

## Latinidad Newsletter – August/September 2003

*You are receiving this newsletter because you have expressed an interest in Marcela Landres and her work. If this newsletter has been forwarded to you and you wish to receive it directly, please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id51.htm>. Past newsletters are archived at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marcelalandres/>*

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### **1. Saludos**

*Muchisimas gracias* for the outpouring of good wishes I received from so many of you in response to July's inaugural issue of the Latinidad Newsletter, as well as in response to my departure from Simon & Schuster. Many of you have asked what my plans are—rest assured, I will continue, through my workshops, web site, and this newsletter, to

forge ahead with my mission to help talented Latino writers launch writing careers. I welcome you to join me in my mission by sharing the information I offer with interested friends and colleagues.

## **2. FAQ**

Q: I know Latino writers are hot right now, but I want to be judged on my talent, not because I'm Latino. Do I have to identify myself as a Latino when I submit my proposal?

A: Many people want to believe that writing talent is the only thing agents and editors seek in a writer. This is not the case. If it were, then the only component necessary to a proposal would be a writing sample. The reality, as you can see from the submission guidelines on my web site <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id20.htm>, is that a complete, professional proposal is composed of many parts. The purpose of a proposal is not to convey the talent of a writer, but rather to persuade agents and editors that a writer has a platform from which to launch a writing career.

A platform can consist of many things. For instance, authors of self-help books can have a high profile on the speaking circuit, a newspaper or magazine column, and a psychology or counseling background. For fiction, authors can have an MFA from a highly regarded program, a well-connected mentor, and literary awards. If there

are two proposals on the same subject that are equally well-written, the one with a weaker platform is more likely to end up in the rejection pile.

Your proposal is competing against countless others. I have rejected more proposals in a week than I've published in a year. Large publishing companies receive hundreds of submissions a day. Agents and editors wade through piles of submissions seeking proposals that will offer the greatest return on their investment of time and energy. But on your side is the growing interest in Latino authors. Latino writers who are savvy enough to clearly identify themselves as such will get—and the ones with talent and a platform will keep—the attention of agents and editors. Latino writers who don't identify themselves as such risk getting lost in the bottomless submission pile. Being Latino is not a platform in and of itself, but it is a hook that may keep you away from the rejection pile long enough to have someone fall in love with your talent—and your platform.

For more FAQ visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id54.htm>

### **3. Success Stories**

Below is an example of one writer, Laurie, who used the advice I shared with her to start laying the groundwork from which to launch a great writing career. As I mention above, talent alone is not enough—writers need a platform. For fiction writers a platform could include having short

pieces published in magazines/journals/anthologies, as well as garnering awards and recognition from the literary community. Congratulations to Laurie, on being published in the anthology, winning the award, *and* being chosen for the mentorship program—all things that will make her proposal stand out amidst the scores of submissions editors and agents receive.

"I read your email a while back about you leaving your job. I have to admit my first thought was *what happens to my book now?* I'm not sure if you even remember me; we met 2 Julys ago at Gemini Ink here in San Antonio. I've been working a lot on my novel, but it's much harder than I first thought it might be. I have however taken your advice about doing everything I can with my poetry in the meantime: Last October I had some work published in an Anthology and in March I won a monetary award from the National Society of Arts and Letters for a small collection of poetry. I just found out that I was hand picked by Barbara Ras to study with her in a mentorship program through Gemini Ink—and *they're* going to pay for it.

So, thank you, Marcela Landres. You have been a large voice in my life. Because of you I feel like a real writer.

Laurie Guerrero-Garces"

For more success stories visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id57.htm>

#### **4. Recommendations**

VONA (The Voices of Our Nation Arts Foundation) is a non-profit organization associated with the University of San Francisco's School of Education that is dedicated to nurturing developing writers through the traditions, perspectives, and aesthetics of writers of color. VONA was

founded by Junot Diaz (author of *Drown*), Elmaz Abinader (author of *Children of the Roojme* and *In the Country of My Dreams*) and Executive Director Diem Jones. I've heard nothing but raves from both writers and speakers who have participated in their Summer Writing Workshops. The impressive faculty has included such acclaimed writers as Terry McMillan, Martin Espada, and Willie Perdomo.

I highly recommend their Summer Writing Workshops. This year's workshops are already closed, but bookmark their web site and visit regularly to find out how to register for next year's session, as well as to find more information about VONA <http://www.vona-voices.org/>

For more recommendations visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id25.htm>

## **5. News to Use**

Last year I attended a writing conference in a region of the U.S. that has a large population of Latinos. As such, I expected to meet a significant number of Latino writers. Over 200 writers attended—but only about six were Latino. To my dismay, numerous non-Latino writers approached me and said “I’m not Latino, but I have lots of Latino friends who would love to submit their work to you. Can they?” To which I responded “Why aren’t *they* here?”

The writing life is a solitary one, but Latino writers seem more removed from the writing community than other writers. This needs to change, because writers who are part of the writing community are more likely to be happily published than those who are isolated. One effective way to become connected is to attend writing conferences, which offer the opportunity to create and maintain relationships with agents, editors, and other writers. Over the years I've met numerous writers at conferences who stay in touch with me, and I naturally pay more attention to their submissions than to submissions by writers I've never met. At one conference alone I met two writers who I signed up—one for a six figure deal.

Writing conferences are more about cultivating your rolodex instead of honing your craft. Consider the cost of attending a conference, like the cost of a good computer and printer, as an investment in your writing career. Below is an article that offers excellent guidance on how to choose the right conference for your needs. To help you get started, look up some of the conferences I've attended on the left hand side of this page on my web site: <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id44.htm>.

Writermag.com article “Writing Conferences: How Do You Choose the Best One for You?”

<http://www.writermag.com/WRT/default.aspx?c=a&id=1114>

For more News to Use visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id41.htm>

## **6. Upcoming Workshops**

I will participate in a panel regarding Spanish language publishing in the U.S., as well as present my “What Latino Writers Need to Know About Getting Published” workshop.

Location: 2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Latino Artist Round Table Congress, The King Juan Carlos I of Spain Center, New York University, 53 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012

Panel: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m. Thursday, October 23, Auditorium, 1<sup>st</sup> floor

Workshop: 11:00 – 1:00 p.m. Friday, October 24, Rm. 404, 4<sup>th</sup> floor

To Register: tk

For a list of upcoming workshops visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id22.htm>

## **7. Writing Opportunities**

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### SEEKING SCRIPTS

The Jim Preminger Literary Agency is looking for television series (comedy or drama) and feature writers for representation. Please fax your credits to Hilary Stern at 310-860-1117. You must have at least one completed spec television episode or spec feature screenplay to be considered. Please do not send unrequested material.

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### MARKETING FOR AUTHORS

Do you want to ensure the way you think you should promote your work is indeed the best way? At the end of this six-week class you will know for sure, and you'll have a customized plan that is tailor made for your book--and only your book.

M.J. Rose ([www.mjrose.com](http://www.mjrose.com)) and Douglas Clegg ([www.douglascllegg.com](http://www.douglascllegg.com)), novelists, co-founders of Pigeonhole Press and co-authors of **Buzz Your Book** will do much more than teach theory. Rose and Clegg will work on each student's marketing plan, word for word. The work is done in the class assignments and, when it's done, each student will have everything they need to go forth and get attention for their book. To register, and for more information about the course, visit <http://writersweekly.com/wwu/courses/marketing.html>

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#### START-UP LATIN MAGAZINE

Start-up Latin Magazine aimed at young, ambitious, urban, Latin markets of metro NYC is seeking talented writers with hot story ideas. We want a Maxim with citysearch type flavor to it. Articles and stories must be sexy not vulgar, hot, creative, intelligent but not geeky, funny but not immature, opinionated, clever articles, columns, lists, letters, blurbs, charts. . . the list goes on. Send in idea for articles in the following categories:

- Sex/Dating - online dating, blind dates, etc.
- Entertainment - Hip hop, Latin, alternative, dance, rock, Latin rock, etc.
- Music - Hot recording artist and upcoming ones.

If your idea rings a bell with us, we'll give you a call and work out the details. If this sounds like you, send ideas and salary requirements to: [dssraft@yahoo.com](mailto:dssraft@yahoo.com)

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#### SEEKING STORIES FROM MATURE WOMEN OF COLOR

Guidelines: We're calling on mature women of color from 45-105. We're developing an anthology that's a celebration of your years of seasoning; a place for all of those stories you want to share with your Sistahs. You've triumphed as a mother, you've become a dynamic businesswoman; you're gifted, or perhaps you've come to terms with negative events in your past.

Write a story, essay, or poem about a unique event in your life. Submissions should be typed, double-spaced, no more than 2500 words. Poetry should be no more than two double spaced pages. Send via email as a Microsoft Word attachment, to [vicki@seasonedsistahs.com](mailto:vicki@seasonedsistahs.com).

**Submissions must be received by 11/30/03.** You're encouraged to submit early, as decisions to publish will be made as entries are received and reviewed. If manuscript is accepted, author will receive \$100.00 and one copy of anthology upon publication. For more information, please visit: [www.seasonedsistahs.com](http://www.seasonedsistahs.com)

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## STUDENT WRITING AWARD

Willamette Writers announces the 2003-2004 Kate Herzog Writing Award to recognize exceptional student writing. Open to all high school seniors or college freshman/sophomores in the U.S. This year's theme is "Winners & Losers". Prizes include college scholarships: first place = \$500; second and third place = \$250 each; plus a free scholarship to the 2004 Willamette Writers Conference. To apply, please forward the following by no later than **Sunday, February 1, 2004** to Kate Herzog Scholarship, 9045 SW Barbur Blvd., Suite 5A, Portland, OR, 97219:

1. A writing sample, typed, double-spaced. For fiction include an original, unpublished writing sample of 1000 words or less. For poetry include an original, unpublished poem, 2 pages or less in length. The sample should be titled, but should not include information about the writer. Writing published in school publications is eligible.
2. A cover letter with contact information, the title of the writing sample, and a paragraph describing the student's goals as a writer.
3. A letter of recommendation from an instructor in the student's current academic year.

For further info about the award, please contact Willamette Writers at 503-452-1592. For more info about Willamette Writers, visit <http://www.willamettewriters.com/>

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## STUDENT WRITING PROGRAM

Young Willamette Writers - Students in grades 4-8 in the greater Portland area are invited to join an ongoing creative writing program. For more information visit online <http://www.willamettewriters.com/> or contact Joni Heyman, Willamette Writers, 9045 SW Barbur Blvd, Suite 5A, Portland, OR 97219.

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## 2003 ZOETROPE: ALL-STORY SHORT FICTION CONTEST

A. M. Homes will judge. First prize: \$1000, Second prize: \$500, Third prize: \$250

Winners and seven honorable mentions will be announced at the website December 1, 2003, and in the spring 2004 issue of Zoetrope: All-Story. Mail entries to: Zoetrope: All-Story Short Fiction Contest 916 Kearny Street San Francisco, CA 94133

Complete Contest Guidelines - We accept all genres of literary fiction. Entries must be: unpublished; 5,000 words or less; **postmarked by October 1, 2003**; clearly marked "Short Fiction Contest" on both the story and the outside of the envelope; accompanied by a \$15 entry fee per story (make checks payable to AZX Publications). Please include name and address on first page or cover letter only. We welcome multiple

entries (\$15/story) and entries from outside the U.S.; please send entry fee in U.S. currency or money order. While we cannot return manuscripts, we will forward a list of the winning stories to all entrants who include an SASE. Entrants retain rights to their stories. For more info visit <http://www.all-story.com/contests.cgi>

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#### CALL FOR POETRY

Poet Lore is the oldest continuously published poetry magazine in the U.S. Under the stewardship of its present publisher, The Writer's Center, Poet Lore publishes semi-annual installments of the finest contemporary poetry both by established writers and by those breaking into print for the first time.

Submission Guidelines: 1. You may submit three to five poems. 2. All poems must be typed with name and address on each poem. Photocopies are acceptable. 3. If a poem is more than one page, please indicate if the second page begins with a new stanza. 4. Submissions must be poems or essays never before published. 5. Reviewers: Please query the editors with a sample of your writing. 6. We prefer poems or prose not be simultaneous submitted. However, we ask you let us know in your cover letter if this is the case. We also need immediate notification if the work is accepted elsewhere. 7. A SASE must accompany all submissions. No manuscripts will be considered without an attached SASE. 8. Send your work and SASE to: Poet Lore, The Writer's Center, 4508 Walsh Street, Bethesda, MD 20815. For more information visit <http://www.writer.org/poetlore/>

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#### INDIANA REVIEW'S FICTION PRIZE

\$1000 Honorarium and Publication

Postmark Deadline: **October 6, 2003**

Reading Fee: \$15, includes a year's subscription. All entries considered for publication. All entries considered anonymously. Send no more than one story per entry, 35 double-spaced pages maximum. No previously published works, or works forthcoming elsewhere. Cover letter must include name, address, phone number, and title. Simultaneous submissions acceptable, but fee is non-refundable. Entrant's name should appear ONLY in the cover letter. Entries must be accompanied by SASE for notification. Manuscripts will not be returned. Make checks payable to Indiana Review. Each fee entitles entrant to one-year subscription, an extension of a current subscription, or a gift subscription. Please indicate your choice and enclose complete address information for subscriptions. Send entries to: Fiction Prize/Indiana Review Ballantine Hall 465 1020 E. Kirkwood Ave. Bloomington, IN 47405-7103

Final Judge: Aimee Bender, author of two books: *The Girl in the Flammable Skirt*, a collection of stories and a New York Times Notable Book of 1998; and *An Invisible Sign of My Own*, a novel and an L.A.

Times Pick of 2000. For more information visit <http://www.indiana.edu/~inreview/general/prize.htm>

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“MAKING BOXES AND SHRINES” WORKSHOP AT OMEGA INSTITUTE  
September 15-19, 2003

Kathy Cano Murillo, Latina artist and author, will be teaching students how to express themselves through the fabulous world of assemblage art, via shrines and shadow boxes. A form of “dimensional scrap booking”, it takes her recent how-to book, *Making Shadow Boxes and Shrines* (Rockport Publishers) and brings it to life in a hands-on way. Students will create all kinds of collage-friendly projects such as cigar box shrines, tin travel shrines, spirit houses, dashboard shrines, and much more. Students can bring their own photos or mementos to incorporate in their projects, otherwise all supplies are included.

To register, or for more information about the workshop, visit <http://www.omega.org/omega/workshops/a50aebb38b938ca0c7c30ecc7b42f565/>; for more information about Kathy Cano Murillo, visit <http://www.kathycanomurillo.homestead.com/>

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For past writing opportunities visit <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marcelalandres/>

Changing the world one e-mail at a time,

Marcela Landres

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

*If you'd like to share a question, success story, or information about an organization/event/job opening, please email me at [marcelalandres@yahoo.com](mailto:marcelalandres@yahoo.com)*

“Life shrinks or expands according to one’s courage.”

—Anais Nin

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