs, and transnational borders. She received a BA in Spanish from Marymount College in 1965, an MA in Spanish from the Universidad de las Américas in Mexico City in 1969, and a PhD in Latin American literature from the University of California at Los Angeles in 1975. She wrote her dissertation on the famed Mexican fiction writer Juan Rulfo, on whose work she modeled her precision, starkness, and subtleties between the lines. Considered a late bloomer as an author, Limón’s critical acclaim has distinguished her as one of the key figures in what is sometimes called Post-Movement Chicana literature since 1990. She is currently professor emerita of Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles.

Limón began teaching at Loyola Marymount University in Los Angeles in 1969 and retired from there in 2008. Most of her works have received considerable acclaim because each one boasts a new thematic, usually based on extensive research. In 1990, she published *María de Belén: The Autobiography of an Indian Woman*, which aims to shed a critical light on conquest chronicles through a hybrid set of genres (testimonies, historiography, and autobiography). She aims to reexamine the master narrative of history through the lens of fiction in order to unearth a more truthful rendition. Her second work, *In Search of Bernabé* (1993), reflects her new sense of transnationalism and pan-Latino relations as a result of participating in a sanctuary movement in downtown Los Angeles to provide asylum for Salvadoran refugees fleeing from the Central American conflict. For this work she received considerable recognition, including the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award in 1994 and the critic’s choice from the *New York Times*. Her in-depth view of war and its effects on innocent people avoids the simplistic portrayals by the media of good versus bad, and the protagonist, Bernabé, acquires a new consciousness thanks to liberation theology. Violence of various types commingles to expose a world of moral inversions, showing a conflict on the ground that had many ramifications for new immigrants in the United States.
In 1994, Limón published The Memories of Ana Calderón, a disturbing tale of immigration about a girl who has to endure her father’s curse, blaming her for poisoning her mother’s womb upon her own at birth, and thereby preventing her mother from bearing male children. The only rationale is her gender, and the narrative illustrates lifelong effects on a family unit in a progressively melodramatic story that is part soap opera and part biblical parable. Ana struggles against all odds and against cultural and religious determinism to overcome such restrictions, becoming a wealthy CEO of a multinational clothing corporation. For example, she revises the interpretation of Hagar in a Bible scene as it relates to her son, opting to view it as a challenge for self-empowerment instead of submissiveness. The story has a double edge: two narratives that intertwine, sometimes complementing each other but at other times contradicting each other. We find here both the subjective narrator and the authorial narrator, who together provide two sides to the same coin while providing depth and suspense to the narration. Ana learns to function outside the pressures of a fabricated patriarchal discourse that seems to unjustifiably target women for cultural misgivings. The story represents an indictment of that mentality, but also serves as an example of the will to overcome false obstacles.

Limón further expands her narrative virtuosity in Song of the Hummingbird (1996), again using the double narration of two distinct perspectives. The action centers on Huizitilín, a noble Aztec woman who reluctantly retells her life story (the eyes of the conquered) to Franciscan friar Benito Lara in a series of informal and formal confessional sessions when she is in her eighties. Again, Limón resorts to a fictional testimonio (testimony) format to imagine and reassess the Spaniards’ invasion of Tenochtitlán (the Aztec name for Mexico City) in 1519, alluding to the influence and impact they had in transforming the vanquished Aztec nation. The battle of wills between Huizitilín and Father Lara becomes an epic struggle to see whose culture will prevail while encountering irreconcilable differences in a clash of two different worlds. The outcome is a demarcation of differences, but also the burgeoning of a new consciousness about each other’s vantage point. Whereas the Western Father Lara may assume greater authority and superior religious legitimacy, he slowly realizes that indigenous Huizitilín possesses a rightful reason to defend her pre-Columbian worldview. As the dialogue becomes a mutual forgiveness of “sins,” each accomplishes more than he or she originally desired, through a blending of views.

Limón has written other pieces of experimental fiction, such as The Day of the Moon (1997), which deals with a series of sensitive topics: forbidden love, interracial relations, patriarchy as an operative institution, and the discovery of an indigenous cultural identity. In addition, in Erased Faces (2001) she examines the unheralded heroes of the Zapatista revolt in southern Mexico, particularly the role played by women, who transgressed traditional lines
of conduct against an ancestral patriarchal system. Limón successfully delves into the subjacent reasons for such a conflict as she allows her characters to speak for themselves. Published in 2005, Left Alive further explores dark corners of a mentally ill narrator and why some women contribute to destroying their families. In The River Flows North (2009), Limón explores with originality and ingenuity the lives of immigrants through a wide variety of characters. The Madness of Mamá Carlota (2012) offers another historical view of Maximilian’s wife, Carlota, whose madness has been a source of fascination.

Graciela Limón has achieved broad critical acclaim for her innovative and refreshing fictive approaches to a wide array of subjects regarding Chicanos, specifically Chicanas, and their relationship with Mexico and other Latinos. She received the 2002 Gustavus Myers Outstanding Book Award for Erased Faces and was a finalist for the Art Seidenbaum First Novel Award in 1993. Her novels are prime examples of pursuing new ways of thinking while revising assumed or preconceived notions about culture and women. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

LLORONA, LA (THE WAILING WOMAN). As an iconic figure in Mexican and Chicano cultures, La Llorona is a central character in folklore. In Mexico, she represents a kind of “boogey woman” who is feared and respected. In the United States, she tends to be less fearful, instead being captured as a cultural archetype of suffering and abnegation. The origins of such an enigmatic figure are a bit vague because she resembles the Greek Medea—without extra powers—but it appears that she also derives from Cihuacóatl (the serpent woman), the patroness of women who die while giving birth. Chicanas in particular have developed her as a central character and motif in poetry and fiction to represent the victimization of women. She often appears symbolically to highlight haunting aspects that criticize the social environment, as in Bless Me, Ultima by Rudolfo Anaya and Barrio on the Edge by Alejandro Morales. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

LÓPEZ, DIANA (1948–). Novelist, poet, professor. Best known by the name of her maternal grandmother, Isabella Ríos, Diana López was born in Los Angeles on 16 March 1948, but grew up in Camarillo and Oxnard in southern California in a family environment of rich storytelling about early California. Her father was a descendant of both Native American and Mexican Indians, which also contributed to her extensive background in oral tradition. She participated in the early phases of the Chicano literary movement at San Francisco State University in the late 1960s, producing mimeographed copies of poems and short stories. Only a couple of her poetic texts
LÓPEZ, JOSEFINA (1969–)

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Her self-published *Victuum* (copyrighted 1974), a psychic novel, stands out for mixing fiction with her aunt’s life story, which the author obtained via a series of interviews. López attempted to construct the first Chicana bildungsroman, but the mundane story took on greater significance through fantastic phenomena, visions, dreams, psychic qualities, and the extraterrestrial character Victuum. For this reason, the novel does not easily correspond to a single genre. In extensive dialogue, the protagonist, Valentina Ballesteros, re-creates her life while providing insight into historical events of the first half of the 20th century. The more extraordinary part is Valentina’s dialogues with past writers (William Wordsworth), literary characters (Ulysses), popes (Eusebius), the prophet Isaiah, and Victuum, while seeking advice and counsel from the extraterrestrial sage. The work attempted to take the Chicano novel into exploring psychic phenomena outside of the social realism of the era.

López also wrote *A Dance with the Eucalyptus* (1995), a collection of 80 poems that exalt the simple pleasures of life and human affection. Most of the poems embody some kind of yearning, nostalgia, or melancholy associated with the passing of time through ocean, plant, and tree images, especially the aromatic eucalyptus. The poet’s reflections about past relationships—both friendships and love affairs—are like “hymns to nature’s grandeur” (146). Although life appears good, something seems missing. Controlled passion, intimate tenderness, and the struggle to relive bygone days move the poems with a sense of authenticity. The language seems at times unapologetically old fashioned (thanks to William Wordsworth and other poets), but it is true to a melancholic innocence. The first poems tend to be free verse, and the last third of the collection follows a more rigorous sense of rhymed verses while maintaining a sense of freedom and fanciful explorations. López teaches at Moorpark Community College in Moorpark, California. (FAL)

LÓPEZ, JOSEFINA (1969–). Playwright, novelist, director, poet, screenwriter and television scriptwriter, actress, painter, activist. Born on 19 March 1969 in San Luis Potosí (Mexico), in 1975 six-year-old Josefiná López migrated to Boyle Heights near downtown Los Angeles with her parents, using the U.S. birth certificate of one of her sisters. The angst and fears of deportation haunted her for years. She was an early prodigy in playwriting in elementary school and eventually attended the Los Angeles County High School for the Arts, aspiring to become an actress. Thanks to the Rodino Amnesty Program in 1987, she became a temporary resident. She joined the
Los Angeles Theater Centre’s Young Playwrights’ Laboratory between 1985 and 1988, where she further honed her writing skills. López has garnered multiple awards for her playwriting and screenwriting, such as the Vocal Program Award for Excellence in the children’s category and San Diego’s Gaslamp Quarter Theatre California Young Playwrights Project. In addition, she received formal recognition from U.S. senator Barbara Boxer’s Seventh Annual “Women Making History” in 1998, a screenwriting fellowship from the California Arts Council in 2001, the Gabriel García Márquez Award from the Los Angeles mayor in 2003, and an Artist-in-Residence grant from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2007. López established a theater company in 2000 in East Los Angeles called CASA 0101 Theater Art in Boyle Heights to allow burgeoning playwrights to represent and experiment with their plays. To date her plays have been produced more than 80 times throughout the United States; she is one of the nation’s leading Latina playwrights.

At the young age of 17, López produced her first play, *Simply María, or The American Dream: A One-Act Play* (copyrighted 1996), in which she expressed her frustrations with being typecast while dealing with the dichotomies of the American Dream. She then moved to New York in 1988 to participate in the renowned Maria Irene Fornés’s Hispanic Playwrights-in-Residence Laboratory, where at age 21 she penned the first draft of her now famous *Real Women Have Curves: A Comedy* (1996), which gained considerable notoriety in women’s theaters and other Latino community theaters. This work was made into a feature film in 2002 with the same title; she and coauthor George LaVoo won the Humanitas Prize for Screenwriting. The play, which presents five women’s personal and collective tribulations as each deals with her own issues in a sweatshop where fancy dresses are made, became a sensation in experimental theater circles, including El Teatro de la Esperanza’s workshop under renowned Mexican playwright Emilio Carballido. The entire story occurs inside a garment sweatshop. It signals the women’s awakening about their bodies, realizing that they do not have to conform to unrealistic sizes or preconceived social roles. What initially appears to be a group of women quarreling about petty issues develops into a process of solidarity and coming together as a gender and labor force. They realize their differences can be ameliorated by working as a unit, which will ultimately bring them greater success as social beings and workers. The film portrays some of the standard unrealistic expectations about women’s bodies, but it expands the realm of humor as well as familial trappings and societal limitations.

López briefly studied at New York University and then transferred to the University of California at San Diego, where she presented her play *Food for the Dead*, which portrays men’s conditioning of women as second-class citizens within an American society that marginalizes them. López later re-
ceived an MFA in playwriting from the University of California at Los Angeles. In 1994, she wrote *Unconquered Spirits: A Historical Play* (1997), a more philosophical piece about Mexican women employing the cultural icons of *La Llorona* (the Wailing Woman) and *La Malinche* (a much-maligned woman figure who is generally characterized as a traitor, but whom López reevaluates). Her favorite topic of women’s representations through various media continues to preoccupy her in works such as *Confessions of Women from East L.A.: A Comedy* (1997); *Yes, You Too Can Be a Chingona* (1997); and *Boyle Heights; Queen of the Rumba;* and *Raw & Ready (Poetic Thoughts)* (1997). Most of these works highlight women’s development as complete beings, except that López adds humor, edginess, pathos, and catharsis to a new stage of interpersonal and political awareness. Two special editions of Josefina López’s theatrical productions—one by Jorge A. Huerta, *Real Women Have Curves and Other Plays* (2011), and the other by Huerta and Tiffany A. López, *Detained in the Desert and Other Works* (2011)—bring together many of her influential works.

Her repertoire has visibly grown, dealing with a series of crucial issues related to immigration status and the ideological zaniness surrounding it, the effects of machismo in Chicano culture and how women are the likely victims, a mother–daughter relationship and how they learn from each other, and strong satire on how to improve Chicanas’ social plight. Her latest work is a novel, *Hungry Woman in Paris* (2009), loosely based on her experiences in a cooking school in Paris. The main character, Canela, renounces her engagement and decides to remain in Paris to see if she can re-create another self. In her quest for meaning in Paris, this leads her to reflect on the clash of cultures while she pursues a new spiritual meaning through sensuality and food. The work has echoes of Laura Esquivel’s *Like Water for Chocolate*, except that it is more existential in that she is wondering about her immigration status in a different country while indulging in the discovery of her epicurean affinities.

López has also expanded her repertoire into the production of television shows, including sitcoms such as *The Chávez Family* with famed producer Norman Lear, and she hopes to explore other television opportunities while relying on her rich theatrical background. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
MALINCHE, LA (1505?–1529?). Also known as Malinalli (the Goddess of Grass), Malintzin, and Doña Marina, she is best known as the interpreter, adviser, and intermediary for, and later mistress of, Hernán Cortés, who conquered the Aztecs in Tenochtitlán (now Mexico City) between 1519 and 1521. She knew Náhuatl, the language of the Aztecs, Mayan, and Spanish, making her a key factor in translating for both Cortés and Moctezuma when these two leaders first met. Symbolically, many consider her the mother of the mestizo nation because she gave birth to a son fathered by Cortés, Martín, but others consider her a traitor to the indigenous/mestizo nation for facilitating the process of conquest. In Mexico, a “Malinchista” is considered to be someone who betrays his or her culture.

However, Chicanas in particular have reevaluated and revised her role in the conquest as a possible victim, whose ultimate motivation was to create a new people and, by extension, a new nation. Chicana poets have questioned the facile method by which she has been denounced, stigmatized, and burdened with the historical responsibility for the outcome of the conquest of the indigenous peoples. They usually point to Cortés’s taking advantage of her skills and later passing her on to one of his soldiers. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

MARIELITOS. This term refers to the mass exodus of Cuban refugees who left their homeland for the United States via the Mariel boatlift, which sailed from Cuba’s Mariel harbor for Miami, Florida, between April and October 1980. The boatlift was the result of a deteriorating Cuban economy, which led to growing dissent in Cuba, and an effort by 11,000 Cubans to gain political asylum in the Peruvian embassy in early April. The Cuban government responded by removing all Cuban guards from the embassy perimeter and announcing that anyone who wanted to leave the island could do so, thus generating an exodus by boat that started on 15 April and lasted until 31 October 1980. During this period, 125,000 Cubans made the journey to Key West, Florida. While the vast majority of these Marielitos were ordinary, upstanding citizens, some were criminals or mentally ill, whom Fidel Castro
decided to deport to the United States, wanting to create a negative image of Cubans in this country. Unlike previous waves of Cuban exiles, a considerable number of the Marielitos were poor and Afro-Cuban, and they lacked the fierce anti-Castro political attitudes that were prevalent during previous exiles.

Among those leaving Cuba in the Mariel boatlift were many writers, musicians, and other artists who had been marginalized and had endured political persecution because their writings and artistry were considered antirevolutionary. Several years after arriving in the United States, these writers and artists founded a group known as the Mariel Generation, and in 1983 they established *Mariel*, a literary and art journal whose manifesto rejected any political or literary theory that restricted free investigation and/or imagination and also asserted that every work of art was a “song of liberty.” The journal was discontinued in 1986, but it existed long enough to establish the Mariel generation as an intellectual force. Some of the more noteworthy writers of the group were poet and novelist Reinaldo Arenas, Jesús J. Barquet, René Cifuentes, Miguel Correa, Reinaldo García Ramos, Roberto Madrigal, Pulitzer Prize–winner Mirta Ojito, Luis de la Paz, Andrés Reynaldo, Roberto Valero, and Carlos Victoria. (DWU)

See also IMMIGRATION.

**MARTÍNEZ, DEMETRIA (1960–)**. Poet, novelist, essayist, immigrant activist, creativity coach, journalist. The daughter of Ted and Dolores Jaramillo Martínez, Demetria Louise Martínez was born on 10 July 1960 and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico, where she was educated in local public schools. Upon completion of high school in 1978, she attended Princeton University’s Woodrow Wilson School of Public and International Affairs, from which she earned a BA in 1982. While at Princeton, she also enrolled in several poetry workshops to further nurture the poetry writing skills that she had developed in her high school creative writing class. By this time, she was already being guided by a quote she had come across some time earlier: “It is important to make a living, but more important to make a life.” Thus, once she completed her degree at Princeton, she decided to follow her “bliss” and become a poet rather than “take a job that requires heels and hose from nine to five. I would never survive that. I would either become a paid activist and live on the edge all my life or be a writer. . . . It was just a decision to follow my bliss, as Joseph Campbell says. And that bliss involved becoming a poet” (Ikas, 116).

In light of this decision, upon returning to Albuquerque in 1982, Martínez joined an artists’ society called Sagrada [Sacred] Art Studios in Old Town, where she devoted herself to improving her creative writing skills and polishing her poetry. She also worked part-time as a journalist for the *National Catholic Reporter* and as a religious writer for the *Albuquerque Journal*. In her role as a journalist, she reported extensively on the plight of Central
American refugees fleeing political repression and violence in Guatemala and El Salvador, and subsequently became actively involved with the Sanctuary Movement, a religious and political campaign in the United States to provide asylum for Central American refugees fleeing civil conflict. In this context, in 1986 Martínez took a trip to the U.S.–Mexican border with Glen Remer-Thamert, a Lutheran minister who was “helping two Salvadorans cross over into this country as part of the Sanctuary Movement.” He invited her to join him with the hope that she would write a story about his Sanctuary Movement activities (Ikas, 120). Indeed, she did write a poem about this experience (“Nativity: For Two Salvadoran Women, 1986–1987”), and in December 1987 both she and the minister were indicted on charges of conspiracy against the U.S. government and smuggling two Salvadoran women into the United States. Both were later acquitted of all charges based on First Amendment rights.

The aforementioned poem and 30 others are included in *Turning*, Martínez’s first collection of poetry, published as part of a larger collection, *Three Times a Woman: Chicana Poetry* (1989), coauthored with Alicia Gaspar de Alba and María Herrera-Sobek. Divided into five distinct sections, the poems in *Turning* collectively embody Martínez’s commitment to the marginalized and the oppressed from the perspective of a politically committed Chicana feminist and social activist. The six poems of the section “Border Wars: 1985,” for example, reflect beautifully crafted but harsh images of her involvement and experiences with the Sanctuary Movement and the plight of Salvadoran immigrants compelled to flee the terror and violence of El Salvador, only to be met in the United States with resistance and contempt.

Martínez’s next major publication was the novel *Mother Tongue* (1994). Inspired to write her novel while listening to a reading by Sandra Cisneros of *Woman Hollering Creek*, Martínez based *Mother Tongue* in part on her own participation with the Sanctuary Movement and with Salvadoran refugees. It tells of the romantic relationship between Mary, a 19-year-old, introverted Chicana, and José Luis Romero, a psychologically war-wounded refugee from war-torn El Salvador who is given sanctuary by Mary. The relationship eventually dissolves after José Luis experiences a post-traumatic stress disorder flashback and physically beats Mary, thinking she is the enemy back in El Salvador. However, before his departure, Mary becomes pregnant with José Luis’s child, and contrary to her own experience, she wants to ensure that her child has a strong sense of self and identity in life. In this light, she reconstructs the story of her past via a series of first-person and third-person intertextual narratives: letters, journal entries, photograph descriptions, newspaper and periodical clippings, poems, José Luis’s speeches, and testimonio (testimony), with which to inform her son of his identity. A novel of exceptional poetic quality, *Mother Tongue* won the 1994 Western States Book Award for Fiction.
Mother Tongue was followed by two collections of poetry: Breathing Between the Lines (1997) and The Devil’s Workshop (2002). The former is reminiscent of her novel, in that some of the poems touch on the themes of love and politics and reveal a melancholic poetic voice growing from an existence gone awry, while at the same time finding strength and cultural identity in the Spanish language, the mother tongue. The Devil’s Workshop is an autobiographical collection of 53 lyrical poems that once again explore the themes and issues that have long characterized her writing: the creative and destructive powers of romantic love, human rights, the failure of political systems, the spiritual life, and the need to forgive oneself in order to move on with the work of transformation, both social and personal. According to reviewer Ariel Robello, “the pages in The Devil’s Workshop bleed from beginning to end. In this autobiographical collection, Demetria Martínez’s speaker has been pricked at the skin, until bloody and worn from false accusations, loneliness, receding love, and political rhetoric, she surrenders the most fantastic and most painful moments of her life.” The Devil’s Workshop was followed by Confessions of a Berlitz-Tape Chicana (2005), a collection of Martínez’s essays, newspaper columns, speeches, and poems in which the author once again writes with lyricism and passion about life on the U.S.–Mexican border. As in her previous works, she continues to focus on the plight of the undocumented immigrants, who sometimes perish as they make their brutal pilgrimage from their home country to the U.S.–Mexican border, and she is also very adamant in her opposition to the war in Iraq. In 2006, Confessions of a Berlitz-Tape Chicana was given the International Latino Book Award for best biography.

Martínez’s latest work, The Block Captain’s Daughter (2012), is a novella that introduces us to six characters whose lives intertwine through their activism as they seek to create a better world and find meaning in their own lives. It is a story about survival, of six gutsy individuals who choose not to succumb to disillusion and who, with the support of one another, make good with what life has to offer. In 2013, The Block Captain’s Daughter was presented with an American Book Award and also won the International Latino Book Award for best Latino-focused fiction.

Martínez has also coauthored a bilingual children’s book, Grandpa’s Magic Tortilla (2010), with Rosalee Montoya-Read. The work received the 2011 Young Readers’ Book Award from New Mexico Book Awards.

Demetria Martinez currently resides in New Mexico, where she continues to engage actively in social justice and immigrant rights, offers fiction and creativity workshops in Santa Fe and Albuquerque, and dedicates herself to her passion of writing. For her body of work she received the University of California, Santa Barbara’s (UCSB) Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature in 2011. (DWU)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
MARTÍNEZ, RUBÉN (1962–). Journalist, poet, essayist, philosopher, educator. Born on 9 July 1962 in Silver Lake, California, to a Mexican American father and a Salvadoran mother, Rubén Martínez grew up in greater Los Angeles. His first job was as a journalist, and he was later an editor for L.A. Weekly, then Los Angeles bureau program chief and cohost of the PBS affiliate KCET-TV public affairs program Life and Times. He has taught at Claremont McKenna College and the University of California at Santa Barbara, and he holds the Fletcher Jones Chair in Literature and Writing at Loyola Marymount University.

Martínez, an Emmy-winning journalist, forms part of a new generation of Latinos, not only because he is part Mexican and part Salvadoran, but due to his desire to transcend borders: “Mine is the generation that arrived too late for Che Guevara but too early for the fall of the Berlin Wall. Weaned on a blend of cultures, languages, and ideologies (Anglo/Latino, Spanish/English, individualist/collective), I have lived both in the North and the South over my twenty-nine years, trying to be South in the South, North in the North, South in the North and North in the South. . . . My quest for a true center, for cultural, political and romantic home, is stripped of direction” (The Other Side, 3).

In 1992, he published The Other Side: Fault Lines, Guerrilla Saints and the True Heart of Rock 'n' Roll, later published as The Other Side: Notes from the New L.A., Mexico City and Beyond (1993). It is a highly experimental work of various genres in one, mixing journalistic prose with drama, memoir, poetry, and a journal. He illustrates a new way of viewing pan-Latino identity by staying in touch with key cultural hubs that mark his identity, that is, Mexico City as a rich source of his Mexicanness, San Salvador as a reference point of his Central American background, and Tijuana as a zone of cultural hybridity—all of which impact and leave an indelible mark on his Los Angeles, a multicultural cauldron of multiple influences. This work, along with others, approaches transnational migrations by giving a face to actual accounts of hardship and sacrifice. Los Angeles, an epicenter of postmodernity, becomes a vehicle through which peoples mingle, borrow, converge, and mix freely, much like the movement between freeways. Here, realities come together, blend, and shuffle sides (communities) like a deck of cards to illustrate the simultaneity of actions and the free-flowing identities that are no longer islands unto themselves. Martinez mixes and matches utopias with dystopias with ease while navigating moments of tension and conflict in order to describe the changing social landscapes. His descriptions of Los Angeles as a cultural incubator are key to understanding how the newer generations of Latinos perceive race and culture in transnational terms more than ever before.
Martínez also published a second watershed work, *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail* (2001), in addition to *Desert America: Boom and Bust in the New Old West* (2012) and *The New Americans: Seven Families Journey to Another Country* (2004), depicting the paths and journeys of immigration to show the human impact it has on families who cross and those who remain behind. His clinical eye unearths untold stories that chronicle the many facets of migratory patterns by focusing on families who somehow reach the far corners of the United States. His reportage journalism is achieved with the sensibility of an empathetic anthropologist, revealing in the process many gut-wrenching accounts of people’s resilience and determination to better their lives. He captures aspects of immigrants’ lives under the radar screen, consequently unveiling a rich fabric of unofficial experiences.

Rubén Martínez is an unusual authority on the daily struggles of immigrants, who subject themselves to forbidding circumstances in order to improve their lives. With a meticulous ability to observe, he presents uncanny insight into the fragility of vulnerable people who risk everything. (FAL)

**MÉNDEZ M., MIGUEL (1930–2013).** Novelist, poet, short story writer, essayist, educator. Born in Bisbee, Arizona, on 15 June 1930, Méndez soon moved with his family to El Claro, Sonora, in northern Mexico, where he lived until he finished sixth grade. Due to family financial woes, he was forced to return to Arizona to work and to abandon his dreams for any further education. Despite a heavy daily workload for decades as a farm laborer and construction worker, he became a self-taught writer at night, reading anything he could get his hands on. Critic Luis Leal encouraged him to submit his initial writings to the famous journal *El Grito* in 1968, where he published his first two stories, “Tata Casehua” and “Taller de imágenes: Pase,” which emphasize an indigenist focus on his Yaqui background with a cultural nationalist bent. Despite his minimal formal education, he competed for and won a creative writing position at Pima Valley College in 1970. Later he was hired as a writer-in-residence at the University of Arizona, where he was a distinguished professor until his retirement in 2005. In 1984, he received a doctorate honoris causa from the same university.

Méndez stands out for his dogged determination to become a writer at all costs and for portraying the Arizona-Sonora desert or border region as the protagonist of most of his literary creations. As a prolific writer in various genres, he has produced a wide variety of works, including the novels *Peregrinos de Aztlán* (1974; later translated as *Pilgrims in Aztlán* in 1992), *El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras* (1986; translated as *The Dream of Santa María de las Piedras* in 1989), *Los muertos también cuentan* (The dead also tell; 1992), *Entre letras y ladrillos: Autobiografía novelada* (1996; translated as *From Labor to Letters: A Novel Autobiography*), and *El circo que se perdió en el desierto de Sonora* (2002; translated as *The Circus That
Got Lost in the Sonoran Desert); the collections of short stories Steelio (1980), Cuentos para niños precoces (1980; Short stories for advanced children), Cuentos para niños traviesos/Stories for Mischievous Children (1979), Cuentos y mitos de dominio público (1978; Short stories and myth of public domain), Cuentos y ensayos para reír y aprender (1988; Short stories and essays to laugh and learn), Tata Casehua y otros cuentos (1980; Tata Casehua and other short stories), De la vida y del folklore de la frontera (1986; About border life and folklore), Los muertos también cuentan (1995; The dead also tell), Río Santacruz (1997: Santacruz River), and Que no mueran los sueños (1991; Don’t let the dreams die); and poetry in Los criaderos humanos (épica de los desamparados) y Sahuaros (1975; The human caretakers: An epic of the abandoned). He was the recipient of the important National Award for Mexican Literature, called José Fuentes Mares, in 1994.

Méndez has a special penchant for language as a source of storytelling, at the same time that he masterfully carves it, much like an artisan. He has been described as a promoter of the neo-baroque—that is, language that remains deeply imbedded in past cultural expressions that reemerge to capture the ancient and the new. Consequently, much of his writing embodies a regional language steeped in a far past, generally obsolete or forgotten, but he revives it with new registers. Another central focus of his is the marginal people of the desert region, who wander or search for a place where they might belong. The disjointed tension of such circumstances gives his works a tremendous force and vitality, including a poetic sensibility in which the desert becomes a paradoxical element of both destruction and regeneration. For example, Peregrinos de Aztlán is a tour de force in which he presents Aztlán, the mythic homeland of the Aztecs, as the border region where the lost souls can find solace and consolation.

Clearly, Méndez engaged in the innovative literature of the Latin American boom of the 1960s and 1970s in order to produce a work of sophisticated techniques and style, which he carries over into his other novels—El sueño de Santa María de las Piedras (The dream of Santa María de las Piedras) and El circo que se perdió en el desierto de Sonora (2002; The Circus That Got Lost in the Sonoran Desert)—two works that challenge and delight in how an unpredictable story of endless tangents can be told. The result is a collection of dramatic narratives of lively characters who struggle to survive in a hostile environment—both physically and socially. In the process, Méndez creates lively characters who exhibit humor, wackiness, irony, puns, social satire, deprecating qualities, and pathos in order to highlight the underdogs who deserve better. Each narrative, including his short stories, offers an internal examination of the human condition as shaped by bad luck or external circumstances. Much of his writing reads like picaresque literature—including its moralistic overtones—that has survived the ages as contoured by the desert and Mexican and Chicano cultural influences. In that
sense, his literature in all genres points to how to tell a good story with colorful characters who can’t avoid their human frailties—both as victims and victimizers.

Méndez has been a storytelling trailblazer who has preferred to produce all his writings in Spanish, with the objective of relishing what the language contains and how it can provide a particular experiential perspective. He is one of the more respected Chicano authors for his audacious and rich prose, particularly coming from a self-taught writer. (FAL)

**MESTIZAJE/MESTIZO.** This term alludes to racial miscegenation as an ideological principle to indicate that Latinos are a product of the best of all races. It is a guiding concept in Latin America and gained considerable currency thanks to the efforts of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) to establish greater equity, freedom, and opportunity. Chicanos in particular have embraced the idea to espouse openness to tolerance and the construction of a new society. Within the context of racial mestizaje, mestizo refers to someone of mixed European and indigenous ancestry. (FAL)

**MEXICAN REVOLUTION (1910–1920).** The Mexican Revolution, also known as the Great Rebellion, is considered to be the first major political, social, and cultural revolution of the 20th century. The uprising began in 1910 as middle-class liberals, intellectuals, peasants, and organized labor rebelled against the Porfiriato, the long-standing dictatorship of Porfirio Díaz, who ruled Mexico from 1876 to 1911, and lasted the better part of a decade, radically changing Mexican politics and society forever. Under the slogans ¡No reelección! (No reelection!), ¡Sufragio Universal! (Universal suffrage!), and ¡Reforma agraria! (Agrarian reform!), Mexicans from all walks of life rebelled against the Porfiriato on 20 November 1910.

The initial spearhead of this Great Rebellion was Francisco I. Madero, who opposed Díaz in the presidential elections of 1910. When Díaz was declared the winner and was sent to the presidential palace for the eighth time, Madero protested, and with his Plan de San Luis Potosí (Plan of San Luis Potosí), which declared the election of Díaz null and void and called upon Mexicans to take up arms against the government, set 20 November for the beginning of the Mexican Revolution. Within months Díaz was forced from office, and he fled the country for Spain on 31 May 1911. Aside from Madero, some of the principal leaders in the rebellion were Francisco Villa (a.k.a. Pancho Villa) in the north, Emiliano Zapata in the south, Pascual Orozco, Venustiano Carranza, and Alvaro Obregón.

While the Mexican Revolution of 1910 officially came to an end with the enactment of the Political Constitution of the United Mexican States, drafted and approved by the Constitutional Congress on 5 February 1917, the armed
MEXICAN–AMERICAN WAR (1846–1848)

conflict lasted until 1920. This Great Rebellion was responsible for fundamentally altering much of Mexico’s social infrastructure and institutions in an effort to modernize the country and thus overcome, once and for all, its feudal past. The revolution spurred a new beginning in Mexico’s efforts to strive for greater class egalitarianism, adopt a new mestizo (biracial) identity, and prepare for the subsequent industrialization of the 1940s. Despite the chaos and upheaval, the revolution attempted to change the concept of social mobility for the masses at the same time that Mexico tried once again to incorporate—at least theoretically—its indigenous population, if not into the mainstream, at least into a more dignified position. The revolution also gave rise to the Mexican Muralist movement of the early 20th century, led by “the big three” painters, Diego Rivera, José Clemente Orozco, and David Alfaro Siqueiros, and also to the novel of the Mexican Revolution, initiated by Mariano Azuela with Los de Abajo (The underdogs) in 1915, and continued by other novelists such as Martín Luis Guzmán, with El águila y la serpiente (The eagle and the serpent; 1928), and Gregorio López y Fuentes, with Tierra: La revolución agraria en México (Land: The agrarian revolution in Mexico; 1932).

It is estimated that during this 10-year period of armed conflict, approximately one million people lost their lives, and another 900,000 fled to the United States to escape the violence and turmoil. Many of the sons and daughters of these refugees became social activists in the Chicano Movement of the 1960s, and like their ancestors, they too fought for equality, social justice, and a reaffirmation of their indigenous heritage. (DWU/FAL)

MEXICAN–AMERICAN WAR (1846–1848). Also known as the Mexican War, the Guerra de 1847 (the War of 1847), and la Guerra de Estados Unidos a Mexico (the War of the United States against Mexico), the Mexican–American War stems from the U.S. annexation of Texas, the Lone Star Republic, in 1845. On 2 March 1836, representatives from the land now comprising the state of Texas formally declared their independence from Mexico. After several months of war between Texas forces under the command of Sam Houston and Mexican troops led by General Antonio López de Santa Anna, Houston’s forces defeated the military of General Santa Anna, and on 14 May 1836, Santa Anna grudgingly recognized Texan independence. For nine years, the territory was an independent country known as the Republic of Texas. In December 1845, the U.S. Congress approved the annexation of the Texas Republic as a new state of the United States despite opposition from the Mexican government. Since before the annexation of Texas, Mexico had claimed the international border to be the Nueces River, while the United States claimed the border was at the Rio Grande, some 50 to 70 miles to the south of the Nueces. In claiming their respective river boundaries, both countries wanted to expand their territory. When the Mexican
army crossed the Río Grande to defend what they recognized as the international border at the Nueces River and skirmished with U.S. soldiers. President James K. Polk declared that the United States had been invaded and American lives lost, and on 13 May 1846, he declared war against Mexico. The war was short lived, and for all intents and purposes ended in September 1847, as U.S. forces under the leadership of General Winfield Scott captured and occupied Mexico City. Finally, on 2 February 1848 the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo was signed, officially ending the war. Under the terms of the treaty, Mexico ceded to the United States upper California and New Mexico, which included present-day Arizona and New Mexico and parts of Utah, Nevada, and Colorado. Mexico also relinquished all claims to Texas and recognized the Río Grande as its northern boundary with the United States. (DWU)

See also ALAMO, THE.

MIGRA, LA (Immigration police). A slang term referring to the U.S. Border Patrol and the Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) and currently the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE), which replaced the INS as a result of the terrorist attacks of 11 September 2001. One of the primary responsibilities of ICE, as of its INS predecessor, is locating illegal immigrants, arresting them, and deporting them to their home countries. In light of this responsibility, immigration raids by la migra on unsuspecting immigrant communities in the U.S. Southwest have been commonplace since the 1940s and the emergence of the Bracero Program and have been amply portrayed in films, literature, television programs, and theater. The phrase “¡Corren, ahí viene la migra!” (Run for it, here come the immigration police!) made its way into the vernacular and is still commonly heard these days. (DWU)

MIGRANT WORKERS/CAMPESINOS. The former are farmworkers who migrate and follow the crops in order to pick them during their respective seasons. The latter are farmhands or peasants who work the land in any fashion. Either way, they represent a fairly common lifestyle for many rural Latinos throughout the United States, which has contributed to an impoverished sector of society living unstable and uprooted lives. The consequences are many: poor living conditions, an irregular education, questionable health treatment, exposure to insecticides and other toxic poisons, and a cycle of poverty. César Chávez became a labor leader of such workers in the early 1960s, and he attempted to unionize them in order to address some of the inequities mentioned. Because many rural Latinos have ties with this lifestyle, it is expected that writers would address such social problems to illustrate exploitation, disenfranchisement, and discrimination. Some of the
works that deal with these concerns are The Plum Plum Pickers (1969) by Raymond Barrio, I Am Joaquin (1967) by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales, “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra”/“. . . And the Earth Did Not Part” (1971) by Tomás Rivera, and Under the Feet of Jesus (1995) by María Helena Viramontes. (FAL/DWU)

MOHR, NICHOLASA (1938–). Novelist, playwright, nonfiction writer, poet, visual artist. Nicholasa Mohr grew up in the Bronx, New York, the daughter of Puerto Rican immigrants, the youngest of seven siblings, and the only girl in her family. Her father died when she was eight years old, and after his death, Mohr’s mother supplied her with paper, a pencil, and crayons, encouraging her to draw and write to cope with her grief. Mohr has credited this gift with beginning her exploration of her creativity in drawing and writing. Mohr’s mother died when she was 14 years old, and Mohr persisted in pursuing her dream of becoming an artist despite being encouraged by the adults in her life to pursue vocational education. She studied at the Arts Students’ League and the New School for Social Research in New York City and at the Brooklyn Museum Art School. In addition to being a writer, Mohr is an accomplished visual artist, including her artwork in the cover design or accompanying illustrations for much of her fiction.

Although Mohr’s writing has received a surprisingly limited amount of scholarly attention, she is considered the first Puerto Rican woman writer to have her fiction published by a major publishing house. Her writing is known for its subtle depictions of life in New York’s Puerto Rican barrio, eschewing stereotypical representations and focusing on highlighting the strength and resilience of those communities and families. Discussing her inspiration for writing about these families in the way that she does in an interview for the children’s literature journal The Lion and the Unicorn, Mohr poignantly asserted, “[W]hat we all have to understand is that people don’t fall apart; they continue to live. . . . I am amazed when I go to the South Bronx and I see wonderful families raising beautiful children. They do it under such trying circumstances. As much as they face hostility, prejudice, and poverty, some still manage to rise above it all. That is something to be celebrated” (Natov and DeLuca, 1987). Moreover, Barbara Roche Rico (2007) has argued that the importance of Mohr’s writing stems from: “1) its representation of a community in exile; 2) its construction of female agency within that community; and 3) more specifically, its exploration of the emergence and development of the female artist within a colonized space.” Roche Rico also highlights Juan Flores’s assessment of Mohr’s fiction as writing that “mov[es] beyond the ‘testimonial stance’ of earlier generations of writers, combining the autobiographical and the imaginative modes of community portrayal.”
In all, Mohr has published 10 books, including novels, short story collections, a memoir, and two books for young adult readers. While her books are sometimes marketed and categorized as young adult literature, Mohr has said that her only two works intended to be children’s books were *Felita* (1979), for which she won the American Book Award in 1981, and *Going Home* (1986). By far, her most well-known work is her first novel, *Nilda* (1973). Mohr was invited to submit a novel for publication after publishing several vignettes, and the manuscript she submitted was rejected at first. Mohr has recalled that the publishers that reviewed her manuscript initially were disappointed, expecting a grittier narrative, perhaps containing violence or sexuality and more similar in tone to the 1967 novel *Down These Mean Streets* by Piri Thomas, another early influential Puerto Rican writer who chronicles life in the barrio. *Nilda* takes place during World War II and chronicles a girl’s life over a four-year period from age 10 to age 14. The story depicts the protagonist, Nilda, as a creative child who endures tremendous hardship, including the death of her stepfather and mother, and becomes conscious of racial prejudice, poverty, and social injustice.

In the essay “A Journey toward a Common Ground: Struggles and Identity of Hispanics in the U.S.A,” Mohr discusses the novel’s relationship to her own life and what she aimed to communicate: “Although much of this story comes from the realms of my imagination, nonetheless, like so many writers’ first books, it contains a great deal of autobiographical material. In this book I was able to unlock the memories and sensibilities of my early years. I was able to document what it was to be poor, female, and Puerto Rican in an alien environment. Survival, after all, must not be all our children should strive for. They must be allowed to thrive and to continue to explore their God-given talents. I felt the need to continue and write about my community—women, the children, the heart of my culture.” Mohr received several awards for *Nilda*, including an Outstanding Book Award in Juvenile Fiction and a Jane Adams Children’s Book Award.

Mohr’s major works after *Nilda* continued to feature strong female characters; dynamic, loving families; and Puerto Rican communities in New York. *El Bronx Remembered: A Novella and Stories* (1975), *In Nueva York* (1977), and her aforementioned books for young readers are all shining examples of Mohr’s exploration of the kinds of characters, issues, and themes outlined herein, and *El Bronx Remembered* was a finalist for the National Book Award. In the short story collection *Rituals of Survival: A Woman’s Portfolio* (1985) and in her memoir *Nicholasa Mohr: Growing Up inside the Sanctuary of My Imagination* (1994), Mohr explores the difficulties of negotiating the desire for autonomy and time and space for creativity with women’s familial obligations. Her memoir engages these issues deeply in the context of her own life, and the fiction explores different aspects of these tensions for
women of various ages and life circumstances. Mohr’s women characters are always rendered with compassion and sensitivity, and her depictions highlight women’s enduring strength.

Mohr is also a playwright and has authored several plays, including an adaptation of *Nilda* into a musical, as well as the plays *Zoraida* and *I Never Seen My Father*. In addition, she has published essays, poems, and short stories in numerous journals, magazines, and anthologies. Over the span of her career, Mohr has received numerous honors and awards, including the Raúl Julia Award from the Puerto Rican Family Institute (2007), a New York State Hispanic Heritage Month Award (2006), a Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature (1997), a Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Congress of Puerto Rican Women in Philadelphia (1996), and an honorary doctorate from the State University of New York at Albany. For several years, she taught at Queens College, City University of New York. She lives in Brooklyn, New York. (MJV)

**See also** WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

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**MONTOYA, JOSÉ (1932–2013).** Artist, poet, musician, educator. One of the celebrated poets of early Chicano literature, José Montoya was born on a ranch near the community of Escobosa in the Manzano Mountains near Albuquerque, New Mexico, and resided in that state until 1941, when his family relocated to the Central Valley of California, eventually settling in Delano, where he attended elementary and middle school. After several additional moves both in California and New Mexico, the Montoya family finally settled down in Fowler, California, a small community in the San Joaquin Valley approximately five miles south of Fresno. It is here that José attended high school and was encouraged to cultivate his talents in art and writing.

Upon graduating from Fowler High School in 1951, Montoya joined the navy and served in the Korean War. After leaving the navy, he married and settled in San Diego, California, where he worked and pursued his interest in art at San Diego City College, completing an associate of arts degree in 1956. He later transferred to the California College of Arts and Crafts in Oakland, California, where he studied art education and also enrolled in literature and creative writing classes. Montoya graduated with a BA in 1962 and became a high school art teacher. After a brief stint teaching art at Wheatland High School in northern California, he continued his studies at California State University, Sacramento, where he earned an MFA in 1971. After completing his master’s degree, he joined the faculty in the Department of Art Education at Sacramento State, where he taught for 27 years, until his retirement in 1998.

Montoya’s first achievement in poetry was in 1969, when nine of his poems were published in *El Espejo/The Mirror: An Anthology of Selected Mexican-American Literature*, printed by Quinto Sol Publications. With the
publication of these early poems—which included “El pobre Viejo Walt Whitman” (Poor old Walt Whitman), “La jefita” (My little mother), “El Vendido” (The sellout), and “Sunstruck While Chopping Cotton”—along with the publication of “El Louie” that same year, he established himself as an emerging voice in Chicano letters. Consequent to this initial publication, he began reading his works at many different venues, including community centers, bars, universities, patriotic festivals such as Cinco de Mayo and 16 de Septiembre (Mexican Independence Day), and literary events like Festival Floricanto, where his poetic voice was received quite favorably. Audiences not only gravitated toward his message, but were captivated by his use of language. A master of the technique of code switching, he often interweaves English, Spanish, and caló, the street argot of the pachuco, and created interlingual and popular images that come directly from Chicano reality.

Influenced by the writings of Walt Whitman, Montoya’s early poetry assumes the identity of the Chicano people and the downtrodden, telling their heart-rending story with honesty and lucidity. Such is the case with “La jefita” and “El Louie,” two of his most successful and anthologized poems. While in the former he creates the image of the migrant mother as the pillar of the Chicano family, in “El Louie” he eulogizes the life of Louie Rodriguez, a pachuco he had known while living in Fowler, California. In both cases, Montoya writes from personal experience and demonstrates the linguistic genius for which he is known.

Following the success of these early poems, in 1972 Montoya published El sol y los de Abajo: And Other R.C.A.F. Poems (The sun and the downtrodden), a collection of 24 poems issued together with Oración a la mano poderosa (Prayer to the powerful hand) by Alejandro Murguía in a back-to-back edition. Like the earlier pieces, the poems of El sol y los de Abajo reflect imagery that comes from Chicano reality, but as indicated in the title, here Montoya underscores social issues and focuses on the Chicano as an underdog, struggling for survival in an alienating society. The collection’s title poem, for example, relates the wretched and downtrodden existence of a poetic voice in search of salvation from his condition. Nevertheless, after a three-generation journey of despair and hopelessness, the poem ends with a hint of optimism as the poetic voice indicates: “Dust that darkened the air begins / to clear y se empieza a ver el Sol [and the sun begins to shine] / I AM LEARNING TO SEE THE SUN” (40). Similarly, many of the remaining poems of the collection are highly critical of those institutions and powers of society that work to alienate and subjugate the Chicano: the Catholic Church, including its Irish and Spanish priests; the Vietnam War; racism; the conditions of migrant work; and so forth.
Montoya’s second volume of poetry, *In Formation: 20 Years of Joda* (1992), includes all the previous work referred to above, plus new poetry written between 1972 and 1990 and two portfolios of original sketches, as well as various songs and corridos (ballads) also composed by the artist. While more than half of the 76 new poems in the collection are written in English, and several are written entirely in Spanish, Montoya does continue to use caló and code switching among the three languages throughout the volume. As with his earlier poems, many of the newer poems in this work also address the punitive reality that characterizes the life and existence of Chicanos and other peoples of color in American society (e.g., “Under the Shade of a Fruitless Mulberry Bush” and “The Telling Signs of Downtown”). However, other verses communicate personal recollections and sentiments (e.g., “La Gina,” “The Grain Shed,” and “La Yarda de la Escuelita”) or present poignant descriptions of his local landscape (e.g., “El barrio en enero,” “El padre nuestro in the park”). In light of the inconsistencies he observes within the Chicano Movement, Montoya also censures what he perceives to be betrayal from within the movement itself (“Los Theys Are Us,” “The Movement Has Gone for Its Ph.D. over at the University,” “The People’s Representative”). Nevertheless, in spite of the personal loss and the devastation that threatens his culture and the lament of the 20 years of struggle presented in the collection, Montoya does project a sign of hope. For example, in “Arroz Is Arroz Is Arroz,” he reminds us that better days will eventually come to his people: “Simón que sí se puede / Someday when they and / Even we, least suspect it, / but on our terms, ese / On our time / On our day of our people– / On our DIA DE LA RAZA!” (108).

For his literary contributions, José Montoya was named poet laureate of the city of Sacramento, California, from 2002 to 2004. In retirement, Montoya remained very active in the Chicano community of the greater San Joaquin Valley until his death on 25 September 2013 at the age of 81. (DWU)

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MORA, PAT (1942–). Poet, essayist, author of children’s literature, educator, university administrator. A second-generation Mexican American and granddaughter of Mexican immigrants, Patricia Estella Mora was born on 19 January 1942 and raised in the U.S. border city of El Paso, Texas. She obtained her primary and secondary education in local Catholic schools and received a BA and an MA in English from Texas Western College in 1963 and the University of Texas at El Paso (UTEPE) in 1967, respectively. After completing her BA, Mora became an instructor of English, a profession she practiced at the high school, community college, and university levels until 1981, when she became an assistant to the vice president of academic affairs
MORA, PAT (1942–) at UTEP. From 1981 to 1989, she held various other administrative positions at the university, including assistant to the president, a position she gave up when she decided to become a full-time writer in 1989.

While writing and public presenting were part of Mora’s life early on, her first experiment with writing poetry was in high school, when she wrote religious verses, though she did not yet think of being a writer. Instead, she wanted to become a nun. Though she published some early writings in Chicanx journals such as Revista Chicano-Riqueña and the Americas Review in the late 1970s, her first major publication came out in 1984; her first collection of poetry, Chants, was published by Arte Público Press. Her published works since then include five additional books of poetry for adults—Borders (1986), Communion (1991), Agua Santa/Holy Water (1995), Aunt Carmen’s Book of Practical Saints (1997), and My Own True Name (2000)—and three books of nonfiction: Nepantla: Essays from the Land of the Middle (1993), House of Houses (1997), and Zing! Seven Creativity Practices for Educators and Students (2010). In addition, she has published 17 children’s picture books and 8 books of poetry for children.

Mora’s writing is notably inspired by the Southwest landscape and its cultures, including the unique social structures and border cultures that exist along the international border between the United States and Mexico. In Chants (1984), the first four poems (“Bribe,” “Unrefined,” “Mi Madre,” “Lesson 1”) pay homage to the southwestern desert. In “Bribe,” for example, analogous to the ritual wherein indigenous women pay tribute to and seek guidance from the desert spirit to guide their hands in their weavings and other creative endeavors, her poetic voice buries pen and paper and asks “the Land to smile on me, to croon / softly, to help me catch her music with words” (7). Similarly, in “Unrefined” she personifies the desert as an unrefined woman who is loud, aggressive, sensual, and violent, and in “Mi Madre” she likens the desert to a mother figure who lovingly nurtures and provides for her child. This affection for the Southwest desert is also echoed in most of her subsequent works of poetry (e.g., in Borders, “Mi Tierra” and “Desert Woman,” and in Communion, “Desert Pilgrimage”) and even in her children’s tales (e.g., Listen to the Desert/Oye Al Desierto [2001], The Desert Is My Mother/El Desierto Es Mi Madre [2008]).

Moreover, as a lifelong inhabitant of the international border region between El Paso, Texas, and Ciudad Juárez, México, Mora has observed and experienced firsthand the cultural, social, and racial inequities that emerge along the borderlands as two very different social and cultural milieus come together. For Chicanos, the difficulties of trying to live in two cultures—Mexican and American—often lead to an identity of ambivalence. For instance, the much anthologized poem “Illegal Alien,” from Chants, captures this theme as the poetic voice states: “American but hyphenated, / viewed by
Anglos as perhaps exotic, / perhaps inferior, definitely different, / viewed by
Mexicans as alien, . . . / an American to Mexicans / a Mexican to Americans”
(52).

Whereas this theme of identity ambivalence is also presented in Borders
and in her later works (e.g., in “Sonrisas,” “Bilingual Christmas,” “A
Voice”), perhaps even more prevalent are poems in which Mora becomes the
voice of those border dwellers (maids, servants, immigrants, farmworkers,
etc.) who suffer prejudice, alienation, segregation, humiliation, and other
hardships because of their class or ethnicity. In the poems “The Grateful
Minority” and “Echoes,” for example, she takes up the plight of Mexican
maids, who toil daily cleaning up after people “scrubbing, washbowls, mop–
mopping bathrooms for people . . . / Dirty work you’ll do again tomorrow,”
all the while remaining invisible to the employer: “[T]hey don’t even know
your name” (22). Similarly, in “Tomás Rivera” she takes up the plight of the
migrant farmworker as she pays homage to the migrant worker turned writer,
educator, and university chancellor Tomás Rivera; in other poems she ad-
dresses the anxieties of Chicanos and Mexican immigrants as they seek ac-
ceptance in American society (e.g., “Immigrants,” “Border Town: 1938,”
“Withdrawal Symptoms,” “Now and the America”). Mora continues to con-
sider these matters in Communion and later works, but more within interna-
tional parameters as she ponders the poverty and marginalization of women
and the indigenous peoples in Third World societies such as Pakistan, Perú,
and the Dominican Republic.

Woven throughout the poetry of Pat Mora is also a feminist perspective.
Many of her poems depict women in their various roles—mothers, daughters,
wives, lovers—frequently in a submissive position vis-à-vis their male
counterparts. In some poems (in Chants, “Plot” and “Illegal Alien”; in Com-
munion, “Perfume” and “Emergency Room”), she condemns domestic vio-
lence and husbands who physically abuse and sometimes even kill their
spouses out of misconstrued tradition or in jealous rages. In others she chal-
lenges oppressive patriarchal systems that subordinate women (in Commu-
non, “Veiled”). However, it is in Agua Santa/Holy Water that her feminist
perspective is most evident, as she condemns patriarchal domination and
oppression and pays tribute to women, including family members, cultural
icons such as Frida Kahlo (“Frida”) and Malinche (“Malinche’s Tips: Pique
from Mexico’s Mother”), allegorical figures such as La Llorona and Coatli-
cue (“Llantos de La Llorona: Warnings from the Wailer” and “Coatlicue’s
Rules: Advice from an Aztec Goddess”), and sacred icons such as the Virgin
of Guadalupe (“Consejos de Nuestra Señora de Guadalupe: Council from the
Brown Virgin”).

In 1993, between the publication of Communion and that of Agua Santa/
Holy Water, Mora published Nepantla: Essays from the Land of the Middle.
Like her poetry, the essays explore the many personal issues and responsib-
ities she faces as a woman of color, a Chicana, and a woman writer in the United States. She also explores both the preservation of her own Mexican American culture and her encounters with other cultures. Her second book of prose, *House of Houses* (1997), is a family memoir narrated in the voices of her ancestors. Composed of an introduction and 12 chapters, each of which is named for a month of the year ("Enero friolero/Chilly January," "Febrero loco/Crazy February," etc.) and focuses on a particular family member, the memoir recounts her family’s departure from Mexico during the Mexican Revolution of 1910–1920 and their struggles to begin life anew in the United States. In the latest of her prose texts, *Zing! Seven Creativity Practices for Educators and Students*, Mora directs seven letters to teachers and encourages them to revive their creative and artistic energy in order to become more creative and passionate educators.

In addition to the titles discussed above, Pat Mora is also the author of many award-winning children’s books. Like much of her writing directed toward adults, her children’s books, be it poetry or illustrated storybooks, also draw their inspiration and themes from her life experiences as a bilingual, bicultural Chicana from the Southwest desert. Her goal is to promote cultural preservation and propagation. In *Nepantla: Essays from the Land of the Middle*, she explains: "‘Every child has the right to be cherished,’ a poster says. Every child and person has a right to have what she is cherished—the color of her skin, the texture of his hair. My investment is in the future. I suppose that is one of the many reasons why I write children’s books. Pride in cultural identity, in the set of learned and shared language, symbols and meanings, needs to be fostered not because of nostalgia or romanticism, but because it is essential to our survival" (36).

As a result of her tremendous literary production, Mora has been honored with many awards, including honorary doctorates in letters from North Carolina State University (2008) and the State University of New York Buffalo (2006), and among her literary awards are the Literary Legacy Award, El Paso Community College (2010); the Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Letters, University of California at Santa Barbara (2008); the University of Southern Mississippi Medallion for Outstanding Contributions to Children’s Literature, Hattiesburg, Mississippi (2008); Roberta Long Medal for Distinguished Contributions to Celebrating the Cultural Diversity of Children, University of Alabama at Birmingham (2007); the National Hispanic Cultural Center Literary Award (2006); the “Literary Lights for Children,” Associates of the Boston Public Library (2002); the “100 Library Champions,” Texas Library Association Centennial (2002); the Ohioana Award in Children’s Literature, Ohioana Library Association (2000); the Pellicer-Frost Bi-national Poetry Award, Ford Foundation, FEMAP Foundation, and Museo de Arte e Historia del INBA-Cd. Juárez (1999); the National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship in Poetry (1994); the Poetry Award, Conference of Cincinnati Women (1990); Authors of the Pass: El Paso Herald-Post Writers Hall of Fame (1988); the Texas Institute of Letters (1987); Literary Award, Harvey L. Johnson Book Award, Southwest Council of Latin American Studies (1984); the Creative Writing Award, National Association for Chicano Studies, Ypsilanti, Michigan (1983); and the Poetry Award, New America: Women Artists and Writers of the Southwest, Albuquerque, New Mexico (1982). She has also been awarded the Southwest Book Award by the Border Regional Library Association on three different occasions (1985 for Chants, 1987 for Borders, and 1998 for House of Houses) and the Premio Aztlán Literary Prize (1997) for her family memoir.

Her awards for children’s books are also numerous. They include the International Latino Book Award for Best Children’s Picture Book—English (2009) for Abuelos; the American Library Association Notable Books Award (2008) for Yum! ¡Mmm! ¡Qué Rico! America’s Sproutings; the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children’s Book Award (1998) for Tomás and the Library Lady; and the Américas Award, Commended List, Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (in 1994 for Pablo’s Tree, in 1996 for Confetti: Poems for Children, in 2003 for A Library for Juana: The World of Sor
MORAGA, CHERRÍE L. (1952–). Playwright, activist, poet, editor, essayist, memoirist, artist-in-residence. Born to an Anglo father (Joseph Lawrence) and Mexican mother (Elvira Moraga) on 25 September 1952, Cherríe Moraga was raised in San Gabriel, California, and developed an early sense of self about her identity and sexuality. She studied at Immaculate Heart College and earned her BA in English in 1974. She moved to San Francisco in 1974 in order to more freely express her lesbianism and enrolled in San Francisco State University, where she received her MA in 1980. Her thesis served as the basis for the manuscript she and Gloria Anzaldúa would later coedit, This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color, a classic collection that redefined U.S. feminist studies. Moraga participated in the Chicano Movement but became disenchanted with the limitations of the cultural nationalist agenda, which ignored the issue of sexuality for Chicanas. As a result, she has dedicated most of her life to promoting a greater awareness about Chicanas as cultural-sexual beings who need to define their own roles outside of patriarchal paradigms. A lesbian and woman-of-color consciousness, a “Xicanadyke in exile,” drives much of her writings, following the mantra “the personal is political.” In 1986, she and Gloria Anzaldúa were recipients of the Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award for This Bridge Called My Back. In 1992, she earned the Pen West Award for Drama, in 1993 a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, and in 2002 the American Studies Lifetime Achievement Award. She has also been an artist-in-residence at Stanford University and the University of California at Berkeley.

Moraga’s creative-intellectual output is divided into the following categories: collections of plays: Giving Up the Ghost: Teatro in Two Acts (1986), Heroes and Saints and Other Plays (1993), The Hungry Woman (2001), and Watsonville/Circle in the Dirt (2012); critical essays: Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó por Sus Labios (1983), The Last Generation: Prose and Poetry (1993), and A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness: Writings, 2000–2010 (2011); memoirs: Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood (1997); and coedited works: This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color (with Gloria Anzaldúa; 1981),
Moraga is one of the more outstanding feminist voices in Chicana/o literature because she has produced groundbreaking works that contribute toward reconceptualizing Chicanas within Chicano culture as political leaders, community organizers, and spokespersons for the social role of sexuality. *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* has become a landmark and standard for Chicana feminism, directly contributing to the formation of the **postmodern Chicana generation** of the 1980s, due in part to Anzaldúa’s influence. She has consistently collaborated with distinguished Chicana writers and critics to define and expand the critical and theoretical discussions of Chicana feminism within what she terms a “Queer Nation” and “**theory in the flesh**.” Her coedited works *This Bridge Called My Back* and *The Sexuality of Latinas*, in addition to her provocative critical essays in *The Last Generation* and her enlightening memoir *Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood*, place her in the center of feminist/lesbian discourse since 1981.

In *The Last Generation*, part essay and part poetry, she posits a poetics and a politics: “A writer will write with or without a movement” (58; emphasis in original). Herein, she includes an important chapter about **Aztlán** as more than a mythical homeland, referring to “Queer Aztlán: The Re-formation of Chicano Tribe,” a new definition in the form of a manifesto that proclaims the inclusion of lesbians and gays in this Chicano space. Similar to *The Last Generation* in terms of its personal ideological explorations, *A Xicana Codex of Changing Consciousness* revisits many of the same topics 18 years later with a more mature approach, extracting the staying power of feminist thought. The result is a well-articulated consciousness that is moved to excavate memory, dreams, and desire. By referring to a “codex,” she aims to underscore her reliance on pre-Columbian scriptures as written texts of a past with which she wishes to reconnect.

Moraga is a pioneer in her creative works, affirming unapologetically that the body of women has to be considered a discursive entity. She has promoted the idea of facing our own contradictions of internalized hatred via racism, classism, and sexism. She started as a poet and in 1983 published *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó por Sus Labios*, a combination of confessional poems, dreams, essays, and journal entries. Here we encounter a burgeoning consciousness about discovering her voice to articulate love while grappling with her white privilege. She in part selectively reappropriates aspects of her Mexican background and rediscovers her resolution to carve out a new philosophy of desire within a lesbian context. In *Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood*, the author discloses the step-by-step process of becoming a lesbian mother by giving birth to a son, including
all the complications and near-death moments. The memoir in the form of a diary becomes a personal glimpse into how to redefine and recover a sense of “family.”

In addition to the self-reflective, multigenre books on what she considers her essence and her choices, Moraga has made outstanding contributions in theater. *Giving Up the Ghost,* one of her most accessible plays, is a story of sexual discovery in a highly poetic interplay of perspectives: Marisa, a Chicana lesbian in her twenties, and Corky, Marisa’s *pachuca* self. Corky is the reference point of early trauma, including rape and abuse, and Marisa is a more mature lesbian seeking to carve out a lifestyle despite the many social pressures. Marisa is attracted to Amalia, a heterosexual native Mexican artist, and each learns from the other about her femininity. Marisa relishes the spiritual aspect that Amalia brings to the relationship, and the latter appreciates the former’s adamancy about her female identity. Ultimately, Marisa learns an important life lesson: to make family from scratch, especially for someone who does not abide by social norms. The play, published in 1981, was the first major work to introduce the topic of lesbian love in Chicana/o literature.

In *Heroes and Saints and Other Plays,* Moraga offers three plays—*Giving Up the Ghost, Shadow of a Man,* and *Heroes and Saints*—that depend on technically sophisticated scenes and dialogue. *Shadow of a Man* (1989)—winner of the 1990 Fund for New American Plays Award—openly discusses male homosexuality and how Manuel Rodríguez is unable to reconcile his hidden fascination for men. The work encompasses various shades of a man’s indecisiveness, self-denial, and repression within a homophobic society. Symbolically, the play provides a process of stages that Manuel has to experience to eventually encounter full sexual individuation. *Heroes and Saints* offers a social critique on ecology and the plight of farmworkers exposed to pesticides and other toxic elements. The play resembles Luis Valdez’s first play, *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* (1963). Cerezita Valle, the protagonist in the form of a head, defies social norms by serving as an example for others to pursue dignified roles. She teaches the local priest, Father Juan, about liberation theology and others about Mexican spirituality through the Virgin of Guadalupe. Despite her disabilities, Cerezita is able to show others she is a more “complete” person than other people.

Moraga’s next play, *Watsonville: Some Place Not Here,* includes some characters from *Heroes and Saints,* but the message is more bluntly militant in trying to vindicate the farmworker community of Watsonville. The story has three parts: the cannery strikes of 1985–1987, the major earthquake of 1989, and the purported appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe on an oak tree. Consequently, the play takes on an earthy connection through spirituality, but her criticism is directed at the Catholic Church for its indifference to
the farmworkers’ sense of place and belonging. Their cultural identity becomes central to their self-affirmation and sense of solidarity, and the play ends with an outright protest to burn the grape fields.

The Hungry Woman: A Mexican Medea/Heart of the Earth: A Popul Vuh Story by Moraga, consists of two highly experimental plays that reintroduce classical mythological tragedy—both European and Mesoamerican—with a modern interpretation. It represents an exploration of where Chicanas can situate themselves in the midst of conflicting cultural dilemmas. The first play combines the Greek Medea, a witch who killed her two children, with the Mexican La Llorona, the Wailing Woman who kills her children and is cursed to look for them along river banks. Moraga also factors in the role of Coyolxauhqui, the moon deity, who is dismembered in the Aztec myth—a critical commentary about the way women are treated. The main difference is that here Medea is a lesbian who divorced her husband Jason and wishes to retain custody of her 13-year-old son, Chac-Mool. Unfortunately, her only alternative is to poison him at the end, when her mental state is in question in an asylum. Through a complex series of situations and philosophical syllogisms, her lesbian lover (Luna) and her son, who comes back as a ghost, kill her. The prophetic overtones suggest the destiny of a woman like Medea, who is intertwined with fate and circumstances. This gives new meaning to a “hungry” woman while reevaluating the true role of Aztlán as the liberating Chicano mythical homeland, which should be inclusive of women and values that transcend machismo. The second play reinscribes the foundational and sacred Maya text El Popul Vuh, a creation story that encompasses a collection of counsel and examples. Moraga delves into some of the same stories and modernizes them for general consumption, resorting to a variety of theatrical techniques, like puppetry, the use of a chorus, anthropomorphic figures, dance, and chants. Magical realism, wizardry, ceremonial rituals, speaking animals, metamorphosing characters, and other “exotic” Mayan and contemporary figures prevail. Moraga concentrates on the potential of Ixquic, the young woman who aspires to achieve some independence and individuality in a male-dominated society. Otherwise, the play cleverly re-creates a relatively little-known Mayan world, injecting into it new vitality and relevance, including examples to avoid or emulate.

Cherrie Moraga has been instrumental in and highly committed to developing a lesbian poetics within a general Chicano literary agenda. Her sophistication in drafting the story lines in her plays has not gone unnoticed by critics and foundations. For example, Heart of the Earth: A Popul Vuh Story was staged at The Public Theater in New York in 1994 and The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, D.C., in 1997. She has been a relentless leader in redefining, with unparalleled originality, Chi-
cana feminism among women of color within and beyond the constructs of cultural nationalism. Her concept of “theory in the flesh” has opened new ground in feminist studies. (FAL)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

MORALES, ALEJANDRO (1944–). Novelist, short story writer, critic, essayist, poet, professor. Morales was born to working-class parents from Mexico on 14 October 1944 and raised in Montebello near downtown Los Angeles, where his father worked in a brick factory that was later dismantled. He received his BA from California State University of Los Angeles and later completed an MA and a PhD in Spanish at Rutgers University in New Jersey in 1973 and 1975, respectively. He immediately moved to the University of California at Irvine, where he has been a professor ever since.

Regarded as one of the more accomplished and sophisticated novelists, much of his work is a product of his fiercely independent approach to writing; he published his first novel, Caras viejas y vino nuevo (1975), in Spanish in Mexico. His seven novels and one collection of short stories/novellas reflect a restless writer of boundless creativity, exploring unorthodox topics while resorting to well-established narrative techniques from the French nouveau roman (or new novel), the Latin American nueva novela (new novel), and current trends and styles from other literary traditions. He rarely repeats himself, opening new fictional vistas via his provocative and sometimes disturbing subjects and themes.

While Morales has distinguished himself in terms of breaking new ground and developing highly interrelated social phenomena, his works seem to revolve around the following cluster of ideas: the articulation of history and its agents, the interconnected borders between Mexico and the United States, the sense of place, the effect of social forces, the role of disease and plagues, and futuristic trends. Another important quality of his writings is the notion of constant experimentation and reinventing his craft. Without any signs of complacency, he searches to find the proper form to develop his subject matter. The reader can always anticipate encountering an unexpected novelty or a unique angle on a topic.

Morales first seriously broached the subject of the barrio in Caras viejas y vino nuevo (translated first as Old Faces and New Wine by Max Martínez and then as Barrio on the Edge by Francisco A. Lomeli) as a merciless milieu of social degeneration, unbridled violence, turf warfare, and dysfunctional families. Writing in Spanish, he was unable to find a Chicano publisher because of the delicate nature and negative portrayal of the barrio at the peak of the Chicano Renaissance, when idealistic depictions were preferred. Instead, he published it in Mexico, where the reviews were at best mixed. The novel takes place mainly in the dark among blurry surroundings in which
people and objects are represented through distorted cubistic details, suggesting more than telling. Clearly experimentation is at the core of the story, particularly because the story is told backwards. In this way, Morales captures the spirit of a harsh and corrosive place that slowly gnaws at the characters, like Julián, who is on a downward spiral into addiction and self-destruction. The other protagonist, Mateo, serves as a counterpoint to indicate hope and survival. This work forced Chicanos to confront the hard-core barrio experience as a lesson to overcome it. The novel initially did not receive much critical attention because of what some readers consider a confusing narration of imprecise voices and characters. But over time it has become a centerpiece of the Chicano novel that had come of age by 1975. Harsh topics are confronted: violence, drugs, sex, social marginalization, environmental determinism, stratified social roles, and how a community, originally pastoral, becomes a site of degeneration. The novel is deliberately disturbing and intentionally provocative to seek out change.

Morales next chose the topic of a socially committed Anglo doctor in La verdad sin voz (1979; translated as Death of an Anglo) who resists discrimination, corruption, and a loss of social morality. The story is told in a three-narrative structure. The doctor becomes a victim of his idealism while the chronicler of the story, Professor Morenito, unveils a parallel ambience in academia, which some colleagues of Morales at the University of California at Irvine took personally. The novel did not have much of an impact except to demonstrate the author’s ability to cleverly interweave related stories. His subsequent novel, Reto en el paraíso (1983), marked a key and ambitious turn in exploring the power of the construction of history, that is, who creates “official” history, how that status becomes a tool of subjugation and hegemony, and who inherits and can claim such a legacy. Basically, it in part traces the downfall of the Californios through the Coronel family and the rise of the Irish Linford family, who switch places in terms of economic prowess and landholdings. A tour de force, this totalizing novel actually represents various novels in one, unearthing the “real” history of the Irvine area of southern California to show how the Irvine family appropriated Mexican lands. In other words, Morales offers a counterhistory while unmasking a history of deceit and power mongering. The modern protagonist, named Dennis Berreysa Coronel, becomes the link to this past while serving as a leap into a more promising future for Chicanos. Due to the novel’s density and archival elements, it has remained largely ignored, even though it contains many of Morales’s more advanced literary experimentations with technique, time, space, ideology, characterization, and the role of collective memory.

The next work, a metanarrative of experimentation, The Brick People (1988; translated as El olvidado pueblo de Simon in 2008), again examines how history can give a community a sense of itself. Based on the Simon
MORALES, ALEJANDRO (1944–)

Brick Factory where Morales’s father worked, the story is a re-creation not only of place but also of family genealogy in which myth and history merge seamlessly. Ultimately, it recounts Mexican immigrant contributions to Los Angeles as an essential motor of the latter’s development. It tells various stories juxtaposed within the same region, illustrating the multicultural diversity of Los Angeles and how peoples of different backgrounds commingled and coexisted.

Morales’s originality continues to surprise and astound. The Rag Doll Plagues (1992) marks a quantum leap into new thematic explorations, such as disease and its effects on history. Its structure in three different historical periods (colonial, 20th century, and 21st century) is evidence of a highly theoretical novel about interconnected phenomena and how they cross borders and time frames. A disease plagues the three periods, as a narrator, a protagonist, and a descendant of the previous narrators grapples with how to cure it. The unnerving search moves the narrative into unexplored territory of finding the solution in Mexicans themselves. This work is considered highly innovative for its story line, its narrative structure, its many parallelisms, and its disturbing examination of the role of disease. Morales, however, pushed his literary agenda further by expanding the notion of borders in Waiting to Happen (2001), a work that blends detective novel with prophecy and future shock along with fictional biography, part reportage, part myth, and part psychological novel. The apocalyptic view of parallel worlds in Mexico and Southern California reinforces a bent on futurism while looking at borders as radically transformed spaces between two countries.

In addition, Morales has published a collection of short stories/novellas titled Otra nación (2007; translated as Alien Nation), which explores strange phenomena and fragments of local characters from Los Angeles. This was followed by another incursion into disease (tuberculosis) as a source of altering history in The Captain of All These Men of Death (2008), a mystery novel that, according to Marc García-Martínez (2014), becomes a “literary form of testimony, love story, exposé, encyclopedic treatment, and artistic pronouncement on the human retaliation against the disease” (129). The plot focuses on protagonist Robert Contreras and how he deals with such a disease while living in isolation. Contreras’s rehabilitation is at the core of the story, along with all the morbid details on how to deal with such a misunderstood disease that acquires racial, social, psychological, and ultimately, allegorical overtones, with intense symbolism and sordid expressionism.

Morales also published River of Angels (2014), an ingenious portrayal of the City of Los Angeles using its river as a symbol of its permanent underground and “native” heritage. The novel presents two racially and socially opposite families who live along two sides of the river and how they are forced to interact through technology, tragedy, or familial ties. A sense of ecology also plays a prominent role, as well as fantastic or magical realist
qualities. The novel then unfolds Los Angeles history in its many layers and the role Mexicans played in its development—something that an introductory narrator realizes while viewing old photographs from the 1920s and 1930s that show workers building bridges and other constructions as the groundwork for the city’s infrastructure.

Alejandro Morales stands out as a serious, independent writer whose many talents illustrate the enviable advancements within Chicano literature because he reexamines history and its effects on people. He also ponders theoretical questions about telling a story, in addition to which he prefers to focus on untouched or uncomfortable subjects such as diseases, plagues, death, degeneration, and interrogations into the future. Given his dedicated creativity, most of his novels have now become classics that help to better understand Chicano culture from historical, mythical, social, and political perspectives. (FAL)

MORTON, CARLOS (1947–). Playwright, essayist, professor, journalist, poet. Born in Chicago to working-class parents Ciro and Helen López Morton from Texas, Carlos Morton frequently moved throughout the United States and Latin America (Panama, Ecuador, and Mexico) because his father was in the U.S. Army. He received his BA in English from the University of Texas at El Paso in 1979. He then became inspired by the unique theatrical style of Luis Valdez’s Teatro Campesino due to its farmworker concerns, its bilingualism, and its satirical humor. He earned an MFA in playwriting in 1981 from the University of California, San Diego, and by 1987 he had completed a PhD in drama from the University of Texas at Austin. In 1989, he spent a year at the National Autonomous University of Mexico (UNAM) on a Fulbright Fellowship, while contributing articles to newspapers in Mexico City. He has traveled extensively to many countries to present his works, such as Poland, Italy, Morocco, France, and Spain.

Morton has been a consistent contributor to Chicano theater since 1975, when he first presented El jardín (The garden), a biblical comedy about the conquest that deals with the loss of paradise for Chicanos. Perhaps his best-known play, The Many Deaths of Danny Rosales (1977), recounts in a lively courtroom scene the death of a young Chicano from Texas. The parallel actions between the present court proceedings and the simultaneous reenactments of past actions are effective dramatizations about a social environment of deep-seated injustice and prejudice that helps explain Danny’s many deaths. The powerful message is delivered in a compelling scenario of legalities that eventually unmasks institutionalized racism. The play received the Hispanic Playwrights Festival Award in 1977.

In 1983, Morton produced Johnny Tenorio, a modernized version of the Tirso de Molina’s Don Juan archetype that fits within the Day of the Dead, filled with much humor and bilingual puns. Later in 1984 he presented Pan-
cho Diablo (Frankie Devil), about an encounter between Good (a vato loco or barrio dude) and Evil (a Texas Ranger), and in 1989 he came out with The Miser of Mexico, following Moliere’s model, which situates such a figure in Mexico to reevaluate its relevance. Morton has produced a series of plays that have had relative success: Rancho Hollywood (1991), an experimental satire that mocks glitzy superficiality and Latino stereotypes; Savior (1993), a political exposé about Father Oscar Romero from Central America, who ends up as a martyr; Drug, O the Magnificent (1996), a moralistic play about the destructive effects of drugs in families; The Fickle Finger of Lady Death (1996), a sardonic view of death; Children of the Sun: Monologues and Scenes for Latino Youth (2008), a children’s play; and Frontera sin fin (2014), an in-depth look into the nature of borders.

Morton constantly experiments with form, language, structure, and themes. He is particularly fascinated with myths and historical figures, archetypes, and prototypes, which he either exaggerates or sometimes turns into caricatures. His interlingual code switching stands out as a favorite technique through which he creates sardonic situations while providing criticism about political issues, discrimination, or injustice. As Alicia Arrizón (1993) notes, he offers folkloric interpretations of classic characters and patterns. He has put on more than 100 theatrical productions, both in the United States and abroad, and has worked as a professor since 2004 at the University of California, Santa Barbara. (FAL)

MURRAY, YXTA MAYA (1968–). Novelist, lawyer, law clerk, professor, short story writer, essayist, critic. Born in 1968 in Long Beach, California, Yxta Maya Murray grew up in the general Los Angeles area. She received a BA in English with honors in 1989 from University of California at Los Angeles and a JD with distinction from Stanford University in 1993. Between 1993 and 1995, she served as a law clerk, then became a professor at Loyola Law School in Los Angeles in 1995, where she teaches criminal justice, feminist theory, law and literature, sexual orientation and the law, and feminist jurisprudence. She has been widely recognized for her writings, having received a National Magazine Award for Fiction in 1996, a Whiting Award for Literature, and in 2001 a MacDowell Fellowship.


It is difficult to pigeonhole her due to the variegated themes she has explored: one minute she delves into hard-core female characters, as in Locas, the other into the Spanish Conquest in Mexico, then on to the extravagances of Las Vegas, and more recently a fanciful guide and a kidnapping.
She also has to her credit a short story titled “La Llorona” (1996) and a number of essays published in Buzz, ZYZZYVA, Sloke, Harvard Law Journal, Stanford Law, and Glamour. She oscillates between sociocultural topics and sociological examinations with a keen interest in literary formulas while concentrating on a refined style and riveting storytelling.

Her first work, Locas, is a highly complex and nuanced novel in which she depicts two contrasting cholas, female gang members, from the tough neighborhood of Echo Park in East Los Angeles. Similar to the film Mi vida loca (1994), directed by Allison Anders, in which female characters dominate the screen, Murray presents hard-core barrio women who seek a sense of belonging and empowerment. This is the first time that a Chicana writer included female protagonists comparable to the male leading roles in Alejandro Morales’s Caras viejas y vino nuevo (1975) and Luis J. Rodríguez’s Always Running, La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A. (1993). Together, Cecilia and Lucía present a double-voiced narration in which they alternate their life stories in three parts: 1980–1985, 1985–1990, and 1997. They both observe male gang members, learning to “better men at their own game.” Lucía becomes a gang boss in charge of drug deals and imparting barrio justice, while Cecilia indulges in homoerotic activities as she later recedes from gang life. If both characters were originally perceived as “sheep” or gang groupies at the pleasure of the males, they break away from that mold to carve out their own self-transformation. In great part, each attempts to overcome her respective mother’s abnegation and docility in the traditional Mexican family structure. Locas becomes a double story of self-affirmation.

The Conquest, written in elegant prose, resonates with a meandering intrigue like Umberto Eco’s The Name of the Rose and with echoes of Laura Esquivel’s Like Water for Chocolate, including features of a chivalric novel in the mold of Amadís de Gaula. Mystery pervades the narration as Sara Rosario González, a restorer of rare books at the Getty Museum, copes with her love affair with Karl Sullivan in the present while vicariously deciphering a novelistic archive of an Aztec juggler maiden’s—Helen’s—fanciful adventures after the conquest of Mexico in the 16th century. The sensualized narration presents various parallels between these two protagonists’ lives in the midst of Sara’s sexual encounters with Karl and the many erotic exploits of Helen, who was taken as a slave by Hernán Cortés to Spain to exhibit her as an exotic Indian beauty. Helen is motivated to exact revenge on the Spanish king for the atrocities committed against her people, but she meets the noblewoman Caterina, who becomes her all-time lover. While Sara tries to reconcile her life of dissatisfaction and unrealized fulfillment, she finds consolation in carefully tracing Helen’s fascinating trajectory in a series of fantastic episodes contained in an apocryphal book called “The Conquest.” Disguises, camouflage, and hidden identities abound as Helen crisscrosses the Mediterranean countries, trying to complete her dream of eliminating King
Charles V, but too many detours distract her from her main objective, including exotic visits to Venice, Arab countries, and other labyrinthine sites, as well as pirates. Meanwhile Sara, at the Getty Museum, attempts to give Helen new life and meaning at the same time that she tries to determine if the real author is Padre Miguel Santiago de Pasamonte, who sounds like a character from *Don Quijote*. The novel memorializes historical memory, cultural legacy, and women’s roles as agents of captivating stories of intrigue.

In *The Queen Jade* and *The King’s Gold*, Murray indulges in fanciful adventures that contain elements of mystery, intrigue, and exotic places. These maddeningly paced novels offer multiple clues and riddles to solve in order to find a source of wealth or anthropological satisfaction. Murray’s penchant for locating ancient places of cultural richness makes for complex stories, forcing the reader to traverse narrative mazes in *The Queen Jade* while following the protagonists Lola and Eric on their journey through the hurricane-ravaged area of Guatemala in search of Lola’s mother. The ultimate goal, much like in the films *Romancing the Stone* or *Indiana Jones*, is to find the lodestone of jade that supposedly is mentioned in old manuscripts by Beatriz de la Cueva and Alexander Von Humboldt. Of course, there are scenes of death-defying acts of survival, such as pits of quicksand, corrupt militia, harrowing storms, and close calls, as well as discoveries about family (Lola’s real father and a sister she didn’t know she had). Murray again resorts to phantom books as the genesis of the characters’ curiosity to connect the past with the present.

Murray’s other narrative experiments, *What It Takes to Get to Vegas* and *The Good Girl’s Guide to Getting Kidnapped*, are more oriented toward young readers. Both are coming-of-age novels with female protagonists who have to face their demons in order to overcome their social environment. In the first, Rita Zapata, a dreamer who resorts to boxing as her medium to get ahead, uses male boxers as stepping-stones toward her goal. Known as the Queen of the Street Fighters, she ends up defeated when her boxer boyfriend plays her for a fool. In the second, Michelle Pena, a star track athlete and academic prodigy, a.k.a. Princess P, tries to figuratively run from her hard-core background, reminding us again of *Locas*. She is kidnapped by a gang member, and she slides back into her gangsta mode, thus negating her previous gains.

Murray has gained a reputation for writing riveting novels noted for their action, with considerable experimentation in multiple story lines, labyrinthine mysteries, and gratifying character development in quests of personal discovery. (FAL)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
MURRIETA, JOAQUÍN (1829?–1853). Joaquin Murrieta is one of the principal epic figures in Chicano literature, representing everyman and the paradoxes of Chicano identity as popularized by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales in I Am Joaquin (1967). In real life he was a miner from Sonora, Mexico, who went to California during the early stages of the Gold Rush of 1849. With the sudden influx of miners from throughout the United States and Latin America, northern California became a hotbed of contested land sites. Little respect was rendered to Mexicans during the gold fever era as owners of mines in the midst of chaos and lawlessness. Murrieta set out to avenge the arbitrary treatment of Mexicans, whose mines were generally confiscated or stolen through trickery or by force. His exploits became legendary in defense of Mexicans’ rights, and he resorted to violence and criminal acts. Mexicans considered him a social bandit, while others branded him an outlaw; a bloody criminal; and an elusive, mythical figure whose omnipresence threatened the new social (dis)order. He became so feared in his short life of notoriety that anyone who resembled Murrieta was called “Joaquin.”

Eventually, on 24 July 1853, a posse led by Captain Harry Love tracked and gunned down his band of outlaws, including Jack Three Fingers and Joaquin Valenzuela. Considerable mystery and misinformation existed during and after his life, thus inflating his fame; he was sometimes depicted as a Robin Hood and was portrayed by Walt Disney and Hollywood as Zorro. Some even claimed he was a Chilean miner, as Nobel Prize–winning poet Pablo Neruda believed. His hero status grew as he attacked Anglo-American authorities and ranchers because sentiments were still raw from the conquest of the Southwest by the United States in 1848. Murrieta, then, represented a backlash to such a takeover, through violent means. Luis Leal, in Life and Adventures of the Celebrated Bandit Joaquin Murrieta: His Exploits in the State of California (2001), demystified much of the misinformation by proving that John Rollin Ridge’s The Life and Adventures of Joaquín Murrieta, the Celebrated California Bandit (1854) was the basis for both the historical and fictional figure. A plagiarized version emerged in The Police Gazette, later translated into French by Robert Hyenne, both of which contributed to injecting new details of fictional drama to further hyperbolize his persona. His mythical and legendary stature seemed to grow every time someone penned a new version. In 1904, Ireneo Paz published another version in Spanish, Vida y aventuras del más célebre bandido sonorense Joaquin Murrieta: Sus grandes proezas en California, coming full circle to reaffirm Murrieta’s Mexican identity.

In short, Murrieta’s origins, evolution, and transformation are the substance of both myth and fiction that highlight an era of unbridled conflict. His figure encompasses a key moment in California history that can be viewed
from two distinct perspectives: Chicanos prefer to see him as a symbol of resistance to Anglo encroachment, while Anglos see him as the reason that kind of resistance had to be challenged. (FAL)
NÁHUATL. This refers to the language the Aztecs (better known as Mexicans) spoke in central Mexico before, during, and after the Spanish Conquest of 1519, which is still spoken by millions of Mexicans. Many terms from this language were incorporated into Chicano writings during and after the Chicano Movement (1965–1980) as a way of referring to concepts that defied a Eurocentric perspective. The language also contributed to the neo-indigenist trends of certain poets, such as Alurista, Gloria Anzaldúa, and Juan Felipe Herrera. (FAL)

NEPANTLA. As a part of Aztec thought and culture, Nepantla has represented a middle ground or a world in-between. Some Chicana theorists and writers, particularly Gloria Anzaldúa and Pat Mora, have focused on this concept to indicate how women occupy such a space between negation and realization, between utopia and dystopia. (FAL)

NIGGLI, JOSEFINA MARÍA (1910–1983). Novelist, playwright, poet, short fiction writer. An only child, Josephina María Niggli was born on 10 July 1910 in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, to Frederick Ferdinand Niggli and Goldie Morgan Niggli, American citizens who in 1893 had relocated to Hidalgo, a small town near Monterrey, to pursue employment. However, after the assassination of Mexican President Francisco I. Madero, three-year-old Josefina and her parents moved to San Antonio, Texas, to escape the turmoil and disruption of the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). Her formative years were divided between Monterrey and San Antonio, and she was homeschooled by her mother until she enrolled in Main Avenue High School in San Antonio.

At age 15, Niggli entered the College of the Incarnate Word, a woman’s Catholic college in San Antonio where, under the mentorship and with the encouragement of her English professor, Dr. R. E. Roehl, she discovered a love of writing. Encouraged by Roehl and other teachers, she participated in several literary contests, and before completing her undergraduate degree, she had already garnered first and second prizes in the National Catholic
College Poetry Contest and second prize in the Ladies’ Home Journal College Short Story Contest. As a result of this accomplishment, her father financed the publication of her first book, a collection of poems, *Mexican Silhouette* (1931). Written entirely in English, this small collection deliberates Niggli’s dual Mexican/American heritage and is her first attempt at revealing Mexican life and culture from an insider’s perspective to an English-speaking American audience.

After completing her undergraduate degree at College of the Incarnate Word in 1931, with a major in philosophy, Niggli studied playwriting for several years under the guidance of Coates Gwinne, director of the San Antonio Little Theater (SALT), during which time she produced several skits and one-act plays. In 1935, Niggli decided to continue her education at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, where she studied theater and joined the Carolina Playmakers, a theater company that originally dedicated itself to the production of folk theater. During her association with the Carolina Playmakers, she penned some of her best “Mexican-themed” plays, centered on themes of the Mexican Revolution and the portrayal of mestizo consciousness, including *Tooth or Shave, Soldadera, Azteca, The Red Velvet Goat*, and *Sunday Costs Five Pesos*, all produced 1936, and *This Is Villa*, produced in 1938. Of these, *Soldadera* stands out for its portrayal of the women soldiers of the Mexican Revolution as true and daring soldiers, rather than the stereotypical camp followers and/or prostitutes often portrayed in novels of the Mexican Revolution. Many of these plays were gathered together and published by Niggli in the anthology *Mexican Folk Plays* (1938).

In 1945, Josephina Niggli published the work for which she is most known, *Mexican Village*, a novel comprising 10 interrelated stories chronicling the life, traditions, and folklore of San Nicolás Hidalgo, Nuevo León, Mexico, the village in which she was born and lived as a child. It is filled with characters of both American and Mexican heritage and of mixed indigenous-Spanish heritage. Narrated in the third person, the stories highlight Robert Webster, who, like the work’s creator, is of dual Mexican and American heritage and speaks both English and Spanish with equal facility. In this light the novel presents an insider’s view of Mexican life and culture, the Mexico of Niggli’s own experience, and thus offers the author’s outlook on cultural identity and mestizaje or racial mixing. *Mexican Village* was later adapted by Niggli as a screenplay for the movie *Sombrero*, which was released in 1953, featuring Ricardo Montalbán as the lead.

Niggli’s second novel, *Step Down, Elder Brother* (1947), is also set in Monterrey, Nuevo León, Mexico, and explores the ethnic and class rivalry between the Mexican elite, the criollos (persons of pure Spanish descent), and the mestizos (persons of mixed Spanish-indigenous heritage) and their emergence to power in Mexico following the Mexican Revolution. Niggli’s third and final novel, *A Miracle for Mexico*, was released in 1964. It is the
first creative work in English depicting a Mexican cultural icon: the Virgin of Guadalupe. As in her two previous novels, the thematic focus of this novel is the “inception of mestizo consciousness” through the appearance of the Virgin of Guadalupe to Juan Diego, a Náhuatl Indian, on 12 December 1531 at the hill of Tepeyac (Coonrod Martínez 2007, 235–236).

Given this vast array of literary contributions and the U.S.–Mexican border vision that she espoused, Niggli has come to be considered an early 20th-century precursor to Chicano letters. In addition to these creative works, she also wrote and published several books on the techniques of playwriting and radio writing. And when Mexican Village was selected to be made into a movie in 1953, she moved to Hollywood and became a “stable writer” for Twentieth-Century Fox and MGM studios. She later left Hollywood to teach English and drama at Western Carolina University, where she helped to found the Theater Department, and taught theater from 1956 to 1975. Josefina Maria Niggli died on 17 December 1983 in Cullowhee, North Carolina, from complications resulting from diabetes. She was 73 at the time of her death.

In a letter from Niggli to Maren Elwood dated 11 May 1957 she wrote: “When I was a young kid starting out as a writer, I had a shining goal: I was going to present Mexico and the Mexicans as they had never before been presented. Well, I did. I made the big time. I even made MGM and Book of the Month. You see, I reached my goal and passed it.” And indeed she did.

As observed by Elizabeth Coonrod Martínez, “She preserved and presented the basis of Mexican cultural history to English-language readers—and shines as an outstanding woman writer of the first half of the twentieth century.” (DWU)

See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.

NUYORICAN POETS. The Nuyorican poets began an artistic movement in the late 1960s that forever changed the face of Latino literature. A Hispanicized combination of the terms “New York” and “Puerto Rican,” the poets reappropriated the term “Nuyorican,” once used as a disparaging term by island Puerto Ricans to mark the distinction between themselves and their mainland counterparts. Marginalized in the United States and subject to racist and classist stereotypes that pathologized urban barrio living, Nuyorican were not only subjected to derision by the U.S. mainstream, but also by Puerto Ricans on the island. Indeed, Puerto Ricans in New York City did live in neighborhoods with high crime rates, high dropout rates, and poverty. Yet these phenomena were rarely discussed as systemic failures of the “American Dream”; instead, Nuyorican were stereotyped as lazy and welfare dependent.
Within the context of the civil rights movement and the subsequent power movements—perhaps most significantly for Puerto Ricans, the Chicano Movement and the Black Power movement—the voices of Puerto Rican authors in the United States began to emerge with renewed vigor and dynamism in the late 1960s, especially with the 1967 publication of Piri Thomas’s *Down These Mean Streets*. It was around this time that these authors brought the term “Nuyorican” into widespread use as a symbol of their empowerment and their drive to name the specificity of their experiences as both Puerto Ricans and New Yorkers, urban Americans and racialized minorities. The writing that emerged from this period challenged stereotypes, giving voice to Nuyoricans with poetry that described their hybrid identities as a people living at the interstices of what Tato Laviera names their “euro-Indian, black, Spanish” origins in his poem “AmeRícan.”

Nuyorican poetry evoked the experiences of Puerto Rican migrants and their children in New York City, raised on the Lower East Side and other neighborhoods, including Spanish Harlem and the South Bronx, in an unprecedented way. The poets simultaneously described the harsh realities of urban living and their deep sense of connection to New York as “home,” as well as rootedness in their multiple identities as Puerto Ricans living in the United States.

In 1973, Miguel Algarín cofounded the Nuyorican Poets Café, a space within which emerging and established poets could showcase their poetry. Besides Algarín, notable poets within the Nuyorican Movement include Miguel Piñero, Pedro Pietri, Tato Laviera, and Sandra María Esteves. Poems such as Piñero’s “A Lower East Side Poem,” in which the speaker expresses pride in being from the Lower East Side and his wish to be buried there and not in Puerto Rico, are emblematic of the concern in Nuyorican poetry with expressing belonging and connection to the specificity of Nuyorican neighborhoods as place. Other anthems of Nuyorican identity include Pietri’s “A Broken English Dream” and “Puerto Rican Obituary,” which reveal the realities of poverty in the urban Puerto Rican migrant context. Many of these poems include Spanglish and code switching from English to Spanish, particular linguistic characteristics that emerge from the hybrid context of Latino identities.

The poetry of the Nuyorican Movement contributed significantly to the creation of the genre of Latino poetry as poetry to be performed and voiced, not merely read. Nuyorican poetry was influenced by the Puerto Rican plena, a traditional musical form that like the corrido engages in the act of storytelling. The Nuyorican poets were innovators and pioneers as performance poets, and the creation of slam poetry as a genre is in part attributed to the style of performance in that venue. Allen Ginsberg once called the Nuyorican Poets Café “the most integrated place on the planet,” and it continues to be a vibrant performance space for poets. (MJV)
See also WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
ORTIZ COFER, JUDITH (1952–). Judith Ortiz Cofer was born in Hormigueros, Puerto Rico. At two years of age, Ortiz Cofer immigrated to the United States with her family, and they made their home in Paterson, New Jersey. Because her father was in the U.S. Navy and frequently traveled abroad with his fleet, her mother was often left to care for Ortiz Cofer and her brother for considerable stretches of time. During these periods, the family frequently went back to Hormigueros, where Ortiz Cofer, her mother, and her brother would stay with her grandmother. At the age of 15, Ortiz Cofer and her family went to live in Georgia, where she still lives. “As a Puerto Rican immigrant my key experience was growing up bilingual and bicultural,” Ortiz Cofer said in a 1993 interview published in the journal MELUS. While this emphasis on bilingualism and biculturalism is common for Puerto Rican heritage writers in the United States, Ortiz Cofer is unusual in that she does not live in New York and never has and does not primarily write about New York or use the language and conventions common to the Nuyorican Movement.

When asked about this aspect of her life, identity, and work in a 2003 interview in the journal Meridians, Ortiz Cofer asserted, “[B]eing Puerto Rican to me is not a matter of location. I don’t have to be a Puerto Rican from New York and I don’t have to be a Puerto Rican from the island to feel Puerto Rican. . . . [J]ust as there is no one way to be an American, there is no one way to be a Puerto Rican.” Thus, bilingualism, biculturalism, and the idea of the multiplicity of Puerto Rican and American cultures and identities significantly inform Ortiz Cofer’s work. Moreover, highlighting the significance of her writing as a site for exploring the multiple and dynamic cultural influences that infuse not only Latino/a literature, but American literature as a whole, Margaret Crumpton writes, “Judith Ortiz Cofer represents the new frontier of American literature as her prose and poetry depict and integrate the many cross-sections of culture she has encountered in her life.”

Ortiz Cofer has published 10 books and is a multigenre writer whose work includes poetry, short stories, novels, and essays. Significantly, several of her books combine genres, an aspect of her writing that Crumpton suggests
places Ortiz Cofer at the “forefront of a contemporary movement that is expanding and redefining literary genres” by challenging the boundaries that genres themselves impose. Significantly, Ortiz Cofer herself has noted that she “mix[es] fiction and nonfiction not to confuse, but because [she] feel[s] that it is almost impossible in memory to separate what we have imagined from what actually took place.”

Ortiz Cofer has published three books comprised solely of poetry: *Terms of Survival* (1987), *Reaching for the Mainland* (1987), and *A Love Story Beginning in Spanish: Poems* (2005). *Silent Dancing: A Partial Remembrance of a Puerto Rican Childhood* (1990), a memoir in essays and poetry, and *The Latin Deli: Telling the Lives of Barrio Women* (1993) also bring together prose and poetry. In countless interviews and in essays, Ortiz Cofer has repeatedly spoken to the centrality of poetry to her work, stating, for example: “I consider poetry my primary genre and greatest discipline. Poetry is what connects me to my memory, to my imagination, to my subconscious life, and to my original language. In fact, I cannot think of anything that I have done in fiction or nonfiction that has not found expression in either a successful or unsuccessful poem.” The content of Ortiz Cofer’s poetry is rooted in the depth and richness of her lived experience, exploring a range of themes from bilingualism to biculturalism to motherhood and beyond. Ortiz Cofer has said that the precision and close attention to language needed for writing poetry provides her with intense training and practice for being a skilled writer of prose.

Indeed, it is Ortiz Cofer’s prose that has garnered the most critical attention and recognition. In particular, *Silent Dancing*, *The Latin Deli*, and her novel *The Line of the Sun* (1989) are the subject of numerous scholarly articles and have earned Ortiz Cofer several awards. *Silent Dancing* is a moving series of mixed-genre vignettes about her childhood and coming-of-age, as well as her movement back and forth between her home in Paterson, New Jersey, and Puerto Rico. Organized chronologically, the text is most innovative in terms of its challenging of generic boundaries, and it addresses the issues of living in the context of multiple cultures, particularly as they pertain to being a girl/woman. *The Latin Deli* also contains autobiographical elements, but is not centrally or explicitly a memoir or autobiography. Instead, the book explores the lives of various Puerto Rican women characters, sharing a community and building a home away from the island.

In 1990, *The Line of the Sun* was nominated for a Pulitzer Prize, and the novel was also named an Outstanding Book of the Year by the New York Public Library. The first half of the novel takes place in a fictional Puerto Rican town, Salud, based on Ortiz Cofer’s own hometown, while the second half of the novel is set in New York City. Spanning approximately 20 years from the 1940s to the 1960s, Ortiz Cofer’s novel is complex in terms of narrative voice and perspective, narrating the experiences of one of the pro-
agonists, Guzmán, from the time he is a young boy in Puerto Rico, through his migration to the United States, to his subsequent return to the island. The reader learns that the narrator of the story is Guzmán’s niece, Marisol, who attempts to piece together an account of his life. Later in the novel, Marisol’s own life experiences are rendered, as she experiences adolescence as the product of two cultures in New York. Reflecting Puerto Rican island culture, Nuyorican culture, and the movement between them, as well as different gendered and generational perspectives, The Line of the Sun powerfully highlights the impact of multiple views and identities on the meaning of home and the construction of life narratives.

In describing a driving thematic force in her writing, Ortiz Cofer has said, “I have decided that, really, all my stories are about storytelling. . . . If there is anything that I can say is the main topic for my stories, it’s my need to tell stories.” Her masterful storytelling has earned her the accolades that have accompanied the publication of most of her books, including a collection of short stories, An Island Like You: Stories of the Barrio (1995), which won Pura Belpré Prize from the American Library Association; the collection of essays Woman in Front of the Sun: On Becoming a Writer (2000); a novel, The Meaning of Consuelo (2003), which won an Américas Award in 2003; and a young adult novel, Call Me María (2006), which received an Honor-able Mention for the Américas Award. Her work has been published in hundreds of anthologies, magazines, and journals, including The Georgia Review, The Kenyon Review, and The Southern Review. Her essay “Silent Dancing” was selected by Joyce Carol Oates as one of The Best American Essays of 1991. In addition, she coedited the anthology Sleeping with One Eye Open: Women Writers and the Art of Survival (1999), a collection of essays about the challenges faced by women writers.

In 2007, Ortiz Cofer received an honorary doctorate in humane letters from Lehman University in New York, and she was inducted into the Georgia Writers Hall of Fame in 2010. Ortiz Cofer is the Regents’ and Franklin Professor of English and Creative Writing, emerita, at the University of Georgia in Athens. (MJV)

OTERO, MIGUEL ANTONIO (1859–1944). Politician, autobiographer, chronicler. Miguel Antonio Otero was born on 17 October 1859 in St. Louis, Missouri, to professor Miguel Antonio Otero and Mary Josephine Blackwood. His family moved around many parts of the Midwest and the Southwest, where he witnessed firsthand the rough life of the frontier. He personally knew “Wild Bill” Hickok and “Buffalo Bill” Cody, giving him special insight into epic figures of the mid-19th century. He studied first at St. Louis University and eventually graduated from Notre Dame University, but he then returned to New Mexico as an elected probate clerk in the northern region. His long political career began in 1891, when he represented New
Mexico at the Republican National Convention. At this event, he met future president William McKinley, who in 1897 appointed Otero governor of the territory of New Mexico, making him the first Hispanic governor in the Southwest.

Otero gained considerable notoriety for his progressive social agenda in New Mexico, and particularly for incorporating Hispanics in the political process. He was a direct witness and an instrumental participant in preparing his territory for statehood in 1912. But it was not until he retired from politics in the 1930s that he became more of a chronicler of key colorful figures of the region, such as Colonel José Francisco Chaves, Hickok, Cody, and Billy the Kid. Otero wrote a trilogy: *The Real Billy the Kid* (1936), *My Life on the Frontier, 1864–1882* (1935), and *My Life on the Frontier, 1882–1897* (1939), and *My Nine Years as Governor of the Territory of New Mexico, 1897–1906* (1940). His views of the Wild West are well documented with numerous memories of actual happenings, including observations on the controversial land grants, political parties (i.e., Partido del Pueblo Unido or the United People’s Party), and secret organizations (i.e., Las Gorras Blancas or the White Caps), as well as his fascination with bandits. In his last autobiography, he described the effervescent political environment of New Mexico; his struggles for statehood; and his friendship with Theodore Roosevelt, who admired Otero for spearheading a recruitment campaign among New Mexican Hispanics for the military regiment known as the Rough Riders. Clearly, Miguel Antonio Otero stands out, thanks to his autobiographical writings, as an early chronicler and storyteller of amazing happenings, when the Southwest was transitioning from being Hispanic to American. (FAL)

**OTERO-WARREN, MARIA ADELINA ISABEL EMILIA (NINA) (1881–1965).** Teacher, chronicler, politician, suffragist, business entrepreneur. Born on 23 October 1881 in La Constancia, New Mexico, to Eloisa Luna and Manuel Basilio Otero, Nina Otero-Warren came from a distinguished Hispanic family with deep historical roots, tracing her origins to the first Spanish conquistadores of the region. When she was still quite young, her family moved to Santa Fe, which she considered home until her death in 1965. She witnessed the growth and various stages of development of Santa Fe, from a small frontier town to a fully developed city of railroad barons and cultural revival, the epicenter of New Mexico. She studied at Maryville College of the Sacred Heart in St. Louis, Missouri, from 1892 to 1894, where she received a BA. In 1908, she married Rawson Warren, a lieutenant in the U.S. Cavalry. Although the marriage failed after one year, she continued to use her married name (hyphenated).

Otero-Warren became a key figure in political arenas as the state chair of the legislative committee for the Federation of Women’s Clubs, which became her platform to promote suffragist ideas. She also served in important
ed
tional positions, such as superintendent of public schools in Santa Fe County, in conjunction with her charitable work with the American Red Cross, as inspector of Indian services for the Department of Interior, and as an interpreter with the Pueblo Land Board. She also participated as chair of the Republican Women’s Organization and in 1922 became a Republican candidate for the U.S. House of Representatives. Around this time, she purchased 1,257 acres to homestead outside of Santa Fe with her friend Mami Meadors. She later returned to her principal interests, education and administration, becoming director of literacy programs in New Mexico and director of the Work Conference for Adult Teachers in Puerto Rico.

She became an acute observer and witness to the internal changes of New Mexican society and culture, which spurred her to write her retrospective chronicle, *Old Spain in Our Southwest* (1936). A definite Hispanophile attitude dominates the memoir, as if all significant deeds emanated from the *patrones* or hacienda owners, but the pride of capturing the nostalgic old days drives the narrative. She recounts folklore about village life in the past, certain cultural characteristics, numerous customs, beliefs, religious practices, and some gems as anecdotes. The work itself is not literary, but it does contain considerable material relevant to understanding New Mexican culture, rooted in the region since the 16th century, when the conquistadores first set foot there. Otero’s lens would seem to perpetuate the “fantasy heritage” concept proposed by Carey McWilliams in the 1940s in his *North from Mexico*, or what Chicano critic Raymond Paredes termed the “hacienda mentality.” Critics Tey Diana Rebolledo and Genaro Padilla believe otherwise, claiming that the “romanticized, ahistorical, genteel textual discourse” (180) is not devoid of emerging “storms” of change in the horizon. Also, they point out that Otero’s meticulous description of customs, places, and names gives names to Hispanic objects that otherwise would be forgotten. If her method appeared conservative, the substance of the message is that she gave New Mexican culture legitimacy and a rightful place within American folklore and culture. She spoke from the position of a homesteader, but she also defiantly defended what she was recounting. She addressed “old Spain” in the Southwest while giving credence to it as an amply established culture, thus blurring its erasure and invisibility.

Otero’s contributions are well distributed in various social and political arenas, but her more lasting contribution is to affirm that Hispanic culture is soundly rooted and an integral part of the Southwest from time immemorial. (FAL)
PACHUCO. Chicano urban youth from the barrio, characterized by their dress, invented language, behavior, and social clans. The pachuco is also considered by many to be one of the first symbols of resistance in the 1940s, pursuing his own identity and place within an American society that rejected him. In the Chicano Renaissance period, he represented a polished style of dress as well as a symbol of pride that emerged in the Chicano barrios of El Paso, Texas, and Los Angeles, California. One of the earliest representations of the pachuco was Mario Suárez’s short story “Kid Zopilote” in 1947. The pachuco was also the subject of an essay (“El pachuco y otros extremos”/“The Pachuco and Other Extremes”), published by Octavio Paz in his canonical work El laberinto de la soledad (1950). Chicano literary portrayals of this cultural icon are “El Louie” by José Montoya and “Ode to a Dead Lowrider” by J. L. Navarro, both poems from 1969, and Luis Valdez’s theatrical masterpiece Zoot Suit (1978), which portrays the pachuco as a symbol of Chicano resistance. (FAL/DWU)

PAREDES, AMÉRICO (1915–1999). Folklorist, anthropologist, educator, critic, novelist, poet, short story writer, army soldier. Américo Paredes was born in Brownsville, Texas, on 3 September 1915 to a family of Mexican settlers who trace their origins in the region back to the 18th century. He grew up in what is known as the Río Grande Valley in Texas, which served as the background for much of his theoretical concepts about border culture, known as Greater Mexico. From this he developed the idea that the U.S.–Mexican border represents a cultural entity unto itself, sometimes referred to as a third culture. Most important, the region is characterized by deep Mexican roots that have generally been either minimized, overlooked, or even forgotten. He set out to reclaim some of this past through his scholarly research, particularly through the groundbreaking book *With His Pistol in His Hand*: A Border Ballad and Its Hero (1958), in which he meticulously proved how the corrido (ballad) and other folk songs played a key role in defining the local culture, with attributes closely related to the epic. He gathered considerable folkloric materials to prove his theory. Paredes
showed how people of Mexican descent in the region were agents of history and culture, even standing out as heroes, rather than the villains or bandits they are typically portrayed as.

Paredes wrote various manuscripts of fiction before the 1960s, including his first collection of poetry, *Cantos de adolescencia* (1935; translated as Songs of Youth [1932–1937] in 2007), the novels *George Washington Gómez* and *The Shadow*, the collection of short stories *The Hammon and the Beans*, and a selection of poetry called *Between Two Worlds*, all of which were subsequently published much later (1990, 1998, 1994, and 1991, respectively). *George Washington Gómez* stands out for its early exploration into identity, which parallels the later novel *Pocho* (1959), by José Antonio Villarreal. Paredes’s protagonist, Guálinto Gómez, grapples with being both American and Mexican-Texan, illustrating the temptations and trappings of dealing with binaries. Originally composed in the 1930s, the novel’s final draft contains some modifications to show the evolution of his Chicano characters. With such works, Paredes’s penchant for writing about unique issues relevant to his community place him as a pioneer of Chicano literature ahead of his time, especially for claiming that Chicanos belonged in the region as original settlers and not as recent interlopers.

Paredes served overseas in the U.S. Army during World War II and later embarked on an academic career at the University of Austin, where he initially intended to study creative writing and criticism, having earned his PhD in English in 1956. Soon, however, he developed a keen interest in folklore, and from then on he dedicated himself to the contributions of Mexican Americans, in such works as *Folktales of Mexico* (1970), *A Texas Mexican Cancionero: Folksongs of the Lower Border* (1976), and *Uncle Remus con Chile* (1992). Coupled with his most famous work, “With His Pistol in His Hand,” Paredes carved out an effective academic career by highlighting the element of resistance in such texts. His creative writing laid the foundation for what became known as Chicano literature years later, underscoring the dual nature of a social experience. In the process, he challenged anthropologists’ and sociologists’ distorted views of Mexicans and the stereotypes they perpetuated. He became known as a cultural philosopher and leader for Chicano civil rights in scholarship and also through his literature. Consequently, he garnered many awards and much recognition—including the Charles Frankel Prize, granted by the National Endowment for the Humanities (1989), and the Aguila Azteca (1991) from Mexico—for his committed scholarship. He also spearheaded an effort to identify and hire Chicano academicians at universities across the United States. (FAL)

See also BORDERTOWNS.
PÉREZ, EMMA (1954–). Novelist, historian, theorist, professor. Emma Pérez was born on 25 October 1954 in El Campo, Texas, where she grew up. She received a BA in political science and women’s studies in 1979, and an MA in 1982 and PhD in 1988 in history from the University of California, Los Angeles. As a respected historian, she has focused on Chicanas’ representation in history as social agents, along with a concentration on lesbianism as a viable form of consciousness. She is a recipient of the Christopher Isherwood Writing Grant (2009) and currently teaches in the Ethnic Studies Department at the University of Colorado.

She is best known for her critical writings as well as her creative work on Third World feminist theory: The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History (1999) and the novel Gulf Dreams (1996) and Forgetting the Alamo, or, Blood Memory (2009).

In The Decolonial Imaginary: Writing Chicanas into History, Pérez posits a redefinition of Chicanas’s agency by developing the tenets of a historical consciousness coupled with a political project of race and sexuality that falls under contemporary decolonial theory. She claims Chicanas should not be considered a tacked-on category, but rather equal to what men have accomplished. Her work allows for serious consideration of what the documentation of history has been and how it could be more inclusive. She advocates approaching the study of history as one that depends on modes of intersectionality among a broad range of factors that operate as markers instead of hegemonizing elements: ideological/intellectual properties pertaining to Chicanas; immigrant/labor as referents of colonization; social history as a fundamental concept instead of only viewing Chicanas as workers; and the view of a gendered history as a basic precept (8). In this way, Chicanas can be considered pivotal to the study of history a priori instead of an afterthought.

Pérez’s first novel, Gulf Dreams, consists of an autobiographical narrative in which she traces the life of a young woman in an Anglo-dominated town in South Texas. The protagonist tries to find her own identity while she struggles with her bicultural upbringing. She quickly discovers that she does not fit in her social environment because her vision is not compatible with her surroundings. Her dreams and aspirations lead her to acquire a new consciousness about her social role and sexuality, deciding to break the mold of her upbringing and seeking a place where she might feel more comfortable. The protagonist realizes the search is worth it.

Pérez’s other novel, Forgetting the Alamo, or, Blood Memory, a “Chicana lesbian Western” is a complex and advanced literary experiment to create a story within the theoretical framework of The Decolonial Imaginary. Pérez proposes to suspend preconceived notions of normativity and renditions of history, but the protagonist also seeks revenge for the violence against her family. In this way, she creates a new memory about the Alamo, but particularly about the effect a lesbian cowgirl could have had on the era of the
1830s. Protagonist Micaela Campos, also known as Lorenzo, intervenes in the canonization of history-telling by insisting that there is more to the story. Her person as well as her body become the centers of contention, meanwhile deploying her memory to “forget the Alamo,” that iconic historical structure that seems to embody Texas history through homogenization, white-washing, and racial selectivity. As Pérez notes in The Decolonial Imaginary, “I’m anxious to move to another site of remembrance. I am anxious to remake and reclaim another story—stories of love, of compassion, of hope” (127). Her novel, then, becomes a new way of reconceptualizing both a protagonist as well as the nexus of history that envelops the character “when the teller is the tale being told” (52). Hegemony, storytelling, and the documentation of so-called empirical history are interrogated and undermined by injecting a female character as the focal point in another version of historical memory. The irony of embodying history is that Micaela hides her body by dressing up as her Uncle Lorenzo, thus not fully impacting her milieu as she intends. Her way of reconciling such a paradox is by drinking and transforming her blood memory into what Cherríe Moraga has called “theory in the flesh.”

The confessional novel opens new spaces for understanding history as something lived and not archived. Micaela grapples with her anger and revenge until she realizes that agency is channeled through love and forgiveness, or a form of a decolonial imaginary. She not only learns from history, but acts upon history by altering the cycle of violence. Forgetting the Alamo is one way of ensuring that it is remembered for what it was while enacting a fundamental change of perspective by inserting a woman’s story. Forgetting what the Alamo has represented in traditional history is another avenue for remembering what is highly valued: one’s voice, liberation, memory, and consciousness.

Emma Pérez has distinguished herself for her critical-theoretical writings on Chicanas, particularly as they relate to the construction of history. In addition, she offers novels that are provocative, cutting-edge, and philosophical about a network of issues that affected Chicanas in the past and still affect them in the present. (FAL)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE.

PIETRI, PEDRO (1944–2004). Poet, playwright, performance artist, activist. Pedro Pietri was born in Ponce, Puerto Rico, and immigrated to the United States at the age of three. After the death of his parents, Pietri was raised by his grandmother, and he grew up in Spanish Harlem. After high school, he was drafted and served in the Vietnam War. Upon returning from the war, Pietri joined the Young Lords, a Puerto Rican activist group that promoted and worked for community empowerment and self-determination and Puerto Rican nationalism, as well as providing leadership and service for
their communities, for example, providing free breakfast for the children of the neighborhood, in the tradition of groups such as the Black Panthers. This activist orientation remained central to Pietri’s writing, performances, and work for the duration of his life.

Pietri has been called the poet laureate of the Nuyorican Movement, and he was an early contributing performance poet at the Nuyorican Poets Café, opened in 1973, which he has been credited with cofounding along with Miguel Algarín and Miguel Piñero. The Nuyorican Poets Café continues to be a vibrant site, showcasing the poetry of established and emerging Nuyorican poets, as well as other urban poets sharing an affinity or performance style with them. Many have described Pietri as irreverent and his performances and his poems as absurd or absurdist. In gestures supporting these assessments, Pietri gave himself the title “Reverend” and often appeared carrying a suitcase with a label reading “Coffin for Rent.”


His most famous poem, “Puerto Rican Obituary,” is an epic poem chronicling the lives of five archetypal Nuyoricans: Juan, Miguel, Milagros, Olga, and Daniel. The poem’s first stanza includes powerful opening lines that establish the bleak tone and the major thematic focus of the poem: “They worked / They were always on time / They were never late / They never spoke back when they were insulted / They worked . . . They worked / They worked / They worked / and they died / They died broke / They died owing.” William Luis (1997) explains, “The repetition of the verbs worked and died is important in the poem. Pietri takes two diametrically opposed concepts and brings them together to explain the lives of his characters. Under other circumstances work leads to prosperity, but for Puerto Rican immigrants, work leads to death,” pointing to spiritual death and disenfranchisement as perpetual conditions of Puerto Rican workers in the United States. For Pietri, the only effective resistance to this spiritual death is resisting the urge to assimilate, clinging to Puerto Rican culture and celebrating it, and cultivating creativity and imagination. In contrast to the morbid opening, near the end of “Puerto Rican Obituary,” Pietri joyfully and memorably proclaims, “PUER-
TO RICO IS A BEAUTIFUL PLACE / PUERTORRIQUEÑOS ARE A BEAUTIFUL RACE / If only they / had turned off their television / and tuned into their own imaginations.”

In addition to his published work, Pietri produced two recorded performance poetry LPs, *Loose Joints* and *One Is a Crowd*. His dynamic, humorous, and outlandish performance style is highlighted in these recordings, and in many video recordings as well, and his signature style has led many to consider him a pioneer of slam poetry. In the 1990s, Pietri worked to establish a group of experimental Puerto Rican artists called “El Puerto Rican Embassy” with the artist Adal Maldonado (elpuertoricanembassy.org). Pietri authored the group’s manifesto, extolling the virtues of a “sovereign state of mind,” and asserting: “To be free means to be proud of yourself! To be proud of yourself means to be creative! To be creative means to defend your dreams! . . . What do we want? What every human being wants! The right to dance *la Plena* whenever we please like dignified human beings of tropical brilliance who time after time their fine minds have proven that you can be in two islands at the same time.” In performances associated with one of the group’s signature projects, “El Puerto Rican Passport Project,” Pietri performed his “*Spanglish* National Anthem” and distributed “Puerto Rican passports,” symbolically affirming Puerto Rican sovereignty and challenging the position of Puerto Ricans as colonial subjects and ethnic minorities, and importantly, asserting the beauty existent in the duality of their identities as Puerto Ricans and Americans. Li Yun Alvarado (2010) has suggested, “Ultimately Pietri’s message is that ‘Puertoricanness’ knows no geographical boundaries, but instead it can create and inhabit its own cultural space.”

Pietri’s writing has been widely anthologized, and he was the recipient of a number of honors praising and grants supporting his work, including New York State Creative Arts in Public Service honorariums and an award from the New York Foundation for the Arts. Perhaps most important, however, during his lifetime and beyond he has been highly respected and beloved by his peers and community members. Indeed, *Junot Díaz* has called Pietri “ferocious,” “brilliant,” “necessary,” and “peerless,” while Amiri Baraka has referred to him as “one of the great American poets of the twentieth century.” (MJV)

**PINEDA, CECILE (1932–)**. Novelist, short story writer, performer, director and founder of a theater company, dramaturgist. Cecile Pineda was born in Harlem on 24 September 1932. She began her literary career as an author of performance pieces with the company Theatre of Man, which she founded and directed in San Francisco between 1969 and 1981. She operated as an independent theater artist for a number of years, but it was not until her first novel, *Face* (1985), appeared that she was recognized as part of Chicano literary circles. Born into an intellectual and patrician family of social privi-
PIÑERO, MIGUEL (1946–1988). Playwright, poet, editor, actor. Born in Gurabo, Puerto Rico, Miguel Piñero was raised on New York’s Lower East Side. Piñero was incarcerated twice for robbery, the first time at age 13 and the second time in 1972, at the age of 25.

It was while incarcerated in Sing Sing Correctional Facility that Piñero composed his first play, Short Eyes. Written in 1972 for a playwriting workshop in which he participated, Short Eyes has garnered the most critical
praise of all Piñero’s work. The play was first staged in 1973, performed by a group composed primarily of former inmates called “The Family.” Exposing social inequalities, harmful ideologies of criminalization, the violence of the prison environment, and the blatantly inhumane treatment of prisoners, *Short Eyes* features a middle-class, white prisoner named Clark Davis, who has been wrongly detained for child molestation. Another character in the play, Juan Otero, is sympathetic to Clark’s claims that he has been wrongly imprisoned and engages in a futile attempt to save him from his violent fate; nonetheless, Clark dies at the hands of his fellow prisoners. Piñero was the first U.S. Latino playwright to have his work produced on Broadway, and the play was enormously successful, earning six Tony Award nominations and winning two Obie Awards and the New York Drama Critics Circle Award for Best American Play of the 1973–1974 season. *Short Eyes* was adapted as a feature film, for which Piñero wrote the screenplay. The film was released in 1977.

Piñero wrote and published several other plays, including *Sideshow* (1974), *The Guntower* (1976), *The Sun Always Shines for the Cool* (1976), *Eulogy for a Small-Time Thief* (1977), and *Playland Blues* (1980). He also published the collection *Outrageous One-Act Plays* (1985), in which all of the plays take place in relationship to the same apartment building in New York City and explore the theme of confinement from different racial and class perspectives. In 1982, Piñero was awarded a Guggenheim Fellowship in drama.

Piñero is perhaps most well known as a foundational writer of the Nuyorican Movement along with collaborators Miguel Algarín, Pedro Pietri, and others. In 1975, he edited the landmark anthology *Nuyorican Poetry: An Anthology of Puerto Rican Words and Feelings* with Miguel Algarín, showcasing the movement’s breakthrough poetry. Piñero’s own poetry is powerfully emblematic of the core thematic concerns of Nuyorican poetry, including the affirmation of poor and working-class New York/U.S. Puerto Rican identities, as well as some of the signature aesthetic elements of the poetry.

In his most famous poem, “A Lower East Side Poem,” Piñero depicts the landscape of the Lower East Side with realism and vivid characterizations of the social ills that plague the area, including his own misdeeds: “A thief, a junkie I’ve been / committed every known sin / Jews and Gentiles . . . Bums and Men / of style . . . run away child / police shooting wild . . . mother’s futile wails . . . pushers making sales . . . dope wheelers / & cocaine dealers . . . smoking pot / streets are hot & feed off those who bleed to death.” And yet significantly, the refrain of the poem is a request to “have [the speaker’s] ashes scattered thru / the Lower East Side.” This exhortation is repeated in numerous places in the poem, and Roberto Irizarry (2004) has argued that the speaker of the poem, “claims his diasporic space as his ultimate destination, and, in doing so, negates the possibility of escape to any
past or future utopias” (77). In other words, Piñero’s “A Lower East Side Poem” represents the dimensions of the Nuyorican experience—poverty, violence, death, and a host of other sources of communal pain—but asserts, perhaps paradoxically, that for the Nuyorican, this is home, and that a return to an idealized Puerto Rico, an original “home,” is neither possible nor desirable. “A Lower East Side Poem” was published in Piñero’s only published collection of poetry, La Bodega Sold Dreams (1980).

Piñero was also an actor and appeared in numerous films and television shows throughout the 1970s and 1980s. In 2001, the biographical feature film Piñero was released to critical acclaim. Having struggled with drug and alcohol addiction throughout most of his life, Piñero died in 1988 at the age of 41. (MJV)

PINTO POETRY. This is poetry produced by prisoners, recognizing that many were victims of a harsh and discriminatory society that profiled them into becoming a criminal element. During the Chicano Movement (1965–1980) in particular, they were encouraged to express themselves through poetry as social therapy and rehabilitation. Many outstanding writers emerged from this opportunity, including Jimmy Santiago Baca, Alex Ki-rack, Raúl Salinas, and Ricardo Sánchez, and they address solitude, cultural reaffiliation, and the schisms that impacted their lives. (FAL)

POCHO. Pocho is a derisive term used by Mexicans to refer to someone of Mexican descent in the United States who has lost his or her culture and language. The term enjoyed widespread usage up to the 1960s, when “Chicano” subsumed some of its meaning while deflating some of pocho’s negativity. Since the 1970s, it has become a more objective descriptor of partial assimilation and hybridity among the Mexican American community, without the previously condescending connotations. More recently, it has been embraced as a unique style by blending American and Mexican elements in the United States. (FAL)

See also VILLARREAL, JOSÉ ANTONIO (1924–2010).

POCHO CHE, EL. An important quarterly journal, founded by Ysidro Ramón Macías in 1969 in Berkeley, California, its objective was to capture the Chicano Movement in its multiple developments and manifestations during its heyday. At times it resembled a manual on strategies and tactics, but its contents also included numerous literary pieces by Alurista, Manuel Gómez, Roberto Vargas, and others. Part of its agenda entailed presenting provocative articles on current internationalist issues, such as identity construction and its respective crisis. Ysidro Ramón Macías in particular wrote a series of articles on political action for Chicano groups, blending militancy
PORTILLO TRAMBLEY, ESTELA (1926–1998). Playwright, short story writer, novelist, poet, and educator. The first celebrated woman writer of Chicano letters, Estela Portillo was the eldest of five children born to Delfina Fierro and Francisco Portillo. However, she was raised by her maternal grandparents in the Segundo Barrio of El Paso, Texas, and remained with them until age 13, whereupon she returned to the home of her parents and lived there until she married Robert Trambley, with whom she eventually had six children (five daughters and a son).

Portillo Trambley attended local public schools in El Paso, Texas, and earned a BA in English from Texas Western College (now the University of Texas at El Paso [UTEP]) in 1956, and in 1978 she received an MA in English, also from UTEP. After completing her BA, she held several positions in the El Paso public schools, including El Paso Technical School and Jefferson High School, where she taught English and literature. The last two decades of her teaching career were as a homebound teacher for the El Paso Independent School District. She was also one of the founders of Los Pobres, the first Hispanic theater group in El Paso, in 1968, and served as resident director of drama at El Paso Community College (1970–1975). In addition, she hosted the weekly radio talk show Estela Sez, on radio KIZZ (1969–1970), and a weekly Hispanic cultural television program, Cumbre, for El Paso KROD-TV (1971–1972).

Though she was introduced to the world of literature at an early age by her maternal grandparents and was an enthusiastic reader as a young woman, Portillo Trambley did not begin writing until after she married and had children. Already in her forties, her desire to write drama was sparked in the late 1960s during her involvement with the bilingual theater group Los Pobres. After several failed attempts to write plays for the group, her first success came in the spring of 1971 with the publication of The Day of the Swallows in El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought, a play that established her as a noteworthy figure in Chicano theater. Following the traditional three-act structure, in The Day of the Swallows Portillo Trambley dramatizes the story of Josefa, a highly respected member of the idyllic
village of Lago de San Lorenzo, who goes to extremes to keep her lesbian sexual orientation a secret from the community. At the drama’s end, as her sexual relationship with Alysea, a young woman whom she has rescued from the streets, is about to be exposed by a resentful and drunken uncle, Josefa opts to drown herself in the Lago de San Lorenzo rather than submit herself to the judgment of the traditional community. This tragic drama was followed by Blacklight (Bilingual Review, 1973), a tragic play that focuses on the mythic, Mayan roots of its immigrant characters as they struggle for survival in a border community, and Morality Play (El Grito, 1974), a three-act musical comedy, both of which won her critical acclaim.

During her early years of theatrical success, Portillo Trambley also experimented with short fiction. In the spring of 1972 and summer of 1973, two of her short stories (“The Apple Trees” and “The Paris Nightgown”) were published by El Grito (vol. V, no. 3, and vol. VI, no. 4, respectively); both of which would later be included under different titles in Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings (1975), the first published collection of short fiction by a Chicana in the Chicano Renaissance. Comprised of nine stories and a short novella, this collection addressed a theme previously introduced in The Day of the Swallows: the plight of women in male-dominated societies. As in her drama, in her fiction Portillo Trambley develops strong women characters who resist roles that have been predetermined for them by tradition and culture. The mantra for many stories of the collection seems to emanate from the following quote, taken from “If It Weren’t for the Honeysuckle . . .”:

> It had been decreed long ago by man-made laws that living things were not equal. It had been decreed that women should be possessions, slaves, pawns in the hands of men with ways of beasts. It had been decreed that women were to be walloped effigies to burn upon the altars of men. (106)

For example, in “The Paris Gown,” Clotilde Romero de Trasque narrates her story of liberation from constricting cultural norms and a controlling and authoritarian father to her granddaughter Teresa, as the latter also struggles to free herself from blind tradition. And in “If It Weren’t for the Honeysuckle . . .,” the story’s protagonist, Beatriz, is forced to resort to murder to prevent the physical and sexual exploitation of 14-year-old Lucretia by a violent and abusive drunk who had previously violated Beatriz and Sofia, her housemate, when they were young women. “Rain of Scorpions,” the collection’s title story, on the other hand, is a rite-of-passage tale of the symbolic journey of five young boys from Smeltertown who discover their indigenous heritage as they seek to find a legendary map to the green valley where the nature gods live, hidden in a cave deep in the Franklin mountains outside of El Paso, Texas.
The collection was revised and republished as *Rain of Scorpions and Other Stories* in 1993 by Bilingual Press in its Clásicos Chicanos series. Of the original stories, only five were retained: “Pay the Criers,” “The Paris Gown,” “If It Weren’t for the Honeysuckle . . .,” “The Burning,” and “Rain of Scorpions,” all of which are better crafted and show significant improvements in style over the 1975 versions. The revised edition also includes four new stories (“Leaves,” “Looking for God,” “Village,” and “La Yonfantayn”), in addition to an informative introduction, “Crafting Other Visions: Estela Portillo Trambley’s *New Rain of Scorpions*,” by Vernon E. Lattin and Patricia Hopkins.

As she was composing the short fiction of *Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings* (1975), Portillo Trambley continued to pen and produce drama. Between 1974 and 1977, four of her plays were produced at the Chamizal Memorial National Theatre in El Paso, Texas: *Morality Play* (produced and published in 1974 in *El Grito*), *Blacklight* (published in 1973 in *Bilingual Review*; produced 1975), “Sun Images” (produced 1976; published in winter 1979 by *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*), and “Isabel and the Dancing Bear” (produced in 1977). In 1983, the playwright published *Sor Juana and Other Plays*, which includes *Puente Negro* (Black Bridge), *Autumn Gold*, *Black Light*, and *Sor Juana*. While *Puente Negro* is a border play that depicts the dilemma and dreams of a small group of Mexican immigrants who have illegally crossed the Black Bridge over the Rio Grande from Mexico into El Paso, Texas, *Autumn Gold* is a comedy that explores human vulnerabilities in search of a way to overcome death and does not engage in any of the themes or issues generally associated with Chicano literature. *Blacklight*, on the other hand, is a border tragedy highlighting the alienation of a Mexican family as it struggles to survive in an American border community. And *Sor Juana*, the collection’s title play and one of Portillo Trambley’s most celebrated theatrical works, is a historical play exploring the life of *Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz* (1651–1695), Mexico’s renowned 17th-century intellectual, writer, and women’s rights activist, as she contemplates her own existential crisis and personal struggle for autonomy vis-à-vis the Church’s opposition to her writings.

In 1986, Portillo Trambley published her only novel, *Trini*. A novel of immigration, *Trini* is the entrancing coming-of-age story of a young girl’s journey across various borders into womanhood and self-reliance. Born in the Valley of Bachotigori in the Tarahumaran region of northern Mexico, Trini loses her mother at an early age (13). She is forced to leave the valley with her family when the local copper mines are closed and José Luis, her father, is offered a job working in the mines of San Domingo, in la Barranca del Cobre (Copper Canyon). However, when the father is diagnosed with tuberculosis and indefinitely hospitalized, Trini is obliged to help provide for the family. After 15 years of surviving in poverty in the Mexican...
lands and undergoing numerous tragedies and betrayals, including rape, Tri- ni finally crosses the border into El Paso, Texas, where, with the help of a dying hermit, she is able to realize a lifelong dream of land ownership and become a financially self-reliant woman.

In addition to her work as a playwright and fiction writer, Portillo Trambley edited a special edition of *El Grito* (year VII, book 1, September 1973), dedicated to Chicana art and literature. The issue, titled “Chicanas en la literatura y el arte,” introduces the literary works of 13 women to the public, including selections of Portillo Trambley’s musical comedy, *Morality Play*.

Estela Portillo Trambley’s body of short stories, dramas, and a novel indeed establish her as a pioneer of modern Chicana literature. She entered the Chicano literary scene when it was dominated by male writers and paved the way for Chicana writers who followed, especially those who sought to combat constricting norms, traditions, and social orders that would limit the freedom, self-determination, and ability of women to be all that they can be. For her work in literature and theater, she has been the recipient of several awards, including the previously mentioned *Quinto Sol* Award in 1975. In 1986, she was inducted into the El Paso Women’s Hall of Fame, in 1990 was named Author of the Pass by the *El Paso Herald-Post*, and in 1995 she held the Presidential Chair in Creative Writing at the University of California, Davis. Estela Portillo Trambley died of natural causes on 29 December 1999.

*(DWU)*

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS.

**POSTMODERN CHICANA GENERATION.** A classification coined by Francisco Lomeli for the group of Chicana writers who emerged in the mid-1980s, this generation marks the key moment of what has been termed the Chicana literary boom. It alludes to a period when a considerable group of Chicanas produced a number of key works, thus forming a generation. In 1985 important works appeared, such as Pat Mora’s *Borders*, Sandra Cisneros’s *The House on Mango Street*, Denise Chávez’s *The Last of the Menu Girls*, Margarita Cota-Cárdenas’s *Puppet*, Cecile Pineda’s *Face*, Ana Castillo’s *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, Helena María Viramontes’s *The Moths and Other Stories*, and Cherríe Moraga’s *Giving Up the Ghost*. Certain conditions and characteristics show that these writers came into their own: their penchant for genderized texts, a herstorical perspective, women as theoretical subjects, psychic or experiential inwardness, defying conventional genres, challenging established notions of social conditioning and family and sexual taboos, an introspective and vertical view of culture and self, and an effort to seek out publication venues for other women.
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Clearly, this generation has impacted the rest of Chicano letters since that time and in some ways became the benchmark for greater stylistic and thematic experimentation, as well as making an inroad into mainstream publishing venues. (FAL)
QUIÑÓNEZ, NAOMI H. (1951–). Poet, performer, editor, educator, community activist. Born on 25 May 1951 in El Sereno, California, Naomi Quiñónez grew up between this East Los Angeles community and downtown Los Angeles. Her parents, José Quiñónez and Yolanda Castellanos, were originally from El Paso, Texas, as her grandparents fled the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920). Her mother, steeped in storytelling, and her journalist father together provided a stable family environment in which she was able to explore her early interests in writing and journalism. She received her BA in English in 1975 from San José State University, worked as a chief administrative aide for the Santa Cruz County Board of Supervisors between 1978 and 1980, and then pursued an MA in public administration at the University of Southern California in 1982. In 1996, she completed her PhD in American studies at Claremont Graduate University.

Quiñónez has worked as an instructor in various universities, including the University of California, Santa Cruz, the University of the Pacific at Stockton, and various campuses in the California State University system (Chico, Fullerton, Long Beach, Northridge). She currently teaches at San Francisco State University as a professor in the Ethnic Studies Department. She has been the recipient of a Rockefeller Research Fellowship, the American Book Award, the California Arts Council Award, and the National Endowment for the Arts Award. She continues to be a highly solicited presenter of poetry throughout the United States.

Quiñónez has produced two books of poetry and two coedited works: respectively, Sueño de colibrí (Hummingbird dream; 1985) and The Smoking Mirror: Poems (1998), and Invocation LA: Urban Multicultural Poetry (coedited with Michelle T. Clinton and Sesshu Foster; 1989) and Decolonial Voices: Chicana and Chicano Cultural Studies in the 21st Century (coedited with Arturo J. Aldama; 2002).

She is well regarded for her advocacy of social justice and as an oral performer of poetry, much within the style of Lorna Dee Cervantes. Her first book, Sueño de colibrí (Hummingbird dream), embraces a new trend of highly experimental writers who delve into gender, identity, family, genre,
and a new poetics. In the 43 poems, Quiñónez relates women’s lives in the workplace in a patriarchal society as governed by a series of moods and contemplations, from the cultural nationalistic to the personal. Filled with strong emotions about changing times, the poetry evokes topics of nationalism in contrast to sensuality and agency. Her obsession with her place of origin is described thus: “L.A.—A Face Only a Mother Could Love.” One can sense a change of tide from some Chicano Movement concerns to postmovement poetics. In that context, she renders a revisionist view of some of the cultural icons from Mexico that Chicanas were reevaluating: La Malinche (the translator and mistress of Hernán Cortés, who is sometimes viewed as a traitor), La Llorona (the Wailing Woman), and Quetzalcóatl (the Aztec male god of high culture and art). Quiñónez also explores pan-Latino subjects regarding the Central American wars of the 1980s, thus acquiring a definite Third World flavor.

Her second book, The Smoking Mirror: Poems, consists of 29 poems that demonstrate that she is a seasoned poet with a quiet eloquence and creative wordplay. Her focus on womanhood acquires a more nuanced representation while incorporating new African Latino rhythms and jazz ‘n’ funk. The central metaphor of the “smoking mirror,” an Aztec image, takes on a cultural incantation of finding out who we really are in a confusing and sometimes alienating world. In this way, women are represented in myth, history, and society as more holistic beings. Finally, the poet finds solace and regeneration in indigenous symbols and sensibilities while emphasizing the orality of her poetic expressions. Quiñónez delights in portraying ancient indigenous representations, but she is also actively seeking suitable images in postmodern times in order to better understand women’s roles as relevant and pivotal for the development of future societies.

Quiñónez has also participated in scholarship, coediting two important collections of critical essays that address multiculturalism in Los Angeles and decolonial voices within cultural studies in the 21st century. (FAL)

QUINTANA, MIGUEL [MATHIAS] DE (1677?–1748). Poet, colonizer, public scribe, court clerk, ecclesiastical notary. Born in Mexico City on 28 February 1677(?), Quintana moved to Villa Nueva de Santa Cruz de la Cañada in New Mexico in 1693 with his bride (Gertrudis de Trujillo) as part of the Don Diego de Vargas expedition to reconquer the region for the king of Spain. As one of the few literate persons among the settlers, he occupied important posts in the judicial and ecclesiastical sectors of the early Hispanic frontier society. He was instrumental in establishing and monitoring Spanish laws as well as authenticating legal documents, such as marriage certificates, land titles, and other civil documents. His distinction is as the first regional poet to express an intimately personal perspective, in contrast to someone like Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá in his Historia de la Nueva México (1610),...
who focused on an epic representation. Given his free-thinking verses containing traces of quasi-mystical inspiration, Quintana’s notoriety is principally due to the Inquisition’s trial in 1737 to investigate him for possible heretical violations: “The Honorable Prosecutor for the Inquisition for This Holy Office of Mexico City against Miguel de Quintana, Married, Resident of Villa Nueva de Santa Cruz for Heretical Assertions.”

His poetry portrayed the Virgin Mary and Christ speaking to him while encouraging and prodding him to continue “along the good path” of manifesting his feelings and thoughts despite two local priests’ strong reservations about his tactics. His manuscript of poetry, consisting of 47 folios stitched together with a series of letters from a variety of Inquisition officials as far off as Mexico City and Santa Fe (New Mexico), provides good evidence of the inner workings of an inquisitorial investigation at the same time that it reveals social and cultural values of the first half of the 18th century. Although eventually exonerated of “fanciful delusions” and “a damaged imagination,” Quintana gives insight into an isolated poet’s life in the remote frontier, where some considered him a “mad poet” and others New Mexico’s poet laureate of the 18th century. After the scandal, he returned to his community unscathed, and he died on 9 April 1748. (FAL)

QUINTO SOL (PREMIO QUINTO SOL). Quinto Sol, or the “Fifth Sun,” refers to the Aztec mythology of creation and destruction and specifically to the Aztec calendar, which stipulates that a new era or renaissance will take place, something Chicano@s in particular chose to see as their opportunity to manifest themselves as a continuation of the people of the sun. Quinto Sol Publications is also the first modern, independent publishing house owned by Chicanos for Chicanos; it was established at the University of California, Berkeley, in 1967 by Octavio Romano to promote Chicano intellectual self-determination.

In 1970, the publishing house created a literary award known as the “Premio Quinto Sol” to acknowledge and celebrate recent works by Chicano writers, since few Chicano creative works were known at that time. Tomás Rivera won the first prize in 1971 for his landmark novel “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra”/“. . . And the Earth Did Not Part,” which began an emphasis on the novel as the genre of greatest literary sophistication. The prize consequently helped spur a novelistic tradition that had been overlooked or forgotten. Among the other important prize winners who impacted this literary tradition were Rudolfo A. Anaya, for Bless Me, Ultima (1972); Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, for Estampas del Valle y otras obras (1973); and Estela Portillo Trambley, for Rain of Scorpions and Other Writings (1975). (FAL)
RAMOS, MANUEL (1948–). Attorney, novelist, short fiction writer, educator, activist. The eldest of three siblings, Manuel Ramos was born into a working-class family in Florence, Colorado, on 6 March 1948. His father Henry, an immigrant from Zacatecas, Mexico, was the director of a training school for the International Laborers Union, and his mother, Emma, was from the coal-mining community of Chandler, Colorado. Ramos attended public schools in Florence and later in Colorado Springs, where the family had relocated sometime earlier. After completing high school in 1966, he attended Colorado State University, where he studied political science and graduated with a BA in 1970. He immediately entered law school at the University of Colorado and completed his JD in 1973. After a couple of years of private law practice, Ramos accepted a staff attorney position with the Denver legal aid program, working as “a legal aid lawyer in the trenches,” as he describes it, and later became director of advocacy for Colorado Legal Services, the statewide legal aid program, a position he held for many years until his retirement in 2013.

An avid reader of literature since his childhood, Ramos began writing relatively early in life and wrote consistently from his youth through college. However, after college “the pressures of law school and a career as a legal-aid attorney” made it difficult for him to dedicate much time to the craft (Contemporary Authors Online), that is, until the mid-1980s, when he began writing short stories. The first of these, “White Devils and Cockroaches,” placed second in a literary contest sponsored by Westward and was published by the magazine in 1986. This inaugural story was followed by “La visión de mi madre” that same year, by “Kite Lesson” in 1987, and by “The Smell of Onions” and “The Truth Is” in 1989, two of which are predecessors to longer works of fiction published later.

In addition to these short stories, Ramos is also the author of eight novels and a collection of short stories, including The Ballad of Rocky Ruiz (1993), The Ballad of Gato Guerrero (1994), The Last Client of Luis Móntez (1996), Blues for the Buffalo (1997), and Brown-on-Brown (2003). These five novels constitute a series of Chicano detective fiction featuring Denver attorney
Luis Móntez, a street-smart but somewhat burned-out legal aid attorney who initially saw his genesis as González in the story “White Devils and Cockroaches.” Ramos’s published works also include the Moony’s Road to Hell: A Mystery (2002); the mainstream novel King of the Chicanos (2010); Desperado: A Mile High Noir (2012); and a collection of short fiction, The Skull of Pancho Villa and Other Stories (2015).

Ramos’s debut novel, The Ballad of Rocky Ruiz, is set in Denver, Colorado, and is narrated in the first person by Luis Móntez, a middle-aged attorney “near the end of his rope,” a former activist heavily immersed in the politics, history, and culture of the Chicano Movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. Móntez recounts the movement days as experienced by him and his fellow Chicano student insurgents, Los Guerrilleros: Héctor García, now a respected judge; Orlando (Orlie) Martinez, director of a local community center and longtime community activist; Tino Pacheco, manager of an apartment complex; and Rubén (Rocky) Ruiz, also a disciple of Los Guerrilleros, who 20 years earlier was supposedly murdered by a group of white-hooded men driving pick-ups, but whose murder was never solved. Now, 20 years later, Rocky Ruiz’s former compatriots are also being targeted. When Tino Pacheco is killed, judge Héctor García is forced into hiding by a series of threats, and Orlie Martinez disappears, Luis Móntez is forced to reinvestigate the crucial event of their shared past, the murder of Rocky Ruiz. In the meantime, Móntez has developed an amorous interest in Teresa Fuentes, a young Chicana attorney who is also determined to solve the mystery of Ruiz’s death and who, unbeknownst to him, is the daughter of Rocky Ruiz. When Teresa vanishes after the mysterious disappearances of Héctor García and Orlie Martinez, Móntez tracks her to south Texas, where he learns that she is indeed the daughter of Ruiz and that her father had left a spiral notebook with potential clues and possible answers about his murder 20 years earlier.

While each of the sequel novels in the Luis Móntez crime series is quite different in story line and time, they do have some commonalities. As Teresa Márquez (1999) informs us, “Each of Ramos’s novels successfully combines engaging thriller elements with insightful social commentary.” Moreover, although the novels in the crime series cover a span of 10 years (1993–2003), they have a common protagonist in Luis Móntez, and a common setting, metropolitan Denver, Colorado. And in this light, they offer captivating perceptions of Chicano/Latino culture and the history of the region. In an interview with Contemporary Authors Online, Ramos asserts: “I write crime fiction–stories set within the Latino / Chicano community of North America that involve a crime and some type of injustice, . . . [M]y protagonists come from that community, so the culture, traditions, history, politics, and mythology of that community appear in my stories.”
This statement can also be applied to the novels *Moony’s Road to Hell* and *Desperado*, both of which have been identified as Latino noir, but with different protagonists than the previous novels. The first of these mysteries introduces private investigator Danny Mora, a.k.a. Moony, who is hired by a colleague to investigate the murder of Immigration and Naturalization Service (INS) agent Kiko Vigil, who was shot while having drinks in a local Denver bar. The latter novel, also set in Denver, features Gus Corral, first introduced in the short story “The Skull of Pancho Villa” (2009), a 28- to 30-year-old Chicano who is down on his luck and who manages and lives in a secondhand store owned by his ex-wife. Gus agrees to help Artie Baca, an old friend and successful real estate developer, come to terms with an underage girl with whom he has had a sexual relationship. However, before he can meet the girl, Artie Baca is murdered, and Gus finds himself embroiled in a situation involving drugs, warring gangs, murder, and international theft.

*King of the Chicanos* (2010), a more traditional novel, is the story of the rise and fall of Ramón Hidalgo, a fictional leader of the Chicano Movement. Hidalgo, a boy who grew up as a migrant farmworker in the 1930s and 1940s, becomes a leader known as “El Rey” in the Chicano rights movement of the late 1960s and 1970s. A passionate story, the novel captures the spirit, energy, and imagination of the movement. Ramos’s final work is a collection of short fiction, *The Skull of Pancho Villa and Other Stories*. Divided into four sections (“Basic Black,” “Outlaws,” “Lovers,” and “Chicanismo”), the collection consists of 22 stories and a poem whose original dates of publication span from 1986 to 2014. While many of the stories deal with Chicanos/as struggling with their circumstances as an ethnic minority in the United States, some feature historical events such as the *Mexican Revolution*, and others relate cultural beliefs and memories of childhood.

In addition to being nominated for the Edgar Allan Poe Award for *The Ballad of Rocky Ruiz* in 1994, Ramos’s fiction has garnered the following awards: the 1991 Chicano/Latino Literary Award from the University of California at Irvine for *The Ballad of Rocky Ruiz*, the Top Hand Award from the Colorado Authors League, and the Colorado Book Award for *Desperado* in 2014.

In addition, Ramos is a cofounder of and regular contributor to *La Bloga* (www.labloga.blogspot.com), an award-winning Internet magazine devoted to Chicano/Latino literature, culture, news, and opinion. He has also taught Chicano literature courses at Metropolitan State College of Denver. He currently lives in Denver with Flo Hernández Ramos, his spouse of 33 years, where he continues to engage in his passion of writing. (DWU)

**RASQUACHISMO/RASCUACHISMO.** Originally a term denoting something “underclass” and “tacky” in a Mexican context, **rasquachismo** has taken on a new definition and application among **Chicanos/as**. As Tomás Ybar-
ra-Frausto argues (1977), it has become an aesthetic concept of a Chicano sensibility, a lens through which to see creativity from a working-class perspective. It generally refers to something of little value, even bad taste, Funky in quality, potentially vulgar, and irreverent in attitude, while ultimately serving to subvert upper-class or mainstream art. Rasquachismo depends more on the process of spoofing pretentious forms of art to show that artistic expression can be subjective and relative according to the eyes of the beholder. While the term initially connoted something negative in Mexico for its impoverished, bare-bones origins, Chicanos have both expanded on and reversed its meaning into something still kitsch but nonetheless resourceful, expressive, and beyond the mainstream. It functions much like a vernacular code of taste, including a critical stance against other forms of art while highlighting the distance between them.

Rasquachismo is not reductionist; on the contrary, it is an admission of eclecticism by resorting to whatever is available in order to create an unexpected object of art. It does not respond to a school or a single style, but instead adapts, conflates, mixes (the more disparate, the better), and molds things out of the ordinary into something somewhat extraordinary. In essence, something is created out of limited sources. The attitude is profane and an assault on appearances, decorum, and what is proper. Much of rasquachismo has its roots in some of the popular figures, such as the pelado (an urban subclass individual who, as his name suggests, “has nothing”); the pícaro (the “rogue,” who does not conform to the good tastes of society because he is always willing to subvert them); and the spunky outcast, who weaves among the social strata.

There are many examples of rasquachismos among Chicanos: El Teatro Campesino, for its farmworker representations who defy the “hero” images; the itinerant, vaudeville-like theater companies; the comedians Cantinflas and Tin Tan, who contrasted with middle-class values; and such literary works as the novel La aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamén (1928) by Daniel Venegas for its pícaro protagonist, the novel The Revolt of the Cockroach People (1973) by Oscar Zeta Acosta for its unconventional portrayals, the collection of poetry Hechizospells (1976) by Ricardo Sánchez for its zaniness, the play Real Women Have Curves (1992) by Josefina López for its iconoclastic views on gender, and the transgender collection The New World Border: Prophecies, Poems, and Loqueras for the End of the Century (1996) by Guillermo Gómez-Peña for its unqualified unpredictability in theme, concepts, and visual artifices. By understanding rasquachismo, one can better begin to understand the multiple dimensions of Chicano/a creativity on canvas, paper, stage, or sound. (FAL)
RAZA CóSMICA, La. Coined by José Vasconcelos, a Mexican philosopher and secretary of education in the 1930s, this expression encompasses the idea that peoples in Latin America embody a true melting pot of races (indigenous, black, European, Asian), thus transcending one race as a fifth race. He also referred to “La Raza de Bronce” (The Bronze Race). His intent was part glorification, but also had a eugenics application. Chican@/s appropriated the idea in the renaissance period to indicate that Chicanos and other Latinos/as were a result of a long history of miscegenation among all races in the world, thereby suggesting that they should be emulated to achieve racial harmony. (FAL)

RECHY, JOHN (1931–). Novelist, short story writer, documentary novelist, essayist, nonfiction writer, writer in residence, dramaturgist. Born in El Paso, Texas, to parents of Mexican and Scottish descent (housewife Guadalupe Flores and musical director Roberto Sixto Rechy, respectively), Rechy grew up in El Paso and volunteered for the army in 1949. By then he had written two rough drafts: “Time on Wings,” a historical novel, and “Bitter Roots,” a semiautobiographical work, both of which he destroyed. In 1949, he completed a manuscript titled “Pablo!,” a literary attempt that convinced him he was destined to be a writer. He later obtained a BA in English literature from Texas Western College (now known as University of Texas at El Paso), and he also attended the New School for Social Research in New York City.

His first modest breakthrough happened in 1957, when Evergreen Review published his first short story, “Mardi Gras,” but his first published novel, City of Night (1963), became an overnight international sensation and launched his career. City of Night stayed on the national best-seller list for over six months and has been translated into more than 20 languages. Rechy has taught as a writer in residence at Loyola Marymount, California State Los Angeles, and the University of Southern California. In addition, he has been a recipient of the PEN Center USA’s Lifetime Achievement Award, the Publishing Triangle’s William Whitehead Award for Lifetime Achievement, and the Luis Leal Literary Award.

Rechy is particularly known for his confessional and transgressive fiction, which has broken thematic barriers while dealing with existentialist characters who struggle to fit in, finding themselves in contraposition to traditional social mores. His works opened new ground on homosexuality, such as in his classic *City of Night*, which unveils a nomadic picaresque protagonist, whom Patrick O’Connor (2004) calls a “canonical loner,” who roams various U.S. city streets and hustler bars of the 1950s seeking immediate gratification, validation, and meaning. Terry Southern (1964) classifies Rechy’s writings in “the self-revelatory school of Romantic Agony” that uncovers tormented or troubled souls in the midst of exploring social taboos. Rechy has directly contributed to understanding the role and function of a gay hustler lifestyle in American literature, providing poignant examples of characters who seem to define an underground way of being as a social commentary on mainstream culture, including the issue of intolerance. He is definitely the first Chicano author to openly discuss a homosexual subculture—although some initially expressed reservations about including him as a Chicano writer—allowing such a topic to come of age within American letters. Much of the action in his novels occurs at night, when the characters come out of hiding, as illustrated in the decadent sameness of adventures in a long list of large cities. The impersonal urban centers turn the narcissistic characters into objects of others’ desire, thus becoming an unorthodox form of survival.

In *Numbers*, Rechy again portrays a sexually obsessed protagonist, who counts his conquests as a way of defining his identity, couched within what he describes as a “sexual horror story, an existential nightmare.” Numerous autobiographical elements emerge in his works, such as in *This Day’s Death*, which confronts his relationship with his overprotective, domineering mother. In this nuanced psychological novel with parallel story lines, the protagonist is charged with lewd acts he did not commit but that his latent homosexuality wishes he would, and later he does commit such acts. The action also focuses on the unjust court proceedings that judge a person by allegations, giving symbolic credence to the title as a death sentence or as a harbinger of a new lifestyle. In *The Fourth Angel*, Rechy examines the lives of four juvenile dropouts whose escapades involve drugs, thus contrasting the real with the make-believe. Their youthfulness is expressed with colorful street language while they grapple with depression and desolation. Jerry, the fourth angel, finally breaks the cycle by separating himself from that lifestyle when he has to deal with his mother’s death.

Rechy later experimented with deep philosophical renditions of the condition of being gay and urban, such as in *The Sexual Outlaw: A Documentary*, *Bodies and Souls*, *Rushes*, *The Vampires*, and *The Coming of the Night*. The first work, described by the author as a “prose documentary,” depicts three days and three nights in the sexual underground. The second novel provides a wide cross-section of characters, who interact in their respective vacuums
and together comprise a pathetic group of people without a soul. The issue of salvation is frequently mentioned, but the urban jungle does not permit these characters to reach it. In the third novel, a bar called Rushes serves as the microcosm for a series of identity-less characters who confirm society’s attitudes about their gayness, as they dress in stereotypical ways and are viewed with contempt. Highly symbolic of the 14 Stations of the Cross, the novel resembles more a morality play in which the characters seek sanctuary but instead give in to violence. The fourth (a psychodrama) and fifth novels again concentrate on the night as a vehicle for exploration of sexuality and self-individuation.

In *Marilyn’s Daughter*, Rechy examines the icon of Marilyn Monroe from a supposed daughter’s perspective while concentrating on intrigue and mixing fiction with history. In essence, Marilyn stands out as an elusive character who fascinates but does not allow us to really know her. His other work of distinction, *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gómez*, is one of the author’s most Chicano-oriented novels; it follows the protagonist through a series of trials and tribulations as she grapples with her past, family life, and poverty. Its experimental bent, telling the bulk of the story in a single day, is filled with flashbacks, reflections, and tangents, illustrating a woman of strong character whose spirituality allows her to survive the urban maze of Los Angeles.

John Rechy is indeed a master in perfecting style and point of view. He often presents stories of redemption either in gay or philosophical terms, but always expressing a deep concern for the human condition in its frailties and pursuit of freedom in preference and personal lifestyle. He stands out as a highly nuanced writer who has assimilated a broad spectrum of other writers’ aesthetics in conversation with his own through irony, re-creation, and the ramifications of sexuality. (FAL)

*See also GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE.*

RÍOS, ALBERTO ALVARO (1952–). Poet, short story writer, professor, memoirist. Born on 18 September 1952 in Nogales, Arizona, Alberto Alvaro Ríos is the son of a British mother, Agnes Fogg Ríos, and a Mexican father, Alberto Alvaro Ríos. He grew up along the U.S.–Mexican border in Arizona, where he spoke Spanish until he was punished in school for doing so. Ashamed of what he was, in college he relearned Spanish while double majoring in English and creative writing at the University of Arizona, graduating with honors in 1974. He then went on to earn a second BA, in psychology, in 1975. He enrolled in law school for a year but opted to pursue creative writing, finishing his MFA program in 1979.

He is a Regents’ Professor and director of the Creative Writing Program at Arizona State University and the recipient of various awards: the prestigious Academy of American Poets’ Walt Whitman Award (1981), a Guggenheim
Fellowship, a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, a Latino Hall of Fame Award, the Western States Foundation Award for Fiction (1983), the PEN Beyond Margins Award, the Katharine C. Turner Chair in English (2007), an Arizona Historymaker from the Arizona Historical League, and several Pushcart Prizes (1986, 1988, 1989, 1993, 1995, 2001). He was also chosen to present a poem for Mexican president Vicente Fox’s visit to Arizona governor Janet Napolitano.


Ríos’s first chapbook, *Elk Heads on the Wall*, represents childhood memories of his neighborhood, friends, and family members while anticipating coming changes to his cocoon of innocence. In *Whispering to Fool the Wind: Poems* and *Sleeping on Fists*, the poetic voice’s adolescence is disturbed as people around him confront obstacles and circumstances. In Ríos’s testimonial style of capturing individuals from family and other acquaintances, we come to know a town of characters, namely his parents, grandparents, and peripheral personalities. For example, there is the man who grew a new tooth every year, the grandmother whose blindness prevents her from embracing her grandchildren, a gypsy fortune-teller, the haunting images of a witch, the dead town drunk, a couple’s affective predicaments, and reflections on death. The poems are sophisticated in style and craft, sometimes transparent but always allowing considerable room for interpretation.

Ríos continues in his subsequent poetry collections (*Five Indiscretions, The Lime Orchard Woman, The Theater of Night, Teodoro Luna’s Two Kisses, and The Smallest Muscle in the Human Body*) a line of storytelling that now offers more mature renderings and happenings of small-town and family characters. Now the poems touch on sexuality and desire, disenchantment, again death (“The Man Who Loved Her Before He Died His Famous Death,” *Five Indiscretions*, 21), bilingualism (“Snow Cones from the Old Carnivals”), aging, quotidian happenings such as breaking a piñata, learning moral lessons (“The Lime Orchard Woman”), rhythmical metaphors e.g., “Hips to hips Elvis in our hearts to hearts”), the significance of the Vietnam Wall, the desert with invisible walls, magical mermaids, family legends, the
idea that trees are not trees in the desert but rather animals, a miracle performed by Santa Teresa, self-doubt, borrowing time, nature, and the enigmas in growing up.

His short fiction continues the magical aura of his poetry, often expanding topics already present in his poetry via folklore and storytelling. Border culture comes alive as a vibrant place of unforgettable characters, incredible happenings, and deep reflections about family and the mysteries of life. Ríos approaches his subjects with respect and empathy to capture specific moments of the narrators’ enthrallment with their surroundings. Most stories in The Iguana Killer: Twelve Stories of the Heart offer anecdotes of coming-of-age, with young children discovering the world around them, while Capirotada: A Nogales Memoir is a personal account of growing up in Nogales between Arizona and the northern state of Sonora, Mexico. The former contains memorable characters and situations that highlight a gallery of characters of innocence, such as Sapito (“frog eyes”), who uses a baseball bat to kill iguanas, or the sleeping child traveling in a bus who—much like Mexican author Juan Rulfo’s characters in Pedro Páramo—turns out to be dead. Sometimes cruelty prevails, at other times mischievousness or awkward childhood moments in dealing with secrets such as menstruation and body odor. Jodi Daynard (1984) compares Ríos’s stories with William Golding’s The Lord of the Flies because of the interaction among the young characters.

In his memoir, Capirotada, Ríos recounts key moments of his upbringing and his family, capturing lyrically poignant cultural aspects of border life while slowly recognizing that the world extends beyond his microcosm. Coincidentally, his reference to the Mexican bread pudding known as capirotada brings to mind an earlier Arizonan writer, Mario Suárez, who in 1948 also spoke of such a dish as a plate of diverse ingredients coming together to always create something new.

Some stories resemble Tomás Rivera’s “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra”/“. . . And the Earth Did Not Devour Him” in terms of pathos and vulnerability, except that in Ríos’s writing, tragedy or fate do not play a central role. In Pig Cookies and Other Stories and The Curtain of Trees, he reinforces the folkloric quality of storytelling about the border, with numerous characters from other stories reappearing. The border becomes a metaphoric place of people celebrating the ebbs and tides of life through unrequited relationships, small-town reputations, and magical realism (as in “The Orange Woman, the Walnut Girl”). Ríos likes to examine humdrum lives and how a place shapes their personalities, particularly his parents, relatives, and the unsung border eccentrics. (FAL)

See also BORDERLANDS.
RIVERA, TOMÁS (1935–1984). Novelist, short story writer, poet, essayist. The son of Mexican immigrants and seasonal migrant workers, Tomás Rivera was born on 22 December 1935, in Crystal City, Texas. During his formative years and young adulthood, Tomás shared the migratory experience of his family and community, following the harvests from Texas northward into the midwestern states of Iowa, Michigan, Minnesota, and Wisconsin; this cycle began in April and ended with their return to Crystal City in November. Despite this annual migration and his condition of alternating between migrant work and school throughout his primary and secondary school years, Rivera still managed to graduate from high school in 1954. After completing high school, he enrolled in Southwest Texas Junior College and limited his migratory work to the summer months.

After graduating with a degree in English education from Southwest Texas State Teachers College in 1958, Rivera taught English and Spanish in several Texas high schools and eventually continued his own studies, receiving an MEd from Southwest Texas State University in administration in 1964, and both an MA in Spanish literature and a PhD in Romance languages and literature from the University of Oklahoma at Norman in 1969. After completing his PhD, Rivera held teaching positions in Spanish and several administrative positions at various Texas universities, namely Sam Houston State University, the University of Texas at San Antonio, and the University of Texas at El Paso. In 1979, he was appointed to the position of chancellor at the University of California, Riverside. Rivera held this position for five years, until his untimely death of heart failure in May 1984.

Notwithstanding his academic and administrative responsibilities at three different universities early in his career, Tomás Rivera also managed to dedicate time to literary creativity as a storyteller, poet, and essayist. Encouraged by his maternal grandfather, who enlightened him about the importance and value of literature and art, Tomás began writing his stories and poems in the 1960s, but did not publish anything until the advent of the Chicano Renaissance in the late 1960s and early 1970s, as new Chicano publishing houses and journals began to emerge out of the Chicano Movement. One such publishing house was Quinto Sol Publications in Berkeley, California, which first surfaced in 1967 with the publication of the journal El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought. In 1970, Quinto Sol announced its first annual Quinto Sol Literary contest, and in 1971 awarded the first Premio Quinto Sol to Tomás Rivera for his novel “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra.”

Translated into English by Herminio Ríos and published in a bilingual edition by Quinto Sol the following year, “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra”/“. . . And the Earth Did Not Part” is a coming-of-age novel that evokes the environment and feudal-like existence of seasonal migrant workers as they make their way along the midwestern migrant stream. Narrated from the
perspective of a young child, the novel reveals Rivera’s ingenious artistry as he experiments with language, novelistic structure, point of view, and style to re-create an exceptionally authentic and affective manifestation of the Chicano migrant worker experience. Many of the events depicted in the work are based on Rivera’s own life as a migrant worker. In discussing the novel, Rivera acknowledged that he was focusing on migrant workers between the years 1945 and 1955, the period when he himself was actively involved in migrant labor, and that his primary objective in writing the work was social and historical documentation: to expose the harsh realities and injustices suffered by migrant workers and, at the same time, document their spiritual strength and resolve to survive. Needless to say, “. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra” was immediately embraced by the Chicano community and has since become one of the foremost milestones of Chicano literature. Now in its third edition, with a new translation by Evangelina Vigil-Piñón and a revised English title (“. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra”/“. . . And the Earth Did Not Devour Him”), the novel was also adapted for the cinema in 1995. Written and directed by Severo Pérez and produced by Paul Espinoza, the film’s title is “. . . And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him.”

Rivera also published a collection of poetry, Always and Other Poems (1973), and other poems, short stories, and literary essays, which appeared separately in journals, anthologies, and other literary collections. When he died unexpectedly in May 1984, he had been working on a second novel (La casa grande del pueblo), which was designated to be published by Justa Publications, but the novel never saw the light of day. However, other unpublished works were collected and edited by Julián Olivares and published posthumously: The Harvest: Short Stories by Tomás Rivera (1989) and The Searchers: Collected Poetry (1990), a complete collection of Rivera’s poetry. In addition, Olivares organized, edited, and published all of Rivera’s literary productions in Tomás Rivera: The Complete Works (1992).

While many of the short stories included in these works follow the migrant-worker framework established by his earlier masterpiece, others do not share this construct and are more personal and esoteric in nature. Such is the case for “Looking for Borges,” for example, a short parable in which Rivera offers his personal ars poetica of social commitment as opposed to the nihilistic abstractions of Borges-like fiction. In the collection of lyrical poetry entitled The Searchers, Rivera returns to the theme of searching and renews his search for self, the other, community, and the past, while at the same time presenting the theme on many other very personal and intimate levels. (DWU)
on 9 July 1954 in El Paso, Texas, to María Estela Jiménez, a seamstress, and Alfonso Rodríguez, a handyman and janitor, he lived in Ciudad Juárez his first two years, then the family moved to South Central Los Angeles in Watts, California. In 1962 the family moved again, to East Los Angeles, where Rodríguez became involved in the gang life of the barrios. He experienced difficulties while growing up, often faced with hard choices and a hostile environment. Discrimination in schools and in the barrio left an indelible mark on his outlook on life. He developed a social conscience about inequalities in schools and about the Vietnam War, participated in protests at a young age, and dropped out of school at the age of 15. His emotional life zigzagged from one feeling to another, sometimes settling on rage and complex emotions. His penchant for poetry kept him focused in his writing, but gangbanger life was too absorbing, and he eventually became a full-fledged participant. His life changed drastically when he was arrested for petty theft and drug addiction, consequently spending six years in county jail. He later admitted that his involvement in the Chicano literary movement saved his life.

Rodríguez is a prolific writer with an intense sensibility as a survivor of the gang lifestyle. His writings, however, usually transcend the inner city, as he prefers to address contradictions; anomalies; and the effects of honor, respect, and healing. Among his many works are Poems across the Pavement (1989); The Concrete River (1991); Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A. (1994); América Is Her Name (1996); Trochemoche: Poems (Helter-skelter: Poems, 1998); It Doesn’t Have to Be This Way: A Barrio Story (1999); Hearts and Hands: Creating Community in Violent Times (2001); The Republic of East L.A.: Stories (2002); Running to America (2004); Music of the Mill: A Novel (2005); Seven: Poems (2005); Dos mujeres: Dos poemas (Two women: Two poems; 2005); Luis J. Rodríguez Broadsides (2005); My Nature Is Hunger: New and Selected Poems, 1989–2004 (2005); Making Medicine (2007); Honor Comes Hard: Writings from the California Prison System’s Honor Yard (coedited with Lucinda Thomas; 2009); and It Calls You Back: An Odyssey through Love, Addictions, Revolution and Healing (2011).

Rodríguez is an uninhibited voice of rehabilitation, given that the gang life was both his salvation and his cross. In 1972, he won third place in the Quinto Sol literary contest, reminding him of other possibilities, which led him to engage in literature, journalism, and photography. He then became a writer for The San Bernardino Sun, but he was later blacklisted for his radical political views. He became engaged in promoting Chicano writers through such venues as the vanguard magazine Chismearte, becoming one of the key voices to promote Chicano authors.
In 1985, he moved to Chicago to expand his opportunities in artistic organizing as an editor of the *People's Tribune*. In 1989, he founded Tía Chucha Press as an alternative publisher, at first producing chapbooks of numerous Latino writers, and he was the cofounder and a board member of Chicago’s Guild Complex, a leading art and literary organization. During this period, he wrote *Poems across the Pavement*, *The Concrete River*, and *Trochemoche*, which were all partly included with new poems in his compilation *My Nature Is Hunger: New and Selected Poems, 1989–2004*. These books were published in Chicago, except for the latter work, which appeared in 2005. At this stage, Rodríguez was a rebellious spirit determined to confront the social demons that haunted him and, by extension, his people. Rodríguez is not an epic poet in the strict sense of the word, but he does speak on behalf of those less privileged or voiceless. In his first book, an inner-city poetic voice points out: “The calling came to me / . . . / It brought me to life, / out of captivity, / in a street-scared / and tattooed place / I called my body” (38). Similar to Fenton Johnson’s sense of alienation described in his classic poem “Tired” (1922, “I am tired of building someone else’s civilization”), Rodríguez reveals that he too is “a shadow on the sidewalk, ... exiled in the country of reason,” and fat due to “[s]orrows, past indiscretions, slow death, / Addictions and shunned silences.”

Much like poet Jimmy Santiago Baca’s writings, Rodríguez’s work is about overcoming obstacles and his dark side while allowing his creativity to go wild. He experienced an epiphany in Chicago when he saw signs of his son’s involvement in hard-core barrio life, opting to move back to Los Angeles in 2001. He set out to write his memoir, filled with brutal starkness, hoping to intervene and impede the self-destructive tendencies of barrio life. *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.* is one of the most poignant and unadorned views of the inner dynamics of gang life, including its violence, turf wars, secrets, machismo, self-destructive tendencies, and unwritten codes of conduct. Shortly thereafter, he wrote a collection of 12 short stories, titled *The Republic of East L.A.*, a biting satire on L.A.’s isolation and insular characteristics, for which he received the PEN Oakland/Josephine Miles Literary Award. The implication in the book is that the characters are trapped in their milieu, and it is thus a metaphoric treatise on the destiny of barrio dwellers.

Upon returning to Los Angeles in 2001, Rodriguez systematically set out to create alternative venues for Latino artists, founding Tía Chucha Café Cultural, a multimedia arts center and bookstore. He also attempted his first novel in 2005, *Music of the Mill*, a partially autobiographical and didactic portrayal that covers a multigenerational view of 60 years of the Salcido family, adapting to immigration from Mexico, the stresses of a steel mill, discrimination, and labor politics, plus the intrigue and degeneration of some characters who end up immersed in hard-core barrio activities, including
drugs. The novel loosely parallels aspects of Rodriguez's family's trajectory to create a political novel about social justice while lacking some of the pathos and substance of his poetry.

The same year that Rodriguez returned to Los Angeles, the Dalai Lama named him one of 50 “Unsung Heroes of Compassion,” and he has since received one distinction after another, including a Hispanic Heritage Award for Literature, Illinois Authors of the Year Award, Lila Wallace-Reader’s Digest Writers’ Award, Lannan Poetry Fellowship, Paterson Poetry Prize, Carl Sandburg Book Award, Chicago Sun-Times Book Award, Sundance Institute Arts Writing Fellowship, and other prizes. He was also recognized for shedding light on the perils and dangers of the barrio, receiving the Paterson Books for Young People Award for América Is Her Name and It Doesn’t Have to Be This Way: A Barrio Story, a Parents’ Choice Approved Winner for Children’s Books and an Americas Award Commended Title.

In his latest work, It Calls You Back: An Odyssey through Love, Addictions, Revolution and Healing, Rodriguez revisits some of the same issues as in Always Running, except that now the writing is more nuanced, comprehensive, compelling, and current. A mature narrator relates details that were left unsaid, covering rawer material. More than being reflective, Rodriguez bares his soul as the final act of overcoming his demons, again hoping that his son Ramiro and others will listen.

Luis J. Rodriguez is a highly inspirational grassroots writer and a cultural warrior who shares his literary gifts for a higher cause, in part against what B. V. Olguín calls “ganexploitation.” For example, in Honor Comes Hard: Writings from the California Prison System’s Honor Yard (coedited with Lucinda Thomas), writings from prisoners show their humanity, fears, and aspirations. Rodriguez is driven by using art as redemption and an antidote for the crazy life of the gang lifestyle in order to seek inner enrichment. His exemplary didacticism is only superseded by his commitment to making fundamental changes for the good of humanity. (FAL)

RUIZ DE BURTON, MARÍA AMPARO (1832–1895). Novelist of historical romance, entrepreneur, playwright, epistolary writer. Born on 3 July 1832 in Loreto, Baja California, in Mexico, María Amparo Ruiz de Burton was the daughter of Isabel Ruiz Maytorena, of a prominent family in Baja California, and an unknown father. Ruiz de Burton moved to Monterey, California, shortly after the Mexican–American War was won by the United States in 1848. Then age 16, she married Captain Henry S. Burton, a 28-year-old widower, with whom she had two children. As a lady with considerable real estate capital, she actively sought to legally reclaim some lands in Baja California and in the San Diego area, a battle that continued until 1887, two years after the publication of her most well-known novel, The Squatter and the Don. She was a key witness to numerous historical events in the latter
half of the 19th century, including President Abraham Lincoln’s inauguration in 1861, the end of the Civil War, and most notably, the struggle by Californios (Hispanic Mexicans of early California) to keep and, in some cases, reclaim their land against the onslaught of new East Coast settlers. Legal procedures did not favor Californios, causing a massive appropriation on the part of invaders that contributed to the former’s economic demise. Ruiz de Burton spent a good part of her life militating against blatant racism and political corruption. Despite her privileged social class, she sought to denounce the land grabbers and railroad barons of her era (e.g., Leland Stanford, H. P. Morgan, Henry E. Huntington, Charles Crocker, and Mark Hopkins), who tilted financial interests toward their cohorts. She died in poverty in 1895, which was common among Californios by then.

Her claim to fame resides in being the first Mexican American woman to publish two novels in English, The Squatter and the Don: A Novel Descriptive of Contemporary Occurrences in California (1885) and Who Would Have Thought It? (1872), in addition to an early play, Don Quijote de la Mancha: A Comedy in Five Acts, Taken from Cervantes’ Novel of That Name (1876). Given the explosive nature of her indictments and the editorial weight of her arguments, bolstered with facts, she published the first novel using the pseudonym “C. Loyal” and the second using her husband’s name, H. S. Burton. She camouflaged part of the acerbic commentary in The Squatter and the Don with a story of romance between Clarence Darrell (an echo of Clarence Darrow, a mid-19th-century lawyer) and Mercedes Alamar (symbolically, “mercedes” means land grants in Spanish and “Alamar” refers to the Mexican victory at the Alamo), which ideally posited reconciliation between Anglos and Mexican Americans. Notwithstanding the suspense in the extended romance, the author aims to embed much of her novel with sordid criticism of the inequities, the arbitrary legalities that favored newcomers, the excesses of the financial elites, and the systemic measures to displace Mexican Americans from their lands and other holdings. On one occasion, the sage and benevolent Don Mariano (evoking the name of Don Mariano Vallejo, one of the last wealthy Californios eventually stripped of his wealth), Mercedes’s father, who tries to coexist with the newcomers, resigns himself: “I am afraid that there is no help to save us native Californians. . . . If the Americans had been friendly to us, and helped us with good, protective laws, our fate would have been different. But to legislate us into poverty is to legislate us into our graves” (164–165). The Squatter and the Don remained forgotten for around 100 years until, in 1992, the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, headquartered at the University of Houston, republished it to immediate critical acclaim, thanks in great part to editors Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita.
In her other novel, *Who Would Have Thought It?*, Ruiz de Burton explores issues of race that she had encountered while living in the Northeast United States for 10 years. The story depicts an upper-class Mexican American girl named Lola Medina, who was born in Indian captivity and was adopted by a New England family. The narrator exposes eastern biases and hypocrisy about definitions of race and how they are unable to grapple with the hybridity and miscegenation of Mexicans. The criticism is aimed at Anglocentrism, which cannot accept that this girl can be considered white.

María Amparo Ruiz de Burton was an early author who was resurrected through literary recovery efforts after 1990, when a group of scholars focused on identifying, cataloging, and researching works that had somehow been lost, forgotten, or rendered obscure before 1965. Her works offer an important testament and milestones in filling in significant gaps in Latino literary history from the 19th century. (FAL)

*See also* MESTIZAJE/MESTIZO.
SÁENZ, BENJAMÍN ALIRE (1954–). Novelist, short story writer, poet, professor, writer of children’s literature. Born on 16 August 1943 to Eloísa Chávez Alire and Juan Villanueva Sáenz in the small New Mexican town of Old Picacho, Benjamín Alire Sáenz grew up in Mesilla, New Mexico. Deeply steeped in Catholicism, he pursued a master’s degree in theology from the University of Louvain (Belgium) in 1980, where he was ordained the following year. For a short period, he worked with Mother Teresa. He later left the priesthood, opting to pursue a master’s degree in creative writing from the University of Texas at El Paso. He also briefly studied at the University of Iowa and then moved to Stanford University, where he began work on a PhD in English that he never completed. Currently, he teaches in the bilingual MFA program at the University of Texas at El Paso. He has won various awards: the American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation for *Calendar of Dust*, a Lannan Poetry Fellowship, a Wallace Stegner Fellowship, and the PEN/Faulkner Award for *Everything Begins and Ends at the Kentucky Club*.

Sáenz has an extensive list of creative works from a variety of genres: poetry (*Calendar of Dust* [1991], *Dark and Perfect Angels* [1995], *Elegies in Blue* [2002], *Dreaming the End of War* [2006], and *The Book of What Remains* [2010]); novels (*Carry Me Like Water* [1995], *The House of Forgetting* [1997], *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* [2004], *In Perfect Light* [2005], *Names on a Map* [2008], *He Forgot to Say Goodbye* [2008], *Last Night I Sang to the Monster: A Novel* [2008], *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe* [2012], and *Native: A Novel* [2012]); short stories (*Flowers for the Broken* [1992] and *Everything Begins and Ends at the Kentucky Club* [2012]); and bilingual children’s books (*A Gift from Papa Diego/Un regalo de Papá Diego* [1998], *Grandma Fina and Her Wonderful Umbrellas/La Abuelita Fina y sus sombrillas maravillosas* [1999], and *A Perfect Season for Dreaming/Un tiempo perfecto para soñar* [2008]).

Sáenz’s prolific production covers a wide array of themes, symbols, and literary formats. For example, much of his writing is rooted in the border, the desert, its dryness and desolation, and what is right and just. He frequently
ponders inequities and the challenges of reconciliation among family members, generations, social classes, and those who feel marginalized. He addresses such concerns with great sensitivity and empathy toward those who don’t fit in and often presents characters held back by awkwardness due to some personal or psychological trauma from the past. Such edginess allows Sáenz to examine existential rifts that require mending.

His poetry, such as in Calendar of Dust, offers reflections on life and death, the Southwest, and the passing of time, couched in biblical markings. In Dreaming the End of the War, he provides poems in the form of 12 dreams, an oniric context of finding solutions to the problem “War is institutionalized murder” (17; emphasis in original). He laments the effects of war: “Death stops the waking / and the dreaming” (57). His desert meditation poems are evident in The Book of What Remains, again exploring death in a deeper, almost mystical sense. On one occasion he notes: “You are what you remember” (69; emphasis in original). The collection Dark and Perfect Angels overtly probes religious themes, such as faith and the sacred, including prayers for the holy and the dead. In Elegies in Blue, the author presents an eloquent collection of elegies teetering between rage and unrequited social love.

Sáenz’s short stories are also noteworthy in presenting a dilemma, an enigma, or an issue to resolve. In Flowers for the Broken, he explores characters caught between two worlds “with nothing but time for remembering” (162). The notion of geographical, personal, and social borders (i.e., internal and external scars) emerges constantly to indicate small traumas, including the effects of war in El Salvador. The stories include excellent character portrayals of people seeking reconciliation with themselves. In Everything Begins and Ends at the Kentucky Club, Sáenz brings together a collection of disparate persons who somehow meet at the bar Kentucky Club in Ciudad Juárez. Symbolically, the place represents a watering hole where people bring their respective differences and baggage, merging into a new collectivity, thus bridging psychological borders.

Sáenz has produced nine novels, most categorized as young adult. In these works he explores young characters’ lives in coming-of-age narratives, often confronting issues of difference or personal trauma. For example, in He Forgot to Say Goodbye, Ramiro and Jake, from two different cultural backgrounds, share a father figure who abandoned their respective families, thus mitigating their personal differences. In In Perfect Light, again, two young people face a common tragedy and somehow navigate a form of salvation to overcome cruelties due to displacement. Unexpected twists occur in Names on a Map in the midst of the Vietnam War, when Gustavo leaves the border region for Mexico, but his return to his family’s native land does not produce the results he had desired. Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood depicts two young people who grapple with heartfelt issues of war, racism, and barrio
violence, and Aristotle and Dante Discover the Secrets of the Universe explores the world of two teens examining self-discovery. In the latter work, both Aristotle, an angry teen, and Dante, a know-it-all, develop a deep friendship that goes beyond the bounds of what they expected. The narrative teeters between boyhood and manhood, allowing them to discover their sexuality through friendship. In still another novel of self-discovery and determination, the psychological thriller The House of Forgetting, young Gloria Santos is kidnapped and moved from her barrio in El Paso to Chicago by the well-intentioned Thomas Blacker, who essentially enslaves Gloria in a gilded cage, taking away her free will and innocence. An implicit moral fabric is present in all these novels, as the characters grapple with new challenges and evolving circumstances. Sáenz develops situations of pathos and understanding—often tenderness—while not mincing words, in order to unravel dilemmas and undermine socially constructed stereotypes.

In Carry Me Like Water, an ambitious totalizing border novel, Sáenz demonstrates his greatest virtuosity as a seasoned novelist through the examination of dichotomies and crisis. Couched within biblical ruminations, 12 characters spread the word of kindness and charity to help those in the margins in the urban centers of El Paso and San Francisco, especially those dealing with alienation, sexual abuse, issues of spirituality, racism, AIDS, poverty, homophobia, and so forth. One of the 12 protagonists, Luz, expresses that she is unwilling to relinquish her city of El Paso, even though it is malignant, dusty, and on the fringes of being neither American nor Mexican. Other characters point out that the desert is their true home despite its bad reputation. The novel, a very oral text, is filled with extended dialogues. Sáenz collapses many of his themes and characters into this novel, which defines some of his central concerns: belonging, exile, justice, and redemption.

In 2013, Poets and Writers Magazine named Sáenz one of the 50 most inspiring writers in the world. Clearly, he is an outstanding, lyrical storyteller with a moral passion defined by a deep sense of spirituality. (FAL)

See also BORDERLANDS.

SALINAS, LUIS OMAR (1937–2008). Poet, instructor, activist. Shortly after his birth on 27 June 1937 in Robstown, Texas, to Olivia Trevino and Rosendo Valdez Salinas, Salinas and his family moved to Monterrey, Mexico, to open a store. His life changed abruptly when his mother became ill with tuberculosis and died in 1941. Young Salinas and his siblings were sent to live with various relatives, causing permanent trauma and involving frequent moves. He basically grew up in Fresno, California, until he moved to Bakersfield, where he studied at Bakersfield City College. He then moved again, to Los Angeles, to live with his father while attending California State College, until he had a mental breakdown. Returning to Fresno, he undertook some of his first formal training in creative writing at California State Uni-
versity under the tutelage of such writers as Philip Levine, Robert Mezey, and Peter Everwine, who clearly saw his potential. His health problems plagued him from then on. He became intrigued with the cultural and political turmoil of the 1960s. His participation as an instructor in the Chicano Studies Department at Fresno State and his activism in the United Farm Workers’ boycott efforts inspired him, but also took their toll.


Salinas’s first book of poetry, *Crazy Gypsy*, was an instant hit for its Chicano Movement lyrical inferences with a dark side. The work is a veiled search for his mother, revealing a fascination with social change in verses that combine innovative, surrealist imagery with everyday occurrences. His personal anguish and loneliness are expressed with delicacy and verve, particularly in “Crazy Gypsy,” “Aztec Angel,” “Mexico Age Four,” and “Nights and Days.” His poetry touched a sensitive chord among Chicanos, for it spoke about feeling culturally alienated and socially odd, almost invoking therapy for these social ills. Cultural nationalism was not at the forefront of this book, but it definitely shaped some of the poems. Poet Gary Soto (1989) recalls how Salinas wrote his books: from a self-induced trance, not sleeping for more than 48 hours, and drinking coffee.

Salinas gained confidence and a readership with his second book, *Afternoon of the Unreal*, under the guidance of poets Christopher Buckley, Gary Soto, and Jon Veinberg. Here he further develops his penchant for surrealist metaphors while following a pendulum of opposite images, from joyful to dejected and gloomy. “Unreality” seems to pervade the situations described as well as the sentiments. Salinas again oscillates between one extreme and another, as if a middle is not an option. The work received the Stanley Kunitz Poetry Prize in 1983.

In *Prelude to Darkness*, Salinas indulges in love fantasies of what could be. He hints at his illness as a companion that follows him around, while he envisions dancing with sunlight and imagines moonlight sweethearts. What often starts as a positive outlook turns into something grim. In his third book, *Darkness under the Trees/Walking behind the Spanish*, a new kind of lyrical obscurity surfaces, returning to deeper surrealist imagery with darker overtones. It is divided into two parts; the first speaks of death, madness, solitude, sorrow, and unrequited love, exposing his wounds and appeals for understanding. He seeks expressions of love but cannot find them. The second part of the book, consisting of 41 poems, represents an homage to Spanish Civil War poets for their commitment to higher causes beyond writing, because
they stood for friendship, love, and family. His fourth book, *The Sadness of Days: Selected and New Poems*, contains 14 new poems and a selection of previous ones. As Gary Soto notes, “the poems are less surreal, less political, less rambunctious, and more steeped in sadness” (238). Salinas’s authenticity as a poet is evident; he speaks frankly about the troubles of his life, his instability (both mental and economic), what he treasures most, and what is everlasting. There is a resignation that emerges, provoking tenderness and meditation about his personal trajectory.

In his last three books, *Sometimes Mysteriously*, *Elegy of Desire*, and *Greatest Hits, 1969–1996*, Salinas reaches a pinnacle in his writing, letting his imagination loose and not getting bogged down by the tribulations of his life per se. A mature voice emerges, accompanied by a wisdom about surviving, which he communicates via elegies, odes, and chants. He also relishes the small moments of triumph and fanciful love while acknowledging death as an unrequited companion.

Luis Omar Salinas started out as a socially committed poet and developed into a poet committed to his craft and the power of poetry. He possessed a down-to-earth quality that transcends deeper contemplations about life, death, and madness. A pioneer in early Chicano Movement poetry, he became an example of a people’s poet who lived a life on the fringe while speaking of his wounds openly. He received numerous distinctions: the California English Teachers citation (1973), the Stanley Kunitz Poetry Prize (1983), the Earl Lyon Award (1980), and the General Electric Foundation Award (1984). (FAL)
American studies from Union Graduate School in Ohio, focusing on cultural linguistic theory and Chicano poetics. Subsequently, he held various teaching positions, at the University of Massachusetts (1970), El Paso Community College (1975), the University of Utah (1977–1980), Washington State University (1991–1994), the University of Alaska (Poet-in-Residence, 1979), and the Centro Cultural Aztlán in San Antonio (1986–1987); he also worked as a consultant at the University of Texas (1971–1972), as a journalist, and at many other jobs. He received the Frederick Douglass Fellowship in Journalism (1969) and the Ford Foundation Fellowship (1973–1975). He also wrote the script for the film Entelequia (1979), on the role of a poet.

Besides serving as a troubadour for the Chicano Movement, often jotting down some of his free and automatic verses on napkins and diaries, it is clear Sánchez functioned as a witness to social and historical events via his “visceral, gut-wrenching and . . . soul-searching” poetry, as noted by Francisco A. Lomelí (1994). He was adamant about denouncing the dehumanizing effects of modern society, seeking to achieve a broad sense of humanism. His first book, Los cuatro (The four; 1970), coedited with Raymundo Pérez, Abelardo Delgado, and Juan Valdez, gathers four voices of angry nationalist poetry with the intent of criticizing what Americans consider sacred (e.g., democracy). One of the messages is to create conditions for secession of the Chicano homeland (Aztlán) from the United States. His second work, Canto y grito mi liberación (y lloro mis desmadrizados . . .): Pensamientos, gritos, angustias, orgullos, penumbras poéticas, ensayos, historietas, hechizos almas del son de mi existencia . . . (I chant and shout my liberation [and I cry my zaniness . . . ]; thoughts, shouts, anguish, pride, poetic penumbras, essays, anecdotes, soulful spells of the sound of my existence . . .; 1971), became his signature collection of poetry, with its bottled-up outbursts of alienation, hostility, justice, rage, and freedom, such as when he says “AMERIKA-THE-DESECRATOR.” His social passion oozes throughout, and his verbal virtuosity is unmatched for flair, thanks in great part to his extensive use of Spanglish.

His tour de force, Hechizospells: Poetry/Stories/Vignettes/Articles/Notes on the Human Condition of Chicanos & Picaros, Words & Hopes within SoulMind (1976), burst onto the literary scene with its impassioned pleas, its exuberance, and its mesmerizing irreverence in the form of an unbridled stream of consciousness. As Lomelí has noted, “What might have seemed like graffiti in Canto y grito mi liberación now becomes a sophisticated interplay of codes, language nuances and variations, testimonials, Freudian explorations, and political diatribes” (1994). The range of topics, modalities, and moods is impressive, offering a voluminous inside view of the meanderings of a social movement as it confronted expectations and contradictions. The rich texture of iconoclastic, poetic pulsations reached a high point in Chicano poetry at the time. Thereafter, in Milhaus Blues and Gritos Norteños...
SÁNCHEZ, ROSAURA (1941–). Critic, professor, short story writer, novelist. Born on 6 December 1941 in San Angelo, Texas, where she was raised in a working-class family and sometimes picked cotton, Rosaura Sánchez studied at San Angelo College for her AA degree and later moved to the University of Texas at Austin, where she focused on Spanish and Latin American literatures and transformational linguistics, earning a BA in English and Spanish in 1965, an MA in Spanish, and a PhD in 1974. She has worked as a linguistics, literature, gender studies, and creative writing professor at the University of California at San Diego in the Literature Department since 1974. Besides her extensive work on Chicano linguistic discourse, she has maintained a steady agenda of writing creative work (both short stories and a novel) and literary history, involving the recovery of 19th-century texts by such writers as María Amparo Ruiz de Burton, currently considered the first person of Mexican descent to publish two novels.

Sánchez’s scholarship covers a broad range, from projects in linguistics, in which she discusses Chicanos’ written and oral speech patterns, to uncovering early novels and testimonios (testimonies), to gathering feminist studies: Chicano Discourse: Socio-Historic Perspectives (1981), Telling Identities: The Californio Testimonios (1995), Essays on la Mujer (coedited by Sánchez and Rosa Martínez Cruz; 1977), Who Would Have Thought It? by María Amparo Ruiz de Burton (coedited by Sánchez and Beatrice Pita; 1995), The...
SÁNCHEZ, ROSAURA (1941–)

*Squatter and the Don* by Ruiz de Burton (coedited by Sánchez and Beatrice Pita; 1997), and *The Conflicts of Interest: The Letters of María Amparo Ruiz de Burton* (coedited by Sánchez and Beatrice Pita; 2001). Much of her work in recovering 19th-century literary texts and *testimonios* has been instrumental for reconstituting key developments of early writers who have helped reshape Chicana literary history. Sánchez also edited a collection of short stories, *Requisa treinta y dos: Colección de cuentos/Short Story Collection* (1979), but her principal creative work consists of the collection of short stories *He Walked In and Sat Down and Other Stories* (translated by Beatrice Pita; 2001) and the science fiction novel *Lunar Braceros, 2125–2148* (cowritten with Beatrice Pita; 2009), the first time two Chicana authors have collaborated in producing a novel.

*Lunar Braceros, 2125–2148* marks a distinctive new path, indulging in the rarely used science fiction subgenre in Chicano literature. Although it is futuristic, many features of the 20th century appear: reservations (called “rezs”) like *barrios* or prison labor camps, low-paying lunar employees hired like *braceros* (seasonal workers), parallels about hegemony and usurping control, racialization of politics, and Arnold Toynbee’s idea of history repeating itself. Although it is organized as a collection of 98 nano-text memoirs that have been saved by Lydia (the main narrator) for her son Pedro to learn from, the nonlinear plot meanders in many directions, pondering the errors of the past and rethinking how to combat the 22nd-century forms of capitalism. Basically a social novel, it aims to raise awareness about contradictions, conflicts, and inequities that have not been ironed out in a society that is technologically advanced but socially still backward. As part of its imagery, the novel reconfigures geopolitical alignments, particularly the Cali-Texas corridor that encompasses much of current North America. Pedro’s parents, Lydia and Frank, seek a utopia in the form of a pun-filled place called Chinganaza, somewhere between the Ecuadorian and Peruvian jungle. The goal is to prepare the new generation for real social change in a world that urgently needs mending. The theme is serious, but the form is sometimes light and playful, with a certain tongue-in-cheek attitude.

Sánchez’s collection of 17 short stories, *He Walked In and Sat Down and Other Stories*, is a varied compilation of fiction that intersects a wide array of characters who live dilemmas difficult to reconcile. For that reason, the narratives are driven by an ideological edge of pinpointing a social problem while suggesting a solution through a socially realistic prism. Sometimes the stories offer stylistic experimentation, particularly with the narrative voices (sometimes narrators speak to nonresponsive persons, there are one-sided phone calls, there are simultaneous narratives in the form of cubic fragments, there are juxtaposed voices, some characters are silent, etc.). Chicanos/as or undocumented immigrants appear in various roles: an undocumented woman in the midst of domestic violence as captured by oral tradi-
tion (“Barrio Chronicle”), meatpackers who face outright exploitation (“At the Meat-Packing Plant”), policemen who pick up two kid suspects (“Dallas”), a Chicano administrator’s internal conflict about siding with protesters or the university administration (“He Walked In and Sat Down”), and a former Singer sewing machine salesman who becomes the leader of a strike (“Don Salomón”). There are various stories about undocumented workers who suffer one indignity after another (“The Ditch,” “Like I Was Telling You . . .,” “The Fields”), three generations who share experiential lives (“Three Generations”), a young professor who grapples with academic alienation, and a woman scholar interested in the 19th century who suddenly finds herself in a Twilight Zone–like quagmire of two historical periods (“Road Detours”). Sánchez stresses narrative techniques that echo Tomás Rivera (through plot ambiguities), Rolando Hinojosa-Smith (through collective voices), Mexican Juan Rulfo (through anonymous listeners and contrasting narrative fragments), and Argentine Julio Cortázar (the use of multiple voices, suspense, and rationality). Ultimately, she focuses on either the underprivileged classes who suffer exploitation or characters who do not quite fit in, thus presenting a broad framework of criticism for social change.

Rosaura Sánchez is a well-known linguist, but her creative literature is committed to changing the way poor, defenseless, disenfranchised people face their everyday vulnerabilities. (FAL)

SANTIAGO, ESMERALDA (1948–?). Memoirist, novelist. Esmeralda Santiago was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico, the first of 11 children. She immigrated to Brooklyn, New York, at the age of 13. She graduated in 1976 with a BA from Harvard University and an MFA in fiction writing from Sarah Lawrence College in 1996. Shortly after completing her bachelor’s degree, Santiago cofounded a media and film production company and began publishing essays and short articles in publications including the New York Times, the Boston Globe, and House & Garden magazine.

Santiago is best known for her memoir writing. When asked in an interview what prompted her to write about her life, she said: “It was the experience of returning to Puerto Rico right after I graduated from Harvard. This was about twelve years after I had come to the United States, and I had not been back in all that time. I was very proud of myself—the daughter of the island of enchantment returns! But to my surprise, I had a very negative reception. Many Puerto Ricans questioned my ‘Puerto Rican-ness,’ because I had lived in the United States for so long. The Puerto Rican culture that I had with me was the one of twelve years earlier, and that’s the one that I was functioning in, not realizing that everything had changed. So when I came back to the United States, I began to write about these issues, really for myself so I could understand them.” Her writing reflects on the complexity of immigrant Puerto Rican identity in the United States and duality and
ambivalence as core aspects of being both Puerto Rican and American. Moreover, Santiago explores the complex intersections of ethnicity, race, class, gender, and sexuality, and she writes about the early experiences that contributed to her sense of herself as a feminist.

Published in 1993, Santiago’s first book, *When I Was Puerto Rican*, recalls her childhood living in Macún, in the countryside along Puerto Rico’s northern coast. The memoir is narrated in a straightforward style from the point of view of a thoughtful adolescent and takes place in the 1950s. The narrative spans an 11-year period in Santiago’s life, from ages 4 to 14. Referring to herself as “Negí,” the nickname given her by her family, short for “Negrita,” Santiago celebrates many aspects of her life in Puerto Rico, the cultural richness of that place, and the shock she experienced upon her arrival in Brooklyn, New York. In one of the most often-cited chapters of the book, “How to Eat a Guava,” Santiago celebrates Puerto Rico’s natural splendor, food, and culture through expressions of reverence for the island fruit. In contrast, she describes the guavas found in New York as unpalatable. The chapter “The American Invasion of Macún” describes the attempts of the U.S. government to “Americanize” Puerto Rico in the 1950s, her family’s reactions, and the opinion she eventually formed. Santiago narrates the young Negí’s learning the term “Yankee imperialists,” and her father’s assertion that the “Americanos . . . want to change our country and our culture to be like theirs, . . . They expect us to do things their way even in our own country.” Santiago’s Negí comes to agree with her father, yet paradoxically finds herself attracted to U.S. culture even as she indict “Yankee imperialism.”

Speaking to some of the tensions embodied in the lived experiences of Puerto Ricans in the United States and the relationship between these and the title, Gregory Stephens (2009) has explained, “The past tense of the title is intentionally provocative: by self-consciously framing the narrative as the memorializing of a previous identity, Santiago has helped inspire a lively debate about Puerto Rican identity in the present, in which cultural authenticity seems all but unattainable.” In an interview, Santiago herself has added, “It has been particularly poignant to speak to immigrants who have returned to their countries, only to discover how much they have changed by immersion in North American culture. They accept and understand the irony of the past tense in the title, the feeling that, while at one time they could not identify themselves as anything but the nationality to which they were born, once they’ve lived in the U.S. their ‘cultural purity’ has been compromised, and they no longer fit as well in their native countries, nor do they feel one hundred percent comfortable as Americans” (Bridget, 2000).

Santiago has published two additional memoirs since *When I Was Puerto Rican*. *Almost a Woman* (1999) focuses on her adolescence, from her arrival in the United States to age 21. The eight-year period is a dynamic time, as
she adapts to life in the United States, living in Brooklyn with her mother, grandmother, and 10 siblings; attends Manhattan’s prestigious Performing Arts High School; and negotiates the gendered restrictions imposed on her by her strict traditional family. Indeed, she relates with humor the occasion of her first date, at the age of 20. The memoir won the Alex Award from the American Library Association and was adapted into a screenplay for an award-winning PBS film.

*The Turkish Lover* (2004), Santiago’s third memoir, begins in 1969, when she leaves New York, and covers the period through 1976, when she graduates from Harvard University. The central focus of the book is her romantic relationship with Turkish filmmaker Ulvi Dogan and explores her conflicted feelings as she leaves home against her mother’s wishes to live with him. In this book, she shifts from being Negi to “Chiquita,” the nickname given her by her lover, Ulvi. Their relationship involves a significant age difference, and a vast power differential, and the lover is an imposing and controlling figure. Significantly, by the end of the book, Santiago breaks free from her lover’s confining hold and asserts herself as “Esmeralda,” refusing the moniker “Chiquita,” and even leaving “Negi,” her family nickname, behind. In this, and in Santiago’s engaging narration, the reader gleans that while the end of that romantic relationship was painful, Santiago emerged from it more confident and assured in her womanhood and in her commitment to her self-determination.

While Santiago is best known for her memoirs, she has also written two novels, *América’s Dream* (1997) and *Conquistadora* (2011). Both feature compelling, strong women characters embroiled in complex romantic and familial relationships. The protagonist in *América’s Dream* flees an abusive relationship in Puerto Rico to begin a new life in the United States as a nanny. Describing one of the main thematic threads in the novel, Antonia Domínguez Miguela has written that “America’s dream signifies the hope in change. In dreaming of having her own home, driving her own car, and having an ideal family, America takes the reader through an emotional and psychological journey into the challenges of many Latina women.” *Conquistadora* is a robust and ambitious historical novel centered on a character named Ana, a 19th-century plantation mistress embroiled in a forbidden love affair with a friend, Elena. While the *New York Times* criticized the novel for its “soap-operatic excess,” the reviewer praised Santiago’s development of the complex, contradictory character of Ana (G. Bahadur, 2011).

Santiago has also edited two anthologies: *Las Christmas: Favorite Latino Authors Share Their Holiday Memories* and *Las Mamis: Favorite Latino Authors Remember Their Mothers*. She is also the author of the illustrated children’s book *A Doll for Navidades*. Santiago has been a spokesperson and advocate for numerous causes, including public libraries, the value of arts and literature, and youth. She also cofounded a shelter for battered women
and their children. For her dedication to activism and advocacy, she was
awarded the Girl Scouts of America National Woman of Distinction Award
in 2002. (MJV)

comedy writer, comedic social commentator, performance artist. The second
daughter of George and Beatrice Serros, Michele was born 10 February 1966
in Oxnard, California, and raised in El Rio, a rural Hispanic community on
the outskirts of Oxnard. She attended local public schools, but because of
decreasing grades during her sophomore year at Rio Mesa High School, her
mother transferred her to Santa Clara High School, a private Catholic high
school in the city of Oxnard. After her graduation from Santa Clara High in
1984, Serros attended Ventura College for two years, then transferred to
Santa Monica City College, at which she earned an AA in English in 1991.
She graduated cum laude in 1996 from the University of California, Los
Angeles (UCLA), with a degree in Chicano studies.

Serros took an early interest in reading literature and writing. Following
the inspiration of her mother, who herself was an avid reader of John Stein-
beck and Danielle Steel, among others, Michele began reading the young
adult fiction of Judy Blume. Consequently, at age 11, upon the separation
and divorce of her parents, Serros wrote to Blume expressing her despair and
confusion about her parents’ breakup and asked the celebrated writer for
advice. Blume responded on her personalized stationery, suggesting that the
child use writing as a means for expressing her thoughts and emotions about
the breakup and encouraged her to maintain a personal journal. As a result of
this exchange, Serros became an ardent diarist, and writing poems and stories
developed into “a means of therapy, escape, an outlet that was much needed
as a young girl” (http://www.nypl.org/author-chat-michele-serros).

In 1993, after many years of writing her personal journals and while she
was still a student at Santa Monica City College, Serros’s first book of poetry
and short stories, Chicana Falsa and Other Stories of Death, Identity and
Oxnard, was published. Together, its poetry, essays, and short fiction tell the
coming-of-age story of young Michele as she ponders her own rite of pas-
sage from innocence to experience. Through a relatively humorous lens and
in a somewhat conversational style, she writes about growing up in a work-
ing-class Mexican American family, the disparities between her Mexican and
American cultural identities, her emerging sexual awareness, becoming a
writer, adolescent angst, and the idiosyncrasies of family and human relation-
ships.

With the success of Chicana Falsa, in the summer of 1994 (7 July–5
September), Serros was one of 12 poets invited to be a road poet, traveling
nationally with the touring music festival Lollapalooza ’94; she often read
her poems and stories to stadium crowds of 25,000. The 42-day, 33-city tour
introduced her poetry and short stories to thousands of prospective readers. In 1997, Serros recorded and released selected stories from *Chicana Falsa* as an audio CD, and in October 1998 she was one of the Los Angeles area poets selected by the Poetry Society of America and the Getty Research Institute for the History of Art and the Humanities to place her poetry on MTA buses throughout metropolitan Los Angeles. That same year, *Chicana Falsa* was reissued in a second edition.

Serros’s second book, *How to Be a Chicana Role Model* (2000), is a fictional autobiography, which chronicles many of her early struggles with being a writer, among other experiences, and offers advice as a de facto Chicana role model. The work is organized into 13 rules for role models, each of which is segmented into two or three vignettes that often contradict and even mock the advice suggested in the title. For example, in “Role Model Rule Number 1: Never Give Up an Opportunity to Eat for Free,” she recalls an experience of being invited to participate in a Chicana Writers’ Conference: not to read her poetry but to serve brunch. And in “Role Model Rule Number 3: Remember, Commerce Begins at Home,” she recounts the day when 10 boxes of her first book, *Chicana Falsa*, were delivered to her home because the original publisher had gone out of business, and she was forced to promote and sell copies of the book on her own. The second narrative of the chapter, “Passport to Cross Overland,” chronicles the efforts of her family and friends to dissuade her from becoming a writer, and the third, “Second Call,” tells about one of her many attempts to collect on an honorarium for a poetry reading she had previously done at the home of a well-known Chicano professor. As in her previous work, Serros also addresses the issues of what it means to be Chicana, brown-on-brown discrimination, and her struggle for belonging while straddling two cultures; she employs humor, irony, and sardonic wit to condemn such disappointing experiences. Soon after its publication, *How to Be a Chicana Role Model* was recognized as a best seller by the *Los Angeles Times*, and Serros was named by *Newsweek* magazine as “one of the top young women to watch for in the new century.”

Given the popularity of these two works and her obvious understanding of Latino/a youth and pop culture, Serros was approached and invited by Alloy Entertainment to create a “Latina version” of their Gossip Girl Young Adult Book Series. The result was *Honey Blonde Chica* (2006), and its sequel, ¡*Scandalosa!* (2007). Directed at young adult female readers, the duology narrates the coming-of-age story of Evelina (Evie) Gómez, an upper-middle-class Mexican American surfer girl, as she approaches her “sixteenera” (16th birthday) and finds herself in the midst of a Mexican American/Mexican identity crisis. According to Stacey Wiebe (2006) of the *Ventura County Reporter*, “With Evie’s story, Serros seeks to shed light on a different aspect of Latino culture by showing, in part, that not all Latinos are poor, uneducat-
ed laborers and that there are different challenges faced by the Latino middle
and upper-middle class.” “Similarly,” the critic added, “she wanted to dem-
onstrate that there is friction between various Latino subgroups.” More than
her earlier works, both of these novels are sprinkled with Spanglish, woven
into the narration and the dialogues, which gives the reader a sense of Evie’s
Mexican American cultural reality. However, even more interesting in the
context of young adult pop culture is the constant use of text messaging by
the characters to communicate.

In addition to her poetry and works of fiction, Serros has also written
journalistic essays for the Los Angeles Times, Ms. magazine, CosmoGirl, the
Washington Post, and the Huffington Post, among other newspapers and
periodicals, and has contributed commentaries to National Public Radio
(Morning Edition, Weekend All Things Considered). She also worked as staff
writer on the ABC television sitcom The George López Show and has made
presentations at high schools, colleges, universities, and other organizations
throughout the country. On Sunday 4 January 2015, Serros died at the Berke-
ley home she shared with her husband, Antonio, two years after she was
diagnosed with adenoid cystic carcinoma, a rare malignancy of the salivary
glands. She was 48. (DWU)

SOTO, GARY (1952–). Poet, short story writer, novelist, writer of young
adult literature, writer of children’s literature, playwright, editor, essayist,
professor. Born in Fresno, California, to Manuel Soto and Angie Treviño on
12 April 1952, Gary Soto was raised in the San Joaquin Valley by farmwork-
er parents. His father’s death when Soto was five left an indelible mark in
him, which appears in his poetry with considerable longing. Vulnerable to
financial strife, his mother remarried, but Soto’s stepfather was harsh to him
and his two siblings. Instead of enrolling in the military or some low-paying
job, Soto decided to attend Fresno Community College, where he randomly
discovered poetry at the library as a vehicle for his inner feelings. He then
moved on to California State University at Fresno, from which he graduated
magna cum laude with a BA in English in 1974.

Mentored by poet Philip Levine, who demanded an emphasis on craft and
meticulous language selection, Soto discovered the potential for expressing
both subject and technique in poetry that was economical but profound. He
found his calling and his relationship with a group of writers called the
Fresno School of Poets (Luis Omar Salinas, Ernesto Trejo, Leonard Adame,
and Jon Veinberg), which provided a support system consisting of work-
shops and a challenge to write “sound poetry.” He then attended the Univer-
sity of California at Irvine’s Creative Writing Program, graduating with an
MFA in 1976. His immediate success and impact in national journals led to
his being hired at the University of California at Berkeley, where he attained
associate professor status but was turned down for a full professorship in
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1985. Disenchanted with academia, he opted to dedicate himself full-time to writing. He pursued a number of short-term teaching positions in creative writing, at San Diego State University in 1976–1977, the University of California at Riverside up to 1987, the University of Cincinnati in 1988, and Wayne State University in 1990. He is one of the few Chicano authors who has been able to write professionally after disengaging from an academic affiliation.

Soto has a voluminous oeuvre from his long and prolific career. Initially, he became a lightning rod for poetry that distanced itself from the cultural nationalist agenda that was prevalent in the 1970s. He avoided using bilingual expressions, and his subjects did not seem to be overtly Chicano Movement oriented, although a working-class focus is evident. He emphasized how language constructs metaphors to speak of minimalist events and images. From this emerged an aesthetic preference for the small and insignificant happenings surrounded by a mysterious world of uncertainty and paradoxes. He reveals an internal world of conflict and alienation. In an autobiographical essay Soto states: “A lot of my work seems autobiographical, because I write a lot about growing up as a Mexican American. It’s important to me to create and share new stories about my heritage. . . . There are many different types of writers. Some people like to write things that are factual and historical. For me, the joy of being a writer is to take things I see and hear and then rearrange them. I like to tamper with reality and create new possibilities. In short, not all my work is autobiographical, but it could be” (http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/gary-soto).


Soto stands out as one of the most decorated Chicano writers in terms of national and international awards, recognition, and fellowships. His impressive list of awards clearly situates him among the “who’s who” in Chicano letters and includes the Academy of American Poets Prize (1975); the Nation-Discovery Prize (1975); the International Poetry Forum’s selection of his work in 1976 among the 1,200 entries for the United States; the University of California at Irvine’s Chicano Contest Literary Prize (1976); Poetry magazine’s Bess Hokin Prize (1977); Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award nominations (1978); a Guggenheim Fellowship (1979); a National Education Association Fellowship (1981); Poetry magazine’s highly regarded Levinson Award (1984); the American Book Award (1985); selection as an Ellison Poet at the University of Cincinnati in 1988; the California Arts Council Fellowship (1989); a Beatty Award from the California Library Association (1991); a Reading Magic Award from Parenting magazine; the George C. Stone Center Recognition of Merit from the Claremont Graduate School (1993); a Carnegie Hall Medal (1993); being a finalist for both the National Book Award and the Los Angeles Times book prize (1995); a Literature Award from the Hispanic Heritage Foundation (1999); an Author-Illustrator Civil Rights Award from the National Education Association (1999); a Book Award from PEN Center West (1999); a Silver Medal from the Commonwealth Club of California (2000); the Tomás Rivera Prize (2002); and the establishment of the Gary Soto Literary Museum at Fresno City College in 2010.
Soto released his first book of poetry, *The Elements of San Joaquin*, in 1977, published by the University of Pittsburgh Press in its prestigious Pitt Poetry Series. Divided into three sections and composed in succinct and direct language, the collection presents a bleak view of urban existence and rural life in the greater San Joaquin Valley, with the subdivisions offering descriptions of life in the urban centers, portrayals of the farmworking class, and reminiscences of childhood, respectively. The poems in part 1 offer a portrayal of urban workers, violence, crime, and alienation. “San Fernando Road,” for example, describes the difficult manual labor that young Mexican workers engage in “on this road of factories.” Among these laborers is Leonard Cruz, a homeless man who seems to be on the verge of death: “Far from home / He had no place / To go. Nights / He slept in cars / Or behind warehouses, / Shivering . . . And dawn is only hours away” (3–4). The poem “The Underground Parking” describes the rape of “your wife” by “A man who holds fear / Like the lung a spot of cancer” (5), and “The Morning They Shot Tony López, Barber and Pusher Who Went Too Far, 1958” speaks of the unforeseen assassination of a local drug dealer. In all, as Juan Bruce-Novoa (1982) acknowledges, “four of the six poems of this section refer to rape; one and possibly two more to murder; two to drugs, another to drunkenness, and one to mental illness” (*Chicano Poetry*, 1188).

Part 2 of the collection consists of 20 poems, the first 8 of which constitute a long sequence poem titled “The Elements of San Joaquin.” The subdivisions of this section each have a particular title (e.g., “Field,” “Wind,” “Sun,” “Rain”), with each composition reflecting on the harsh effects of the elements on migrant workers as they toil during the harvest season. In “Field,” after a long day of working the grape fields in the blowing wind, the poetic voice sardonically asserts: “A fine silt, washed by sweat, / Has settled into the lines / on my wrists and palms. Already I am becoming the valley, A soil that sprouts nothing / For any of us” (15). Similarly, in “Wind” the poetic voice expresses the transforming consequences of the dry wind on his temperament. Like the rabid dog, he too is becoming violently angry at a thankless system that “sprouts nothing” for its field workers, and he is on the brink of a rabid outburst.

The 12 poems in part 3 of *The Elements* are mostly remembrances of the poet’s childhood, which are often projected somberly and dispassionately. Many of the poems evoke family, friends, and childhood places and experiences. The poem “History” nostalgically recalls his farmworker-turned-homemaker grandma, in her fifties, who still “lit the stove. / . . . sliced *papas* [potatoes], / Pounded *chiles* [chilies] / With a stone / Brought from Guadala- jara,” despite her physical condition and waning health (40). “Photo, 1957” focuses on an image of his mother at age 22, holding her child Debra and looking up “smiling to a cloud perhaps,” displaying happiness and radiance in the presence of her husband, not anticipating his looming death. The poem
“Spirit” describes the emotional impact of the father’s accidental death upon his family, especially the five-year-old poetic voice. The Elements of San Joaquin was awarded the United States Award of the International Poetry Forum in 1976, prior to its publication in the Pitt Poetry Series in 1977. The New York Times Book Review honored the book by reprinting six of the poems.

Soto’s second collection of poetry, The Tale of Sunlight, continues along the line of his first book, with well-crafted verses dependent more on metaphors than on action, except that introspection takes on new meaning. Verbs often matter little, with images taking precedence thanks to cubistic techniques. The poet wants the reader to experience the pieces of images coming together like Legos in order to decipher the emotions being portrayed. Considerable obscurity reigns because he does not offer openly social poetry, but social themes of despair, vulnerability, and isolation are still common threads: “The poor are unshuffled cards of leaves / . . . / Eating only enough so as not to say good-bye” (23). Objects have a life of their own through a minimalist lens: an ant, rustling weeds, a moon above the trees, a stunned gray street, the moon’s laughter, reading a face like braille, an iguana munching air, unsleeved limbs—all populate a poetry with contained evocations in order to provide glimpses instead of the full story. Soto challenges the reader to follow a treasure map, often insinuating a discourse of riddles more than stating anything directly.

In this collection, Soto rarely resorts to narrative realism because his objective is impressionism in the form of contemporary abstract art. The collection is also divided into three distinct parts: the Molina poems representing his childhood; a diverse array of ambience poems; and the Manuel Zaragoza poems, which highlight the bohemian life of a roaming individual open to close encounters with sexuality, booze, and Mexico. In the poem “How an Uncle Became Gray,” he suggests having read Gabriel García Márquez’s magical-real butterflies, thus indulging in fancy. But the author shows empathy for tired souls who are unable to break out of their circumscribed conditions. As José Varela-Ibarra observes, “Soto is also a master of the one liner.” Ultimately, Soto warns against excess and extreme conditions by allowing the “sunlight” to enter your soul in order to relish the wonders that nature has to offer. The Tale of Sunlight was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

Soto’s Father Is a Pillow Tied to a Broom is a collection of 10 poems in chapbook form loosely related to his family and acquaintances. The well-crafted images represent an implied narrative stitched together to recount the hardships lived by an adolescent in relation to his stepfather, mother, sister, and by extension other characters (Beto, Camilo, Pérez Widow, Frankie, Angel, and finally a Filipino American writer named Carlos Bulosan, known for his famous fictional autobiography America Is in the Heart [1946]). Nostalgia and melancholy are used to recall his stepfather’s absences while
drinking excessively and his mother’s resourcefulness in maintaining the family. Destitute, the boy is sent out to hunt for rabbits, but he usually ends up with frogs or catfish, clearly implying scraps. The central metaphor of a “father as a pillow tied to a broom” evokes the family situation of a useless stepfather. Domestic violence is assimilated by the young, transferring their rage to defenseless animals, such as when “I / Slapped a pillowcase / Of frogs against / A fence post, until / They grew silent” (8). Sadness prevails within a world gone awry, emphasized by a boy who licks a salt block that was meant for cows. Usually in free verse, Soto uses the quatrain to simulate conventionalism with imagery and themes that combine to create a sense of awe and apprehension in a cruel world of abandonment.

Black Hair, also published by the University of Pittsburgh Pitt Poetry Series, is a collection of 49 poems divided into two parts. The poetic voice appears more mature and less anguished about his losses, principally his father’s death and his impoverished background. The reflective poems concentrate more on the present than on the past, focused on creating a life for the poet’s daughter and his wife. Many of the poems are addressed to his daughter to teach her about nature, her surroundings, the significance of simple phenomena, love, dating at a young age, and how things work. Some sorrow brings back memories of poverty, when his life was unstable and uncertain. The central motif “black hair” denotes his head moving through a wide array of situations and fantasies while still filled with astonishment about unembellished things. Here, a number of symbols repeat themselves, such as sparrows (usually implying memory), clouds (fantasy or temporary distractions), grass (the passing of time), trees (landmarks of growing up), oranges (childhood playthings), dust and ash (death), the moon (moods), and bread (a ritual of sharing). Other birds embody other connotations: pigeons bicker, gulls pick at dead heads, and generic birds compete with kids for the fruit. But the poetic voice also ponders larger questions about love, death, the meaning of life, and the mysteries of the ineffable. The reflections end on a somber note in “These Days”: “in the end / not even the ants / will care who we were / When they climb our faces / To undo the smiles” (78). So what was often exploration and an affirmation of simple pleasures turns into contemplating the inevitable. To date Soto has published a total of 20 collections of poetry, some of which are in the young adult category.

As does his poetry, much of Soto’s prose emanates from his observations of daily life in California’s Central Valley, portrayals of farmworkers and other working-class characters, and his childhood memories. Such is the case in Living up the Street: Narrative Recollections (1985), his first work of prose—fiction or nonfiction—which won a Before Columbus Foundation American Book Award. Narrative Recollections is a collection of short prose pieces that describes the author’s coming-of-age experiences while growing up in the Fresno barrio during the late 1950s through the 1970s. Narrated in
the first person in very vivid, detailed, and conversational language, each of
the 21 memories recalls a particular event in the author’s life, from adoles-
cence to adulthood and married life. “Being Mean,” the first of these recol-
clections, tells the story of Soto and his siblings, ages four, five, and six, who
are left home alone while their parents are out working. Given their unabated
energy, their “streak of orneriness,” and the lack of adult supervision, the
children spend the day fighting among themselves and with neighboring
children, wrestling, eating raw bacon, jumping from the couch, sword fight-
ing with rolled-up newspapers, stealing from the neighbors, kicking chick-
enes, throwing rocks at passing cars, hurling cherry tomatoes at one another
inside the house, and even starting a fire in the living room.

“The Small Faces,” on the other hand, has a much more mature and re-
sponsible narrative voice. Now 16 years of age and unable to find a summer
job, the narrator volunteers to become a recreational assistant for the City
Parks Department and later assists children at the school Soto first attended
as a child. Other memories tell of his school escapades and experiences
(“Catholics,” “Summer School,” “Bloodworth,” “The Beauty Contest”), his
interest in girls (“Desire”), his relationship with his family (“Father”), other
childhood experiences (“Baseball in April,” “Saturday with Jackie”); and his
work experiences (“Looking for Work,” “One Last Time,” “Black Hair”).
Soto followed Living up the Street with four additional collections of auto-
biographical sketches: Small Faces, Lesser Evils: Ten Quartets, The Effects
of Knut Hamsun on a Fresno Boy: Recollections and Short Stories, and Help
Wanted: Stories.

In Baseball in April and Other Stories, a collection of 11 short tales for
young readers, Soto turned to fiction. In these stories, Chicana/o adolescents
and teenagers dare to dream and strive to rise above the crowd, and Soto once
again draws on his own childhood in California’s Central Valley to explore
the sometimes painful theme of growing up. In the collection’s title story,
“Baseball in April,” he narrates the story of two siblings, 9-year-old Jesse
and his 11-year-old brother Michael, in the city’s spring tryouts for Little
League baseball, hoping to become members of one of the Little League
teams. Since this is their third year in a row of tryouts, Michael is confident
that “this is the year” (16). Despite Michael’s excellent performance in the
fielding and hitting trials, neither is selected to play on a team, instead join-
ing the Hobos, a neighborhood team comprised mostly of Mexican children.
Similarly, “The Marble Champ” tells the story of Lupe Medrano, a 12-year-
old who excels in academics, but who is determined to stand out at least in
one sport. With this in mind, she practices until she has developed the neces-
sary skills for playing marbles, setting out to win the neighborhood marble-
shooting competition. And in “Growing Up,” 16-year-old María, a 10th grad-
er, thinks she’s too grown up to go on family vacations and convinces her
father to allow her to stay with her godmother while the family travels.
However, when the family returns, Maria feels resentful that they had a good time without her. *Baseball in April and Other Stories* earned instant critical recognition and garnered two awards, the Best Book for Young Adults Award from the American Library Association and the John and Patricia Beatty Award from the California Library Association, in 1991. Additional works of fiction by Soto for young adults include the short story collection *Local News*, the popular novel *Buried Onions*, and its sequel, *The Afterlife*.

The publication of *Jesse* in 1994 transitioned Soto to the novel. A rite-of-passage novel set in Fresno during the early 1970s, *Jesse* tells the story of two brothers, 17-year-old Jesse and 19-year-old Abel, who have left home to escape the wrath of an abusive stepfather. The boys attend a local city college and live on a $90 monthly Social Security benefit that each receives due to their father’s death. To make ends meet, they also engage in field work on weekends, picking a variety of vegetables and fruits. At the same time, the brothers aspire to escape a lifetime of labor in the fields. To this end, Jesse joins the United Farm Workers (UFW) movement headed by César Chávez, trusting that such involvement will result in better working conditions for workers like him and Abel. At the city college, Jesse develops an interest in a young woman, but he is humiliated on their first date when Ron Dryer, an old high school acquaintance, confronts and strikes him. Near the end of the academic year, his older brother finds romance, but Jesse becomes more of a recluse. Instead, he joins the organization MEChA (Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán or Chicano Student Movement of Aztlan), gaining a new awareness about the organization’s mission while denouncing U.S. involvement in Vietnam. At the end, Abel is drafted into the army, and Jesse, saddened and lonely because of his brother’s absence, understands he will now have to fend for himself. In addition to *Jesse*, Soto has also published three novels for adult readers and at least six others for adolescents and/or young adult readers.

Soto has also written several children’s picture books, the first of which was published in 1993 (*Too Many Tamales*), including a series featuring Chato, a witty, playful, low-riding cat from the barrio who wears baggy pants and a backwards baseball cap. The series includes *Chato’s Kitchen; Chato and the Party Animals*, which won the Pura Belpré Medal for best illustration in 2002; *Chato Goes Cruisin’*; and *Chato’s Day of Dead*. Soto has released two plays, *Novio Boy* and *Nerdlandia*, both romantic comedies intended for junior high and high school readers. *Novio Boy*, a one-act play in six scenes that tells the story of 9th-grader Rudy’s first date with 11th-grader Patricia, focused on his concerns about what to say and how to behave during the date, including how to obtain the money to pay for it. *Nerdlandia* tells about Martín, a teenage Chicano nerd who admires Ceci, a pretty and popular
Chicana girl, from afar. With the aid of his friends, Martín changes his image to get the attention of Ceci, who, unbeknownst to Martin, has also been admiring him; she, in turn, transforms herself into a nerd to get his attention.

Given his literary proficiency, Soto is indeed one of the most accomplished of Chicano writers, and his writings have attracted a vast audience of children, young adults, and mature readers, as well as garnering many awards. (DWU/FAL)

SPANGLISH. Sometimes called Espanglés, this term refers to a code-switched vernacular comprised of a mixture of Spanish and English that is spoken by bilingual Latinos/as across the United States. Although not as widespread in writing as in conversation, the use of Spanglish is also present in Chicano/Latino literature, especially in the works of writers who are fluent in both Spanish and English. Early Chicano writers, such as Alurista, Gloria Anzaldúa, José Antonio Burciaga, Margarita Cota-Cárdenas, Angela de Hoyos, José Montoya, Ricardo Sánchez, and Bernice Zamora, and Nuyorican authors, including Sandra María Esteves, Tato Laviera, Pedro Pietri, Miguel Piñero, and Piri Thomas, readily use Spanglish in their writings. For bilingual artists such as these and others (e.g., Junot Díaz), switching between Spanish and English is not a capricious act, but rather an attempt to exploit the effectiveness of each language, along with the rhythmic or semantic charge that might be produced by combining them. It is indeed a very conscious decision on the part of the writers to promote the legitimacy of the Spanish language in American society and also to generate a desired literary effect. Ultimately, Spanglish provides a vehicle of communication for those writers whose works demonstrate the coexistence and mutual penetration of the two languages. Such a linguistic modality permits a medium of biculturalism and bilingualism to develop organically. (DWU)

SUÁREZ, MARIO (1923–1998). Short story writer, journalist, novelist. Born in Tucson, Arizona, on 12 January 1923 and raised there, Suárez quietly became one of the earliest known Chicano writers from the middle of the 20th century. A perfectionist, he produced 20 short stories and 2 drafts of novellas, but only published 11 stories. Given that most of the stories are interconnected by the common space they share—El Hoyo, an urban barrio in Tucson—one might surmise that the author intended to bring them together as a novel called “Chicano Sketches,” approximately the title that editors Francisco A. Lomeli, Cecilia Cota-Robles Suárez, and Juan José Casillas-Núñez assigned to the posthumous collection of his published and unpublished stories: Chicano Sketches: Short Stories by Mario Suárez (2004).
Suárez was a close observer of human mannerisms, customs and habits, distinctive qualities, and characteristics of common folk in a Chicano barrio. He especially highlighted their features as characters who possessed unique personalities or displayed inimitable ways of being. Each story tended to focus on one type of character through the lens of humor, irony, a philosophical viewpoint, or some other quirky feature—either virtuous or deviant. Together, these stories embody a whole barrio to show characters in their everyday life patterns, often rubbing elbows with others to unveil a dynamic social milieu of lively people who manifest their uniqueness and, consequently, their humanity. Suárez obviously respected their individuality at the same time that he allowed them to show how they transcended the unidimensional characteristics that mainstream society saw in them. The author carefully presents their linguistic habits, their obsessions, their strengths and flaws, and most of all what motivated them to act within their respective social contexts. So, if each story is a sketch, together they form a kind of social puzzle, offering a fairly nuanced picture of both the characters and their environment. Suárez’s careful delineations cover a wide gamut of personalities and the barrio—which becomes the most important character—but ultimately the reader encounters a series of unforgettable individuals, such as Señor Garza, the barber-philosopher-counselor; Loco-Chu, the barrio idiot who collects coins; Kid Zopilote, the *pachuco* wannabe who is ostracized by his acquaintances, the drunk who resists taking the last unction until a priest tells him heaven is filled with Mexican music, food, and women; and the migrant who faces an uphill battle to provide for his family.

Suárez also attempted to compose four novel manuscripts—“Cuco Goes to a Party,” “Trouble in Petate,” “A Guy’s Worst Enemy,” and “The Kiosk”—but he found no takers in New York, consequently stifling his career plans as a novelist. Nonetheless, he persisted in publishing some of his short stories as early as 1947 and throughout the early 1950s, and he joined the ranks of other writers during the Chicano Renaissance after 1965 in promoting fully developed characters who defied stereotypes and limited depictions. In addition, Suárez served as a contributing editor to a newspaper in Tucson and later contributed to area newspapers in southern California by submitting short stories and essays on current cultural and political issues relevant to Chicanos. He no doubt should be recognized as a key figure in the foundation of Chicano literature before and during the Chicano Renaissance period. His short stories, some masterpieces of character development, offer refreshing and unbiased portrayals of real people who otherwise would be relegated to oblivion. (FAL)
TEJANO/A (TEX-MEX). Tejano refers to a person of Texas Mexican background, which is usually synonymous with Tex-Mex. The term has a wide assortment of usages, principally as an identity marker for a Latino from Texas. It can also refer to the language spoken as a variety of Spanish, bicultural practices of the region, a distinct folklore, and the cuisine (based on meat, chile con carne, burritos, and other Mexican dishes). The term has come to signify various styles, for example, as in music preferences based on banda or conjunto (a band or group of musicians synonymous with northern Mexican music, commonly referred to as Norteña or ranchera music). Tejanos are well-known for fusing various genres of music, such as ranchera with country, synthesizers with conjunto, corridos with ballads, and cumbia and salsa with Tejano Norteñas. One outstanding performer who cultivated, fused, and transcended such styles is the popular Chicana pop singer Selena, who almost reached a saintly status. Tex-Mex is usually mentioned in terms of regional pride about anything from Texas, as a way of distinguishing itself from other cultural practices of Anglo Texans and other Latinos. (FAL)

TEXAS RANGERS. Also known as los rinches, a derisive epithet for this enforcement agency that emerged unofficially after the Mexican–American War (1846–1848), in which the United States appropriated 51 percent of Mexico’s territory by 1848 (what are now the states of Texas, New Mexico, Arizona, Nevada, California, and parts of Oregon, Colorado, and Utah). The agency’s origins are attributed to the strong anti-Mexican sentiments after the war, which was used to justify arbitrary acts of injustice against people of Mexican descent. The Rangers soon acquired their own mythology as a volunteer group, infiltrated by vigilantes under the pretext of protecting the social order in the Old West against rampant lawlessness. The Texas legislature eventually made the group an official enforcement agency in 1874, comprised mainly of Anglo Texans but sometimes of Mexican Texans. Although the expression “shoot first and ask questions later” might not have been the Rangers’ official modus operandi, this was often the perception of
peoples of Mexican descent, who seemed to bear the brunt of such swift acts of “justice.” More than 3,000 persons of Mexican descent were killed, in addition to African Americans and Native Americans.

The Rangers were feared, despised, and often viewed as an oppressive force to maintain the status quo in Anglo-American society, in which usurpation of grazing animals, land, and other possessions was often at stake. According to the Texas Hall of Fame and Museum, one writer said that a Texas Ranger could “ride like a Mexican, trail like an Indian, shoot like a Tennessean, and fight like the devil.” The Rangers are generally vilified among Chican@s from Texas because of their controversial habit of enforcing the law stringently against persons of Mexican descent. (FAL)

**THEORY IN THE FLESH.** This is a feminist concept coined by Cherríe Moraga to refer to the body and physical aspects of the woman as the source upon which to establish a theory to study women, or what Norma Alarcón (Anzaldúa, 1990) calls “women as theoretical subjects.” Francisco Lomelí (1993) refers to “psychic inwardness,” and Paula M. L. Moya (2000) writes of the totality of factors surrounding a woman that shapes her perspective as well as her politics. A woman’s sense of desire is predicated by location, consciousness, and identity, and is thereby conditioned by sexual preference and class, race, and ethnicity. (FAL)

*See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS.*

**THIRD ROOT.** A recently coined term, it refers to the inclusion of and acknowledgment that African ancestry is a fundamental part of a Latino’s racial and cultural makeup, in contrast to the binary model of indigenous and European. (FAL)

**THOMAS, PIRI (1928–2011).** Writer, poet, activist. Born Juan Pedro Tomás, the first son of a Puerto Rican mother and a Cuban father in New York City’s Spanish Harlem, Piri Thomas is credited as being a pioneer of the Nuyorican Movement.

His early childhood was spent in extreme poverty after his father lost his job during the Great Depression. During his adolescence, Thomas’s family relocated to Long Island after becoming more financially stable. While the impoverished conditions of his childhood were difficult, Thomas’s adolescence in Long Island was marred by intense racism. He was dark-skinned like his father, and his schoolmates harassed him for being black. Thomas felt alienated from his light-skinned mother and brother. As a result of these painful adolescent experiences, Thomas decided to leave his family and moved back to Harlem at age 16. As a Puerto Rican and black Latino, Thomas felt at the margins of both white U.S. society and the Puerto Rican
community itself, which considered him a black man and thus marginalized and inferior. These feelings intensified during his adolescence, and he began to use drugs and participate in gang activities. Thomas was subsequently imprisoned for seven years after an attempted armed robbery, spending much of the 1950s in prison.

In interviews and in his writing, Thomas described at length the way in which his time in prison led to a complete self-transformation; he earned a high school diploma, and it was while incarcerated that he began to write. After being released from prison, Thomas was employed by Youth Development Incorporated (YDI), where he counseled youth involved with gangs. He also continued writing, and his prison writings became the foundation for his groundbreaking debut novel, the autobiographical *Down These Mean Streets*, which he completed with a grant he received from the Rabinowitz Foundation in 1967. The novel brought to life the harsh social realities of the barrio, including poverty, racism, and crime. Significantly, the novel highlights the psychological effects of these phenomena on the protagonist, who struggled with feelings of profound alienation and self-loathing as a result of internalized racism. The novel is also a coming-of-age narrative in which the narrator emerges with an awareness of the need for cross-racial harmony rooted in respect and understanding. The narrator’s voice is dynamic and uses the language of the Harlem of the time in which it is set. Thomas’s gritty account was the first time a book about the urban Puerto Rican experience had ever been widely read in the United States, and although it was controversial for some of its language and representations of violence, the publication of *Down These Mean Streets* is widely thought to be a critical starting point in Nuyorican literature.

Thomas wrote a number of other books, including *Savior, Savior, Hold My Hand* (1972); *Seven Long Times* (1974), a prison memoir; and *Stories from El Barrio* (1978), a collection of short stories. He also wrote several unpublished plays, and the Puerto Rican Traveling Theater in New York produced one of his plays, *The Golden Streets*, in 1970. Thomas was also a poet, and though he did not publish any collections of poetry in book form, he produced two compact discs containing what he calls “word songs,” poems performed with instrumental accompaniment.

Thomas dedicated a significant amount of time to activism and advocacy for youth and the imprisoned. He frequently spoke in schools and prisons, where he shared his experiences and insights and performed his poetry and prose. He lived with his wife, the writer, editor, and translator Suzanne Dod Thomas, in San Francisco until his death in 2011. (MJV)

**TREATY OF GUADALUPE HIDALGO.** Officially called the Treaty of Peace, Friendship, Limits and Settlement between the United States of America and the Mexican Republic, the Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo is the peace
treaty signed between the United States and Mexico that ended the Mexican–American War of 1846–1848. Following the defeat of the Mexican army and the fall of Mexico City in September 1847, the Mexican government surrendered, and peace negotiations began. The war officially ended on 2 February 1848, with the signing of the treaty in the Villa de Guadalupe Hidalgo neighborhood of Mexico City.

Under the treaty, Mexico surrendered 525,000 square miles of its national territory to the United States, including the land that makes up all or parts of present-day Arizona, California, Colorado, Nevada, New Mexico, Utah, and Wyoming. Mexico also gave up all claims to Texas and recognized the Rio Grande as America’s southern boundary. In return, the United States paid Mexico a mere $15 million and agreed to settle all claims of U.S. citizens against Mexico. Article VIII of the treaty gave Mexican citizens living in those annexed areas the choice of relocating to within Mexico’s new boundaries or receiving American citizenship, with the same civil rights enjoyed by extant U.S. citizens. Of the 80,000 or so Mexicans living in the annexed region, more than 90 percent chose to become U.S. citizens. (DWU)
ULIBARRÍ, SABINE R. (1919–2003). Short story writer, poet, educator, critic, essayist, statesman. Originally from Tierra Amarilla in northern New Mexico, Sabine Ulibarri was born on 21 September 1919 to Sabiniano and Simonita Ulibarri, who owned a cattle ranch. He died on 4 January 2003, after an extensive career as an educator at the University of New Mexico (UNM). He served in the U.S. Army Air Force as a gunner in 35 combat missions during World War II, for which he was decorated for bravery with the Distinguished Flying Cross and the Air Medal. After the war, he married María Concepción, studied for his MA in Spanish at UNM, and later earned a PhD from the University of California, Los Angeles in 1958. He then returned to UNM, where he taught and served as chair of the Modern and Classical Languages Department for a number of years until he retired in 1982. In 1978, he was appointed by the Real Academia Española (RAE [Royal Spanish Academy]) to serve as a correspondent for the Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española (ANLE [North American Academy of the Spanish Language]).

Aside from being widely known on the foreign language circuits, Ulibarri became an avid spokesman for bilingualism in the early 1970s. He first wrote a book of poetry, Al cielo se sube a pie (One reaches heaven on foot; 1961), a highly lyrical exposé on love, identity, and the spiritual world, in which he illustrates a sensibility clearly shaped by the Spanish poets Juan Ramón Jiménez, Gustavo Adolfo Bécquer, Antonio Machado, and Federico García Lorca. There is also a philosophical affiliation with Miguel de Unamuno’s tragic sense of life. Ulibarri also published his dissertation as a book, El mundo poético de Juan Ramón Jiménez: Estudio estilístico de la lengua poética y de los símbolos (1962). In addition, he published a book of poems, Amor y Ecuador (Love and Ecuador; 1966), which celebrates his contact with Ecuador as a place of inspiration.

However, Ulibarri is best known for his depictions of rural New Mexico, which include both Hispanic and Native American portrayals and characters. His outstanding collection of short stories, Tierra Amarilla: Cuentos de Nuevo México (Tierra Amarilla: Stories of New Mexico; 1964), has come out in
numerous editions and translations, becoming a classic in the process. It is grounded in northern New Mexico, but the colorful characters transcend the region with considerable pathos and poignancy. Without idealizing the characters or their predicaments, Ulibarri manages to present convincing characterizations thanks to costumbrismo (local color) and vivid humor. The author captures something quintessentially rural New Mexican while tracing oddball characters, social misfits, contemplative cowboys, fantastic happenings, or people trying to find their place in their social milieu. What emerges, as Reynaldo Ruiz (1989) argues, is the soul and spirit of Chicano communities in the isolated towns of northern New Mexico. Among some of the more notable stories are “Caballo mago,” about a legendary wonderhorse captured by a child, much like finding a unicorn; “Hombre sin nombre,” a philosophical piece about a father’s influence on the narrator’s identity; and “Juan P.,” whose sister’s flatulence provoked his nickname. The stories are unforgettable and wonderful renditions of a long-gone Hispanic past.

Ulibarri also wrote other collections of short stories, such as Mi abuela fumaba puros = My Grandma Smoked Cigars (1977), El Cóndor and Other Stories (1989), and Primeros encuentros = First Encounters (1982). In these works, he again returns to his favorite place: northern New Mexico as a place and source of human experience, where the grandmother matriarch serves as the cultural center, a free-spirited cowboy finds creative ways to survive, an Apache illustrates the cultural fusion of the region, and the Penitente Brotherhood expresses the deep religiosity of the rural folks. Folklore and storytelling are brilliantly woven into memorable characterizations of a lively Hispanic culture that has persevered while coexisting harmoniously with Native American neighbors. Ulibarri depicts the old ways as they confront new social forces, but first he gives the former their rightful place.

Ulibarri has also developed the essay genre, in which he philosophizes about certain social issues, particularly those related to language, specifically the Spanish language in the United States. As he states in his essay “Language and Culture”: “The language, the Word, carries within it the history, the culture, the traditions, the very life of a people, the flesh. Language is people. We cannot conceive of a people without a language, or a language without a people. The two are one and the same.” His work is an example of early Hispanic writings that have transitioned into more contemporary times. (FAL)

URREA, LUIS ALBERTO (1955–). Poet, novelist, short fiction writer, essayist, university professor. Born on 20 August 1955 in Tijuana, Mexico, to a Mexican father and an American mother, Luis Alberto Urrea lived in Tijuana until the age of three, when his family relocated to the African American and Mexican barrio of Logan Heights in south San Diego. In 1965, the family left the Logan Heights barrio and moved to Clairemont, a
URREA, LUIS ALBERTO (1955–) • 293

predominantly white neighborhood in San Diego. In Clairemont, Urrea attended local public schools, graduating from Clairemont High School in 1973. After completing secondary school he enrolled in the University of California, San Diego (UCSD), earning a BA in writing in 1977, and eventually went on to earn an MA in creative writing from the University of Colorado–Boulder in 1994.

After completing his undergraduate degree at UCSD, Urrea was active in relief work on the U.S.–Mexican border—in trash dumps and orphanages—for several years, including with San Diego’s Spectrum Ministries (a Protestant organization) from 1978 to 1982, a life-changing experience that would later serve as the basis for his critically acclaimed trilogy of books focusing on the life and people at the U.S.–Mexican border. After doing the relief work on the border, Urrea relocated to Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he taught expository writing and fiction workshops at Harvard University (1982–1986), then served as an associate professor of liberal arts at Massachusetts Bay Community College until 1990, when he moved to Boulder, Colorado, to pursue graduate studies and devote time to writing.

Luis Alberto Urrea developed an interest in writing at an early age. An avid reader of literary texts at age 13, he chose to follow the pathway of his literary role models. At a recent Dallas Festival of Ideas, he stated: “I just had to do what my heroes were doing,” and indicated that he got his start in literature writing poems “to impress girls in junior high school.” While in high school, he self-published his first story, “I See the Wind, the Blind Man Cried.” He reflects on this endeavor in his blog: “Like all young writers (and cartoonists) I wanted to be published. I didn’t know how to be published. All I knew was I had piles of cool stuff I wanted to see in print. . . . The cover art reflects that phase when I was trying to learn how to draw with pencils and fancied myself Salvador Dali, Jr.” (http://luisurrea.com/blog/my-first-book). Urrea’s first “real” publication came out in 1977, when he was a senior at UCSD. For his senior thesis, he penned a book of short fiction and poetry titled *Frozen Moments*, which was later published in a small edition of 1,500 copies.

An extremely prolific and versatile writer, Urrea has published 16 books representing all the major genres. He has published five volumes of nonfiction, the first of which was *Across the Wire: Life and Hard Times on the Mexican Border* (1993), followed by *By the Lake of Sleeping Children: The Secret Life of the Mexican Border* (1996). These two works comprised nonfiction essays, sketches, and vignettes originally published in the *San Diego Reader*, a local alternative newspaper. Written while Urrea worked with Pastor Von and Spectrum Ministries as a relief worker on the borderlands from 1978 to 1982, these two journalistic memoirs offer a compassionately painful but candid portrayal of the lives of orphans, homeless teenagers, garbage pickers and dump dwellers, and other olvidados or abandoned peo-
ple left to starve in utter pain and depravity in the garbage dumps and slums of Tijuana, Mexico. These works were followed by two memoirs, *Nobody’s Son: Notes from an American Life* (1998) and *Wandering Time: Western Notebooks* (1999). While the former documents Urrea’s struggle to come to terms with his own conflicted Mexican/American identity, recalling his parents’ “daily war over their son’s ethnicity,” *Wandering Time* offers an intimate account of his own search for healing and redemption after a failed marriage and the lukewarm reception of his novel *In Search of Snow.*

Urrea’s final work of nonfiction is *The Devil’s Highway* (2004), a true story that chronicles the 19 May 2001 attempt of 26 men to cross the Mexican border into the sweltering desert of southern Arizona, a region known as the Devil’s Highway, one of the deadliest regions in North America. Of those who entered the Arizona desert, only 12 survived. Based on interviews, testimony, and government documents and reports from both Mexico and the United States, Urrea focuses on the 26 undocumented subjects and the conditions that took them to *El norte.* As he tracks the paths these men took from their small villages in the state of Veracruz all the way to the Arizona wasteland, he introduces the reader to each individual immigrant by name and tells his personal story, recounting the motivations, dreams, and hopes each had for risking his life as he did, and in doing so, “puts a human face on one of the great tragedies of our time.” An outstanding story of human fortitude and courage, *The Devil’s Highway* won the Lannan Literary Award for nonfiction in 2004 and was also a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Nonfiction in 2005.

As previously indicated, Luis Alberto Urrea is also a poet, with three printed collections to his name. *The Fever of Being* (1994) is a collection of poems, written mostly in English with a few in Spanish, dealing with Urrea’s life within the U.S.–Mexican border cultures. Some poems in the collection recall individuals and events (sometimes tragic) of his youth and his experiences on the borderlands; others tell of his personal experiences with love, separation, migration, and death, among other topics. The poem “Man’s Fate,” for example, tells about how a man copes when a love relationship goes awry; “And the Wind to Blow Us On” nostalgically pays homage to his deceased mother, Phyllis. This collection won the 1994 Western States Book Award for Poetry.

Urrea’s second collection of poetry, *Ghost Sickness* (1997), like his memoirs and other works of nonfiction, is an autobiographical narrative of death, divorce, and the precarious life of immigrant workers. Of this collection Urrea states, “I think of *Ghost Sickness* as my last Gothic book. I had some last unclean spirits to exorcise.” In this light, he confronts the ghosts and conflicts of a past existence that continued to haunt him: his father, a dark and crazy macho Mexicano whom Luis admired and dreaded as a young
boy; his proud and lonely Anglo mother, so out of place in the heat of Tijuana; and the identity conflict of his Mexican/American heritages within his inner self.

His most recent collection, *The Tijuana Book of the Dead* (2015), is an assortment of mostly narrative poetry, some of which code switches between English and Spanish, that relates stories about particular individuals, places, and events he experienced in the borderlands. In “You Who Seek Grace from a Distracted God,” he directs his voice toward the rejected and downtrodden masses of the border region and repeatedly expresses his love for them; in “Valley of the Palms,” he compassionately recalls the orphans of Tijuana, particularly six-year-old María, whose father “took her from bar to bar, where he put her to work” as a prostitute; and in “Codex Luna,” he evokes imagery of young indigenous women, his “unknown sisters,” smuggled across the border to work as maids in homes of affluent Americans. The collection was put together largely in response to the book banning and abolition of Mexican American studies in Arizona and as a cry against the current political climate for immigrants (http://www.luisurrea.com/books).

Urrea is also a prolific writer of fiction. To date he has published four novels and two collections of short stories. Set in the Arizona desert in the mid-1950s, his first novel, *In Search of Snow* (1994), is a coming-of-age novel about a young man seeking love and companionship. After the death of his mother, seven-year-old Mike lives in isolation and loneliness with his redneck father Turk, a former boxer who runs a gas station in the Arizona desert northwest of Tucson. Years later, when his father dies of a heart attack, Mike takes to the road in search of love and human warmth, which he finds in the García family when he is invited into their home by his friend and their son, Bonifacio. Urrea’s next novel is *The Hummingbird’s Daughter* (2005), a delightful historical tale about the life and experiences of healer and mystic Teresa Urrea, a.k.a. the Saint of Cabora, the author’s great-aunt. The illegitimate indigenous daughter of a wealthy Mexican landowner (Don Tomás Urrea) who worked on the Urrea hacienda, Teresita, born in 1873 with a red triangle on her forehead, also possesses a supernatural gift for healing that becomes much stronger under the guidance of Huila, the rancho’s curandera, the midwife and her mentor, and stronger still after she suffers a sexual assault that left her in a coma and she is pronounced dead. She awakens from death exuding the scent of roses, and her healing powers take on a miraculous bent. Her followers were the sick, the dying, and Mexican Indian revolutionaries opposed to the Porfirio Díaz regime. When the Mexican dictatorship of Díaz became aware of her effect on the Yaqui and Tomóchic peoples, she was deported to Arizona. Teresita’s subsequent “healing” life in Arizona and other parts of the United States became the
story of Queen of America (2011). These two books, which involved some 20 years of research and writing, form an epic work honoring the life of an incredible woman.

Between the publications of these two narratives about Teresita, Urrea published Into the Beautiful North (2009). Described as “a playful fusion of fiction and reality” by one reviewer, it is a delightful quest novel narrating the story of three young Mexican women and a gay taco shop proprietor who travel north to “Los Yunaites” (the United States) in search of seven ex-patriots who will help save their village, Tres Camarones, from invading narco bandits.

In the short fiction genre, Urrea has two collections: Six Kinds of Sky (2002) and The Water Museum (2015). In Six Kinds of Sky, Urrea once again becomes a persuasive spokesperson for the downtrodden and the alienated. The well-crafted stories offer a variety of settings, from Tijuana, Rosario, or Mazatlán, Mexico, to the Sioux Indian reservation in South Dakota, and the protagonists are either Latinos or Native Americans, whose struggles are documented most touchingly. Similarly, in the stories of The Water Museum, Urrea examines the borders between nations and between individuals.

Luis Alberto Urrea currently lives with his family in Naperville, Illinois, where he is a professor of creative writing at the University of Illinois–Chicago. (DWU)

See also MEXICAN REVOLUTION (1910–1920).
VALDÉS-RODRÍGUEZ, ALISA (1969–). Novelist, journalist. Valdés-Rodríguez, a saxophonist, graduated from the Berklee School of Music and went on to earn a master’s degree in journalism from Columbia University. She worked as a journalist for several years, writing for the *Boston Globe* and the *Los Angeles Times*, before beginning her career as a novelist.

Born in New Mexico, Valdés-Rodríguez moved around a great deal as a child, as her father, a sociologist and Cuban immigrant, taught at various universities. In interviews, Valdés-Rodríguez has pointed out that she is only half Latina—her mother, a poet and native New Mexican, is of mixed ethnic heritage. Indeed, Valdés-Rodríguez has expressed considerable ambivalence about being labeled a “Latina writer.” In a somewhat infamous interview with a *Chicago Tribune* writer, Valdés-Rodríguez said, “There’s a part of me that wants to vomit to be called a Latina writer. . . . Why am I identified as part of a Latino movement and not by my mother’s Irish background?”

Valdés-Rodríguez is a highly successful author of commercial women’s literature and was dubbed the “Godmother of Chica Lit” by *Time* magazine in 2005. She is the author of 13 novels, a memoir, and several short pieces of fiction. Her breakthrough debut novel, *The Dirty Girls Social Club* (2003), was published by St. Martin’s Press after the publisher won a bidding war with several other major publishers for publication rights to the book. *Dirty Girls* was the first book written by a Latina to debut on the *New York Times* best-seller list. The book was released to great fanfare and was widely compared to Terry McMillan’s *Waiting to Exhale*. The “dirty girls” of the title are six Latina friends in their late twenties who meet while in college, a group of friends who playfully refer to themselves as “sucias” (dirty girls). Significantly, the women protagonists are all professional women with either wealth and/or aspirations to be wealthy, but they represent diverse aspects of the broad pan-ethnic term “Latina/o,” particularly in terms of race and regional and ethnic/national origin.

While it is clear that one of Valdés-Rodríguez’s intentions in the novel was to challenge stereotypes about Latinas, Amanda Morrison (2010) has persuasively argued that Valdés-Rodríguez presents an image of upwardly
mobile, white-collar Latinas at the expense of working-class Latinas, and particularly Mexican Americans/Chicanas. Morrison adds that Valdés-Rodríguez “introduces an undercurrent of disdain for politically radical, gender-convention defying Mexicanas.” Despite scholarly criticisms of the novel, The Dirty Girls Social Club enjoyed major commercial success and became the first book in a loose trilogy that includes Playing with Boys (2004) and Make Him Look Good (2006), books that though less popular were still relatively successful in the commercial realm. Published in 2008, Dirty Girls on Top was the last book in this series.

In 2013, Valdés-Rodríguez published a provocative memoir, The Feminist and the Cowboy, about her relationship with a conservative rancher with traditional views on gender, which was marketed as a love story and compellingly engages issues about feminism and present-day gender relations. Since its publication, Valdés-Rodríguez has publicly made allegations that the relationship on which the memoir is based was an abusive one.

Valdés-Rodríguez received substantial public recognition, particularly at the height of her popularity in the early 2000s, including being named one of the 25 Most Influential Hispanics in the United States by Time, one of the 100 Most Influential Hispanics in the United States by Hispanic Business magazine twice, and Woman of the Year by Latina magazine. Valdés-Rodríguez lives in New Mexico. (MJV)

VALDEZ, LUIS MIGUEL (1940–). Playwright, actor, poet, theater company founder, director, filmmaker, philosopher. Born into a family of migrants in Delano, California, on 26 June 1940, Valdez learned the art of creating theater early, becoming what many consider the father of modern Chicano theater. As the founder of the grassroots El Teatro Campesino (The Farmworkers’ Theatre) in 1965, he spearheaded the fusion of Chicano theater with César Chávez’s farmworkers’ labor struggle, sparking what came to be known as the contemporary Chicano Renaissance by mixing art and social consciousness. He has continued to be a leader in the theater movement with his experimentation and innovations while maintaining his independent theater ensemble in San Juan Bautista, California.

His working-class skits, called actos, have become iconic for their short dramatic form, with a hilarious and often hard-hitting style that incorporates Brechtian techniques (using signs), Pirandellian ideas (characters in search of a director), Cantinflas language (humor as a tool for unmasking contradictions), inspirations from the San Francisco Mime Troupe (a kind of guerrilla theater), the Italian tradition of commedia dell’arte (physical movements, farcical and rambunctious tone), and vaudevillian entertainment (the use of improvisation and poor-man props). He also mastered the mitos (myths), which offered spiritual exposés or mystical treatments of indigenism and suggested a return to basic cosmic stories from the world of Mayans and
Aztecs (e.g., the Virgin of Guadalupe, the Aztec resistance leader Cuauhtémoc, the origins of Mayan cosmogony). In addition, he has developed the corrido (ballad) narrative of popular concerns. The actos in particular were an original, highly innovative, and provocative agitprop theater (a mixture of agitation and propaganda) that developed topics on justice, discrimination in schools, the consequences of war, the effects of stereotypes, and labor strikes. The mitos attracted some attention but few followers among theater groups.

Valdez’s first collection, *Actos by Luis Valdez y El Teatro Campesino* (1971), contains 10 plays that exhibit a combination of all these qualities. He asserts that if his people do not go to the theater, then his theater will go to his people. He lists the following points as goals of his theater: inspire the audience to social action, illuminate specific points about social problems, satirize the opposition, show or hint at a solution, and express what people are feeling (6). The collection includes some of the most unforgettable dramatic pieces, such as “Los vendidos” (The sell-outs), “Las dos caras del patroncito” (The two faces of the boss), “No saco nada de la escuela” (I get nothing out of school) and “Soldado razo” (Common soldier). In 1971, he wrote *Pensamiento serpentino*, a poetic manifesto on aesthetics and philosophy, based closely on Mayan concepts of creation. In 1976, he adapted his play El corrido from the popular, internationally renowned epic play of pathos and innovations *La gran carpa de la Familia Rascuachi* (The great tent of the Rascuachi [also Rasquachi] family). By 1978, Valdez was experimenting with a documentary theater in *Zoot Suit*, based on the Sleepy Lagoon trial of 1942, which received rave reviews at the Mark Taper Forum in Los Angeles but fell short of such fanfare on New York’s Broadway.

The professionalization of Chicano theater produced some critics among its practitioners, but it also became a more polished form. This led to a temporary double career for Valdez: film and theater. He turned *Zoot Suit* into a screenplay in 1982, and in 1987 he directed *La Bamba* and produced *Corridos! Tales of Passion and Revolution*. The latter work revealed Valdez’s penchant for popular forms as a way of disseminating theater more effectively among the masses. This is also quite evident in his re-creation of didactic religious theater in the form of shepherds’ plays, such as *Los pastores* (The shepherds) and *Las cuatro apariciones de la Virgen de Guadalupe* (The four apparitions of the Virgin of Guadalupe), which continue to be presented in San Juan Bautista. Among Valdez’s other outstanding works are the plays *Bernabé* (1972), *Fin del mundo* (End of the earth; 1972), *Bandido* (Bandit; 1981), *The Shrunken Head of Pancho Villa* (written in the early 1960s), and *I Don’t Have to Show You No Stinking Badges* (1986). Valdez has received many awards, among them one of distinction from the Interna-
VÁSQUEZ, RICHARD (1928–1990). Freelance writer, journalist, novelist. Born on 11 June 1928 in the city of South Gate, California, Richard Vásquez was raised in a family of 10 siblings in the San Gabriel Valley, just east of the city of Los Angeles. While not much is known about his youth, it is known that he dropped out of high school at age 17 and joined the U.S. Navy in 1945. After completing his military service in the late 1940s, he returned to the Los Angeles basin and developed his own enterprise in the construction industry while also working nights as a cab driver. In his capacity as a cab driver, he met and was befriended by a newspaper editor who offered him the opportunity to write a weekly column for the *Santa Monica Independent*. In this column, titled “The Cabby,” Vásquez wrote of his experiences as a cab driver in the greater Los Angeles community. And thus was launched his career as a journalist and his vocation as a writer. Following a brief stint with the *Santa Monica Independent*, Vásquez became a reporter for the *San Gabriel Valley Daily Tribune* (1960–1965), for which he produced hundreds of articles on Chicano history and culture; in 1970 he joined the newspaper staff of the *Los Angeles Times* as a replacement for Rubén Salazar, who was killed by the Los Angeles police in 1970 during the Chicano Moratorium against the war in Vietnam. In 1970, the same year he became a columnist for the *Los Angeles Times*, Vásquez also published his first novel, *Chicano*, a work of fiction he began writing in 1960.

A classic of early Chicano literature and a very engaging novel of immigration, *Chicano* spans five decades (1910–1960) and four generations of one family as they seek to gain acceptance and fulfill their dreams in an unreceptive and sometimes hostile American environment. The story opens with Hector Sandoval leading his family out of Mexico during the turmoil of the *Mexican Revolution* of 1910, when his only son, 14-year-old Neftalí, is conscripted into the Mexican Army and deserts his post. Fearing the consequences of this desertion, the Sandoval family abandon their village of Agua Clara (a.k.a. Trainwreck) and immigrate to the United States, “where there will be no more of all that makes us suffer” (32), where they eventually settle in the community of Irwindale, in the greater Los Angeles basin.

Hector is initially able to provide for his family as a farmworker; however, after a brief period of success, the Sandovals realize that living in the United States has not brought them the happiness and economic stability they seek. On the contrary, they encounter racial prejudice, poverty, and injustice, and face other shattered illusions and perplexing setbacks that eventually destroy the family unit: Hector turns to alcohol and becomes a drunk, his daughters fall into prostitution, and his wife returns to the arms of a former suitor in
Agua Clara. While subsequent generations of the Sandoval clan do indeed achieve economic success, they continue to experience hardship and rejection due to their cultural differences and their darker mestizo features. Finally, the novel ends in tragic misfortune as the great grandchildren of Hector Sandoval fall prey and succumb to the forces of cultural prejudice and alienation: Mariana, his granddaughter and perhaps the most acculturated of the family, dies from an unsuccessful back-alley abortion because her Anglo boyfriend did not want to be inconvenienced with children. And Sammy, Mariana’s twin brother, falls prey to heroin addiction as he struggles with low self-esteem and a strong sense of alienation.

While the novel is well written and was generally well received by its readers, critics of the time were not too enthusiastic about Vásquez’s portrayal of Chican@s and faulted the narrative for inadequacies in characterization and technique. Nevertheless, as Rubén Martínez writes in the foreword to the 2005 edition of the novel: “Chicano is a brave and pioneering attempt to create dialogue across a terrible divide, the kind that has opened up on so many occasions throughout our history when ‘foreigner’ meets ‘native’” (xxi).

Whereas Chicano was issued in a hardbound edition by a major publishing house and was eventually republished by Rayo/HarperCollins in 2005, Vásquez’s subsequent novels were not quite so fortunate. Published as a mass-market paperback, The Giant Killer (1978) is an adventure novel about a Chicano journalist, Ramón García, who uncovers a plot by black separatists to create separate ethnic homelands in the United States. Another Land (1982), also a mass-market paperback, is a love story of two migrants who immigrate to the United States in search of opportunity and the American Dream, only to find hardship and exploitation by those who prey on the disenfranchised. While these novels address some of the same ideas and social issues developed by Vásquez in Chicano (undocumented immigration, assimilation, racial conflict, etc.), both went virtually unnoticed and were ignored by critics.

Not much is known about Richard Vásquez after the release of Another Land in 1982, except that he died on 23 April 1990 in Inglewood, California, at the age of 62. In “A Note from Sylvia Vásquez,” published in the 2005 edition of Chicano, the novelist’s daughter writes: “My father said the job of a novelist is not to resolve problems, but to present them; he couldn’t resolve the problems Chicano portrays, but felt a responsibility to articulate them. It is my hope that new readers or those returning to the book in its beautiful new edition will ask this relevant question: have things changed over the last thirty-five years since Chicano was first published? More to the point, have things changed enough?” (xxiv–xxv). Needless to say, given the anti-immi-
grant sentiments and the immigration debate that have dominated American politics for the last decade, it is safe to say that Vasquez’s articulation of such issues in his three novels is still of much relevance today. (DWU)

VELÁSQUEZ, GLORIA L. (1950–). Novelist, poet, educator. Currently a professor of Spanish and Hispanic literatures in the Department of Modern Languages and Literatures at California Polytechnic State University in San Luis Obispo, California, Gloria Velásquez was born and raised in Johnstown, Colorado, where she attended Roosevelt High School. After graduating from the University of Northern Colorado in 1978, she attended Stanford University and earned a master’s degree and a doctorate in Latin American and Chicano literatures in 1985.

Velásquez is the author of two collections of poetry, I Used to Be a Superwoman (1994) and Xicana on the Run (2005), and nine novels, all of which are in the Roosevelt High School Series: Juanita Fights the School Board (1994), Maya’s Divided World (1995), Tommy Stands Alone (1995), Rina’s Family Secret (1998), Ankiza (2000), Teen Angel (2003), Tyrone’s Betrayal (2006), Rudy’s Memory Walk (2009), and Tommy Stands Tall (2013). In addition, Ankiza was released in a French edition, entitled J’aime qui je veux, in 2003. The primary target audience of this series is teenage adults, and the novels deal primarily with the many pressures and issues that plague the lives of contemporary young adults—divorce, racial prejudice, school expulsion, domestic violence, homosexuality, interracial relationships, teenage pregnancy, alcoholism, betrayal, lack of self-identity, and violence—and their psychological effects on young people. The novels generally feature Chican@ and other multicultural/multiracial characters, all of whom attend Roosevelt High School, a predominantly Hispanic and African American school in Laguna, California (a fictional central coast community), and with whom other young adults can generally relate and empathize.

Velásquez’s poetry is compelling, passionate, and socially engaged. Reminiscent of the early voices of the Chicano Movement of the 1960s, the feminist voice of I Used to Be a Superwoman fervently commits itself to the social action and social justice of el movimiento (the Chicano Movement) and passionately calls on others to do the same. In Xicana on the Run, Velásquez addresses issues of social marginalization, politics, love, war, solitude, poverty, otherness, and feminism from a Chicana feminist perspective.

For her literary accomplishments, Velásquez has been the recipient of several awards: in 1979 she was acknowledged with the Premier and Deuxième Prix in poetry from the Department of French and Italian at Stanford University, and in 1985 she was awarded the 11th Chicano Literary Prize in Short Story from the University of California at Irvine for “Sunland.” She was also the first Chicana to be inducted into the University of Northern Colorado’s Hall of Fame for her achievements in creative writing (1989), and
in 1999, she and Stanford University entered into a contract agreement to archive her papers. In 2006, she was named poet laureate of the city of San Luis Obispo. Because she deems herself primarily an artist and not an academic, it is Velásquez’s desire to be a full-time writer and eventually return to Colorado. (DWU)

VENEGAS, DANIEL (1895–?). Novelist, newspaper editor, journalist, businessman, playwright, short story writer. Supposedly born on 8 December 1895 somewhere in northern Mexico, Daniel Venegas is believed to have immigrated to California in 1919, but the rest of his background is sketchy. A man of many talents, he edited newspapers in Los Angeles, and between 1924 and 1933 he directed the vaudeville ensemble Compañía de Revistas Daniel Venegas. He also served as president of La Confederación de Sociedades Mexicanas (The Confederation of Mexican Societies), a community organization that promoted and defended Mexican interests. Much of his community-based and intellectual work stems from disseminating new ideas through artistic entertainment, newspapers, and magazines. His level of education is not known, but his degree of engagement early on indicates some formal education, especially because he began writing reviews and editorials six years after having immigrated.

Venegas’s principal fame rests on his picaresque novel Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos mamen (The Adventures of Don Chipote, or, When Parakeets Suckle Their Young; 1928), but also includes such plays as ¿Quién es el culpable? (Who is the guilty one?, 1924), Nuestro egoísmo (Our Ego; 1926), Esclavos (Slaves; 1930), El maldito jazz (The darn jazz; 1930?), Revista astronómica (Astronomical review; 1930?), El con-su-lado (play on words between “On His Side” and “The Consulate”; 1932), and El establo de Arizmendi (The stable of Arizmendi; 1933). Among some of his other work that has been recovered are the short stories “El repique del Diablo” and “En el vil traque,” clearly attesting to the oral tradition that drives many of his writings. He was also instrumental in the founding of the newspaper El Malcriado (The brat; 1924–1933), and was a journalist for the Los Angeles newspapers El Pueblo (The people), La Opinión (The opinion), and El Heraldo de México (The herald of Mexico). In 1927 he was mentioned as having served as president of the Mexican Journalists Association of California.

He stands out as a polemical, sometimes controversial, figure for the issues he presented in his writings, both creative and journalistic. He touched on sensitive topics of current events surrounding Mexican Americans: the workplace, their penchant for bilingualism, social class biases as exercised by the elites, customs, and cultural practices within a framework of assimilation or Americanization. He satirized such topics through slapstick humor, but ultimately, he expressed respect for underprivileged people because he
related to their status as exiles. One of his central concerns was to capture them with dignity instead of disparaging their character. Thus, he was often a supporter of solidarity and a defender of Mexican Americans due to their social and economic vulnerabilities.

*Las aventuras de Don Chipote, o, Cuando los pericos maman* is his signature work, published in 1928 but recovered by Nicolás Kanellos with a new edition in 1985. The novel exhibits his sharp wit, unbridled satire, and esteem for the Mexican and Mexican American characters grappling with the growing pressures of assimilation. He cannot help seeing caricatures and exaggerated embodiments in such characters while trying to salvage a sense of their Mexicanness. Nonetheless, the narrator relishes the idiosyncrasies of the working class, capturing them via puns and made-up names, in part to illustrate their susceptibilities but also to show their naiveté. Don Chipote, the protagonist, migrates to the United States in search of gold on the streets, but mainly falls into one bumbling mishap after another, denoting the horrid, slavelike working conditions that immigrants are subjected to. If the narrative initially captures an incongruous humor, slowly it becomes bitter and almost prophetic. As the title indicates (“cuando los pericos maman” or “when parakeets suckle”), the message is that no matter what good deed is attempted, it will end up as a disaster. In other words, Don Chipote will achieve what he searches for “when hell freezes over.” Pessimism overtakes joviality with hard-hitting criticism for the various sectors that exploit and mistreat persons of Mexican descent. In this way, the novel becomes a key precursor of and an early window into the kind of language and sensibility that would later develop after the Chicano Movement.

Although much is still unknown about Venegas, his groundbreaking narrative is a sign of things to come, illustrating that Mexicans or Mexican Americans could write extended pieces of prose. (FAL)

**VILLAGRÁ, GASPAR PÉREZ DE (1555–1620).** Epic poet, chronicler, legal officer, captain, soldier, conquistador, administrator, ecclesiastical counsel. Born in Puebla de los Angeles, Mexico, to Hernán Pérez and Catalina Ramírez, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá’s original name was Pérez Ramírez, but he later added Villagrá in acknowledgment of his parents’ town of origin in Spain, and also because it provided immediate name recognition from the Villagrán conquerors in South America. He specialized in law, studying Greek and Roman historians and rhetoricians at the University of Salamanca, where he received a degree in 1576. He later befriended the mining magnate Juan de Oñate, governor and general from Zacatecas in Mexico City, who later hired him as his legal officer and captain in the expedition of 1598 to New Mexico, with the objective of colonizing the region after pacifying it from Indian raids. Aside from his administrative functions, Villagrá also served as a scribe of the expedition and later as *alcalde mayor* (magistrate) of
the Guanaceví mines in Durango (1601–1603). The magnitude of the events he witnessed and participated in led him to write his famous epic poem, *Historia de la Nueva México*, which he published in Alcalá de Henares in 1610. He had counted on some kind of royal compensation for his services or some kind of appointment, but neither ever quite materialized.

Villagrá’s only literary contribution is his epic poem, which, according to Luis Leal, is the forerunner of U.S. *Latino* literature because it introduced a literary tradition to what was northern Mexico during the colonial period. He hoped to receive special rewards from the king for his courageous role in the conquest of New Mexico, but instead he was accused of murdering two deserters from the expedition on Oñate’s orders in 1598. For this and other atrocities, both Oñate and Villagrá were found guilty, and the latter was banished from New Mexico in 1614 and stripped of his rank as captain, according to Manuel Martín-Rodríguez (2009). He then returned to Spain to fight the sentence, managing to obtain a royal pardon in 1619. He was appointed mayor of Zapotitlán, Guatemala, in 1620, but he died on the ship on his way back to Mexico, on 9 September 1620.

Villagrá is known for his multifaceted talents: a capable soldier, a legal representative, a poet, and an administrator. But it is his epic poem *Historia de la Nueva México* that has etched his name in literary history, through his in-depth descriptions and insights into what an expedition entailed regarding its mission, accomplishments, and possible failures. The account has invaluable historical merit, first describing various indigenous groups and their rituals, the Río Bravo (also known as the Río Grande), the *vaquero* (the cowboy), and the buffalo as “monstrous cows,” but it also provides a human drama of intrigue, danger, military strategies, battles, graphic massacres, and reflections on the conquest as an imperial enterprise. The last part of the poem dedicates pages to massive scenes of genocide, of mutilated bodies and then remorse about the unbridled violence. What begins as an exploration to tame the unknown territory of New Mexico concludes with the tone of a morality play about the excesses in subjugating the indigenous peoples, which resembles the heroic portrayal of the natives found in Alonso de Ercilla’s *La Araucana* (1569) from Chile. The poetic voice as narrator turns into the conqueror’s conscience, regretting the extent of the invasion and the tragic demise of the town of Acoma, almost admitting that the conquest’s tactics had gone too far.

The epic poem was relatively unnoticed and forgotten until critics of *Chicano/a* literature (e.g., Luis Leal, Manuel Martín-Rodríguez, Genaro Padilla, María Herrera-Sobek) situated the text as a key cornerstone of early *Hispanic* writings in what became the American Southwest. The work garnered considerable notoriety with the 1992 translation *Historia de la Nueva México, 1610, Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá: A Critical and Annotated Spanish-English Edition*, translated and edited by Miguel Encinias, Alfred Rodríguez,
and Joseph P. Sánchez. In fact, Villagrá’s poem precedes Captain John Smith’s *General History of Virginia* by 14 years, generally considered the first history of European colonization on the eastern seaboard. Much controversy has emerged about the literary value of Villagrá’s poem versus its historical content, but it is remarkable that a soldier with a legal mind such as his would write such a well-crafted poem with a difficult but consistent metrics of hendecasyllables. The work is the most voluminous conquest poem in the Americas, covering 34 *cantos* or chants of unrhymed verses, filled with classical literary, philosophical, and mythological allusions. The language is not obscure, but is sometimes molded to fit the verse format. The style is at times a bit forced, almost trying to be too literary, but the fact that Villagrá is able to sustain the same versification throughout most of the poem is indeed admirable and unprecedented.

Villagrá is also credited with having written a second (but rare) book: *El capitán Gaspar de Villagrá para justificarse de las muertes, justicias y castigos que el adelantado don Juan de Oñate dicen que hizo en la Nuevo México* (Captain Gaspar de Villagrá to justify the deaths, justices and punishments that they say the adelantado [governor of a remote frontier region] Don Juan de Oñate committed in New Mexico; 1612). Here he purportedly relates how the events unfolded with respect to Oñate’s alleged recriminations and acts of brutality.

Gaspar Pérez de Villagrá is a strong example of a Hispanic antecedent to Chicano and U.S. Latino literatures from the colonial period. His epic poem is more and more considered a part of four interconnected literary traditions: Spanish, Mexican, U.S., and Chicano. (FAL)

**VILLANUEVA, ALMA LUZ (1944–).** Poet, novelist, short story writer. Born in Lompoc, California, on 4 October 1944 to a German father—whom she never knew—and a Mexican mother, Alma Luz Villanueva grew up in the Mission District of San Francisco with her Mexican grandmother, Jesús Villanueva, a Yaqui Indian whose mother had been a healer. Her Mexican grandfather was a college-educated Baptist minister who wrote poetry and edited a newspaper in Hermosillo, Mexico. These two figures directly influenced her worldview. She was 11 when her grandmother died, forcing her to return to live with her mother and face solitude. A troubled youth, she dropped out of high school in the 10th grade, had a son at age 15, and married a violent U.S. Marine. After having three children, uncertainties and financial instability pushed her to seek other options beyond San Francisco in pursuit of harmony with nature. She later married Chicano artist Wilfredo Castaño and had another child. Already in her thirties, she received an AA from City College of San Francisco and a BA from Norwich University, eventually earning an MFA from Vermont College in 1984. She has held writer-in-residence positions at the University of California at Santa Cruz,
Cabrillo College, University of California at Irvine, Naropa Institute, University of California at San Diego, San Francisco State University, and Stanford University, and has taught in the Creative Writing Program at Antioch University in Los Angeles since 1998.


She has gained a reputation for carefully crafted writing that appeals to a deeper sense of raw feelings, often love, sexual passion, solitude, the human body, and what one critic termed “sensual mysticism.” Given her background and life trajectory, it is understandable how Villanueva’s poetry initially served as an instrument of self-affirmation while she was seeking an identity within her personal traumas and turbulence. Her poverty and difficult childhood pushed her to the brink of existence, compelling her to recover from the ashes to reconstruct a female self of strength, resilience, and perseverance. Much of her writing revolves around the themes of survival, recovery, race construction, spiritual wholeness, feminist concerns, and the exploration of sexuality as elements of liberation.

In Bloodroot, her inaugural collection of poetry, Villanueva explores a wide variety of themes and issues from an ecofeminist consciousness, including a harmonious identity with Mother Earth, the power of a woman’s sensitivity and creativity, universal camaraderie, and the importance of family and human relationships. She also challenges racism, sexism, and masculine violence against women. The collection’s title poem, “Bloodroot,” for example, establishes her oneness with nature: “I grow heavy with the sperm of trees, with the nectar of hummingbirds . . . with the journeying wind, it fills me and tiny kisses cover my eyes, my neck, my leafy hair: roots threaten to form; my toes ache; my eyes shut and chrysalis begins” (1). Similarly, in the poem “(Wo)man” she celebrates a woman’s power to create and nurture life and rebukes men for being out of touch with this reality. In several poems she evokes family, including her mother and children, but especially her Yaqui grandmother, Jesús Villanueva, or “Mamacita,” who nurtured and guided her in times of need after her mother abandoned her as a child.
Divided into three sections, Villanueva’s second collection of poetry, *Mother, May I?* is a sequence of 29 autobiographical reflections in which she records significant stages in her life, from her childhood to her mid-thirties. In the poems in part 1, the female speaker recalls her childhood, living and growing up in the Mission District of San Francisco with Mamacita as her mentor and guardian. She reminisces about the early days with her grandmother, when “everything had joy on it, in it” (8). She tells of being rebuked for speaking Spanish in her first day of school, and then the lamentable day when she was sexually assaulted by a stranger. Part 1 ends with the death of her beloved grandmother and the young girl’s heartache. Part 2 opens with a poem telling of the child’s placement in foster care and of her escape to the security and comfort of family, her aunt’s home. At age 13, the poetic voice begins an amorous relationship with a young boy and eventually ends up pregnant. However, the boy’s parents prohibit them from continuing their relationship, and she once again finds herself alone. She subsequently gets help from her mother and in due course gives birth to a baby girl. Subsequent poems tell about her new marriage—“me in black, he in uniform”—then about her husband going off to war for two years and returning a changed man: “he does not cry so easily / he does not laugh so easily / he drinks too much / and he hurts me sometimes. He is angry about something. He wants to kill something.” After another child is born, the emotional distance between them deepens, and her existence becomes increasingly more futile and empty. She realizes that she has lost touch with her true self.

In part 3, the protagonist tells of the death of a good friend, her acceptance of the friend’s husband and children as her own, and of the new family unit moving to the countryside to live in harmony with nature. Now a woman in her early thirties, she declares her love for her children, both natural and adopted, and ends the collection by focusing on the “thread” of her story, the women who most inspired her in life: her childhood best friend, her daughter, her mother, and of course, her grandmother.

Villanueva’s subsequent collection of poetry, *Life Span* (1985), appeared at the peak of the Chicana literary boom (a.k.a. the postmodern Chicana generation), confirming the emphasis on experiential inwardness from a woman’s point of view. She reflects on the highs and lows of the various poetic voices who speak in unison: measuring outside influences, recoiling from the hurt, seeking new forms of inspiration, ultimately joining her body and language into one. Tenderness mingles with desire, a communion of form and substance. Dreams appear frequently: those in her sleep and those she imagines. In addition, she is amazed by the mysteries life offers, such as the challenges of loving and sustaining it. In the poem “Escandalosa” (scandalous), the poetic voice assumes an identity of self-affirmation, for the first time standing and speaking out. She no longer holds things inside, but prefers to let her inner feelings navigate the outside world while discovering woman-
hood from one generation to another. She also questions loneliness, contrasting the idea with having wings to fly away, in the poem “Winged Woman.” The poet laments and wonders how she can reconstruct her person, resorting to animals (eagles, butterflies, fish, and sirens) as markers of resurrection. She seeks joy without God as a way of saying she needs to overcome her own struggles. Her poetry is strikingly economical, meditative, and soothing.

With the dedication “To the Earth, who I worship, and to all Native People of the planet” (2), Villanueva continues her ecofeminist celebration of all things female and natural in Planet, with Mother, May I?, a collection of poetry published in 1993. The first book observes what constitutes the planet: stars, lakes, trees, flowers, directions, rainbows, and so forth. The poetic voice relishes nature and its beauty, but juxtaposes such things with dreams and thoughts to create a subjective and lived view of her surroundings. The poems correlate with key moments of her maturation as a woman (having children, lovers, overcoming difficult times), but still speak to desire and reexperiencing different forms of love. In one instance, she states “[t]o dare to love is hubris” (64), but then suggests that “love is never fragile” (77). Her poems mark a trajectory of “backpacking through the universe” through personal vistas into her own being, as she contemplates the twists and turns of life. She titles the book Planet in order to feminize such a place, offering messages of encouragement for women as theoretical subjects in search of their own truths.

In her collection Desire (1998), Villanueva once again speaks to her love for Mother Nature, humanity, and the animal kingdom; to the harmony and close kinship of all life on the planet; and to the destruction of this natural order due to the ignorance, masculinity, and violent nature of men. In some of the more lyrical poems, such as “Ancestor,” “Power,” and “Delicious Death,” she evokes memories and the importance of family. In others, like “Pulse” and “Empty Circle,” she acknowledges the sun as the earth’s “Core of all life.” In a series of poems called the “Mango Poems” and “Mango Poems Part 2,” she champions universal love and peace, respectively. The epistolary poems of the section titled “Dear World” speak to the violence of the contemporary world and to the horrors of war. In one such poem, dated 17 October 1994, she writes: “Dear World, Your ways are messy, / people dying all the time— / the 19-year-old Israeli soldier / shot by his captors, an / 8-month-old girl beaten to death / by her mother’s boyfriend, / a 5-year old dropped from / 14 floors in Chicago because / he wouldn’t steal candy for / 10-year olds; the endless / slaughter of wars” (136).

Written over a period of 10 years, Villanueva’s latest collection, Gracias (2015), is the poet’s “gracias a la vida / Thanks to life” message, as she enters her sixties and transitions from the United States to San Miguel de Allende in the heart of Mexico. Divided into four sections, the 66 poems of the collection represent a symbolic coming home of the author to the spirit
home of her beloved Yaqui grandmother, Jesús Villanueva, while also providing a biographical journey spanning some six decades of experiences and memories, including her new experiences in San Miguel de Allende as well as Paris, Costa Rica, and the United States. At each juncture of the three-day journey, she repeats the anaphora “I crossed into the rainbow,” for a total of 24 repetitions, in anticipation of the new life, the spiritual cohesion, and the richness of culture she will experience in her ancestral home: “And I’m at home, so alive, in this world, now / and I’ve crossed, oh I’ve crossed, into the rainbow” (9).

Villanueva also wrote works of fiction. In her first novel, *The Ultraviolet Sky*, she develops the self-exploration of Rosa Luján, who comes to grips with her limitations and infinite potential. This protagonist, a 35-year-old, separated, and unemployed woman, paints while struggling with her desires as sometimes defined by others. She wishes to shed the urban lifestyle constraints and moves to an isolated mountain cabin to reconnect with nature, one of her ultimate goals. She also grapples with life choices: the back-and-forth relationship/love affair with husband Julio, a possessive and jealous man who satisfies her sexually but not spiritually; her son’s burgeoning sexuality and manhood that at times interrupt her new lifestyle; her estrangement from her best friend; her distancing from her lovers (a German and a neighbor); and finally, her unexpected pregnancy by Julio and the birth of her daughter, Luzia. All these plotlines, enhanced with various dreamscapes, converge to create mild suspense about where Rosa will end up. She spends an endless amount of time working on a painting of a lilac sky, which at the end becomes an ultraviolet sky, symbolizing both spirituality and mourning. The canvas parallels her trajectory: its incompleteness marks her own individuation until she realizes that the various colors she paints are the essence of her life path. Multiple letters from friends and relatives break up the plot with thoughtful side notes and poetry. The novel is filled with colorful imagery, rainbows, an eagle that looks down on her, a magical lake, and butterflies in rich ecstasy that hint of magical realism from Gabriel García Márquez. The sensation of seduction, titillation, orgasms, arousal, fascination, affection, sexuality, and ultimately love permeates the pages of the novel with an ever-present sensibility. Along the way, she discovers the range and strictures of love as an everyday modus operandi, but Rosa pursues various facets of being lovestruck the same way she experiments with colors in her painting. Highly autobiographical, the novel’s poetic style creates a feminist prose that focuses on the blossoming of the individual, while theorizing about her body, much within the vein of the postmodern Chicana generation.

*The Ultraviolet Sky* was followed in 1994 by *Naked Ladies*, a novel that centers on the relationship of several women living in the San Francisco Bay area, who develop strong bonds due to strained or failed relationships with
their spouses or partners, and the violence propagated by them. Taken from wildflowers known as “naked ladies,” which grow in the meadows and countryside of northern California, the title evokes the daily struggles and vulnerability of these women vis-à-vis the worst elements of society. Much like those wildflowers, the women remain resilient and survive their hardships. Divided into two parts and narrated in the third person, the narrative focuses on the story of Alta, a Chicana in her late twenties and the mother of two preteens, who is in an unhappy relationship with Hugh, her husband of more than 10 years. She has ambitions of beginning a career as a counselor, but Hugh’s lack of support disparages her dreams at every given opportunity. As their relationship declines, he becomes physically and sexually violent in an attempt to make her submissive to his desires. The marriage finally ends when Hugh admits to Alta that he has been engaged in a homosexual affair with an older man since he was 17.

Part 2 of Naked Ladies takes place in 1999, some 11 years after the first section. Now 38 years of age, Alta finds herself living alone in rural northern California, where she has a practice in family counseling. Her children are now grown, Hugh has succumbed to AIDS, and her mother has surrendered to old age. In spite of dealing with issues of sexual abuse and rape in her counseling practice, Alta finds happiness in a harmonious relationship with a younger African American man, Michael, with whom she eventually has a child. As in much of her fiction, the pages of Naked Ladies are permeated with scenes of seduction, sexuality, orgasms, and affection.

The same year that she published Naked Ladies, Villanueva also published Weeping Woman: La Llorona and Other Stories, a collection of 27 short narratives, some of which deal with her own youthful experiences and upbringing in the San Francisco Bay area. These stories also depict the brutal realities of sexual abuse, domestic violence, poverty, racism, and other forces of patriarchal societies that oppress women and children. Central to the stories is the mythical figure of La Llorona (the Wailing Woman) who, instead of being a source of fear and horror, is portrayed by Villanueva as an empowering figure for women.

Villanueva’s Luna’s California Poppies is a unique bildungsroman with an experimental point of view and style. Written principally as a diary of a 12-year-old girl after her grandmother died, near the end there is a break of 16 years, after which she restarts the diary as a 29-year-old woman with children. The confidential nature of the diary (the first page of each entry is in cursive) offers considerable insight into the protagonist’s mentality and hardships at two stages of her life through a well-sustained narrative, providing considerable psychic inwardness. In each case, Luna Luz Villalobos (a clear echo of Alma Luz Villanueva) writes her entries with the Virgen de Guadalupe as her audience/reader. She tells all, but constantly wants reciprocity from the Virgen to provide her with dreams to best anticipate the
future or develop better judgment about difficult situations or persons. The
imagined dialogue becomes the narrative medium by which Luz unveils her
actions, fears, or aspirations. The issue of verisimilitude puts into question
how a 12-year-old can maintain a narrative voice while using her diary to
assimilate new words such as “flabbergasted” and “groovy,” puns like
“mammal gator,” and the degree of extensive swearing. Young Luz actually
speaks more like a 17-year-old, which would make more sense. When 29-
year-old Luz takes up the diary a few years later, the narrator seems to be
almost the same—although more poetic—except that her spelling has im-
proved. Later, as a divorced woman, she inherits money from a male friend,
taking the family to a small rural town to escape the streets and poverty of
San Francisco. But now her family faces bigotry when a Klu Klux Klan
member burns a cross on her front lawn. California poppies become a leitmo-
tif and a symbol of multiple meanings, including her pursuit of nature, family
stability, and poetic inspiration. Much of the narrative concentrates on mem-
ory and dreams: “The Dreamer is the lover loving / the Dream, and La Vida
is / the child of their union. The mystery / of loving. And dreaming” (189).
The novel is an excellent mix of self-exploration and self-affirmation that
embraces spirituality and consciousness.

In her last novel, *Son of the Golden Scorpion*, the author once again
indulges in narrative titillation with philosophical overtones about love and
freedom. Set in Mexico, the novel tells the story of Xochiquetzal, a 58-year-
old Chicana from California who has moved to Mexico “to be reborn” (46),
and a much younger man, 34-year-old Javier Zapata, a Mexican physician.
The two meet in Puerto Vallarta and maintain a 12-year love affair that
transcends their initial intentions. The novel is driven by dreams—a favorite
leitmotif in Villanueva’s poetry and fiction—in this chronicle of two people
who eventually bring together a diverse group of people: Ai, a Japanese
woman who recalls atomic destruction; Hank, a Hopi man who elicits Native
American spirituality; Don Francisco, who brings in Oaxacan culture and
mythology; and Ari, an Israeli commando. While the narrative contains some
erotic scenes, much of what happens between the two main characters is
sublime. Villanueva appears as the “sensual mystic,” bringing these charac-
ters together to seek common ground. One would expect conciliation, but the
novel proves that there is much more to the coming together of the minds,
and consequently, the love affair between Xochiquetzal and Javier remains
an open-ended question that love cannot answer because a greater freedom is
at stake. Villanueva is at her best in her poetic prose, imagistic poetry, and
sensual representations.

When not traveling to do readings, literary seminars, and workshops, Vil-
lanueva lives and writes most of the year in San Miguel de Allende, Mexico,
where she settled in 2004. (DWU/FAL)
VILLANUEVA, TINO (1941–). Poet, educator, critic, painter. Born in San Marcos, Texas, on 11 December 1941 to Mexican American migrant parents, Tino Villanueva experienced extreme poverty with his family, constantly moving to work in endless cotton fields and rural towns. He also lived through racial tensions in low-quality schools and segregation in social settings where the family migrated. His general material deprivation contributed to his developing an acute sensibility about making the most of what little they had.


Receiving little direction after high school, Villanueva went into the U.S. Army to serve in the Panama Canal Zone between 1964 and 1966. A late bloomer, he enrolled in Southwest Texas State University in San Marcos, where he discovered Dylan Thomas’s poetry along with Spanish-language writings. Coupled with militant Chicano Movement poetics, he soon found his voice by addressing inequities, disenfranchisement, social justice, and a systemic lack of opportunities. Through some form of fortuity, in 1969 he enrolled in graduate studies in Spanish at the State University of New York at Buffalo, where he earned his MA in 1971 and PhD in 1981. In 1972, he published his first book, *Hay Otra Voz: Poems (1968–1971)*, a largely autobiographical and contemplative collection about a burgeoning identity, a new consciousness, and a renewed social purpose, freely resorting to standard English, Spanish, and their respective slang variants, including Spanglish. Lyrical intimacies accompany a desire to detach himself from conventionalisms while defiantly reminiscing about his barrio and small-town past.

In 1980, he edited a groundbreaking anthology for a university audience in Mexico titled *Chicanos: Antologia histórica y literaria*, which helped define the parameters of Chicanos so they could be better understood in Mexico. He then founded the outlet *Imagine: International Chicano Poetry Journal* (1982–1986), thus offering a broad and inclusive venue for poetry from throughout the world. He developed his craft further through careful experimentation in his second book, *Shaking Off the Dark* (1984), imitating Dylan Thomas in part but again capturing flashes of his farmworker days as well as his barrio conundrums. In 1987, he further evoked his painful youth in a moving collection of poems titled *Crónica de mis peores años*. In 1993, he explored the evocative connections between film and poetry in *Scene from the Movie “Giant,”* winner of the 1994 American Book Award for its stylistic finesse and poetic eloquence. The work delicately portrays one scene in a
Texas diner from *Giant* (1956), an iconic film foreshadowing the racial tensions of the 1960s, recalling the hurt, disillusionment, and rattled conscience of a young boy sitting at the back of the theater. The work is a masterful introspection into a boy’s burgeoning awareness about the inequitable treatment of Chicanos in both society and the celluloid screen. The book marks a definite change in the author’s judging race relations, realizing that he now has the power of the word to speak out.

In 1999, he published *Primavera causa/First Cause*, which deals with memory, craft, and his bilingual voice, inspired by poetic forms from Spain’s golden age, including the Renaissance and baroque periods. More recently, in 2013, he published *So Spoke Penelope*, a highly polished contemplation by Penelope, whose soliloquy is heartfelt while she is waiting for Ulysses. The story is well known in literary lore, but Villanueva gives it a new twist by penetrating Penelope’s heart and soul in facing the inevitable instead of simply waiting. The universality of her situation cannot be overestimated, allowing the reader to relive a key moment in Western myth, civilization, and culture.

Villanueva’s poetic strength lies in his articulate yet simple lyrics, which evoke sentiments about finding a voice to express profound human conditions, such as disenchantment, deprivation, the struggle to overcome, validation, cultural relevance, and discovery. His style is well crafted, meticulously culled, and evocative of multiple sentiments that people experience. (FAL)

**VILLARREAL, JOSÉ ANTONIO (1924–2010).** Novelist. Villarreal is widely recognized as the first Chicano novelist in the contemporary era and the first to have been published by a major publishing house (Doubleday). The son of Mexican immigrants who fled their native land in 1921, shortly after the Mexican Revolution ended, he was born in Los Angeles, California, on 30 July 1924. Villarreal lived with the constant recollections of the tumultuous times that marked Mexico’s transition into modernity. He was constantly conflicted between calling himself a “pocho” (a person of Mexican descent who lost his cultural background in the United States) versus a “Chicano” (a person of Mexican descent who had gained a new ethnic identity of empowerment). He sometimes felt he was of two worlds or neither, calling himself a Mexican American.

Villarreal’s life story encompasses what many Chicanos experienced in the 20th century through immigration: the pressures of acculturation and assimilation, discrimination and segregation, ethnic profiling, invalidation, and relegation. His landmark novel *Pocho* (1959) appeared at a time when peoples of Mexican descent were considered invisible, ahistorical, minor, and generally insignificant. Through his perseverance and determination, he was able to obtain a modest contract to publish his manuscript in New York, which he hoped would garner attention as an important “Mexican story.”
American literature to that point had been either reticent about or indifferent to the role and place of Mexicans in American society. Villarreal managed to put the “pocho” on the map of American literature with a developmental novel or bildungsroman that traced the maturation process or coming-of-age of a young character into early adulthood.

The result is a frank and honest exploration of the formation and psyche of Richard Rubio, the son of two Mexican parents who had immigrated to the United States. The father, Juan, is a former revolutionary who has to flee Mexico because he killed a Spaniard, and the mother, Consuelo, is an ultra-traditional woman who quietly accompanies her man. The main protagonist, Richard, finds that he cannot return to Mexico literally or figuratively, and that he is still adjusting to an American society that does not seem receptive toward incorporating peoples of Mexican descent into the mainstream. Consequently, he lives divided and sometimes torn between his inherited Mexican background and his American surroundings. Although the novel remained largely unnoticed at the time of its publication, it experienced a significant revival during the Chicano Renaissance after it was reissued in 1970, becoming an instantaneous “classic” in Chicano fiction. It definitely filled a void, being an epic portrayal of the many complex personal and social issues pertaining to the immigrant experience.

The novel captured in fiction what many Chicanos had experienced in real life, while touching on many sensitive topics, such as machismo, gender roles, poverty, familial dysfunction, identity, and the many pressures of Americanization. Richard seemed to be in the middle of all these subthemes at the same time that he navigated his commonalities and differences with his two major influences. Ultimately, Richard is a young man who seeks a new middle ground, or what Chicanos came to know as an ethnic identity comprising both Mexican and American qualities. But not all critics praised the protagonist’s confusions, and the work had a divided following.

After his landmark treatment of a pre-Chicano consciousness in Pocho, Villarreal returned to the topic of the Mexican Revolution in his ambitious novel The Fifth Horseman (1974), in an attempt to explore the backdrop and background from which Pocho had emerged. Here he examined a revolutionary named Heraclio Inés and how he developed social consciousness about justice and equity for the Mexican peasant, while being obsessed with his “destiny.” Although Villarreal’s second novel is technically and artistically superior to his first novel, its appeal was limited, and it remained largely unnoticed by critics. His third novel, Clemente Chacón (1984), aims to re-create a variation of the Horatio Alger story within Mexico; in it an impoverished boy, whose street-smarts enable him to become clever and successful upon crossing the border, eventually becomes an insurance executive. Up-
ward mobility is the central theme, and the book’s composition displays greater complexity and sophistication, but some critics find it thematically simplistic and unconvincing.

Villarreal never managed to surpass the belated success of *Pocho*. He also produced a few short stories, but they have remained largely unacknowledged. But he definitely contributed to the epic portrayal of Chicanos in the 20th century. (FAL)

See also IMMIGRATION, NOVEL OF.

VILLASEÑOR, VÍCTOR (1940–). Novelist, short story writer, nonfiction writer, screenwriter, children’s literature writer. Born in Carlsbad, California, on 11 May 1940 to bookkeeper Guadalupe Gómez and businessman Juan Salvador Villaseñor, Victor Villaseñor grew up on a ranch in Carlsbad, where he still lives. His immigrant parents were refugees from the Mexican Revolution (1910–1920) and settled in the San Diego area. Villaseñor had dyslexia, which was not initially diagnosed, and he struggled in school, causing him to feel inadequate, alienated, and stigmatized, in part due to his preference for the Spanish language. He dropped out of high school and later attended the University of San Diego, but soon dropped out. He moved to Mexico with his relatives, where he gained confidence, returning to work as a construction worker but reinvigorated to pursue creative writing at the University of California, Los Angeles. His is a story of perseverance and determination to capture his family’s trajectory as an example of a Chicano epic story of gumption and effort to improve his social status through legitimate or illegal means.


Villaseñor initiated his writing career with *Macho!* which received scathing reviews for its negative attitudes of cultural determinism among Mexicans. An immigrant story about Tarascan Indian Roberto García, the portrayal is candid and written in a lively style, but the novel trips on its own stereotypes. Villaseñor then concentrated on nonfiction, such as *Jury: The People vs. Juan Corona*, which depicts the psychological drama among the jury members who declared Juan Corona guilty of the murders of 25 mi-
grants. He also wrote the movie screenplay to *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, which received acclaim for the re-creation of an early Chicano folk hero from Texas who killed a sheriff due to a linguistic misunderstanding. The film, in subtle ways, counters Hollywood depictions of swarthy Mexicans. But his principal contributions consist of a series of Villaseñor family biographies of various generations, starting with the saga of *Rain of Gold*—an overnight sensation and regarded by many as a “Latino Roots”—followed by a trilogy of sequels (*Walking Stars*, *Wild Steps of Heaven*, and *Thirteen Senses*).

*Rain of Gold* reached the best-seller list for its forceful and moving portrayal of a humble family from northern Mexico who struggled first to survive the Mexican Revolution and then to fit into American society while seeking creative ways to make a living, including the father’s involvement in gambling, bootlegging during Prohibition, and other business ventures. The detailed account of Villaseñor’s paternal grandparents and parents is told using many novelistic techniques, provoking pathos and sympathy. It is also the love story of Villaseñor’s parents. In addition, he wrote a moving self-portrayal of his traumatic relationship with school and his peers in *Burro Genius: A Memoir*, in which he recounts his struggles with his learning disability and how he developed a keen sensibility as a writer. He also indulged in creating a parallel story of his family place of origins through the secondhand story of Jan and Mireya in *Lion Eyes*, and in 2011 he wrote a continuation to *Rain of Gold*, titled *Beyond Rain of Gold*, bringing parts of the family story up to contemporary times through analogy.

For good measure, Villaseñor has cultivated the genre of children’s literature in a series of books that incorporate cultural depictions Mexican American children can relate to, as exemplified by the language used, animal characters, and humor.

Villaseñor is well recognized for his storytelling prowess and passion, particularly focusing on his family history as his principal muse. His originality lies in his ability to capture humdrum events of family life and turn them into magnanimous, sometimes even magically realistic, events. He masterfully mixes history and fiction to create a uniquely American story of Chicano characters seeking love, success, and belonging. (FAL)

See also IMMIGRATION, NOVEL OF.

**VIRAMONTES, HELENA MARÍA (1954–).** Short story writer, novelist, editor, university professor. Born in East Los Angeles, California, on 26 February 1954, Helena María Viramontes grew up in a working-class family with nine children: six girls and three boys. As a youth, she attended public schools in East Los Angeles, graduating from James A. Garfield High School in 1971. After completing high school, she attended Immaculate Heart Col-
lege in Los Angeles, from which she earned a BA in English literature in 1975. Viramontes later obtained an MFA in creative writing from the University of California, Irvine, in 1994.

Viramontes’s interest in storytelling emerged relatively early in life, as she eavesdropped on the real-life stories narrated by the adults in her extended family when they chatted in the comfort of the kitchen. In her testimonio, “‘Nopalitos’: The Making of Fiction,” she writes: “I come from a family of eleven, six sisters and three brothers, but the family always extended its couch or floor to whomever stopped at our house with nowhere else to go. As a result, a variety of people came to live with us. Former boyfriends of my sisters who were thrown or pushed out of their homes, friends who stayed the night but never left, relatives who crossed the border and stayed until enough was saved. Through all this I remember two things well: first, the late night kitchen meetings where everyone talked and laughed in low voices, played cards, talked of loneliness, plans for the future, of loves lost or won. I heard men cry, drunken stories, women laughing. It was fascinating to listen in the dark, peek into the moments of their lives. For me it seemed like a dream to wake up at midnight and hear the voices. . . . This was adulthood and I yearned to one day be the one on the other side of the door. Little did I realize that this is the stuff good fiction is made of: the stories, the fascination of the subject matter, capturing the moments and fleeing with them like a thief or lover. I began my apprenticeship without even knowing it” (Horno-Delgado 1989, 33).

Nevertheless, Viramontes did not begin to write until college, when she experimented with both poetry and short fiction. Favoring fiction over poetry, in 1977 and 1978, respectively, two of her short stories (“Requiem for the Poor” and “The Broken Web”) won first prize awards in a contest sponsored by California State University, Los Angeles’s Statement magazine. Similarly, in 1979 she entered the story “Birthday” into the University of California, Irvine’s Chicano Literary Contest and was again awarded first prize for short fiction. In the early 1980s, other stories were published by the XhismArte, Cenzontle, and Maize literary magazines, and two additional stories, “Snapshots” and “Growing,” appeared in Cuentos: Stories by Latinas (1983), edited by Alma Gómez, Cherrie Moraga, and Mariana Romo-Carmona. These stories, along with several others, were published together as a collection in The Moths and Other Stories (1985).

Reprinted four times since its initial publication, The Moths and Other Stories’ eight stories generally focus on the struggles and dilemmas of Chicana/Latina protagonists as they adjust to traditional cultural and social roles within their family and/or community. Many of the conflicts in the stories develop around the female protagonist and an authoritarian male figure, be it her father, husband, boyfriend, or priest. In “The Moths,” for example, a young, sassy, and rebellious protagonist who is “already used to the whip-
pings” tells of being sent to the sanctuary of her grandmother’s home to avoid conflict with and possible beatings by her very controlling father. And in “Growing,” 14-year-old Naomi does not understand why her father demands that she be escorted by her younger sister Lucia to any event or activity where social interaction can be expected to occur. When she queries him about his mistrust of her, his response is: “TU ERES MUJER (YOU ARE A WOMAN) . . . and that was the end of any argument, any question, because he said those words not as a truth, but as a verdict” (31–32). By and large, the women protagonists of Viramontes’s stories endure adverse consequences for breaking with tradition, challenging Church doctrine, or openly opposing social mores; the collection was very well received by enthusiasts of Chicano and feminist literatures.

Viramontes’s next major publication was the novel Under the Feet of Jesus (1995). Dedicated to her parents, Mary Louise LaBrada and Serafín Viramontes, both of whom engaged in migrant work and who met while picking cotton, and to the memory of César Chávez, leader of the United Farm Workers, Under the Feet of Jesus portrays the hardships and harsh realities of migrant farmworkers as they toil in the fruit orchards and migrant labor camps of California. A novel of exceptional imagery and a moving coming-of-age story, the narrative follows the life of Estrella, a 13-year-old migrant worker girl, as she transitions from adolescence into adulthood. On her journey she experiences her first amorous relationship, with Alejo, a young worker who becomes deathly ill after being accidentally sprayed with pesticides by a crop duster, and she begins to consciously understand the social injustices faced by her immediate and extended migrant family.

Viramontes’s second novel, Their Dogs Came with Them (2007), returns to her East Los Angeles barrio and chronicles the decade 1960–1970, with a focus on the disenfranchised, the working poor, and the homeless, as the community where she was born and raised undergoes demolition to make way for a new freeway. As homes are condemned, emptied, and demolished, and community members are displaced, the novel takes on apocalyptic overtones, and lives are destroyed. Such is the case for Ermilia, Tranquilina, Turtle, and Ana, the novel’s four protagonists, whose lives were doomed as a result of this urban renewal. In a 2007 interview with Daniel Olivas of La Bloga, Viramontes declared: “I do remember the neighborhood, whole city blocks abandoned, then chewed up, our neighbors disappeared. It devastated, amputated East L.A. from the rest of the city. The bulldozers resembled the conqueror’s ships coming to colonize a second time and I felt a real desire to portray the lives of those who disappeared.”

Early in her career, Viramontes served as literary editor for the avant-garde Chicano magazine ChismeArte and for 201 Homenaje a la Ciudad de Los Angeles. She was a co-coordinator of the Los Angeles Latino Writers Association. She also coedited, with María Herrera-Sobek, two literary col-
VIRAMONTES, HELENA MARÍA (1954–)


As a result of her many literary contributions, Viramontes has been the recipient of numerous awards, including a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship (1989), the John Dos Passos Prize for Literature (1995), and the Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino literature (2006). She was also named a USA Ford Fellow in Literature by United States Artists in 2007.

Helena Maria Viramontes is a professor of creative writing in the Department of English at Cornell University, where she has taught since 1995. She currently lives in Ithaca, New York, and is working on her third novel, *The Cemetery Boys*, and seeking to publish the long-awaited collection of short stories *Paris Rats in East L.A.* (DWU).

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
WILLIAMS, WILLIAM CARLOS (1883–1963). Poet, novelist, essayist, playwright, translator. Williams was born in Rutherford, New Jersey, where he lived most of his life. Williams’s mother was Puerto Rican, and his father was British West Indian. When he was a child, the predominant language in Williams’s home was Spanish, and he claimed his Latino/Caribbean heritage in both his Autobiography (1951) and a biography of his mother, Yes, Mrs. Williams (1959). He authored 49 books in his lifetime. Although he is best known as a prominent American modernist and imagist, Lisa Sánchez González (2001) asserts that Williams’s “migratory family history in the Caribbean, as well as his bilingual, bicultural formation in the States,” places him squarely within the Latino/a literary tradition. Indeed, Sánchez González asserts that Williams “performs Boricua [Puerto Rican] modernism that simultaneously spins and reinvents the wheel of American literary history.”

Williams was a practicing doctor for nearly 50 years—the entirety of his literary career—practicing obstetrics and pediatrics, and he is said to have delivered more than 3,000 babies. He received his MD from the University of Pennsylvania, where he met and befriended the renowned American modernist Ezra Pound, whose writing greatly influenced Williams, particularly at the beginning of his writing career. Williams published his first book, Poems, in 1909; his second collection of poetry, The Tempers, in 1913; and his third collection, Al Que Quieres! (To he who wants it!), in 1917. Williams’s first three collections were not explicitly imagistic in the style for which he became famous, though over the course of the first few collections, his poetry became increasingly experimental and incorporated more of the characteristics of imagism, namely clear, concrete language that eschews abstraction and vivid, precise renderings of visual images.

Williams’s major published volumes of poetry include Spring and All (1923), Pictures from Brueghel and Other Poems (1962), the five-volume epic Paterson (1963, 1992), and Imaginations (1970). Spring and All was very successful, and he did not publish another book of poetry for nearly 10 years, shifting his focus to prose writing instead. Williams’s iconic poem, “The Red Wheelbarrow,” was published in Spring and All and is one of the
most famous American modernist poems. Williams was a major influence on Allen Ginsberg and the Beat poets, who were drawn to his interest in simple language, everyday life, and ordinary people, as well as the way he sought to embody his democratic ideals in language. Williams’s last book, *Pictures from Brueghel*, won a Pulitzer Prize in 1963.

One of the most lauded poems of his later career, “Asphodel, That Greeny Flower,” appeared in that award-winning volume. In the poem, he confesses marital infidelity, exploring themes of love and renewal. The poem received a great deal of critical praise, including the assertion by W. H. Auden that it was “one of the most beautiful poems in the language.”

Williams published numerous volumes of fiction and nonfiction. His fiction publications include the novel *A Voyage to Pagany* (1928); the collection of short stories *The Knife of the Times* (1932); and a three-part trilogy, *White Mule* (1937), *In the Money* (1940), and *The Build-Up* (1952). *The Knife of the Times* focused on the Great Depression, specifically critiquing U.S. culture’s impact on the emotional and economic lives of its people. The trilogy beginning with *White Mule* followed a Norwegian immigrant family in New York City, the Stechers, modeled after his wife’s family. Williams’s most noteworthy volume of prose writing was his book *In the American Grain* (1925), a series of experimental essays organized chronologically about various historical figures and events that have shaped “the American Grain” or character. Subjects of the chapters included Red Eric (Eric the Red), Christopher Columbus, Hernán Cortés, Juan Ponce de León, the Pilgrims, Cotton Mather, and George Washington. In his book *I Wanted to Write a Poem: The Autobiography of the Works of a Poet* (1958), Williams details the extensive research he and his wife, Florence (Flossie) Williams, conducted. Of the nature of the historical exploration in Williams’s book, Sánchez González (2001) writes, “*In the American Grain* is . . . less concerned with righting the historical record than with making history ‘show itself’ (116), as Williams puts it, and narrating a transamerican archive of feelings to testify to the subaltern experience of the Americas’ history.”

Williams died in Rutherford, New Jersey, the town where he was born. In the late 1940s, he suffered the first of several heart attacks and strokes, and he endured poor health for the last 15 years of his life. In an often-quoted passage from a 1939 letter to Horace Gregory, Williams explains, “Of mixed ancestry I felt from earliest childhood that America was the only home I could ever possibly call my own. I felt that it was expressly founded for me, personally, and that it must be my first business in life to possess it.” Thus, his most energetically expressed identification was with being American, not with his ethnicity. While it is perhaps his own reticence about his ethnicity that has prevented him from being amply studied as a Latino author, his life and work speak to the complexity and heterogeneity of Latino/a lives, ideologies, and experiences. (MJV)
WOMEN'S LITERATURE. Women have played a crucial role both as subjects and authors throughout Latino/a literary history. At this moment in time, there are so many literary representations of Latinas and texts authored by Latinas that it is nearly impossible to generalize about them. Thus, this entry serves as a mere point of entry into vast and complex fields of study—namely, the study of representations of women in Latino/a literature and the study of literature written by Latinas.

Chicana/Latina literary critics have made important contributions in terms of developing frameworks for thinking about the portrayals of women in Latino/a literature. For example, in a foundational essay, “Unveiling Athena: Women in the Chicano Novel,” Erlinda Gonzales-Berry suggests that the Chicano novel has three “stages of development . . . 1) Chicana characters cast as types—virgin / mother / whore roles; 2) Chicana characters hidden behind the mask of femininity, cast as the ‘Other’ of male protagonists; 3) Chicanas cast as unveiled Athenas or characters of multiple dimensions” (Alarcón, Norma et al, 1993, 34). Gonzales-Berry’s essay includes a rich discussion of José Antonio Villarreal’s novels Pocho (1959) and Clemente Chacón (1984), asserting that these are examples of novels in which the “virgin-mother/whore” dichotomy appears in how women characters are depicted (this virgin-whore dichotomy had been critiqued as early as the 1970s by Chicana feminist scholar Marta Cotera). Gonzales-Berry also cites examples of texts in which idealized mother characters appear, such as Rudolfo Anaya’s Bless Me, Ultima (1972). When discussing more complex renderings of women characters in Chicano novels, Gonzales-Berry highlights Villarreal’s The Fifth Horseman (1974), Alejandro Morales’s La verdad sin voz (1979), Klail City y sus alrededores (translated as Klail City) by Rolando Hinojosa-Smith, and Sandra Cisneros’s The House on Mango Street (1983). Gonzales-Berry’s essay provides a helpful general framework for thinking about how women have been represented in Chicano/a literature.

Numerous other celebrated works of Latino/a literature have been criticized for their failure to include complex women characters of multiple dimensions. Moreover, in the texts in which women characters have been portrayed without adequate complexity, the types of women characters that tend to reappear are similar to those articulated by Gonzales-Berry over two decades ago: idealized mothers, virginal love interests, or hypersexual temptresses. Down These Mean Streets (1967) by Piri Thomas and The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love (1989) by Oscar Hijuelos are but two examples of novels that, while popular as well as significant and celebrated by many critics, have also been amply criticized by scholars who point out the limited and limiting ways that women characters appear in them. Critics note that the character of Piri’s mother in Down These Mean Streets is the idealized mother—docile, passive, and nurturing—while the lovers/love interests in the novel are portrayed as also passive and sexualized. Piri also mistreats the
women in the novel, and in explaining the protagonist’s behavior, the novel suggests that it is the cruelty of the streets and the racism and violence experienced by Piri that are the cause of his behavior toward them.

*The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*, for which Hijuelos won the Pulitzer Prize, has been even more widely criticized for its hypermasculine excess and hypersexualization of women. In *Life on the Hyphen: The Cuban American Way* (1994), Gustavo Pérez Firmat refers to the novel’s “phallocentrism” and engages with some of these critiques in recalling a line from the novel: “Summing up his life, César remarks: ‘So I was led around by my prick, so what?’” (53). Pérez Firmat notes that the “phallocentrism” revealed in that line “is the aspect of the novel that has elicited the strongest response from its readers.” Pérez Firmat goes on to suggest that, indeed, the novel is “critical of Castillo’s [one of the main characters’] machismo” (148–149).

Significantly, other scholars have also addressed the sexual and gender politics of the novel, in works such as Karen Christian’s *Show and Tell: Identity as Performance in U.S. Latino/a Fiction* (1997) and more recently, Maja Horn in “Messy Moods: Nostalgia and Other Nagging Feelings in Oscar Hijuelos’s *The Mambo Kings Play Songs of Love*” (2009).

Given this literary history, it is important to note that there are now myriad representations of women in Latino/a literature, with a plethora of characters of multiple dimensions appearing throughout Latino/a texts authored by writers across gender identities. **Francisco Goldman**’s autobiographical novel *Say Her Name* (2011) provides a moving and unforgettable portrayal of Aura Estrada, Goldman’s deceased wife, who died in a bodysurfing accident. Goldman shows Aura, a writer, to be a creative force—vibrant, dynamic, and talented. The novel portrays the romantic relationship between Francisco and Aura with vulnerability and sincerity and is poignant without being sentimental. **Junot Díaz**’s work, particularly his novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao* (2007) and the short story collection *This Is How You Lose Her* (2013), also includes several examples of rich, multifaceted women characters who come to life on the page.

Numerous Chicana/Latina literary critics have sought to document and analyze the contributions of Chicana/Latina writers. Tey Diana Rebolledo’s groundbreaking *Women Singing in the Snow: A Cultural Analysis of Chicana Literature* (1995) was the first comprehensive, book-length analysis of Chicana literature, though Marta Sanchez had published *Contemporary Chicana Poetry* in 1985. *Women Singing in the Snow* historicizes Chicana literary production, introducing such notable early Mexican American writers as **María Ruiz de Burton**, who published two novels in the 19th century; **Fabiola Cabeza de Baca Gilbert**, Jovita González; **Nina Otero-Warren**; **Josefina Niggli**; Cleofás Jaramillo; and Maria Cristina Mena. Other Chicana/Latina scholars who have written about these early Mexican American wom-
en writers (the term “Chicana” was not used when these early writers published) through a variety of theoretical frameworks are María Eugenia Coteran, Marissa López, and Rosaura Sánchez and Beatrice Pita.

Besides providing a valuable introduction to these early writers, Rebolledo’s book is well known for identifying and grouping a number of important myths, archetypes, and symbolic figures that appear recurrently in Chicana literature. These myths/archetypes/symbols include Coatlicue (an Aztec sculpture of fertility), la Virgen de Guadalupe, guerrilleras/soldaderas (women resistance fighters of the Mexican Revolution), Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, La Malinche, La Llorona (the Wailing Woman), and the curandera/bruja (healer/witch). Although they are too complex and multifaceted to adequately discuss with specificity, in general, these figures represent a mixture of inspiring and iconic images that have been interpreted by feminist writers and critics as empowering (e.g., guerrilleras/soldaderas) with those that have traditionally been maligned in literary and historical representations, which feminist writers and critics have reinterpreted and reappropriated in order to challenge the negative and, indeed, chauvinistic portrayals of these figures who historically had been the norm. Prominent Chicana writers who have participated in reclaiming these figures through their writing include Gloria Anzaldúa, Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, Lucha Corpi, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, Josefina López, Pat Mora, Estela Portillo Trambley, and Alma Luz Villanueva.

In addition to transforming and reclaiming historical and mythical figures/archetypes/symbols, Chicana/Latina writers have used coming-of-age and familial narratives and poetry to center women’s experiences and render women characters in complex, multidimensional ways. Nicholasa Mohr’s Nilda (1973) was a revelation at the time of its publication for its depiction of the title protagonist, a creative child who endures adversity and becomes aware of racial prejudice, poverty, and injustice in her New York Puerto Rican community. Mohr’s subsequent publications continued to focus on the experiences of Puerto Rican women and children, particularly in New York, and are well known for foregrounding U.S. Puerto Rican women’s experiences and subjectivities.

An unprecedented number of Latina novels, memoirs, and mixed-genre texts featuring girl protagonists were published beginning in the 1980s and into the 1990s. Of these, probably the most celebrated and widely read was Sandra Cisneros’s The House on Mango Street, featuring the now-famous protagonist Esperanza, a Chicana growing up in a working-class neighborhood in Chicago and longing for “A House of [her] Own.” The House on Mango Street not only masterfully represented the girl protagonist’s viewpoint, but also vividly rendered the experiences of other girls and women in her family, school, and neighborhood. Cisneros’s second novel, Caramelo, or, Puro Cuento (2002), also makes a significant contribution to this genre,
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featuring an equally unforgettable girl protagonist coming-of-age in a Chica-
no/a family who lives in Chicago but make yearly visits to Mexico City, her
father’s home of origin.

Published in 1993, Esmeralda Santiago’s first book, When I Was Puerto
Rican, has been widely studied and well received by critics, as well as by a
broader readership. A memoir, it recalls the author’s childhood in 1950s
Puerto Rico at age 13 and her arrival in the United States when her family
migrated. The memoir describes Puerto Rican natural beauty, food, and cul-
ture with great reverence and depicts the difficulties of the transition from
living in Puerto Rico to life in New York. Critics have been drawn to the
book’s evocative yet straightforward style and the complex way that Santia-
go engages issues of Puerto Rican cultural identity, immigration, and adapta-
tion. Santiago has published two other memoirs about her adolescence and
young adulthood: Almost a Woman (1999) and The Turkish Lover (2004).

While there are now numerous books about U.S. Puerto Rican literature,
culture, and history, Carmen S. Rivera’s Kissing the Mango Tree: Puerto
Rican Women Rewriting American Literature (2002) is important in that it is
the first full-length book study featuring feminist literary criticism about a
number of important U.S. Puerto Rican women authors, including Santiago,
as well as Nicholasa Mohr, Judith Ortiz Cofer, and Sandra María Esteves.

Another notable coming-of-age narrative is Canícula: Snapshots of a Girl-
hood en la Frontera (1995) by Norma Elía Cantú, who terms the book a
“fictional autobioethnography.” The book features an adolescent narrator,
Nena, who lives along the U.S.–Mexican border, and discusses and describes
characters, rituals, celebrations, and various other aspects of her life in a
series of vignettes accompanied by family photographs. Cantú uses the
photographs and the accompanying events to explore subjectivity and memo-
ry, among other themes. Through the mixing of an ethnographic style with
fiction, autobiography, and photos, Canícula also typifies another trend in
Chicana/Latina writing, particularly in the 1980s and 1990s: an experimental
approach to questions of form and genre and the tendency to combine differ-
ent genres within texts.

A further example of this phenomenon is Aurora Levins Morales and
Rosario Morales’s Getting Home Alive (1986), a collection of short stories,
essays, and poems by daughter and mother that reveal what scholar Inmacu-
lada Lara-Bonilla (2010) describes as “the internal diversity and hybridity of
Puerto Rican cultural identity, especially on the variety of motives for migra-
tion and its relationship with the phenomenon of exile.” Calling themselves
“California-Puerto Rican-Jew[s]” in one of the collection’s signature poems,
“Ending Poem,” Levins Morales and Morales’s work points to what critic
Edrik López (2005) refers to as a “diasporic awakening” in U.S. Puerto
Rican literature. The Latin Deli (1993) by Georgia-based writer Judith Ortiz
Cofer is also a mixed-genre text exhibiting this approach to Puerto Rican
identity in Latina literature, exploring the lives of various Puerto Rican women characters, sharing a community and building a home away from the island.

Combining autobiographical and theoretical prose with poetry and written in what she called “the language of the Borderlands,” Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza (1987) is a signature mixed-genre text in Chicana/Latina literature. Significantly, the text contains other characteristic elements of Chicana/Latina literature: challenging taboos about the body and sexuality, celebrating women’s bodies, and using bodily metaphors. Anzaldúa’s Borderlands begins powerfully with a bodily metaphor about the U.S.–Mexican border, describing the border as “a 1,950 mile open wound / dividing a pueblo, a culture, / running down the length of my body, / staking rods in my flesh, splits me slits me” (2). And in one of the most anthologized chapters in Borderlands, “How to Tame a Wild Tongue,” Anzaldúa describes an encounter with a dentist as a metaphor for her search for a way to resist the repressive social control imposed on multilingual Chicanos/as: “We’re going to have to control your tongue,” the dentist says. . . . And I think, how do you tame a wild tongue, train it to be quiet?” (33–34). In different ways, both of these passages show what critic Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano refers to as Anzaldúa’s “embodied theory and subjectivity,” in her article “Gloria Anzaldúa’s Borderlands/La Frontera: Cultural Studies, ‘Difference,’ and the Non-Unitary Subject” (1994).

Many other Chicana/Latina writers have written about the body and sexuality in compelling and transformative ways. Most of Ana Castillo’s body of work addresses themes related to sexuality in either central or peripheral ways. Several of Castillo’s novels, including The Mixquiahuala Letters (1986), Sapogonia (1990), So Far from God (1993), and recently, Give It to Me (2014), render and explore Chicana/Latina sexualities. A classic and often cited essay on the topic is Norma Alarcón’s “The Sardonic Powers of the Erotic in the Work of Ana Castillo” (1989). Focusing on Castillo’s early work, Alarcón asserts that mixing irony and eroticism are hallmarks of Castillo’s writing. Castillo’s poetry and nonfiction writing have also extensively explored issues of sexuality and the body, as they relate to Chicana identities and histories. Much of Castillo’s collection of essays, Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma (1994), speaks to issues of the subordination of Chicanas and a claiming of a “Xicana” identity grounded in the writer’s sense of herself as a brown, “mestiza/Mexic/Amerindian woman.” In “La Macha: Toward an Erotic Whole Self,” Castillo asserts the need for Chicanas to claim their sexuality and recognize its connection to spirituality and the ways in which religion, particularly Catholicism, has operated as repressive: “It is impossible to ‘free’ our attitudes about our sexuality in a society where we are not free as human beings. . . . Because of the degree to which religion has stigmatized women, it is understandable why women do
not see the link between eroticism and spirituality. But if we cannot claim anything for ourselves, let us at least begin to integrate the mind, soul, and body” (143). Castillo’s dedication to the exploration of these important topics can also be seen in her role in the anthology *The Sexuality of Latinas* (1989), which she coedited with Norma Alarcón and **Cherríe Moraga**, among other important projects.

Lesbian identity, subjectivity, and sexuality have also been important areas of engagement in Chicana/Latina writing. The pioneering anthologies *This Bridge Called My Back: Writings by Radical Women of Color* (1981), coedited by Gloria Anzaldúa and Cherríe Moraga; *Compañeras: Latina Lesbians* (1987), edited by Juanita Ramos; and *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About* (1991), edited by Carla Trujillo, are among the first collections to center the experiences of Chicana/Latina lesbians and to critique the predominant heteronormativity of Chicana/Latina writing until the 1980s. In particular, Chicana/Latina lesbian writers identified the oppression they experienced as a result of traditional notions of women as wives and mothers, with men inherently at the head of the Latino/a family structure; men who sought to impose their authority; and heterosexual Chicanas/Latinas who strictly adhered to traditional family structures, with their attendant gender roles.

Among Chicana lesbian writers, the most well known are undoubtedly Gloria Anzaldúa, Cherríe Moraga, Alicia Gaspar de Alba, and Carla Trujillo. Moraga’s *Loving in the War Years: Lo Que Nunca Pasó por Sus Labios* (What never passed through your lips; 1983) is a mixed-genre, autobiographical text including poetry, essays, and journal entries. In the book, Moraga speaks evocatively to the intersection of her social identities—class, race, ethnicity, gender, and sexuality—voicing lesbian desire in a moving and powerful way. *Waiting in the Wings: Portrait of a Queer Motherhood* (1997) is a memoir, describing Moraga’s process of becoming a mother, including giving birth prematurely and caring for her newborn son. The memoir is compelling in its exploration of “queer motherhood” and in narrating the creation of a Chicana lesbian family. Chicana/Latina scholars who have provided important analyses of Moraga’s work include Yvonne Yarbro-Bejarano, Sonia Saldívar-Hull, and Paula Moya.

Gaspar de Alba’s writing also vividly renders Chicana lesbian subjectivities. In Gaspar de Alba’s poem “Making Tortillas,” the poet metaphorically brings to light Chicana lesbian sensuality and sexuality in a culturally specific way through the iconic tortilla and through recalling a Mexican slang term for lesbians, “tortilleras”: “Smell / of baked tortillas all over the house, / all over the hands still / hot from clapping, cooking. / Tortilleras, we are called, / grinders of maíz, makers, bakers, / slow lovers of women. / The secret is
starting from scratch.” Moreover, Gaspar de Alba’s *Sor Juana’s Second Dream* (1999) is an impressive historical novel that portrays the legendary 17th-century nun, poet, and scholar Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz as a lesbian.

Luz María Umpierre, Erika López, Achy Obejas, and Mariana Romo-Carmona are other lesbian or bisexual Latina writers highlighted by Lawrence La Fountain-Stokes (2009) in his groundbreaking work on representations of Puerto Rican lesbian, bisexual, and transgender women in U.S. Latina literature and culture. Of these writers, the best known is undoubtedly Luz María Umpierre, a U.S. Puerto Rican writer and critic whose most well-known collection of poetry, *The Margarita Poems* (1987), thematically links the search for an ex-lover, Margarita, with the search for “female connectedness,” according to critic Elena Martínez. In “Lesbian Themes in Luz María Umpierre’s *The Margarita Poems . . . Y otras desgracias . . . and Other Misfortunes*,” Martínez notes that Margarita becomes a “central motif in the collection . . . related to the spirit of rebellion . . . and to the political lesbian voice” (1996, 69). Indeed, Chicana/Latina lesbian writers have transformed Latina literature with their voices and “spirit of rebellion.”

In 2009, scholar Juanita Heredia published *Transnational Latina Narratives in the Twenty-First Century: The Politics of Gender, Race, and Migrations*. Heredia’s study analyzes one of the most recent trends in Latina writing: the inclusion and focus on the transnational dimensions of Latino/a experiences and identities. The book highlights five novels that exemplify this trend: Denise Chávez’s *Loving Pedro Infante* (2001); Sandra Cisneros’s *Caramelo, or, Puro Cuento* (2002); Marta Moreno Vega’s *When the Spirits Dance Mambo: Growing Up Nuyorican in El Barrio* (2004); Angie Cruz’s *Let It Rain Coffee* (2005); and Marie Arana’s *American Chica* (2001). Reyna Grande’s memoir *The Distance Between Us* (2012) and her novel *Across a Hundred Mountains* (2006) are two other examples of texts that could certainly be grouped within this framework. Speaking to the power and significance of these transnational narratives, Heredia writes: “In this age of globalization, the ‘new’ narratives by Latina writers in the post-2000 period further complicate representations of identity, by adding the multi-racial and gender factors in the equation as the writers migrate across continents, nations, cities, and towns to understand rapidly changing communities in the U.S. and beyond” (131).

While it could be argued that Latina writers such as Julia Alvarez, Cristina García, Esmeralda Santiago, and many others had published narratives with transnational plots and sensibilities well before the 21st century, it is clear that the evolution of Chicana/Latina literature is characterized by literary voices, representations, and thematic explorations that have become richer, more complex, and especially greatly nuanced. (MJV)
330  •  WOMEN’S LITERATURE

See also ALLENDE, ISABEL (1942–); CERVANTES, LORNA DEE (1954–); CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; GARCÍA, DIANA (1950–); GAY AND LESBIAN LITERATURE; LÓPEZ, DIANA (1948–); MARTÍNEZ, DEMETRIA (1960–); SERROS, MICHELE (1966–2015); THEORY IN THE FLESH; VIRAMONTES, HELENA MARÍA (1954–); ZAMORA, BERNICE (1938–).
ZAMORA, BERNICE (1938–). Poet, editor, university professor. The eldest of five siblings, Bernice Ortiz was born on 20 January 1938 in Aguilar, a small farming community in southern Colorado at the foot of Huajatolla, the Spanish Peaks. Until the age of seven, she was raised in a predominantly Chicano community, where Spanish was readily spoken by adults, but English was the language of youth. At age seven, she moved with her family to Denver, where she attended Catholic schools, and then at age 12 she moved to Pueblo, Colorado, where she attended local parochial and public schools. After completing high school, at the age of 19 she married (Zamora is her husband’s surname) and went to work in a local bank, eventually beginning a family.

In the mid-1960s, at the age of 28, Zamora began attending college at Southern Colorado University in Pueblo, where she earned a BA in English in 1969. Upon completion of the BA, she immediately began graduate studies at Colorado State University (CSU) in Fort Collins, earning an MA in English in 1972. The following year, she continued her graduate studies at Marquette University, but after a year she and her husband divorced, and with her two daughters she relocated to California. In California, Zamora pursued a PhD in English and American literature at Stanford University, a degree she successfully completed in 1986.

Though Zamora did not begin to write poetry until she was 30 years old, her first experiences with writing occurred early in life, as she wrote letters, journals, diaries, and travelogues, and as an undergraduate she was recognized for the humorous essays she wrote in one of her English classes. Her first efforts to write fiction occurred during her graduate studies at CSU, and she was awarded second place in a Creative Writing Symposium for the short story “Flexion”; in the same year (1972), she also wrote the story “Vergüenza” (Shame), which was subsequently published in *Mestizo: Anthology of Chicano Literature* (1978). Nevertheless, Zamora’s genre of choice was poetry, and it is this genre that she nurtured and for which she has received recognition.
While completing her PhD at Stanford, Zamora engaged with other blossoming Chican@ writers and poets in literary dialogues and other literary gatherings, at which they shared and discussed their works and generally honed their craft. During this period, she published numerous poems, short stories, and literary essays in various anthologies and literary journals, such as *Caracol, El fuego de Aztlán, De Colores*, and *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*.

Zamora’s first collection of poetry, *Restless Serpents*, was published in 1976. It was written in collaboration with the late José Antonio Burciaga, also of Stanford University, and Zamora’s contributions account for about half of the collection. Considered a seminal work, Zamora’s poetry in *Restless Serpents* was very much influenced by the Chicano Movement and examines themes relevant to the Chicano struggle and to Chicano heritage and cultural traditions, while at the same time addressing issues such as gender and racial discrimination, identity conflict, death, and love. Written primarily in English, with several in Spanish and others code switched between the two languages, the collection was very well received by reviewers and literary critics, most of whom praised Zamora’s poetry for its carefully crafted technique, its lyricism, and the metaphorical complexity of the poems.

Zamora’s second collection of poetry, *Releasing Serpents*, was published by Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingüe in 1994. The collection is composed of seven sections, the first six of which consist of her earlier work in *Restless Serpents*, and the seventh—“And Everything Will Perish” made up of 33 new poems. Like much of her earlier work, these new poems are extremely introspective and examine such topics as life and death, love and betrayal, social disillusionment and racial intolerance, violence against women, the spiritual silence of religious authorities and writers in the wake of social injustice, and the power of poetry as a medium for revealing cultural, social, and political truths.

In addition to her career as a poet, Zamora also served as an editor of the literary journal *De Colores: Journal of Emerging Raza Philosophies* and coedited *Flor y Canto IV and V: An Anthology of Chicano Literature* (1980) with José Armas and Michael Reed. She also taught classes in Chicano studies, ethnic studies, and English at the University of California at Berkeley, the University of San Francisco, Stanford University, and Santa Clara University, from which she retired in the early 2000s. (DWU)

See also CHICANA/LATINA FEMINISMS; WOMEN’S LITERATURE.
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INTRODUCTION

The collection of cataloged materials on U.S. Latino/a literature has been spotty and inconsistent ever since the first bibliography by Guillermo Rojas appeared in *El Grito: A Journal of Contemporary Mexican-American Thought* in 1973. Generally speaking, few librarians saw the need to gather and categorize such material because U.S. Latino/a literature was not considered a legitimate and long-standing literature. The dispersion of sources made it virtually impossible to place them in a comprehensible order, leaving many books on dusty shelves in isolated libraries throughout the Southwest, the eastern seaboard, and the Northeast. Each ethnic group lived in isolation from the others, and subregions within each major region also experienced seclusion. Consequently, Chicanos had no idea what Puerto Ricans were publishing, and Cuban Americans had no knowledge of what was being produced in geographical spheres beyond their reach. At the same time, each group did not know what its respective compatriots were producing outside
of the immediate region. The result was a helter-skelter approach to compiling information that could potentially help create a profile of a group of writers and their works. Bibliographies seemed an afterthought, a haphazard act of someone’s whim to collate information that could attest to a burgeoning literary tradition. The problem was that there was no sense of a legacy in terms of a background that could lead to declaring the existence of a viable literature. If the literature did not exist, why bother creating a bibliography to document that fact?

There were some attempts that resulted in fallible outcomes, such as Bibliografía de Aztlán: An Annotated Chicano Bibliography, edited by Ernie Barrios (1971), because the section on literature was at best a case of wishful thinking. Since few works by Chicanos/as had been identified, it seemed logical to fill in gaps with works by any author with a Spanish surname. Instead of creating a distinctive classification of works by Chicano/a writers, the only option seemed to be to list Mexican authors in their place (e.g., Mariano Azuela, Octavio Paz, Miguel León-Portilla). It was not until 1976 that Francisco A. Lomelí and Donaldo W. Urioste, with Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography, produced a landmark bibliography of 127 items that aimed to define Chicano literature and its parameters while critically assessing each work they had found up to that point in history. They addressed historical context by using literary criteria to assess each individual work; more important, they collated works from anywhere in the United States to document once and for all the existence of a body of literature. They concentrated on works published after 1965 simply because those were the most common, but they also willingly unearthed older works, such as Eusebio Chacón’s Dos novelitas originales: El hijo de la tempestad and Tras la tormenta la calma from 1892, Vicente Bernal’s Las primicias from 1916, and Felipe M. Chacón’s Poesía y prosa from 1926. The premise was that the literature had deep but unknown roots, thus posing a challenge to locate more works. Before 1976, the notion was that Chicano literature existed nebulously, but now the contours of discovery were set in motion within which librarians and scholars could begin to fill in the gaps.

The 1970s were a pivotal period for defining the characteristics that U.S. Latino/a literature exhibited; there was greater critical attention and it was established once and for all that such a literature existed within a wider American domain. A literary renaissance was in effect as writings proliferated exponentially while conquering new discursive territories. The result was a string of brief bibliographies, including Carlota Cárdenas de Dwyer’s Chicano Literature: An Introduction and an Annotated Bibliography (1977); Frank Scott, César Caballero, and Ida González’s Chicano Literature: A Selective Bibliography (1977); and Charles M. Tatum’s Selected and Annotated Bibliography of Chicano Studies (1979).
But again, bibliographies lagged behind or confronted new challenges as the literature gained legitimacy and a broader readership. By 1982, Ernestina Eger's *A Bibliography of Criticism of Chicano Literature* had collected an extensive cross-referenced list of critical articles on authors and genres in a meticulous effort to document the scattered critical writings. In 1984, two key bibliographical collections appeared: Roberto Trujillo and Andrés Rodríguez compiled *Literatura Chicana: Creative and Critical Writings through 1984* at the same time that Lillian Castillo-Speed, Richard Chabrán, and Francisco García-Ayvens initiated the massive collection titled *Chicano Periodical Index: A Comprehensive Subject, Author and Title Index* (1984–1993). Since that time, others have produced rather extensive bibliographies relative to Chican@ and/or Latin@ literatures as stand-alone publications or as part of a major publication. In this regard, the Recovering the U.S. Hispanic Literary Heritage project, led by Nicolás Kanellos and housed at the University of Houston, has been instrumental in convening groups of scholars since 1990 to meet, discuss, identify, “rediscover,” and catalog literary works by Latinos/as prior to 1965, creating a bibliographic data clearinghouse of approximately 20,000 items, the largest for any ethnic group in the United States. Also, in 1992 Marc Zimmerman published *U.S. Latino Literature: An Essay and Annotated Bibliography*, a comprehensive work of primary sources, which for the first time embraced Chicano and Latino literatures as parts of the same canon. In addition, Donald W. Urioste has been a consistent contributor to various publications with accompanying bibliographies, such as the Dictionary of Literary Biography series on Chicano/a authors (1993 and 1999), edited by Francisco A. Lomelí and Carl R. Shirley, and *U.S. Latino Literatures and Cultures: Transnational Perspectives*, edited by Karin Ikas and Francisco A. Lomelí (2000). Also, key dictionary and encyclopedic works by Nicolás Kanellos (*Biographical Dictionary of Hispanic Literature in the United States*, 1989; *The Hispanic Literary Companion*, 1996; the three-volume *Greenwood Encyclopedia of Latino Literature*, 2008; *Hispanic Immigrant Literature: El Sueño del Retorno*, 2011) have contributed significantly to the documentation of and critical attention to such works.

A landmark event for the U.S. Latino literary landscape was the publication in 2011 of *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature* (edited by Ilan Stavans et al.), which appeared with considerable fanfare and anticipation, clearly marking the canonization of many works, but especially the grouping we call “U.S. Latino/a” literature. Doubts about its validity and rightfulness seemed to evaporate, establishing once and for all that this literature belongs within the American canon, with a Hispanic accent. Frederick L. Aldama’s milestone *The Routledge Concise History of Latino/a Literature* (2013) has further cemented the place of this literature by analyzing its expansiveness,
breadth, and originality. Our work aims to contribute to this tradition of
dictionaries, encyclopedias, special collections, and bibliographies to demon-
strate the variety and depth of literary expressions by U.S. Latinos/as.

This bibliography is organized in two sections. The first section, “General
Chicano/Latino Literary History and Criticism,” lists books that critically
address literature written by Chicanos/as, literature composed by other U.S.
Latinos/as, or both. In recent years, the country has come to employ the term
Latino/a as a tag of inclusivity that embraces Chicanos/as, just as it does
Puerto Ricans, Cubans, Dominicans, Salvadorans, and other Latinos/as who
were born and/or raised on the U.S. mainland. In this light, many contempo-
rary works of literary criticism reflect this usage.

The second section of the bibliography, “Select Bibliography on Specific
Chicano/Latino Writers,” consists of books and scholarly articles dedicated
to the specific U.S. Latino/a writers included in the dictionary section of this
work. Like the dictionary entries, the sources are listed alphabetically, ac-
cording to the surname of the author. Our intent is to make the bibliography
accessible to a broad audience nationally and abroad by providing a useful
cross-section of key works. The second section is particularly tailored for the
reader who wishes to pursue further readings on the respective authors. In
this way, readers will have easy access to both general and specific informa-
tion that otherwise might take considerable effort to unearth and collect.

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About the Authors

**Donaldo W. Urioste** is a professor of Spanish language and Hispanic literatures at California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB). Prior to coming to CSUMB as a pioneer faculty member in the fall of 1995, Urioste spent 17 years teaching at the Colorado College in Colorado Springs and at California Lutheran University in southern California, where he also taught Spanish language and Latin American and Chicano literature and culture courses. Professor Urioste completed his BA in Spanish at the University of Colorado at Denver (1971) and his MA in Spanish language and Hispanic literatures at the University of Colorado (1974), and received his PhD in Latin American literature from the University of New Mexico in 1985. A founding member of the Chicano/Latino Faculty Staff Association (CLFSA) at CSUMB, Urioste has also served as a faculty adviser to the Movimiento Estudiantil Chicano de Aztlán (MEChA) student group and the Chicano/ Latino Graduation Association (CLGA) at CSUMB. His research interests reside mostly in contemporary Chicano literature. With Francisco A. Lomelí, he coauthored *Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography* (1976) and coedited “Chicano Literature and Criticism” (*De Colores: Journal of Chicano Expression and Thought* 3, no. 4 [1977]), and he has written various articles on Chicano literature.

**Francisco A. Lomelí** has been a professor since 1978 in the Departments of Spanish and Portuguese and Chicana/o Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara (UCSB). He received his PhD in Romance languages from the University of New Mexico. His areas of expertise include Chicano/a literature (particularly literary history and the novel), Latin American literature (the novel, Mexico, and the Southern Cone), Spanish for heritage speakers, cultural studies, and Chicano studies in general. Among his publications are *Chicano Perspectives in Literature: A Critical and Annotated Bibliography* (coauthor, Donaldo W. Urioste; 1976), *La novelística de Carlos Drögutt: La poética de la obsesión y el martirio* (1984), *Chicano Studies: A Multidisciplinary Approach* (coeditors, Gene García and Isidro Ortiz; 1983), *Chicano Literature: A Reference Guide* (coeditor, Julio Martínez; 1985), *Aztlán: Essays on the Chicano Homeland* (coeditor, Rudolfo A. Anaya; 1989), three volumes of the *Dictionary of Literary Biography, Chicano Writers* (coeditor, Carl R. Shirley; 1989, 1993, 1999), *Handbook of Hispanic Cultures of the United States: Literature and Art* (1993), the translation *Barrio on the Edge* (1998), *Defying the Inquisition in Colonial New Mexico: Miguel de Quintana’s Life and Writings* (coauthor, Clark Colahan; 2006),
ABOUT THE AUTHORS

The Writings of Eusebio Chacón (coauthor/coeditor, Gabriel Meléndez; 2012), and The Chican@ Literary Imagination: A Collection of Critical Studies by Francisco A. Lomelí (coeditors, Julio Cañero and Juan F. Elices; 2012). He has also served in a variety of administrative posts, such as department chair for Chicana/o studies, black studies, and Spanish and Portuguese, as well as serving as director of the Education Abroad Program in Costa Rica, Chile, and Argentina. He has a number of articles, translations, journal editorships, reviews, and one film as associate producer to his credit. In 2016, Lomelí was elected as a correspondent member into the Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española (North American Academy of the Spanish Language), a national organization that oversees and approves the dissemination of new words of Spanish within the United States. It is an organ of the Royal Academy of the Spanish Language from Spain.

María Joaquina Villaseñor received her BA, MA, and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley. She is currently an associate professor of Chicano/a-Latino/a studies at California State University, Monterey Bay, where she has been a faculty member since 2006. She teaches courses in Chicano/a-Latino/a studies and comparative ethnic studies. In 2015, she was named Outstanding First-Year Student Advocate by the National Resource Center for the First-Year Experience and Students in Transition. Villaseñor’s research interests include Chicano/a-Latino/a literature and history, Chicanos/as-Latino/as in higher education, Filipino/a literature and history, and working-class literature. She is a twin and a mother of twins.