

Latinidad - Winter 2021: Best Books of the Year

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BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

“Working with Marcela Landres is a bracing, eye opening experience in truly gaining insight into the business of writing. While deeply respecting creativity and individuality in an author’s choices, Marcela’s experience, insight, and hard-earned facts and realities from the publishing trenches arm you with the knowledge and confidence to keep writing and press on. ¡Mil gracias!”
—Mario Bosquez, author of *The Chalupa Rules: A Latino Guide to Gringolandia*

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1. Saludos

Most years when I compile the Latinidad List, the only commonality my picks have is Latinx authors. This year, several of the books depict the magic of connection, whether with your ancestors, a new friend, or yourself. As we recover from a period of separation—imposed by the pandemic or politics—I hope these books inspire magical connections in your lives.

Please consider the books on the Latinidad List as gifts as you do your holiday shopping. Better yet, buy them from a Latinx-owned bookstore. Find one on the Latinx in Publishing web site:

<https://latinxinpublishing.com/latinx-owned-bookstores>

Helping Latinos get published,
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2. The Latinidad List

Novel - *The Inheritance of Orquidea Divina* by Zoraida Cordova
Simultaneously historical and contemporary, comical and tragic, a captivating depiction of the magic and mayhem endemic to family.

Short Story Collection - Eat The Mouth That Feeds You by Carribean Fragoza
Grounded in reality but stepping ever so gingerly into magic, stories that convey how mothers can be absent from their children's lives in different ways than fathers.

Debut - Hola Papi by John Paul Brammer
With self-deprecating humor, great empathy, and well-turned phrases, the Queer Latinx Dear Abby addresses weighty issues such as bullying and suicide.

Anthology - Living Beyond Borders edited by Margarita Longoria
Margarita Longoria proves to have a discerning eye for talent, having amassed within the pages of this collection some of today's most impressive writers.

Memoir - My Broken Language by Quiara Alegria Hudes
Written with a poet's eye for the perfect, precise image, Hudes sews memories together into a vivid quilt.

Poetry - The Blood Poems by Jessica Helen Lopez
Passionate poems about the devastation of divorce, briny sex, familial trauma, and the heavy absence of passion.

Cookbook - Portuguese Home Cooking by Ana Patuleia Ortins
Hearty and heartwarming meals that range from simple soups for a busy weeknight to sumptuous platters for entertaining.

Young Adult - Fifteen Hundred Miles From the Sun by Jonny Garza Villa
Fierce humor and sensitively drawn characters abound in this debut that is like a BIPOC, LGBTQ, YA version of the television show Friends.

Middle Grade - The Insiders by Mark Oshiro
For anyone who has ever felt like a misfit, a quick-witted and deeply felt story of how finding your tribe can help you find yourself.

Children's Picture Book - Isabel and Her Colores Go to School by Alexandra Alessandri
A colorful testament to how art can build bridges in situations where words cannot.

3. Resources

MISSISSIPPI REVIEW PRIZE

Deadline: January 1

Three prizes of \$1000 each and publication in Mississippi Review are given for a poem, a short story, and an essay. All entries are considered for publication. For more information, visit <http://sites.usm.edu/mississippi-review/>

\$5000 EMERGING WRITER PRIZE

Deadline: January 15

The Chautauqua Janus Prize offers \$5000 and publication in Chautauqua for a single work of fiction or nonfiction by an emerging writer. Named for Janus, the Roman god who looks to both the past and the future, the prize will honor writing with a command of craft that renovates our understandings of both. For more information, visit <https://chq.org/schedule/resident-programs/literary-arts/chautauqua-janus-prize/>

KENYON REVIEW SHORT FICTION CONTEST

Submission Period: January 1 - January 31

The contest is open to all writers who have not yet published a book of fiction. The Kenyon Review will publish the winning short story in the Jan/Feb 2023 issue, and the author will be awarded a scholarship to attend the Kenyon Review Writers Workshop. For more information, visit <https://kenyonreview.org/>

STAUNCH BOOK PRIZES

Submission Period: Opens February

The Staunch Book Prizes are awarded to novels, short stories or flash fiction in the thriller genre in which no woman is beaten, stalked, sexually exploited, raped or murdered. The competition is open to authors of any nationality who are over the age of 18 on the closing date. Entries are strongly welcomed from BAME and working-class writers and those from other under-represented groups. For more information, visit <http://staunchbookprize.com/>

\$5000 POETRY COLLECTION PRIZE

Deadline: February 1

The Michael Waters Poetry Prize offers \$5000 and publication by the Southern Indiana Review Press for a poetry collection. For more information, visit <https://www.usi.edu/sir/>

NEW AMERICAN FICTION PRIZE

Submission Period: February 15 - June 15

A prize of \$1500 and publication by New American Press is given for a full-length fiction manuscript, such as a story collection, novel, novella(s), or

something that blends forms, like a novel in verse. For more information, visit <https://newamericanpress.com/>

WILD WOMEN CONTEST

Deadline: March 8

A prize of \$1000 and publication in TulipTree Review is given for a poem, a short story, or an essay that tells a story about the ways women use their power to create and shape the world, and stories about discovering—or remembering—this power in the first place. For more information, visit <http://www.tuliptreepub.com/tuliptree-review.html>

WANT TO WORK IN BOOK PUBLISHING?

Application Deadline: March 9

Course Dates: June 13 - July 22

The best way to improve the quantity and quality of Latinx books published is for more Latinx to work in publishing. A time-honored method of breaking into the book biz is to attend the Columbia Publishing Course (CPC). Their staff works tirelessly to help graduates land the all-important first job. If you dream of working in book publishing, the CPC would be a smart investment of your time and money. Note the course is open to international applicants, and some financial aid is available. To learn more, visit <http://www.journalism.columbia.edu/publishing>

GUY OWEN PRIZE

Submission Period: March 1 - May 31

A prize of \$1000 and publication in Southern Poetry Review is given for a single poem. SPR publishes poems from all over the country as well as from abroad and maintains a worldwide readership. They showcase poems by leading poets as well as those writers they think will become leading poets. For more information, visit <https://www.southernpoetryreview.org/>

ECLECTICA MAGAZINE

Eclectica Magazine is a quarterly electronic journal. Pushcart Prize, National Poetry Series, and Pulitzer Prize winners, as well as Nebula Award nominees, have shared issues with previously unpublished authors. They tend to favor the varied perspectives that often characterize the work of international authors, people of color, women, alternative lifestyleists, and straight white men—but others who don't fit into these categories often surprise them. For more information, visit <https://www.eclectica.org/>

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ONLY WHEN SHARED

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“Here is the difference between two animals: wolves howl at the moon and people make up stories about the moon. We can’t live without stories. The ones we tell ourselves often end up guiding our daily lives.”

—John Paul Brammer

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