

Latinidad Newsletter - July 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 will be archived at <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/marcelalandres/>

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1. Saludos

I launched my web site <http://www.marcelalandres.com/> in May, and the response has been overwhelmingly positive. I created the site because I discovered Latino writers would travel from as far as Los Angeles, Miami, and even Mexico to New York to attend my workshops. In order to continue sharing information that I think is of value, and to maintain and extend my connection to the Latino writing community, I'm launching the Latinidad Newsletter, and this is the inaugural issue. The intention of this newsletter, like my workshops and web site, is to encourage and enable Latino writers to realize their dreams of being happily published. I hope you find it helpful, and I invite you to share it with friends and colleagues. Information is power, but only if you share it.

2. FAQ

July is National Foreign Language Month, and in honor of this, I'd like to focus on a FAQ I receive from Spanish language writers. (Of course, Spanish is hardly a foreign language in the US. In fact, there are places, such as Miami, in which Spanish is arguably the dominant language.)

Q: I write in Spanish, and want to submit a proposal to you, but your submission guidelines indicate that the proposal must be written in English. Why?

A: Good question. This is because of the realities of the publishing process. While editors have the power to say "No" (reject a manuscript), most don't have the power to say "Yes" (acquire a manuscript). What this means is that unless an editor happens to also be a Publisher or very senior management, editors have to take a manuscript through an acquisition process before an author can be put under contract for publication. Different publishing houses handle the acquisition process in different ways, but it usually runs along these lines:

First, an editor has to persuade her Editor-in-Chief that a manuscript is a good fit for the department's list. If, after reading the manuscript, the Editor-in-Chief agrees with the editor that the manuscript is worthwhile, then the Editor-in-Chief must consult with the Publisher. This is because it is the Publisher who controls the money. The editor and Editor-in-Chief need to persuade the Publisher to offer an advance large enough to convince the agent and author to sign up with their publishing company. These days, it is becoming more and more important to have an author that is promotable. As a result, sometimes someone from Publicity may be asked to read the manuscript to assess the promotability of the author and manuscript. In addition, the Marketing and Sales departments may be queried to see how marketable an idea is, or how enthusiastically they think the bookstores and other accounts will respond to an author.

Bottom line: several people are usually involved in the acquisition process, not just the editor. It is very unlikely that any of these people, with the possible exception of the editor, can read in Spanish. As such, your chances of convincing a publisher that they should not only publish your work, but do so with great passion and enthusiasm, increases exponentially if the people involved can actually read your proposal. So while it is okay to write your manuscript in Spanish, it is to your advantage that the proposal be written in English.

More answers to FAQ can be found at <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id54.htm>

3. Success Story

The more connected you are to the writing community, the closer you'll be to making your dream of being published come true. This newsletter, like my web site, is intended to strengthen and expand the Latino writing community. Below is an example of one writer who used the information I shared in a past email about the \$25,000 John T. Lupton "New Voices in Literature" Awards sponsored by the Books for Life Foundation, and he became a finalist. Congratulations Raul!

May 19, 2003

Wonderful news to share with you folks.

I believe that I am now finally on the entrance ramp of the road to fruition....SKUNK ALPHA is on course and at flank speed.

Good News and Bad News....

Bad News - I didn't win the \$10,000 plus \$2,500 travel expense award for the John T. Lupton New Voices In Literature competition that I entered a while back. Winners are to be announced (and must be present) at the BooksAmerica Expo in Los Angeles on the 28th of this month. A query letter, book proposal and sample chapter were being considered.

Good News - my book proposal will be pitched to literary agents, NY editors and publishers as a result of being selected as one of the ten nationwide finalists in the Non-fiction genre!

A special thanks goes to Bob Shirley. Your web site (<http://www.pcf45.com/index.html>) added a great amount of credibility to the book proposal. I'm committed to working hard at finishing the work quickly and thus pay tribute to those Swift Boat Sailors "Still On Patrol" and to the rest of you that served by their side in Vietnam.

An added "gracias" goes to my good friend Richard Rios whose editing hand works magic! But, without Tony Diaz having forwarded Marcela Landres' lead on the competition, someone else would have filled my spot on that Finalist list....."gracias" to you as well.

Raul "Bean" Herrera

4. Recommended

Karen Quinones Miller is a bestselling writer who I've had the privilege of working with at Simon & Schuster. She launched her literary career by self-publishing a novel. At my workshops, I often recommend that Latino writers seriously considering self-publishing because it has proven to be an excellent way for many African-American writers (including Michael Baisden and E. Lynn Harris, among others) to land a book deal with a major publisher. Self-publishing is such an effective means of gaining the attention of agents, editors and publishers, that I wonder why more Latino writers don't pursue this option. Of course, there's a difference between simply self-publishing and successfully self-publishing. To learn how to do it right, I highly recommend writers check out Karen's "Booking It! Publishing/Self-Publishing Seminar". For more info, visit her web site <http://www.oshunpublishing.com/Seminars.htm>

Recommended Archives can be found at <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id48.htm>

5. News to Use

Street Life books (literature by and for the hip hop generation) are growing in popularity, and below are two articles that describe this popular phenomenon. Street Life books, like hip-hop itself, are identified strongly with the African-American community, and rightly so. However, Latinos have arguably been instrumental in creating and shaping hip hop culture, and are certainly major fans and consumers of this culture. Case in point, the first reader interviewed in the AP article below is a fellow by the name of Jose Perez. However, none of the authors mentioned are Latino. Which begs the question: Where are the Latino Street Life authors? If your writing is of and for the hip hop community, or you know of Latino writers who have this sensibility, please let me know. I'd love to read (and possibly publish) their work, 1) because I myself grew up with hip hop, and 2) because one of my missions is to publish books that will inspire nonreaders to read, and these books have proven to do just that.

AP "Street Life" article <http://www.news-journalonline.com/NewsJournalOnline/Entertainment/Books/sceneBOOK01052>

003.htm

PW "Urban Fiction" article <http://publishersweekly.reviewsnews.com/index.asp?layout=article&articleId=CA299553&display=searchResults&text=urban+fiction>

For other articles of interest, please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id41.htm>

6. Upcoming Workshops

I will be participating in a "New York Editors Q&A Panel". In addition, I will be conducting one-on-one consultations with writers.

Conference Dates: August 8 through 10

Panel Time and Date: 8:15 am - 9:15 am, Saturday August 9

Location: The Sheraton Airport Hotel, 8235 N.E. Airport Way,
Portland, Oregon 97220-1398

To Register: To attend the conference and to reserve a one-on-one meeting with me, please visit Willamette Writers' web site: <http://www.willamettewriters.com/wwc/registration.htm>

Program: For a copy of the conference program, please visit their web site: <http://www.willamettewriters.com/wwc/program.htm>

Questions?: For more information, please contact the Willamette Writers office at:
9045 SW Barbur Blvd, Ste 5A
Portland, OR 97219

Voice: 503.452-1592, FAX: 503.452-0372

To see a list of all my upcoming workshops through 2003, please visit <http://www.marcelalandres.com/id22.htm>

7. Writing and Job Opportunities

THE POETRY LIFE PRIZE

24th Open Poetry Competition

http://freespace.virgin.net/poetry.life/24th_open_poetry_competition.htm

ENTRY FEE £4.00 for each poem

1st PRIZE £3000

2nd PRIZE £500

3rd PRIZE £250

20 Special Commendations winning a £25 book token.

Deadline July 26, 2003.

ESSENCE

www.essence.com/essence/writers_guidelines/0,16109,,00.html

The magazine for African-American and Caribbean women. We feature personal-growth articles, celebrity profiles, and well-reported pieces on political and social issues. We are also looking for how-to pieces on careers, money, health and fitness, and relationships. And we run short items on people in the arts and community activists. Word length is given upon assignment. Please send a query letter rather than submitting a completed manuscript. The only exceptions are for the Interiors, Our World, Brothers and Back Talk columns. Essays submitted for these pages should run no longer than 600 words and should be clearly addressed to the editor of the column. We cannot discuss story ideas over the telephone, nor can we respond to queries that come by fax or e-mail. About 50 cents/word.

SCIFI.COM

<http://www.scifi.com/scifiction/submit.html>

SCIFICTION is looking for literate, strongly plotted science fiction and fantasy stories between 2,000 and 17,500 words—on a variety of subjects and themes. We want to intrigue our readers with mind-broadening, thought-provoking stories. Characterization is crucial. Stories must be written in clear, understandable prose. Payment is 20 cents a word up to \$3,500. Originals only; no reprints.

NEW CENTURY WRITER NOVEL/NOVELLA AWARDS

http://www.newcenturywriter.org/6th_ncwa_2003_entry_call.htm

ENTRY FEE \$35 per each novel excerpt
Two or more novels/novellas for \$30 each.
1st Place \$2,000 cash
2nd Place \$1,000 cash
3rd Place \$500 cash
4th - 10th Places \$100 cash each
Plus, the TOP 10 novels/novellas will be listed by title and author, along with author bios, in a New Century Writer Awards® Best of paperback original anthology. Deadline July 31, 2003. Winners announced in November 2003.

JOURNEY

<http://journeymagazine.ca/faqs/>

We publish about three travel features and at least one major automotive feature every issue. We also feature one-page columns on lifestyle (gardening, hobbies), health and finance topics, with a travel or automotive slant. Journey is published four times per year and represents the CAA clubs in the Maritimes, as well as Hamilton, Ottawa, Kitchener and Niagara regions in Ontario. Feature articles are 1200-1500 words (\$800); mini-features are 800-1200 (\$600); columns are 400-500 words (\$400). Each article should include at least one sidebar. Payment is upon publication—sorry about the wait. A kill fee of 50 percent applies to stories we have assigned but cannot use

for whatever reason. We expect tourist board photos to be used free of charge, and pay \$40 per photo to freelancers.

SPOKEN WORD ENGLISH INSTRUCTOR

The Center for Black Literature seeks a spoken word/poetry instructor to work in a project in the Center's CUNY Arts Consortium Program. This project is part of a program that introduces students to the elements of the spoken word as an art form. Although performance is emphasized, students study the history of the spoken word as well as elements of poetry. Students will be expected to compose poems and to perform them. Students will also have an opportunity to meet spoken word artists. The class meets Friday afternoons from 3:30 - 5:45.

The ideal candidate should have a minimum of three years teaching English (poetry) in a middle school or high school. He/she should also write and perform poetry. Interested persons should submit their resume with a cover letter, writing samples, and references to:

Dr. Brenda M. Greene, Executive Director
Center for Black Literature
Medgar Evers College, Metrotech
1650 Bedford Avenue
Brooklyn, New York 11225
718 270-6976
Resumes will be accepted through July 30, 2003.

Poetic Spontaneity: Writing on the Spot

Level: All

American Book Award-winning author Martín Espada will share hands-on writing experience as a model for teaching poetry workshops in the community and the schools. Participants will explore a variety of written forms, including traditional forms, such as odes and elegies; and not-so-traditional forms, such as San Antonio haiku and bilingual jazzpoems. The workshop will consist of two sessions. In the morning, we'll explore a variety of innovative writing exercises. In the afternoon, teachers enrolled in the University of Texas at San Antonio's Summer Institute for the Inclusion of Mexican American and Latino Literature and Culture in the Classroom will join the discussion. This workshop is co-sponsored by the University of Texas at San Antonio's Division of Bicultural-Bilingual Studies.

Instructor: Martin Espada

Date: Thursday, July 17; 9:00 am - 4:00 pm (one-hour break for lunch)

Limit: 20 students

Location: UTSA Downtown Campus (specific location will be mailed to workshop participants)

Registration Deadline: Friday, July 11

Fee: \$90/member; \$100/nonmember

To register, call 210-734-WORD (9673) or 1-877-734-9673, toll free. Registration may also be completed online at www.geminiink.org

Writing and job opportunities from past email alerts are archived at <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 suggest a question, share a success story, and/or offer information about an organization/event/job opening of interest to Latino writers for me to feature in an upcoming newsletter, please email me at marcelalandres@yahoo.com

“If you bring forth what is inside of you,
what you bring forth will save you.
If you do not bring forth what is inside of you,
what is inside of you will destroy you.”
—The Gnostic Gospel of St. Thomas

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