

2040 review

April 2019 | Vol. 2 Issue 1

Featured Author

Daniel Suarez,
author of *A Kind
of Solitude*

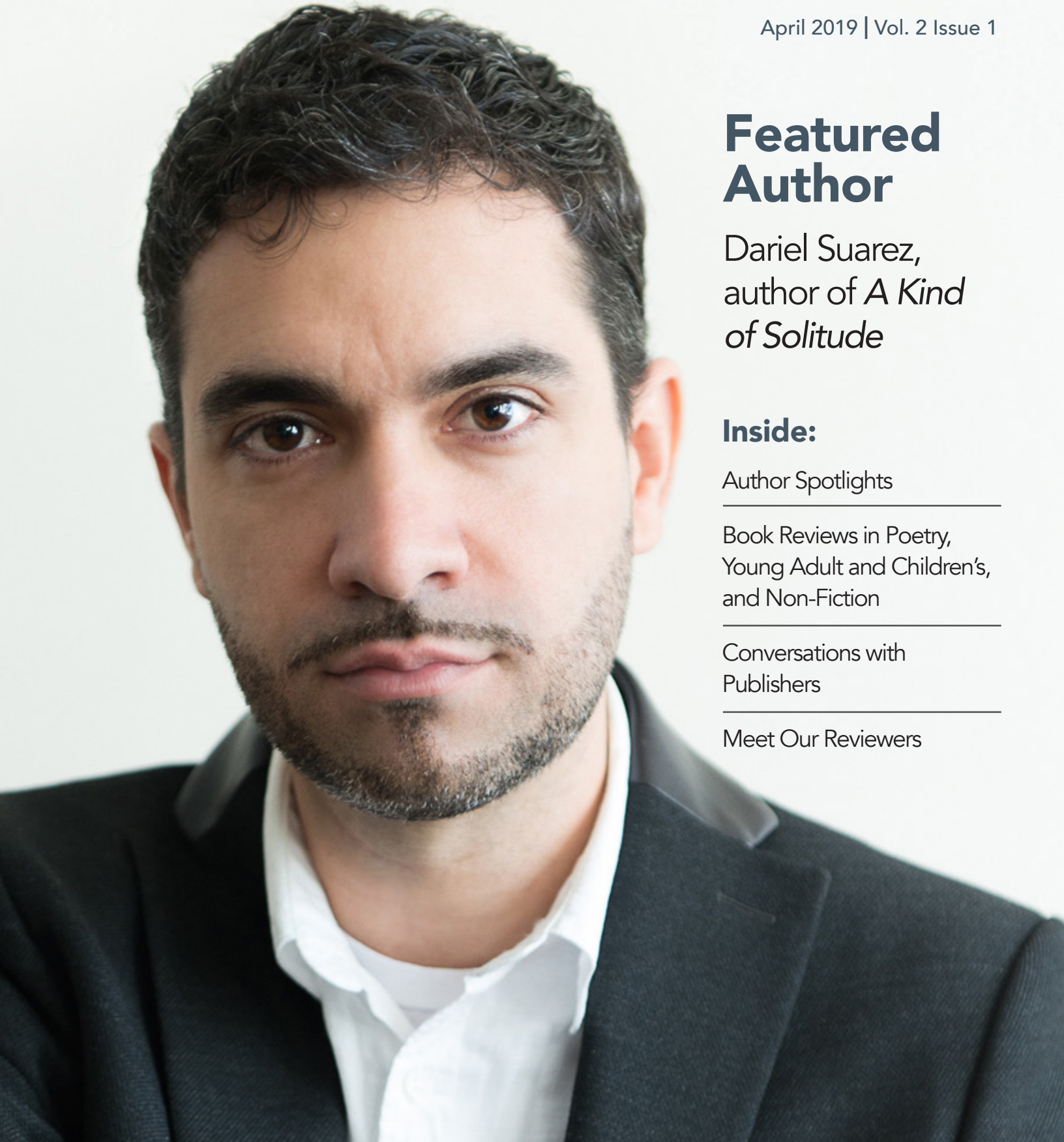
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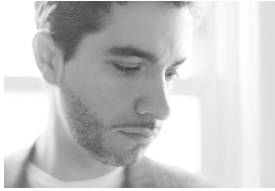
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Editorial Director: Asata Radcliffe **Creative Director:** Jennifer N. Shannon **Design Consultant:** Mike Lawley

Contributing Writers: Asata Radcliffe, Ella Nathanael Alkiewicz, Lisa Braxton,
Soomin Lee, Dharani Persaud, Anita Nham, and Marilse Rodríguez-García

2040 Review is headquartered in Boston, Massachusetts. For media inquiries or questions contact:

asata@2040Review.com or jennifer@2040Review.com

From the **EDITOR**

Dear Readers,

We are excited for this new issue that adds depth and breadth to the literary publication community. *2040 Review* represents an inclusive reflection of diverse literature by sharing literature reviews crafted by writers of color, for authors of color.

Literature reviews are vital to the promotion, publication and sales of an author's work, yet the literary market reflects a limited culture due to publication standards that endorse a large majority of white authorship. It is our goal to deconstruct and penetrate the traditional track of "publication-to-shelf" standard that has historically excluded diverse representation.

In this issue, we feature Dariel Suarez, the author of the phenomenal short story collection, *A Kind of Solitude*, curated with stories that traverse the Cuban landscape. We also highlight speculative authors Zig Zag Claybourne, Cerece Rennie Murphy and Elwin Cotman, authors who have created a space for themselves in science fiction. Through our interviews, we get to know how each author approaches craft and process.

Our reviewers cover all genres while our youngest reviewer, 8th grader Soomin Lee, is featured in the YA/Children's section. Also in this issue, poetry is comprised of cross-cultural voices that confront intersections of racial identities, womanhood, Indigenous sovereignty and the validation of African ancestry.

To round out our first full issue, we are excited to spotlight two independent presses — Arte Público Press and Yali Books. Arte Público is a long-standing press dedicated to culturally sensitive practices and bilingual publications. Yali Books is a press committed to exploring the diversity that exists within South East Asian culture.

We hope you encounter titles that move you to support gifted authorship that now have this platform to showcase their works. It is imperative that the world have more access to diverse authorship which reflects the experiences of all humanity. These experiences are informative, educational and emotionally resonant.



Welcome to 2040 Review!

Featured Author

We'd like our featured and spotlight authors to answer both craft/process-oriented questions and share more about their path as writers. These stories will hopefully inspire others!

FEATURED AUTHOR: Dariel Suarez

Dariel Suarez was born and raised in Havana, Cuba. He immigrated to the United States with his family in 1997, during the island's economic crisis known as The Special Period. He is the author of the novel *The Playwright's House* (forthcoming, Red Hen Press) and the story collection *A Kind of Solitude* (Willow Springs Books), winner of the 2017 Spokane Prize for Short Fiction. Dariel is an inaugural City of Boston Artist Fellow and the Director of Core Programs and Faculty at GrubStreet, the country's largest independent creative writing center. His prose has appeared or is forthcoming in numerous publications, including *The Kenyon Review*, *Michigan Quarterly Review*, *Prairie Schooner*, *The Massachusetts Review*, *North American Review*, *Third Coast*, *Southern Humanities Review*, *WBUR's Cognoscenti*, and *The Caribbean Writer*, where his work was awarded the First Lady Cecile de Jongh Literary Prize. Dariel earned his M.F.A. in Fiction at Boston University and now resides in the Boston area with his wife and daughter.

darielsuarez.com

Q: When was the first time that you remember realizing that you were a creative person?

A: I began learning how to play the guitar at the age of sixteen, which any musician will tell you is late. Before then, I hadn't seriously tried to do anything one might call artistic. After a few lessons I decided to just teach myself. I wasn't interested in theory or learning how to read music. I simply wanted to be in a band. Within two years, I was composing songs based mostly on intuition and experimentation. I played alongside more advanced, classically trained musicians who thought my songs were as good as theirs.



Spotlight Authors

AUTHOR: Zig Zag Claybourne

Zig Zag Claybourne's essays on sci fi, fandom, and life in general have appeared in Apex, Strange Horizons, and other genre venues. His fiction has been described as "effortlessly cool." His most recent novel is *The Brothers Jetstream: Leviathan*, with the sequel, *Afro Puffs Are the Antennae of the Universe*, due in 2019. His short story collection *Historical Inaccuracies* once topped a collection from Neil Gaiman on Amazon for about 3 seconds. He grew up watching *The Twilight Zone* and considers himself a better person for it. You can find his work scattered throughout the web, but if you really want to get to know him the door's always open at writeonrighton.com.



Q: At what point in your life did you realize you wanted to write science fiction?

A: It was early. I mean, I was always reading. Mama told me I did it so much I should write a book, so when we had the assignment in grade school (maybe 5th grade?) to write a story on any subject we wanted, I jumped on it. I grew up watching sci-fi and reading Marvel comics like they were going out of style. My story was about aliens using people as hunting dogs to hunt other people. Didn't even think about it. Brain went straight to aliens. I love the "What if" part of SF/Fantasy, and that was the first time I'd actually tried writing my own, so even though the story was silly I felt wonderful doing it! Like I'd found a

playground with a trampoline and my brain kept wanting to go higher and higher. These days there's less "science" and more speculation in my writing, so Speculative Fiction is where I hang my hat, but it's all the same wide open What If territory. Even when trying to be varied in what or how I write, there's always a hint of the fantastic or unknown.

Later, when I realized acutely and painfully that this wonderful genre I loved intentionally kept me at arm's length or in the background, my desire to make sure the black experience was visible front and center in imaginative fiction solidified.

Q: What, or who, has been your biggest inspiration in keeping your creative energy going?

A: There's an amazing community of writers — online and in-person — who lift me up when the WHY BOTHER gremlin gets too big, or whose enthusiasm for their own work is so infectious I can't help but get inspired! When somebody calls you up to squee that they just finished a chapter outline and can't wait to flesh it out, you gotta be dead not to feel that. It's energy. Pure mental electricity. It fuels me. I go to writers conventions for that same sense of excitement. Another important thing that keeps me going is a sense of personal exploration. I don't know what I'm doing on this planet 9 times out of 10; writing helps me attempt to figure things out in relation to everything and everybody else.

Q: How has life events influenced your creative style and abilities?

A: First thing that comes to mind is I grew up poor, so we had to be innovative, flexible, and creative regarding everything from how to fix

AUTHOR: Cerece Rennie Murphy

National bestselling and award-winning author Cerece Rennie Murphy fell in love with writing and science fiction at an early age. It's a love affair that has grown ever since. In 2012, Mrs. Murphy published the first book in what would become the Order of the Seers sci-fi trilogy. Mrs. Murphy has since published nine books and short stories, including her latest release and first fantasy series, *The Wolf Queen*.



Mrs. Murphy and her son are also working on completing *Ellis and The Cloud Kingdom*, the 3rd book in the Ellis and the Magic Mirror early reader children's book series. They hope to release *Ellis and the Cloud Kingdom* in 2019. Mrs. Murphy lives and writes in her hometown of Washington, DC with her husband, two children, and the family dog, Yoda. To learn more about the author and her upcoming projects, please visit her website at cerecerenniemurphy.com.

Q: What in your personal life influenced you to choose to write science fiction?

A: I wouldn't say that I chose to write science fiction. It was never my plan, but I have loved science fiction ever since my mom took me to see *Empire Strikes Back* in the theater when I was a little girl. Everything about the genre appealed to me. The action, the brave new worlds, the strange alien creatures, the super-powers, and the chance it gives us to transcend reality and build something new. The idea for *Order of the Seers* (my first book) came completely out of the blue (while I was washing the dishes). I wasn't looking for it. It just came to me and because of that, I didn't second guess it. I simply loved the story and endeavored to write

it. I wasn't thinking about publishing it or even if I would be any good as a writer. I just knew I would try my best. Of course, once I got into it, then I discovered this whole new world within a story that would take three books to tell, but I was hooked by then. I loved the process of discovering and telling the story so much.

Q: Tell us about the Nazaru project. How did that get started?

A: NARAZU started as an answer to a question. I exhibit at a lot of sci-fi conventions and have met the most wonderful readers and artists through these events. It's really a great place for introducing sci-fi and comic fans to topnotch work by independent artists. The problem is, after the show, how do readers find exceptional independent artists? How do artists keep this audience aware of all the great things they are creating?

NARAZU was built to answer that question. The idea was to build an online platform where a fan could go and find excellent content created by indie artists across all the mediums that fans love – comics, books, art, graphic novels, and film. It's a project that I really believe in and hope to grow over time.

Q: What do you think keeps your imagination from conforming to mainstream society?

A: That's a great question, but it's honestly not something I think about. I am trying to tell the stories that I've been given in the truest and most effective way that I can. That's my job and my primary measure of success. If that story conforms, great! If it doesn't, great! I don't try to make my stories one thing or another. I just want to be true to whatever they are. For some people that will be thrilling, for others it will put them off. I can't really worry about that. As far as the reader goes, I'm trying to find the people who want to read my story, people are open to unique situations, diverse characters, and ideas

AUTHOR: Elwin Cotman

Elwin Cotman is a storyteller from Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. He is the author of two collections of speculative short stories, *The Jack Daniels Sessions EP* and *Hard Times Blues*.



Cotman has toured across North America doing readings. His work has appeared in *Grist*, *Weird Fiction Review*, *Black Gate*, *The Thought Erotic*, *The Southwestern Review*, and *Cabinet des Fees*, among others. He was a participant in the 2012 Low Lives Performance Festival. In 2009, Cotman was a core member of the Cyberpunk Apocalypse Writers Cooperative, a DIY writers space in Pittsburgh.

Cotman holds a BA from the University of Pittsburgh and an MFA from Mills College.

 [Elwin-Cotman-254559227913217](#)

 [BlackFlaneur](#)

Q: At what point in your life did you realize you wanted to write speculative fiction?

A: *Beloved* by Toni Morrison.

I'll out myself as an 80s kid and admit my first exposure to fantasy was mainly through pop culture. I grew up watching a lot of cartoons and I was drawn in by the utopian elements of those fantasy stories. (I'm doing a talk about this at the end of the month, so it's on my mind a lot.) I watched shows like *The Smurfs*, *Fraggle Rock*, *Rainbow Brite*, *The Adventures of David the Gnome*. These shows all represented worlds where people wanted to live at peace with the land and with each other. Evil was not an overwhelming force that ruined their lives, but a momentary challenge that could be defeated in ten minutes. The stories mainly revolved around well-meaning characters involved in domestic affairs, with peace and kindness as the default

mode of the world. I wanted to live in these worlds. There were a myriad of other exposures I had to fantasy fiction like *King Arthur*, *Arabian Nights*, *Wind in the Willows*, but I think television and film really spurred my interest.

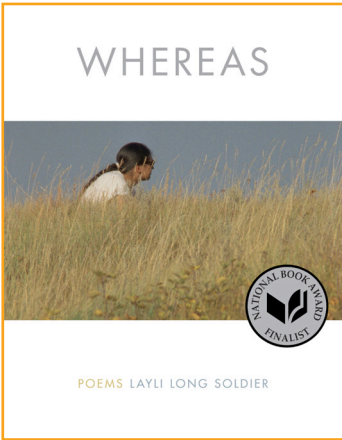
In high school I started writing a lot of pulp-style stories based on authors I was reading like Michael Moorcock and Robert E. Howard. But it was seeing the Jonathan Demme film of *Beloved* that started me on the path. It's a horror movie where racism is the monster. From there I read the novel, which is both more disturbing and more supernatural than the film. Alongside my awareness of being black in America, as well as the horrors involved, I was exposed to a speculative work that delved into that very subject.

The first fantasy story I wrote as an adult was "Assistant," the novella in my first book. At the time I wrote it in college I thought of it as horror, now I think of it more as dark fantasy. I was very much inspired by Morrison in this.

Q: How do you get your inspirations?

A: So many places. Events in the world around me. Events in my own life. The work of writers I admire. Things that make me angry, a lot of the time. I find it hard to write secondary world fantasy, where you have to craft an entire reality with a thousand-year history, because I find this world we live in so fascinating. There's things in the world I want to address and I start with that, let the story flow from it. Sometimes I just overhear things that sound like cool prompts.

For instance: my last published piece is based on a conversation I had with Dan McCloskey where he said, if fantastic things did happen in real life, we'd find a way to shrug it off as normal. That became the germ for "*Reunion*." That's also a dialogue-based piece because I'd been writing a lot of descriptive work at the time. I always try and write something different than what I'd just worked on.

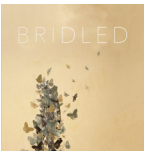


Poetry Review **Whereas**

Authors: Layli Long Soldier, Oglala Lakota
ISBN: 978-1-55597-767-2 **PUB Date:** 2017. 121 pp.

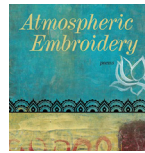
Lakota Sioux poet and storyteller Layli Long Soldier has earned several prestigious awards for her writing. Her tenacity and fortitude were demonstrated on the page and her formal education reinforced her messages. Throughout *Whereas*, she artistically places her words with an urgency where the reader may feel moved to read her poems aloud to hear the subtle drumbeat. "But tonight I cannot bring myself to swing a worn hammer at poverty to pound the conditions of that slow frustration." Long Soldier used her native language, while other times she uses Old English vocabulary. I was intrigued and perplexed by some poems, and for good reason. Some pieces were a reflection of motherhood while other poems taught, as in her poem 38, that tells the story of 38 Dakota Indians were hanged in 1862 by the government. Lakota Sioux stories are valuable and must be told for future generations.

Reviewer Ella Nathanael Alkiewicz (*Labrador Inuk*)



BRIDLED

Author: Amy Meng
ISBN: 978-1-55885-842-8 **PUB:** 2018. 415 pp.
A delicate musing that traverses the landscape of relationships.



Atmospheric Embroidery

Author: Meena Alexander
ISBN: 978-0-8101-3760-8 **PUB:** 2018. 86 pp.
A delicate chronicle that allows the reader to surrender to the beauty of sorrow and memory.



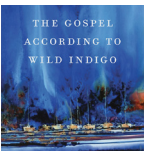
The Drowning Boy's Guide to Water

Author: Cameron Barnett
ISBN: 978-1-938769-26-9 **PUB:** 2017. 96 pp.
An elegant interlacing of identity, history and self-interrogation.



Pardon My Heart

Author: Marcus Jackson
ISBN: 978-0-8101-3691-5 **PUB:** 2018. 65 pp.
A rare glimpse into the longing that accompanies the angst of reconciliation.



The Gospel According to Wild Indigo

Author: Cyrus Cassells
ISBN: 978-0-8093-3660-0 **PUB:** 2018. 106 pp.
Illuminating, lyrical, a poetic read that journeys into a sensory and imaginative collection.



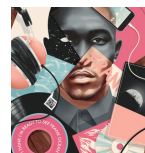
Girl with Death Mask

Author: Jennifer Givhan
ISBN: 978-0-253-03279-9 **PUB:** 2018. 80 pp.
Daring and heartbreaking, this collection confronts the disruptive layers of the excavation of womanhood.



Dulce

Author: Marcelo Hernandez Castillo
ISBN: 978-0-8101-3696-0 **PUB:** 2018. 39 pp.
Each poem carries within it a world that holds the weight of a novel.



I Think I'm Ready to See Frank Ocean

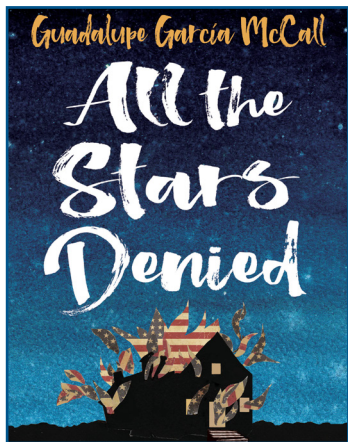
Author: Shayla Lawson
ISBN: 978-0-9899797-8-8 **PUB:** 2018. 134 pp.
A surrealist jaunt through space and time, groundless in form and lyric.



MANTECA!

Editor: Melissa Castillo-Garsow
ISBN: 978-1-55885-842-8 **PUB Date:** 2018. 415 pp.
A well-crafted, rare anthology featuring Afro-Latin@ poets who chronicle diasporic histories and inter-cultural racism, while celebrating their complex cultural identities.

YOUNG ADULT & CHILDREN'S



Young Adult Review **All the Stars Denied**

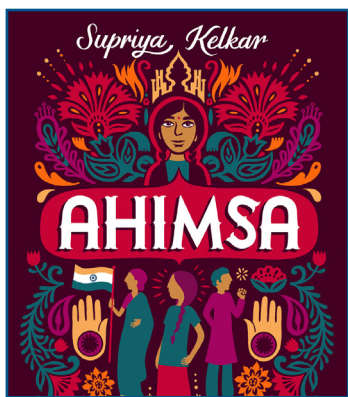
Author: Guadalupe Garcia-McCall
ISBN: 978-1-62014-283-7 PUB Date: 2018. 336 pp.

Estrella del Toro is a Mexican-American living in Monte Seco, Texas during the Great Depression. After organizing a protest against the mistreatment of Mexicans, her family is deported to Mexico despite having American citizenship. Estrella has to face discrimination daily because she is Mexican. She has to attend a Mexican school, which has less opportunities and offerings than the white school. The signs and posters on many of the doors and windows of businesses on the Anglo side of town spit out extremely offensive phrases such as "NO DOGS OR MEXICANS ALLOWED." After being repatriated, Estrella

has to face economic hardships, and as a result, she becomes humble and willing to work to provide for her family.

The companion novel to *Shame the Stars*, *All the Stars Denied* is a wonderful coming-of-age story that conveys deep social issues that are still relevant today. The prose flows smoothly from chapter to chapter, even with bits and pieces of Estrella's journal scattered in between. It is a page-turner that many students will benefit from reading, especially the history of Mexican-Americans in the United States.

Reviewer Soomin Lee (*Teen Reviewer*)



Young Adult Review **Ahimsa**

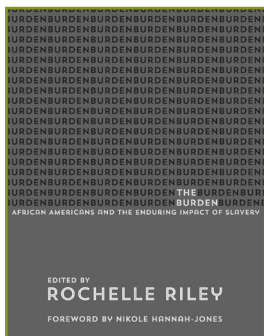
Author: Supriya Kelkar
ISBN: 978-1-1620143569 PUB Date: 2017. 321 pp.

Told by the perspective of 10-year-old Anjali Joshi, her perfect world is turned upside down. Her mother quits her secure job with Captain Brent of the British Army to join the Indian freedom movement in the 1940's. Anjali's mother freely volunteers for her family when Mahatma Gandhi, a practitioner of Ahimsa — non-violent resistance — asks Indians to give one family member to the freedom movement. Anjali isn't happy about her mother's

decision, especially when her mother burns Anjali's gorgeous Ghagra-Cholis, because they were made by the British, and replaces them with homespun cotton. Reluctantly, Anjali begins to attend freedom movement meetings with her mother and becomes inspired to start her own project to get Dalits, the "untouchables," to attend school with the rest of the children. As the political situation intensifies, the winding road leads Anjali to emerge from her prejudices to continue making a difference in her town.

Inspired by her great-grandmother's experience working with Gandhi, Supriya Kelkar does a phenomenal job in highlighting the Indian freedom movement. She also shines light on the differences of Indian cultures, caste, race, and religion, in an understandable manner. The debut novel is a poignant, yet rare glimpse into this part of history through the eyes of a child.

Reviewer Anita Nham



Non-Fiction Review **The Burden**

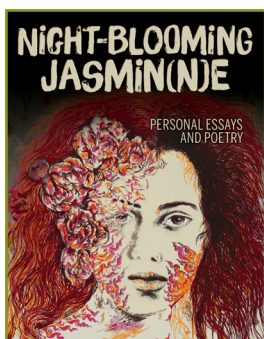
Authors: Rochelle Riley
ISBN: 978-0-8143-4514-6 PUB Date: 2018. 200 pp.

It would not be an exaggeration to suggest that many people in our society feel it's time for African Americans to get over slavery, that it is but a distant memory that should barely skim the surface of the nation's consciousness. Needless to say, award-winning newspaper columnist Rochelle Riley is not among them. In her introduction to this cultural studies anthology, Riley announces in her quietly powerful words that she will not "shut up" about slavery, an institution that remains ingrained in American life. As the editor of this anthology, she gathers 23 contributors whose combined work enriches the African-American Studies canon with reflections and heartbreaking revelations. Actor Tim Reid deftly compares slavery to having cancer, drawing from his personal experience with the disease, to illustrate slavery's insidiousness and impact. Author Betty DeRamus rolls back time to her eight-year-old self as she walks into a whites-only ice cream shop. Time stands still as the encounter unfolds. The unimaginable horror of slavery is shown through the journey of an old, patched cotton bag as described by anthropologist Mark Auslander.

The Burden is suitable reading for a college-level course on culture, race, or ethnic studies, or as a reference point for a public affairs panel discussion. It will hopefully reach a broad audience of Americans, striking a blow to the denials of slavery's presence, reaffirming what so many in our society endure, and lead to a healthy dialogue on racial injustice.

The Burden will marinate in my consciousness, flashing in my mind like a highlight reel, reminding me of how much work still needs to be done in this country surrounding race.

Reviewer Lisa Braxton



Non-Fiction Review **Night-Blooming Jasmin(n)e**

Authors: Jasminne Méndez
ISBN: ISBN: 978-1-55885-861-9 PUB Date: 2018. 277 pp.

Night-Blooming Jasmin(n)e is a beautiful and sometimes heartbreaking book of essays and poetry about navigating life and chronic illness while being a young Black woman in America. Jasminne Méndez, a first-generation Dominican Afro-Latina, writes honestly about her experiences managing the physical and emotional side effects that result from lupus and scleroderma. This collection of essays and poetry encompass topics like trying to find a doctor who will listen to her, the pain of a miscarriage and infertility, and her relationship with her parents after her diagnoses. While the subjects she writes about are serious, Méndez actively discourages readers to feel bad for her. Instead, she aims to drive home the point that while living with chronic illnesses requires navigating life differently, it does not make anyone any less of a person.

A few lines from one of her poems get at the heart of this book: "remind yourself you are human/even if this won't change/the weather or the results/the diagnosis or the disease."

In this work, Méndez invites us to follow her on her own journey of disbelief, understanding, and empathy about what it's like to navigate the world with chronic illness.

Reviewer Dharani Persaud

Conversations with Publishers

Our conversations with publishers are meant to share insights about the publishing companies that are impacting multicultural communities. These stories share the often untold successes that are helping to enhance and diversify bookshelves around the world!

PUBLISHER:
Arte Público Press, Eloisa Perez-Lozano
artepublicopress.com



Q: What is the driving force of Arte Público Press?

A: As a non-profit organization, our mission drives what we do. Arte Público Press's mission is the publication, promotion and dissemination of Latino literature for a variety of audiences, from early childhood to adult, through the complete gamut of delivery systems, including personal performance as well as print and electronic media. In its publication and dissemination of Hispanic literature and cultural information, Arte Público Press is committed to reforming the national culture to more accurately include, value and reflect Hispanic historical and contemporary contributions.

Q: Why is it vital to have a press devoted to the Latinx writers and stories?

A: It's crucial that young Latinxs see themselves and their culture reflected positively in the media. For too long, Latinxs have been portrayed in books, movies, and television programs as thugs, gang-bangers, and thieves. We actively seek to combat these negative stereotypes with books written from within the culture. How can Latinx kids even begin to dream about their futures if they don't see people that look like them working successfully as writers, illustrators, scientists, or astronauts?

It's just as important for non-Latinos to be exposed to the wealth, richness, and variety that is Latino

culture. Hispanics have been in the geographic area that makes up the United States since before the British landed at Plymouth Rock. Especially now in the current political climate, Latinos' contributions to this country need to be recognized.

Q: What audiences would you like to reach that you feel you may not have reached yet?

A: In 1979, Arte Público started publishing books by Hispanic authors for adults. We have published many of the authors who are now well-known, including Ana Castillo, Sandra Cisneros, Nicholasa Mohr, Pat Mora, Gary Soto, Luis Valdez, and Victor Villaseñor. Our books for adults include fiction, poetry, short prose, and non-fiction.

In 1992, APP launched its project to recover the written legacy of Latinos in the geographic area that has become the United States from the colonial period to 1960: Recovering the US Hispanic Literary Heritage.

In 1994, APP launched its imprint for children and young adults, Piñata Books, which is dedicated to publishing culturally relevant literature for children from kindergarten through high school. As part of the kids' book imprint, we publish bilingual picture books, bilingual "flip" books for intermediate readers, and books in either English or Spanish for teens.

So as you can see, we publish books for a wide range of audiences. The one area we have not focused on is early childhood literacy; we don't publish board books or books with very few words. Another area we have not explored is graphic novels, which are hugely popular. Some day

Q: How do you discover talent?

A: We meet authors at conferences and festivals. They send their work to us. Other authors/board members/readers recommend us. We have been publishing Latino literature for 40 years now, so to a certain extent we are known for being the only publishing house dedicated to Latino literature.

SUPPORT WRITERS OF COLOR WITH YOUR GENEROUS DONATION

2040 Review is the first literature review publication whose focus is authors and reviewers of color. We believe that the success of this project will contribute to a future that is inclusive of literature that hasn't had the world audience it deserves. Join us in this historical effort and support the future success of *2040 Review*.

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