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Autobiography & Memoir

Beyond Rain of Gold
Victor Villasenor
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> *The big strong male that's in front…doesn't lead…he follows in front. It's we, the mothers and grandmothers and children, who lead with our squawking, screeching, happy sounds.*

These are the words of the author's grandmother, who came to Mexican-American Victor Villaseñor in a dream to inspire him with her hope that human beings could learn to live in natural harmony as the snowgeese have always done. The visitation leads him to form the non-profit Snowgoose Global Thanksgiving, only one of the magical wonders chronicled in Villaseñor's latest autobiographical exploration, *Beyond Rain of Gold*.

The author's determination to become a writer from adolescence brought nearly 300 rejections before the publication of his coming-of-age novel, *Rain of Gold*, invoked comparisons to John Steinbeck. He served as the founding Steinbeck Chair at Hartnell College and the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, and his books are taught in many schools. Villaseñor still writes, while making the rounds as an inspirational speaker.

You'll get in the groove of the author's style once you read the introduction to *Beyond Rain of Gold* in which he says "I realize that in English, understatement is a very prominent style. This is not true of my cultural background." So be prepared for a lot of caps, exclamation points, enthusiasm, and SCREAMING.

Villasenor's father is a central figure in the book. Growing up, the author is gradually distanced from this dynamic man who built his life by fierce determination. At his father's funeral, through the emotional, heart-felt testimony of hundreds of loyal friends, Victor finally realizes how incredible his father was–generous, dangerous, strong, regal. Then his father's spirit begins to appear, guiding him through tricky situations with advice that sometimes seems counter-intuitive–but works. Through this guidance Villasenor gains respect for the teachings of

his elders and their connections with the Other Side. He learns from other cultural streams as well: two Native Americans reveal to him that “God” is not a noun but a verb, leading to his emphasis on “goding.”

Beyond Rain of Gold takes us through Villasenor’s later years, recapitulating some of his earlier failures and triumphs, his family relationships, marriage, and the development of his philosophy. In every way a self-made person, he can serve as a role model to young Mexican Americans looking for a toehold in their adopted culture, and as an inspiration to anyone seeking a pathway to inner guidance.

Barbara Bamberger Scott