



***Rain of Gold* by Victor Villaseñor**

Arte Público Press, 1991

ISBN: 978-1-55885-030-9 (Clothbound)

*Age Range: 14+ (Suggested by Publisher)

Grade Range: 8+ (Suggested by Publisher)

BOOK SYNOPSIS

Rain of Gold is a true-life saga of love, family and destiny that pulses with bold vitality, sweeping from the war-ravaged Mexican mountains of Pancho Villa's revolution to the days of Prohibition in California.

It all began when Villaseñor's maternal grandmother sat him down in their little home in the barrio of Carlsbad, California, gave him sweet bread and told him the story of their past. Of his mother Lupe, the most beautiful girl in the whole village who was only a child when Villa's men came shooting into their canyon. And of his father Juan and his family, reduced to rags and starvation as they sought refuge across the border, where they believed that endless opportunity awaited.

Lupe and Juan met and fell in love in California, but they found that the doors to the Promised Land were often closed to those from south of the border. His father was forced to take the law into his own hands, in spite of his wife's objections. With love and humor, Villaseñor shares this passionate love story that celebrates the triumph of the human spirit.

An all-American story of struggle and success, *Rain of Gold* focuses on three generations of Villaseñor's kin, their spiritual and cultural roots back in Mexico, their immigration to California and overcoming poverty, prejudice and economic exploitation. It is the warm-hearted and spirited account of the wily, wary and persevering forebears of Victor Villaseñor.

REVIEWS AND PRAISE

"*Rain of Gold* by Victor Villaseñor both enhances and enriches the American experience. It is a well-written work, filled with indelible drama and people." —Alex Haley, author of *Roots*

". . . a grand and vivid history . . . [Villaseñor's] characters are keenly drawn . . . Often I felt like a family member quietly watching from a corner stool." —*The New York Times Book Review*

"Villaseñor is a born storyteller, and this Latino *Roots* . . . is a gripping inspirational epic full of wild adventure, bootlegging, young love, miracles, tragedies, murder and triumph over cultural barriers." —*Publishers Weekly*

Updated December 11, 2025

Arte Público Press

appinfo@uh.edu

“From beginning to end, the chronicle is filled with one remarkable story after another. All have the simple, warmhearted quality of family tales told around the kitchen table, yet all are eminently believable ... an inspiring, fast-paced tale with a simple, fable-like quality that’s often surprisingly moving.” —*Kirkus Reviews*

“The brisk, down-to-earth prose sweeps the reader through often fantastic events in a compelling narrative. This is a big book, but one that moves swiftly. It is a story that deserves to be told, bringing to life a cultural heritage of all Americans.” —*The Washington Post*

“*Rain of Gold* is a tapestry embroidered with folk tales, folk medicine, and folk wisdom. The central narrative contains myriad dramatic episodes and hilarious, heartwarming anecdotes that will teach, delight, inspire and shock readers. Villaseñor gives us the good, the bad and the ugly as well as the brave, the tragic and the comic.”

—*Philadelphia Inquirer*

MEDIA AND RESOURCES

[Interview with Victor Villaseñor about his book, *Rain of Gold*.](#)

RESPONSE TO CHALLENGES

The Texas Observer: [“Trans Pecos Culture: Victor Villaseñor in Alpine”](#)

***A NOTE ON AGE RANGES**

A publisher-suggested age range covers the gamut of readers that publishers envision using the book, whether for independent reading, family sharing, group study, or in other ways. Educators have the best sense of the appropriate age range for the diverse learners they work with and understand these ranges vary depending on a book’s intended use.

Updated December 11, 2025

Arte Público Press

appinfo@uh.edu