

PRESS & BOOKING PACKET
CURTAINS OF RAIN

a novel by Anel I. Flores · she/they/elle

WINNER — 2026 International Latino Book Award, Best LGBTQ+ Book
WINNER — NACCS Tejas Foco Book Award, 2026

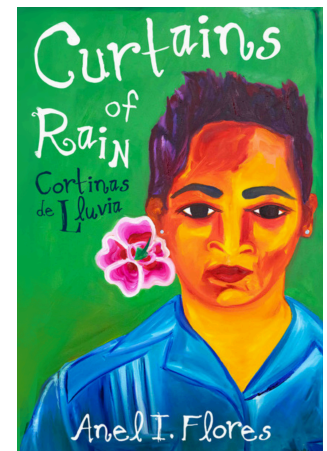
A South Texas love story for a river, an ocean, a shore — and the land the border is trying to erase.

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About the Book

Anel I. Flores's *Curtains of Rain* Wins 2026 International Latino Book Award and NACCS Tejas Foco Book Award

Anel I. Flores has something to celebrate. *Cortinas de Lluvia* is the winner of the 2026 International Latino Book Award for Best LGBTQ+ Book — AND the NACCS Tejas Foco Book Award. Two honors for one South Texas story, in a thirty-year career spent turning silence into story. *Curtains of Rain* is a genre-bending, bilingual novel that celebrates the ingenuity of survivors who transform trauma into triumph and reimagine tradition on their own terms. It is a love letter to those who live on the margins, reclaiming family, faith, and home through the vibrancy of queer resilience.



Exiled from her hometown after a traumatic attempted exorcism, Solitaria Gaviota-Alaniz flees to San Antonio and lands at the doorstep of her gay tíos in the dead of night — alone, determined, and ready to reclaim what was taken. With a chosen familia of drag queens, panaderas, politicians, her nonbinary best friend, and other enterprising queer kin, she transforms a flea-market hustle into an international tequila empire. But beneath the glitter and triumph lies the haunting legacy of environmental racism, generational trauma, and the fight to queer tradition and reclaim home.

Running underneath Sol's story is the real Hayes-Sammons Chemical Co. lawsuit, which exposed decades of pesticide contamination in Rio Grande Valley farmworker communities — the environmental racism that decided whose water, whose air, whose children counted as expendable.

“I wrote this novel to honor not just the Hayes Sammons lawsuit,” Flores has said, “but the humanity, resilience, tenderness, and rage behind it.” Flores wrote the novel from a belief that the practice of caring for land was never separate from the practice of caring for one another — that love for the people around us moves outward, into how we tend the river, the delta, the shore. That circle, in Flores's telling, is wider than we're taught: ancestors mapped out across the same cosmos that maps the stars over the grande Rio bravo; herons, pelicans, ocelots, and cormorants, still moving through the land and its water as kin, not backdrop; and our own bodies carrying that same animal spirit, the same ancestral memory, on as energy in blood and breath long after the people who carried it before us are gone.

Sol's inheritance — like ours, Flores would say — is knowing how to live in more than one place, more than one element, at once. Gloria E. Anzaldúa gave that experience a name: *Nepantla*, the space between worlds, where, Anzaldúa wrote, “At some point, on our way to a new consciousness, we will have to leave the opposite bank, the split between the two mortal combatants somehow healed so that we are on both shores at once and, at once, see through serpent and eagle eyes.” (*Borderlands/La Frontera*, 1987)— water and land, the living and those who came before us, held in the same body at the same time.

That belief carries new urgency. Starbase is moving to annex thousands of acres at Boca Chica Beach, after SpaceX was already found violating the Clean Water Act. The new federal budget puts almost 50 billion into border wall construction and strips protections that once kept fencing out of our beloved Santa Ana National Wildlife Refuge — one of the last stretches of native habitat left in the Valley. And over 400 miles of the Rio Grande that nurtured us, are now under military control, even as crossings sit near historic lows.

Curtains of Rain arrives as a record and a witness. Land declared empty, communities erased in the name of progress or security — it is a history we have lived through before. Flores' novel insists it be told, and told again, before it can be buried.

Media Hooks — Why This Book Now

- **Intersectional & Borderlands Storytelling** — expands the queer Latinx literary canon with a bold, layered, and culturally rooted narrative.
- **Queer & Trans Representation** — centers queer and non-binary Latinx characters with authenticity, humor, and complexity.
- **Relevant to Current Issues** — explores cultural survival, environmental justice, family, migration, and spirituality.
- **Perfect for Campus & Community Engagement** — offers readings, workshops, and panel discussions on literature, identity, and resilience.

For fans of Ana Castillo, Reyna Grande, and queer voices reclaiming home.

Praise for Curtains of Rain

“An important and engaging addition to the ever-growing body of Texana queer lit that deliver stories yearning both to be told and heard.”

— Ana Castillo, award-winning author of *So Far from God* and *Give it to Me*

“With lush, lyrical prose, Anel I. Flores offers a tender portrait of girlhood, identity, and the sacred magic of chosen kin. This is a story for every queer brown girl who ever dared to dream herself whole.”

— Alex Espinoza, author of *The Sons of El Rey*

“A delightful journey with charming and challenging characters wading through life's toxicities toward deeper connections.... This enthralling portrayal of the complexities and amazingness of queer lives in South Texas will speak to many hearts.”

— Jackie Cuevas, author of *Post-Borderlandia*

“With her unique voice full of warmth and humor, Anel Flores brings a vibrant flea market to life, creating a compelling coming-of-age story with characters that feel like family.”

— Reyna Grande, author of *The Distance Between Us*

“This story is for everyone who understands fiction has its roots in our lost stories, our galvanized memories, and our cherished lineages. This story is by and for those whose lives are created in telenovelas, along the borderlands, and through the institutions that dare to try to stifle our beautiful locura. Here, thankfully, is a story about surviving and thriving with our love and dignity.”

— jo reyes-boitel, scholar, playwright, and author of the matchstick litanies

Praise for Anel — Speaker, Educator & Facilitator

For Educators

*“I enjoy teaching *Empanada: A Lesbiana Story en Probaditas* in my Ethnic and Women's Studies courses because it captures intersectional themes that I discuss in my social science courses such as race/ethnicity, class, gender, sexuality, food, and spiritualities. While centering a Chicana Tejana Lesbiana standpoint, Anel Flores tells stories that speak to my students from diverse backgrounds. Her stories challenge my students to think, heal, and transform. I encourage other faculty to assign it to their students and see the power that this literary masterpiece has in the classroom and beyond.”*

— José M. Aguilar-Hernández, Lecturer, UCLA César E. Chávez Department of Chicana and Chicano Studies, and Assistant Professor, Cal Poly Pomona

*“The students highlighted *Empanada* as a text that helped them appreciate Chicana/o culture in general and lesbiana culture in a deeper way. *Empanada* allowed students to highlight several aspects of Chicana/Mexicana, working class, lesbiana identity in San Antonio, and that was priceless.”*

— Dr. Rita E. Urquijo-Ruiz, Professor, Trinity University Department of Modern Languages and Literature

“Anel Flores is a gripping speaker and workshop facilitator who exudes a humble and inviting demeanor. Her uncompromising and deeply inclusive feminist praxis leaves audiences, students,

and community members feeling more whole, alive, seen, and closer to their life's purpose. As a spiritual activist storyteller, artist, and guide, Anel captures the essence of borderland, queer, and trans lives in ways that quite literally heal. I seek out and take advantage of every opportunity I can to read Anel Flores, to listen to Anel Flores, and to be in community with Anel Flores. This world needs more of her magica!"

— **Brenda Sendejo, PhD, Associate Professor of Feminist Studies and President, Mujeres Activas en Letras y Cambio Social**

For Organizations

"I have heard Anel at a wide range of public events and each time they demonstrate a unique ability to connect with everyone in the room, while fully bringing themselves to the experience. Anel invites us into their story — from the losses to the triumphs, the sublime to the ridiculous and mundane — in a way that allows us to find greater meaning (and humor) in our own experiences. And Anel can do this every time, with every audience."

— **Stephanie LaFroscia, Director of Grants and Community Engagement, San Antonio Area Foundation**

"Anel is a San Antonio artist who works across mediums. I'm a big fan of their prints and writing that explore the intersection of the lived experience and gender theory, leaning academic, and beyond. Think Laura Aguilar meets Gloria Anzaldúa!"

— **Bianca Alcaraz, Co-Curator, Transamerica/n, McNay Art Museum**

"Anel holds space with seemingly endless reserves of joy, love, courage, and compassion. An essential part of her love is a firm belief that each of us can and must show up for one another, can and must step into our courage to create communities in which we all thrive. She brings her full queer artist-writer-mama-hermana-tía-organizer-activist-healer self to her speaking and facilitation. A panel discussion becomes a virtual visit to her sketchbook and studio, which in turn invites the audience to create their own images and share their own stories. A workshop becomes a place to play, and in the course of play, learn and stretch into the discomfort that is essential for growth."

— **Michelle Otero, author of Vessels and Malinche's Daughter, 2021–2022 Poet Laureate of Albuquerque, NM**

"As an LGBTQIA person, activist, author, and artist, Anel I. Flores brings a genuine passion to the many intersections that are shaped by their lived experiences. They're a dynamic and thought-provoking speaker that evokes emotion and oftentimes a call to action. Anel crafts their words in a way that tells the story of their love for life, family, and their cultura that drives deep into your being."

— **Robert Salcido, Jr., Executive Director, The Center — Pride Center San Antonio**

Book Facts

Title	Curtains of Rain / Cortinas de Lluvia
Author	Anel I. Flores
Genre	Literary Fiction, LGBTQIA+, Chicanx/Latinx, Borderlands Literature
ISBN	978-1-938841-39-2 (ISBN-10: 1-938841-39-5)

Publisher	Jaded Ibis Press
Publication	July 2025
Pages	372
Format / Price	Paperback & eBook, 5.5 x 8.5 in., \$18.99
Language	English, with Spanish elements
Distribution	Ingram Publisher Services · also available via Itasca Books

About the Author

Anel I. Flores (she/they/elle) is a trans, queer, Xicanx writer, visual artist, and educator whose thirty-year career spans poetry, fiction, graphic memoir, theater, and visual art. Born and raised in the Texas borderlands and now based in San Antonio, Flores holds an MFA in Creative Writing and works at the intersection of Chicana/Latina feminist tradition, Gloria Anzaldúa's nepantla theory, and embodied storytelling. They are the founder of La Otra Taller Nepantla and of Anel I. Flores Studio (est. 1999), a longtime member of Sandra Cisneros's Macondo Writers Workshop.



Flores's work has been presented internationally at the McNay Museum, NYU, the Mexican Cultural Institute, the National Museum of Mexican Art, University of Paris VIII, Universidad de Alcalá, and their writing can be found in *The American Poetry Review*, *Sinister Wisdom*, the *Malcs Literary Journal* and *Hostos Review*. They are the founder of the *Queer Voices*, an annual multidisciplinary performance festival in San Antonio now in its ninth year. With over three decades in education and administration, Flores facilitates writing and art workshops — from single classroom visits to multi-week coaching intensives — rooted in lived experience, ancestral healing, and social justice, and has served as Distinguished Writer in Residence at Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU).

Flores novel *Curtains of Rain* (Jaded Ibis Press, 2025) received the 2026 International Latino Book Award and the NACCS Tejas Award, and the Lambda Literary Award–nominated *Empanada: A Lesbiana Story en Probaditas* — also produced and performed as a play — along with the zine *Les Maestras* and the chapbooks *La Fea* and *Behind the Bookbag*. They are co-editor of the anthologies *JOTA: A Queer Latina y Latinx Anthology - FlowerSong Press* and *I Love Us: Queer on the Borderlands* (in progress), and are currently completing the graphic memoir *Painted Red*.

Selected Works

- Curtains of Rain** — novel, Jaded Ibis Press, 2025
- Empanada: A Lesbiana Story en Probaditas** — novel; adapted and performed as a play, 2002-2012
- Painted Red** — graphic memoir, forthcoming
- Les Maestres** — zine, 2020- Present
- La Fea and Behind the Bookbag** — chapbooks, 1998
- JOTA: A Queer Anthology of Voces** — co-editor, 2026
- I Love Us: Queer on the Borderlands** — co-editor, forthcoming

Awards & Honors

- ◆ **International Latino Book Award**—Curtains of Rain, 2025
- ◆ **NACCS Tejas Foco Book Award**—Curtains of Rain, 2025
- ◆ **Lambda Literary Award Nominee** — Empanada: A Lesbiana Story en Probaditas
- ◆ **NALAC Catalyst for Change Awardee** — 2024
- ◆ **Mellon Foundation / UTSA Democratizing Racial Justice (DRJ) Artist-in-Residence Fellow**
- ◆ **Distinguished Writer in Residence** — Our Lady of the Lake University (OLLU)
- ◆ **Macondo Writers Workshop Fellow** — founded by Sandra Cisneros
- ◆ **Founder** — La Otra Taller Nepantla, and the Queer Voices Tardeada performance festival

Campus & Community Offerings

Available and year-round by arrangement, in-person or virtual.

Readings & Conversations

- Queering Home, Healing Land** — a 60–75 minute reading from the novel followed by a moderated conversation and Q&A; open to any class size or public event.
- Single Class Visit** — a 20–30 minute drop-in conversation for a literature, gender studies, Latinx/Chicanx studies, environmental studies, or creative writing course.

Craft & Energy Workshops

Each 2–2.5 hour session opens in what Flores calls the body vault — a return to water memory — and draws craft passages directly from the novel.

- El Cuerpo Es Río: Writing from the Body Vault** — on water memory and survival.

- **Umbilical Currents: The River as Inheritance** — lyric memoir and poetry craft rooted in ancestral water.
- **Water Dreaming: Grief, Repression, and Radical Hope** — writing eco-memoria for uncertain times, in tribute to Ecomemoria.
- **Nuestra Delta Mágica: Dismantling Silence, Writing Resistance** — testimonio and witness writing against environmental racism.
- **Les Aguas Maestras: A Multi-Genre Ritual for Border Legacy** — poetry, prose, and hybrid forms honoring queer and Brown survival.

Full-Day Retreat

- **Water Dreaming Retreat Day** — a five-hour writing and watercolor retreat: Ofrenda welcome, Body Vault Círculo, Cosmic Memory Map, eco-memoria and radical-hope writing, and an original watercolor piece to take home. Ideal for a wellness center, MFA cohort, or community organization.

Panels, Roundtables & Keynotes

Flores speaks on:

- Writing from Within Your Own Identity
- The Borderlands as a Site of Survival & Resistance
- Queering Tradition & Chosen Family
- Environmental Racism & Classism in South Texas
- Intergenerational Trauma & Healing
- Building BIPOC Queer Joy & Resistance
- The Role of Literature in Activism & Social Change

Extended Mentorship

- **10-Week Coaching Intensive** — one-on-one or small cohort (2–5 writers), one hour per session, rooted in Chicana/Latina feminist tradition and Anzaldúan nepantla theory. In-person in San Antonio or virtual — ideal for MFA programs, writing centers, or community cohorts.

BOOKING & CONTACT

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