

# On the Meeting Grounds

Writings, Poetry, and Artwork by  
Johnston High School Students

Edited by Rene Valdez and Lilia Raquel Rosas



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## Red Salmon Arts Mission

*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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*About the Editors and Facilitators*

## Rene Valdez

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 Red Salmon Arts (RSA) and Resistencia Bookstore and is now the Administrator of RSA. Along with ensuring the cutting-edge programming and seamless daily operations of RSA for the past five years, Rene has co-edited several SOY chapbooks. He is also a poet/writer, who has participated in literary events such as El Festival de las Plantas and benefits for El Corazón de Tejas—Central Texas Chapter of REFORMA. He received his Bachelor of Arts in philosophy from the University of Texas at El Paso and was a founding member of the *Austin Javelina*, a community newspaper, and Free Radio Austin, an unlicensed neighborhood radio station.

## Lilia Raquel Rosas

A queer Chicana feminist, Lilia Raquel Rosas is originally from Albany, California in the San Francisco Bay Area but has lived in Austin, Texas since 1995. She is a volunteer at RSA and Resistencia Bookstore. She is a Ford Foundation Dissertation Fellow and is currently a doctoral candidate in history at the UT Austin, specializing in comparative ethnic and queer studies through narratives of sexuality. In addition to assisting with SOY programming, Lilia is experienced in other areas of public education. She has taught U.S. history, civics, and English-language classes to immigrant adults in Riverside, California; worked as a teaching assistant for the Department of History, Center for African and African American Studies, and Center for Asian American Studies; tutored for Intercollegiate Athletics for Men and Women; and worked as a supplemental instructor for UT Learning Center, all at UT Austin.

## raúlsalinas

Xicanindio elder poet and human rights activist raúlsalinas is the Executive Director of Red Salmon Arts and Founder of Resistencia Bookstore, a literary venue and center for aspiring writers in Austin, Texas. raúl also conducts intensive creative writing clinics locally and throughout the country with disenfranchised youth. These clinics are held in conjunction with a variety of arts organizations, correctional facilities, and social service agencies. raúlsalinas' work with various political movements has earned him an international reputation as an eloquent spokesperson for justice and advocate for the challenges and struggles of youth. Through SOY, raúl has reached countless marginalized young people and trained other members of RSA collective to continue this invaluable work nationally. He has worked extensively with the American Indian Movement and the International Indian Treaty Council. raúl is the author of four books of poetry: *Viaje/Trip, East of the Freeway, Un Trip Through the Mind Jail*, and *Indio Trails* as well as three spoken word CDs: *Los Many Mundos of raúlsalinas, Beyond the BEATen Path*, and *Red Arc*. Most recently, the University of Texas Press published *raúlsalinas and the Jail Machine: My Weapon Is My Pen*, a collection of his essays, newspaper articles, and letters. Since 2001, he is an adjunct professor at St. Edwards University, teaching classes and seminars in incarceration and media studies. raúlsalinas is also the recipient of numerous awards: the Louis Reyes Rivera Lifetime Achievement Award presented by La Causa and The Dark Souls Collective at Amherst College, Massachusetts in 2003; the Martin Luther King Jr., César Chávez, Rosa Parks Visiting Professorship Award given by the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor in 2003; the Lifetime Achievement Award from the National Association of Latino Arts and Culture in 2004; Con Tinta, a coalition of Chicana/o, Latina/o cultural activists and writers, honored raúl with the Veterano Writer Award in 2006, and, finally, Alfredo Cisneros Del Moral Foundation Award in 2007.





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