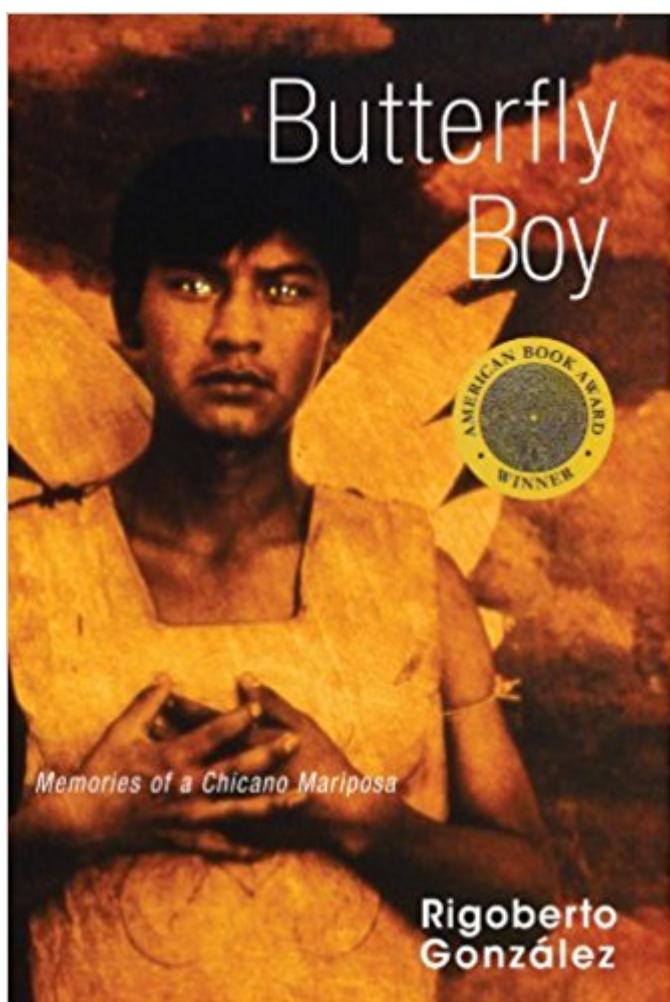


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# **Butterfly Boy: Memories Of A Chicano Mariposa (Writing In Latinidad: Autobiographical Voices Of U.S. Latinos/as)**



## Synopsis

Winner of the American Book Award

## Book Information

Series: Writing in Latinidad: Autobiographical Voices of U.S. Latinos/as

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## Customer Reviews

This moving memoir of a young Chicano boy's maturing into a self-accepting gay adult is a beautifully executed portrait of the experience of being gay, Chicano and poor in the United States. Now an associate professor of English and Latino studies at University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Gonzalez writes in a poetic yet straightforward style that heightens the power of his story (mariposa is Spanish for "faggot" as well as butterfly). As he describes growing up in an extended migrant-worker family, his youth in Bakersfield, Calif., and his departure for college, some readers may recognize similar characters and situations from his 2003 novel, *Crossing Vines* (University of Oklahoma). Like other gay coming-of-age memoirs, this one recounts the hardship of being an effeminate youth with a high singing voice and a penchant for cross-dressing, and the delight in discovering the homoeroticism of classic literature by Melville and E.M. Forster. But Gonzalez transforms these standard conceits into an affecting narrative in which his class and ethnic identities are as vital as his often painful metamorphosis into a fully formed gay man. (Sept.)

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--This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

**\*Starred Review\*** In the tradition of Richard Rodriguez, this stirring memoir of a first-generation Mexican American's coming-of-age and coming out is wrenching, angry, passionate, ironic, and always eloquent about conflicts of family, class, and sexuality. The son and grandson of farmworkers, constantly moving between Mexico and the U.S., then and now, Gonzalez weaves together three narrative threads: his angry present journey across the border with his estranged father; childhood memories of growing up as a fat, bookish "sissy-boy

Having lived in a Latino country for some time I really resonated with *Butterfly Boy*. Although Latino culture changes from country to country there are linking mentalities and traditions that flow through all of them. Gonzalez perfectly captures the complex nature of the Chicano- who never seems to belong to any country completely, but whose heart is undeniably Latin. This is not a book about a gay Mexican. This is a book about a Mexican American who happens to be gay, and who (often) painfully deals with the complexities and hypocrisies of his culture, his family, and his personal relationships. This is a good book for anyone interested in Latino themes, gay themes, cross cultural themes or family and personal relationships- especially troubled father/son relationships. The prose is crisp and snappy and engages you from the first page.

Lyrical and provocative, though at times, a bit too much self-pity for my tastes. Overall, though, a decent work of art -- smart, poetic, erotically charged. RG does a great job, in particular, of making his father come alive on the page.

Amazing read, I'd recommend it .

This book reminds me of another book, "Gypsy Boy" by Mickey Walsh. They are both about migrant workers in search of work, living communally under the dictatorship of the patriarch, where education is considered a waste of time, and always feeling like an outsider. In both books the authors as young men are gay and it is forbidden to express it in any way. In this book the migrants travel back & forth between Mexico and the US so the two brothers, as well as other family members, are of different nationalities. Since I know nothing of Mexico I was unfamiliar with many words, phrases and place names but it didn't change my understanding of the story. This is an excellent book about a culture I never thought about before and how difficult life is, especially when you stand out because you're educated, gay and motherless.

We need more books like this published!

I think that this book really shows the true background story of people. It gives the insight of a different type of history. Of a dual minority someone who is a Mexican as well as a gay Mexican living in today s society.

This book is amazing, raw, riveting, and emotional. I highly recommend it to anyone, especially those who feel alone or lost in regards to their sexual orientation.

A must read!,

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