



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**Advance praise for Esperanzas Desesperadas:**

Viva las voces! So fresh, with corazones abiertos! This inspiring collection of poems, stories, and memories by sixteen writing workshop members glimmers with dreams, yearnings, the kiss of guavas, sting of limones. Read, as they write, beyond fronteras!

– C.M. Mayo, author of *Miraculous Air* and *Sky Over El Nido*

**ANTHOLOGY WITH LATIN ROOTS EXPLORES UNIVERSAL HOPES, FEARS, AND THE OCCASIONAL “TINIEST OF MIRACLES”:** *Esperanzas Desesperadas* Launches in New York City, October 4, 2013

For the past five years, every Monday, gathering workers, students, teachers—writers all—have roamed, like eager literary nomads, across the city’s boroughs to share their art...even congregating in public parks sometimes. All for the love of language, to turn dreams, desires, wishes, and “rescued memories” into lasting tributes to their cultural—and human—experiences. This group has deep roots which span Mexico, Argentina, El Salvador, Guatemala, Nicaragua, and even some locales as wildly exotic as New York City.

“Sometimes my kids are no longer interested in speaking the language of their parents and prefer the language of civilized countries. Maybe they are persuaded by the promises of the American dream where everything is possible if you work hard enough. The dreams of watching snow fall on civilized countries. That is how my mom spoke of this country when we lived in the south. From that south “*paredón y después*” as sung by Goyeneche in his tangos, as we watched snow in the movies,” writes school teacher Carolina Ana Drake in her moving contribution to *ESPERANZAS DESESPERADAS*, an anthology published jointly by Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders and NY Writers Coalition (publication date September 30, 2013, ISBN 978-0-9787794-9-8). The collection includes stories, poems and recollections by sixteen writers, some of these fledgling authors capture the stuff of their minds' eyes and souls' with pen and paper.

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**Mano a Mano: Mexican Culture Without Borders**

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The anthology illuminates the tensions arising from a sharp juxtaposition of cultures: pastoral childhood reveries looked back upon from the jangling urban present; homegrown myths and innocent pleasures reconsidered through the filter of inevitable wisdom and inescapable change. Celene Sánchez recalls a childhood filled with the joys of playing outside with tamales made from mud while her grandmother, who washed the dirty clothes, would unsuccessfully scold her. Some of the contributors to the anthology imagine a homeland far beyond the Latin countries. In “I Come from that Place” Evelyn Hernández writes, “Nameless place, without origin and without end where spirits and souls never die, they live to transform, feed on corn milk and fruits, on tranquility and peace, they dress in harmony and love. Time and location do not exist; the cardinal points are one, the four spirits of *Chaac* lead you to the same axis...”

In sharp contrast, Alejandro Barragan IV writes of now searching for “some fabric to cover myself from others’ judgments” while “awaiting each day’s arrival/of a city/of a lie.” Despite — and perhaps precisely because of—these tensions, magic happens in a big way in this anthology. “Here you find stories and poems, pensamientos y oraciones, milagritos and the tiniest of miracles that arise out of a space of safety, of love,” writes Miguel Ángel Ángeles – the workshop leader. Spanglish, sprinkled throughout the book, brings an unvarnished honesty to the work, as heartfelt and unselfconscious as “outsider” paintings. Call it, perhaps, literary folk art.

“Poetry should be made by all,” declared the French poet Lautréamont. And the poetry, in all its forms—free verse and fiction, memoir and anecdote—captured in these pages makes it so...with engaging, enlightening, and inspiring results.

A reception will be held to celebrate the anthology's launch at Gallery Octavio Paz at the Mexican Cultural Institute on Friday, October 4, 6-9 p.m., at the Consulate General of Mexico in New York, 27 East 39th Street, 2nd floor. The event is free and open to the public. All are welcome.

**ABOUT NY WRITERS COALITION (NYWC):** NYWC is one of the largest community writing organizations in the country. NYWC creates opportunities for formerly voiceless members of society to be heard through the art of writing. We provide free, unique and powerful creative writing workshops throughout New York City for people from groups that have been historically deprived of voice in our society, including at-risk and disconnected youth, the homeless and formerly homeless, the incarcerated and formerly incarcerated, war veterans, people with disabilities, cancer and major illness, immigrants, seniors and others. For more information, please visit [www.nywriterscoalition.org](http://www.nywriterscoalition.org)

**ABOUT MANO A MANO: MEXICAN CULTURE WITHOUT BORDERS:** Based in New York, Mano a Mano is a nonprofit organization dedicated to celebrating Mexican culture and promoting the understanding of Mexican traditions through the arts, annual celebrations of holidays (Day of the Dead/Día de Muertos; Christmas/Posadas y Pastorelas), classes, festivals, concerts, performances, processions, installations, and seminars. For more information, please visit [www.manoamano.us](http://www.manoamano.us)

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