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Pluma Fronteriza: Newsletter of Latino/Chicano(a) Writers from the El Paso and Cd. Juárez Border Region

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UTEP Chicano Studies, "Pluma Fronteriza: Newsletter of Latino/Chicano(a) Writers from the El Paso and Cd. Juárez Border Region" (2004). *Chicano Studies*. Paper 1.
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Winter/Spring 2004 Volume 4, No. 1

Pluma Fronteriza

Newsletter of Latino/Chicano(a) Writers from the El Paso and Cd. Juárez Border Region

NEWS

La Llorona visits Gaspar de Alba

Last fall, Alicia Gaspar de Alba released *La Llorona on the Longfellow Bridge: Poetry y Otras Movidas* (Arté Público Press, ISBN 1558853995). In this collection of poetry and essays, Gaspar de Alba incorporates the Mexican archetypal wailing woman who wanders in search of her lost children. *La Llorona* is more than an archetype. She is a tour guide through the ruins of love and family and the constant presence of the poet's voice. She transcends time, place, and gender. The lines of the poems breathe that haunted spirit as they describe her *movidas,* both geographic and figurative, in search of the lost mother, the absent father, the abandoned child, the lover, the self. These essays track other movements of thought: reflections on identity, sexuality, and resistance.

Españolarias

Terra Incognita (www.terraincognita.50megs.com/) is an annual bilingual literary journal, whose editors are in Madrid, Spain, and Brooklyn, New York. Their forth issue was published last fall. Some works have been posted on the web including poetry by Ray González, Virgil Suárez, and Francisco Aragón.

Writers contact Pluma

Several authors contacted *Pluma* this summer. In our last issue, we mentioned the novel *Cibola to San Miguel*. Its author Rafael Meléndez tells us he was born in El Paso and attended Bowie and Jefferson high schools. He is a professor at New Mexico State University in Las Cruces in Latin American Studies.

Miguel Juárez is the author of *Colors on Desert Walls: The Murals of El Paso* (1997, Texas Western Press), which includes

continue Además, page 3

Did You Know?

Solórzano takes the reins

Rosalía Solórzano, who teaches at Pima Community College and in Chicano Studies at UTEP during summers, has been appointed by MALCS to chair the August 2004 Chicana/Latina Summer Institute in Seattle, Wash. Solórzano established a successful track record with MALCS and NACCS in the fields of literature, sociology, and gender studies.

Arciniega honored

In October, the Hispanic Association of Colleges and Universities (HACU) honored Tomás Arciniega, president of California State University at Bakersfield. Arciniega is a member of the HACU governing board and is a past governing board chair. In his tenure, Arciniega has helped build HACU's membership to more than 300 colleges and universities, and helped HACU win tens of millions of dollars each year for Hispanic college students. Arciniega has been president of CSUB since 1983.

El Paso a la Swift

El Paso's first satire publication *The El Paso Lampoon,* which has been web-based for a few years, has gone print. This hilarious tabloid pokes fun at everything from the Sun Carnival Parade to the UTEP Alumni Association. For more information, contact Ho Baron, 2830 Aurora Ave., El Paso, TX 79930.

Pat comes home

Pat Mora was in her hometown in June speaking at the Clardy Fox Library.

La Calaca Review

Calaca Press has released *The Calaca Review* (ISBN 0966077393), edited by UTEP MFA alumnus Manuel J. Vélez. The review features poetry and prose by well-known Chicano/a authors including the poet laureate of California, Francisco Alarcón, and Chicano Movement literary icons Alurista (El Plan Espiritual de Aztlán), Abelardo "Lalo" Delgado ("Stupid American"), and raúlrsalinas (*Un Trip through the Mind*

See Did U Know p. 12

UNIVERSITY OF TEXAS AT EL PASO

CHICANO STUDIES

OVER 30 YEARS OF MOVIMIENTO

Published and distributed with generous assistance from UTEP Chicano Studies

INSIDE ► Barrio San Juan p.8 • New Chicano Literature p.6 Kudos p.6 • Chicano/a writing in Colorado p.4

Dear Readers,

The last six months have been a busy publishing season with presses like Arté Público, Bilingual Press, and University of Arizona Press putting out a lot of reading. In case you missed it, Northwestern University Press has a Latino Voices series under the editorship of Ilan Stavans. The University of Oklahoma has also delved into the genre with some works by Rigoberto González for their Chicana and Chicano Visions of the Américas Series. This joins the number of series out there like the Camino del Sol series at University of Arizona Press.

There has been an abundance of photography books of late as one can see in some recent publications by the University of Texas Press and Bottom Dog Press which we mention in our *Libros, Libros* section. These books offer some prose and photos of Chicanos and Latinos in everyday life. Photos many times gives us impressions that writing cannot. Other works include *Louise Carlos Bernal: Barrios* on University of Arizona Press and *Colors on Desert Walls: The Murals of El Paso,* surprisingly, on Texas Western Press. The latter contains photography of murals in El Paso. Books like these allow pairings of writers and photographers. Furthermore, there are many treasure troves to be found in collections of photographers that have passed away. This can be a way of honoring Chicano and Latino photographers of the past who may not have had the means to put a book of photography together in their lifetimes.

On a recent book review by a Chicano author, the author said how he is tired of Chicano(a) literature being about working Chicana(os) or suffering in the workplace. I found this unfortunate. My summer among farmworkers in Colorado and my journeys in the meatpacking and feedlot Mecca of Southwest Kansas reinforced my belief in the need for literature on the working class. Whether we like it or not, it will always be a part of our culture. And with the increase in illegal immigration in the 1990s, the issues remain relevant.

Unfortunately, when we read of farmworkers in Chicano/a literature, the best known to us concern experiences from more than 30 years ago, the Bracero Program, and César Chávez and the United Farm Workers. Not that this is bad, but new experiences are needed, especially experiences within the last fifteen years. Works on the working class have expanded in many directions. Though the farmworkers plight is always of importance, stories of trade workers and the construction industry have moved into the light as seen in writings by Richard Yañez and Dagoberto Gilb. Issues of gender and sexuality can be found in plays by Cherrie Moraga on cannery workers and strawberry pickers, and Josefina Lopez with the garment industry. Even children's literature has made some steps with Cinco Puntos Press' *Si, Se Puede/Yes, We Can: Janitor Strike in L.A.* and Pat Mora's *The Bakery Lady/La Señora de la Panadería*.

When some people thought the grape pickers' plight was old and unoriginal, Rigoberto González proves critics wrong with enchanting tales of workers in California. Manuel Muñoz also has a story dealing with this, and this is good, because both authors give different experiences, including issues dealing with sexuality. I hope to see many more. Though some of the experiences of Midwest workers can be found in literature from Chicanos of the Texas valley, most of this literature has come out of California and Texas. We need more to be done as Mexican and other Latino immigrants (indigenous and non-indigenous) proliferate the fields of the Old South (the Carolinas, Virginia, Kentucky, and Georgia) and Southern Florida, the meatpacking plants of Nebraska, Iowa, Missouri, Texas and Kansas, and the apple orchids of Missouri. Pat Mora made a good one about Tómas Rivera as a child in *Tomás and the Library Lady*. Don't forget Sergio Troncoso and Daniel Chacón's stories on the chickens.

The last comments I have focus on Chicano literatures' transition to film. With successes like Patricia Cordoso's "Real Women Have Curves" based on Josefina López' play and Severo Pérez and Paul Espinosa's "And the Earth did not Swallow Him" (1995) based on Tomás Rivera's book, the trend as begun of Chicano literature going to film. It took long enough. One would be surprised at the many authors who have sold film rights to their works. John Rechy admits selling *City of Night*. I have heard rumor that Rudolfo Anaya selling rights to *Bless me Ultima* and Benjamin Alire Sáenz selling film rights to one of his novels. Jimmy Santiago Baca helped write the screenplay to *Blood in, Blood out* (a.k.a *Bound by Honor*). In all, the works made into movies are a play and a group of connected short stories. Most movies that are based on written works are based on novels, and film awaits a novel from Chicano Literature. But all is not lost. Short stories have also been made into film. Four short stories by science fiction writer Phillip K. Dick have been stretched into two-plus hour movies, so hope remains for the short story writers out there to join Tomás Rivera being applied to film.

Por la raza y c/s ,
Raymundo Elí Rojas, Editor

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Además!

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photography by Cynthia Farah. Juárez, originally from El Chuco, now living and working in Tucson, was in El Paso this summer for the opening of Cheech Marin's exhibit at the El Paso Museum of Art. His website is:
www.library.arizona.edu/users/juarezm/vita.html

Pete Flores

Pete Flores contacted us. He has written a biography of a man from El Paso whose plane was shot down over France during World War II, declared dead, buried in a small village north of Paris, France. Fifty year later, through the efforts of a young man from Villers-Cotternets, France, after an eight-year search, the pilot was found alive and well here in El Paso. This is a very historical and emotional story of World War II. Another book on which he is working is a novel based on a true story of the disappearance of Enrique Camarena, the DEA agent working in Mexico, and subsequent circumstances surrounding the drug trade in our area. Both books are in the editing stages.

Elizabeth Flores

Elizabeth Flores also contacted us. She wrote a bilingual children's book *La Tortilla Huida*, (Donars Production 1982). Flores has participated in two doctoral programs, at Arizona State University and University of Colorado in Boulder. She has taught at ASU, Our Lady of the Lake in San Antonio, TX (1986), and UTEP (early 90's), and was a teacher trainer at CU through program BUENO. She has another book, *Late for School*, which teaches the order of the numbers for pre-kinder and kinder, and also has a one-act bilingual play, "The Know Littles," which is based on British folktale geared for 1st - 6th grades.

Check out www.facingfaces@prophitart.com for poems by Elizabeth Flores. She is the only Latina from the U.S. whose poems have been accepted by Vista magazine. Also, Elizabeth wrote an article for *Vista*, September issue, titled "Tejano Pioneers of Terrell County." Check it out - www.vistamagazine.com

Here comes the Judge

El Paso Judge Albert Armendariz, one of the founding members of the Mexican American Bar Association & MALDEF, will be writing his memoirs to be entitled *Neither Fish Nor Fowl*, a reference to the tentative ethnic status of the Chicano on the border who is neither "completely" Mexican nor American.

Time & Place

Editors Note: César Chávez told Robert F. Kennedy that Chicanos are to the 20th century as the working Irish were to the 19th Century. This old Irish tune, somewhat reminded me of El Paso and one can draw many parallels especially regarding militarization of the border, language issues, the garment industry, and even internal colonization and occupation a la Acuña. One can even analogize riot gas to parallels with pollution.

THE TOWN I LOVE SO WELL

In my memory I will always see
the town that I loved so well
Where our school played ball by the gasyard wall
And we laughed through the smoke and the smell.
Going home in the rain, running up the dark lane
Past the jail and down behind the fountain.
Those were happy days in so many, many ways
In the town I loved so well.

In the early morning the shirt factory horn
Called women from Creggan, the Moor and the Bog.
While the men on the dole played a mother's role,
Fed the children and then trained the dogs.
And when times got tough there was just about enough
But they saw it through without complaining.
For deep inside was a burning pride
In the town I loved so well.

There was music there in the Derry air
Like a language that we all could understand
I remember the day when I earned my first pay
And I played in a small pick-up band.
There I spent my youth and to tell you the truth
I was sad to leave it all behind me.
For I learned about life and I'd found a wife
In the town I loved so well.

But when I returned how my eyes have burned
To see how a town could be brought to its knees
By the armored cars and the bombed-out bars
And the gas that hangs on to every tree.
Now the army's installed by the old gasyard wall
And the damned barbed wire gets higher and higher.
With there tanks and their guns, oh my God, what have they done
To the town I loved so well.

Now the music's gone but they carry on
For their spirit's been bruised, never broken.
They will not forget but their hearts are set
On tomorrow and peace once again
For what's done is done and what's won is won
And what's lost is lost and gone forever.
I can only pray for a bright, brand new day
in the town I loved so well.

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Rocky Mountain Raza: Chicano/a writing in Colorado

By Raymundo Elí Rojas

Entry, Summer 2003. Alberto Mesta visits me while I am in Colorado this summer. An old UTEP MEChA colleague, Alberto Mesta sits besides me in La Taza Café (www.la-taza.com/) at 1550 Platte Street in downtown Denver. It was Alberto who first made me realize that El Paso had many Chicano(a) writers. Like El Paso, Colorado has also had its Chicano writers, in particular Denver.

I told Alberto I wanted him to meet certain people while in Denver. Trinidad Sánchez, one of the few Chicano writers from Detroit, moved to Colorado from San Antonio. In *La Oreja*, he was part of the thriving literary scene alive in the city. In San Tony, the readings he hosted were noted for being attended by ethnically diverse groups.

Trini's wife Regina Chávez y Sánchez is the daughter of Santiago Chávez, one of the founders of Denver's Crusade for Justice. When Regina's father passed away, she wanted to be closer to the family, so she and Trini packed up to go north. Ricardo Sánchez called Trini the "heir apparent" of writers like himself and Abelardo Delgado. Trini's poems *Why Am I So Brown?*, *Let's Stop the Madness,* and *Who Am I?* became very popular in the Chicano poetry genre, which had not seen a poet with such energy in many years. Becoming one of the bestseller poetry collections of the 1990s, Trini Sánchez is still seen as too political by some publishers who cater to the watered-down Latino writers. (www.trinidadjr.org/)

Entry: As we wait for our food, euphoric on the smell of *chorizo* that filled the room, the Don of Chicano Poetry walks in. Abelardo Delgado gives us his famous smile. Delgado, who has gain more of an international fame in the last few years, takes out his latest chapbook, and gives my friend Alberto a copy. "Here vato," says Lalo, "here's a souvenir."

Delgado had moved to Denver in the early 1970s to head the Colorado Migrant Council. After a brief and humorous return to El Paso to work for UTEP, he worked in the Northwest in migrant programs, founded the Idaho Migrant Council, and then took a position a the University of Utah. When the Colorado Migrant Council needed an executive director again, they turned to Lalo.

Despite being renowned as an El Paso writer from Mesa y la Quinta Streets in the El Paso's *Segundo Barrio*, Denver has been part of Lalo for almost 30 years. A few years ago, he received the Colorado Governor's Award for Excellence in the Arts and he was honored by the city of Denver with a day declared as "Lalo Delgado Day."

Entry: I ask Trini and Lalo, who both knew Ricardo Sánchez well, "So what do you think of Ricardo Sánchez leading our troops in Iraq?"

With his original chuckle, Lalo says, "Yea, vato, I thought my carnal had passed away and then I hear he's the *mero mero* of the army in Iraq." Lalo laughs as he continues, "My poor carnal is probably rolling in his grave right now."

On a July 4 evening, Trini takes me to the Mercury Café (www.mercurycafe.com) at 2199 California St. in Denver. The café features open mics and Sunday-night poetry slams. Other poets, refusing to celebrate our independence, join us as small hints of burning cigarettes fill the air. After several readers go up to the podium, the owner of "The Merc" gives her poems and then tops them off with the burning of the U.S. flag. The aroma of the burnt flag fill the room.

On another night, Trini takes me to Brother Jeff's Cultural Center & Café (www.brotherjeff.com) in the historic Five Points neighborhood of Denver at 2836 Welton St. Earlier, when I needed directions, Lalo's granddaughter Vanessa Delgado, a journalism major and poet in her own right, gave them out. She humorously said that I didn't want to end up in Five Points, a neighborhood with a dangerous rep. But Brother Jeff's was far from dangerous. A venue for many African American poets, it

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Continued from p. 5 was every few minutes that a poet would come up to Trini and welcome him. Brother Jeff's is a place not to miss.

Trini has walked the line between Chicano and African American poets for many years. Growing up in Detroit, African Americans and Chicanos shared the same neighborhoods. In

Trinidad Sánchez

Detroit, when Trini was looking for a poets group, he found what he was looking for in a Black poet's group. There, he came under the mentorship of Black poet Ron Allen. Recently, Trini was presented the James Ryan Morris Memorial Tombstone Award for Poetry at Denver Poets Day last August. He was also presented the 2003 Spirit of Tlatelolco Art & Culture Award by Escuela Tlatelolco, Denver.

"denver, bask amongst mountains under el sol de Aztlán" — Ricardo Sánchez

As the new Denver metro rail passes by Brother Jeff's, a poet just out of high school gives his verses with jazz guitar accompaniment and jazz scatting. The women poets go on an expedition of erotic poetry and every performance ends with the M.C. saying, "Can I get an affirmation?"

Colorado has had its share of Chicano writers. Rodolfo "Corky" González of Denver wrote "I Am Joaquin," though Ricardo Sánchez and José Angel Gutierrez suspect González did not write the watershed poem.* But than again, if you were a Chicano poet in those days and had not been called a *vendido, agringado, encholotado, nagonometrico*, or gotten into an argument with Sánchez, then you really hadn't made it as a Chicano(a) poet.

Nevertheless, the poem became Chicano Literature's most famous. In 1977, *A Spokesman of the Mexican American movement: Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzales and the fight for Chicano liberation, 1966-1972* (R and E Research) was published by Christine Marín. A few years ago, Arté Público Press published *Message to Aztlán: Selected Writings* which contains civil rights writings, plays, prose, and more by González. Antonio Esquibel writes the introduction and even explains Gonzales' lack of publication after "I Am Joaquin."

Ernesto B. Vigil wrote *The Crusade for Justice: Chicano Militancy and the Government's War on Dissent* (U of Wisconsin Press) focusing on federal provocateurs and infiltration in the Chicano Movement in Denver. There are also various writings on the FBI's CIONTELPRO referencing the Crusade. On the other side of the coin, another Crusade for Justice co-founder, Juan Haro self published *The Ultimate Betrayal (*ISBN 0-8059-4379), which is both a biography on Haro and exposé on the Crusade for Justice and Gonzáles. Included in the book is a copy the Crusade's incorporation form and a legal demand letter to Dorrance Publishing Co. threatening to sue the publisher if they published the book. The letter was ultimately successful, thus Haro had to self publish.+

A note for El Pasoans: In the early 1970s, many El Pasoans (including many members of *El Segundo barrio's* Mexican American Youth Association — MAYA) came to Boulder with Salvador "El Huevo" Ramírez with the lure of *bien financial aid,* the recently founded Chicano Studies program, and the United Mexican American Students (UMAS). There, they became involved in the student movement. There is a dark history waiting to be told of inter-Chicano rivalry and betrayal concerning the bombings that proliferated the area in those years. Poet, Heriberto Teran was one of the victims. Yet, *movimiento* veterans I know, tell me it's still not time to let those stories out. One veteran of that period, another El Pasoan, Ché Luera, died in 2003. He was also known to write poetry.

Ray González (no relation to Corky) spent some time in the Mile High City. He even edited a book called *City Kite On A Wire: 38 Denver Poets* which included a piece by Lalo Delgado. González is still is the poetry editor of the *Bloomsbury Review*, which is headquartered in Denver near La Taza Café on Platte Street.

Bernice Zamora was born in Aguilar, Colorado, which is a little north of Trinidad. She attended the University of Southern Colorado in Pueblo and then did graduate studies at Colorado State University in Ft. Collins. She published, along with José Antonio Burciaga, *Restless Serpents*. Anthony Virgil is another poet from Denver who has put out a chapbook called *City in Ranfla*.

Lorna Dee Cervantes

Ramon del Castillo, a native of Wichita, Kansas, is also active in the state. I did not meet him that summer, but bumped into him later in Los Angeles. His most recent book *Tales from a Michoacano* came out last year. Dr. Castillo is a professor at Regis University and teaches at Metro State University in Denver. Del Castillo helped lead the movement that defeated Ron Unz' anti-bilingual education movement in Colorado.

Cont. on p. 16

LIBROS, LIBROS
New Chicano & Latino Literature

The Afterlife, (Harcourt Children's Books 1st edition ISBN: 0152047743), Gary Soto. You'd think a knife in the ribs would be the end of things, but for Chuy, that's when his life at last gets interesting. He finally sees that people love him, faces the consequences of his actions, finds in himself compassion and bravery, and even stumbles on what may be true love. A funny, touching, and wholly original story by one of the finest authors writing for young readers today.

El ambiente nuestro: Chicano/Latino Homoerotic Writing (Bilingual Press ISBN: 1-931010-23-4) criticism by David William Foster. *El ambiente nuestro* examines, in unprecedented depth, homoerotic issues in the writing of such authors as John Rechy, Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzáles, Francisco Alarcón, Jaime Manrique, and Richard Rodríguez. Foster explores the important body of writing on these issues that began with Rechy's founding texts of Chicano narrative, and continues today with more recent additions to the field, such as Jaime Manrique's Eminent Maricones.

KUDOS AND AWARDS

Way to go Chávez

Hispanic Heritage Awards Foundation picked Las Cruces author Denise Chávez as one of its 2003 Hispanic Heritage Awards recipients as an individual who has broken ground for other Hispanics and served as role models for all Americans. She was among five notable Hispanics honored in a star-studded ceremony at the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. She received the Hispanic Heritage Award for literature. – *El Paso Times*. Furthermore, in November, the Women's Intercultural Center of Anthony, N.M., celebrated its 10th anniversary with the Women in the Arts Gala honoring Chávez.

Celebrating Rechy

"El Paso has never been in a hurry to celebrate me," were the words John Rechy said to the *El Paso Times* several years ago. Those words seem to shatter as Rechy received the Gold Nugget Award by the UTEP Alumni Association. The author also gained a spread in *The El Paso Times*, Oct. 16. *Times* journalist Ramon Renteria wrote "El Paso writer talks about his craft, fame, sexuality." Jim Przepasniak wrote "Novel could be author's best creation" in his review of Rechy's new novel *The Life and Adventures of Lyle Clemens* (Grove Press 0802117465). Rigoberto González also reviewed the novel, saying "Rechy's complex offering provides plenty of twists." His El Paso Public Library speech reigned in 300 people. Rechy has been in his hometown of El Paso a lot the last few years, speaking at the Stonewall Gala a few years ago and for readings at the El Paso Public Library.

Yañez, Solis, Troncoso, Herrera, Delgado, Gilb

Congrats to Rich Yañez for his recent marriage. Rich has also relocated to the El Paso/Las Cruces area. In October, Octavio Solis was honored at a private reception in El Paso after the performance of his play "Santos & Santos," which was the first of the playwright's plays to be performed in his hometown. Sergio Troncoso was inducted to the Hispanic Scholarship Hall of Fame in October as a former Hispanic Scholarship recipient. Noemí Herrera was recently hired by the *Kansas City Star* as an education reporter. Congratulations to Lalo and Lola Delgado on their Silver Wedding Anniversary last October. Hurray for Dagoberto Gilb for his National Book Critics Circle Award nomination for *Grito*. Congrats to all!

AmeRican (Arté Público Press 1558853952), Tato Laviera. New edition of a collection originally published in 1985 by one of the poets who sparked the Noyorican poetry movement. This collection of poetry celebrates the stripes and colors making up the American people.

Ballad of Gato Guerrero (Northwestern U Press ISBN 0810120917), Manuel Rámos. Paperback edition of Luis Móntez mystery. Móntez, an attorney and part-time detective, has been getting his career and life together. So how did he end up in a ditch, his car crashed nearby, a gun-wielding giant in a cowboy hat coming toward him? The answer: his friend, Felix "Gato" Guerrero, whom trouble has always followed. nupress.northwestern.edu or www.manuelramos.com

Bestiary: Selected Poems 1986-1997 (Bilingual Press ISBN: 1-931010-20-X), Lourdes Vásquez; trans. Rosa Alcalá. A bestiary usually concerns mythological animals. Here, however, Vázquez crafts a bestiary of a different sort with a compilation of sensuous poetry in which insects, animals, and strangers reflect her experience as a "Caribbean in exile."

Blood Mysteries (U of AZ Press 0816522375), Dixie Salazar. Poetry that is a tribute to lost souls in finely tuned lyricism showing an uncanny grasp of frayed lives. Salazar gives flesh and vitality to women normally encountered only as statistics. The incarcerated, the homeless, the hopeless, and the missing. This book is a forceful prayer for the disenfranchised.

Border Crossing (Arté Público 1558854053), María Collen Crúz. (Young Adult) In this debut novel, Crúz creates the voice of a girl just on the brink of understanding as she rides the rails from LA to Tijuana to learn something about her father's family. With her journal at her side, this thoughtful and creative character tackles complicated issues of identity and self-empowerment.

Border Confluences: Borderland Narratives from the Mexican War to the Present (U of AZ Press ISBN 0-8165-2335-5), Rosemary A. King. Helen Hunt Jackson, Carlos Fuentes, Cormac McCarthy, and Leslie Marmon Silko

Libros, Libros cont. p. 7

Libros, Libros cont. from p. 6

have created important literature and helped define the border. King offers a way of understanding the conflicts these writers portray by analyzing their representations of geography and genre. She examines how the theme of cultural difference influences the ways writers construct narrative space and the ways their characters negotiate those spaces.

The Burning Plain and other stories (U of TX Press ISBN 0-292-70132-2), Juan Rulfo. A major figure in the history of post-Revolutionary Mexican literature, Rulfo has received international acclaim. Some works are translated here in English for the first time as a collection. In the transition of Mexican fiction from direct statements of nationalism and social protest to a concentration on cosmopolitanism, these stories of a rural people caught in the play of natural forces are not simply an interior examination of the phenomena of their world.

Chiles for Benito/Chiles para Benito (Arte Público/Piñata Books 1-55885-389-8), Ana Baca, ill. Anthony Accrdo. (Reading level: K-2nd): One September morning, young Cristina and her grandmother pick bright red *chiles* and ring them to dry. When the child is dismayed at the bushels that await them, her *abuela* tells her the story of great-grandfather Benito and his *bizcochitos m gicos*. In the tradition of "Jack and the Beanstalk," the young Benito trades the family cow for some magic seeds.

Crossing Vines (U of OK ISBN 080623528X), Rigoberto González. The author tells of a crew of grape pickers and the harsh realities that have not gone away. He divides the novel into three parts, involving 36 vignettes that document individual migrant farm workers' lives in the presence of others.

Colonized This!: Young Women of Color on Today's Feminism (Seal Press 1580050670), Daisy Hernández, Bushra Rehman, eds. A new generation of brilliant, outspoken women of color are speaking to the concerns of a new feminism, and to their place in it.

Death in Precinct Puerto Rico: A Luis Gonzálo Novel (Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press 0312289898), Steven Torres. In this mystery novel by Puerto Rican writer Steven Torres, Luis Gonzálo of the small town of Anguistias in Puerto Rico's central mountains, knows all there is to know about the people he has worked to protect for more than two decades. He knows Elena Maldonado was beaten as a child and as a wife. But when she winds up dead on the same day she gives birth, he doesn't know who killed her.

Deep Purple (Ecco/HarperCollins 0066214203), Mayra Montero, a Cuban-born writer. *Deep Purple* is provocative and humorous. A distinguished music critic has written for a San Juan newspaper all his life. Forced to retire, he continues to haunt the newspaper's offices. Montero explores the relationship between sexual desire and music. The music critic ultimately finds in that deep and mysterious place that is the core of human sexuality nothing less the meaning of life.

Down Garrapata Road (Arte Público 1-55885-397-9), Anne Estevis. A story about young people on the brink of change and conflict, and the coming of age of a traditional community in the modern world. A novel about the Chicano community in south Texas that brings to life a small Chicano(a) community during the 1940s and 50s. In this untouched world, young men depart for World War II, whispers of El Chupasangre (the bloodsucker) crawl across the countryside, a brother sacrifices the little money he has for a pastel dress of his sister, and one young girl makes a painful mistake when she disobeys her parents for a tryst with her boyfriend.

The Empanadas that Abuela Made/Las empanadas que hacía la abuela (Arte Público 1-55885-388-X), Diane Gonzáles Bertrand, ill. Alex Pardo Delange. A sweet bilingual story about family tradition. In this whimsical look at the making of *empanadas*, the author serves up the festive fun of a family's effort to concoct the delicious pastries. In the tradition of popular rhymes like "The Old Lady Who Swallowed a Fly," laughter and fun rise from page to page.

From Cibola to San Miguel (New Mexico State University Ctr for Latina American Studies), Set in the Mesilla Valley of New Mexico during World War II, 4-year-old Modesto is left by his parents with his great-grandmother Pilar where he ultimately spends the next five years under her care. The war ends and his parents return a year later and instead of staying home they decide to leave for 'Califas' and away from the place Modesto has come to know as home.

The Ghostly Rider and Other Chilling Tales (Arte Público 1-55885-400-2), Hernán Moreno-Hinojosa. A collection of scary tales to thrill and entertain young people. In this debut collection of stories of the bizarre, the folk legends of a community raise their heads, sometimes even from the grave. The author threads together the *cuentos viejos*, the stories told by the fire that transport the reader to another place and time.

En Mi Viejo San Juan

By Raymundo Elí Rojas

"el chuco, beloved land where boulders define the inner borders, the barrio del Diablo unlike yet the almost same barrier-ridden existence of El Segundo, La Roca, San Juan, La Rivera or La Sana, even el catorce and beyond to Chivas Town…"
— Ricardo Sánchez

If you did not grow up in a certain *barrio*, you are an intruder stepping into it. This poses problems and sometimes danger in trying to find the history and the stories of the *barrio's* people. Some think I am weird to just walk into a neighborhood and start talking to the residents there. Even the inhabitants give me a suspicious eye, but after a few questions and lax conversation, they relaxed and the stories flowed.

At one time, outside of South El Paso, Chicanos lived in few other places. Before 1930, they could have lived on *La Mesa*, also referred to as Stormsville, near what is now Kern Place. After 1930, many of residents of La Mesa moved to the east slope of the mountain creating Chivastown.

However, for many years, there were two main enclaves of Chicanos and Mexicanos. One was *La Esmelta* or Smeltertown. The other can be accessed by driving on Interstate 10, exiting on Paisano Drive (TX Highway 62) and heading south. Immediately to your east is San Juan.

Unlike *El Segundo*, which had political boundaries being the Second Ward, the San Juan *barrio* does not bless the researcher with defined boundaries. This is where territory and pride come enter the picture.

As with La Roca, to find the boundaries, you must ask *la gente*.

A few days after New Years, one lucky drive through San Juan, I happened on a group of about 10 men hanging out in front of a *torterilla* on Ybarra Ct. On Jan. 3, 2004, it seemed like an impromptu new year's gathering.

I was a total stranger asking these men about their homeland, their territory. They gave me looks that could kill. Their eyes said, "Who are you? What are you doing in my neighborhood?" I felt as Beowulf would have felt as he arrives in the kingdom where Grendel laid, but before disembarking from his ship, he's met by armed men.

But after explaining my intentions of trying to document the histories of El Paso's Chicano neighborhoods, they nod their heads, as if to say, "*Esta bien. Que queres saber?*"

For those unfamiliar with the area, driving on Gateway East, exiting on the Paisano exit and passing Paisano Drive, you will see a small shopping center and then an elementary school. There you'll find the sign: "Welcome to the San Juan Community."

Years ago, this was the edge of El Paso. Dairies and dairy cow feed lots use to litter the area around San Juan, and even across Interstate 10 near what is now Basset Center Mall. Along North Clark Drive was the Sunset Dairy.

"*Era puro lecheria aqui en esos tiempos*," said one man who didn't want his name mentioned in this story.

The industries in the area came later as the dairy feedlots moved farther east or to Anthony, Texas. Now what lies there are self-storage facilities, a trucking warehouse, and the El Paso Towing lot with its new and old *ranflas*. In fact, residents say El Paso Towing has employed many of San Juan's residents throughout the years.

"*Era puro llano en esos tiempos* especially east of Glenwood Street," said another man who, like many in El Paso, often switched between Spanish and English. "*Al sur, cerca las trackes, era puro caliche*."

The men further described growing up. They recalled sand dunes where Basset Center Mall is now. They hunted rabbits on those dunes, which they called "Sand Hills."

The next day, Ruben Rincón, a former resident of San Juan, called me. He grew up in San Juan in the 1940s. He remembers the times it snowed in El Paso, which was not very often, they would go up to the Sand Hills and use *lámina* to slide down the snow-covered slopes. Rincón also remembers when the city streetcars would make passes near San Juan. A person could catch them at Alameda and El Paso Drive to get to Downtown El Paso.

"Tambien," Rincón said, "on Macías Street *era puro* stables. Sometimes they would hold dances there."

Talking about the many *lecherias*, Rincón humorously told me that the area near Chelsea Street also had dairies. They called the area "El Sovaco" because of the odor.

Growing up, his memories include a house without an air conditioner and sleeping outside under the trees, at least until it got cold. There was a time when San Juan did not have sewage and many of the residents had to use outhouses.

His more glamorous recollections of San Juan entailed listening to 1950's musicians Johnny Lee Hooker and Big Joe Turner.

There were many memories of the 1940s and 50s among the men in front of the *torterilla*. "Many of us would dress with the *pachuco* dress," one of them said. "We weren't *pachucos*, but we had the look *con los drapes*."

Rincón said in our telephone interview, "Many of us liked to dress up when we were young with sharp, shiny shoes."

As the sun turned the sky pink near Mount Franklin, more *Sanjuaneros* began to arrive from work. My group of 10 men instantly grew to about 16, including the *barrio's Sanjuaneras*. One man went on to tell me about his earlier working days.

"There was also a man that would come and pick many of us up to go pick cotton in the Lower Valley or in Canutillo," he said.

Another man said he used to work in house construction.

San Juan began to get

Cont. on next page

San Juan continued from p. 8

chilly as the sun set behind the mountain. The *Sanjuaneros* sat relaxed in their *barrio*, which is part of the Wamble Addition.

To the north, San Juan's border is defined by I-10, with North Clark Street outlining the east boundary. The Union Pacific railroad tracks ("Las Tracas") define the south border and Paisano Street defines the west.

Across Paisano Street, the *Sanjuarneros* call the neighborhood "Brentwood," after the name of subdivision.

I asked the gentlemen what *barrio* lies to the east, across Clark Street.

"Pues, we have always called it 'Los Tankes' because of the refineries of Chevron and Western Petroleum Company. But another man said it's 'El Tanke' because of the water tank that lingers above.

"What was the area across the tracks, to the south," I asked them. "That's Ascarate," they answered.

San Juan has some prominent buildings: the "Civic Center," the San Juan Community Center at 701 N. Glenwood, San Juan Bautista Catholic Church on Dailey Avenue, and various groceries including the San Juan Grocery and La Chiquita.

The San Juan Grocery owner, Mike Márquez, told me his store has been around since 1954, but under different owners.

Hawkins Elementary is on Stephenson Street. The school was called San Juan Intermediate until the 1930s.

But it is the San Juan Community Center that is the pride of San Juan. They told me the San Juan residents originally founded the center as a place to get the kids off the streets and give them something to do. The center had a crude beginning.

"We first had it in a former stable," said a man.

Having grown up on the east side, near Yarbrough and Pebble Hills, I knew of the San Juan Community Center as the center that had the boxing ring and the Golden Gloves. The *Sanjuaneros* say that Jack Martínez was director of Golden Gloves for many years. There were outside basketball courts with lights would be kept on late into the night.

Rincón said one janitor, Victor García, helped run a softball league for adults. He also remembers watching movies outside. They would shine the projector on the wall, he said.

A few years ago, the city demolished the old center and built a new one to the dismay of many *Sanjuaneros* who remember the old center.

"It's not like is used to be," said one resident. "They now charge us a fee to use it. The center was something we use to be able to use free of charge."

Used by many people, the San Juan Community Center once held El Paso's premier boxing tournaments; but now, visitors prefer to go to other places with a boxing ring like the center on Carolina Street.

"Many famous boxers would come and train," said a man, "but the new gym is too small so they pass it by."

The man further expressed his complaints about an eminent domain issue that took place some time ago involving one resident who did not want to sell his San Juan home, but the city took it anyway and built senior citizen housing.

They all remembered a time when their creation, their community center, was for their exclusive use.

In the group I was speaking to, there were several generations. Most had attended *La Jeff* (Jefferson High School) but others went to Burges High School when it was new. In those years, the *Sanjuarneros* describe Burges as "*puro gringos*."

But where did the name "San Juan" come from? St. John, the disciple that Jesus loved. Was the *barrio* named after the nearby Catholic church of San Juan Bautista? Most of the residents say the *barrio* already had the name before the church was built.

I asked if San Juan was ever a dangerous neighborhood. My friend Carlos Caballero grew up in the Segundo Barrio on *La Sana*, the residents' nickname for San Antonio Street, and later near Piedras and Alameda Streets, known for many years as the "Eastside."

"San Juan was a *barrio* you just did not enter," Caballero told me.

The men there reinforced Caballero's sentiments.

Márquez recalled some turbulent times with gangs and crime in the 1970s.

"*Nadie entraba*," said one man, "*pero todo era pacifico aqui. Tenian miedo*."

Were there gangs, I asked.

"No, not really, we were just the *Sanjuaneros*," said a man. "There were many youth clubs, though. There were the King Cobras. They had jackets that said 'King Cobras' on their backs *en amarillo y negro*."

There was also the Silver Teens, they told me.

The air around me was turning blue with the coming of night. As some men smoked and other sipped on drinks, I asked more questions.

Some famous people and heroes came out of San Juan. They include singer Vikki Carr who was born in San Juan, and flyweight champion Jesse Fonseca. Raul Rivera and Angel Romero were World War II heroes. One of the men I spoke with, Alejandro Márquez, served in the Vietnam War and just recently retired from the National Guard.

I asked the men where in the *barrio* they would go to drink *para echar una chela*. In various directions, they began pointing out the bars. There was the Papagallo and El Melón.

The owner of the Papagallo also owned the hotel of the same name on Alameda Street.

There was also a bar called El Copa at the corner of Ybarra Ct.

After talking for about an hour, the night had the group slowly breaking up. As the last hints of pink left El Paso's western sky, I left the *Sanjuaneros* as they talked of old times.

SIGN MY BOOK
PERFORMANCES, CONFERENCES, BOOK-SIGNINGS, AND READINGS & OTHER NEWS

Readings by Lalo

Abelardo B. Delgado read for *16 de septiember*, along with Ramon Del Castillo, Trinidad Sánchez, and Hektor Muñoz (Los Cuatro Aces de Denver) at La Taza Café in downtown Denver. In October, **Delgado** also received a long-awaited welcome in El Paso as he visited the hometown to speak at El Paso Community College's Valle Verde Campus. He also returned to his old stomping grounds in *El Segundo Barrio* and to read at La Fe clinic's Child and Adolescent Wellness and Cultural and Technology Center. As a special treat, he was taken to his *alma mater*, Bowie High School, to speak.

Tatiana goes to San Diego

On Jan. 10, UTEP MFA alumna Tatiana de la tierra read from her book *For the Hard Ones*, at Casa del Libro in San Diego, CA.

Ron Arias: A Moving Target

Ron Arias was in El Paso and Las Cruces in September promoting his book *Moving Target: A Memoir of Pursuit* (Bilingual Review Press). Arias was raised in Los Angeles and El Paso. His mother was also raised in El Paso. S. Derrickson Moore reviewed the book for the *Las Cruces Sun-News*. The review was rerun in the *El Paso Times* on Sept. 15. We also spotted Arias commenting on TV on the celebrity party held at Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch.

Miraculous Days with John Rechy

The El Paso Public Library Board sponsored a visit in October by John Rechy. The Library selected his book, *The Miraculous Day of Amalia Gomez,* as the fall selection for their Read as One program. Rechy was in El Paso on Oct. 16 to kick-off the Library's city-wide reading initiative.

Becoming Gringos & other news

In October, José N. Uranga spoke at New Mexico State University. He is the author of the historical novel *The Buenavida Dilemma: Whether to Become Gringos*. The author is a retired environmental lawyer who lives in Florida. He is a native of New Mexico and an NMSU graduate. He received his law degree from Georgetown University and a master's degree from the University of Texas at San Antonio.

Check out Carlos Morton's poem "Mummy de un Niño de Tres Años by the Name of Anoubias" in Volume IV, No. 14 the University of Santa Barbara's Center for Chicano Studies Spanish-language journal. For information on the journal, write the Center For Chicano Studies, UC Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA 93106. Also, check out the April issue of *La Voz de Esperanza* (Vol 16, Issue 4), the publication of the Esperanza Peace & Justice Center (www.esperanzacenter.org) for the article "October 2nd Will Not be Forgotten" by UTEP History Professor Yolanda Chávez Leyva.

Poet Laureate of Aztlán Abelardo "Lalo" B. Delgado, 2003

Paco Ignacio Taibo II

In October, at UTEP, the College of Liberal Arts and the Bilingual MFA Program in Creative Writing hosted *Literature and Power: A Conversation with Paco Ignacio Taibo II*.

Honoring Salazar

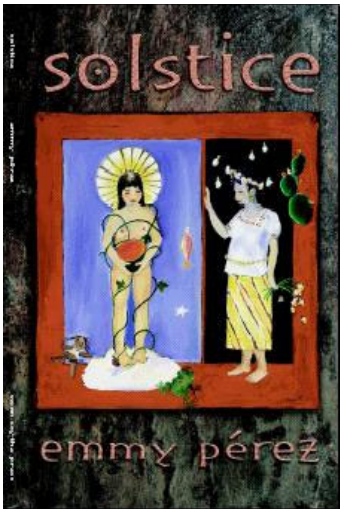
The University of Texas at El Paso named its new Spanish-Language Media Program in honor of slain El Paso journalist Rubén Salazar, who graduated from Texas Western College (now UTEP) in 1954. Born in Cd. Juárez and raised in El Paso, Salazar was one of the first prominent Chicano journalists in the nation. He worked for the UTEP's student newspaper *The Prospector* and a university Spanish-language publication, *El Burro*. Later he went on to work for the *El Paso Herald*-Post and the *Los Angeles Times*. He was killed by Los Angeles County Sheriff deputies in 1970, while covering the Chicano Moratorium March.

Translation workshop

C.M. Mayo announced that the "World to World/Mundo a Mundo" Translation Workshop will be led by poet & translator Amanda Powell in Querétaro, Mexico, July 2004. Anyone who is or wants to translate poetry, short fiction, or anything else literary, this is a wonderful workshop, and Mayo highly recommends it. If you're interested, please see details and links below:

www.cmmayo.com or www.tameme.org

New Books From the El Paso Connection



Solstice

UTEP lecturer Emmy Pérez has released a new book *Solstice* on Swan Scythe Press. The author also presented a Tumblewords workshop in January 2004. On Dec. 19, Emmy Pérez read at the historic Socorro mission to celebrate the publication of her new book. www.swanscythe.com/books/solstice.htm

Classic republished

Not from EPT, but worth mentioning. After many years of waiting and queries, *Among the Valiant: Mexican Americans in World War II and Korea* has been re-published. The original work by Raul Morin was written to draw attention to the deeds of valor and sacrifices made by Mexican American GIs in WWII and Korea. It includes the stories of the Medal of Honor Recipients. A serious historical overview as well as a cherished revelation of traditional values and heroism of a much-maligned race. Read about the thrilling stories of our Mexican American heroes. Available from Valiant Press for $30, which includes tax and S&H. Send to: Edward Morin, PO Box 31476, Los Angeles 90031.

Digame!

A Border politics textbook: *Digame! Policy and Politics on the Texas Border* (Kendall/Hunt, $38.95) was recently published. It is edited by Christine Thurlow Brenner, Irasema Coronado, and Dennis Soden, who teach in UTEP's political science department. Designed as a text for undergraduates, the book cover issues of political, social and economic policy from the perspective of the U.S.-Mexico border. It is also recommended for elected officials, public administrators, business leaders, and citizens who want to understand the border's complexities. The book is available at the UTEP bookstore or at:

www.kendellhunt.com

Los de abajo

Across from Sacred Heart Catholic Church in *El Segundo*, off Oregon Street, are the presidios tenements where Mariano Azuela wrote the seminal Mexican Revolution novel *Los de abajo*, first published in the *El Paso Times*. Luis Leal has edited *Mariano Azuela, Cuentista*. Azuela is studied here for the first time as a short story writer. This collection of 23 *cuentos* also contains the introduction "Mariano Azuela, cuentista" by Luis Leal and bibliography of Azuela's short stories.

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Recent Stories and Book Reviews

- "UTEP to honor slain El Paso journalist," Ramón Renteria, *El Paso Times*, Oct. 11, 2003
- "Collection does late novelist no favors," review of *Arturo Islas: The Uncollected Works,* reviewed by Rigoberto González.
- "Chicano Playwright draws on memories from El Paso," by Raymundo Elí Rojas, *El Paso Times*, Oct. 3, 2003.
- "El Pasoan's plays often show a darkside of border," by Maribel Villalva, *El Paso Times*, Oct. 12, 2003.
- "Attorney-author puts L.A.'s diverse population on paper," review of *Assumption and other stories* by Daniel A. Olivas. Reviewed by Rigoberto González, *El Paso Times*, Oct. 5, 2003.
- "It's a dog's life in now collection of narrative poetry," review of *One Kind of Faith* by Gary Soto. Reviewed by Rigoberto González, Nov. 2, 2003.
- "Professor delves into the Chicano Movement," review of *Mi Raza Primero* by Ernesto Chávez. Reviewed by Carlos Ortega, *El Paso Times*, Oct. 5, 2003.
- "Storyteller gathers up details of Chicano life," review of *Zigzagger* by Manuel Muñoz. Reviewed by R. González, *El Paso Times*, Dec. 7, 2003.
- "'Crossing Vines' tells farm worker's stories," review of *Crossing Vines* by Rigoberto González. Reviewed by R. Joseph Rodríguez, *El Paso Times*, Sept. 21, 2003
- "Pioneering Chicano activist-poet gives talk," by Raymundo E. Rojas, *El Paso Times,* Oct. 19, 2003.
- "Lawyer's novel thrills, educates," review of *Brown on Brown* by Manuel Ramos. Reviewed by R.E. Rojas, *El Paso Times*, Sept. 21, 2003.
- "Fantasy Master's books transcend the films," review of *The Lord of the Rings: Return of the King* by J.R.R. Tolkien. Reviewed by R.E. Rojas, *El Paso Times*, Dec. 14, 2003.
- "'The Silmarllion delves deeper into of the 'Ring' trilogy," review of *The Silmarllion* by J.R.R. Tolkien. Reviewed by R.E. Rojas, *El Paso Times*, Dec. 14, 2003.

Did you know? cont. from p. 1

Jail), and work by emerging literary sensations such as UTEP MFA alumna Olga Angelina García Echeverría and tatiana de la tierra. Also featured are Marc Pinate, Frances Marie Treviño and fellow El Pasoan Rich Yañez, to name a few.

Murder in Cuidad Juárez

Check out the Friday, Oct. 31, 2003 issue of *La Jornada* for an article by *El Paso Times* reporter Diana Washington Váldez on the Cd. Juárez, Chihuahua, Mex. women murders. She includes parts of her upcoming book *Harvest of Women.*

Pérezdiaz on a roll

Roberto Pérezdíaz will have a story of his published in *Esquisite Corpse,* which is edited by Andrei Codrescu. Also, he has just signed an agreement with Bilingual Press Review for publication in 2004 of a short story in English, "Strike Out!". Furthermore, they will publish the story "Elegía a Gloria Osuna Pérez" on their Web page in Spanish. Gloria Osuna Pérez was the late El Paso artist.

From the El Paso Connection, cont.

This publication can be ordered by sending a check or money order for $10 payable to: UC Regents, Center for Chicano Studies, University of California, Santa Barbara 93106-6040.

Latino writers guide

Sherry York, a writer, reviewer and editorial consultant formerly from El Paso, has published her second guide to Latino literature for young readers. "Children's and Young Adult Literature by Latino Writers: A Guide for Librarians, Teachers, Parents, and Students" (Linworth Publishing, $36.95), focuses on a variety of resources including novels, short stories, poetry and anthologies, nonfiction, and other topics. The book is available at www.linworth.com/ or Amazon.com.

Arturo Islas

Reading *Arturo Islas: The Uncollected Works,* we saw that Frederick Luis Aldama will be putting out *Dances with Ghost: Arturo Islas,* a biography of the late El Paso Chicano author. He is also putting out *Arturo Islas: Locating Chicano/a Narrative Production.*

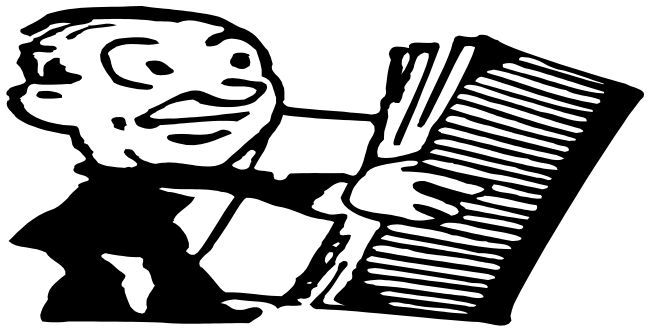
La Llorona republished

Lalo Delgado has put out a third printing of his popular chapbook *La Llorona.* Copies are limited. Send check or money order for $10 plus $2 for S&H to Abelardo B. Delgado, 6538 Eaton, Arvada, Colo. 80003. Please make checks or money orders to "Abelardo Delgado."

Libros, Libros II

Gil Mendez & the Metaphysics of a Blimp, (Aureole Press), Gary Soto. A single long poem, the first extended poem by Soto. It is a narrative poem about an elderly, widowed man living in Fresno. It has many of the elements common to Soto's recent fiction — with pierced tongues, a hapless stray dog, a bumbling romance, chickens and roosters, aching joints — but in this poem they are used for tragic, rather than humorous effect. A limited edition of 140 copies printed by letterpress. Illustrations by Michael Kocinski. www.downtownbrown.com

Homegirls In The Public Sphere (U of TX Press ISBN 0-292-70546-8), Maire "Keta" Miranda. Miranda presents the results of an ethnographic collaboration with Chicana gang members, in which they contest popular and academic representations of Chicana/o youth and construct their own narratives of self identity through a documentary film.



In the City of Smoking Mirrors (U of AZ Press ISBN 0-8165-2325-8), Albino Carrillo. Huitzilopochtli has returned. Aztec god of sun and war, but you can call him "H." Through the unforgettable persona of Huitzilopochtli, Carrillo shows us the transitory nature of our passions and wounds as he chisels a new headstone for our times. "H." is reborn in the sprawling suburbs of an American metroplex in the late 20th-century life. Then "H." is wounded by police and faces death once more. www.uapress.arizona.edu

The Keepsake Storm (U of AZ Press ISBN 0-8165-2329-0), Gina Franco. Kathryn, near the end of her life, is losing her memories. A storm is unleashes as Kathryn's flood of memories washes over us, we know at once that we are in the hands of a truly gifted poet. This is the culmination of a verse cycle that probes the depths of the heart. Drawing on a rich tradition of storytelling in Latino literature, Franco explores the transformative power of compassion as she addresses themes of cultural alienation, lost family roots, and the uncertain resiliency of the self. www.uapress.arizona.edu

A Law for a Lion: A tale of Crime and Injustice in the Borderland (U of Texas Press ISBN 0-292-71614-1), Beatriz de la Garza. In this account of the 1912 murder of two Mexican landowners and the subsequent trial of their Anglo murderer, Beatriz de la Gárza delves into the political, ethnic, and cultural worlds of

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Libros, Libros cont. from p. 12

the Texas-Mexico border to expose the tensions between the Anglo minority and the Mexican majority that propelled the killings and their aftermath.

Let Their Spirits Dance (Rayo ISBN 0060089482), Stella Pope Duarte. Paperback of Pope Duarte's novel about a family's aftermath of the death of a son in the Vietnam War pulls many surprises as the family journeys to Washington, D.C. to see the Vietnam War Memorial.

Life and Times of Willie Velásquez: Su Voto es Su Voz (Arte Público Press 1-55885-419-3), Juan Sepúlveda, Jr. William C. "Willie" Velásquez, Jr. founded the Southwest Voter Registration and Education Project and was an influential participant in other leading Latino rights and justice groups, including the Mexican American Youth Organization (MAYO). From the late 1960s until his death in 1988, Velásquez helped Chicanos and other Hispanics become participants in American political life.

Lorenzo's Revolutionary Quest (Arte Público Press 1-55885-392-8), Lila and Rick Gúzman (YAF). Sequel to *Lorenzo's Secret Mission*, the intrepid young adventurer is back to fulfill his commitment to the American Revolution. When Gen. George Washington names Lorenzo a captain in the Continental Army, Washington sends Lorenzo on another challenging mission.

Madame Ambassador: The Shoemaker's Daughter (Bilingual Press ISBN 1-931010-04-8), Mari Luci Jaramillo. A child of poor immigrants dreams of a wonderful life of noble purpose and service to others. She uses her experiences as the basis for her life's work solving problems of poverty and discrimination. She works her way up from being the child of manual laborers to becoming a U.S. ambassador to Honduras and a celebrated civil rights advocate. Despite a career characterized by public service in government and higher education, Jaramillo shows she remains the shoemaker's daughter, faithful to the precepts and values of her Latino family and community.

The Medicine of Memory: A Mexica Clan in California (UofTX Press 0292752679), Alejandro Murguía. In this work of creative nonfiction, Murguía draws on memories – his own and his family's reaching aback to the 18th century – to (re)construct the forgotten Chicano-indigenous history of California.

Mexicans in the Midwest, 1900–1932 (U of AZ Press ISBN 0-8165-1585-9), Juan R. García. Paperback edition. "A gripping narrative of the beginning of the Mexican migration to the Midwest and the conditions under which these migrants lived. [García] describes social and economic forces that shaped their lives, such as discrimination and overcrowded housing, as well as the mechanisms through which they survived." --*Choice* From Back Cover.

My Tata's Guitar/La guitarra de mi tata (Arte Público/Pinata 1-55885-369-3), Ethriam Cash Brammer. Ages 4-8. When Tata opens the guitar case that once belong to his Tata, a wealth of musical memories entrance the boy as the sound of the guitar strings transform "musty moths into beautiful butterflies."

Narco (Arte Público Press 155885-416-9), Everardo Torres. Torres's debut novel draws the dark underbelly of drug running into the light, away from politics and media attention and into the issues motivating the participants. With descriptions of their lives, the characters struggle in a world of myth and shadow to survive against the backdrop of poverty and danger along the border.

One Kind of Faith (Chronicle Books 0811841170) Gary Soto. Soto digs deeply into his California hometown of Fresno and explores the wonder of the everyday in an ever-shifting world. In Soto's poems, precocious Berkeley dogs practice feng shui, raisins march out of a factory under the nose of the night watchman, and shirts are ironed "with the steam of Mother's hate." In the darker second part of the collection, Soto offers 12 "film treatments for David Lynch." What skin-crawling delight Lynch could conjure with the tightwad furniture salesmen who meets his death in a pool "blue as toilet wash."

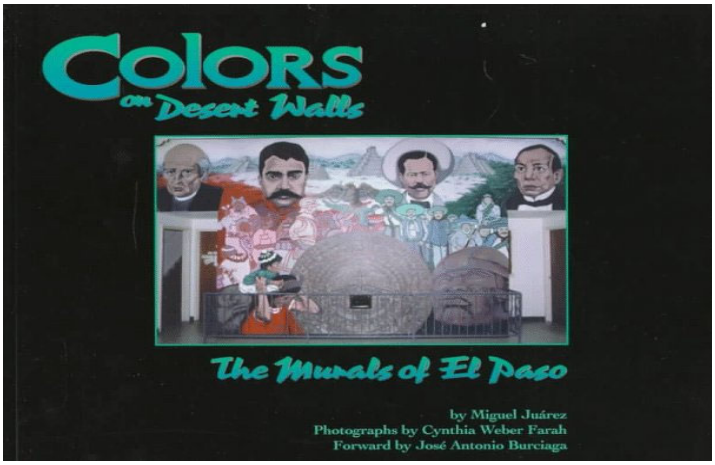
Postethnic Narrative Criticism: Magicorealism in Oscar 'Zeta'Acosta, Anna Castillo, Julie Dash, Hanif Kureishi, and Salman Rushdie (UofTX Press 0292705166), Frederick Luis Aldama. Coining the term "magicorealism" to characterize some of these author's works, Aldama not only creates a post-ethnic critical methodology for enlarging the contact zone between the genres of novel, film, and autobiography, but also shatters the interpretive lens. It traditionally confuses the transcription of the real world, where truth and falsity apply, with narrative modes governed by other criteria.

Rattlesnake (Curbstone Press 193186011), **Go to p. 15**

What About Us?: Miguel Juárez gives El Paso artists some Pasiente Sunshine

George López' show isn't the only television program airing in these days that features Latinos, and more specifically, Latino artists. "Frontera Artists: Mexican and Chicano Artists in El Paso," a 19-part program (530 minutes), has been airing on KCOS-TV Channel 13 (PBS) and/or on Paragon Cable Channel 14 since 1997. The show is co-produced by Miguel Juárez (who also hosts the program) and Gabriel Gaytan, a producer at Channel 14 at the El Paso Community College Instructional Television.

The format features Juárez interviewing El Paso Chicano/a and Mexican artists in the EPCCT studios. Each program is about ½ hour each. Additional footage of various artists' work was shot and several segments cut to those works as Juárez and his guests discuss them. Juárez pitched the idea to Channel 14's General Manager Danny Mata in 1996, after one of Robbie Farley's (then Managing Editor for the *El Paso Herald-Post*) Lunch Group meetings in downtown El Paso. Mata encouraged Juárez to produce a proposal. Juárez did and the rest is history. Juárez' intent was to interview El Paso's Latino artistic history and have EPCC air these programs directly into people's living rooms. Juárez said he also wanted to try and circumvent the process from which institutions decide whose artistic history is important and whose is not.



Artists featured in the series include: Gilbert "Magu" Sánchez Lujan; Sculptor Luis Jiménez Jr.; Paul Dean Daniggelis (talking on the art and life of Urbici Soler); Artist José Cisneros (interview in Spanish); Painter, Muralist and Art Educator Lupe Casillas Lowenberg; Muralist and Artist Carlos Callejo; Pharmacist Teresa J. G. Chávez (talking about the work of her late father Francisco "Frisco" Gutíerrez, artist-in-residence at the Plaza Theater); Painter and Muralist Mario Colin; Photo-mercenary Rigoberto de la Mora; Artist and Educator Gaspar Enriquez; Artist Carlos Flores; Artist and Muralist Mago Orona Gandara; Artist Judith C García; Artist Gabriel Gaytan; Artist Ernesto P Martínez; the late Artist Gloria Osuna Pérez; and filmmaker Willie Varela.

The programs have run continuously since 1997 when Miguel left El Paso to pursue a library degree at SUNY Buffalo. The show took a hiatus for one year in 2000 or 2001, but came back again. In its current slot, two different segments run each Saturday and Sunday evening from 9-9:30 p.m. It is safe to say, Juárez has been seen by El Paso/Cd. Juárez audiences interviewing artists over 600 times since "Frontera Artists" first aired.

Miguel Juárez is now a librarian at the University of Arizona in Tucson, but he often visits El Paso, where he has become a recognizable media celebrity because of the series (it also helps that Los Angeles Artist John Valadez painted Miguel in his mural at the Federal Courthouse in downtown El Paso). In December 2003, Miguel was spotted having breakfast at Lupe's Café on Pershing Street and later that week, he was sighted at Chico's Tacos on Montana Street enjoying a single. Miguel can be reached at: juarezm@u.library.arizona.edu

More News!

Troncoso always comes back

Troncoso was in El Paso/Las Cruces/Socorro January reading at the Westside, Barnes & Noble in El Paso; and reading from *Once Upon a Cuento* "The Snake," and at a discussion with area high school students. He was the keynote speaker at Border Literacy Conference at UTEP and he also spoke at the Barnes & Noble at Mesilla Valley Mall in Las Cruces. Furthermore, he read from the novel *The Nature of Truth* at The Bookery in Socorro, TX, in December 2003.

Author Lisa Chávez visits

In January, Lisa D. Chávez read at UTEP. Chávez is a Chicana Mestiza born in Los Angeles and raised in Fairbanks, Alaska. She has published two poetry books, *Destruction Bay* (UNM Press 0931122929) and *In An Angry Season*, (University of Arizona Press-Camino del Sol Series 0816521522). Her creative non-fiction, part of a longer memoir in progress, has appeared in *Fourth Genre*, *The Clackamas Literary Review*, and other places. She teaches at the University of New Mexico in Albuquerque.

EPT

Books, Books, Libros, Libros

Cont. from p. 13

Arturo Arias. Translation of Arturo Arias' spy novel where a CIA agent has been sent to Guatemala to rescue Mr. Grey, an Australian banker who has allegedly been abducted by the EGP, a guerilla organization. The agent encounters his first love, who has married into a powerful Guatemalan family. This novel is replete with surprising plots and counterplots and with people whose identities and affiliations we can never completely trust.

Riding Low through the Streets of Gold: Latino Literature for Young Adults (Arte Público 1-55885-380-4), ed. Judith Ortiz Cofer. The pieces in this anthology for young adults bear the twists and pulls of youth and includes works by some of the leading writers for young adults like Pat Mora, Nicholasa Mohr, Tomás Rivera, Virgil Suárez, Lorna Dee Cervantes, as well as new voices that will become a part of the literary canon of the 21st century.

Roll Over, Bit Toben (Arte Pub. 1-55885-401-0), Victor Sandoval. Grade 7-10. Set in an LA *barrio* in the 1960s. This young adult novel depicts a teenager's struggle with the clash between the street and the classroom. Fifteen-year-old David López, three things matter to him: his family, his pigeons, and his gang. But with the death of his father, David's life in Little Arroyo becomes a struggle for everything he once cared about.

The Silence of the Rain: An Inspector Espinosa Mystery (Picador USA 0312421184), Luiz Alfredo García-Roza. In a parking garage in the center of Rio de Janeiro, corporate executive Ricardo Carvalho is found dead in his car, his wallet, and briefcase missing. Inspector Espinosa is called to investigate the apparent robbery and murder, but the world-wearing Espinosa knows that things are not always as they seem.

Sin puertas visibles: An Anthology of Contemporary Poetry by Mexican Women (U of Pittsburgh Press ISBN 08222957981), Jen Hofer, ed. A fully bilingual anthology that features emerging women poets whose work provides a taste of the adventurous new spirit infusing Mexican literature. All eleven poets represented have had at least one book published in Mexico, yet none of their work has been translated into English until now.

Slow Dissolve (Monotombo Press ISBN: 0-9710465-4-9), Steven Cordova. Poems in *Slow Dissolve* travel from contemporary New York City to Southwest Texas and back again, tracking the conflicting experiences of a generation of men who have survived HIV, and the author's Chicano heritage. With forays into dreams, daydreams, and the mind's arguments with itself, these poems are meditative rides at once plaintive and rapt.

The Strange Career of Bilingual Education in Texas, 1836-1981 (Texas A&M Press 1585443107), Carlos Kevin Blanton. Despite controversies over current educational practices, Texas boasts a rich and vibrant bilingual tradition and not just for Spanish-English instruction, but for Czech, German, Polish, and Dutch as well. Over the course of the 19th and 20th centuries, Texas educational policymakers embraced, ignored, rejected, outlawed, then once again embraced this tradition.

Tales from a Michoacano, (Auraria ISBN 0-9724029-0-X), Ramon Del Castillo. Power-stirring poetic meditations by Denver poet and Wichita, KS native Ramon Del Castillo. Castillo's poems are a retro muse on the angry Chicano poets of the past with a cross-language mastering of poems. Order at Rdelca2417@aol.com.

This America of Ours: The Letters of Gabriela Mistral and Victoria Ocampo (U of TX 0292705409). Gabriela Mistral and Victoria Ocampo were the two most influential and respected women writers of 20th-century Latin America. This collection of the previously unpublished correspondence between Mistral and Ocampo reveals the private side of two very public women.

Tristan and the Hispanics (Arte Público Press 1558853626), José Yglesias. Sequel to Yglesias' comic novel, *Home Again*, Pinpin's grandson Tristan goes to Ybor City after Pinpin's death, only to be engulfed immediately by the madcap and offbeat Cuban-American family led by Tristan's great uncle, Tom-tom.

Working Hard for the Money: America's Working Poor in Stories, Poems, and Photos (Bottom Dog Press 0933087772), Larry Smith, Mary E. Weems, Jim Lang, Wanda Coleman, and Maggie Anderson, eds., David Budbill (Contributor), Maj Ragain (Contributor). Forty writers and photographers present a revealing portrait of America's working poor in stories, poems, and photos. It is an important document of our times done by writers and photographers of vision and craft, making witness.

Zigzagger (Northwestern University 0810120992), Manuel Muñoz. Set mainly in California's Central Valley, Munoz' first collection of stories goes beyond the traditional family myths and narratives of Chicano literature and explores, instead, the constant struggle of characters against their physical and personal surroundings.

Rocky Mountain continued

Alurista, another Chicano poetry pioneer, is seen occasionally in Denver.

On the dark side of The Force, Linda Chávez, assimilationist and English-only-now-damn-it** crony, graduated from the University of Colorado. She is the author of *Out of the Barrio: Toward a New Politics of Hispanic Assimilation* (Basic Books) and *An Unlikely Conservative: The Transformation of an Ex-Liberal [Or How I Became the Most Hated Hispanic in America]* (Basic Books). Rumors remain as whether Chávez is actually a part of the "collective" known as The Borg ("Resistance if futile, prepare to be assimilated.").

At the University of Colorado in Boulder, Lorna Dee Cervantes teaches in the English department and frequently reads in the Denver/Boulder area. Frederick Luis Aldama, who just edited a collection of unpublished works by Arturo Islas, also teaches at CU. Emma Pérez, the historian, just joined the bunch after leaving UTEP.

In Texas, when someone says "The Valley" or "El Valle," we know what they are talking about. Apparently, you can say "The Valley" in Colorado too, and people will know you are speaking of the San Luis Valley. One recent book on U of TX Press *Alex & the Hobo* by José Iñez "Joe" Taylor describes life and growing up in the San Luis Valley in the 1940s.

Manuel Ramos

My job with Colorado Legal Services (CLS) took me to different parts of the state. It was coincidence that writer-attorney Manuel Ramos also worked with CLS. As I waited outside his office to meet him, I saw the Chicano and Tejano *conjunto* posters smiling at me. Originally from Florence, Colorado, Ramos has published five mystery novels. Active in the Chicano student movement at Colorado State University, he attended law school at Denver University. The University of New Mexico Press has published his most recent novels *Brown-on-Brown* and *Mooney's Road to Hell*. Northwestern University Press is republishing his older novels. Ramos is also one of the past recipients of the Colorado Book Award. His *Ballad of Rocky Ruíz* became a national bestseller and was a Edgar Award nominee for Best First Mystery. I was impressed with Ramos who had karma of a real cool *vato*, even before we spoke to each other. (www.manuelramos.com)

Gloria Velasquez, author of *I Used to be a Superwoman Chicana* (Arte Público) and the famed Roosevelt High School Series for young adults (Arté Público) is a native of Loveland, Colorado. She graduated from the University of Colorado before attending Stanford University where she knew fellow El Pasoan José Antonio Burciaga. In 1989, CU inducted her into their Hall of Fame becoming the first Chicana to be honored by such induction. Incidentally, her young adult novel *Tommy stands alone*, about a boy being chastised in school for being gay, was banned in Colorado.

Gloria Velasquez

Colorado even has a Chicano Humanities in Arts Council (www.chacweb.org/), which is a coalition of Chicano artists and artistic and social groups. Delgado was one of its founders.

There is a thriving *teatro* and poetry scene in the Denver/Boulder area with many young Chicano and Latino poets. In Boulder, Safalla Press has been publishing for quite awhile. They are publishing a book called *Paper Thin* and a compilation called *Poems From Penny Lane*, which is a coffee house in Denver where many poets perform. The compilation is being edited by Gary Pharrish, Jr. and Lee Ann Bifoss. One poet, Ted Vaca, a the founder of the Denver Slam, has been a finalist in the National Poetry Slam and has been featured on the *Freedom to Speak National Poetry Slam* (duende@interfold.com) anthologies and CDs.

Poet Margie Domingo was born and raised in Denver. She has put out a couple of chapbooks including *Mujeres de Aztlán* and *Let my existence be born* (Existence In Verse Press). Geraldina Lawson, raised in Laredo, Texas, also makes her home in Colorado. Lawson, Del Castillo, Delgado, and Domingo released a spoken-word compact disk in 2002 called *Chilé Colorado*, with Chuy Negrete playing background music. Another poet is Gwlyln Cano who is a filmmaker, poet, teacher, and one of the new voices in Denver. He also has published a chapbook.

In theatre, there is El Centro Su Teatro (www.suteatro.org) at 4725 High St. in Denver. Founded in 1971 during the Chicano Movement, it is a community center that produces theatre, art, and music. It is the third oldest Chicano *teatro* group in the country after Teatro Campesino and Teatro de La Esperanza. Su Teatro hosts the Pablo Neruda Poetry Festival in Denver every year. **Cont. on next page**

Rocky Mountain Raza continued from p. 16

Also active in the *teatro* in Denver is Hector Muñoz. He also does poetry. A while ago at La Taza, he had a short play in which individuals performed his poems about immigration. The poems were literally sewn together in an incredible production. He is involved with students at the Migrant Program at Metro State University in Denver. Muñoz has been on Broadway and productions in New York. Having one foot in Piedras Negras and one foot in Denver, Muñoz has helped support Metro State's Chicano Studies program and gay rights. While we're on Metro's Chicano Studies, there is Luis Torres director of the program who has been defending it from being watered down and thrown into "Ethnic Studies."

In Boulder, the Boulder Public Library and EducArté sponsor the Latino Poetry Festival, which has been a great success. Every year they honor a poet. Last year they honored Father Prohens, a Spanish priest and poet. This past festival they honored Trinidad Sánchez. EducArté (www.educarte.com) is a *libreria español* in Boulder (2900 Valmont Rd. Suite D2) run by Elena P. Arranda.

Other poets include Kevin Virgil and Carlos Valverde, the latter employed with the Daniels Fund that provides grants and scholarships for students in Colorado, Utah, New Mexico, and Wyoming. Valverde has put out one chapbook. Right before I left Colorado, Cindy Rodríguez began writing a column for *The Denver Post*. From New York, some of her columns have touched on Latino issues. Her column is published Mondays and Fridays (www.denverpost.com).

I must also mention my friend Juan Sandoval, UTEP research librarian, art and book collector, from Monte Vista. He went to school at Adams State College in Alamosa. And for those of you from *El Segundo barrio* in El Paso, Congressional Medal of Honor winner Ambrioso Guillen was born and lived some time in La Junta in Southeast Colorado.

With the demise of the courts as a useful weapon against racism and the growing worthlessness of our votes, Chicano (as) are looking for new ways to reclaim our rights. This is where writers enter because they record the social, political, and sexism evils of our times. Though there are many Chicano(a), Mexicans, and Latinos in Colorado, the state remains very conservative. One recent article in the *Denver Post* covered the problems in Catholic churches around the state regarding the influx of Spanish-speaking parishioner. With some whites, but not all, going to church with "brown people" is too much a heavy chore to handle. Then there are outright racist like U.S. Representative Tom Tancredo, who Trinidad Sánchez has written a few verses poking fun of: "I'm sure you will say writing this poem is illegal."

In every part of the state, migrant farmworkers come to find work. This comes with problems for these workers, with what some may see as small problems like lack of drinking water in the fields to failure to pay wages and shootings of workers.

The stories of pig ear *tortas* under the overpass in Downtown Denver will have to wait. The Denver skyline is very inviting as one drives from Kansas into the state. The gradual incline brings you to the beauty of a city in summer. Despite high parking costs, the places, poets, and people give a good welcome.

As out *burritos de chorizo con huevos* arrive, Alberto, Lalo, Trini, and I begin our meal among conversation of writers, rights, and *recuerdos*.

* See "Some Notes on "Entelequia III"" by Ricardo Sánchez; *The Making of a Chicano Militant: Lessons from Cristal* (U of Wisconsin Press) by José Angel Gutierrez; *Chicano Timespace: The Poetry and Politics of Ricardo Sánchez* by Miguel R. López (TX A&M Press). Sánchez even went so far as to say the poem was written by a wife of a prominent Chicano lawyer and that the poem was translated to Spanish by Alurista or Lalo Delgado. In *Message to Aztlan: Selected Writings (Hispanic Civil Rights Series)*, by Rodolfo "Corky" Gonzáles, and Antonio Esquibel claim that the lack of Gonzáles' literary output after writing "I Am Joaquin" was due to his busy involvement in the Chicano Movement and government bothering.
** I borrow this term from Adrian Villegas.
+ Copies of this book my have run out, but the letter published in the book gives an address of Juan Haro at 2818 Eliot St., Denver, CO 80211

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Editor and layout — Raymundo Elí Rojas
Copyediting — Noemí Herrera, Alberto Mesta, Jr.