

## Michele Serros

It is a pleasure to introduce Michele Serros.

A native of Oxnard, California – a landscape she has described as turning from strawberry fields to auto malls - Michelle, at age 11, wrote to young adult fiction writer Judy Blume after her parents' divorce. If you have read Judy Blume, you know that she has written candidly and memorably about the pressures facing contemporary teenagers. She credits the letter she received back, which recommended that she keep her thoughts in a journal, with helping to begin her life as a writer.

She was a student at Santa Monica College when her first collection of poetry and short stories, *Chicana Falsa and Other Stories of Death, Identity and Oxnard*, was published. When the publisher went out of business, she sold the book from her garage. In 1998, the book was reissued and a second collection of fiction, *How to Be a Chicana Role Model*, was published. It became a Los Angeles Times Best Seller. Her latest novel, *Honey Blonde Chica*, is a story of the choices one young woman makes as she searches for identity.

She has been named by Newsweek magazine as “one of the top young women to watch for in the new century.” She has been a commentator for national Public Radio, she has read her poems to over 25,000 people at the Lollapalooza festival, she has recorded her poetry, and she was selected by the Poetry Society of America to have her work placed on MTA buses throughout Los Angeles County. She has produced a documentary, “Medium Brown Girl.” She has written for “The George Lopez Show.”

In 2002, the PEN Center sponsored a Twentieth Century Masters Tribute to John Steinbeck. It is a testament to her talent and her authentic voice that she was invited, as a twentieth century literary master, to share the stage with Arthur Miller, William Kennedy, Dorothy Allison, Studs Terkel, Peter Matthiessen and George Plimpton. Today, we are privileged to have her here, alone, with us. Please welcome Michele Serros.