



Wings Press is proud to announce the publication of

# Rebozos

Poems by **Carmen Tafolla**

Paintings by **Catalina Gárate García**

With an historical afterword by  
**Hector García Manzanedo, Ph.D.**

Texts in English and Spanish

Each line, each brush stroke, each graceful movement of this creation celebrates the strength, glory, and power of woman. This beautiful book evokes revolution, but not the typical version of it. Rather this is a revolution of passion and compassion; of understanding and nurturance. This is a book of elated cultural fervor danced in a costume held so close to a woman's heart that it is her other skin: her rebozo. This book relates a revolution only women could lead.

— Kathy Vargas, photo-artist

*Rebozos*: gracious labor of love, this bowing down/lifting up of generations of women and their exquisite unsung dignity, this sharing of spirit and artistry, carrying us all to "the other side of tired." Profound gratitude to the harmony of Carmen, Catalina, Hector, Rose, and Wings Press for their precious chime, echoing through homes and histories and neighborhoods, early mornings where the doves chant "You, and You, and You."

— Naomi Shihab Nye, poet and novelist

Many of us, regardless of age and gender will shed more than a few nostalgic and entrañable lagrimas savouring the heart wrenching poetry, while deeply sighing, musing on the rebozos' awesome beauty in this work, with their simultaneously evanescent and emotionally powerful appeal. Only our own wise women, Carmen and Cata can bring this ofrenda, of our very own "quilt" culture, fashioned for aesthetics, seduction, as political statements, portabebés y más, and above all as individual and collective shields.

— Martha Cotera, author of *The Chicana Feminist*

*Rebozos* is an incandescent interweaving of poems and paintings depicting multiple patterns of women's experience. It is an ardent tour-de-force that enchants the spirit and haunts the imagination.

— Tomás Ybarra Frausto, independent scholar

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## About the Book

This bilingual collection of poems by Carmen Tafolla celebrates both the rebozo as a cultural icon of Mexico and the series of rebozo-inspired paintings by Mexican-California artist Catalina Gárate. These ekphrastic poems—art inspired by art—give voices to the women of Gárate’s paintings, voices of strength and endurance, joy and sorrow.

The Mexican rebozo is more than a woman’s garment. Yes, it is a rectangle of cloth that can be worn as a shawl or scarf, but it is also a simple tool that has become a cultural icon. An essential element of daily life for centuries, one might say it is a physical manifestation of Mexican womanhood—a silent witness to every state of life: a tool of daily labor, a sling to carry children, a shield from weather or from prying eyes, finally either an heirloom or a shroud. At the same time, the manner of its wearing can express every emotion, from shy seduction to sorrow, from flaunted status to simple joys and fears.

Catalina Gárate’s paintings capture what she calls “this unifying element, the rebozo,” which has been for the artist “a theme of profound personal significance.” The rebozo is symbolic of the mestizo blending of peoples in Mexico, and it is used at every level of society. From the expensive Otomí rebozos of San Luis Potosi to the common rebozo de bolita, this garment is an integral part of Mexican life. Gárate is hardly the first artist to be inspired by the rebozo. Several of Frida Kahlo’s self-portraits show her wearing rebozos from different regions of Mexico. The great photographer of the Mexican Revolution, Agustín Casasola, often captured soldaderas wearing rebozos. Novelist Sandra Cisneros used the idea of the rebozo as a binding metaphor in her novel, *Caramelo*.

Poet Carmen Tafolla was “haunted by Gárate’s paintings” and by the voices of Mexican and Mexican-American women. She found poetry in those images and voices and she “painted those colors into poetry, those expressions of posture and stance into voice.... The words of these women in the paintings are, like rebozos themselves, both soft and strong. The poetry lies in the courage of their lives.”

## About the Author

**Carmen Tafolla** is a native of the West-Side barrios of San Antonio and the author of more than 20 books. Tafolla has been recognized by the National Association for Chicano Studies for work which “gives voice to the peoples and cultures of this land” and has received numerous recognitions, including: the Art of Peace Award for work which contributes to peace, justice, and human understanding; the Charlotte Zolotow Award for best children’s picture book writing; the Americas Award, presented at the Library of Congress; two Tomás Rivera Book Awards; two ALA Notable Books; and two international Latino Book Awards. A member of the Texas Institute of Letters, she is currently Writer-in-Residence for Children’s, Youth & Transformative Literature at the University of Texas San Antonio.

Tafolla received her Ph.D. in Bilingual Education from the University of Texas in 1982 and is still doing postgraduate work on her Ph.C. (Curandera of Philosophy.) She lives in San Antonio, Texas with her husband, Dr. Ernesto M. Bernal, her daughter Ariana, her 94-year-old mother, three cats, two computers, one typewriter, a house full of books, a yard full of hierbitas, many dreams, some remedios, and a molcajete.

Carmen’s books of poetry include *Get Your Tortillas Together*, *Curandera*, *Sonnets to Human Beings* & *Other Selected Works*, *Sonnets to Human Beings/ Sonnette an menschen*, *Sonnets and Salsa*, and *Rebozos*. Her award-winning short stories were collected in *The Holy Tortilla and a Pot of Beans*. Nonfiction works include *To Split a Human: Mitos, Machos y la Mujer Chicana*; *Recognizing the Silent Monster: Racism in the 90s*; *Tamales*, *Comadres*, & *the Meaning of Civilization*; and *A Life Crossing Borders: Memoir of a Mexican-American Confederate / Las memorias de un mexicoamericano en la Confederacion*. Tafolla’s award-winning books for children include *Baby Coyote and the Old Woman / El coyotito y la viejita*; *That’s Not Fair! Emma Tenayuca’s Struggle for Justice / ¡No Es Justo! La lucha de Emma Tenayuca por la justicia*; *Fiesta Babies*; *What Can You DO With a Rebozo?* and *What Can You DO With a Paleta?*

## About the Artist

Catalina Gárate was born in Tampico, Mexico, and studied at numerous art schools, including the “La Esmeralda” of the Mexican Ministry of Education, and the Academia de San Carlos of the National University of Mexico (UNAM.) She completed a B.A. and an M.A. in Art and Design at San Jose State University in California. She conducted studies at the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico City, and participated in anthropological research programs in rural indigenous communities in several regions of Mexico jointly with Hector Garcia, pioneering research for Estudios Experimentales en Salubridad. She presently resides in San Jose, California, where she is at work on a series of abstracts. Garate’s works have been exhibited in San Jose, Fresno, Austin, McAllen, Corpus Christi, and El Paso.