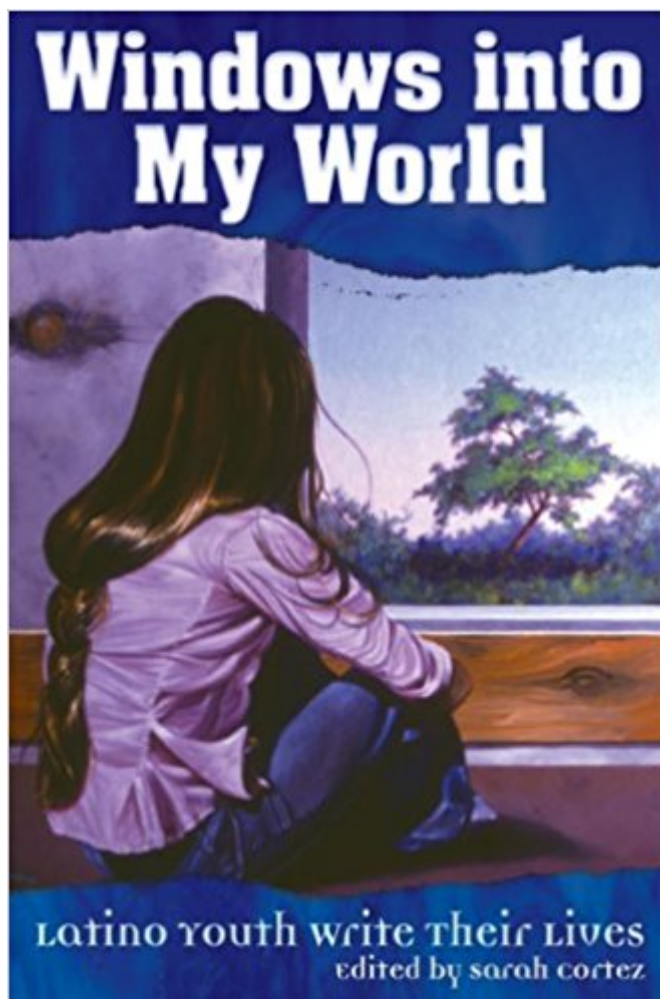




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Windows Into My World: Latino Youth Write Their Lives



Synopsis

"They never thought I would leave. I remember tia Olivia calling the house to let me know that I was betraying my family by leaving to study. But unlike both of my parents, I wasn't leaving the country to let years pass before seeing my family again; and unlike my mother, I wasn't leaving to get married." In this short but powerful memoir, Marisol explains that she knew her departure for Yale would create conflict with her family, but she is surprised that her leaving leads to a bond with her parents that she could never have imagined. Marisol is one of thirty-six Latinos whose writings are included in this collection. They all uniquely document their struggles with the issues that young people encounter--friendship, death, anorexia, divorce, sexuality--but added to these difficulties are those specific to their ethnicity, such as adjusting to a new culture and language, and handling familial and cultural expectations that can limit their hopes and dreams but just as often enrich their lives. In one piece, a young woman muses about the safety in the hills of her native Honduras compared to the flat expanse of her new homeland: "When I venture back into these silver hills, no one can see where I've gone because of the curves of the winding streets. But when I walk the flat roads of America, people can watch me go, trace my path and witness the inevitable stumble." These short essays written by young men and women from various Latino backgrounds--Mexican American, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Salvadoran--reflect the diversity of growing up Latino in the United States. Whether from a gay or straight, urban or rural, recent immigrant or third generation perspective, these illuminating pieces of memoir shine a light into the lives of young Hispanic adults.

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Customer Reviews

Adult/High School – These 36 brief essays document issues that can affect all young people – friendship, death, anorexia, divorce, sexuality – but also comment on the writers' adjustments to a new society or expectations that might limit their hopes and dreams. In one piece, a young woman shares the story of her family's frustrating Thanksgiving Day excursion to find an open restaurant, not understanding this holiday in their new country. Another writer expresses her dismay when her father refuses to let her go to another city to attend college, unless her mother moves in with her. A third recalls a harrowing trip over the border to a feria, the Mexican version of a carnival, when a ride stops in midair and she sees the look of fear on the face of the macho cousin she admires so much. The essayists, many still in college, represent diverse backgrounds – Mexican, Puerto Rican, Dominican, Salvadoran. For young adults of all backgrounds, this collection illuminates both the familiar coming-of-age experiences that transcend cultural differences and the moments that are unique to young Latinos in the States. – Pat Bangs, Fairfax County Public Library, VA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Cortez's collection of essays evokes powerful images of a segment of society struggling to find its place despite language barriers, cultural differences and historical challenges. It should be a must-read book in every high school senior-level English class due to its thought provoking subject matter." --San Antonio Express-News

Personally, I loved the book!! I'm an American girl living in Maine, so you may be shocked that I would've read or even found out about it. But everyday, I spend time with my boyfriend, best friend, and their families who are all from El Salvador, a good friend from Guatemala, and another friend from Mexico. I love hearing their stories because they are so fascinating. So when I found this book I was so excited! Finally I didn't have to bother my friends to tell me stories, I could just read about similar ones over and over again as many times as I wanted. I encourage everyone to learn the culture of Latino countries and also the language!! I'd recommend this book to anyone and I wanna give major thanks to all of the contributing authors!

This was a summer reading selection. The students who read, all of Latino or Brazilian background, found stories that moved them, surprised them, made them laugh, or were a theme they identified with. We talked with animation about the variety of stories shared.

This book is great! As the young writers wrote each of their individual stories, I began to see faces that appear each semester in my classes at Monterey Peninsula College (MPC) in California. The rosters that I am given at the beginning of each semester echo many of the surnames that I saw in the book. As an Anglo, born and raised in southern California, I thought I knew a lot about the Latino heritage, but I was mistaken. As I read through each story, I began to see and understand much more clearly how difficult it is for my minority students to leave their families; enroll in college classes; maintain their grades; work part or full time; and hope to graduate/transfer to a four year college. I am much better informed and able to empathize with each of them now that I have read and digested "Windows Into My World". I am grateful that Sarah undertook and completed such an ambitious and important project. She should be congratulated for the accomplishment. A.J. Farrar, M.S.

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