

The Last Tortilla and Other Stories

By Sergio Troncoso

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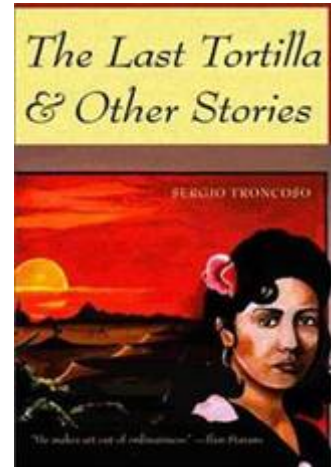
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*Premio Aztlan Literary Prize for the Best Book by an emerging Chicano writer

*Southwest Book Award from the Border Regional Library Association



“She asked me if I liked them. And what could I say? They were wonderful.” From the very beginning of Sergio Troncoso's celebrated story “Angie Luna,” we know we are in the hands of a gifted storyteller. Born of Mexican immigrants, raised in El Paso, and now living in New York City, Troncoso has a rare knack for celebrating life. Writing in a straightforward, light-handed style reminiscent of Grace Paley and Raymond Carver, he spins charming tales that reflect his experiences in two worlds. Troncoso's El Paso is a normal town where common people who happen to be Mexican eat, sleep, fall in love, and undergo epiphanies just like everyone else. His tales are coming-of-age stories from the Mexican-American border, stories of the working class, stories of those coping with the trials of growing old in a rapidly changing society. He also explores New York with vignettes of life in the big city, capturing its loneliness and danger.

Beginning with Troncoso's widely acclaimed story “Angie Luna,” the tale of a feverish love affair in which a young man rediscovers his Mexican heritage and learns how much love can hurt, these stories delve into the many dimensions of the human condition. We watch boys playing a game that begins innocently but takes a dangerous turn. We see an old Anglo woman befriending her Mexican gardener because both are lonely. We witness a man terrorized in his New York apartment, taking solace in memories of lost love. Two new stories will be welcomed by Troncoso's readers. “My Life in the City” relates a transplanted Texan's yearning for companionship in New York, while “The Last Tortilla” returns to the Southwest to explore family strains after a mother's death--and the secret behind that death. Each reflects an insight about the human heart that has already established the author's work in literary circles. Troncoso sets aside the polemics about social discomfort sometimes found in contemporary Chicano writing and focuses instead on the moral and intellectual lives of his characters. The twelve stories gathered here form a richly textured tapestry that adds to our understanding of what it is to be human.

Discussion Questions for *The Last Tortilla and Other Stories*:

<http://sergiotroncoso.com/tortilla/questions/index.htm>

Praise for *The Last Tortilla and Other Stories*:

“[An] earthy collection...These stories are richly satisfying.” —*Publishers Weekly*

“Troncoso is a master storyteller; he weaves the threads of events in a way that sometimes surprises but always engages. Readers’ hearts will be touched by episodes of loss, tragedy, and love; his characters witness and reflect on much sorrow and happiness.” —*Multicultural Review*

“Each story is an organic whole, full of characters who have lives as complete as the reader’s....Enthusiastically recommended.” —*Booklist*

“Troncoso really shines when he writes about El Paso and the life of Mexican Americans there. He has the gift for writing from his heart outward into his reader’s heart.” —*Bloomsbury Review*

“What the reader will encounter is Troncoso’s ability to magnify the small gestures and events of life that are packed with meaning but go unspoken because language to describe them is elusive. Fortunately, Troncoso finds the precise words to describe these events and crafts them with great care.” —*Austin Chronicle*

“Troncoso has a creative passion to raise ordinary, everyday, transitory human life to its holy ground: to transform it into literature.” —*El Paso Times*

“He is capable of finding wonder and warmth and tragedy in the simplest of lives.” —
Albuquerque Journal

“A collection of memorable and historically rooted and philosophically provocative stories from that part of our state where culture continues to evolve both bright and dark— while providing us the newest stars on our literary horizons.” —*Texas Observer*

“Troncoso’s wistful, endearingly romantic tales vividly dramatize the inherent richness of even subsistence-level lives. He’s a respecter of persons, and in turn his characters earn your affection and respect.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

SERGIO TRONCOSO is the author of *Crossing Borders: Personal Essays* and the novels *From This Wicked Patch of Dust* and *The Nature of Truth*. He co-edited *Our Lost Border: Essays on Life amid the Narco-Violence*. He graduated from Harvard College and studied international relations and philosophy at Yale University. He won a Fulbright scholarship to Mexico, where he studied economics, politics, and literature. Troncoso was inducted into the Hispanic Scholarship Fund’s Alumni Hall of Fame and the Texas Institute of Letters. He was born and raised in El Paso, Texas and now lives in New York City.

Contact:

SergioTroncoso@gmail.com

www.SergioTroncoso.com