

Cultural Diversity Resources

Books:

Looking for Lost Bird by Yvette Melanson (2000) in this haunting memoir, Yvette Melanson tells of being raised to believe that she was white and Jewish. At age forty-three, she learned that she was a "Lost Bird," a Navajo child taken against her family's wishes, and that her grieving birth mother had never stopped looking for her until the day she died.

Never Go Home Again by Shannon Holmes (2004) is the story of Corey Dixon, a young man whose father tries as best he can to steer him away from the lure of the streets. And yet, like so many others in Corey's neighborhood, he finds the temptations of the lucrative drug trade too great to resist. While he makes fast money for a while, it is inevitable that it is he who has to pay, with his time and maybe even his life: by the age of sixteen Corey is locked up.

The Education of Little Tree by Forrest Carter (2001) this story tells of a boy orphaned very young, who is adopted by his Cherokee grandmother and half-Cherokee grandfather in the Appalachian mountains of Tennessee during the Great Depression.

The Middle of Everywhere by Mary Pipher (2003) this book connects us with the newest members of the American family--refugees. In cities all over the country, refugees arrive daily. Lost Boys from Sudan, survivors from Kosovo, families fleeing Afghanistan and Vietnam: they come with nothing but the desire to experience the American dream. Their endurance in the face of tragedy and their ability to hold on to the virtues of family, love, and joy are a lesson for Americans. Their stories will make you laugh and weep--and give you a deeper understanding of the wider world in which we live.

The Spirit Catches You and You Fall Down by Anne Fadiman (1998) this story tells about Lia Lee born in 1981 to a family of recent Hmong immigrants, and soon developed symptoms of epilepsy. By 1988 she was living at home but was brain dead after a tragic cycle of misunderstanding, overmedication, and culture clash.

Ourselves Among Others: Cross-Cultural Reading for Writers (3rd edition) by Carol J. Verburg (1994) is an anthology of cross-cultural short stories, memoirs, and essays by authors from all over the world. Among the authors are such highly regarded writers as Octavio Paz, Margaret Atwood, Gunter Gass, Carlos Fuentes, and Simone de Beauvoir.

Short Fiction by Hispanic Writers of the United States edited by Nicolas Kanellos (1993) contains Puerto Rican, Cuban-American, and Mexican-American short fiction in which authors tell stories about Hispanic life in the United States.

The Four Agreements: Practical Guide to Personal Freedom by Don Miguel Ruiz (1997) Don Michael Ruiz a shamanic teacher and healer exposes self-limiting beliefs and presents a simple, yet effective code of personal conduct learned from his Toltec ancestors. The four agreements are these: Be impeccable with your word. Don't take anything personally. Don't make assumptions. Always do your best. It's the how and why one should do these things.

A Country of Strangers: Blacks and Whites in America by David K. Shieler (1997) is a record of the in-depth interviews of this former New York Times correspondent with hundreds of people across the United States. From his interview, Shieler concluded that black Americans and white Americans have little knowledge of understanding of each other's lives

Videos:

El Norte (1983) a Guatemalan brother and sister make a long and dangerous journey from their violence torn homeland to the United States, which they call El Norte. Once in Los Angeles, the young people, filled with hope, attempt to start new lives only to discover fresh obstacles and prejudices.

Mi Familia (1995) with a time frame that stretches from the 1920's to the present, *Mi Familia* traces the struggles of a Mexican-American family who call East Los Angeles home. A strong religious faith and deep sense of the togetherness help family members survive discrimination, racism, deportation, imprisonment, and the tragic death of a son.

The Lost Child (2000) adopted by a middle aged Jewish couple and doted on by her mother young Rebecca Hoffman leads a conventional life. Then her mother dies and her father remarries. Years later Rebecca searches for her birth parents and comes to the realization that she is neither white nor Jewish. Rebecca is Navajo. *Lost Child* is a film based on the autobiography, *Looking For Lost Bird*, by Yvette Melanson.

Devil's Playground (2002) This documentary explores the Amish adolescent rite of passage called "rumspringa". Upon their sixteenth birthdays, Amish youth, both male and female, are released from Amish restrictions and can explore secular life outside of the Amish community. The period may last from a few months to several years. By experiencing the outside world, they work temptations out of their systems and prepare themselves for making their most important life decision: to reject the secular world and be baptized into the Amish church.

The New Americans (three tape series) (2004) these videos capture the lives of contemporary immigrants in all their complexities. The series portrays ordinary people, engaged in day-to-day struggles of earning a living, raising a family, and leading productive lives while struggling with the differences of race, language and culture.

Crash (2005) Diving headlong into the diverse melting pot of post-9/11 LA, this compelling urban drama tracks the volatile intersections of a multi-ethnic cast, examining fear and bigotry from multiple perspectives as characters careen in and out of one another's lives. No one is safe in the battle zones of racial strife. And no one is immune to the simmering rage that sparks violence - and changes lives

Unnatural Causes... is inequality making us sick? (2008) This ground breaking documentary series sheds light on mounting evidence of how inequities in the rest of our lives – the jobs we do, the wealth we enjoy, the neighborhoods we live in – can get under the skin and disrupt our biology as surely as germs and viruses. Solutions lie not in more pills but in more equitable policies.

Grand Torino (2008) An unhappy old man who can't get along with either his kids or his neighbors, a Korean War veteran whose prize possession is a 1973 Gran Torino he keeps in cherry condition. When his neighbor, a young Hmong teenager, tries to steal his Gran Torino, He sets out to reform the youth. Drawn against his will into the life of the Hmong family, this unhappy old man is soon taking steps to protect them from the gangs that foul their neighborhood.

Babies (2010) The babies in *Babies* are four newborns, photographed in their natural habitat in distinctly different parts of the world. Hattie is in San Francisco, Mari's in Tokyo, Baryarjargal lives out in the Mongolian steppes, and Ponijao is born amid the simple straw huts of Namibia. In the course of less than 80 minutes, we're going to follow this quartet through their first year of life.