

Ana Castillo



THE GUARDIANS
TASK THE IMPOSSIBLE
WAS A FATHER
MOTHER WHO RISES
THE INVITATION

FULLER AWARD FOR LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT



KODAK PLUS X PAN FILM

7 PM CDT THURSDAY, MARCH 24TH, 2022

AMERICAN WRITERS MUSEUM

180 N. MICHIGAN AVE.
CHICAGO, IL 60601



SO FAR FROM GONITA
SAPO GONITA
PEEL M Y LOVE
LIKE A MONTY
BOOK OF THE DEAD

Presented by

THE CHICAGO Literary
Hall of Fame

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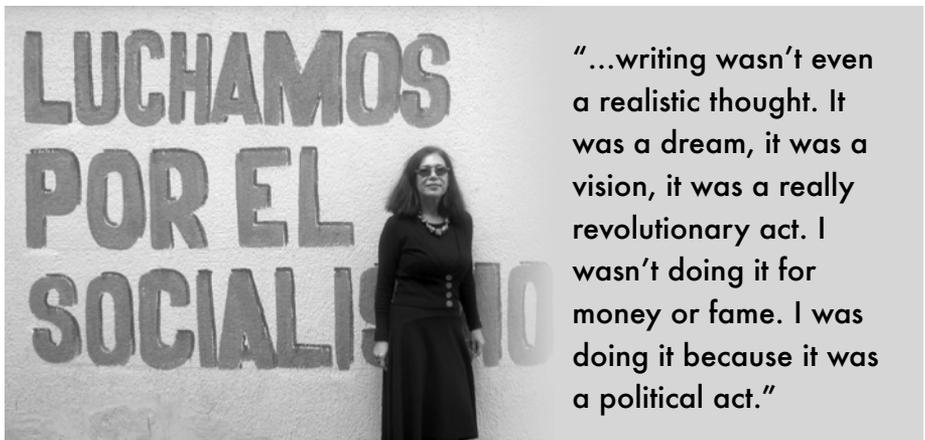
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TONIGHT'S PROGRAM

Carey Cranston	Welcome to the American Writers Museum
Donald G. Evans	About the Fuller Award
Mark Turcotte	Tonight's Emcee
Jane Hseu	<i>Ana Castillo and U.S. Women of Color Literary History</i>
Henry Godinez	Reading Ana's poem "Like the people of Guatemala, I want to be free of these memories"
Sandra Jackson-Opoku	<i>Ana Castillo: Architect of Xicanisma</i>
Arica Hilton	<i>Transcending Boundaries</i>
Liza Ann Acosta	<i>Queen of the Nile</i>
Donald G. Evans	Presenting the CLHOF's Fuller Award for lifetime achievement
Ana Castillo	Acceptance Speech
Christine Maul Rice & Ana Castillo	In Conversation



THE FULLER AWARD

By Valya Dudycz Lupescu

“The Fuller” is awarded by the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame to a Chicago author who has made an outstanding lifetime contribution to literature. The first eleven Fuller Awards were presented to Gene Wolfe (2012), Harry Mark Petrakis (2014), Haki Madhubuti (2015), Rosellen Brown (2016), Angela Jackson (2018), Stuart Dybek (2018), Sara Paretsky (2019), Sterling Plumpp (2019), Sandra Cisneros (2021), Reginald Gibbons (2021), and Luis Alberto Urrea (2021).

With the passing of Wolfe in 2019 and Petrakis in 2021, the CLHOF established a policy of elevating all Fuller Award winners to induction status, pending board approval. Wolfe gained induction at a ceremony last year, and Petrakis will officially enter the Hall on Thursday, May 19 at the Poetry Foundation.

The Fuller Legacy: A Quick Look at a Literary Pioneer

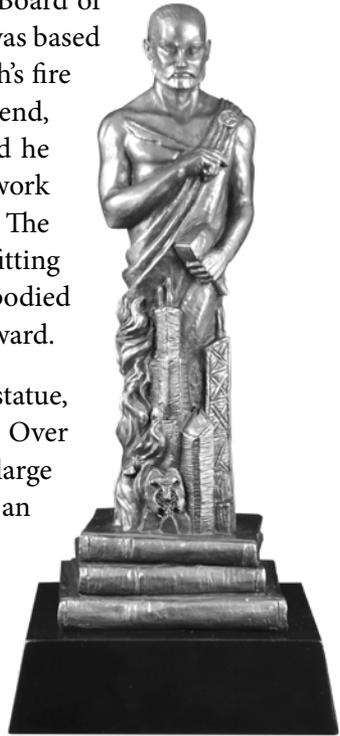
The award was inspired by the literary contribution of 2017 CLHOF inductee Henry Blake Fuller, one of Chicago’s earliest novelists and author of *The Cliff-Dwellers* and *With the Procession*. Both novels use the rapidly developing city of Chicago as their setting and are considered by many to be the earliest examples of American realism. Theodore Dreiser called *With the Procession* the first piece of American realism that he had encountered and considered it the best of the school, even during the days of his own prominence. There are additional layers of meaning to the word “fuller.” A fuller is also a tool used to form metal when it’s hot, an important part of building and a nice metaphor for Chicago, home to the “First Chicago School” of architecture that rose up from the ashes of the Chicago Fire of 1871. Between 1872 and 1879, more than ten thousand construction permits were issued. Chicago emerged as a resilient city that took risks and made bold decisions—using iron and steel to frame its buildings, giving rise to the world’s first skyscraper. The fuller was one such tool that made it happen, a symbol of possibility and perseverance. Inspired by the sleek



lines and Art Deco style of Chicago sculptor John Bradley Storrs, whose sculpture Ceres is on top of the Board of Trade building, the award statue for the Fuller was based on Hephaestus, the Greek god of the blacksmith's fire and patron of all craftsmen. According to legend, Hephaestus was the only god who worked, and he was honored for having taught mankind that work is noble and one should excel at his or her craft. The patron of artists and craftsmen, he seemed a fitting symbol to capture the spirit of excellence embodied by the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's Fuller Award.

Ron Swanson, Jr., who created the Fuller Award statue, is the founder and owner of R.E. Sculpture, Inc. Over the course of his career, Ron has worked on large sculptures, including public figures as part of an artist group at Friends of Community Public Art in Joliet. He has also worked on many original toy prototypes and various licensed character sculpts.

www.resculpture.net



"My writing has had a lot of push, all my life, from my desire to tell people, 'We are here. I exist. Not from your point of view or his point of view or their point of view. My point of view. Just me.' We've always been here."



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Otro Canto (1977): Chapbook poetry collection

The Invitation (1979): Chapbook poetry collection

Women Are Not Roses (1984): Poetry collection

The Mixquiahuala Letters (1986): Penned as a tribute to Julio Cortázar's *Hopscotch*, *The Mixquiahuala Letters* explores the relationship between two women- Teresa and Alicia. Castillo's debut novel is revolutionary and unique, now widely recognized as a pillar piece of feminist text.

My Father Was a Toltec (1988): Poetry collection

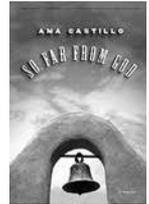
Sapogonia: An Anti-Romance in 3/8 Meter (1990): In the mythological nation of Sapogonia, those of mixed European/Native Central or South American heritage live and reside. Political and poignant, this novel examines the power struggles within gender, race, identity, and conflict.

So Far From God (1993): This multi-genre novel follows Sofi and her four daughters as they wrangle with the beauties and horrors of both life and death. Beautiful and heartbreaking, *So Far From God* masterfully dissects the themes of religion, spirituality, and resistance using different literary styles such as poetry, folk literature, and more.

Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma (1994): In this stunning collection of essays, Castillo navigates the hardships women - specifically those who are black and brown- face while working against male dominance.

Loverboys (1996): This collection explores the toils and troubles that come with love. Humorous, heartbreaking, and complex, *Loverboys* is stocked full of dynamic Latina protagonists and diverse stories of affection.

Peel My Love Like an Onion (1999): Carmen Santos is an ex-flamenco dancer, crippled by childhood polio. A seductive and fiercely independent woman, Carmen's independence is rocked by the reappearance of her condition and the disappearance of her lovers, which force her to rely on those around her. Vulnerable and complex, *Peel My Love Like an Onion* is a moving story with a fiery and realistic protagonist who you can't help but root for.



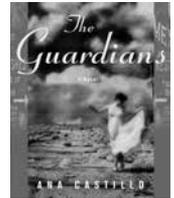
My Daughter, My Son, the Eagle, the Dove: An Aztec Chant (2000):

Inspired by Aztec chants, this collection of poetry shares the hopes and dreams that parents have for their children. Split into two sections - one dedicated for a daughter and the other for a son, Castillo combines Aztec elements with beautiful prose, creating a revolutionary collection.

I Ask the Impossible (2001): Poetry collection

Watercolor Women, Opaque Men: A Novel in Verse (2005): Following the life of a single working mother making her way through life as the daughter of migrant workers, Castillo writes of sexual identity, hardships, and culture. Using a strong voice, *Watercolor Women, Opaque Men: A Novel in Verse* paints a beautiful literary picture of the obstacles underrepresented populations face.

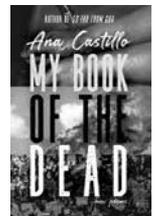
The Guardians (2007): The novel follows Tía Regina, who is raising her teenage nephew, Gabo. Gabo has entered the country illegally when Gabo's father, Rafa, goes missing in an attempt to flee from Mexico. As Regina and Gabo set out to find Rafa, danger and chaos ensue. Castillo masterfully uses landscape and imagery to explore family dynamics, perseverance, and faith.



Give It to Me (2014): Provocative and sensual, *Give It to Me* follows forty-three-year-old divorcee Palma as she rediscovers her sexuality and feminine identity. Through Palma's adventures as a sexually liberated woman, Castillo builds a dynamic story centered around female independence.

Black Dove: Mamá, Mi'jo, and Me (2016): Through her experiences as a minority, inner-city mother - who watches her son eventually be incarcerated- Castillo discusses the politics of gender, parenthood, racial identity, and more in this stunning nonfiction piece.

My Book of the Dead (2021): This contemporary poetry collection centered around current issues such as the environmental crisis, COVID-19, systemic racism, and more showcases her literary talent and prowess. Moving and poignant, *My Book of the Dead* dives into political and societal unrest.



AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS

1987: Before Columbus Foundation's American Book Award for *The Mixqui-ahuala Letters*

1987: Honored by Women's Foundation of San Francisco for "pioneering excellence in literature"

1989: California Arts Council Fellowship in Fiction

1990, 1995: National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship: Poetry

1991: Awarded New Mexico Arts Commission grant

1993: Carl Sandburg Literary Award in Fiction for *So Far From God*

1995: *So Far From God* awarded Mountains and Plains Booksellers Award

1995: National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship: Creative Writing (fiction)

1998: Sor Juana Achievement Award from the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum

2001-2006: Held the first Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz Endowed Chair at DePaul University

2006: Independent Publisher Book Awards Storyteller of the Year for *Watercolor Women, Opaque Men*

2006: Independent Publisher Book Awards Outstanding Book of the Year for *Watercolor Women, Opaque Men*

2012: Poet-in-Residence at Westminster College in Utah

2013: The American Studies Association Gloria Anzaldúa Prize

2014: Held the Lund-Gill Endowed Chair at Dominican University, River Forest, IL.

2015: *Give It to Me* received the Lambda Literary Award for bisexual fiction

2015: Given the Lifetime Achievement Award in literature for "literary contributions to the Latino/a community, and commitment to the betterment of our younger generations" by Latina 50 Plus

2016: *Black Dove: Mamá, Mi'jo, and Me* received the International Latino Book Award in the category of autobiography

2016: Awarded the Outstanding Latino/a Cultural Award in Literary Arts or Publications by the American Association of Hispanics in Higher Education

2017: *Black Dove: Mamá, Mi'jo, and Me* received the Lambda Literary Award for bisexual fiction

2018: PEN Oakland Reginald Lockett Lifetime Achievement Award

2018: MALCS (Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social) Xicana Critical Thought Leader Award

2020: Northeastern Illinois University Distinguished Alumna Award

Castillo also held the Martin Luther King, Jr. Distinguished Visiting Scholar post at MIT, among other positions.



"My writing style and finding the famous 'voice' a writer must discover for herself shifts from piece to piece, subject to subject. While getting a message out—a message from a member of society typically not heard and that is the very reason it must be written, documented—the creative in me must be challenged. Sometimes, the outcome may not be what I wanted or expected but at least, I wasn't bored, playing it safe or redundant in the process."

TONIGHT'S PARTICIPANTS



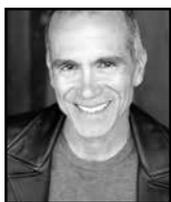
Liza Ann Acosta. Born in Brooklyn, raised in Ponce, Puerto Rico, this Boricua migrated to study Literature, History and Chemistry. Their wanderings led them to translate for Hemingway biographer Michael Reynolds the letters from a Cuban fisherman and pamphlets on bullfighting from the 1930s. Then they read a thousand and one plays to earn a PhD in Comparative Literature at The Pennsylvania State University with a dissertation that conjured *Teatro Luna* right in front of their eyes when they moved to Chicago. It was North Park University that allowed the wanderer to teach courses in all things CRT before it became a bad word and where they climbed the ladder of administration to rule and demand compliance. They published enough to be tenured and promoted, and spent over fifteen years writing for *Teatro Luna*. They also served as dramaturg for Urban Theater Company. They love writing about nuns, their family, and the peculiar.



Carey Cranston took on the role of President of the American Writers Museum in September of 2016. Prior to that Carey had been serving for 12 years as President of Fox College, a private career college in Chicago, and prior to that he was a Vice President at Hill & Knowlton, a global PR firm, where he led digital and web services with several major clients. He also served as Director of Technology and E-commerce at KemperLesnik Communications, a local PR firm in Chicago. Early in his career, Carey taught writing at UIC and DePaul and worked at both the DePaul University Library and at Kroch's & Brentano's Bookstore.



Donald G. Evans is the author of the novel *Good Money After Bad* and the short story collection *An Off-White Christmas*. He is the editor of *Cubbie Blues: 100 Years of Waiting Till Next Year* as well as *Wherever I'm At: An Anthology of Chicago Poetry* (June, 2022). He was named to the *Newcity Lit 50: Who Really Books in Chicago* Hall of Fame and won the Chicago Writing Association's Spirit Award for lifetime achievement in 2017. He founded the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame in 2010 and continues to serve as its executive director.



Henry Godinez is Resident Artistic Associate at Goodman Theatre, where as director of its Latino Theatre Festival he fostered the co-production of *Pedro Páramo* with Teatro Buendia of Cuba, and has directed works by Luis Valdez, Charise Castro Smith, José Rivera, Karen Zacarias, Regina Taylor, Luis Alfaro, Cheryl West and Ana Castillo. Other directing work includes The O'Neill Theatre Center, Yale Rep, Signature Theatre, Seattle Rep, Dallas Theatre Center, Chicago Shakespeare Theater, Portland Center Stage, The Children's Theatre Company, and Denver Center. Born in Havana, Cuba, Godinez is co-founder and former Artistic Director of Teatro Vista, and a professor at Northwestern University.



Arica Hilton is based in Chicago, where she is the director of Hilton|Asmus Contemporary, a gallery platform that she leverages to support internationally known artists and humanitarians who seek change for a better world. She is a multidisciplinary artist, poet and global advocate who travels worldwide to research and learn from scientists and experts in the fields of ocean environments, humane animal treatment and the well-being of women and children. Her life mission is to use her creativity to bring awareness to threats that endanger the delicate balance of all living things. Recently, Hilton was invited to be the inaugural, lead artist-in-residence for Immersive Van Gogh Chicago where she created a body of work inspired by Vincent Van Gogh with an eco-conscious, contemporary twist. In addition, she was honored as Greenheart International's 2019 Global Leader Honoree for her work as artist, curator and youth empowerment champion. Hilton has had numerous exhibitions in Europe, the Middle East and the United States.



Jane Hseu is Professor and Chair of English at Dominican University. She teaches classes in racial minority US literatures and writing creative nonfiction. Jane has published scholarly essays on Asian American and Latinx literature, and personal essays on funky Chinese American names and writing as recovery. She is currently working on a memoir about a family history of mental illness and is a proud core organizer for Chicago-based Banyan: Asian American Writers Collective.



Sandra Jackson-Opoku is author of the award-winning novel, *The River Where Blood is Born* and *Hot Johnny (and the Women Who Loved Him)*, an Essence Magazine Bestseller. She coedited the anthology, *Revise the Psalm: Work Celebrating the Writing of Gwendolyn Brooks*. Her fiction, nonfiction, poetry, and dramatic works are widely published and produced.

Sandra is the recipient of a Billops-Hatch Research Fellowship, the Alyce Hunley Whayne Visiting Researchers Travel Award, a Mississippi Department of Archives and History Family Genealogy Fellowship, and a Lifeline Theatre Adaptation Fellowship. Other awards and honors include a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship, the Coordinating Council of Literary Magazines/General Electric Award for Younger Writers, an American Library Association Black Caucus Award, a City of Chicago Esteemed Artist Award, and a Pushcart Prize nomination.



Christine Maul Rice's novel-in-stories *Swarm Theory* (University of Hell Press) was awarded an Independent Publisher Book Award, a National Indie Excellence Award, a Chicago Writers Association Book of the Year award, and was included in PANK's Best Books of 2016 and Powell's Books Midyear Roundup: The Best Books of 2016 So Far. Christine was included in *Newcity's Lit 50: Who Really Books in Chicago* 2019 and named One of 30 Writers to Watch by Chicago's Guild Complex. In 2010, she founded the literary nonprofit Hypertext Magazine & Studio.



Mark Turcotte (Turtle Mountain Ojibwe), author of *The Feathered Heart* and *Exploding Chippewas*, lives and works in Chicago, where he teaches in the English Department at DePaul University.

Interview: March 14, 2022

My Word Would Have Been Conviction: An Interview with Ana Castillo

by Christine Maul Rice

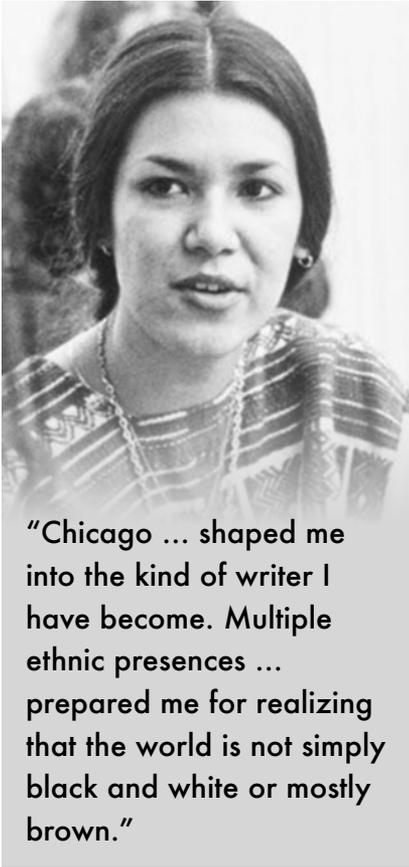
Like Chicago, Ana Castillo can't be easily summarized or neatly categorized. Her body of work—poetry, essays, short fiction, novels, plays, translations, visual art—is at once expansive, gritty, badass, sexy, gorgeous, disturbing, humorous, erotic, bold, dangerous, explosive, biting, lyrical. The writing never panders to the reader. It's meant to challenge. It's meant to look you in the eye and dare you to flinch. None of it is written to entice the little old lady, as they say, in Iowa.

Years ago, I boarded the Red Line at Addison on my way to a soul-crushing corporate job in the Loop. Picture a bitter Chicago winter morning, pre-dawn, platform lights flickering, the sky opalescent before sunrise. Boarding the nearly empty train at 6:30 a.m., I found a massacre of books, pages torn and scattered, covers detached. I knelt to gather the pages and mangled covers (I'm quite sure you would have done the same) and imagined what had happened. The owner, I reasoned, had been robbed, then pushed to the platform. The thieves, with the backpack, boarded the car, opened the backpack, and finding only books, angrily emptied the backpack of its contents, scattered and kicked them across the grimy floor.

If you're from Chicago, this isn't at all surprising. What was surprising were the books I rescued. Among them were Gabriel García Márquez's *One Hundred Years of Solitude*, the love poems of Sor Juana Inés de la Cruz, Sandra Cisneros' *The House on Mango Street*, and a slimmer book, one not easily splayed or ripped, Ana Castillo's *The Mixquiahuala Letters*.

Thus, my introduction to Ana Castillo.

Fast forward to 2019 when Ana graciously offered three poems to *Hypertext Review* and traveled to Chicago to help us kick off our first fundraiser (the whole thing so surreal I tried not to fawn). When we met, I wasn't sure if I should tell her how I came to know her work. What would I say? I rescued your book, someone else's property, from the floor of a Red Line train?



“Chicago ... shaped me into the kind of writer I have become. Multiple ethnic presences ... prepared me for realizing that the world is not simply black and white or mostly brown.”

Ana attended Chicago Public Schools. As a young person, she was a voracious reader and talented visual artist (recent pen and ink drawings can be found in *My Book of the Dead*). Once in high school at Jones Commercial, she fell in love with literature but, not seeing herself reflected in, for example, Edna St. Vincent Millay’s sonnets, she began writing poetry and short stories, even started a newspaper.

When we met in person, I asked, “How does a girl from Jones Commercial make a life in literature?”

“I had my own inner vision,” Ana began. “It didn’t surprise me. For me to get to where I did, and doing what I did, and the time I was doing it, it was a bigger deal. Now, there are role models. Avenues. A different world. Back then, Chicanas were making our own tracks in the ground.”

In 2023, a major house will publish a new collection of Ana’s short stories and next year will mark 46 years since her first chapbook of poetry, *Otro Canto*, was published in 1977. Ana has published consistently, in one form or another, since then.

“The only way I can write,” Ana said, “is to give voice to that which I know, to that which is underrepresented.”

How wonderful that she forged ahead, that the writing swept her away. How fortunate for us that her singular voice on the page carved tracks for countless writers, that her mentorship, activism, and grace continue to illuminate unknowable paths for us to follow.

Over the past few months, Ana and I had a chance to catch up. The following reflects those conversations.

Can you tell me, again, that story about your mother? The one about her speaking only Spanish to you?

Although my older siblings were born in Laredo, Texas, I was born in Chicago. Because of this or something else, I'll never know, my mother was uncompromising with me on certain things. For example, she only spoke to me in Spanish. My entire life, if I said something in English, she would make me repeat it in Spanish. Because of this, I naturally assumed that my mother didn't understand English.

When I was around thirty, a good friend who lived in Chicago called. "Ana," she said, "I thought your mother didn't speak English, but I saw her today registering voters—and speaking English."

I called my mother and repeated, in English, what my friend told me. My mother hesitated for only a moment before responding, in Spanish, that she didn't understand me. She then made me repeat the entire story in Spanish.

That story beautifully illustrates the relationship you and your mother shared and I love how you laugh when you tell it.

And, when you were 40, your mother gave you her mother's diary, yes?

Powerful to see that. She gave it to me when I was an established writer. It answered the question: Where the heck did I get this from? My grandmother liked to read, had a very nice life. If they had not been repatriated, who knows what that side of the family would have established. You've got to grab onto what you can, right?

In your work, you often use dialect—certain rhythms and tones and spellings. In person, when I've heard you in front of a group or at readings, I don't detect a dialect. At certain times, though, during our conversations, you've slipped into a Chicago dialect.

It's taken a lot of practice for me to lose that accent. When I was teaching in California, there were two CIA agents in my department, and that scared every accent out of me. It's really hard, if speaking in public. When I'm in Mexico, I speak fluent Spanish. Obviously, I'm not from Mexico. Consequently, when I'm traveling, no one knows where I'm from.

What other Chicago-isms do you use?

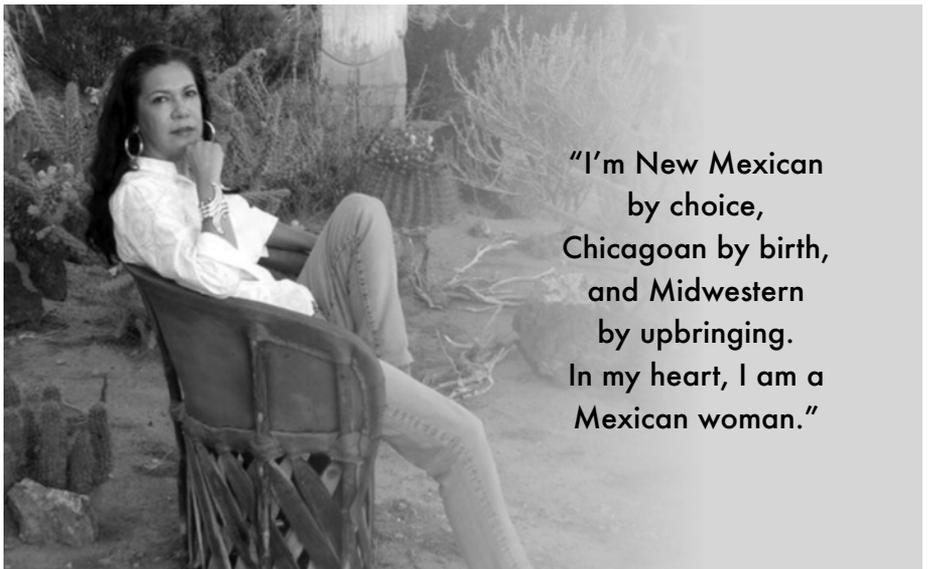
My dad was born and raised in south Bridgeport and I went to the same grammar school as him. Eventually, my parents and I moved to the North Side. My dad died in his mid-fifties, and, remembering him, these great Chicago wisdoms come to mind, wisdoms that are so handy to live by. So simple. When people are really getting on my nerves, whether colleagues or workers on my house, I think of his advice: “Eh, forget about it. Don’t listen to those bimbos.”

Bimbo. That’s so Chicago.

You now live in New Mexico. How is the rhythm of the desert different from living in Chicago? The quality of light? Sounds?

Wow, best question. The quality of light is the biggest difference. Where I live now, the place I’d come to when I was still teaching in Chicago and then in Boston, the light is startling with no obstruction from anywhere; from sunrise to sunset there is light around me. Like the Expressionists, I’ve studied the light on certain objects, the tree outside my bedroom [in] winter, a sage bush, or the Franklin Mountain Range at different times of day.

I see almost no humans, hear no mechanical sounds. I hear birds, dogs, mares...a mosquito at my ear. Complete and total silence at night—later, owls, dogs, or in the distance, occasionally, coyotes.



**“I’m New Mexican
by choice,
Chicagoan by birth,
and Midwestern
by upbringing.
In my heart, I am a
Mexican woman.”**

How has living in different locales influenced your writing? How has it influenced your activism?

I'm not sure what made me move around. I've often done so on my own and with no job prospects waiting. I've bought properties that way. The price I've paid for taking these risks is loneliness and the constant worry about how to pay my bills. But I don't regret any of it. It brought much to my writing and to my personal growth.

Knowing the varying cultures in the United States and places I've stayed for periods of time and visited, I learned firsthand to appreciate this world and planet. However, where I call home has now been my home for twenty years. I'm New Mexican by choice, Chicagoan by birth, and Midwestern by upbringing. In my heart, I am a Mexican woman. Ethnically, at face value, wherever I go—from growing up in Chicago or as a young writer walking about in Paris—dominant society perceives me as mostly indigenous, foreign, *Other*. I embrace all of it. I write from that privileged perspective to respond. I'm also viewed as feminine, a woman, this is important. And yes, in the eyes of many, 'Other,' a brown woman without much by way of social status. As Whitman wrote so beautifully, "I contain multitudes." There are no contradictions there.

"People have always thought that feminism is politics or an ideology, and it really isn't. It really is about focusing in on women's identities and rights and their places in the world."

Photography by Marina Guit erre
NYC, 1976

You mentioned loneliness, and it made me think of this quote by Maya Angelou: "Music was my refuge. I could crawl into the space between the notes and curl my back to loneliness."

You weave various musical artists into your writing. One artist, for example, is the fabulous Celia Cruz. Does music bring you solace? Inspiration? Both?

Yes, indeed. Both my parents loved music, popular music. My father played percussion. His favorite music was jazz, all Latin music and mambo. My mother enjoyed that, too, but also favored all kinds of popular Latin and Mexican music. I grew up hearing Stan Getz at home and Javier Sol s. Music accompanied me through my novels. You see my nod to some in the pages. I tried learning piano but wasn't disciplined enough, I suppose.

Do you miss Chicago?

I've not stayed away long. I accepted an endowed chair in 2014 at Dominican University so as to spend extended time there. I frequently visit. I consider it my hometown and am very proud of the City of Big Shoulders. My parents worked in factories there. My son and grandchild make their home there. It's home. Obviously I don't miss the freezing weather but as for the rest, I value it, the variety of people, cultures, creativity, energy. It's just the right pace for me. My father was such a South Side Chicagoan—my speech still reflects the influence. My mother and her sister, who also made her life there, were very proud of the city. Once, my *tía* Flora, who was born in Mexico City, told me she found her Paris in Chicago.

That's beautiful. Chicago really shows off in spring. It's my favorite season.

You are an activist. In your poetry, nonfiction, and fiction, you bear witness to influential events of the later part of this century including but not limited to environmental terrorism, climate change, the criminal mistreatment of immigrants, policing, incarceration, mass shootings, vigilantism, civil rights, death by firearms, among many other issues.

You also write about wholly personal issues including love, sex, joy, and devastating loss.

You are masterful at weaving these issues into relatable, human narratives. For example, in the poem "Detention" (My Book of the Dead, University of New Mexico Press, 2021) you give voice to a young person crossing the border, the horrors of being caught, detained, and eventually adopted by a white family. This piece is heartbreaking. It also exposes the reader to the narrator's humanity in the face of brutal reality.

How has the way you process the world—and its inequities—changed over the years?

Thank you for your comments. My first response has to do with initially choosing poetry to use for political actions. A very early poem, "Napa, California" (*Otro Canto*, 1977) might be seen as a precursor of the recent poem you refer to, "Detention." Both poems address the migrant's inability to escape their circumstances. As you may know, I'm a self-taught writer and have developed my craft through practice. However, I don't see in either poem a great change in perspective.

I do fervently live and believe in social justice, equity for all, especially the poor and working class, women, etc. I share the concern for our planet with

activists regarding the environmental justice movement.

From a very early age I became interested in the world outside our flat on the Near West Side of Chicago. The *Chicago Sun-Times* was delivered, and we read it every day. My father read it from front page to back. He'd often remark on stories that caught his eye. One day he said to me, "They're burning down the Amazon." I might have been twelve or thirteen years old.



"Poverty has its advantages. When you're that poor what would you have that anyone would want? Except your peace of mind. Your dignity. Your heart. The important things." from *Peel My Love Like an Onion*

By the time I was 24, I had learned Portuguese at the University of Chicago and traveled to Brazil on my own. That was in 1979-80, when that country was under a military dictatorship.

As an adult, my curiosity about the world, planet, and its inhabitants hasn't waned, and my travels have taken me to places my father could only read about in the *Chicago Sun-Times*—whether it was the pyramids in Mexico or Egypt, the Art Institute of Chicago, or the Louvre, encouraging budding feminists in Kazakhstan or Peru, working with academics in Germany and Paris, promoting NGOs in Jordan or Ecuador.

I process the world as an adult mostly from first-hand experience. I once gave a reading—not that long ago—in a small, agricultural town in the Southwest. The first question (from a young man) I received was, "How can you relate to the women here?" I explained my humble roots and family background. I also explained how my older siblings, as children, worked summers picking tomatoes in Indiana. My parents worked in factories in Chicago until manufacturing moved to Southeast Asia where they could pay workers substantially less, no unions, no safety regulations, etc. I also told him that my father, who was an unskilled laborer, died unemployed in his mid-fifties.

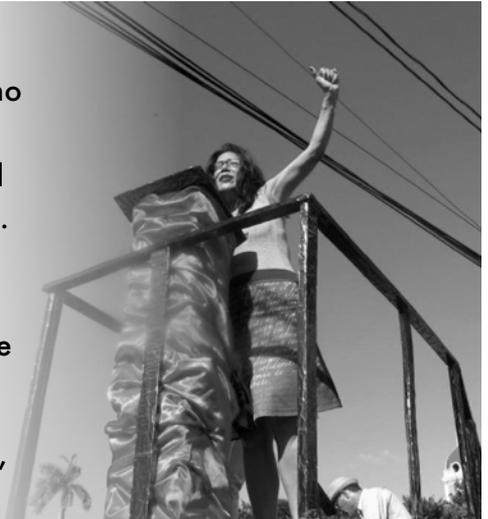
What activists or movements influenced you? And in what ways?

In high school, it was local politics, the Civil Rights Movement, and the growing Latino and Chicano Movements. As a college student it was all the youth movements of the era including anti-war (Viet Nam), student movements, women's movement, UFW, movements for justice in Latin America, you name it. As soon as I finished with my bachelor's degree, I headed for California—considered headquarters for the Chicano Movement and UFW. A few years later, back in Chicago, disillusioned by the male dominance and treatment of women by men in socialist movements, I turned my attention to feminism. I didn't stop my belief in social justice, I began to focus on seeing it from women's perspectives. There may be much more that I could see about the long journey of developing one's consciousness.

Like many of my generation, I looked up to so many individuals, activists in the field, intellectuals, César Chavez, Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, James Baldwin, Angela Davis—mind you, these were all strong and thriving individuals when I was coming up. I learned a lot from writers and those who preceded me. Their books were my teachers. In 1977 or '78, I gave a sociology class at a community college in Chicago and used Paulo Freire's essential book. My friends in Chicago, California, and New York (where I also started traveling to, on my own, to seek out connections with Latino poets) were all my teachers, loves, mentees, and sometimes rivals.

It's impossible to quantify all their influences.

"I always give credit to those times. Civil Rights and the Latino Movement and the Chicano Movement from California...all those things were reaching me. I am the kind of person, I was very curious about the world. For me, it was important. Those times were saying that people of color didn't have to accept this mold they were born into."



There are a number of elegies in *My Book of the Dead*. One is based on the life of H.G. Carrillo and another is based on your relationship with Francisco X. Alarcón. Did the writing of these, in any way, help you deal with the unimaginable death and sadness wrought by Covid?

We're still living through these times. A week doesn't go by without hearing of a death. The book was in when Sister Dianna Ortiz, whom I also wrote about, passed from cancer. And there are many others. I am of a generation that is experiencing death of my mentors, peers and those from Covid. My hope and intention is not to become numb by the frequency of death.

Carrillo and Alarcón had, at certain points in my life, been personal friends. Their deaths touched me personally and led to the poems. Although, Carrillo died as a result of Covid. The pandemic and contracting the virus remains a lived and survivors' experience.

Not finding yourself represented by middle- to upper-class feminists, you coined the term *Xicanisma*. Did this naming, this ownership, impact the way you approached the belief in social, economic, and political equality for women?

Xicanisma. The distinction between using the *Ch* of the Chicano Movement and an *X* was, I think, significant. The *X* signifies the indigenous connection, although I know the Chicano Movement was very connected to and loyal to our indigenous history. Certainly, as a Chicana, I wasn't the first feminist to note the difference between poor and working-class women and the feminists who came out of certain class privilege, usually white. I will add that this was true in Mexico and elsewhere.

Labels are often signifiers. It's important to know how you're being labeled, but the most important is the one you give yourself.

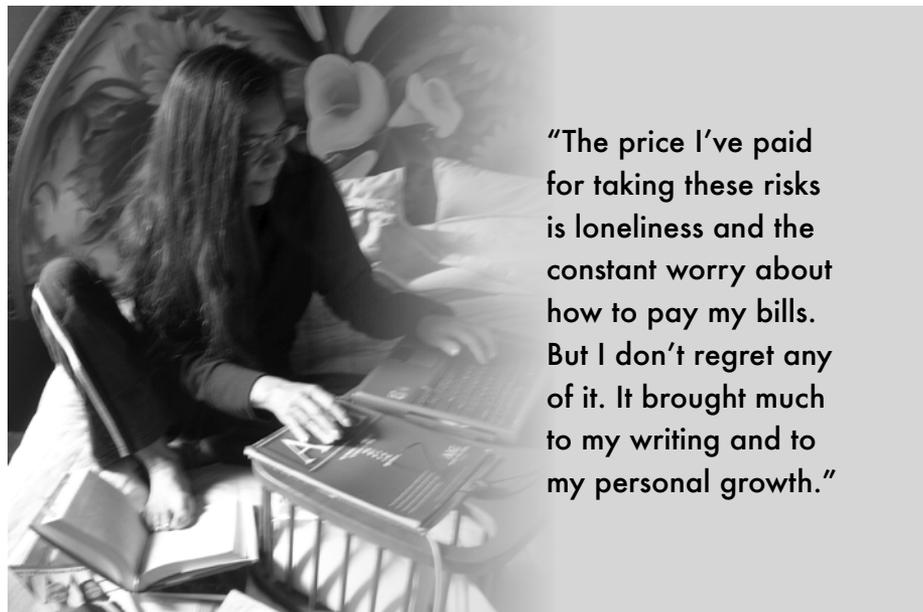
In my collection of essays, *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*, I attempted to describe, address, give depth and acknowledgement to women who, for so long, were marginalized. The collection was written long before the internet and Google. On my own, I searched libraries and bookstores throughout the country and around the world to find connections. I wrote the essay collection without funds and with little support, just my own drive. How do you prove what you've always known, experienced, felt in your gut? With scant historical documentation, I had no road map. At the time I wrote *Massacre of the Dreamers: Essays on Xicanisma*, it was an ambitious project and

a sincere attempt to include the Chicana experience in the mostly white-focused feminist ideology. It was especially difficult because I was looking at large groups of people over long periods of time, in two nations and beyond, and, most significantly, much of the history I wrote about was in the process of being erased or distorted.

I was invited to submit my manuscript as a formal dissertation to the University of Bremen in Germany. There were no mentors there, no residency, not so much as a plane ticket to go defend it. However, defend it I did and was conferred the doctorate in American Studies.

You've written that, as a child, you often felt isolated. Your parents, who worked two and sometimes three jobs to make ends meet, often didn't have energy to indulge or even talk to you. Once you began to read, however, your world transformed. You devoured books. One day, your father brought home a Bible from the bindery where he worked and you were wholly taken by the spectacles of war, displacement, death, and destruction.

Yes, I was fascinated by that wonderful Bible my father brought home. It was the St. James version (we were Catholic). It taught me a great deal about patriarchy and fiction (fast forward, my novel, *So Far From God*). But even in the Bible, where were the Mexicans? (Mixture of indigenous and Spanish-Catholic? The 'New World'?)



"The price I've paid for taking these risks is loneliness and the constant worry about how to pay my bills. But I don't regret any of it. It brought much to my writing and to my personal growth."

You didn't see yourself—a young Chicana—represented in the books you read.

When you started attending Jones Commercial in Chicago, an all-girls secretarial school, you started a radical newspaper. How did this newspaper come to be, and what issues did you write about and publish? As a young woman hell-bent on changing the world, how did it feel to have that power—to create something people would read?

In terms of early 'technology' the Xerox machine was it in my youth. Going from the mimeograph machine to pressing a button.... At Jones we were required to work half-time at an office job. As a nobody, part-time girl clerk, I had access to the Xerox. I am indebted to that Xerox for being able to get my work out even years later. My primary creative interest was not journalism but art. So I was the illustrator of my underground paper, too. It was distributed by me at my school, but who knows if I gave it to any friends outside the school?

I didn't exactly shake things up around me with my stapled Xeroxed publication. I was given the title 'inteligente,' by the Spanish Club (all Mexican girls). Mostly, it showed my early ambitions to communicate what I was learning and fervently believing about the world. It was an activity inherent in my personality and character, which led me to live the life I've had.

Today, on social media, we see a lot about women's ways to self-empower, to remind ourselves of 'que chingonas' we are, to give ourselves 'permission' to heal or what's 'ok' to feel or do what we must do. Nearly a half century ago, I heard distant calls: the Civil Rights Movement, Women's Movement, Chicano Movement. In my world as a teenager studying basic classes and working an office job as the lowest on the totem pole (the role pre-assigned to me as a Mexican American woman), it made sense to me to strive to break the horrific, unjust mold about my being.

How could I be so curious about the world, want to experience so much, learn languages, love art I'd not yet seen, music I'd not yet heard, and be told my life was to take a menial job, marry, bear children, be a good, obedient daughter, wife and mother, and die? (Simone de Beauvoir?)

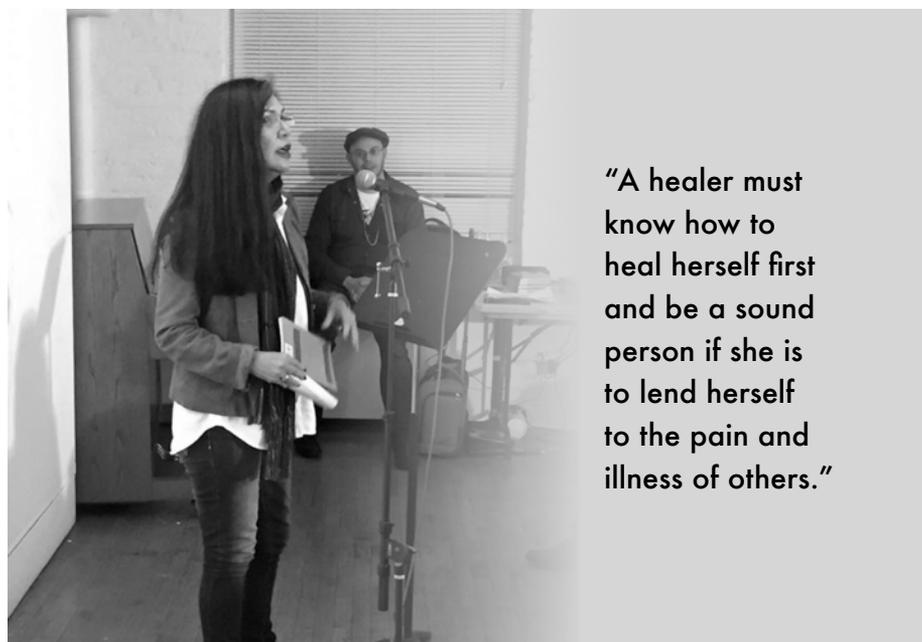
It may be a matter of language. Along the road, I didn't see it as 'empowering' myself, or giving myself 'permission.' My word would have been conviction.

Latinas, like African Americans had by the time I was coming up, needed women to speak up and speak out, too. There was no guarantee or even indication that I would be that woman or one among them. I only knew that it had to be and I was going to give it my all. Conviction regarding social justice led me there.

You founded the literary zine *La Tolteca*. How has working with other writers influenced your own work?

I have two careers, professionally speaking. One has been, blessedly, as a writer and the other as a professor. In both cases, I've always worked with other writers. My zine was an outcome of the public writing workshops I gave from 2009 to 2019. I felt privileged and happy to encourage aspiring writers and lucky to have the contributions of many established writers.

During those years, I went through personal crises, which affected my own productivity and pursuing publications. I was always happy for the writers pursuing their projects and encouraged them in any way possible. I did write and publish during those years. Throughout my life, I've mostly kept my writing to myself. If a book was on contract with the publisher, my editor there might be the first to see it. Many times, I had work that only I've seen. Case in point, my most recent collection of poems, *My Book of the Dead*.



“A healer must know how to heal herself first and be a sound person if she is to lend herself to the pain and illness of others.”

Your grandmother was a curandera (and you have some gifts too, yes?). You've written a number of essays about your grandmother and other healers, of mothers of all stripes and abilities, and explain the significance of the mother of all mothers, the Virgin of Guadalupe, to Chicanas, Mexican women and, especially, to the curandera.

You edited the essay collection, *Goddess of America*. In your essay in that collection, "Extraordinarily Woman," you wrote:

But she was a curandera—loosely translated, a medicine woman—and proceeded to negotiate with Maria Guadalupe with whom, I seem to recall, she was on a first-name basis. I was the youngest of all her many grandchildren and great-grandchildren and, as she also told me later, when I recovered, I was the very nectar of sugar cane in her heart, her *consentida*, and she was not about to let me go.

Later, in that same essay, you write:

God the Father was absent, though like the men in my family, who were often shadowy and silent, He nevertheless was the ultimate authority. He watched us with a close and critical omnipotent eye and mostly wielded His power by instilling fear. Our Mother, on the other hand, watched over her children without condemning our acts. Our mother simply loved us.

You also write exquisitely about your joy and challenges as the single mother of an only child.

This focus, on the mother as healer, as one who provides unconditional love, has seen you through the mystifying incarceration of your son. How has your background and experience with the all-knowing and suffering mother/caretaker/healer guided you through your own hardships as a caretaker and mother?

With the exception of one spectacular and near-tragic moment, my only child, an adult man now, did end up imprisoned for two years. They were a long two years for me as a mother, mostly because of the mystification of the facts. With the exception of being picked up by police for doing graffiti as a teen, he'd never been in trouble with the law before and hasn't been since.

The last figure I'd have wanted to portray was the all-suffering mother. But suffer, I did. Living in the world that continues to designate archetype roles to women, I did. You don't have to be a mother, wife to a man, obedient daughter, devout *religiosa*, sex worker, or mistress (side chick) to exemplify these roles. They show up within the confines of patriarchal designations for the

feminine figure. You think you are defying these “signs,” but the terms remain. You’re an independent woman, living on your own terms, but much of your self-worth is dependent on your looks. Men gain cache with age. This hasn’t been the case with women, regardless of our accomplishments. I do feel this is all somewhat changing for various reasons now.

Like many women raised in (although later conflicted by the religion), I kept a rosary nearby during my son’s ordeal. I participated in the Way of the Cross Procession in northern New Mexico and attended several indigenous ceremonies in the Pueblo reservations in NM. I let myself weep. I sat alone once in a Catholic Church in an indigenous reservation, after attending an all-male Native ceremony and appealed to all who have gone through the pain and agony of oppression, genocide, and mass devastation for strength.

But I am also the woman who reads and writes and connects with the world using other methods. I sent books to my son, we read and talked about them. We emailed each other. A bit of our correspondence appears in the memoir essay collection *Black Dove*. He has an essay in the book too, as evidence of how as a writer and professor, I used those tools to bring him back to society.

I worked on *La Tolteca Zine* and gave public writing workshops and spoke about Chicano/Chicana writing to mostly Chicano/Chicana audiences that know of whence I speak and affirmed their experiences and perceptions as they did mine.

I lit candles and burned incense at home and at churches and temples everywhere I traveled.



“For me to get to where I did, and doing what I did, and the time I was doing it, it was a bigger deal. Now, there are role models. Avenues. A different world. Back then, Chicanas were making our own tracks in the ground.”

During that time, I was single and without immediate family support and greatly appreciated whatever friend or friends stepped up. These are times when you must know yourself and rely on your convictions. I've always been grateful to anyone who has shown compassion at any juncture in my life and I'm deeply grateful to the few who showed themselves in how and as much as they could. A healer must know how to heal herself first and be a sound person if she is to lend herself to the pain and illness of others. My aim throughout the ordeal was to stay firm, acknowledge my pain and move through it.

It was particularly difficult because of the patriarchal emphasis on blaming 'mother' for offsprings' failings, to not blame myself, too. It was a concerted, conscious process, but I moved through it, too. This readiness to blame Mother didn't come at me in the abstract but from actual people in our lives.

In the early 1990s, when Sapogonia was published, you were dubbed one of "America's leading Chicana writers." How has the publishing industry changed (or not) over the years?

The qualification continues. It's a notable distinction, therefore, from more than a century ago when the discussion was 'woman writer' versus 'writer.'

Because Chicanas proved ourselves not just to be readers, but also to have the numbers in terms of consumers of books, was a game changer in the 1980s.

Chicanas are not the only exotic flavor but, more and more, the publishing industry is opening to all kinds of perspectives from marginalized sectors. With regards to how the publishing industry has changed, "ghost writing" in my view, has gone to top of the list, as far as publishing being a financially successful endeavor. Among *NYT*'s best sellers in recent years, we have a bombardment of nonfiction, biographical works from the likes of Trump to TV reality stars. Like the culinary arts, fashion and modeling, writing as a profession has proliferated in recent decades. You get a degree or certificate or don't and just jump in there on Instagram or TV and there you are, swimming upstream.

At the end of the day, publishing is an industry and ruled by what sells.

In your novel, Sapogonia, as well as in a number of essays in Black Dove and other writing, you take on the issue of mixed blood—of not being one or the other, not Mexican enough and not American enough. Can you talk about that tension—of not belonging—and why the exploration of it fuels your work?

At a result of European invasion, indigenous people experienced near genocide, slavery, servitude and to this day, second-class citizenship. The importation of slaves from Africa is an added legacy to all of the Americas and the Caribbean that is fraught with continued pain. This all fuels my work because a day of my life hasn't existed where I don't experience the tension between the dominant society I live in and the blood I inherited.

There might have been a deviating factor. We return to class and status. All things ethnic being equal, had I been born to a middle-, upper-class, or elite family, had I also been born in Mexico where my surname, mother's language, my color and ethnicity were accepted, it would have made a difference. I'd have felt and been less marginalized than in the U.S.

By the time my parents began to imagine a middle-class life for themselves (in Chicago), I was a young adult on my own. The mold had been formed. The men I married all came from working-class families. My priorities, heart, efforts were always directed to addressing 'the masses.'

These are factors that have influenced my work. My project has been to make beings like myself less invisible, validated, represented on all levels, and empowered.

I'm always fascinated by how a writer orders a book of poems (or short stories). You began writing My Book of the Dead in 2012, is that right? How did these poems come to you? In order? Or did you rearrange them before publication? And, if you rearranged them, did that cause you to edit any of the poems to fit the overall collection?

Yes, I decided to start a poetry collection in 2012. The poems came to me over time and experience in those years, whether through reading or lived experience or both. No, they're not in 'order' but do cover the period of time: 2012-2020.

In terms of ordering, it has always been organic and ever-changing. Some poems ultimately don't make the final cut. (Craft-wise, the piece isn't working.) I arranged all the poems before submission.

One day, while staying in my small apartment in New York, I laid out the hard copies on the bed and dresser. (Old school, how I've always organized my poems but usually on the floor. In NYC, there was little floor-space.) I decided to organize them into three parts—where thematically they might make sense, a loose beginning, middle and end, if you will. This is around 2019. In 2020, I returned to New Mexico, and what is submitted is pretty much what you see in the book. In the final cut, I chose to eliminate one piece, again, because I wasn't sure of its success. It wasn't a poem in any sense but more of a diagram addressing migration.

While you take on profoundly serious subjects, your writing is often humorous. In "Two Men and Me," bad boys Charles Bukowski and Jose Bolaño join you at a café.

Years ago, I was sitting in the front row somewhere about to give a reading from my novel, *So Far From God*. Someone behind me was laughing out loud. I turned around, it was a white woman reading *So Far From God*. "It's very funny," she said. "Did you know it was funny?"

"I hope so," I said.

Aside from limerick or rhyming verses, it's not easy to be funny in poetry. Anyone who knows me for ten minutes, however, knows I appreciate humor. Wit is a cup of liquid gold in any setting. But when you are a writer who takes on grave, currently relevant subjects, a poet who feels social crises or the urgency to address environmental issues, we understand the need for a moment of levity. I imagine, men like Bukowski, Bolaño, Neruda, Nicanor Parra and his anti-poems would have been a blast to go out carousing with on a given night. If I didn't embrace many woman poets in my young adult years, it was because their books didn't reach us in the U.S. that often.

Nevertheless, whether conscious-driven performers like Violetta Parra or Mercedes Sosa were passionate lovers, mothers, they gave everything of themselves for their people and for their art. These, like Bolaño and Bukowski, I never met but I know they had to have had *joie de vivre*. They danced with abandon, drank, and sang aloud. You have to let go now and then or you die of sadness, and one of those two women finally did take her own life.

You're embracing silver hair. Tell me about this journey.

Again, the question of the weight on women's attractiveness, appeal to the public in reference to her worth and relevance. For many years now, women,

regardless of ethnicity but women whose natural hair color was dark, have been encouraged by society to lighten their hair as they grow older. (The assumption is it'll take away from their visibly aging faces.) Suddenly you are seeing everywhere women who were never auburn haired or blond now using that color in middle age. I took another path, I colored my hair dark brown—my original color—but kept the roots white.

During the pandemic many women, middle aged and older, couldn't get to the salons. It's a whole beauty movement now, "grondré," hair that is two shades, the grey or silver growing out and the lower half dark. I didn't 'join' the movement, *per se*, but made the decision not to color it anymore on my own, as I was also letting my hair grown long again. There's much more pressure on women than on men on denying our aging.

Greying hair, weight, crow's feet, rooster neck, the multi-billion-dollar beauty industry is such because of our fear of aging and subsequent self-loathing, as with being dark-skinned. How many dark-skinned readers will hate me for saying this? I'm not self-loathing either, but I question 'blond hair'. There's a movement to break out of all this, plus-size models addressing the increased size of the average woman in the U.S. It's a process, but Capitalism, Imperialist-Corporatism, always adjusts and accommodates trends.

We may start not dying our hair—not going to salons or buying products to do it at home—but rest assured, the hair industry is paying attention and is already profiting from this new fashion trend in new ways.

Is it true that, in the desert, you own horses?

I have mares. Once I was living on the homestead I've had now for twenty years, I thought it made sense. Decades ago now, I learned to ride in the desert here.

A number of poems in My Book of the Dead deal with earth's destruction. One of my favorite poems in the collection is "By the End of the Twenty-First Century When." This poem is playful in a super terrifying way. You face the senseless destruction of our home head-on, but it's also playful. How did this poem evolve?

Thank you, Chris.

The poem in reference didn't have a long evolution. The planet was enduring the Trump era. Buddhists remind us that we begin dying at birth. Dystopian

governments aside, we are dying every day. One method as a writer to deal with a hard subject is to bring some levity and inject humor, irony, or fantasy. I think this poem has some of all of that.

As to its evolution, I know some people sometimes don't like to hear how something just flows stream of consciousness or comes from an actual dream. This poem reminds me of some of my pen drawings. Drawing consumed me during part of the Trump administration. I did them without preliminary planning. I've drawn hybrid animals, whimsical scenes, from mermaids to buffalo, goddesses to spiders. My subconscious reveals what's on my mind, my fears, longings, grief, and desires. It must be from the same place where such a poem comes.



“When you're writing poetry, it's like working with gold, you can't waste anything. You have to be very economical with each word you're going to select. But when you're writing fiction, you can just go on and on; you can be more playful.”

Take a Left at Taylor Street

by Donald G. Evans

In English, she was “Anita,” in Spanish “Annie.” It wasn’t until she turned 18 that she declared, “I’m Ana now.”

Taylor Street was the road to adulthood for Ana Castillo, who eventually would gain respect, admiration, and even celebrity as a giant in American letters.

Ana spent her first ten years at 1039 S. Newberry Avenue, a second-floor back apartment in a rickety frame building. Her middle-class Mexican landlords lived in front, an old hoarder man downstairs. The upstairs, too ragged to rent, remained vacant. Newberry Avenue is just a few blocks west of Halsted Street; Ana’s home was about equidistant between Taylor Street (1000) to the north and Roosevelt Road (1200) to the south, two blocks either way. This is the apartment in which Ana’s father, Ray, had lived his entire life and where her mother and step-siblings came when they moved here from Laredo, Texas.

Ana entered the flat via a gangway. The apartment building shared an alley with El Milagro Tortillas, where Blue Island Avenue cuts northeast across the neighborhood, and practically bumped up against the Maxwell Street market. From 1953-63, the years Ana lived with her parents, paternal grandmother, and two older siblings on Newberry, Italians dominated Taylor Street (thus: Little Italy). But it was much more diverse than legend has it. People still spoke Italian in the cheese and macaroni stores and bakeries lining Taylor Street, but more and more they also spoke Spanish.

Ana’s neighborhood included Latino families, like her own, as well as Jewish families and Black families. She walked to Goodrich Elementary School and St. Francis of Assisi’s, which was right on Newberry Ave., on the south side of Roosevelt Road. It was one of the first Chicago churches that hosted a Mexican parish. Goodrich, from which her father had graduated, had a diverse faculty and student body, way before such representation was considered desirable. Ana’s best friend since kindergarten, Fabiola López, lived with her extended family directly across the street. They were from Ecuador, and Ana frequently visited with them in their “playroom,” listening as they all practiced music lessons. “This was the whole Chicago,” Ana remembers.

Ana's first love as a grade school student was the visual arts. Ana used envelopes from bills or junk mail as her canvasses, or sometimes drew on butcher store paper after her family had eaten the meat. "I would draw around the blood stains," Ana says. "My form of entertainment was to draw."

Ana's mother worked on assembly lines, including a decade at the Zenith Radio Corporation's West Dickens plant. Somehow, Raquel squirreled away a crudely-glued orange and yellow notepad on which workers like herself were to record their quotas. She presented it to her daughter. It was on that that Ana began to write. In the spring of 1963, Ana's paternal grandmother, with whom she was extremely close, passed away after a brief hospitalization. Ana attended the wake and funeral, but as a child she was not gifted a platform to mourn or express her thoughts about this traumatic event. "That's when I started writing something," Ana says. "I was writing my feelings. Whatever it was I was writing, I don't know what caused me to share it with the kids at Goodrich at recess."

Share, though, she did. The kids started requesting that Ana write more. They pleaded, "I want one of those," and "write one for me."

"Those were my first poetry commissions," Ana jokes. "That's what I was doing: writing poetry. I would write very comfortably, very naturally. I saw myself as an artist. Over the next few years, I would handwrite my own stories and illustrate them."

Ana frequented the Maxwell Street market, which served as her family's de facto shopping center. Raquel bought Ana's dresses on layaway at Terry's Department Store. Ray ordered his suits at Smoky Joe's. After church, Ana would get a hot dog or Polish sausage, listen to blues, maybe flirt with boys out in the chaotic open-air bizarre.

"Chicago to [my tia Flora] was idyllic. It became her 'Paris,' she came to say as the years passed—with its pristine Grant Park and colorful Buckingham Fountain, Magnificent Mile (where a woman with little means could still window shop even if she couldn't go in to buy), its lively summer street fairs and snowy winters."

Around that time, the University of Illinois expansion encroached on Ana's neighborhood. She remembers on her walks to and from Goodrich School that there would be signs attached to houses, new signs every day. The signs pictured an "x" through a circled house. These signs told which houses were designated to be torn down as part of the urban redevelopment plan. "One day I came home, and there was that x and circle on my house."

On June 1, 1963, the city of Chicago relocated Ana and her family. Much of the neighborhood suffered similar fates, even Goodrich School got torn down. Before long, what had been Ana's childhood home, and her father's childhood home, and her grandmother's home, was a big asphalt parking lot.

"My father would never have moved," Ana said.

Ana was two weeks shy of her 10th birthday when her family moved into a new apartment at 913 S. Miller Street. This apartment was just off Taylor Street near Morgan. She transferred to what was then Jackson School, about a block and a half from there. The family would live there from June 1, 1963 until December 1972, when they were able to use Raquel's Zenith profit sharing, along with other savings, to buy their own Lakeview home.

Ana's new home was a second-floor front unit in an old six-flat apartment building. There were three bedrooms, one for her parents, one for her brother, and one that Ana shared with her sister. No closets. A bay window. When Ana's brother went into the Army, she would sleep in his deserted bedroom, with its view onto Miller Street.



"I've been by there a few times since," Ana says. "The whole street is almost unrecognizable because of gentrification."

Ana's tiny backyard supported her new landlord's vineyard, the grapes of which he used to make batches of basement wine. That led to the alley. Ana, from early on, enjoyed, or accepted, a kind of independence uncommon today. With Maxwell Street's UIC-induced decline, Ana's family started shopping downtown, mostly at Goldblatt's, as well as locally.

“I was the person that did all the errands and chores for the family,” Ana says. “I knew that Taylor Street area: there was the drugstore on Racine and Taylor; there was my father’s cleaners; the little Ma and Pa Italian bread shop on Aberdeen; there was the place to pick up tortillas; the optometrist; the dentist...” So independent was Ana that she, on her own, walked upstairs from the drugstore to the dentist’s office and made her own appointment to take care of her teeth.

At Jackson School, Ana received a basic public education, which at the time did not much encourage or foster artistic expression. She wrote a long, illustrated story that her mother kept for many years but has since been lost. She excelled at any kind of reading and writing assignments. She also took advantage of Library Day, every Friday finding and consuming new books, like *Alice in Wonderland*, *Little Women*, and *The Diary of Anne Frank*. These stories moved Ana and also started her thinking about how they were told.

“I think we had art class once a week,” Ana recalls. “Nothing, really. I’m not sure anybody noticed anything outside of that. Those books: *those* were my teachers.”

At home, the Castillo’s routine was very much that of a blue-collar family. Saturdays, when Ana’s mother did not have to report to her factory job, meant scrubbing the house. Ana assisted in all the household chores, from washing ashtrays to vacuuming the carpets to hanging out the clothes on the second-floor clothesline. Ana’s mother, having been raised in Mexico City, preferred corn tortillas; since they were unavailable locally she made her own. The ironing, especially, made a lasting impression. “Back then, you ironed everything,” she says. “You ironed sheets, you ironed handkerchiefs, I ironed my father’s boxer shorts. Knowing how to iron in detail a shirt or shirt collar, that to me today is still invaluable.”

Ana’s home life did not permeate with the kinds of literature that would later consume her as a student and author, but it was “100 percent” a *Chicago Sun-Times* household. Her father started reading the newspaper first thing in the morning, when it arrived on the porch, and continued reading it until well after supper time. News of the city and the world arrived to Ana on the streets, in the paper, and around the neighborhood. Organized crime figures lived in and controlled Little Italy. Some of these stories made headlines while others arrived by way of whisper or innuendo, like the suspicion that the landlord’s daughter was married to a Mob guy, or that the fire at the new taco place

was a torch job. Italian mob figures congregated in places like the Survivor's Club on Taylor and Loomis. Latino families throughout the neighborhood, not only from Newberry Avenue but also Sangamon Street and other nearby blocks, were systematically displaced, some, like the Castillo family, relocating within the neighborhood, others moving south to Pilsen and Little Village.

Ana's tia Flora, her mother's sister, moved to Pilsen from Taylor Street. Her house was at 2017 S. Throop Street. Ana's mother and aunt were close, so Ana was there often to play with her five cousins. She was familiar as an adolescent with many of the places teenagers hung out as she went around with a girl cousin about her age. When Ana's tia Flora died a few years back, she left the house to her family.

"I love books," says Ana. "It's so much a part of me as I'm growing up. But not until I'm like 19 years old do I realize I'm not represented in any of the books I'm reading. Nobody is reflecting anything like me or my background. In Mexico you can find them, but not the United States. There's no history, you don't exist. I was reading and loving reading and loving literature and loving Anaïs Nin as a young woman and Alice Walker, but where, where, where are we? Where's somebody that looks like my mom, a fully rounded character from her background? It took me a while to figure that out. My writing has had a lot of push, all my life, from my desire to tell people, 'We are here. I exist. Not from *your* point of view or *his* point of view or *their* point of view. *My* point of view. Just me.' We've always been here."

After graduating from Jackson, Ana went two years to St. Patrick High School for Girls on Des Plaines Street. Her final two years she spent at what was then Jones Commercial High School, a type of vocational school at 606 S. State Street built to resemble an office building. Jones technically offered a co-educational experience, but Ana only remembers two or three men at the school. Jones took pride in preparing girls for the kind of conventional office jobs in vogue decades hence. Students wore hats and gloves. It was mandated that hair be worn short. Students spent half their time at school, the other half at work.

"By my senior year, I was becoming alert and acute with all things Social Justice," Ana says. "Of course, I participated in its first walk out." This to protest the rules governing hairstyles, a reserved and rather quaint standard in conflict with an era known for wild rock concerts, free love, and recreational drugs.

Senior year, Ana also attended her first rally, in the Loop. “All I remember was yelling ‘Chicano Power.’ I don’t recall who organized it.”

Now a young adult, Ana experienced the benefits of Chicago’s cultural life: the museums, the opera house, the music venues, art. “In those years, I’m looking and I’m reading and I’m thinking,” says Ana. “Things bother me. 1968, Martin Luther King is murdered, there’s Malcolm X, the Democratic Convention...I’m witnessing all of that, I’m watching, even though I am a Brown working-class female that nobody cares what I think, nobody cares what I see, I’m just watching it. I saw that shit from my back porch: they were knocking down my neighborhood, riots...I saw that smoke. I saw that going on, I was seeing it from my view, from my eyes. I know they don’t care what I think. But I’m watching. Those things are reflected in my writing. I’m going to report on it from my perspective. That’s what changes things and defines the women’s movement. You have someone witnessing what is going on around you from a different perspective. It really gave me impetus to pursue an education after high school, to see what I could do, what tools, what arms you can gather, so that you can join that movement. There’s something very wrong here just because we are born into a certain place, we don’t have to accept this.”

She took the Taylor Street bus downtown, where it would drop her off at Harrison and State Streets. Jones ostensibly prepared Ana to work as a secretary or some other respectable office job, but she was already thinking about expanding her education. “My parents didn’t want me to be in a factory, but they didn’t support [college],” Ana says. “Now what? Fairy godmother with a wand? Now what do I do?”

It was a turbulent time in America and much of the unrest around racial inequality and injustice found its way into pockets of Chicago. “I always give credit to those times,” Ana says. “Civil Rights and the Latino Movement and the Chicano Movement from California...all those things were reaching me. I am the kind of person, I was very curious about the world. For me, it was important. Those times were saying that people of color didn’t have to accept this mold they were born into.”

Chicago remained very much a part of Ana’s life as she pursued her education, first at Loop Jr. College and Wright Jr. College. At Northeastern Illinois University, she got her BS in art with a minor in secondary education; at the University of Chicago, she got her MA in Latin American Studies. She later served as a writer-in-residence at the Illinois Arts Council and taught at Mal-

colm X Junior College. She published her first poetry chapbook in 1977, then another in 1979, and followed those up with a novel in 1986.

When Ana's parents bought their two-flat on Cullom Avenue in Lakeview, Ana was 19 years old. By chance, David Hernandez's parents lived right across the street. Ana and David became friends. His band Street Sounds practiced in the Castillo basement and Ana performed in the group.

"[Chicago] is also a city that maintains certain modesty and keeps you humble," Ana says, "I heard Saul Bellow say that in Chicago they'll say, 'So you won the Nobel...but do you got a job?' It is a city with a notorious reputation of racial, ethnic and economic divisions. It is widely diverse and if you keep your eyes open, you will learn much about other people, cultures, ways of life even if you were raised when I was and had to stay on your side of the viaduct."

Chicago appears as a setting in much of Ana's writing, including that debut novel, *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, her second novel, *Sapogonia*, her most celebrated novel *Peel My Love Like an Onion* (1999), the novel *Give It to Me* (2014), and also the poetry collection *My Father Was a Toltec* (1988). Among the Chicago essays in *Black Dove*, there is one Ana dedicated to her tia Flora. She's also published essays in *Chicago Magazine* and the *Chicago Tribune* about growing up in Chicago. The city will make another appearance in her forthcoming book, *Doña Cleanwell Leaves Home* (HarperVia, May 2023).

"While it has been part of my agenda to focus on Mexican American female characters, I've not been naïve about other ways people perceive life and



Photography by Marina Guit rre NYC, 1976

the world through the lens of their heritage," Ana says. "Chicago taught me that. I've traveled some, not just to Mexico or around the country but places like Kazakhstan, Turkey and Jordan. I felt alliances and kinships in those places, because of my wonderful Mexican culture but also because of Chicago's abundant variance of migrations and immigrations and its relentless push on its residents to work hard at whatever they do."

A Chicago Original

by Carlos Cumpián

Summer 1975: a Friday night open-mic poetry reading was happening at the corner of Lincoln Avenue and Montana Street. Inside Patsy's Café aka Patsy's Greasy Spoon, were wall-to-wall poets and audience gathered. Thirty minutes into the reading an attractive woman went up to the tiny stage and introduced herself to the crowd. Her name was Ana Castillo. I was immediately impressed with her melodious speaking and poetry reading voice. One of her poems eloquently spoke to an issue that mattered to me: working class solidarity— via her poem entitled “1975.”

... Talking proletariat talks/over instant coffee/and nicotine/in better times/there is tea/to ease the mind/ talking proletariat talks/during laid-off hours/cursing and cussing/complaining of unpaid bills/and bigoted unions/that refuse to let us in.

Okay, I said to myself- she's laying down words on issues that speak to barrio Mexicano life “deportations tight immigration...” topics most non-Mexican poets were not concerned with. She made it clear she was speaking as the brown daughter of a factory working mother and machine assembly father. These were not academic topics, rather personal protests and affirmations of endurance and resistance.

I was just beginning my own poetry journey and knew a number of Chicano cultural workers on the far southeast side of the city. An activist troop of actors and guitar players called El Teatro del Barrio, who too were addressing oppressive work condition issues and deportation in their *actos* “short skits”—I imagined they would really like Castillo's poetry. This group, El Teatro del Barrio, modeled themselves along the same lines as the California traveling troop El Teatro Campesino. Both theatre groups helped alert the public about the grape and lettuce boycotts of the 1970s that Cesar Chavez and Dolores Huerta of the United Farm Workers in California led.

I discovered there were also a few poet audience members that night who had just been published for the first time in the ground-breaking anthology *Nosotros* (published by Indiana University Northwest in Gary, part of their offshoot journal, *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*), which showcased a special issue of Latino art and poetry from Chicago's Puerto Rican and Mexican Americans.

I was surprised Ana wasn't in that anthology. But she did something better. She worked out a deal with a Little Village Mexican printer in the grand tradition of Walt Whitman, e.e. cummings, T.S. Eliot, Oscar Wilde, Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Chicago's own Carl Sandburg, plus many unsung beatniks and anarchists everywhere. She self-published her first chapbook.

Seven months after that Lincoln Avenue reading, her first chapbook *Otro Canto* began to make its rounds in Chicago. The chapbook was printed on glossy magazine quality paper. Her amiga Miriam Gutierrez, a New York-based artist, offered an illustration of a bold fierce dark-haired young woman which favored Ana. The chapbook's title invoked both the flamenco-like term "Canto Hondo" or "Deep Song," and Dante's *Divine Comedy's* sections of Cantos. As you may know, the word "canto" is derived from the Latin *Cantus*, "song, a singing; a bird-song." Of course, it's Italian for "song" also shared in español. For the record, Ana Castillo was the first Latina Chicagoan, hell, she is the very first Indigenous Xicana to publish a chapbook of poetry in Illinois, and possibly in the entire GREAT LAKES region!

I immediately recognized her work required a larger audience than the 18th street Pilsen, North Ave. to Division/Humboldt Park or Lincoln Park devotees of Puerto Rican and Mexican cultural experimentation could offer. When I joined El Teatro del Barrio on a road trip to San Antonio, Texas for a national gathering of Chicano poets and teatro performers in June 1976, I brought a double-wrapped dozen copies of *Orto Canto* and sold them for her. Poets like Inés Hernandez Tovar, Alurista, José Antonio Burciaga, Ricardo Sánchez, and many others were some of her first readers.



¡Exito!, 15 de agosto 1996

I knew there would be an expanded interest in what this talented Chicana from Chicago was writing about. Again, let me repeat, this was nearly five years before any other U.S. Latina poet would get nationally discovered.

In the Fall of 1976, Ana's praise poem in honor of revolutionary Mexican cultural workers, "Canción del Revolucionario," appeared in the official organ of an arts organization MARCH Movimiento Artístico Chicano's publication *Abrazo*. Her powerful poem was published entirely in Spanish. Ana's 40-lined

poem commanded the poetry section which was followed by two short romantic poems by Carlos Cortez, a recent inductee into Chicago's Literary Hall of Fame, and two short protest poems from my pen.

The only other Latino Chicagoan who had self-published a poetry chapbook at that time was our mutual friend, David Hernandez. In 1971, he took his poetic musings and with industrial staples and construction paper produced a collection called *Despertando/ Waking Up!* I recall the book sold for 50 cents! He confided he made it clandestinely using pirated paper and a printing press in the basement of DePaul University's long-gone McCormick Theological Seminary, once located on the corner of Fullerton & Halsted. Perhaps, his deed of self-publishing also inspired Ana—posiblemente es verdad.

In Ana's introduction to her 1995 W.W. Norton book, *My Father Was a Toltec and Selected Poems*, she notes: "*By the time I was twenty my creative impulses had been channeled into street-wise poetry. In 1974, I did my first poetry reading. Throughout my twenties, I almost always read with musical accompaniment—from Afro-Latin rhythms to Native American flute to South Side-style jazz to classical and flamenco guitar.*"

The inclusion of her command in Spanish, English, and Indigenous terminology, as well as street slang and what is "World Music" in her earliest public presentations is evidence that Ana was a pioneer and innovator as translator and poet Margaret Randall proclaimed "... *defining her own lyrical positions on a variety of social, political, sexual, and aesthetic issues, Castillo's poetic voice is unmistakably her own...exciting and---forerunners notwithstanding---absolutely new.*"

To conclude, in an article quotation from the *Chicago Sun-Times*, Sunday, March 24, 1996, Ana reflected on her intellectual search as a young Mexican-American woman, "*I looked for literature that spoke to me...I didn't find myself anywhere in print...*" Let's all celebrate that since that article appeared and from the moment she first stepped out as a poet here in Chicago until now, with great admiration let's celebrate not only Castillo's poetry, but also her works of fiction, drama and her ground-breaking essays on Xicana philosophy. Ana Castillo is a Chicago original, yet, I believe she has poetic spiritual connections to Puerto Rico's Julia De Burgos' Latina Feminism and her quest for social justice and Chicana Queer Feminist poet and essayist Gloria E. Anzaldúa. Ana Castillo is a living treasure and an inspiration and well deserves the Fuller Award for lifetime achievement.

Las flores re-energizantes

by Jael Montellano

If you don't speak Spanish, Google it. This is the twenty-first century.

Haz patria, mata a un chilango, goes the Mexican provincial saying, a cry against capital culture born of the 1985 earthquake that scurried hundreds of Mexico City inhabitants into the surrounding states after the destruction of their homes. Today, *chilanga* is slang for “woman belonging to the capital.”

“Soy chilanga,” I said to the taxista, rosary beads jangling from the rear-view mirror of the cab on a honeymoon eve when my then-wife and I left the Zócalo for our rental in Roma.

The cabbie shook her head. “Eres de allá.” *Allá* as in, America.

“No me diga,” I mourned, knifed surgically between the ribs by a stranger.

“Ya no es de aquí,” she noted again, which is to say, she told me I did not belong there, not anymore, despite my Mexican birth certificate, my passport, the way I dip limes in Tajín and suck at the teat of life.

I have lived in Chicago longer than I have lived in Mexico now, at thirty-three. When I gossip with my eldest aunt, a baker, and don't remember the Spanish words for ‘grapefruit,’ ‘spoonful,’ ‘convection,’ I say them in English, record-skips in our conversation. She pretends to understand but the distance between us is a canyon's. When I can't communicate with my Mexican bank because my vocabulary doesn't exceed the fifth-grade reading level, I crumble into the shape of a crustacean, shamed and shorn, sun-bleached.

To be a person of color is to be othered, but to be camouflaged in whiteness is to be othered too, I've learned. The price for my chameleon coat in the Midwest came at the cost of my family, my mother tongue, my culture, my history. What colonialism did to the Mexicas, Hopi, Yaqui, and countless other natives over five hundred years, migration, colonial Stockholm syndrome, and the American school system did to me in ten, with the sole grace that I live.

I arrived to the titanic rooting of Ana Castillo's work at the moment I began my reckoning of this great loss. In Ana's work, I see the threads of my life like dancing double-dutch ropes, which means I trip, often and hard, leveled with my cheek against the playground pavement. Processing a grief like this is a

myriad challenge; at times as nourishing and sweet as a maguey's agave, at others spearing like its spikes.

What I mean is Ana's work is my scholarly teacher, my scraped elbows, my house robe, my broken bones, my ancestral home, and my new haven. I am both *Mixquiahuala's* Teresa in my longing and Alicia, unconvinced of her beauty. I am both *Sapogonia's* Máximo and Pastora, saboteur and heroine, a mestiza in exile.

Mythology is the requirement for a culture and an origin point for history. For peoples who have consistently had their myths, cultures, and histories erased through colonialism, migration, and other violences, the need for a new mythology to repair the psychological wounds left over is an abyss of Marianic-trench proportions.

Ana Castillo, you are one of the great myth makers. Your body of work is the tapestry of this new mythology we of this Latinicity weave to bud our new flowers. You place us in community with ourselves, our ancestors, and one another. You take the black night and adorn it with celestial spheres.



In my life D.M. (*después de México*), no one filled the void of my absent mythology, culture, or history, not my mother, not my educators, though I've had some great, albeit Anglo-centric, ones. Belatedly but not too late, I have come to the work of repatriating myself *ex situ*, and you have been, and continue to be, one of my constellatory guides. You give me memory where mine was blotted. You give me home to remake where the tides may ebb.

For myself, and for all mixed and displaced Latinx belonging nowhere, I say with all the gratitude of my heart, *muchisimas gracias*.

Conscienticized Poetics: New Conditions of Possibility in the Writings of Ana Castillo

By Karen R. Roybal and Bernadine M. Hernández

For over 40 years, Chicago author Ana Castillo has been a key literary figure in Chicana/o/x and American literary history. She is a self-identified Xicana feminist and writer, whose work transcends multiple borders, including those around literature, theory, gender, sexuality, and geography. Born in Chicago, Illinois on June 15, 1953, she is a copious writer of poetry, novels, short stories, essays, collected editions, and plays. Castillo, over her decades-long career, has employed a political poetics and Chicana feminist positionality via what she terms as “conscienticized poetics.” It is through this consciousness raising that she invites readers to raise their own awareness and political consciousness. Her writing also beautifully reveals the interconnectedness of diverse cultural traditions. As part of her conscienticized poetics, Castillo is a writer who also experiments with form, which she uses to unfix static categorizations of her work.

It must be noted that Castillo was part of a growing Chicana literary market and became one of the first Chicanas to be published by a New York publishing firm. The “chica lit” boom, as it was coined by the literary market, served as an attempt to make Chicana literature seem exotic, foreign, and magical. In other words, it was an attempt to market Chicanas to a more mainstream public. Castillo knew what she was doing when she strategically employed conventional genre and form that would be understood by a mainstream audience, while also tackling the national political and racial issues facing Chicanas/os and Latinas/os.

Her first published work appeared in 1977; it was a collection of poems called *Otro Canto*. Castillo received much attention when her epistolary novel, *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, was published in 1986 by Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue. The book is comprised of letters between two women who meet in Mexico City while they are both enrolled in a cultural program there: Teresa, a writer, and Alicia, an artist. The women retain contact after their trip and through their letters readers learn about their conflicted romantic relationships, heteropatriarchal oppression, and a series of traumatic events experi-

enced by both Teresa and Alicia. With this book, we begin to see Castillo push the boundaries of genre convention when she dedicates the book to Argentine writer Julio Cortazar's *Hopscotch*, which like *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, is episodic. Castillo writes, "Dear Reader: It is the author's duty to alert the reader that this is not a book to be read in the usual sequence. All letters are numbered to aid in following any of the author's proposed options." This challenge to form and the call for readers' development of their own conscientización would become hallmarks of Castillo's writings.

Castillo would go on to publish at a steady pace. *Women Are Not Roses* was released in 1984 (Arte Público Press), followed by her most popular book of poetry, *My Father Was a Toltec* in 1988 (West End Press). Castillo also went on to publish a combination of novels throughout the 1990s, including *Sapogonia: An Anti-Romance in 3/8 Meter* (Bilingual Press, 1990) and *Peel My Love Like an Onion* (Doubleday Press, 1999), as well a short story collection she called *Loverboys* (W. W. Norton & Company, 1996). In these novels and the short story collection, Castillo addressed issues like civil wars, misogyny, racial and sexual identity, love, relationships, disabilities, and what it means to traverse borderlands. Castillo's collection of writings thus revealed a new condition of possibility for what Chicana writings could accomplish through a combination of many literary forms, genres, and conventions.

In the 2000s, Castillo continued to produce novels that confronted the issues important to her and other people of color, especially queer women of color. She released *I Ask the Impossible*, a collection of poems published in 2001, that pays homage to strong female heroines and that is attentive to the painfulness of love and loss. She turned back to the episodic novel format in 2005, when she published *Watercolor Women, Opaque Men*, where her protagonist embraces her sexual identity as a single Chicana who is raising a young son. Perhaps mimicking Castillo's own experiences, in this novel, she addresses the struggles second-generation Chicanas/os experience as they try to make sense of the tensions between a familial and cultural history impacted by border crossing and negotiating a space within working-class communities striving for upward mobility. Castillo's novels attract a large following of Chicana/Latinx readers because they can relate to many of the lived experiences and predicaments within which her characters find themselves.

Castillo would go on to produce three additional novels in the 2000s: *The Guardians* (2007) and her raunchiest novel to date, *Give It to Me* (2014). These

novels span U.S./international borders and take head-on topics from the violence inflicted on brown bodies along the U.S./Mexico border, where people live in constant danger and crossing the border often results in disappearance or murder, to a chaotic plotline that follows a 43-year-old Chicana protagonist who engages in more than twenty sexual adventures over the course of 256 pages in *Give It to Me*.

Castillo's 2016 memoir, *Black Dove: Mamá, Mi'jo, and Me*, bridges the personal and the political. The memoir in some ways reads as *testimonio*, as Castillo shares with readers her own experiences with familial and romantic relationships. But true to her style, Castillo also includes insights about contemporary issues, such as immigration, a lived reality she experiences from her position of living in Southern New Mexico, along the U.S./Mexico border. *Black Dove* delivers a realist perspective that emphasizes the complexity of Chicana/o/x identity, and especially, the lived realities of a queer woman of color.

Castillo's influence on feminism overall, and Chicana feminism specifically, was just as steady as her publishing career. Alternativa Publications published her first chapbook of poetry titled *Otro Canto* in 1977. Coincidentally, this was the same year that the Combahee River Collective published their statement on black feminism that stated their collective was committed to developing an intersectional analysis, just as Castillo's work was doing. *Otro Canto* was the beginning of a call to form alliances between Latinas/os in the U.S. and was a coalitional model that stood amongst statements like the Combahee River Collective Statement in that moment of civil rights, nationalist movements, and radical groups across the nation. Just two years after her first chapbook publication, Castillo published her popular chapbook, *The Invitation*, in 1979.

Castillo was amongst the first Chicana novelists such as Sandra Cisneros, who published *The House on Mango Street* in 1984 (Arte Público Press) and Margarita Cota-Cárdenas, who published *Puppet: A Chicano Novella* in 1985 (UNM Press) to publish her first novel *The Mixquiahuala Letters* in 1986 (Bilingual Press/Editorial Bilingue). These foundational authors set the stage for Chicana feminism that examined not only issues of gender, but also how race and class were intersecting structures of violence that second-wave feminism would never attend to or accept. Working alongside and with other women of color feminists, in 1993 Castillo joined forces with Chicana feminist Norma Alarcón and Chicana author Cherríe Moraga to coedit their own collection through Third Woman Press, which Alarcón founded in 1980. The collection,

The Sexuality of Latinas, examined the state of the Latina and Chicana in the U.S. In 1996, Castillo edited her own collection, *Goddess of the Americas: Writings on the Virgin of Guadalupe / La Diosa de las Américas: Escritos Sobre la Virgen de Guadalupe* published by Riverhead. Both collections examine the performativity of gender and sexuality in the Americas through colonialism and imperialism.

There is a cross-national concern in Castillo's writing that constructs links between the U.S. and Latin America, establishing the most evident transnational connection her work confronts. She does this in her poetry, in her novels, and in her creative non-fiction writing. Transnationalism has always been central to Castillo's life and the narrative she shares with us about her mother in *Black Dove* (2016) is a stark reminder that the borderlands from which her family departed are defined by a legacy of colonialism and imperialism that begins with the genocide and dispossession of indigenous peoples from their homelands. During their moves North, many Mexicanas/os, like Castillo's family, settled in Chicago, where a vibrant immigrant, working-class community emerged. Even though Chicago is considered a global city, socio political borders were present in very visible ways. As Castillo recollects her experiences growing up, and despite its multiculturalism, multilingualism, and its internationalism, in Chicago she was exposed to ongoing resistance to unequal social, political, gendered, and cultural injustices occurring around her and told to her by her Mamá. As she came of age in the "Windy City," Castillo recognized the fact that "Racial tensions were high then" and that "color and ethnicity were important [...], particularly in a white-dominated city" where she was constantly reminded, "I wasn't white. You had only to ask what any European-descended individual thought of me. With my reddish-brown hue, indigenous features, and dark hair I inherited mostly from my mother, the usual comment was that I couldn't even be American".

Much of Castillo's writing renders visible the ways in which she was already always contemplating not only the role of identity in understanding her own place in the world as a woman of color, but also the ways in which her feminist praxis was always transnational as it was influenced by the move her mother made to protect herself and her children. Castillo's feminist discourse—influenced significantly by her mother's journey North—serves as a reminder that feminist practices travel across geographical and cultural locations. Considering Castillo's work in this way reveals how she pushes temporal and spatial boundaries of Chicana feminism and Latina/o/x and Chi-

cana/o/x literature and how her feminist praxis intersects with and impacts identity formation.

Castillo's poems, novels, short stories, memoir, and critical essays lend new insights to Chicana literature and theory that encourage new ways of understanding the Chicana lived experience, as well as current Chicana feminist and trans-border politics and scholarship. Through her approach, which centers on developing conscientización, Castillo facilitates for her readers an intervention in structures of colonialism that are constantly reinforced in an Anglo-centric U.S. society. Castillo's work is transformative. She has inspired multiple generations of Chicana peoples and a broader U.S. and global readership and she continues to forge new paths for a transformed world.

Karen R. Roybal is Assistant Professor of Southwest Studies, Colorado College. Bernadine M. Hernández is Assistant Professor American Literary Studies, University of New Mexico.



"I believe for every novelist it's the same. All our characters have some of ourselves in them just as they do in our dreams. We dream about our dead grandfathers, have arguments with old lovers, but in fact, all of those dream characters are ourselves. We're working it out. In the novel, we writers do that and to make it accessible to the reader, we further develop a character that is a composite of many people."

Ana's Next Two Books

As if Ana Castillo has not done enough, she just last week signed a contract with HarperOne to publish her next two books, in English and Spanish. The English-language editions will be published by the HarperVia imprint, while the Spanish-language titles will be published by HarperCollins Español. The first book is a story collection, *Doña Cleanwell Leaves Home*, and the second is a dystopian novel titled *Isabel 2121*. According to HarperOne's Tara Parsons, via *Publishers Weekly*, the story collection is about "the secrets that are kept within households, the behaviors born of patriarchal privilege, and the women they impact the most." Parsons said the novel is "loosely based on string theory" and tells the story of a woman "who exists simultaneously" in the time of the early 16th century conquest of Mexico and in 2121.

Doña Cleanwell Leaves Home, due out in May 2023, is, according to Ana, her attempt to "enter into the conversation." As part of her research, Ana learned that women in Spain only gained voting rights in 1936. "I know in the big sphere of life we're not part of the conversation," Ana said. "It was important for me as a writer to be at the table, not sitting on the bleachers or in the audience."

The stories range between Chicago, New Mexico and Mexico, often featuring women of color. "They are women who are coming into their own," Ana said. "There is a sense of feminism without calling it that. Self-empowerment, if you will."

The novel, *Isabel 2121*, tentatively scheduled to hit bookshelves in 2025, marks a departure for Castillo, as she takes on two new genres, the historical and dystopian novels. The election of Donald Trump in 2016 so shook Castillo's faith that she thought she would stop writing. Around that time, she began to experiment with the beginnings of this novel. "When you think there's no way out...as a creative writer, you got to think, 'How's the way out?'" Castillo said.

"TO BE at peace without possessions, that was a challenge to the American Dream, wasn't it? The physical and spiritual unburdening of greedy human nature." from *Give It To Me*

TRIBUTES

Dreaming

In our twenties we walked the paths of the University of Chicago where we studied for our M.A.s. We talked about dreams. To each of us dreams were a source of guidance, a reservoir of memory, a deep connection to our people. We marveled at the way in which dreams worked in our work as poets, as writers. We talked about what we would write. What it meant to be Brown and Black women.

In recent years, as many as ten more or less, I was lucky enough to attend a book party for Ana on a side of town I did not frequent. It was a cozy club, packed with a groundswell of Latinas. I was the only Black woman there. Ana was no longer the girl-dreamer I had known and traded secrets and dreams with. She was a multi-faceted diamond, sharp and enduring, casting much light. She blazed out into that audience and led her audience-army. She was and is a warrior poet-scholar-novelist-playwright. Fierce. I tell you she can go against enemy armies. And she does. With brilliance and unceasing love.

Angela Jackson

Urging Us to Action

Ana Castillo's work is edgy and urgent. The texts, her words, her life impel us to consider truths and urge us to action. Whether in a work of fiction, essay, or poem, she weaves words deftly and with passion. I first met Ana through her poetry. In time, I would come to her fiction. Later I would meet her in person, in Spain, actually in 1985. Indelibly marked by memories of our bus trip to Toledo on a cold rainy day, and a few days later a train trip to Barcelona, our friendship has but grown with the years. My admiration for her politics, her unwavering commitment to her work and her artistry remains unchanged. She offered me her casita in Albuquerque's old town when I needed a refuge, a place where I could go and write uninterruptedly. I wrote *Canícula* that hot summer of 1993 at her kitchen table. When she returned that August, I had a manuscript, and I will forever be grateful for that gift of a safe and quiet space. Gracias, Ana. For all you do for la raza and for writing. Gracias for your work and your passion. Enhorabuena!

Norma E. Cantú

Always Fresh

With over twenty books published, Ana Castillo is one of the most prolific writers of our generation. She began her career with poetry books and the award-winning novel, *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, a novel that uses stylistic devices from Julio Cortázar's *Rayuela* (*Hopscotch*). The first novel received the prestigious American Book Award from the Before Columbus Foundation in 1987. In a sense, the innovative approach set the tone for what was to come from Castillo, who is consistently prepared to experiment with genres to offer fresh ways of reading. For example, she plays with verse and wrote a novel entirely in poetic passages in *Watercolor Women*, *Opague Men: A Novel in Verse* and to illustrate additional range, she also wrote the sci-fi *Sapogonia: An Anti-Romance in 3/8 Meter*. One of the many qualities I admire so much about Castillo is that she consistently flourishes as she experiments with genre, characters, voices, rhythm, structure and plot. Additionally, she is not intimidated by controversial topics like gender and sexuality in her essays, poetry, novels, and memoir.

When I spoke with her in Salamanca, Spain during the Chicano/Latino Literary Conference in May 2018, I was captivated with her keynote address in which she delivered a poem on #45, never mentioning the former president's name while enumerating in stanza the damage he and his administration inflicted upon the United States and the world while targeting brown and black bodies, along with women, queers and transwomen/transmen. What struck me when we talked after her keynote is how unassuming she was when I told her how much I appreciated the poem she had read. I had met Ana years prior, and I promptly became a fan of her fiction, poetry, and essays while continuing to be awestruck with her productivity. I feel fortunate to call her a friend. I cannot say enough about her, and I'm so pleased she's being honored in her hometown, Chicago.

Emma Pérez

"Poems invite you to look directly into the moment. Once in it, you're not allowed to escape. You cannot un-see what you've seen except by willful ignorance."

A Real-Life Author

In the spring of 2014, I was teaching Ana's novel *The Guardians* in my multi-ethnic US literature class. I heard that Ana was teaching a class at Northwestern, and got in touch with her to do a reading at Dominican University. The reading was in an auditorium that seated a hundred and eighty people. The word got out, and a few minutes before the reading started, we watched as the auditorium filled to standing-room only with faculty, staff, and students from a variety of fields including English, Spanish, sociology, and women's and Latinx studies. Donna Carroll, then President of Dominican, who introduced Ana, generously gave up her seat so a student could listen to the reading. I enjoyed seeing a few of my students in the front row with their books open, following along as Ana read the pages aloud.

Ana's enthusiastic reception at Dominican led to her being invited to be the Lund-Gill Endowed Chair in Fall 2014. During this semester, Ana taught a seminar on writing life stories to undergraduates and gave a lecture that would become the introduction to *Black Dove*. She guided students in writing their stories and also published students' work in her *La Tolteca* 'zine.

In September 2021, we welcomed Ana back to Dominican to do a reading of her new book of poetry, *My Book of the Dead*. She was really real with everyone about her challenges with writing and life during the pandemic, but also about ultimately going back to writing and art to express and survive. In the last ten years, the Latinx student population of Dominican has increased dramatically, and we've become a Hispanic-Serving Institution. So it's wonderful that all Dominican students have had the opportunity to have a relationship with Ana and her work as one of our foremost US and Chicana/Latina writers. During her recent visit, Ana had lunch and a book discussion with students, and several students told me this was their first time having this kind of interaction with a "real-life author."

As for myself, I first started working with Ana around the time I was pregnant and gave birth to my daughter. In knowing Ana over the years, I've greatly benefited from our conversations and her wisdom, about writing and the artist's life, motherhood and grandmotherhood, being women of color in the world, and the power of art and literature to galvanize healing and social change, in our personal and political lives.

Jane Hseu

A Creative Force in Our Midst

I am so pleased that I can contribute my little outsider's voice to help cheer on Ana Castillo's immense success as a writer who continues to inspire us all. My own career path as a writer would not have been the same had our paths not crossed in the summer of 2014 at Northwestern University, and I saw firsthand Ana's immense generosity and spirit when I accepted her invitation to become a writer-in-residence at her inspiring and beautiful El Cielito Con Nopales in New Mexico. I am reading her collection *My Father Was a Toltec and Selected Poems* for the umpteenth time and find, at its heart, a remarkable and uplifting work. Ana, you truly are a creative force in our midst, and Chicago's very own. Congratulations again on your Fuller Award!

Ignatius Valentine Aloysius

Carrying Us Through

In the preface to his book *Genesis: Memory of Fire* Eduardo Galeano writes, "I am not a historian. I am a writer who would like to contribute to the rescue of the kidnapped memory of all of America."

Once in a generation, there is a writer like Ana Castillo who rescues our kidnapped memory. I've turned to her work when I've wanted to *feel* something fundamentally true and quantum about the Americas – its fronteras, its disappearances, its exiles, its pillaging, its transgressions, its familial joy, its humor, its tender solidarities, its rebellions.

Some years ago, when I was teaching high school in Humboldt Park in Chicago, we read *So Far From God* and *The Guardians* in class, novels with Chicana/queer/border characters and stories already familiar and close to my students' corazones before they even read those first few pages. I'll always hold dear the stunned silence, the dialogues, the jokes, the love, and even the tears shed for Sofi, Gabo, and Regina (and each other) while reading, page by page, juntos, in that fourth story classroom overlooking the enormous sun-red trees of Humboldt Park. What can we say about a writer who already *knows us*? What immense beauty lies in the fact that we are even and finally known? Ana Castillo's life and magnificent, wonderous oeuvre carries us *through* the unstable realities of literature and life itself.

Michael Zapata

Going Behind Her Chicago Turf

Along with Sandra Cisneros, Ana Castillo ranks highest among Chicago's born and bred Chicano writers—the two who have had great impact on the national level. But while Illinois artist grants, jobs, and publications figured in her early development, Castillo, like Cisneros as well as Carlos Morton, only matured as a writer and received fuller recognition after she left her city and state behind.

The effect of Chicago on Castillo's creativity was such that at least some of her poems and novels provide us with oblique and fictionalized, but suggestive windows onto the social and political realities of the city and its Latino world in the 1970s and beyond.

The journey out from the narrow working-class Latino space of Chicago, the search for life and love, all lead to a search “from ruin to ruin” in sacred lands, but then, ultimately, to a resolution involving the rejection of traditional modes of female submissive masochism and a plunge into a fantasy whereby the male's vindictive struggle for power turns to self-destructive violence and leads to a new space or country that only subsequent writing will be able to define. In this sense, Castillo's overall transnational fictional geography, while framed by Latin and Central America, Mexico, Al Andalous (southern Spain and Moslem Africa), New York and the Southwest, is centered in Chicago and extends from there to Mexico in *The Mixquiahuala Letters*, to Central America and Madrid in *Sapogonia* and to the Southwest in *So Far From God*, only to return to Chicago in *Peel My Love Like an Onion*, and oscillating between the Southwest and Chicago, in *Give It to Me*.

Castillo, like Carmen la coja and other characters of hers, draws on and transcends her life problems by creating ideal worlds—third space countries that contrast with and answer to the worlds in which she has lived and still somehow has to portray and confront. Living in and going beyond her initial Chicago turf is crucial to Castillo's art and to our understanding of her overall achievement.

Marc Zimmerman, excerpted from previously published articles.

To Read Castillo

You hear stories about writers who change lives through their novels, poems, and essays. Ana Castillo is that writer and more. Her gifts extend far beyond the beauty, elegance, and complexity of her words and into her teaching and mentorship to students who, like me, did not know they were allowed to be writers, to be teachers—to be unapologetic. The first time I read *So Far From God*, I was completely enthralled by the story, language, and magic. The story became a classic, and Castillo a legendary writer above all the so-called canonical writers I read in college.

To read Castillo is to heal from an Anglo-centric episteme. It is to center us—*tú y yo*—in the stories we read and tell. To read Castillo is to celebrate the Spanglish, the Indigenous, Black, the Xicanx, LatinX, and all the Xs that make and unmake Latinidades. To read Castillo is to realize that healing is an act of decolonizing. As a critic and educator, Castillo allowed me to heal and, in return, to heal others through teaching and writing characters that look and sound like us. Gloria Anzaldúa once wrote, “I will have my serpent’s tongue—my woman’s voice, my sexual voice, my poet’s voice. I will overcome the tradition of silence.” Castillo has taught us, and is still teaching us, this lesson. To honor Castillo is to honor the spirit of the *curandera*.

Ayendy Bonifacio



In Search of Ourselves, Our Truth

Years before I became a writer, when I was still suppressing the desire to be one, reading Ana Castillo's work brought me closer to saying out loud what I'd kept secret even from myself. Having grown up on Henry James, William Faulkner, and Thomas Hardy in junior high and high school, and later Virginia Woolf post-college, my experience of literature was centered in Bostonian or English drawing rooms, windswept heaths, or Mississippi hamlets – locations and characters that were fascinating but remote from my life and times. In the nineties, I found the work of Ana Castillo. It spoke to me in more ways than I could've imagined. Her essays, novels, and poems about strong women, brownness, history, myth, oppression, and courage are infused with such candor and grace that she made me believe she was writing to me. As if she was saying, *come join me in this life of stories and essays in search of ourselves, our truth*. Ana Castillo's work, both on the page and in her activism, brought me closer to that day when I finally acknowledged I wanted to be a writer. The breadth and depth of her work reflect the abundance of her talent, generosity of spirit, and unending inspiration to writers and readers alike. She is a force.

Donna Miscolta



Claiming Vast Spaces

I met Ana Castillo through her words long before we met in person. Her first novel *The Mixquiahuala Letters* was my introduction to her dazzling, inventive writing. I inhaled that book, relating profoundly to the dilemmas explored by two main characters. At that time I didn't know about the difficulties Ana faced on her path toward becoming a writer, nor about the many ways she had been "told not to take up much space," as she says in her poem "The Reflection." But I knew her voice was one I hadn't heard before, and it was one I needed to hear.

Over the decades Ana Castillo has claimed vast spaces for herself and for others through her provocative, visionary writing as well as her activism. She is a woman who crosses boundaries, embodying what Gloria Anzaldúa would call a *nepantlera*—someone who, in Anzaldúa's words, "from a listening, receptive, spiritual stance, rises to her own visions and shifts into acting them out, haciendo mundo Nuevo (introducing change)." As I've gotten to know Ana in person, I've witnessed her fearlessness in approaching her art, her commitment to truth-telling, her generosity towards others—and her wicked sense of humor. I am delighted that the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame is honoring Ana Castillo and her extraordinary body of work.

Mary Hawley



SPONSOR TRIBUTES

The **Seminary Co-op Bookstore** and **57th Street Books** are proud to celebrate Ana Castillo's recognition as the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's 2022 Fuller Award recipient. Ana Castillo's books have long graced our shelves and this recognition only furthers what we already know: Castillo's writing is deeply worthy of our attention—and praise.

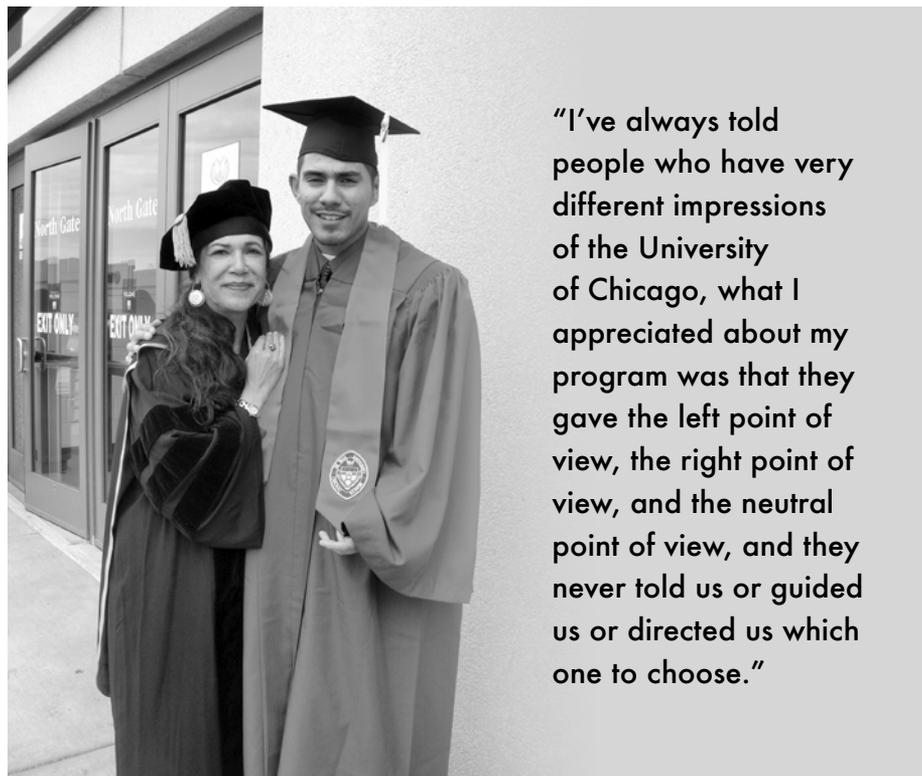
**SEMINARY
CO-OP
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BOOKS**

Congratulations to one of Chicago's finest writers. Beer is on us, Ana! **Marz Brewery**



ViNEJOY CHICAGO proposes a toast to Ana Castillo for all she's given to Chicago and the world beyond.

**ViNEJOY
CHICAGO**



"I've always told people who have very different impressions of the University of Chicago, what I appreciated about my program was that they gave the left point of view, the right point of view, and the neutral point of view, and they never told us or guided us or directed us which one to choose."

CHICAGO LITERARY HALL OF FAME



The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame (CLHOF) honors, celebrates, preserves, and promotes the development of Chicago's great literary heritage—past, present, and future. CLHOF seeks to realize this purpose by annual inductions of selected great writers from the past; ceremonies honoring living writers whose lifetime contributions to the literary arts warrant the highest recognition; literary awards to young people; classes, panels, and other literary endeavors designed to encourage the development of writers at all ages. CLHOF also creates written materials that record the lives and works of Chicago's most important literary figures and presents these and other materials on its website, in exhibits, author events, public art installations, literary tours, and programming relevant to the organization's goal of promoting Chicago's vibrant literary tradition and culture. CLHOF formed as a project of the Chicago Writers Association in 2010, and splintered into its own nonprofit 501 c(3) entity in 2014.

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SPECIAL THANKS

Always, the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's outstanding board of directors and associate board deserve acknowledgements for all they do, day in and day out, to make this and other programs a success. Amy Danzer, Randy Albers, Michele Morano, Barbara Egel, Roberta Rubin, Emily Winkler, Joseph Doyague, and Melanie Weiss, in particular, took on many needed tasks in advance of this ceremony. Our partners helped build the audience for this special evening and underwrote some of the expenses that would otherwise be difficult for a small organization like ours to take on. The talented and passionate lineup of speakers, too, played obviously instrumental roles in elevating this to a world class event. The selection committee that deliberated a long list of truly deserving candidates to choose Ana Castillo must be recognized for everything they brought to a process that ultimately worked. And the American Writers Museum staff, led by Carey Cranston, Christopher Burrow and Allison Sansone, put an incredible amount of thought and toil into the planning and execution of this ceremony. Those and other contributors are named elsewhere in the program, but many others did much behind-the-scenes to ensure that this evening lived up to the amazing legacy of the honoree.

Barry Jung did everything and then some—among other tasks, such as picking up beer and wine and leading the volunteer contingent the night of, he applied his considerable editorial skills to proofing (over and over again) this program. Cate Plys also lent her editorial expertise to this process. Chris Rice, in addition to much else, secured a lot of the content found in this program. Marta Ayala, Carlos Cumpián, Humberto Gamboa, and Rachel Swearingen were among the people who also helped secure quality content for this program. Angie Raney researched and compiled several sections of this program.

Rich Kono, in addition to creating the slideshow used as a backdrop to tonight's festivities, worked with Hannah Jennings to keep the CLHOF website current and dynamic. Atlan Arceo-Witzl made the beautiful program cover. Jeff Waggoner applied his too-good-to-be-true design skills to turning all the disparate pieces into a coherent and lovely booklet. Breaker Press, especially Rich Lewendowski and Nicole Huppenthal, proved, once again, why there is only one printer for us.

Steve Sullivan and VineJoy made sure that the wine tonight was top shelf. Ed Marszewski and Marz Brewing, with an assist from John Freyer, gave us the uniquely excellent (and uniquely Chicago) beer for our reception. Seminary Co-Op came out to ensure that everybody that wanted an Ana Castillo book would have the chance to get one (or three). Photographer Don Seeley used his phenomenal photography skills to capture this wonderful evening for posterity.

A ceremony like tonight's lives up to its potential only when a lively and passionate community takes ownership. Our literary community showed us tonight why it is unparalleled, and that includes the hundreds of people that attended this program in person or online.

AMERICAN WRITERS MUSEUM (OUR HOST)

As one of the most distinctive Chicago museums downtown, the American Writers Museum celebrates the enduring influence of American writers on our history, identity, culture, and daily lives. American writing is distinctive, diverse, and comes in many forms from across the nation. As the only museum devoted to American writers and their works, AWM connects visitors with their favorite authors and writings from more than five centuries, while inspiring the discovery of new works of every type – poetry, lyrics, speeches, drama, fiction, nonfiction, journalism, and more. The authors and works AWM presents are not meant to be a definitive list of who is the greatest or most influential. Instead, it presents authors and works as part of a continuum that grows and changes. AWM’s permanent Chicago Gallery tells the story of literary Chicago through rotating panels. In this exhibit, guests learn about famous Chicago writers and their influence on American life. The Chicago Gallery presents our city as one of overlapping communities – avant-garde intellectuals, journalists, activists, artists, and migrants from places near and far. The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame is proud of our long association with AWM and delighted to host tonight’s program in its illustrious halls.
<https://americanwritersmuseum.org>



Wherever I'm At A New Anthology of Chicago Poetry Coming in June 2022

Chicago's history vibrates through these pages. Chicago's culture. Chicago's beauty and its scars. Chicago's landmarks and joints. Chicago in all its glory, Chicago in all its sadness. In a word: life. Chicago life.



The Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's first major publication, a project done in collaboration with two of our city's finest publishers, After Hours Press and Third World Press.

These pages feature outstanding work produced by more than 150 poets and artists, with a range of style and complexity that mirrors Chicago's varied and nuanced character. Every poet and artist boasts strong Chicago ties, some born and raised, others passed through or left for other opportunities, or settled here later in life.

UPCOMING LAUNCH EVENTS:

MAY 15

Chicago Cultural Center,
part of the American
Writers Museum
"American Writers Festival"

JUNE 13

Official Book Launch Event,
The Logan Center

JULY 12

Chicago History Museum

For more details visit: ChicagoLiteraryHOF.org

CHICAGO LITERARY HALL OF FAME 2022 EVENTS

The Martini Chronicles

Friday, April 1 • 7 p.m.

via Zoom

Virtual cocktail clinic and party featuring Chicago literary-themed drinks.

Independent Bookstore Day

Saturday, April 30 • Noon-1 p.m.

via Zoom

Chicago Literary Hall of Fame's roundup of Chicago bookstores.

Chicago Lit Walking Tour:

Nelson Algren

Saturday, May 7 • 3-5 p.m.

Meet at the Nelson Algren Memorial Fountain (Milwaukee/Ashland/Division)

Chicago in Verse: A Discussion of Poetry and Our City

Sunday, May 15 • 5:30 p.m.

Chicago Cultural Center

78 E. Washington, Chicago

Discussion centered around *Wherever I'm At: An Anthology of Chicago Poetry*.

Induction Ceremony

(Class of 2020):

Harry Mark Petrakis, Era Bell Thompson, and Lisel Mueller

Thursday, May 19 • 7 p.m.

The Poetry Foundation

61 W. Superior Street, Chicago

Official Launch: *Wherever I'm At: An Anthology of Chicago Poetry*

Monday, June 13 • 7 p.m.

Reva and David Logan Center for the Arts

Performance Penthouse

The University of Chicago

915 E. 60th Street, Chicago

If You Want Something Done Right....

Thursday, July 7 • 7-8 p.m.

via Zoom

Discussion about the state of the publishing industry.

Poetic History

Tuesday, July 12 • 6 p.m.

Chicago History Museum

1601 N. Clark Street, Chicago

A panel discussion that ties history and verse.

Free Youth Writing Workshop in Chinatown

Monday, July 25 • 1 p.m.

Chinese American Service League

2141 S. Tan Ct., Chicago

Rick Kogan: Fuller Award for lifetime achievement

Wednesday, October 5 • 7-9 p.m.

Chopin Theater

1543 W. Division Street, Chicago

Induction Ceremony

(Class of 2021):

Carol Shields, Ethel Payne, and Ray Bradbury

Thursday, October 27 • 6:30-7:45 p.m.

City Lit Theater

1020 W. Bryn Mawr Ave., Chicago

Chicago Writers of the Federal Writers' Project

Saturday, November 19 • 7 p.m.

Online; ongoing.

The Illinois unit of the Federal Writers Project employed some of Chicago's finest literary minds.

For more information please visit chicagoliteraryhof.org

The **American Writers Museum** is proud to support this honor for Ana Castillo, whose art, scholarship and activism have earned deserved praise and helped connect generations through her writing.



Hypertext Magazine & Studio congratulates Ana Castillo on her breathtaking body of work. During her illustrious career, Ana's writing, activism, and mentorship have and continue to brilliantly illuminate the way forward. Thank you for your abiding belief in the transformative power of the written word and for being a friend to HMS in our formative years.

Congratulations to Dr. Castillo! Thank you for teaching and inspiring **Dominican University's** students, faculty, staff, and community!



Felicidades, Ana, on this well-deserved award! We're so happy for you and proud to have counted you among our faculty. Looking forward to the new books!



The **English Dept. of the University of Chicago** is thrilled to honor alumna and Chicago native, Ana Castillo, and to celebrate her as one of the most dynamic and important writers of our time. For almost five decades, Ana Castillo's poems, essays, short stories, and novels have captured, with urgency and political force, Latinx life in Chicago, in the borderlands, in Mexico. Through feminist and multilingual chronicles of migration, survival, love, friendship, and artistic commitment, and with a richness of form and voice, Castillo has created literary worlds of transcendence and beauty that have been models for generations of writers who revere her as one of the most influential voices in U.S. literature.



Dear Ana, thank you for amplifying the voices of Brown, Mexican, Latina women and people, for showing the world that Brown is Beautiful, and that we are just as worthy as anyone else. "I wanted everything. What could you not want when you are brown and Indian-looking in a society in which the white aesthetic is praised as acceptable?"



Back in the day, she was known mostly as a poet but she has been a friend of the **Guild Complex** for many moons. A true renaissance artist, to call Ana Castillo a writer would be too simple. She is a trailblazer in not only Latinx literature but for modern women's literature as well. Congratulations to our Chicago Chicano sister, Ana Castillo, for this well-deserved award.



Congratulations to Ana Castillo, one of the most passionate, timeless, ageless poets of our era who transcends the boundaries of what it is to be human.



The **Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelley Foundation** and **Illinois Arts Council Association** provide ongoing support to the Chicago Literary Hall of Fame.