

SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2021 | ISSUE 04

movement

union county library literary magazine

CELEBRATE
NATIONAL HISPANIC HERITAGE MONTH

This Is My Heritage

OSCAR



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Take a look at some artwork and stories on Hispanic/Latinx heritage*

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A mix of work by Hispanic authors and works about Hispanic peoples and cultures



September 15 - October 15

Cover Artwork by Oscar Ortiz

editor's letter



**SPEAK OUT.
HAVE AN OPINION.
BE HEARD.**

H

eritage; what does it mean to you? It can mean many different things, for different groups of people. The definition states it is something handed down from the past as a tradition. During National Hispanic Heritage Month we celebrate a national legacy of honor, pride, and courage. This vibrant cultural heritage of the Hispanic and Latinx community is handed down generation to generation.

From my time putting this issue together, I have learned that heritage means multiple things: it represents who people are as a culture; it means traditions; and celebrating accomplishments. We can draw from the wisdom of our elders and add our own new, wonderful story to the rich tapestry of our heritage. Hispanic Heritage Month means bringing awareness to the Hispanic and Latinx populations that greatly contribute to our local communities and American culture.

With this in mind, Union County Library is proud to bring you our current issue of *Movement Literary Magazine* featuring writing and art celebrating National Hispanic Heritage Month.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Royal'.

Jakeem Royal
Editor in Chief



BENICIO DEL TORO

Puerto Rican actor and producer. He has garnered critical acclaim and numerous accolades and awards, including an Academy Award, BAFTA Award, Golden Globe Award, and Screen Actors Guild Award.



A LIFE IN SERVICE

with

DORALISA PELLANE

INTERVIEWED BY
JAKEEM ROYAL

In the following interview I spoke with Doralisa Pellane, who works in Human Services for Union County, North Carolina and additionally as an ESL Coordinator/ELS Tutor at the Literacy Council of Union County. She shared with us her experience working with the Hispanic communities where she has the opportunity to inspire and motivate those in the community with continuing education and literacy skills, aid in Immigration Services, and work with multiple agencies to advocate for the Hispanic/Latinx communities in the county.

JR: Please tell us a little bit about your background.

DP: I was born in Caracas, Venezuela. My father was originally from Chile and my mother is from Peru. As a family, we really enjoyed the cultural diversity at home. I moved to the United States with my family to have better opportunities. After moving to the United States, I did not speak English. I became an ESL student. I was motivated to learn English to help my family and the community. I lived in New Jersey for about ten years. I moved to North Carolina with my family. We really love it here.

I am very proud of my roots and origins. I enjoy sharing and learning about cultural diversity. I am a community advocate and a volunteer.

JR: What is the importance of National Hispanic Heritage Month?

DP: Hispanic Heritage Month is celebrated from September 15th to October 15th. It is an important month because we celebrate the independence of Costa Rica, Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Nicaragua, Mexico, and Chile. During this month many people in the United States honor all the contributions that Hispanic communities bring. It is important to point out the importance of the heritage of a culture passing generation to generation to keep it present for many Hispanic families living in the United States. The celebration is special because it represents the opportunity to recognize all the contributions Hispanic culture brings through a diversity of flavors, music, language, and customs.

JR: How can we bring more awareness to Hispanic Heritage Month in Union County?

DP: Hispanic Heritage Month has been a very significant celebration in the U.S for more than 40 years. It is a celebration across the country celebrating the month with pride, joy, and the importance of diversity. It is a national celebration in order to honor the culture, history, and the positive [impact] of other past generations in the United States. It is important to be aware and to learn of cultural differences in order to create a better understanding of the celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month to bring

more awareness in Union County. Another way is using the information to help others understand the challenges and the history of other groups in the community. As well as to participate in events such as the Union County Heritage Festival.

JR: How do you utilize your background in helping the Hispanic community when you work at the Literacy Council? Or in your current position?

DP: *The Literacy Council of Union County gave me the opportunity to work as an ESL (English as a Second Language) Coordinator. I was inspired to help and to motivate others to learn. I shared all my experiences and all my challenges as an ESL student myself with every student in the program. Working at the Literacy Council, I had the opportunity to participate in extra-curriculum training such as continuing education to improve literacy skills, immigration services, testing, Motherread/Fatheread reading curriculum. These curriculum skills gave me the opportunity to develop workshops for volunteers and students learning another language and cultural diversity. [Some examples of the workshops are:] developing summer reading programs for families and children at public libraries and churches to improve reading awareness; Partnering with other agencies and public schools to provide Motherread/Fatheread reading programs for children 0 – 5 years old; participating in community outreach fairs to engage with other agencies to serve the community as an advocate and a liaison.*

Hispanic Heritage Month impacts my current job position as I continuously create more awareness of the

importance to recognize and celebrate the contribution that Hispanics have made to the nation and society. Planning a team meal (lunch) is the most delicious way to celebrate culture and diversity.

JR: How can youth celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month? Or how can we make sure they are aware of Hispanic Heritage?

DP: *It is very important for parents to teach their children about their Hispanic Heritage roots and culture. Therefore, youth can be more aware and understand why is important to celebrate cultural diversity.*

It really makes an impact when parents can encourage youth to participate in cultural events [and] visit public libraries. But the most important way parents can pass on traditions such as language, food, religion, celebrations, dance and history, is to be more aware of the significance of the celebration for the Hispanic Heritage Month.

Having communication with the elders and listening to their stories, folk tales and spending more time [together] bring awareness of their heritage. Therefore, speaking their native language can be used to help others with language barriers as they can get more involved in the community as well.

JR: What traditions meant the most to you growing up celebrating your Hispanic Heritage?

DP: *The most important to me growing up was spending time in Caracas celebrating Christmas. Caracas, Venezuela is the center of culture and Christmas traditions.*

Therefore, Christmas celebrates the birth of the child Jesus as the most authentic custom to display a Nacimiento (Nativity scene) on December 25th and a nice Christmas tree. Traditional foods including hallacas – a mixture of beef, pork, chicken, raisins, and olives wrapped in maize and plantain leaves tied up with a string, boiled or steamed. [Other traditional days were] celebrating Carnaval (Mardi Gras)- Monday and Tuesday prior to Ash Wednesday, Labor Day (May 1st), quinceañera (celebrating 15th birthday), Easter Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Independence on July 5th.

JR: What is one important thing you hope the Non-Hispanic community takes away from Hispanic Heritage Month?

DP: *I hope many people can see the value that Hispanic communities represent and to recognize their sacrifice, achievements and contributions toward our national story. Hispanic Heritage Month is a great celebration to learn from one another.*

JR: And lastly, what does your Hispanic Heritage mean to you?

DP: *Hispanic Heritage Month means and represents who I AM to celebrate my culture and spread awareness and to recognize our heritage as new generations celebrate the history and the contributions made to the nation over the years. I am proud and grateful to this nation for giving me the opportunity to become a better citizen to contribute to the progress of the nation every day. I am speaking from my own experience, "Never give up!" The journey can bring you obstacles and challenges but it is your decisions and responsibility to overcome them, to be part of the solution, to set an example to new generations of men and women and to work hard together as one nation.*



RITA MORENO

Rita Moreno was born in Puerto Rico in 1931. The actress, singer, and dancer began her career early on starring on Broadway in her teens before earning acclaim for her portrayal of Anita in *West Side Story* in (1961). That role earned her an Oscar for Best Supporting Actress, making her the first Latina to win the award.

A TASTE OF PUERTO RICO



Taino Restaurant
TRADITIONAL PUERTO RICAN FOOD
3816 Sardis Church Rd Unit #101,
Monroe, NC 28110

PATRICIA ARGUELLES
INTERVIEWED BY JAKEEM ROYAL

Above
Patricia Arguelles

I had the pleasure of meeting, Patricia Arguelles, the co-owner of Taino Restaurant in Indian Trail. Owner of a traditional Puerto Rican restaurant, she has lived in Indian Trail for 18 years helping to serve the Hispanic community. She ran a non-profit called *Tu Agencia Latina* where, for many years, they helped with a food pantry, helped with immigration services, and served the community with other needs. Having served on several boards around Union County and also Mecklenburg County she has accomplished a lot to inspire her community. § Patricia is the sole owner of a food truck in addition to being business partners with her former husband, Edward Concepcion, with whom she runs Taino Restaurant. They are assisted in the restaurant business by their boys and other community members who have become familia.



“
TAINO TOOK EVERYONE BY SURPRISE FROM THE MOMENT WE OPENED...

JR: Please tell us a little about your background.

PA: I was born and raised in Puerto Rico, my parents moved the whole family to Philadelphia when I was fourteen. I'm the oldest female of ten, so I did all the cooking at our home. We were extremely poor so I had to make magic with whatever we had, including the government meat in a can. I became an expert cooking the pork and the beef that came in the metal can... cooking came natural some may say.

I'm the mother of four boys ages 32, 29, 23 and 15. They are my pride and the motor behind everything I do. By far the most rewarding thing about me is my boys, four amazing young men that make me proud and the woman that I am today. That is by far my best accomplishment in life!

JR: Why was it important for you to open a traditional Puerto Rican restaurant in Indian Trail?

PA: I love Indian Trail! I have lived here for eighteen years in the same home where I have raised my children. The town has changed so much its like a melting pot, the only thing missing was a Puerto Rican restaurant and when the opportunity came I was ready! I worked three jobs saving money because I knew this is what I wanted to do since I own[ed] a food truck for the past 16 years and there I only sell Mexican street food, corn and other Mexican items. When I started the main Latinos here were Mexicans, and our culture and food are completely different so I couldn't cook what I was used to cooking I had to learn how to cook Mexican food so that I could have customers and a business. It has changed so much over the years, I started doing catering and offering Puerto Rican dishes, and my customers were

loving it so I thought "Hey! It doesn't have to be just for Puerto Ricans, it could be for everyone once they try my food they will come back!" That's what I would say to myself so I wouldn't be afraid to make my dream happen. The next step was a restaurant, the timing was right, the population changed in the past eight years, now we have Puerto Ricans, Dominicans, Venezuelans, and Cubans so I became less afraid and more convinced. The opportunity came and I knew in my heart this was it and it was going to be a traditional Puerto Rican restaurant with a traditional menu. What I cook for my own family, how I made magic happen!

JR: How big of a part does food play in the Hispanic community?

PA: Food plays a big part in how we all come together, visiting Abuela (grandmother) on Sundays and having a feast. We would make any occasion special just by adding food and coming together. It's funny, but other Hispanic communities are the same; food is key, its happiness, its love, and its traditions.

JR: How do you think Taino Restaurant is adding value to the Hispanic community in the area?

PA: Taino took everyone by surprise from the moment we opened our doors in a small corner that no one wanted to rent. Too far from the main street, unknown food and an indigenous name, and a flag printed on a door at a wall waving at you as you drive by. I knew I had something special the night I was cleaning the restaurant adding the

finishing touches, and this young man parked his car and went running to the flag as he dropped to his knees crying, I ran to him to see if he was ok and crying he said, 'I never felt better and so proud finally, I see my flag after years not visiting the island.' I was in tears myself, he didn't know, but his reaction made me more secure of the big chance I was about to take! He is a regular customer now.

JR: Would you consider Taino Restaurant a cultural ambassador in Union County?

PA: *Yes, we are cultural ambassadors. We are the first Puerto Rican restaurant in Union County that offers traditional food exactly how it's made on the island by our abuelitas. No fancy decorations on your plate, just awesome food. That when our customers eat it, the first thing they say is 'Whoa!' I just remember my abuelita. I always say thank you for it's an honor.*

JR: What has been the reaction of the non-Hispanic community to your establishment?

PA: *Their reaction has been amazing! Our non-Hispanic customers are the best when they come in! They don't know what to order, so we always guide them through and talk about what we have and give them samples to try. They don't only buy, but come back for more and bring friends. We have a lot of regulars, who even say the name of the food in Spanish, which is an honor to me. I always ask as I walk through the tables how everything is, and I get the same response, 'I'm in love' or 'I need a nap.' It's an honor for people to*

love my cooking, it's funny when my sons' friends come by, and now they have to pay, all I hear is "Mrs. Patty, we had it so good growing up always eating at your house, and now we have to pay, we didn't know how good we had it." That's funny since they are all grown men now.

JR: If you were to entice me to try your menu which items on the menu do you think would get me hooked on traditional Puerto Rican food?

PA: *I would have to say our Arroz con Gandulez (rice made with green pegoen peas) and our roasted pork is our typical dish, the one we eat when there's a special occasion but now you won't have to wait, we have it! Our mofongo, which now has become our famous MOFONGO FRIDAY, smashed fried green plantains with garlic and other spices with your choice of garlic shrimp, fried pork, pulled pork, or any other meat we have on the menu. Our customer's favorite is our pepper chicken or our pollo guisado (chicken stew) served with a side of your choice; rice, beans, and always sweet plantains, it will be love at first bite! For the jibarito sandwich, instead of bread, we use fried green plantains as your bread with pulled pork, lettuce, and tomatoes! You will become a lover of everything!*

“

LATINO HERITAGE TO ME MEANS REJOICING IN OUR CULTURE, COMMEMORATING OUR TRADITIONS, AND APPLAUDING OUR ACCOMPLISHMENTS.

JR: What are your future plans for your restaurant?

PA: *I would love to expand or make our patio enclosed. That would be amazing! Our sitting area is somewhat limited. We have a patio, but now with the cold weather approaching, it leaves us with only three tables. At first, I thought it would be just a take-out place but customers love the place and the atmosphere, they love sitting down having their lunch or dinner, some reminiscence about the feeling they get eating at the restaurant, it feels like home and their abuela is about to come out from the kitchen. Expanding would be our future, larger sitting area, and a bigger bakery selection!*

JR: Lastly, what does your Hispanic Heritage mean to you?

PA: *Latino Heritage to me means rejoicing in our culture, commemorating our traditions, and applauding our accomplishments. It is feeling proud of our backgrounds and exposing others to the beauty of our culture as we do at Taino Restaurant, bringing a piece of Puerto Rico to North Carolina, our way to maintain our connection with our roots. For those born here but with Hispanic parents, it is a way to maintain our traditions and bring our ancestors alive. Exploring the depths of our heritage, our values, our food, our music, so that they don't forget where they are from. It is passing down our traditions, that's what Hispanic Heritage means to me, and it's what I teach my sons!*



LUIS VON AHN

Guatemalan entrepreneur and a Consulting Professor in the Computer Science Department at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is known as one of the pioneers of crowdsourcing.

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Food, Family and Tradition

by Judy Garcia

I come from a traditional Mexican family. My father was born and raised in Chiapas, Mexico and my mother was born in Guerrero, Mexico. Like many Hispanic families, my mother and father came to the United States in search of better opportunities. This was not an easy decision for them to make. Travelling to a completely different country where they did not know anyone, the culture, or language was a challenge they were ready to face to give my sister and I a different life from theirs.

For me, my Hispanic Heritage means acknowledging the sacrifice that my parents made and making sure they know I do not take this for granted. I work hard every day to make them proud.

Thanks to my hardworking parents I was able to complete my studies and have a career I am passionate about. Today I work with limited resource families and youth to help them create healthy meals at home with the resources they have available. I absolutely love what I do and it would not have been possible without their unconditional support. The perseverance and resilience I saw in my parents growing up makes me proud to be a Latina woman.

Growing up, I remember having countless family gatherings, celebrating birthdays, baptisms, quinceanera's or just coming together to bond. Apart from spending time with my family, the best part of the gatherings was the delicious food that everyone bought. We would have Spanish rice, beans, carne asada, flan, tres leches cake, pico de gallo; this list goes on and on. Coming together for a meal as a family holds so much meaning in the Hispanic community. Oftentimes when a dish is especially good we say it is because "está hecho con mucho amor" which means it was made with a lot of love.



chilaquiles rojos

My favorite Mexican dish has to be chilaquiles rojos. This is a dish my mother would make all the time when I was growing up for breakfast. This dish consists of very simple ingredients that complement each other beautifully.

INGREDIENTS

- 12 corn tortillas cut into six
- 2 cups of salsa (2 plum tomatoes, 1 jalapeño or serrano pepper, 1 small garlic clove, ⅛ medium size white onion)
- ½ cup Mexican cream
- ½ cup cheese, preferably Mexican queso
- 1 sprig Epazote
- ⅓ cup cilantro, chopped to garnish
- ⅓ cup vegetable oil
- Salt to season
- 1 sliced onion, rings separated
- 4 eggs

PROCEDURE

1. For the red salsa, place tomatoes, onion, pepper, garlic, and onion in a medium-size saucepan. Cover with water and cook at medium heat for about 15 minutes or until the tomatoes and peppers are cooked. Place the cooked ingredients in your blender with ½ cup of cooking water to make a sauce. Season with salt and set aside.
2. Heat 1 tablespoon of oil in a large skillet and start frying the tortillas in batches until golden and crisp. You might need to do 2 or 3 batches to avoid overcrowding the skillet. Drain the tortillas on paper towels. Repeat the process with the rest of the tortillas.
3. Clean the skillet with a paper towel, turn the heat to medium and add 1 tablespoon of oil. Add the sauce and let it cook for 5 minutes. Add the Epazote and season the sauce with salt. Carefully stir in the tortillas to avoid breaking them.
4. Cook eggs in a separate pan to use for protein. I prefer sunny side up.
5. Serve garnished with crumbled cheese, cilantro, onion, and topped with cream and egg. Avocado is also a good addition to the plate.



ISAIAH MIKAELLI

Julia Alvarez penned her way to fame with books like *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* and *In the Time of the Butterflies*. Her writings focused on the struggle of immigrants to assimilate into American culture and her experience growing up as a Dominican-American after her family was forced to flee their home.



ARTIST
EYE
with

OSCAR ORTIZ

INTERVIEWED BY CHRISTIE STARNES

As we celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month, read how it's evolved, and have conversations with the Latinx community, we are reminded of the Hispanic contributions of those that came before and will continue in the future. Around the same time, President Lyndon Johnson was introducing the beginning of our National Hispanic celebration in 1968, our very own Oscar Ortiz and his family would be moving to Puerto Rico. The following is a vibrant account of how his artistry transformed, how it is connected to others, and the strength it draws today.

CS: First, let me say thank you for taking part in this interview. I'll start off by asking you to tell us a little bit about your background.

OO: *I was born in Manhattan, New York, in 1964. My family moved to Puerto Rico when I was about four or five years old. It was there where I grew up and obtained an education.*

CS: Have you always had a love for painting or was it a learned talent over time?

OO: *Both. Like most artists, I enjoy drawing since I was a kid. I had an innate passion for it. My childhood memories include images of me running under pouring rain to the local convenience store to buy slices of meat wrapping paper for a cent each.*

Mr. Serafín, the owner, was a skinny-boned old man that would slowly rip them one by one, rolled them in a scroll, and tied them up with a string. I returned home drenched but happy to sketch superheroes cartoons in front of the black and white TV -in the few spared dry sheets. As a youngster, I was requested often by my teachers to get involved in art projects for the school. I spent hours creating illustrations to be used as teaching aids. Inexplicably, my artistic creativity went dormant for almost thirty years. I just stopped.

CS: What made you want to start again?

OO: In the summer of 2000, while walking with my wife in downtown Charlotte, we decided to take a peek at a Heroes Con. As soon we walked into the building, everything went mute for me. I was overwhelmed by the sight of hundreds and hundreds of professional artists sketching left to right. I walked slowly through each booth, observing, feeling this fire in my belly. Finally, I told my wife, 'I was meant for this. This is what I AM, an artist.' 'Then, you MUST do it,' was her answer. The conversation took place in front of the 'Art Instruction Schools' booth. The attendant, Mr. Ballard, a perceptive gentleman, approached me to ask, 'Do you draw?' 'Well, I do have a couple of sketches at home,' I responded. We arranged to meet at my house for an evaluation of my talents. 'You can certainly draw, but you'll benefit to learn illustration techniques through the school.' Wina, my wife, encouraged me to take the classes even though I was hesitant about the validity of learning mechanical illustrative techniques. My doubts were unfounded as each month afterward I could see my draftsmanship abilities getting sharper and sharper. Soon one of my illustrations made it to the local newspaper followed by a figurative realistic exhibition.

CS: It sounds like your wife is one of your biggest supporters.

OO: Wina, my wife, had always been the pivotal hinge in my artistic career. One fine day I recall clearly that she told me, 'Honey, I love your pencil drawings, but I'm sick and tired of black and white! I would like to see some colors for a change, you know. You are never going to make a living out of art unless you finally PAINT!' I'd always looked at painting as a sacred terrain only available for the gifted ones.



ABOVE
Cinco Margaritas
by Oscar Ortiz

But, I knew my wife was right, so painting I did.

From there on I took upon myself to be as educated as possible in fine art and to learn from real professionals. This entailed visiting working artists in their studios locally and abroad, starting and keeping communication with them through emails, and constantly asking technical questions. I supported this self-imposed education with the reading of hundreds of books of different mediums and subscribing to several magazines. In less than two years after actively painting with no academic training through an atelier or personal coaching, I was commissioned my first piece. After that, I knew there was no going back. Several exhibitions and commissions followed that first

one. When I broke into cyberspace with my website I sold more than 10 original pieces in the first 6 months.

In the past twenty years, I've had wonderful experiences thanks to my art. Among those, I corresponded with Bob Ross, spent an evening chit-chatting about family and stuff with writer Isabel Allende, and met several interesting public personalities that I never thought I would get to see up close.

CS: Would you say your life experiences have influenced your artwork?

OO: Occasionally I've captured snippets of intimate moments and turned them into paintings, but the biggest influence from my life experiences has to be my education about the history of Puerto Rico. You see, Puerto Rico is an island brimming with natural beauty. However, among its most beautiful treasures is its past. For me, the brightest jewel of that past is the men and women of the country, known as jíbaros - a loose translation would be "Puerto Rican hillbillies". They represent the birth of the Puerto Rican race as such. They were the true modern natural islander, after hundreds of years of organic fusion within the three main races that inhabited the island: Africans, Spaniards, and the taínos, the original inhabitants when Christopher Columbus arrived. The final product was these humble and serious people who worked hard for their daily living and the sustenance of the family against all odds - little or no education, abrupt changes in governments, and natural disasters.

In counterpoint, to distress such hard life, music became an integral part of their existence. Despite their few resources, they did everything possible to create string and percussion instruments that uniquely expressed their feelings and experiences. They developed an original genre: *la música jíbara*. Puerto Rican country music.

My art, for the most part, tries to present a romantic vision of this period.

CS: What does your work aim to say?

OO: I paint for the joy of creating *per se*. It aims to create a stylized pictorial romantic nostalgic view of Puerto Rico's years of yesterday. I don't sell a message intentionally. Through the years, people had commented that my art is peaceful, happy, and joyful. It seems like, subconsciously, that is what I am saying. Strive for peace, happiness, and joy in your life.

CS: Because of the subject matter you express in your artwork, have there been moments people stereotyped you?

OO: Well, you can almost say, that artistically I've stereotyped myself by design. Allow me to explain what I mean by that. In today's art business environment the competition for attention is fierce. Because of it, the best way to get your work to be known and collected is by finding a niche, also called a brand tribe in the marketing world. You are the brand. My art speaks primarily to Puerto Ricans. That's my audience. Now, I do welcome all sorts of collectors with open arms! But, to both groups, I clearly present myself as a Puerto Rican painter.

CS: Are there any other artists that give you inspiration or that you admire?

OO: Yes, and the list is extremely diverse, I draw inspiration from artists of all times, countries, and genres. I love to see works from comic book artists, illustrators, and painters alike. Among those are Norman Rockwell, J.C. Leyendecker, NC Wyeth, Robert McGinnis, Cathleen Toelke, Rafael López, Raúl Colón, Francisco Oller, Phil Noto and so, so many others!

CS: Lastly, as it is National Hispanic Heritage Month, why is it important to celebrate?

OO: First I must clarify that all races should be equally respected and celebrated. National Hispanic Heritage Month shines the spotlight on that particular conglomerate to highlight their contributions here in the USA. In that aspect, it is important because the celebration acts as a reminder that the progress of a whole nation rests on the shoulders of hard-working people from diverse cultural backgrounds.

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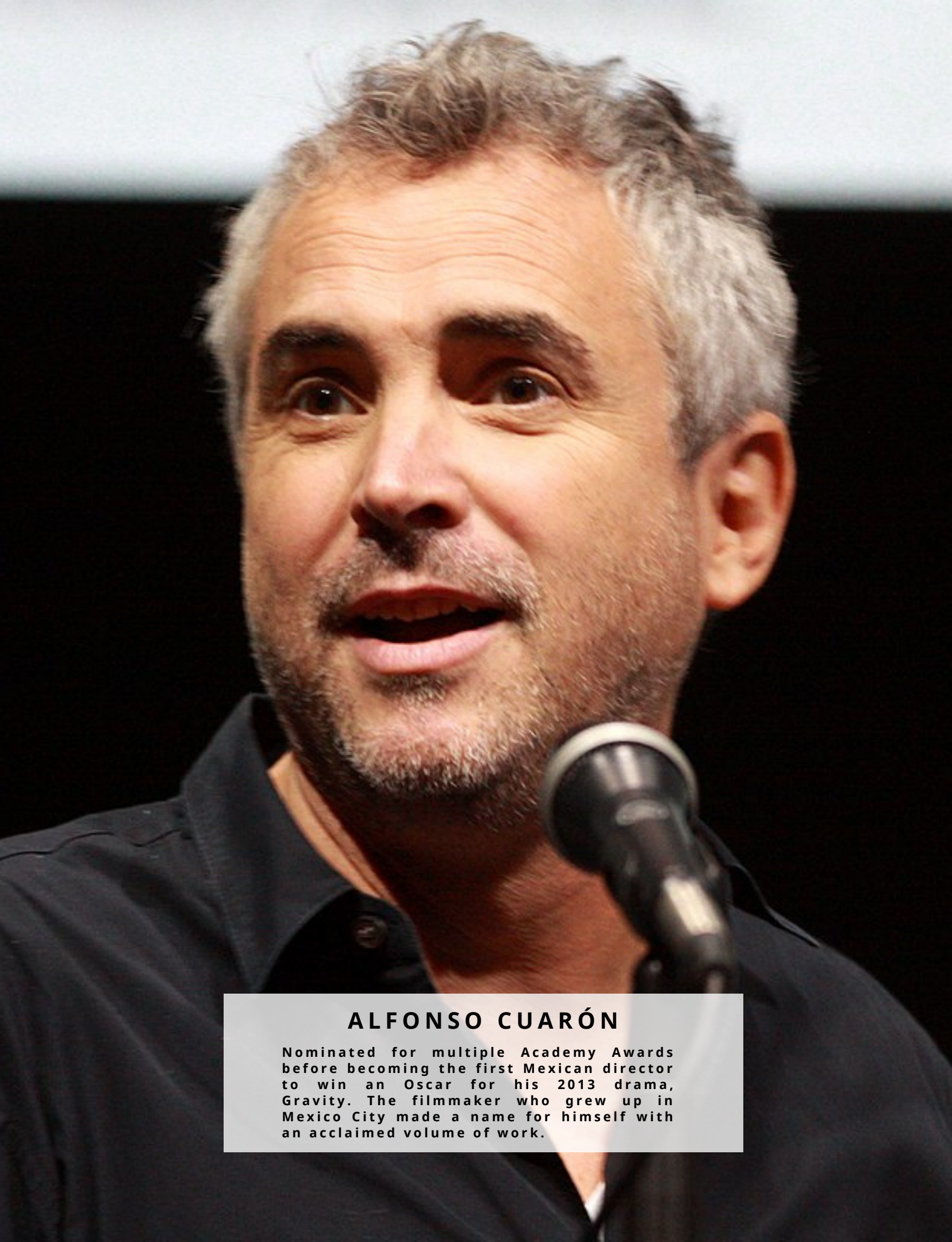
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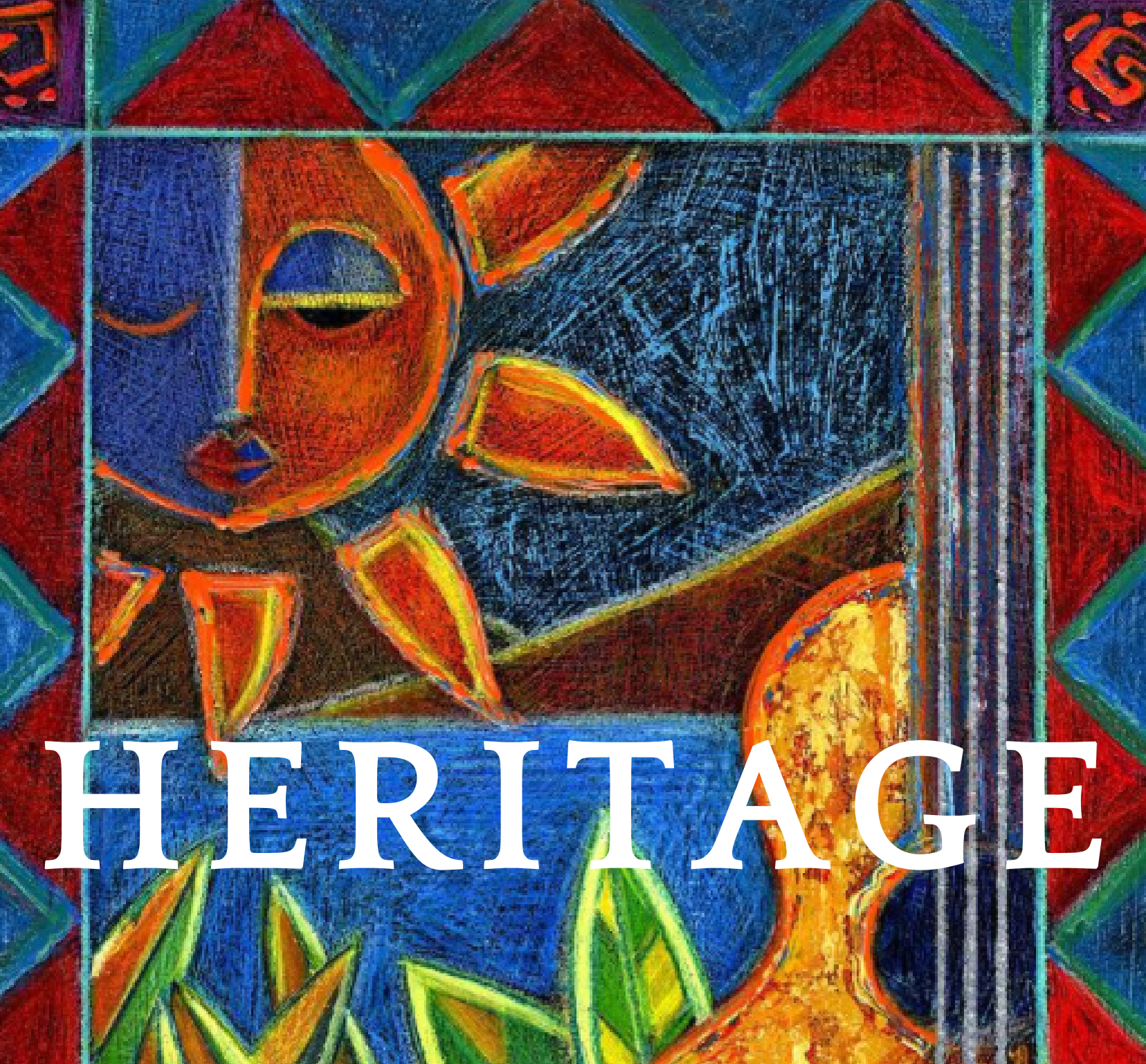
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ALFONSO CUARÓN

Nominated for multiple Academy Awards before becoming the first Mexican director to win an Oscar for his 2013 drama, *Gravity*. The filmmaker who grew up in Mexico City made a name for himself with an acclaimed volume of work.



HERITAGE

For the past 30 years, the Hispanic community has positively reshaped Union County. Their contribution to our social, economic, and artistic growth is something to be celebrated. From beautiful artwork to delicious cuisine, our lives have been spiced up thanks to them. The following submissions are just a taste. Enjoy!

Oscar Ortiz



Juanita

by Valeria Hernandez

Juanita was created to honor all the Hispanic women from Union County.

Juanita's eyes yearn for understanding, acceptance and no pre-judging while her heart is as colorful as her background ready to welcome anyone with open arms.

Let's rejoice in all the things we do have in common and not the ones that make us different and we will embrace diversity in our County.

Juanita



Mi Madre Manuela de Extremadura

by Angela Lubinecky

This is a painting of my mother, she is what what heritage means to me.



CELEBRATING OUR DIVERSITY

by Sofia & Daniela Arias

This piece represents different nations together in one to reflect about our origins, our roots and our descendants. Also to reflect on the positive legacy that each one of us can set for our generations.

The Twelfth of October by Nydia Morales

As a child growing up in Costa Rica, I joined my schoolmates in celebrating El Día de la Raza, the Day of the Race, every October 12. On one such occasion, when I was ten years old, I performed as Christopher Columbus. My mother had given me a pageboy haircut that didn't make me happy but made me suitable for the role. During such celebrations and in History classes I learned that the Spaniards were to be thanked for giving us our race: a mixture of Spanish and Amerindian. We were to be proud of the mixed ethnicity. Yet, the greater value was always given to everything Spanish over everything Amerindian, from the color of the skin to History and Culture.

An example of cultural bias is the narrative taught in my school about the early defeat of Hernán Cortés by the Aztecs. The night Cortés sat under a tree and wept over his defeat was deemed "La Noche Triste" the Sad Night. The suffering and losses of the Aztecs were totally ignored in that version. As it is said, "History is written by the winners" and the Spaniards were the winners in the massive invasion that followed that first trip from Europe to the American continent. It was clear to me that the more Spanish in an individual, the greater the opportunities to access education, health services, jobs, and so on. Thus, I grew up.

The five-hundred-anniversary of the arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Americas brought a wave of articles, lectures, and discussions, as to who was Christopher Columbus: a hero? a villain? What did his arrival mean for the inhabitants of the Americas in 1492 and their descendants in 1992? Personally, the anniversary brought to the surface questions and doubts that had been brewing in my mind over the years about my race, my loyalties, my sense of "self" versus "others". The result of my deliberations was confusion as to my origins and racial identity. Living in the United States only added to my confusion because I had always considered myself White and suddenly (so it seemed to me) I began to be labeled Hispanic or Latino; no longer White.

The advancement of science through the centuries and particularly the explosion of Molecular Biology in the second half of the 20th century widened the possibilities of digging in the past to find out more about one's origins. I had my DNA analyzed for ancestry. The results confirmed my Spanish and Amerindian background. They also revealed two surprises: 1. My genetic make-up includes 3% African. 2. My maternal line can be traced to the people who arrived on the American continent from Eastern Asia more than 14,000 years ago. Up to the moment when I received the results, I had no idea whatsoever of my African ancestry. Looking at my parents, my mother seemed to have more Spanish in her than my father. There was a recent influx of Spanish genes in her line; her grandfather had migrated from Spain in the 19th century. Yet, I inherited from my mother DNA that can be traced to the first Americans!

I started researching the literature and found out that historical records and genetic analysis confirm the average tri-racial make-up of the Costa Rican population: 61% Spanish, 30% Amerindian, and 9% African.* Similar numbers have been verified throughout Latin America.

The veil of confusion started to lift: Although I look White my genes are tri-racial. The knowledge of my DNA has made me aware of my connection to other races and has given me pride in my heritage and a new outlook not only on who I am but how all of us are the product of human admixture following migrations repeated time and time again to this day.

The winds of change seem to be speeding up. "La Noche Triste" was renamed "La Noche Victoriosa", The Victorious Night, in Mexico City this past July. The new name acknowledges the experience of the indigenous people who bravely resisted the invasion. It may be a while before the change in name and its implications make it into school textbooks, but a new awareness is setting in. I hope that as we get a wider view of both History and Genetics, we will become more tolerant and accepting of each other.

*Morera-Brenes, Bernal and Barrantes, Ramiro. 1995. Genes e Historia: El Mestizaje en Costa Rica. Revista de Historia 32:43-64.



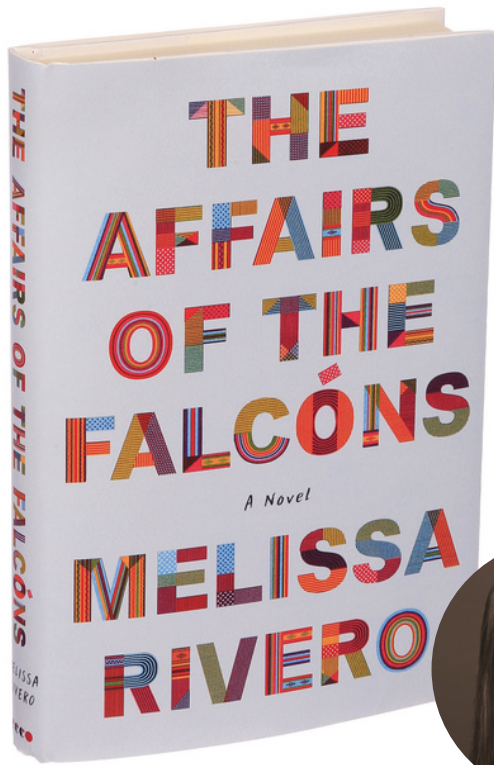
ISABEL ALLENDE

A Chilean writer whose works sometimes contain aspects of the genre magical realism. Allende has been called "the world's most widely read Spanish-language author."

MOVEMENT

BOOK TALKS

Diverse reading helps you explore other cultures with the hope to further your own personal understanding. Hispanic Heritage Month is an annual celebration of Latinx and Hispanic Americans. These books consist of a mix of work by Hispanic authors and works about Hispanic peoples and cultures. Check out the library catalog for these titles.



The Affairs of the Falcóns
Melissa Rivero

Ana and Lucho, a married couple who, in the 1990s, flee a tumultuous Peru with their two children to live in New York. The novel focuses on Ana and her attempts to forge a future while navigating the hurdles faced by an undocumented resident.



Dominicana
Angie Cruz

Dominicana celebrates the tenacity of Ana Cancion, a 15 year old forced to marry a 32 year old as a business arrangement. Raised on a farm in the Dominican Republic, Ana ends up stuck in a hot apartment in New York City with a terrifying husband.

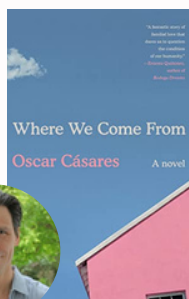


Sabrina & Corina: Stories
Kali Fajardo-Anstine

A Denver family falls into a cycle of violence against women. A moving narrative of unrelenting feminine power and the universal experiences of abandonment, heritage, and an eternal sense of home.

Where We Come From
Oscar Cásares

A Mexican-American family in Texas finds their home turned into a way station for immigrants smuggled across the border.



Infinite Country
Patricia Engel

A mixed-status family as they struggle to survive and reunite after a father's deportation from the United States.

BOOK TALKS



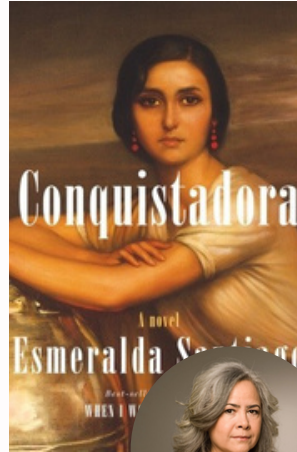
You Had Me at Hola Alexis Daria

Alexis Daria brings readers an unforgettable, hilarious rom-com set in the drama-filled world of telenovelas. An actress on an upward career trajectory falls in love with her leading man.



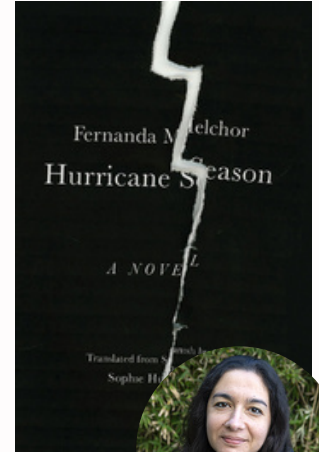
Island Affair Priscilla Oliveras

Sought-after social media influencer Sara Vance, in recovery from an eating disorder, is coming into her own, with a potential career expansion on the horizon. Despite the good news, her successful siblings have a way of making her feel like the odd one out.



Conquistadora Esmeralda Santiago

As a young girl growing up in Spain, Ana Larragoity Cubillas is powerfully drawn to Puerto Rico by the diaries of an ancestor who traveled there with Ponce de Leon. And in handsome twin brothers Ramon and Inocente—both in love with Ana—she finds a way to get there.



Hurricane Season Fernanda Melchor

Hurricane Season explores the violent mythologies of one Mexican village and reveals how they touch the global circuitry of capitalist greed. This is an inquiry into the sexual terrorism and terror of broken men. This is a work of both mystery and critique.



They Could Have Named Her Anything Stephanie Jimenez

Racism, class, and betrayal collide in this poignant debut novel about restoring the broken bonds of family and friendship. The story of two teenaged girls—one Latina and one white—questioning what it means to live up to the name you've been given and how far you'll go for the life you've always dreamed of; grappling with racism, class privilege, female friendship, and familial expectations, set in Queens and the Upper East Side, Manhattan.

MOVEMENT

BOOK TALKS



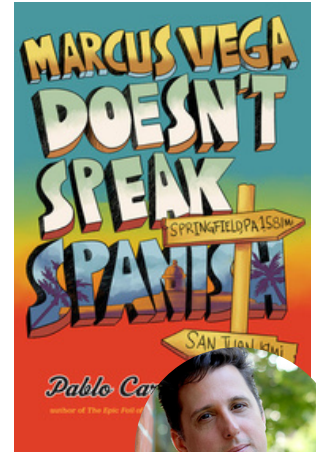
Areli Is a Dreamer
Areli Morales

Written by a DACA dreamer, Areli Morales tells her own powerful and vibrant immigration story.



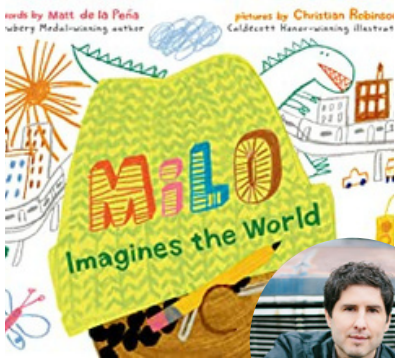
The First Rule of Punk
Celia C. Pérez

A wry and heartfelt exploration of friendship, finding your place, and learning to rock out like no one's watching.



Marcus Vega Doesn't Speak Spanish
Pablo Cartaya

The story of a towering 14-year-old eighth-grader living in Springfield, Pennsylvania, looking to fit in.

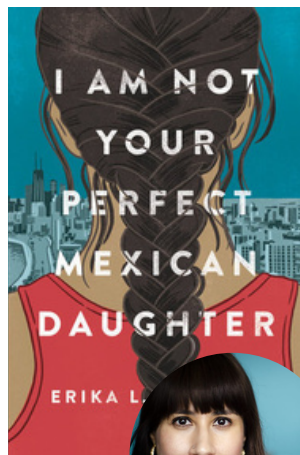


Milo Imagines the World
Matt de la Peña

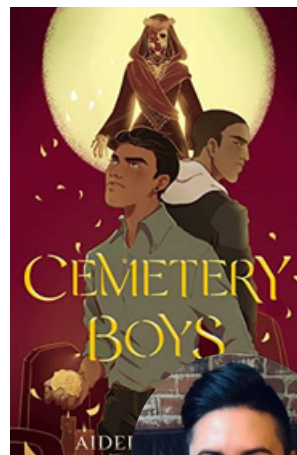
Reminds Kids To Choose Imagination over impressions.



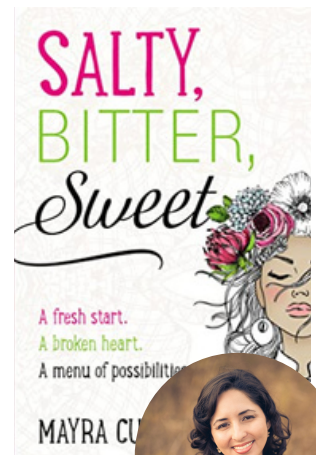
Suncatcher
José Pimienta



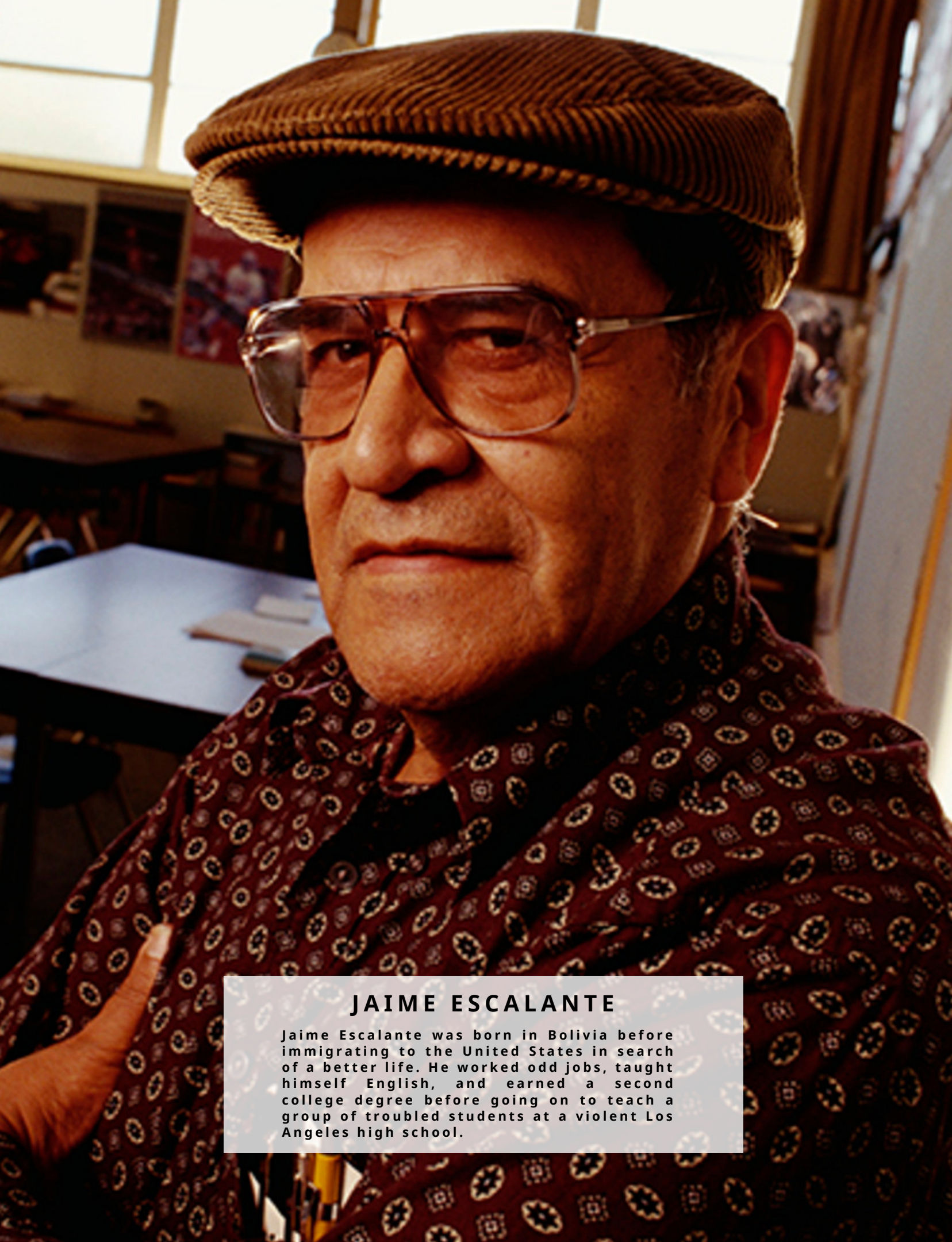
I Am Not Your Perfect Mexican Daughter
Erika L. Sánchez



Cemetery Boys
Aiden Thomas



Salty, Bitter, Sweet
Mayra Cuevas



JAIME ESCALANTE

Jaime Escalante was born in Bolivia before immigrating to the United States in search of a better life. He worked odd jobs, taught himself English, and earned a second college degree before going on to teach a group of troubled students at a violent Los Angeles high school.



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