



Latino Literature

A Compilation of Lists by ALSC, Healdsburg High School and YALSA-BK

Ada , Alma Flor . *I Love Saturdays y Domingos* . Illus. by Elivia Savadier. Atheneum, 2002. (Gr. PreS-2)

Weekends are special for a young girl who spends them with her two sets of grandparents: her grandma and grandpa on Saturdays, her *abuelita* and *abuelito* on Sundays.

Alarcón, Francisco X. *Angels Ride Bikes and Other Fall Poems/Los ángeles andan en bicicleta y otros poemas de otoño* . Illus. by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Children's Book Press, 1999. (Gr. 1-3)

This Mexican American poet recalls people, places, events, and sensations from his childhood in Los Angeles .

Alvarez, Julia. *Before We Were Free* . Knopf Book for Young Readers, 2002. (Gr. 6-9).

In the early 1960s in the Dominican Republic , twelve-year-old Anita learns that her family is involved in the underground movement to end the bloody rule of the dictator, General Trujillo.

Alvarez, Julia. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents* . Plume, 1991. (Adult)

The story of the Garcia family's adjustment to life in the United States .

Alvarez, Julia. *How Tía Lola Came to Visit/Stay* . Knopf, 2001. (Gr. 4-7)

When Tía Lola comes from the Dominican Republic to visit Miguel's family in Vermont , he has mixed feelings about his colorful aunt.

Anaya, Rudolfo A. *Bless me, Ultima : a novel* . TQS Publications, 1991. (Adult)

Set in a small New Mexican community during World War II, Antonio speaks of the dignity, traditions, and mythology of Chicano life.

Anaya, Rudolfo A. *Rio Grande fall* . Warner Books, 1996. (Adult)

Albuquerque private detective Sonny Baca is called to investigate when it appears that drug-dealers, murderers, and shamanistic magic have taken over the annual balloon festival.

Ancona, George. *Barrio: José's Neighborhood* . Photos by George Ancona. Harcourt Brace, 1998. (Gr. 2-6)

This expressive photo-essay spotlights an eight-year-old boy and his community, a barrio in San Francisco .

Argueta, Jorge. *A Movie in My Pillow/Una película en mi almohada* . Illus. by Elizabeth Gómez. Children's Book Press, 2001. (Gr. 3-6)

Illustrated in bright colors, this autobiographical collection of short poems tells of a boy and his father leaving El Salvador as refugees and settling in San Francisco .

Argueta, Jorge. *Xochitl and the Flowers/Xochitl, la niña de las flores* . Illus. by Carl Angel. Children's Book Press, 2003. (K-Gr. 3)

After moving from El Salvador , Xochitl and her family become a valued part of their San Francisco community by growing and selling flowers.

Atkin, S. Beth. *Voices from the Fields* . Little, Brown, 1993. (Gr. 5-8)

Photographs, poems, and interviews with children reveal the hardships and hopes of Mexican American migrant farm workers and their families.

Bernardo, Anilú. *Loves me, loves me not* . Piñata Books/Arte Publico Press, 1999. (Gr. 7-10)

While trying to win the attention of a high school basketball star who already has a girlfriend, Maggie, a Cuban American, learns painful lessons about romantic young love.

Bertrand, Diane Gonzales. *The Empanadas that Abuela Made/Las empanadas que hacía la abuela* . Illus. by Alex Pardo DeLange. Piñata Books, 2003. (Gr. PreS-2)

Illustrated with humorous exaggeration, this cumulative rhyme details the family tradition of baking homemade empanadas.

Bertrand, Diane Gonzales. *Trino's Choice* . Piñata Books, 1999. (Gr. 6-9)

Frustrated by his poor financial situation and hoping to impress a smart girl, seventh grader Trino falls in with a bad crowd led by an older teen with a vicious streak. Also: *Trino's Time* .

***Braided lives : an anthology of multicultural American writing* . Minnesota Council of Teachers of English, 1991. (Adult)**

A collection of over forty stories and poems written by Americans of Native, Hispanic, African, and Asian ancestry.

Bretón, Marcos. *Home is Everything: The Latino Baseball Story* . Cinco Puntos Press, 2003. (Gr. 7-10)

Explores the unique experiences of Latin American baseball players in the Major Leagues, including Roberto Clemente, Orlando Cepeda, and Jose Santana; their struggles, disappointments, and sometimes enormous successes.

Cameron, Ann. *Colibri*. Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. (Gr. 5-8)

Kidnapped when she was very young by an unscrupulous man who has forced her to lie and beg to get money, a twelve-year-old Mayan girl endures an abusive life, always wishing she could return to the parents she can hardly remember.

Chambers, Veronica. *Quinceañera Means Sweet 15* . Hyperion, 2001. (Gr. 6-9)

Though Marisol's fifteenth year brings financial and emotional struggles, it ends with a memorable coming-of-age celebration.

Cisneros, Sandra . *The House on Mango Street* . Vintage Books, 1991. (Gr. 10+)

Sometimes heartbreaking, sometimes deeply joyous, *The House on Mango Street* tells the story of Esperanza Cordero, whose neighborhood is one of harsh realities and harsh beauty. Esperanza doesn't want to belong - not to her run-down neighborhood, and not to the low expectations the world has for her. Esperanza's story is that of a young girl coming into her power, and inventing for herself what she will become.

Cockcroft, James D. *Latino Visions: Contemporary, Chicano, Puerto Rican, and Cuban American Artists* . Franklin Watts, 2001. (Gr. 8+)

Describes the evolution of Latino art in America through discussion of various artistic movements and important Latino artists.

Cohn, Diana . *Sí, se puede! = Yes, We Can!: Janitor Strike in L.A.* . Illus. by Francisco Delgado. Cinco Puntos Press, 2002. (Gr. 2-6)

Carlito's widowed mother, who struggles to support the family on low wages, helps to organize a strike that raises pay for herself and other janitors in Los Angeles .

***Cool salsa : bilingual poems on growing up Latino in the United States* . Fawcett Juniper, 1994. (Gr. 8-12)**

Celebrates the tones, rhythms, sounds, and experiences of growing up Latino in America . Includes works by poets such as Sandra Cisneros, Martín Espada, Gary Soto, Ed Vega, and others.

Dole, Mayra L. *Drum, Chavi, Drum/Toca, Chavi, toca* . Illus. by Antonio Eligio. Children's Book Press, 2003.(K-Gr. 2)

Chavi disguises herself as a boy in order to play the drums in Miami 's Calle Ocho festival parade.

Dorros, Arthur. *Abuela* . Illus. by Elisa Kleven. Dutton, 1991. (PreS-Gr. 2)

Rosalba and her grandmother take an imaginary flight over New York City while sharing companionship and family love.

Draper, Sharon. *Romiette and Julio* . Simon Pulse, 2001. (Gr. 6-10)

Romiette, an African-American girl, and Julio, a Hispanic boy, discover that they attend the same high school after falling in love on the Internet, but are harassed by a gang whose members object to their interracial dating.

English, Karen. *Speak English For Us, Marisol!* Illus. by Enrique O. Sánchez. Albert Whitman, 2000. (Gr. 1-3)

Bilingual Marisol helps her Spanish-speaking relatives communicate with the English-speaking world around them.

Ewing, Lynne. *Party Girl*. Knopf Books for Young Readers, 1998. (Gr. 8-11)

The death of her best friend Ana in a drive-by shooting causes fifteen-year-old Kata to question her position in the Los Angeles gang life.

Figueredo, D.H. *When This World Was New*. Illus. by Enrique O. Sanchez. Lee & Low, 1999. (K-Gr. 3)

A recent immigrant, Danilito dreads starting school where Spanish is not spoken, but his first experience with snow helps quiet his fears.

Galindo, Mary Sue. *Icy Watermelon/Sandía fría*. Illus. by Pauline Rodriguez Howard. Piñata Books, 2001. (PreS-Gr.2)

Three generations of a family enjoy eating watermelon together while Grandfather tells of selling melons as a young man and meeting the woman who became his wife.

Garza, Carmen Lomas. *In My Family/En mi familia*. Illus. Children's Book Press, 1996. (PreS-Gr.2)

Through text and illustrations, artist Carmen Lomas Garza retells her childhood experiences growing up in a Mexican American community.

Hernandez, Irene Beltran. *The Secret of Two Brothers*. Piñata Books, 1995. (Gr. 6-9)

A blend of mature themes and clear language with an action-packed story about two Mexican boys who overcome severe difficulties.

Hernandez, Jo Ann Yolanda. *White Bread Competition*. Piñata Books, 1997. (Gr. 8+)

When Luz, a ninth-grade Latina student in San Antonio, wins a spelling competition, her success triggers a variety of emotions among family, friends, and the broader community.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *CrashBoomLove*. University of New Mexico Press, 1999. (Gr. 8+)

After his father leaves home, sixteen-year-old Cesar Garcia lives with his mother and struggles through the painful experiences of growing up as a Mexican American high school student.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Grandma and me at the Flea/Los meros meros remateros*. Illus. by Anita De Lucio-Brock. Children's Book Press, 2002. (PreS-Gr.2)

When Juanito helps his grandmother at a Southern California flea market, he enjoys the friendship and camaraderie he finds there.

Hoyt-Goldsmith, Diane. *Migrant Worker: A Boy from the Rio Grande Valley* . Photographed by Lawrence Migdale. Holiday House, 1996. (Gr. 3-5)

In a photo-essay, Ricardo describes his life as a fifth-grade student and migrant worker in Texas .

***Iguana Dreams : New Latino Fiction* . HarperPerennial, c1992. (Adult)**

An anthology of contemporary Latino fiction, featuring the work of 29 writers who live in the United States and write in English.

Jiménez, Francisco. *Breaking through* . Houghton Mifflin, 2001. (Gr. 5-8)

Having come from Mexico to California ten years ago, fourteen-year-old Francisco is still working in the fields but fighting to improve his life and complete his education.

Jiménez, Francisco. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* . University of New Mexico Press, 1997. (Gr. 5-9)

"'La frontera'...I heard it for the first time back in the late 1940s when Papa and Mama told me and Roberto, my older brother, that someday we would take a long trip north, cross la frontera, enter California, and leave our poverty behind." So begins this honest and powerful account of a family's journey to the fields of California -- to a life of constant moving. Seen through the eyes of a boy who longs for an education and the right to call one place home, this is a story of survival, faith, and hope.

Jiménez, Francisco. *La Mariposa* . Illus. by Simón Silva. Houghton Mifflin, 1998. (PreS-Gr.2)

When Spanish-speaking Francisco joins an English-speaking classroom in first grade, the caterpillar in a jar beside his desk distracts him from the difficulties of his situation.

Johnston, Tony. *Any Small Goodness: A Novel of the Barrio* . Illus. by Raúl Colón. Blue Sky Press, 2001.(Gr. 4-6)

Eleven-year-old Arturo and his Mexican American family begin to connect with their new community in Los Angeles .

Johnston, Tony. *Uncle Rain Cloud* . Illus. by Fabrico VandenBroeck. Charlesbridge, 2001.(PreS-Gr.2)

After his family moves from Mexico to Los Angeles , Carlos wonders why his uncle has become so grouchy.

Joseph, Lynn . *The Color of My Words* . HarperTrophy, 2002. (Gr. 5-8)

When life gets difficult for Ana Rosa, a twelve-year-old would-be writer living in a small village in the Dominican Republic, she can depend on her older brother to make her feel better--until the life-changing events on her thirteenth birthday.

Krull, Kathleen. *Harvesting Hope: The Story of Cesar Chavez* . Illus. by Yuyi Morales. Harcourt, 2003. (PreS-Gr.2)

This picture-book biography tells the story of Cesar Chavez, whose peaceful protests led to better working conditions for California 's migrant workers.

Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas. *Leticia's Secret* . Piñata Books, 1997. (Gr. 3-6)

Rosario resents the special attention that her cousin receives from their older relatives, until Leticia confides that she has cancer.

Lachtman, Ofelia Dumas. *Summer of El Pintor* . Arte Publico Press, 2001. (Gr. 5-8)

Monica reluctantly moves back to Los Angeles with her widowed father to the barrio house her mother grew up in. There Monica uncovers some secrets from her mother's past.

Lopez, Loretta. *The Birthday Swap* . Illus. Lee & Low, 1997. (K-Gr. 2)

After Lori helps with preparations for her older sister birthday party, she finds that her sister has turned the tables with a wonderful surprise.

López y Fuentes, Gregorio. *El Indio* . Continuum, 1937. (Adult)

A tale of Mexican Indians who are caught between their native ways and the new white civilization that is both alien and hostile to them.

***Love to Mamá: A Tribute to Mothers* . Ed. Pat Mora. Illus. by Paula S. Barragán. Lee & Low, 2001. (Gr. 3-5)**

In this anthology, thirteen Latino poets celebrate their mothers, their grandmothers, and their roots in Cuba , Mexico , Puerto Rico, and Venezuela .

Martinez, Floyd. *Spirits of the high mesa* . Piñata Books, 1997. (Gr. 8+)

The sometimes fierce clash between the past and the future colors this moving coming of age novel set in rural New Mexico .

Martinez, Manuel Luis. *Drift* . Picador, 2003. (Gr. 9+)

At sixteen, Robert Lomos has lost his family. His father, a Latin jazz musician, has left San Antonio for life on the road as a cool-hand playboy. His mother, shattered by a complete emotional breakdown, has moved to Los Angeles and taken Robert's little brother with her. But Robert's got a plan: Duck trouble, save his money, and head to California to put the family back together. Trouble is, no one believes a delinquent Mexican American kid has a chance-least of all, Robert himself.

Martínez, Rubén. *Crossing Over: A Mexican Family on the Migrant Trail*. (Adult)

A powerful account of migrant culture traces the Chavez family as they leave their southern-Mexican town and embark on a perilous journey through the underground railroad to the tomato farms of Missouri , the strawberry fields of California , and the slaughterhouses of Wisconsin.

Martinez, Victor . *Parrot in the Oven : Mi Vida : A Novel* . HarperCollins Publishers, 1996. (Gr. 8+)

Manny relates his coming of age experiences as a member of a poor Mexican American family in which the alcoholic father only adds to everyone's struggle.

Mikaelsen, Ben. *Tree Girl* . Rayo, 2004. (Gr. 7-12)

When, protected by the branches of one of the trees she loves to climb, Gabriela witnesses the destruction of her Mayan village and the murder of nearly all its inhabitants, she vows never to climb again until, after she and her traumatised sister find safety in a Mexican refugee camp, she realizes that only by climbing and facing their fears can she and her sister hope to have a future.

Mora, Pat. *Rainbow Tulip* . Illus. by Elizabeth Sayles. Viking, 1999.(K-Gr. 3)

A little girl from a Mexican American family brings her Spanish-speaking and English-speaking worlds together at the school Maypole dance.

Mujica, Barbara. *Frida* . Overlook Press, 2000. (Adult)

In this novel, Frida Kahlo's younger sister narrates the colorful life of the contentious, exciting painter who married Diego Rivera and helped define 20 th century art.

Nava, Julian. *Julian Nava : My Mexican-American Journey* . Arte Publico Press, 2002. (Gr. 7-12)

Julian Nava recounts his rise from a childhood in the barrio to become the first Mexican American to serve as United States Ambassador to Mexico .

Osa, Nancy. *Cuba 15* . Delacorte, 2003. (Gr. 6-9)

When Violet turns 15, her Cuban grandmother's hope that she will have a traditional coming-of-age celebration challenges her to learn about her family, her heritage, and herself.

Ortiz Cofer, Judith. *An Island Like You : Stories of the Barrio* . Orchard Books, 1995. (Gr. 7-12)

Twelve stories about young people caught between their Puerto Rican heritage and their American surroundings.

Ortiz Cofer, Judith. *The Meaning of Consuelo* . Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2003. (Adult)

When Consuelo--the pensive, book-loving daughter--notices a disturbing change in her little sister Mili--the beautiful ray of tropical sunshine--Consuelo must decide if she will rise to the occasion and fulfill the expectations of her family and culture or risk becoming an outsider, in a funny and startling novel with a strong Latina spirit.

Pérez, Amada Irma. *My Very Own Room/Mi propio cuartito* . Illus. by Maya Christina Gonzalez. Children's Book Press, 2000. (K-Gr. 3)

A Mexican American girl tells of living with a large family in a small house and longing for a little space to call her own.

Pérez, L. King. *First Day in Grapes* . Illus. by Robert Casilla. Lee & Low, 2002. (Gr. 1-3)

When his family moves to a migrant camp to pick grapes, Chico finds the courage to stand up to bullies at his new school.

Quiñonez, Ernesto. *Bodega Dreams* . Vintage, 2000. (Adult)

The word is out in Spanish Harlem: Willie Bodega is king. Bodega can help. He gives everyone a leg up, in exchange for loyalty -- and a steady income from the drugs he pushes. Lyric, inspired, and darkly funny, this powerful debut novel brilliantly evokes the trials of Chino, a smart, promising young man to whom Bodega turns for a favor. Chino is drawn to Bodega's street-smart idealism, but soon finds himself in over his head, navigating an underworld of switchblade tempers, turncoat morality, and murder

Reveles, Daniel . *Enchiladas, Rice, and Beans* . Ballantine Books, 1994. (Adult)

A collection of eleven short stories set in the Baja California town of Tecate, Mexico .

Rice, David. *Crazy Loco : Stories* . Dial Books, 2001. (Gr. 7-12)

A collection of nine stories about Mexican-American kids growing up in the Rio Grande Valley of southern Texas .

Rodríguez, Luis J. *Always Running: La Vida Loca, gang days in L.A.* Simon & Schuster, 1994. (Gr. 9+)

A former L.A. gang member describes his experiences in that world, recounting the sense of security and power found in a gang and the grim reality of violence and poverty.

Rodríguez, Luis J. *América Is Her Name* . Illus. by Carlos Vazquez. Curbstone Press, 1998. (Gr. 3-6)

This picture book for older readers tells of a Mixteca Indian girl who feels alienated from her new community in Chicago , but finds her way through writing stories and poems.

Ryan, Pam Munoz. *Becoming Naomi León* . Scholastic, 2004. (Gr. 5-8)

When Naomi's absent mother resurfaces to claim her, Naomi runs away to Mexico with her great-grandmother and younger brother in search of her father.

Ryan, Pam Muñoz. *Esperanza Rising* . Scholastic, 2000. (Gr. 5-9)

Coping with her father's death, the loss of her family's Mexican estate, and her mother's illness, Esperanza finds the strength to endure the hard life of a California farm worker.

Saenz, Benjamin Alire . *Sammy and Juliana in Hollywood* . Cinco Puntos Press, 2004. (Gr. 11+)

As a Chicano boy living in the unglamorous town of Hollywood , New Mexico , and a member of the graduating class of 1969, Sammy Santos faces the challenges of "gringo" racism, unpopular dress codes, the Vietnam War, barrio violence, and poverty.

Saldaña, René . *Finding our Way* . Wendy Lamb Books, 2003. (Gr. 8-12)

This powerful collection of stories focus on young adults living on the border of Texas and Mexico, with touching moments of family closeness, lighthearted stories where boys love feisty girls; poignant ones that provide snapshots of kids finding their way out of trouble and into the world.

Saldaña, René. *The jumping tree : a novel* . New York : Delacorte Press, 2001. (Gr. 5-9)

Rey, a Mexican American living with his close-knit family in a Texas town near the Mexican border, describes his transition from boy to young man.

Santiago, Danny. *Famous all over town* . New American Library, 1983. (Gr. 9+)

A teenager, Chato Medina, is out to beat the odds in the Los Angeles Chicano barrio where he lives.

***Sol a Sol: Bilingual Poems* . Written and Selected by Lori Marie Carlson. Illus. by Emily Lisker. H. Holt and Company, 1998. (Gr. 1-4)**

Fourteen bilingual poems follow a Latino child and her family through a single day.

Soto, Gary . *The Afterlife* . Harcourt Children's Books, 2003. (Gr. 6-9)

A senior at East Fresno High School lives on as a ghost after his brutal murder in the restroom of a club where he had gone to dance.

Soto, Gary . *Baseball in April and other stories*. Harcourt Brace, 1990. (Gr. 5-8)

A collection of eleven short stories focusing on the everyday adventures of Hispanic young people growing up in Fresno , California .

Soto, Gary . *Buried onions* . HarperCollins, 1997. (Gr. 9-12)

When nineteen-year-old Eddie drops out of college, he struggles to find a place for himself as a Mexican American living in a violence-infested neighborhood of Fresno, California .

Soto, Gary . *If the Shoe Fits* . Illus. by Terry Widener. Putnam's, 2002. (Gr. 1-3)

Rigo's new penny loafers are a welcome change from his usual hand-me-down clothes, but they provoke some unwanted attention.

Soto, Gary . *Pacific Crossing*. Harcourt Children's Books, 1992. (Gr. 6-9)

Having come from Mexico to California ten years ago, fourteen-year-old Francisco is still working in the fields but fighting to improve his life and complete his education.

Soto, Gary . *Petty Crimes* . Harcourt Brace, 1998. (Gr. 6-8)

Ten short stories vividly portray the lives of young Mexican American teens growing up in California.

Stanek, Muriel. *I Speak English for My Mom* . Illus. by Judith Friedman. Albert Whitman, 1989. (Gr. 2-4)

Pencil drawings illustrate the story of a young Mexican American girl who acts as a translator for her mother and at times dislikes the situation.

Thomas, Piri. *Down These Mean Streets* . Vintage Books, 1991. (Adult)

In this classic memoir of the "barrio" of Spanish Harlem Thomas recounts his transformation from gang member, junkie, and stick-up man to poet of the streets. His memoir breathes new meaning into our notions of manhood, survival, and redemption.

Stavens, Ilan. *Latino USA : A Cartoon History*. Basic Books, 2000. (Adult)

What does it mean to be Latino? This cartoon history of the Latino experience in America tries to answer that question through irreverent, hard-hitting, humorous commentary on everything from Manifest Destiny to Selena.

Torres, Leyla. *Liliana's Grandmothers* . Illus. Farrar Straus Giroux, 1998. (PreS-Gr. 2)

This picture book compares life on two continents by looking at Liliana's two grandmothers, one down the street and one in Latin America .

Urrea, Luis Alberto. *The Devil's Highway* . Little Brown, 2004. (Adult)

Describes the attempt of twenty-six men to cross the Mexican border into the desert of southern Arizona , a region known as the Devil's Highway, detailing their harrowing ordeal and battle for survival against impossible odds.

Veciana-Suarez, Ana. *The Flight to Freedom* . Scholastic, 2002. (Gr. 6-9)

In a fictional diary, 13-year-old Yara tells how her family fled Cuba for political reasons and struggled to understand their new lives in Miami .

Velásquez, Gloria. *Roosevelt High School* (series). Piñata Press. (Gr. 6-9)

The students of Roosevelt High tackle tough issues, including divorce, racism, gay and lesbian issues, and alcoholism in this acclaimed series.

Villarreal, José Antonio. *Pocho* . Anchor Books, 1959. (Adult)

During the Depression-era in California , Richard, a young Mexican American, experiences a conflict between loyalty to the traditions of his family's past and attraction to new ideas.

***Wáchale! Poetry and Prose on Growing Up Latino in America* . Edited by Ilan Stavans. Cricket Books, 2001. (Gr. 6-10)**

Along with biographical accounts of the writers, this anthology provides stories, poems, and memoirs reflecting the experiences of young Latinos in the United States .

Wing, Natasha. *Jalapeño Bagels* . Illus. by Robert Casilla. Atheneum Books, 1996. (K-Gr. 3)

With a Mexican mother and Jewish father, Pablo chooses a food with elements of both cultures to take to his school's International Day.