

Does HEAVEN Have a GHETTO?

Poetry & Artwork by Youth from
Gardner Betts Juvenile Justice Center

Edited by SOY Collective



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Salmoncito Series
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RSA Mission Statement

Red Salmon Arts is dedicated to the development of emerging writers and the promotion of indigenous, Chicana/o, Latina/o literature, providing outlets and mechanisms for cultural exchange and sharing the retrieval of a people's history with a commitment to social justice.

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Hecho en Aztlán
c/s

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About the Facilitators & Guest Artists

Czarina Aggabao Thelen (Facilitator)

Czarina is a Pinay dancer who writes about indigenous peoples' cultural activism and organizing for ancestral land recovery. She previously was senior community organizer at Mothers on the Move and Youth on the Move in the South Bronx and was featured in Celina Su's *Streetwise for Book Smarts* (2009). She facilitates theater and writing workshops to uproot internalized oppressions and create social change.

João Costa Vargas (Facilitator)

João teaches Black Studies at the University of Texas at Austin and is a jazz musician.

Jonathon Mahone (Guest Artist)

A member of Riders Against the Storm (RAS), a Providence hip hop duo, Jon is a former Providence high school teacher, and ran several after-school arts programs. After a number of years of performing as a local solo artist on the theatrical and performance stage Jon "Jbro" came together with Ghislaine "Tiger Lily" Jean-Mahone in the summer of 2003 to create music together. The group has been working hard over the last few years to manifest music and poetry that reflects a spirit of resistance to the prevalent and dominant streams of music and art that exists today. RAS, through music and performance, hopes to not only inform, but also to uplift and create spaces where atrocities against people of the African diaspora can begin to heal.

Jorge Antonio Renaud (Guest Artist)

Born in New Mexico, Jorge has lived in Texas most of his life. A former copy editor for the *Austin-American Statesman* and the *Waco Tribune-Herald*, Jorge is also the author of *Behind the Walls: A Guide for Families and Friends of Texas Prison Inmates*. He has received nine PEN awards for his poetry, fiction, nonfiction and memoir writing. His essays are featured in *Americas Review*, *The Texas Observer*, *The Threepenny Review*, *Revista Chicano-Riqueña*, and *The Other Side*. Jorge is a former editor of *Echo*, the Texas Prison newspaper. He holds a B.S. in psychology from Sam Houston State University.

Rene Valdez (Facilitator)

Hailing from East El Paso, Texas, Rene is a working-class Chicano cultural worker, community organizer, and media activist, who migrated to Austin in the late 1990s. He began as a volunteer for both RSA, and the community-based Resistencia Bookstore. Since 2000, he has worked closely as a student, political comrade, and caring son of Xicanindio elder poet/human rights activist Raúl Salinas who founded RSA and Resistencia Bookstore. Presently, Rene is the Executive Director of Red Salmon Arts and one of the many caretakers of Resistencia Bookstore. For the past few years, he has facilitated the intensive writing workshops of Save Our Youth, a RSA project, and edited several SOY collections of poetry and writing.

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