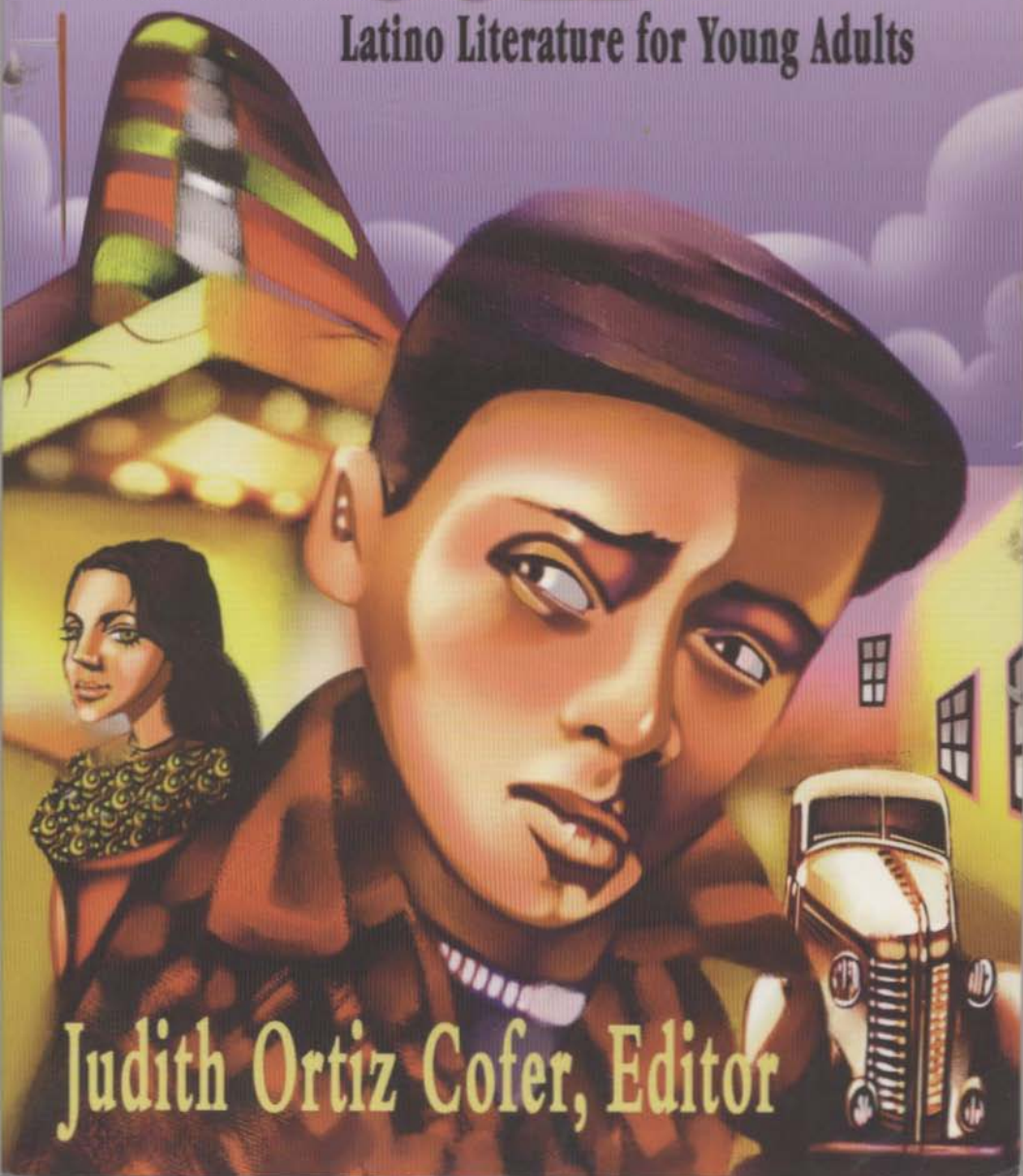


RIDING LOW on the STREETS of GOLD

Latino Literature for Young Adults



Judith Ortiz Cofer, Editor

RIDING LOW
on the STREETS of
GOLD

Edited, with an Introduction, by

Judith Ortiz Cofer



PIÑATA BOOKS
ARTE PÚBLICO PRESS
HOUSTON, TEXAS

Contents

Judith Ortiz Cofer

Introduction	v
--------------------	---

José Martí

I	2
---------	---

Roberta Fernández

Amanda	9
--------------	---

Tomás Rivera

from ... <i>y no se lo tragó la tierra</i> / ... <i>And the Earth Did Not</i> <i>Devour Him</i>	23
The Salamanders	24

Jesús Salvador Treviño

The Fabulous Sinkhole	30
-----------------------------	----

Pat Mora

Fences	61
Same Song	62
Tomás Rivera	63

Helena María Viramontes

Growing	66
---------------	----

Sarah Cortez	
Haunt	78
Walking Home	79
Mike Padilla	
Carrying Sergei	81
Jesús Colón	
He Couldn't Guess My Name	119
Beatriz de la Garza	
Pillars of Gold and Silver	122
Sandra María Esteves	
Religious Instructions for Young Casualties	140
Affirmations #3, Take Off Your Mask	142
Life Is A Journey	142
Virgil Suárez	
Ricardito	144
Daniel Chacón	
Too White	147
Victor Villaseñor	
<i>Toreando el tren</i> or Bullfighting the Train	166
Judith Ortiz Cofer	
Primary Lessons	186
<i>Volar</i>	194
Additional Works by These Authors	197

Too White

I felt bad for the kid but wanted to laugh at the fat cop, who looked around the scene with his eyes squinted as if he were the greatest detective. His fat cheeks and the front teeth that touched his lower lip made him look like a little kid with a badge and a gun. That afternoon I was alone, having gone in the grocery store to walk the tall aisles of wine and liquor, hoping to have guts enough to stuff a bottle down my baggy pants to share later with my friends Johnny de la Rosa, David Romero, and Gilbert Sanchez, who were, like me, among the few Chicanos in our town. Usually we walked the Livermore streets together, feeling like giants, strutting past small homes that seemed barely to reach our waists, thinking we were bad. We weren't a gang, but we had thought about giving ourselves a name. Kids our age avoided us.

The crowd was pressed so close that our shoulders touched. Suddenly some kid on a ten-speed bike broke through to the front. His handlebars were raised up like ram's horns. He stopped and rested his elbows on the chrome bars, and his face in the palms of his hands.

"Damn," he said, blue eyes wide. "What happened here?" He looked at me, expecting me to answer.

"Some kid got hit," I said.

"Friend of yours?" he asked.