



VICTOR VILLASEÑOR, Biography

Born in the *barrio* of Carlsbad, California in 1940, Victor Villaseñor was raised on a ranch four miles north in Oceanside. Since his parents were born in Mexico, Villaseñor spoke only Spanish until beginning school. After years of facing language and cultural barriers, heavy discrimination and a reading problem, later diagnosed as dyslexia, Victor dropped out of high school his junior year and moved to Mexico. There he discovered a wealth of Mexican art, literature, music, that helped him recapture and understand the dignity and richness of his heritage.

Victor returned to the U.S. at the age of 20. He began to feel the old frustration and rage return as he witnessed again the disregard toward poor and uneducated people and especially toward the Mexicans. Then a chance encounter with James Joyce's *Portrait Of An Artist As A Young Man*, changed Victor's life. It awakened a desire to confront through literature the problems associated with his cultural heritage that continued to plague him.

After producing nine novels, 65 short stories, and receiving 265 rejections Villaseñor sold his first novel, *Macho!*, which the Los Angeles Times compared to the best of Steinbeck. This began a journey that would eventually lead to the publication of the national bestseller, *Rain of Gold*. Published in seven languages and used by thousands of teachers and school systems across the nation as required reading, *Rain Of Gold* tells the story of Victor's family, taking the reader from war-torn Mexico during the Revolution to the present day.

Villaseñor's body of works include a number of nonfiction books which are all used in schools throughout the country: The trilogy *Wild Steps Of Heaven*, *Rain of Gold*, and *Thirteen Senses*, *Jury: The People vs Juan Corona*, *Macho!*, and *Walking Stars*, a collection of short stories written especially to inspire youth. *Burro Genius*, national best seller and Pulitzer Prize finalist, is the first book of the second trilogy. The second book, *Crazy Loco Love*, will be released September 2008.

Victor also wrote the screenplay for *The Ballad of Gregorio Cortez*, starring Edward James Olmos. A work in progress is an HBO mini-series on the books *Rain of Gold*, *Wild Steps of Heaven*, *Thirteen Senses*, and *Burro Genius* with Maya Production: Moctesuma Esparza, Producer.

Villaseñor's acclaimed written works, as well as his inspiring lectures, have earned him numerous awards and endorsements, including the Founding John Steinbeck Chair appointment.

A gifted and accomplished speaker, Victor Villaseñor, in his candid and heartfelt manner, brings a fresh perspective to a number of universal themes, including pride in heritage, the strength of family, world peace, the power of the written word, and dedication to education and personal achievement.

Villaseñor's commitment to world peace and harmony is demonstrated through "Snow Goose Global Thanksgiving", his non-profit organization established to promote peace throughout the world. His self-published book, *Snow Goose Global Thanksgiving*, describes a simple philosophy toward that eventuality.

Victor Villaseñor continues to live on the ranch where he was raised.