



The Chicano/Latino Literary Prize: An Anthology of Prize-Winning Fiction, Poetry, and Drama

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"David is mine!" Mrs. Renteria shouts out to her neighbors gathered about the dead but handsome young man found in the dry riverbed next to their homes in a Los Angeles barrio. "David?" Tiburcio asked. "Since when is his name David? He looks to me more like a ..." Tiburcio glanced at the man's face, "... a Luis." Mrs. Renteria's neighbors call out a litany of names that better suit the mysterious corpse: Roberto, Antonio, Henry, Enrique, Miguel, Roy, Rafael. The very first winner of the Chicano / Latino Literary Prize in 1974, Ron Arias' *The Wetback* uses dark humor to reflect on the appearance of a dead brown man in their midst.

This landmark collection of prize-winning fiction, poetry, and drama paints a historical and aesthetic panorama of Chicana/o and Latina/o letters over a twenty-five-year period beginning in 1974 and ending in 1999. Most, but not all, of the winning entries are featured in this anthology, which also includes second- and third-place winners, as well as honorable mentions.

Now entering its thirty-first year, the award has recognized a wide variety of writers, from established ones such as Juan Felipe Herrera, Michael Nava, and Helena Maria Viramontes, to those that are lesser known. Many of the pieces in this anthology are considered to be foundational texts of Chicana/o and Latina/o literature, and those that are not as widely recognized deserve more serious study and attention.

Presented in chronological order, the selected writings are primarily in English, although some are written in Spanish, and others in Spanglish. Some, like Francisco X. Alarcon's poem "Raices / Roots," appear in both languages: "Mis raices / las cargo / siempre / conmigo / enrolladas / me sirven / de almohada." "I carry / my roots / with me / all the time / rolled up / I use them / as my pillow."

In addition to the diverse array of authors, styles, and genres, the works included in this collection cover a wide range of themes, from more political issues of ethnic, gender, and class conflicts to the universal themes of love, death, and birth.

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