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Guacamole Dip: From Baja...tales of love, faith--and magic

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Tecate, a Mexican border town near San Diego, really exists. In the hands of Reveles, however, it's also a state of mind. *Guacamole Dip*, his second book focusing on life in Tecate, is a collection of seven short stories about the sometimes magical and always fascinating characters whose lives are centered along the town's narrow streets.

The reader is introduced to the cast of characters like a bowl is introduced to avocado, garlic, lime. There's a private investigator, a benevolent witch, a matronly shopkeeper, and a doughnut maker, to name a few. All have their strengths and challenges, and their experiences intertwine and blend.

The author, a longtime resident of Tecate, has written a text that would comfortably fit into any classroom on anthropology or sociology. The stories and examples of everyday life speak louder about Mexican culture than any textbook. This is a land where a person's nickname says more about him than his fingerprints. In one story, the narrator reflects on the deep impact of a mariachi band, describing it as, "that unique musical form that fills your heart with joy, or awakens a forgotten memory that moistens the eyes. They do it all with three violins, two guitars, the big bass guitarrón and a silvery trumpet that talks to the soul."

As the Mexicans say, *Tan cerca de los Estados Unidos, tan lejos de Dios*… but as the author's tales unfold, the reader begins to wonder at the truth of this. There are very few references to *el Norte*, the country or its inhabitants. Maybe Tecate isn't really just a stone's throw from the U.S. Maybe it's actually hundreds of miles into the heart of Mexico, sequestered by mountains.

Although written in English, *Guacamole Dip* contains a rich concoction of Spanish phrases and terms, stirred into the text in such a way that the meanings can usually be savored through context. Equally as rich is the author's sense of humor. *¡Viva la fiesta!*
KARL KUNKEL (October 9, 2007)

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