

## Family & Community

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Poetry often speaks to the bonds of family and community. How have Latino poets depicted these relationships—among children, parents, and grandparents, between intimate partners, and within wider communities, informal networks of support, and “chosen families”? What sorts of practices and rituals surrounding family and community do we find in Latino poetry, and how have poets explored the effects of migration, generational change, and other circumstances on these traditions?

**Read an essay on  
this theme by Lauro Flores**



This brochure was compiled from  
*A project reader to Latino Poetry, The  
Library of America Anthology,*  
Rigoberto González, editor, ©2024.  
The full resource is at  
<https://www.latinopoetry.org>

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## Discussion Guide Family & Community

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The Center for the Book, in collaboration with New Hampshire Humanities and UNH, and thanks to a grant from the Library of America invites you to join us in a celebration of Latino Poetry here in the Granite state in 2024/2025. Our celebration will center around *Latino Poetry: The Library of America Anthology*, edited by Rigoberto González, 2024.

A national public humanities initiative directed by Library of America with generous support from the National Endowment for the Humanities and Emerson Collective, comprising a groundbreaking anthology, events around the country, and an online media archive.

Una gran iniciativa pública en el campo de las humanidades, dirigida por Library of America con el generoso apoyo del Fondo Nacional para las Humanidades y Emerson Collective, que comprende programas públicos por todo el país; un archivo multimedia; y una nueva antología sin precedentes.

<http://nhsl.dncr.nh.gov/latino-poetry>

## Start with these poems

“In Colorado My Father Scoured and Stacked Dishes” by Eduardo C. Corral (*Anthology*, p. 474)

“Put Attention” by Laurie Ann Guerrero (*Anthology*, p. 493)

“Nani” by Alberto Ríos (*Anthology*, p. 326)

Notes on the theme generally



These three poems are also at <https://www.latinopoetry.org/humanities-themes>

## Questions to Consider

1. What did you expect based on the title of the poem? Were your expectations met?
2. Did the structure, tone, or layout of any of the poems affect your reading experience?
3. Did the poem make you think about any of your own experiences?
4. What are the similarities and differences between how the family members in each poem are depicted? How does the speaker in each poem understand their relationship to their parents and grandparents? Do these relationships affect the speaker in the poem’s present?
5. How does each poem deal with time? Which verb tenses are used throughout the different poems, and do they change? Do you get the sense that the past is far away, or alternatively, very close?
6. What are the “memory-objects” or childhood images in each poem? What effect do they have? How does each poet set the scene of their past? Consider how the presence of “Bugs Bunny” in Corral’s poem contrasts with the “fat red lips and Mexican moustaches” seeping from the television in Guerrero’s poem.

7. What lessons have the speakers learned from their parent or grandparent? What lessons might they have missed?
8. How do experiences of migration or of linguistic or cultural estrangement affect familial relationships? What is particular to these relationships that might speak to Latinx or diasporic experience more broadly?

## Poems for further reading

“Ars Poetica with Mother and Dogs” by Rio Cortez (p. 476)

“My Father’s Hands” by Richard Garcia (p. 270)

“El fantasma de mi padre en dos paisajes / My Father’s Ghost in Two Landscapes” by Jaime Manrique (p. 288)

“Because My Mother Burned Her Legs in a Freak Accident” by Judith Ortiz Cofer (p. 302)

“Distance” by Ruth Irupé Sanabria (p. 534)

“El Exilio” Virgil Suárez (p. 442)

“The Distance between Love & My Language” by Andrés Cerpa (p. 468)

“Lord, Spanglish Me” by J. Michael Martinez (p. 503)

Page numbers are from *Latino Poetry, The Library of America Anthology*