

## Latinidad – 7/12-8/12: Travel Writing 2.0

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### BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

"In one hour on the phone with Marcela, I learned practical strategies about promotion, publicity, and the business side of the publishing industry that a doctorate in literature and several writing workshops never covered. Marcela is friendly, frank, and fun. She pulls no punches, and she followed up after our conversation with resources tailored to my particular project. Especially as a writer working far from New York, I was so helped by her knowledge and experience."

--Joy Castro, author of Hell or High Water, <http://www.joycastro.com>

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### 1. Saludos

Writers who are tempted to try their hand at travel writing must first read Travel Writing 2.0: Earning Money From Your Travels in the New Media Landscape by Tim Leffel. Whether you seek to publish magazine articles, guidebooks, or blogs, Leffel offers timely, no-nonsense advice based on his own career as an award-winning travel writer. In addition, he shares hard-earned wisdom from fifty-two other working travel writers plus select editors who hire freelancers or book authors. To learn more, read this month's Q&A with Leffel.

Helping Latinos get published,

Marcela Landres

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### 2. Q&A

Award-winning travel writer Tim Leffel is author of The World's Cheapest Destinations, Travel Writing 2.0, and Make Your Travel Dollars Worth a

Fortune: The Contrarian Traveler's Guide to Getting More for Less. He is also co-author of Traveler's Tool Kit: Mexico and Central America and is editor of the narrative web publication Perceptive Travel, <http://perceptivetravel.com/>. He splits his time between homes in Florida and Mexico. For more information, visit <http://travel.booklocker.com/> and <http://travelwriting2.com/>.

Q: How did you get started as a travel writer?

A: I used to do a good bit of corporate writing working for RCA Records, so when my now-wife and I started off on a year-long trip around the world, I started pitching some articles and got some things published. I also started reviewing hotels for a trade publication and I'm still doing that a fair bit almost two decades on. It was part-time for a long time, but about five years ago I went all-in and I don't do anything else on the side anymore.

Q: If you knew then what you know now, what would you have done differently?

A: Before the Internet, I wouldn't have done much differently except pitching more small stories about my own region/city. After the Internet came along, I should have moved a bit faster to expand beyond my first blog. All in all, I read a lot and got a lot of good advice along the way, so no major blunders thankfully.

Q: What three mistakes should newbie travel writers avoid?

A: Trying to do things in the wrong order: like pitching Travel & Leisure before they've had anything published elsewhere. Not reading enough to know what's good (especially not enough books), not writing often enough, not keeping a journal while traveling. Most importantly, though, they need to find a unique niche or point of view that's fresh. Become an expert at that instead of being lost in a sea of generalists.

Q: Alternatively, what are three signs of a top-notch travel writer?

A: Highly observant, very open-minded, very curious. If those things are in place, they're usually a pretty good writer with enough practice. Professionalism matters more than anything to editors, though. Most would prefer an average writer who follows instructions well and submits good copy on time over one who's brilliant but always late or sloppy.

Q: Who is your agent and how did you meet him/her? If you don't have an agent, how did you secure publication of your books The World's Cheapest

Destinations, Traveler's Tool Kit: Mexico and Central America, Make Your Travel Dollars Worth a Fortune, and Travel Writing 2.0?

A: I've only used an agent for two things: getting Make Your Travel Dollars Worth a Fortune published and getting Italian rights sold for one of the other books. The first could have been accomplished without one if I'd gone direct, so an agent really only helps if you've got something that will pull in a huge advance. Not many travel books meet that criterion. It's far more profitable to go print on demand. Bookstores don't matter much anymore.

Q: Aside from your uber-sensible book, Travel Writing 2.0, what resources would you recommend to folks who want to learn more about travel writing?

A: The TravelWriting2.0 blog (<http://travelwriting2.com/>) and monthly newsletter, also Travel Writers Exchange (<http://www.travel-writers-exchange.com/>), MediaKitty (<http://www.mediakitty.com/>), and the Wooden Horse Database (<http://www.woodenhorsepub.com/>) if you're pitching print editors. Go to conferences for travel writers or bloggers. I've gotten far more career boosts from networking in person than anything else I've done. After you've got the basics down, it's all tweaks and new opportunities. The latter come from who you know as often as not.

Q: Do you have upcoming projects that my readers should have on their radar?

A: I just started a new site called Hotel-Scoop.com (<http://www.hotel-scoop.com/>) that features reviews of lodging around the world. There are ten professional writers besides me. Most of us worked for a site that got bought by Groupon and shut down their blogs. I saw an opportunity open up to fill the gap and pounced on it. That's been part of my success I guess: seeing a hole in the marketplace and filling it.

### 3. Resources

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#### HOW EDITORS THINK

"I read How Editors Think in one sitting and was engaged from beginning to end. It is well written, highly informative, and humorous—I found myself laughing out-loud in a few spots! Thanks for sharing the secrets of the trade."  
—Mayra Lazara Dole, author of Down to the Bone

Inspired by my experience as a former Simon & Schuster editor, How Editors

Think: The Real Reason They Rejected You reveals what it really takes to get published. For more information, visit:

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/E-book.html>

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#### TRAVEL WRITERS CONFERENCE

Dates: August 9-12

The Book Passage Travel Writers & Photographers Conference offers workshops in the morning, a full afternoon of panels and discussions, and evening faculty presentations. The faculty includes publishers, magazine editors, photographers, travel essayists, food writers, restaurateurs, guidebook writers, and more. For more information, visit <http://www.bookpassage.com/travel-writers-photographers-conference>

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#### OMEGA INSTITUTE MEMOIR FESTIVAL

Dates: August 10-12

Offers interactive writing workshops, discussions, readings, and the chance to share your own work in public. Faculty includes Andre Dubus III, Malachy McCourt, and Melissa Coleman. For more information, visit <http://www.eomega.org/>

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#### SEEKING LATINO BASEBALL FICTION

Deadline: August 31

VAO Publishing seeks submissions for the forthcoming anthology Arriba Baseball!: A Collection of Latino/a Baseball Fiction. Translations and works in Spanish will be considered. For more information, visit <http://publishing.valartout.org/arriba-baseball/>

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#### POETRY/SHORT STORY COLLECTION CONTEST

Deadline: August 31

Black Lawrence Press offers The St. Lawrence Book Award for an unpublished collection of poems or short stories. The winner will receive book publication and a \$1,000 cash award. For more information, visit [http://www.blacklawrence.com/stlawrence\\_1.html](http://www.blacklawrence.com/stlawrence_1.html)

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#### KIMMEL HARDING NELSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS

Deadline: September 1

Each resident receives a \$100 stipend per week, free housing, and a separate studio. Residencies are available for two to eight week stays. The Center does not discriminate on the basis of disability, sex, age, race, religion, or national origin. For more information, visit <http://www.khncenterforthearts.org/>

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#### POPULAR FICTION AWARDS

Deadline: September 14

Grand prize includes \$2500 and a trip to the Writer's Digest Conference in New York City. Categories include: romance, mystery/crime fiction, science-fiction/fantasy, thriller/suspense, horror, and young adult fiction. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/7pppycv>

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#### BOOKS FOR A BETTER LIFE AWARDS

Deadline: September 14

Honors the best self-help books published this year. Categories include: Childcare/Parenting, Cookbook, First Book, Green, Inspirational Memoir, Motivational, Psychology, Relationships, Spiritual, Wellness and Young Adult/Nonfiction. Publishers, agents, and authors are invited to submit entries. For more information, visit <http://tinyurl.com/3952y2f>

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#### RAGDALE ARTIST'S RETREAT

Deadline: September 15

Ragdale offers residencies from two weeks to two months to emerging and established writers from all over the world. Financial aid is available on a limited basis. Past residents include Francisco Aragon, Loida Maritza Perez, and Achy Obejas. For more information, visit <http://www.ragdale.org/>

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#### EROTIC ROMANCE PUBLISHER SEEKS A SEXY LATINO BESTSELLER

Does Fifty Shades of Grey have you ready to heat things up? Ellora's Cave seeks erotica featuring Latino protagonists. Themes can include male/male, BDSM, paranormal, ménage, vampire, shapeshifter, medieval, regency, etc. All categories are welcome: sci-fi, romantic suspense, western, historical, contemporary, erotic horror, time-travel, etc. Send the manuscript to [submissions@ellorascave.com](mailto:submissions@ellorascave.com) and enter "Latinidad" in the subject line. For more information about Ellora's Cave, visit <http://www.jasminejade.com/>

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#### AVAILABLE FOR PRE-ORDER: COUNT ON ME

Count on Me: Tales of Sisterhoods and Fierce Friendships by Las Comadres, edited by Adriana V. Lopez

Beloved bestselling Latino authors, including Esmeralda Santiago, Carolina De Robertis, Stephanie Elizondo Griest, Lorraine Lopez, Fabiola Santiago, Teresa Rodriguez, Sofia Quintero, Reyna Grande, Daisy Martinez, Michelle Herrera Mulligan, Dr. Ana Nogales, and Luis Alberto Urrea, share moving personal stories of the many ways that sisterly bonds have powerfully impacted their lives. For more information, visit [http://www.lascomadres.org/lco/lco-eng/events/preorder\\_popup.html](http://www.lascomadres.org/lco/lco-eng/events/preorder_popup.html)

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#### KNOWLEDGE IS POWER ONLY WHEN SHARED

Please forward Latinidad® widely.

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For more resources, visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/resources.html>

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#### SUCCESS STORIES

Has Latinidad® been of help to you? E-mail your success stories to [marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com)

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“If Bruce Springsteen, Harlan Howard, or Tom Waits can tell a character’s whole story in four minutes, maybe you don’t need as many words as you think to make an impact.”

--Tim Leffel, Travel Writing 2.0

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Marcela Landres

Author of the e-book "How Editors Think: The Real Reason They Rejected You"

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