

Latinidad - Spring 2022: Mestiza Blood

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BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

“I reached out to Marcela because I felt a bit lost and unsure of myself and the direction I want to take with my creative endeavors. With her guidance, and encouragement—which I needed—I have renewed clarity on what I should be doing and how I should make use of my time. Throughout our consultation, Marcela demonstrated her knowledge of writing and publishing and showed that she had my best interests at heart. I am grateful for that, and her generosity. Her read on my manuscript and the advice and follow-up resources she provided couldn’t have come at a better time.”

—Juan Alvarado Valdivia, author of *Ballad of a Slopsucker*, <https://www.juanalvaradovaldivia.com/>

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1. Saludos

If you love Jordan Peele’s movie *Get Out* but wish for a Latino equivalent, read V. Castro’s *Mestiza Blood*. Badass women with a weary, hard-won wisdom leap off the pages of Castro’s stories. Often these mujeres have little more than their bodies and ganas to slay the monsters—male and mythological—they invariably encounter. Supernatural forces are grounded in the gritty realities of climate change, immigration, and the parade of missing females in Juarez. To learn more, read the Q&A below.

Helping Latinos get published,
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2. Q&A

Violet Castro was born in San Antonio, Texas to Mexican American parents. Since Violet was a child, she wrote short horror stories and was always fascinated with dark fiction beginning with Mexican folklore and the urban

legends of Texas. At eighteen Violet left Texas for Philadelphia to attend Drexel University where she received her Bachelor of Science in Political Science and History.

Violet now lives with her family in the UK writing and traveling with her children. She tries to return to the US twice a year to see her parents, three sisters and extended family.

For more information about her books and other publications, please visit www.vvcastro.com. You can also follow her on Twitter and Instagram @vlatinalondon.

Q: “The Final Porn Star” (Love the title!) like all your stories is very cinematic. If I were Jordan Peele, I’d hire you to write a script for a Latino film in the vein of Get Out. What movies have most influenced your writing?

A: My first book was a vampire novel because Fright Night and The Lost Boys were childhood favorites. I love vampires and I do hope my Latinx vampire novels find homes very soon!

Q: You have written book and movie reviews for <https://www.scifiandscary.com/>. How has writing reviews influenced your own writing? And vice versa?

A: It was a great way to meet people in the horror community and lift other writers, especially writers of color. Also, any type of writing helps you to always improve your craft. Writing reviews did this for me.

Q: Along with Sonora Taylor, you co-founded <https://www.frightgirlsummer.com/>, a resource for all things female in the horror writing community. What inspired you to create this?

A: I didn’t feel there were enough places for women and women of color to showcase their work. Women in Horror month is only one month and we should be celebrating year round. Sonora liked the idea so we teamed up.

Q: You compellingly depict prematurely mature children like ten year old Sonora in “Truck Stop.” Sonora feels like a sisterfriend to Macy Cashmere, the protagonist in the young adult novel The Disturbed Girl’s Dictionary by NoNieqa Ramos. Have you considered writing children’s books?

A: I wrote two children’s books and they are with my agent! Fingers crossed.

Q: In the story “The Most Wonderful Time of the Year” you perfectly describe motherhood: “There is no way out and no breakup. I can’t ghost my own kids, as much as I want to at times.” In real life, you have published four books, and had stories published in numerous anthologies—while raising three children. How are you so productive amidst the likely endless demands on your time?

A: I write whenever I have a free chance because it’s my passion. My children are also in school so I write during the day.

Q: Who is your agent and how did you meet him/her? If you don’t have an agent, how did *Mestiza Blood* come to be published by Flame Tree Press?

A: My agent is Beth Marshea of Ladderbird Literary Agency. I met her through querying and she took my fourth novel. *Mestiza Blood* was accepted before I had my agent and I submitted it right after *The Queen of The Cicadas*. Things do align and happen for a reason!

Q: Other than honing their craft, what advice would you give to Latino writers looking to land a book deal?

A: Don’t give up and be authentic. You have a story and it is important. Also, try not to compete with anyone else. Your journey is unique.

Q: Do you have upcoming projects that my readers should have on their radar?

A: Pick up any of my books that are already available and my other projects I can’t talk about yet! Very soon!

3. Resources

ORISON CHAPBOOK PRIZE

Submission Period: April 1 - July 1

A prize of \$300 and publication by Orison Books is given for a manuscript of 20-45 pages, in any genre (poetry, fiction, nonfiction, or hybrid). Orison Books seeks to be broad, inclusive, and open to perspectives spanning the spectrums of spiritual and religious thought, ethnicity, gender identity, and sexual orientation. For more information, visit <https://www.orisonbooks.com/>

THE CABINS

Deadline: April 15

The Cabins is a collaborative retreat for people working in the creative arts, including artists, writers, musicians, dancers, filmmakers, poets. The creative knowledge exchange program was founded on the tenets of open-mindedness, collaboration, and financial accessibility by novelist, Courtney Maum. As a program based on the exchange of knowledge and experience, they strive for a diverse representation of race, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, age, class and creed among their participants, and accordingly, they are prioritizing applications from underrepresented artists in the creative arts. For more information, visit <https://www.thecabinsretreat.com>

POETRY COLLECTION PRIZES

Deadline: April 30

The Hillary Gravendyk Prizes offers one national prize and one regional prize, each \$1000, and publication by the Inlandia Institute for a poetry collection by a US resident and a poetry collection by a poet residing in Inland Southern California. They invite all styles and forms of poetry. For more information, visit <http://inlandia institute.org/books/the-hillary-gravendyk-prize/>

CHESTER B. HIMES MEMORIAL SHORT FICTION PRIZE

Submission Period: May 1 - August 20

Kallisto Gaia Press is a nonprofit literary organization promoting social and educational justice and equality through literary excellence, offers a prize of \$1200 for a story. They welcome the expression of diverse voices, diverse cultures—including stories partly or entirely in Spanish, Italian, German, Portuguese and other romance languages. For more information, visit <https://www.kallistogaiapress.org/>

SEEKING WRITING BY/ABOUT MILITARY VETERANS

Deadline: May 2

Southeast Missouri State University Press seeks short fiction, poetry, interviews, essays, and photography for their anthology series Proud to Be: Writing by American Warriors. Writing must be by veterans, military-service personnel, or their families. No entry fee. For more information, visit <http://www.semopress.com/>

\$2000 ESSAY PRIZE

Submission Period: June 1 - August 1

The Deborah Tall Lyric Essay Book Prize offers \$2000 and publication by Seneca Review Books. Cross-genre and hybrid work, verse forms, text and image, connected or related pieces, and “beyond category” projects are all within the ambit of the contest. The competition is open to writers who have previously published book-length collections, as well as to unpublished

writers. For more information, visit <https://www.hws.edu/senecareview/bookprize/>

\$4000 EMERGING WRITER PRIZE

Deadline: June 15

The \$4000 Narrative Prize is awarded for the best short story, novel excerpt, poem, one-act play, graphic story, or work of literary nonfiction published by a new or emerging writer in Narrative magazine. For more information, visit <https://www.narrativemagazine.com>

YOUNG ADULT FICTION PRIZE

Submission Period: June 30 - September 30

The Acheven Book Prize offers \$750 and publication by Regal House Publishing for a work of young adult fiction. For more information, visit <https://www.regalhousepublishing.com/>

OXFORD AMERICAN SEEKS DEBUT FICTION

The Oxford American magazine welcomes submissions for a work of fiction from an emerging writer for their Fall 2022 issue. They are eager to feature a writer whose fiction has not yet been published in a print publication with a circulation over 5,000 copies. Stories under 10,000 words will be considered, and the selected writer will receive \$1000. For more information, visit <https://www.oxfordamerican.org/>

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“Originality does not consist in saying what no one has ever said before, but in saying exactly what you think yourself.”

—James F. Stephan

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