

Latinidad - Winter 2019: Best Books of the Year

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BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

“Marcela is a savvy guide for a writer through the publishing labyrinth. She treats writers with respect and with concern for their success. I always enjoyed our discussions and her encouragement. When we discussed my writing on the phone I liked her being sure that I understood precisely what she wanted me to know. I recall how she was so delighted with my writing sample at a writers’ conference. ‘. . . the novel I’ve been waiting for,’ she said. Alas, the rest of my book wasn’t what she had been waiting for, and she let me down gently. However, her candor helped me realize that my fiction had its roots in non-fiction, and my experiences read like fiction. So I write non-fiction. Most of my life I have sought the secret of life. I found the answer and it became my book, *Power: A Memoir*. Marcela may not know, but her early encouragement fueled my persistence.”

—Leilani Grajeda-Higley, <https://www.smashwords.com/books/view/931451>

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1. Saludos

Despite the relentless growth of a certain online retailer, according to the American Booksellers Association independent bookstores are thriving. (See the ABA’s web site for more information: <https://www.bookweb.org/for-the-record>) Be part of this success story by doing your holiday shopping at your local bookstore. Read on to find the Latinidad List, my round-up of this year’s best Latino books, some of which may be the perfect gift for your loved ones. Enjoy, and please share the list.

Helping Latinos get published,
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2. The Latinidad List

Debut Novel - Don’t Date Rosa Santos by Nina Moreno

A siren's call of poetry and curanderismo, ghosts and gossips, lost treasure and found memories.

Women's Fiction - Side Chick Nation by Aya de Leon

A Latina Ocean's 8 (ideally starring Cardi B) which brilliantly braids politics and pop culture.

Literary Novel - The Affairs of the Falcons by Melissa Rivero

A slice of life usually lived in the shadows told by an important new voice.

Memoir - Ordinary Girls by Jaquira Diaz

Barry Jenkins' Moonlight meets Jeannette Walls' The Glass Castle in a memoir as powerful as a clenched fist.

Short Story Collection - Ballad of a Slopsucker by Juan Alvarado Valdivia

Muscular stories about male pain, unanswerable questions, and resilient hope.

Poetry - The Crazy Bunch by Willie Perdomo

Part memorial, part (self) interrogation on legacy, storytelling, and bearing witness.

Cookbook - Latin Superfoods by Leticia Moreinos Schwartz

Sensuous and sensible recipes fit for both foodies and fans of Latin fare.

Young Adult - Juliet Takes a Breath by Gabby Rivera

With a vibrant voice that leaps off the page, Bronx Boricua Juliet embodies and inspires joy as she stumbles out of the closet.

Middle Grade - The Other Half of Happy by Rebecca Balcarcel

Pitch-perfect depiction of the trials and tribulations of being bicultural not just in the US, but in middle grade.

Children's Picture Book - A New Home by Tania de Regil

Original juxtaposing of NYC and Mexico City shows how more alike than dissimilar these cities—and their inhabitants—are.

3. Resources

PAGE PRIZE IN NON-FICTION

Entry Period: January 1 - 31

The Pinch Journal is pleased to announce the creation of The Page Prize in non-fiction. Winner will receive \$1000. Esme Weijun Wang, author of The

Collected Schizophrenias, will judge. For more information, visit <http://www.pinchjournal.com/new-page-2>

ECOTONE

Submission Period: January 26 – February 1

Ecotone, the literary magazine dedicated to reimagining place, seeks writers historically underrepresented in literary publishing and in place-based contexts: people of color, Indigenous people, people with disabilities, gender-nonconforming people, LGBTQIA+, women, and others. For more information, visit <https://ecotonemagazine.org>

SHORT MEMOIR PRIZE

Deadline: January 31

A prize of approximately \$1100 and publication in the Fish Publishing anthology is given for a short memoir. For more information, visit <https://www.fishpublishing.com/competition/short-memoir-contest/>

\$5000 CREATIVE WRITING RESIDENCIES

Deadline: February 1

The Philip Roth Residence in Creative Writing offers \$5000 to writers of fiction and/or literary nonfiction. For more information, visit <https://stadlercenter.slideroom.com/#/login/program/52898>

SENECA REVIEW

Reading Period: February 1 - March 15

The Seneca Review's emphasis is poetry, and the editors have a special interest in translations of contemporary poetry from around the world. They consistently publish emerging writers and are always open to new, innovative work. For more information, visit <https://www.hws.edu/senecareview/index.aspx>

WILLOW RUN POETRY BOOK AWARD

Deadline: February 20

A prize of \$1000 and publication in Hidden River Press, an imprint of Hidden River Publishing, is offered for an unpublished book length collection of poetry. The award is open to all poets writing in English around the world. For more information, visit <https://hiddenriverarts.wordpress.com/awards-deadlines-and-guidelines/willow-run-poetry-book-award/>

LOW RESIDENCY MFA MINORITY SCHOLARSHIP

Deadline: March 1

The MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College has always been a place exceptionally diverse in gender, age, occupation, academic background,

and aesthetic views. The Holden Minority Scholarship provides full tuition and residency fees for a student of color's entire 4-semester degree program. For more information, visit <http://www.wcmfa.org>

WANT TO WORK IN BOOK PUBLISHING?

Application Deadline: March 6

Course Dates: June 14-July 24

The best way to improve the quantity and quality of Latino books published is for more Latinos 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>

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NEW RIVERS PRESS

Submission Period: March 1–March 31

For their general submissions, New Rivers Press seeks book-length literary manuscripts in the categories of: short story/novella collections; novels; memoirs; essay collections; poetry collections; and hybrid forms. For more information, visit <https://www.newriverspress.com>

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SFWP QUARTERLY

The SFWP Quarterly is an online literary journal which provides a home for published and unpublished authors featuring fiction, creative nonfiction, book reviews, and experimental work. For more information, visit <https://santafewritersproject.submittable.com/submit>

santafewritersproject.submittable.com/submit

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ONLY WHEN SHARED

Please forward Latinidad® widely.

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“When I stand before God at the end of my life, I would hope that I would not have a single bit of talent left, and could say, ‘I used everything you gave me.’ ”—Erma Bombeck

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