

Latinidad - Winter 2020: Best Books of the Year

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BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

“I thought I was all set to send out my book proposal—thank goodness a friend directed me to Marcela Landres first! Marcela showed me how to make my proposal much better, and how to become well published—not just published. My career is much stronger after working with Marcela. She offers one of the best bargains in the business I've encountered.”

—Lisa Scott, author of the Flirts! short story collections and The Willowdale Romance series, <http://readlisascott.com>

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1. Saludos

One of the few silver linings of the pandemic is people are reading more books. Since a vaccine is not likely to be widely available for a bit, this holiday season is the perfect time to give books as presents. Support independent booksellers (instead of retailers who don't pay taxes) by shopping online via Bookshop, <https://bookshop.org/>. For specific gift ideas, see the Latinidad List below, my annual round-up of the best Latino books of the year.

Helping Latinos get published,

Marcela Landres

marcelalandres@yahoo.com

<https://marcelalandres.com>

2. The Latinidad List

Literary Novel - Afterlife by Julia Alvarez

Timeless yet reflective of our fractured times, a tale ostensibly about widowhood that is actually about sisterhood and community.

Graphic Novel - You Brought Me the Ocean by Alex Sanchez

Sensitively depicted origin story of a lad coming to terms with his identity, dreams, and family.

Short Story Collection - Living Color: Angie Rubio Stories by Donna Miscolta

Like Beverly Cleary's Ramona, Angie Rubio is a delightful character for the ages, by turns laugh-out-loud funny and earnest.

Thriller - The Cipher by Isabella Maldonado

Foster child turned FBI agent hunts down a serial killer while she faces her own inner demons in this briskly paced thriller.

Memoir - Unforgetting by Roberto Lovato

Machete sharp insights and images make this memoir about a man and his two countries unforgettable.

Poetry - Year of the Dog by Deborah Paredez

Joy of wordplay dances with grief by an author bearing witness to a war in which she did not fight.

Self-help - Mending Life: A Handbook for Repairing Clothes and Hearts by Nina and Sonya Montenegro

A soulful guide that persuasively presents sewing as a form of meditation.

Young Adult - Holly Hernandez and the Death of Disco by Richie Narvaez

If Elmore Leonard were Latino and wrote YA, he would have written this witty page-turner.

Middle Grade - The Everything I Have Lost by Sylvia Zeleny

Heartwarming yet heartbreaking story of a precocious girl who copes with her father's mysterious job and her mother's emotional absence.

Children's Picture Book - LillyBelle: A Damsel NOT in Distress by Joana Pastro

Essential reading for those of us who aspire to be queens, not princesses.

3. Resources

WANT TO WORK IN BOOK PUBLISHING?

Application Period: Opens in December

Course Dates: June 14-July 23

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>

\$7500 ESSAY PRIZE

Deadline: January 15

The Calibre Essay Prize offers approximately \$7500 and publication in Australian Book Review for an essay. For more information, visit <https://www.australianbookreview.com.au/prizes-programs/calibre-prize>

DRYLAND

Submission Period: Opens January 30

Dryland, a literary journal based in South Central Los Angeles, seeks poetry, prose, and art by subversive and bold voices. They are proud to publish never published, emerging, and established writers/poets/artists. English and Spanish language pieces are welcome. For more information, visit <https://drylandla.org>

POETRY COLLECTION AWARD

Deadline: January 31

The Terry J. Cox Poetry Award offers \$1000 and publication by Regal House Publishing for a poetry collection. For more information, visit <https://www.regalhousepublishing.com/>

HARPUR PALATE

Submission Period: February 1 to April 15

Harpur Palate has no restrictions on subject matter or form. Quite simply, send them your highest quality short stories, flash fiction, poetry, and creative nonfiction. For more information, visit <https://harpurpalate.binghamton.edu>

MEDICAL POEM PRIZE

Deadline: February 14

The Hippocrates Prize offers £1000 (approximately \$1300) and publication in the Hippocrates Prize anthology for a poem on a medical issue. For more information, visit <http://hippocrates-poetry.org/index.html>

NEW ENGLAND REVIEW

Reading Period: Opens March 1

The New England Review seeks fiction, poetry, nonfiction, drama, translation, creative writing for the web site (NER Digital), cover art, and art for their website. They encourage submissions from writers of every nationality, race, religion, and gender, including writers who have never been affiliated with an

MFA program and whose perspectives are often underrepresented in the literary world. For more information, visit <http://www.nereview.com>

FIVE:2:ONE MAGAZINE

FIVE: 2:ONE is primarily dedicated to the transgressive, the progressive and the experimental. They want to hear from experimental writers who are POC, LGTBQ, women/femme/nonbinary person, neurodivergent, trauma survivors, nonreligious/atheist/pagan, or any other person that is often underrepresented in literature. For more information, visit <http://five2onemagazine.com>

AMERICAN SCHOLAR

The American Scholar is a quarterly magazine for the general reader by the Phi Beta Kappa Society. They accept nonfiction by known and unknown writers. For more information, visit <https://theamericanscholar.org>

SOUTHWESTERN AMERICAN LITERATURE

Southwestern American Literature is a biannual scholarly journal that includes literary criticism, fiction, poetry, and book reviews concerning the Greater Southwest. They accept submissions year-round. Previously published authors include Jennifer Givhan and Simon Ortiz. For more information, visit <https://www.txstate.edu/cssw/publications/sal.html>

KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ONLY WHEN SHARED

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“Everything in writing begins with language. Language begins with listening.”

—Jeanette Winterson

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