

## Latinidad – July/August 2008: Grand Central Publishing

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Please forward to fellow writers, both published and pre-published. Thanks!

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### 1. Saludos

Grand Central Publishing (formerly known as Warner Books) has always published Latinos, but their commitment to Latino publishing grew exponentially when they hired Latina editor Selina McLemore last year. In the short time she's been there, she has built a formidable list of Latino books. Read this month's Q&A to learn what this star editor is looking for and—if you're writing what she's seeking—how to submit your work to her.

Helping Latino writers get published,

Marcela Landres

[marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com)

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/>

### 2. Q&A

Selina McLemore is an Editor at Grand Central Publishing where she focuses on Latino fiction and non-fiction. Her diverse list includes award-winning screenwriter of *Real Women Have Curves* Josefina Lopez; Congresswomen Loretta and Linda Sanchez; International Latino Book Award Winner Raul Ramos y Sanchez; award-winning literary fiction author Lorraine Lopez; and Crafty Chica Kathy Cano-Murillo. Additionally, Selina publishes top-shelf general women's fiction and romance. Prior to Grand Central Publishing, Selina worked at HarperCollins Publishers and Mira/Red Dress Ink. She is a graduate of Northwestern University, where she earned degrees in English and Spanish Literature.

\* Why is Grand Central Publishing a great home for Latino writers?

GCP is a great home for all writers because we are a company that's fully committed to our authors. We have some of the best authors in the business, and we help make them successful by also having some of the best publicists, art directors, marketers, editors, sales teams, etc. in the industry. All our writers benefit, including Latino writers. Unlike other houses, we don't segregate our Latino writers into a separate imprint. With the exception of

certain genres—Romance, for example, has its own program—everything is mainstream, though we are open to additional bilingual marketing or targeted niche promotion when it's appropriate to a specific book.

\* What kinds of manuscripts are you craving at the moment?

I'm looking for up market, culturally significant commercial fiction. I publish predominantly, though not exclusively, women's fiction, and am always eager for more of that, but I also love big thrillers and suspense novels. I'm also looking for beautifully written narrative non fiction, but the key there is that the story has to be both so unique that it could only happen to one person, and have themes that are so universal that almost everyone can relate. It would be great to find a fantastic historical fiction novel—that's something I don't see often enough.

\* What kinds of manuscripts are not your cup of tea?

Much to the disappointment of my former English teachers, I know nothing about poetry, so I don't acquire that; nor do I acquire children's or young adult novels (despite the fact that I secretly adore them.) Children's and YA novels are handled by Little Brown, so those writers should inquire there. I also don't publish Christian fiction, fantasy or science fiction.

\* How can writers avoid your "Reject" pile and get into your "Pursue" pile?

First impressions are crucial so make sure your query letter and synopsis are tight. I always look to those two items first to make sure a writer understands the concept of a "hook," can identify conflict and crucial plot points in her own work, and knows how to write a sentence. Also, make sure you're paying a lot of attention to your opening chapters. It's very important that you pick a strong scene to start your work so that there is something compelling me to stick with your manuscript and not pick up one of the other 50 on my desk. Finally, when creating characters, be on the look out for cliches and stereotypes. When people first heard I was looking for books that represented Latino culture I was flooded with a lot of projects—from Latinos and non-Latinos alike—that were so full of bad cliches I wanted to scream. Writers need to remember that you are not writing about "A Latino." You're writing about an individual person with a unique life.

\* Do you welcome unagented submissions?

I welcome unagented query letters accompanied by a synopsis of no more than two pages. Regular mail only—no emails.

\* Other than honing their craft, what can writers do to improve their chances of getting published?

Platform—it's not just for non fiction writers anymore! Anything you can do to build up your professional platform is a plus. If you can publish in magazines or online journals, win contests, or join writers' organizations, that's great. But there are other less conventional ways of building your platform too. For example, if you worked for 20 years at a law firm and have written a courtroom drama, that can be part of your platform. Or you could be a celebrity. That always seems to help.

\* Which of your authors' upcoming books should Latinidad readers look out for?

I have so many books coming out that I'm incredibly excited about! First up in September 08 is DREAM IN COLOR: How the Sanchez Sisters Are Making History in Congress by Congresswomen Loretta and Linda Sanchez. I'm sure many of your readers already know who these two amazing woman are, but for those who might not, they are the first sisters to ever serve concurrently in Congress in the history of the United States. They've written a wonderfully unconventional memoir about how the values they learned at home from their family helped them achieve the success they enjoy today. It's a really inspiring and entertaining read. Then, in October 08 I have a terrific novel called THE GIFTED GABALDON SISTERS by Lorraine Lopez. It's the story of four sisters who grow up believing they have special "gifts" given to them by their elderly housekeeper. Over time, they begin to question the gifts, as well as the identity of the woman who bequeathed them, which leads to the discovery of a long-buried family secret. The characters in this story are so terrific that I actually found myself missing them when I finished the book. I know your readers will love it. And in March of 2009 I'm thrilled to be publishing the first novel by Josefina Lopez, HUNGRY WOMAN IN PARIS. Most of your readers probably know Josefina as the writer of the hit film Real Woman Have Curves. Now she's finally turned her talent towards novels and written an incredible story about Canela, a journalist in L.A. who quits her job and her relationship, runs away to Paris and enrolls in cooking school. Josefina—who went to cooking school in Paris herself—even includes recipes! People won't be able to just read this book—they'll devour it!

\* And, of course, the one thing all my readers want to know: how can they submit their work to you?

Your readers are welcome to query me and send a synopsis (two pages max) to the address below. Please no emails—even when they get through the spam filters, I don't open anything from an address I don't recognize no matter what is in the subject line.

Selina McLemore  
Editor

Grand Central Publishing  
237 Park Ave, 16th floor  
New York, NY 10017

### 3. Success Story

“Dear Marcela,

A few years ago I found some of your resources on writing a book proposal. I used your tips to write my proposal to Cinco Puntos Press, and I'm about to get published in July. Thank you for providing this invaluable resource to writers!”

Claudia Guadalupe Martinez

The Smell of Old Lady Perfume

[http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?  
fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendID=69456012](http://profile.myspace.com/index.cfm?fuseaction=user.viewprofile&friendID=69456012)

[Note: To find the book proposal resources Claudia is referencing, visit  
<http://www.marcelalandres.com/bookproposalbasics.html> ]

### 4. Upcoming Workshops

First Pages Conference

WHAT: The First Pages Conference offers you the chance to spend the day with and get valuable feedback from an editor or agent and some of your writing peers, and attend workshops presented by top publishing professionals.

WHEN: 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m., Saturday, October 11

WHERE: 295 West Avenue, Norwalk, CT 06850

REGISTER: Visit <http://www.firstpages.com/conference/>

Invite me to speak for your organization:

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/requestaworkshop.html>

List of upcoming workshops:

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/workshops.html>

### 5. Resources

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

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#### SIMON & SCHUSTER SEEKS EDITORIAL ASSISTANT

The ideal candidate is an enthusiastic and driven individual who is eager to learn and ready to tackle a diversity of responsibilities. 0 - 3 years experience in publishing, preferably in children's. For more information, visit

<http://www.marcelalandres.com/jobs.html>

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### SHORT STORY COMPETITION

Deadline: August 1

A prize of \$1000 and publication in Portland Monthly magazine will be given annually for a short story. For more information, visit

<http://www.wordstockfestival.com/>

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### YADDO RESIDENCY

Deadline: August 1

For poets, fiction writers, and creative nonfiction writers. Past attendees include Julia Alvarez, Loida Maritza Perez and Paul Auster. Artists from all nations and backgrounds are encouraged to apply. For more information, visit

<http://www.yaddo.org/>

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### SINGLE POEM AWARD

Deadline: August 30

A prize of \$1000 and publication in Margie: The American Journal of Poetry is given for a single poem. For more information, visit

<http://www.margiereview.com/>

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### LATINO TV WRITERS PROGRAM

Deadline: September 2

For writers who can create at least one half-hour comedy or one-hour dramatic television script in English within five-weeks. Those writers whose scripts show promise will be mentored by network executives with the idea of placing them on a show. For more information, visit

<http://www.nhmc.org/writers/>

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### PEN EMERGING VOICES ROSENTHAL FELLOWSHIPS

Deadline: September 5

Fellowships of \$1000 each are given annually to poets, fiction writers, and creative nonfiction writers from minority, immigrant, or underserved communities. For more information, visit

<http://penusa.org/go/voices/>

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### POWER OF WORDS CONFERENCE

Dates: September 12-15

Features readings, roundtable discussions, and workshops in poetry and fiction. Faculty includes Walter Mosley. For more information, visit

<http://www.goddard.edu/powerofwords>

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### FICTION WRITING WORKSHOP FOR PHYSICIANS

Deadline: October 24-26

Designed to give aspiring physician authors practical training on how to write and publish medical fiction. Taught by best-selling authors Michael Palmer and Tess Gerritsen. For more information, visit

<http://www.seak.com/semmfw08.htm>

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#### WOMEN WRITING THE WEST CONFERENCE

Dates: October 24-26

Panels on "Getting Books Made into TV Shows and Movies," "Researching and Writing Small Town and Regional Town Histories" are on the program, as well as workshops on creative nonfiction and writing historical mysteries. For more information, visit

<http://www.womenwritingthewest.org/>

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#### LATINO BOOK AND FAMILY FESTIVAL SEEKS AUTHORS

Dates: November 8<sup>th</sup>-9<sup>th</sup>, Chicago, IL

The Festival offers authors a booth to sell and promote their books, an opportunity to make a presentation on one of their stages, as well as access to local media. Because they are a non-profit, they cannot reimburse travel or hotel costs. Interested writers should contact Yvette A. Soto at

[ysoto@teleguia.us](mailto:ysoto@teleguia.us). For more information, visit

<http://www.lbff.us/>

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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."

—Maryra 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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#### BEFORE YOU SEND IT OUT

Are you ready to submit your work to agents or editors, but want a professional to tell you how to improve it? Have friends and family read your writing, yet you'd like feedback from a pair of fresh eyes? Did you get rejected, and wonder what's wrong and how to fix it? I can help. For more information, visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/services.html>

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#### NOMINATE WWW.MARCELALANDRES.COM

If you like my web site, please nominate it for next year's Writer's Digest Magazine's "The 101 Best Web Sites for Writers" list. Send nominations to [writersdig@fwpubs.com](mailto:writersdig@fwpubs.com) with "101 Best Web Sites" as the subject line and a

brief note explaining how <http://www.marcelalandres.com/> has helped you.  
Thank you in advance for your support!

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#### SPREAD THE WORD

Want to see your announcement in an upcoming issue of Latinidad? Just e-mail me at [marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com)

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“A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.”—Chinese Proverb

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Helping writers get published.