

can be read as part of the Nuyorican Poets Cafe phenomenon, as well as within the voices of resistance in Hispanic-American literature.

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Anne Marie Fowler

Levins Morales, Aurora (1954–) (poet, essayist)

Aurora Levins Morales was born in Indiera, Puerto Rico, to a Puerto Rican mother and a Jewish father. In 1967 the Levins-Morales family moved to the U.S. mainland, and since then the author has lived in Chicago, Minneapolis, and Berkeley. Levins Morales is a lecturer and activist deeply concerned with issues affecting Third World communities, especially the lives of women. Themes in her works include sexual abuse and racial discrimination, as well as ecology and social justice. She switches between prose and poetry in her work and combines both personal and collective narrative voices; in her writing Levins Morales seeks to express the female ethnic voice.

Her first and most acclaimed work, *Getting Home Alive* (1986), was written in collaboration with her mother, Rosario Morales. It is a project in which both women pay homage to a rich heritage, in which they find refuge from discrimination. Important themes in *Getting Home Alive* include

female Puerto Rican identity, Third World and working-class feminism, women's relationships, Puerto Rican multiple identity (Latin American, African, Jewish, North American), memory as a means of recovering a past heritage, and writing as a means of self-discovery. *Getting Home Alive* is a hybrid collection of stories, poems, and personal essays in which the authors' Puerto Rican identity is formally described as mestizo, a mixture of Spanish and Indian blood. This multiple identity surfaces most notably in the poem "Child of the Américas":

I am not African. Africa is in me, but I cannot return.
I am not taína. Taíno is in me, but there is no way back.
I am not European. Europe lives in me, but I have no home there.
I am new. History made me. My first language was spanglish.
I was born at the crossroads
And I am whole (50).

For the speaker in this passage ethnic diversity is a source of power, and home is a place that can be found in many regions of the world. Hybridity is described as a heritage recovered by means of stories of female ancestors, island landscapes, sounds, and smells; it is also described formally through the mixture of voices and genres, prose and poetry. In her discussion of hybridity in the Americas Levins Morales enters into a literary conversation with authors such as Cuban revolutionary JOSÉ MARTÍ and Mexican essayist José Vasconcelos.

Levins Morales published both *Remedios: Stories of Earth and Iron from the History of Puertorriqueñas* and *Medicine Stories: History, Culture and the Politics of Integrity* in 1998. *Remedios* is a fascinating collection of prose and poetry that retells the history of Puerto Rican people through the lives of female ancestors from the Old and the New World. Commentary on healing herbs are accompanied by stories that rewrite history, telling the lives of a long line of women who have been silenced for centuries. Some of the stories

tell about suffering and abuse, but most of them recount stories of strength and resistance.

Medicine Stories is a collection of personal essays grouped in five sections. The section "Historian as *CURANDERA*" deals with history and the struggle over who has the authority to tell the story of other people; "Speaking in Tongues" concentrates on the power of language and how it is used to silence other people's authentic stories; "Raíces" explores the realities and myths of identity politics and the complexity of Puerto Rican identity; "Privilege and Loss" discusses different aspects of privilege and the costs of accepting it. The final section, "Integrity," is about living a politics of integrity, about commitment, activism, and the integration of collective and individual liberation. The collection calls for a revision of personal and collective memories and history as a way to heal all wounds. Given its themes and settings Levins Morales's poetry can be read within the context of PUERTO RICAN LITERATURE.

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Antonia Domínguez Miguela

Line of the Sun, The Judith Ortiz Cofer (1989)

JUDITH ORTIZ COFER spent her childhood shuttling back and forth between Paterson, New Jersey, and her grandmother's home in Puerto Rico. Though not associated with Puerto Rican writers living in New York, Cofer nevertheless shares their preoccupation with the experience of translocation, which is commonly depicted in PUERTO RICAN LITERATURE. Cofer's *Line of the Sun* was nominated for the Pulitzer Prize.

The Line of the Sun centers on the story of the author's uncle, Guzmán. Cofer bases her writings on memories of life in Puerto Rico and the stories of her relatives and ancestors. She cites English author Virginia Woolf as an influence in re-creating personal memories and family stories and imbuing them with a fictive life of their own. In first writing autobiographical works about her family, Cofer worried about the disconnect between her vision and the memories of family members. She now seems to accept—at least in her writing—the unreliable nature of memory as well as the key role it plays in the act of storytelling.

Cofer has been criticized for the novel's shifts in point of view; however, the multivoiced novel allows the reader to see a story unfold in the depth that an adolescent first-person narrator would be unable to achieve. The story begins with the narrator, Marisol, recalling the story of Mamá Cielo, her grandmother, and her sons, Carmelo and Guzmán. Her voice then fades away as others take up the story, or as it is told from a more omniscient point of view. Marisol imagines her parents' life in Puerto Rico based on bits and pieces of overheard conversations and creatively tries to fill in the gaps of her knowledge about events in the lives of her relatives before she was born.

The story is set in Salud, which means "health" in Spanish and which corresponds literarily with García Márquez's idyllic Macondo in *One Hundred*