



# Crossing Borders: Personal Essays

*Sergio Troncoso*

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**Crossing Borders: Personal Essays** Sergio Troncoso

- **Best Books of 2011** by *The Hispanic Reader*
- **Bronze Award** for Essays in *ForeWord Review's* Book of the Year Awards
- **Second Place** for Best Biography in English in the International Latino Book Awards

"On good days I feel I am a bridge. On bad days I just feel alone," Sergio Troncoso writes in this riveting collection of sixteen personal essays in which he seeks to connect the humanity of his Mexican family to those he meets on the East Coast, including his wife's Jewish kin. Raised in a home steps from the Mexican border in El Paso, Texas, Troncoso crossed what seemed an even more imposing border when he left home to attend Harvard College.

Initially, "outsider status" was thrust upon him; later, he adopted it willingly, writing about the Southwest and Chicanos in an effort to communicate who he was and where he came from to those unfamiliar with his childhood world. He wrote to maintain his ties to his parents and his abuelita, and to fight against the elitism he experienced in the Ivy League. "I was torn," he writes, "between the people I loved at home and the ideas I devoured away from home."

Troncoso writes to examine his life and to create meaning from the disparate worlds he inhabits and the borders he crosses. In his three-part essay entitled "Letter to My Young Sons," he documents the terror of his wife's breast cancer diagnosis and the ups and downs of her surgery and treatment. Other essays explore evolving gender roles and interfaith marriage as Troncoso becomes a father, he struggles with an uneasy relationship with his elderly father, and he understands the impact his wife's Jewish heritage and religion have on his Mexican-American identity.

*Crossing Borders: Personal Essays* reveals a writer, father and husband who has crossed linguistic, cultural and intellectual borders to provoke debate about contemporary Mexican-American identity. Challenging assumptions about literature, the role of writers in America, fatherhood and family, these essays bridge the chasm between the poverty of the border region and the highest echelons of success in America. Troncoso writes with the deepest faith in humanity about sacrifice, commitment and honesty.

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