



Red-Inked Retablos (Camino del Sol)

Rigoberto González

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In the Mexican Catholic tradition, retablos are ornamental structures made of carved wood framing an oil painting of a devotional image, usually a patron saint. Acclaimed author and essayist Rigoberto González commemorates the passion and the pain of these carvings in his new volume *Red-Inked Retablos*, a moving memoir of human experience and thought.

This frank new collection masterfully combines accounts from González's personal life with reflections on writers who have influenced him. The collection offers an in-depth meditation on the development of gay Chicano literature and the responsibilities of the Chicana/o writer.

Widely acclaimed for giving a voice to the Chicano GLBT community, González's writing spans a wide range of genres: poetry, fiction, nonfiction, and bilingual books for children and young adults. Introduced by Women's Studies professor Maythee Rojas, *Retablos* collects thirteen pieces that together provide a narrative of González's life from his childhood through his career as a writer, critic, and mentor.

In *Red-Inked Retablos*, González continues to expand his oeuvre on *mariposa* (literally, "butterfly") memory, a genre he pioneered in which Chicano/a writers openly address non-traditional sexuality. For González, *mariposa* memory is important testimony not only about reconfiguring personal identity in relation to masculinity, culture, and religion. It's also about highlighting values like education, shaping a sex-positive discourse, and exercising agency through a public voice. It's about making the queer experience a Chicano experience and the Chicano experience a queer one.

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