



# Paletitas de Guayaba On A Train Called Absence

*Erlinda Gonzales-Berry*

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## **Paletitas de Guayaba On A Train Called Absence** Erlinda Gonzales-Berry

Paletitas de Guayaba's story is narrated in the first person by Marina, who is traveling by train from New Mexico to Mexico City in search of her identity, her history, and answers to many questions that are tormenting her. As the train carries her through the Mexican landscape, she has flashbacks of her life in New Mexico, a failed romance, and a previous journey. The narration also flashes forward to her arrival, and to her discoveries and adventures in Mexico, where she confronts both her historical and mythical past as well as her complex, multicultural present. The themes of hybrid identity, the Chicano movement, Mexican history, U.S.-Mexican relations, and female sexuality are explored, in a highly experimental and self-reflecting narratorial style that is lyrical, profound, and sometimes profane. Paletitas...delivers the powerful lesson of how multiple identities and subject positions can be constructed from the other side of various international, inter-ethnic, and sexual borders. By combining this lesson with humor and a wonderfully executed language, [it] instructs ...and...entertains, and in this way seals its connection to the best ...Chicano oral tradition. Angie Chabram-Dernersesian, *Dictionary of Literary Biography*, 2009 Gonzales-Berry...se rebela contra las limitaciones tradicionales del bildungsroman femenino...caracterizado de buena medida por su utilidad para "domesticar" a las mujeres lectoras. Marina, por el contrario, aprende a deshacerse de esos mecanismos culturales reductores y a establecerse a sí misma como persona madura y compleja. Manuel M. Martin-Rodríguez. *Latin American Literary Review* (Jan-June 1995) Paletitas de Guayaba ... is a trip to the heart of being a Chicana and toward a transnational identity and what that means in terms of nation, race, gender and sexuality.—Diana Rebolledo Erlinda Gonzales-Berry's ancestors settled in the Río Grande Valley in 1598. She grew up in el campo in Northeastern New Mexico, attended high school in El Rito, and received her Ph.D. at the University of New Mexico. Gonzales-Berry currently lives in Corvallis, Oregon where she retired from the Ethnic Studies Department at Oregon State University in 2007. Kay (Kayla) S. García, the co-translator of "Paletitas de Guayaba/On a Train Called Absence," is Professor of Spanish at Oregon State University, and author of "Broken Bars: New Perspectives from Mexican Women Writers" (University of New Mexico Press), and the translator of a novel by the Mexican author Jacobo Sefamí, "The Book of Mourners."

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