

# Coming of Age

In Partnership with the **Denver Public Schools**  
and the **Metropolitan State College of Denver**



El Alma de la Raza Project



# Coming of Age

By Richard A. Bock

Grades 9-12

Implementation Time  
for Unit of Study: 6 weeks

Goals 2000 - Partnerships for  
Educating Colorado Students  
El Alma de la Raza Curriculum  
and Teacher Training Project

Loyola A. Martinez, Project Director

# Introduction

The focus of this unit is Coming of Age: the ways in which adolescent girls and boys make the transition into fully functioning and contributing members of a society. Drawing on the writings of a variety of Latino, other American, and world authors, students will “read and recognize literature as a record of human experience” as they “read, view, listen, respond, and discuss novels, poetry, short stories, nonfiction, plays, essays and speeches.” Because initiatory rites exist in all cultures, students will better “understand the common themes in literature of the United States and in relationship to world literature.” Additionally, students will “read and understand a variety of materials” as they develop their knowledge of how societies throughout the world confer adult status on their progeny. By assessing their own progress toward adulthood, students will “apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening, and viewing” activities. As a culminating activity, students will compose an essay comparing and contrasting the Coming of Age process in two or more distinct cultures for presentation to the whole class.

# About the Author

Richard Bock attended Denver Public Schools from kindergarten through twelfth grade. He received his B.A. degree in English and Psychology from Williams College. He did graduate study in Psychology at The Naropa Institute and received his teaching certification from the University of Colorado at Boulder. Before becoming a teacher, he lived and traveled extensively in south-central Asia and in Mexico and Central America. He has been a teacher in DPS for the past eight years and currently teaches English and Hispano-American literature at West High School.

# Standards Addressed by this Unit

## Reading and Writing

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|------------|--|
| Standard 1 | Students read and understand a variety of materials.   |
| Standard 3 | Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. |
| Standard 4 | Students apply thinking skills to their reading, writing, speaking, listening and viewing.                           |
| Standard 6 | Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.  |

# Lesson 1

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
<p>Students will read literature to investigate common issues and interests in relation to self and others.</p> <p>Students will read literature to understand places, people, events, and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar.</p> <p>Students will read literature that reflects the uniqueness, diversity, and integrity of the American experience.</p> <p>Students will read classic and contemporary literature of the United States about the experiences and traditions of diverse ethnic groups.</p> <p>Students will make connections between prior knowledge and what they need to know about a topic before reading about it.</p>	<p>Students will understand Rites of Passage as a theme in Latino literature and culture, and recognize Rites of Passage and cultural traditions by which adult status is conferred on youth within Latin society (e.g., Confirmation, Quincineras, high school graduation, receiving a driver's license, parenthood, etc.) in works of Latino literature and in students' own lives.</p> <p>Students will identify characteristics of adult behavior (e.g., responsibility, independence, self-respect, tolerance, etc.) in works of Latino literature and in students' own lives.</p>

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Define and discuss "Rites of Passage."</p> <p>Raise issues and questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Function?</li> <li>2. Earned vs. automatic?</li> <li>3. Gender issues?</li> <li>4. Failure?</li> <li>5. Peer vs. society definition?</li> </ol> <p>Introduce Anaya's <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> as one example of a traditional Latino Rite of Passage.</p> <p>Use chapter quizzes to check reading comprehension and generate class discussion.</p>	<p>Students will brainstorm examples and share personal experiences.</p> <p>Students will read Rodolfo Anaya's novel, <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>.</p> <p>Students will take chapter quizzes, and discuss answers in groups and as a whole class.</p>	<p>Board or overhead, spiral notebooks.</p> <p><i>Bless Me, Ultima</i> multiple copies for class.</p>

## Lesson 1 (cont.)

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
<p>Students will identify the purpose, perspective, and historical and cultural influences of a speaker, author, or director.</p> <p>Students will evaluate the reliability, accuracy, and relevancy of information.</p>	<p>Students will distinguish between definitions of man/womanhood as determined by peers vs. parents and adult society at large; and consider social and sexual mores, behavioral expectations, initiations, and ways of earning respect, in works of Latino literature and in students' own lives.</p> <p>Students will analyze risk-taking behaviors as indicators of maturity level in characters from Latino literature, and apply insights from literature to their own life experiences.</p> <p>Students will evaluate personal development toward adulthood.</p>

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Explain reading log and give writing prompts.</p> <p>Give writing prompts to help students focus on significant coming of age themes in the novel.</p> <p>Organize discussion groups and establish guidelines.</p> <p>Lead whole class discussions.</p>	<p>Students will write responses in reading logs.</p> <p>Students will share individual reading responses in small groups.</p> <p>Students will share group responses in whole class setting.</p>	<p>Student reading logs.</p>

## Lesson 2

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
<p>Students will read classic and contemporary literature of the United States about the experiences and traditions of diverse cultural and ethnic groups.</p> <p>Students will read literature to investigate common issues and interests in relation to self and others.</p> <p>Students will read literature to understand places, people, events, and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar.</p> <p>Students will read literature that reflects the uniqueness, diversity, and integrity of the American experience.</p> <p>Students will make connections between prior knowledge and what they need to know about a topic before reading it.</p>	<p>Students will understand Coming of Age as a recurrent theme in U.S. literature.</p> <p>Students will read about and recognize Rites of Passage and other means by which adolescents earn and are granted adult status within various cultural and ethnic groups in the U.S.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate understanding of similarities and differences between Coming of Age processes in Latino and other cultures in the United States.</p> <p>Students will refine skills as effective audience members and/or performers.</p>

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Select representative novels from various time periods and cultural milieus in U.S. history.</p> <p>Establish time line for reading novel and presenting Readers' Theater.</p> <p>Divide students into groups of 4 or 5 and assign a novel to each group.</p> <p>Provide study questions to help groups identify coming of age issues in each novel.</p>	<p>Students will read novels on their own and discuss in groups, using study questions for direction.</p>	<p>Copies of selected U.S. novels for each group member.</p> <p>Suggested texts: <i>Adventures of Huckleberry Finn</i></p> <p><i>Little Women</i></p> <p><i>A Separate Peace</i></p> <p><i>The Bluest Eye</i></p> <p><i>Catcher in the Rye</i></p> <p><i>All the Pretty Horses</i></p> <p>See also annotated bibliography and reading list of Coming of Age novels in Appendix.</p>

## Lesson 2 (cont.)

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
<p>Students will identify the purpose, perspective, and historical and cultural influences of a speaker, author, or director.</p> <p>Students will evaluate the reliability, accuracy, and relevancy of information.</p>	

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Present expectations and directions for presenting scene from novel in Readers' Theater format (scene selection, scripting, performing, costuming, etc.).</p> <p>Videotape and evaluate group presentations.</p>	<p>Each group will select, script, and produce a scene from their respective novel displaying one or more issues inherent to the coming of age process.</p>	<p>Camcorder for recording Readers' Theater performances.</p>

# Lesson 3

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
<p>Students will read classic and contemporary literature representing various cultural and ethnic traditions from throughout the world.</p> <p>Students will read literature to investigate common issues and interests in relation to self and others.</p> <p>Students will read literature to understand places, people, events, and vocabulary, both familiar and unfamiliar.</p> <p>Students will make connections between prior knowledge and what they need to know about a topic before reading about it.</p> <p>Students will identify the purpose, perspective, and historical and cultural influences of a speaker, author, or director.</p>	<p>Students will identify Coming of Age as a common theme in world literature.</p> <p>Students will read and recognize Rites of Passage and other means by which adolescents earn and are granted adult status within various cultural and ethnic traditions throughout the world.</p> <p>Students will understand similarities and differences between Coming of Age processes in Latino cultures and those of cultures from around the world.</p>

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Select one short story from Coming of Age anthologies to be read as a class.</p> <p>Model compare/contrast essay using short story and <i>Bless Me, Ultima</i>.</p> <p>Assign or allow each student to chose a story from world literature Coming of Age anthologies to be used in compare/contrast essay.</p> <p>Discuss scoring rubric.</p>	<p>Students will read selected Coming of Age short story.</p> <p>Students will compose an essay comparing and contrasting aspects of Coming of Age in the short story and the novel read in Lesson 2.</p>	<p>Anthologies of Coming of Age stories by world writers such as:</p> <p><i>Into the Widening World: International Coming of Age Stories</i></p> <p><i>Join In: Multiethnic Short Stories</i></p> <p><i>Coming of Age: Crucial Turning Points in the Lives of Real and Fictional People</i></p> <p><i>Coming of Age in America: A Multicultural Anthology</i></p>

## Lesson 3 (cont.)

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
Students will evaluate the reliability, accuracy, and relevancy of information.	

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials

## How will students apply what they are learning?

Performance Task	Scoring Rubric
<p><b>Instructional Information</b> Students have read a novel and a short story dealing with Coming of Age themes, and have been prepared to write this essay by participating in class discussion identifying elements of Rites of Passage and other Coming of Age processes.</p> <p><b>Benchmark</b> Students read and recognize literature as a record of human experience.</p> <p><b>Task</b> Student will apply knowledge of Coming of Age as a theme in literature by comparing and contrasting, in a written essay, characters in stories from two distinct cultural traditions.</p> <p>Alternative: Student will apply knowledge of Coming of Age as a theme in literature and life by comparing and contrasting the student's own Coming of Age experience with that of a character from the literature.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Articulated thoughtful insights and demonstrated understanding of the Coming of Age process by using well chosen and specific details as support.</li><li>3. Made a thoughtful attempt to develop the topic and demonstrated understanding by using some relevant details as support.</li><li>2. Showed some thought but did not always develop ideas well. Details are relevant to the topic but may not be adequate or specific enough.</li><li>1. Gave little support for ideas, or the support is vague or off the topic.</li></ol>

# Lesson 4

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics
<p>Students will recognize, understand, and use formal grammar in speaking and writing.</p> <p>Students will use correct sentence structure in writing.</p> <p>Students will demonstrate correct punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p>	<p>Students will revise, edit and proofread compare/contrast essays to improve and correct for errors.</p>

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Discuss compare/contrast essay writing rubric.</p> <p>Demonstrate revising, editing and proofreading using model compare/contrast essay.</p> <p>Provide standard proofreading symbols.</p> <p>Demonstrate grammar, spelling, punctuation and syntax problems by having class proofread one student-written sentence each day.</p> <p>Organize peer editing groups.</p>	<p>Students will self-edit and proofread essay drafts.</p> <p>Students will assist each other in proofreading essays through peer editing groups.</p>	<p>Chart or handout of standard proofreading symbols.</p> <p>Board or overhead projector.</p>

## Lesson 4 (cont.)

What will students be learning?	
Benchmark	Specifics

What will be done to help students learn this?		
Instructional Strategies	Student Activities	Resources/ Materials
<p>Provide peer editing groups with peer editing guidelines.</p> <p>Hold individual writing conferences before final draft.</p>	<p>Students will confer with teacher prior to final draft.</p>	

## How will students apply what they are learning?

Performance Task	Scoring Rubric
<p><b>Instructional Information</b> Students have been provided with proofreading and editing guidelines and will meet with peer groups and teacher before final draft.</p> <p><b>Benchmark</b> Students write and speak using formal grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization and spelling.</p> <p><b>Task</b> Student will draft, revise and proofread compare and contrast essay to eliminate all errors in grammar, usage, sentence structure, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.</p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>4. Essay has virtually no errors and shows a strong grasp of the conventions of writing.</li><li>3. Essay generally uses writing conventions correctly and errors do not interfere with communication.</li><li>2. Essay contains several errors that show carelessness and/or inadequate grasp of writing conventions.</li><li>1. Essay contains many errors in conventions that show carelessness or interfere with communication.</li></ol>

# Annotated Bibliography

## Anthologies

Augenbraum, Harold, ed. *Growing up Latino*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1993.

A comprehensive collection of classic and recent Latino writing in English, notable for its presentation of a range of Latino experiences.

Lopez, Tiffany, ed. *Growing up Chicano/a*. New York: William Morrow and Company, 1993.

Twenty-one stories from diverse perspectives compiled as “a public gift to that child who was always searching for herself within the pages of a book.”

Milligan, Bryce, ed. *Daughters of the Fifth Sun*. New York: Riverhead Books, 1995.

A compilation of short stories and poems by established and emerging Latina writers reflecting the dualities of contemporary Latino culture and its conflicts of languages, roots, families and communities.

Tashlik, Phyllis, ed. *Hispanic, Female and Young: An Anthology*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1994.

Collaboration between published women writers and Latina students at a public alternative school in New York City’s El Barrio.

## Novels

Anaya, Rodolfo. *Bless Me, Ultima*. New York: Warner Books, 1972.

A delicately written and sensitive portrayal of a young Mexican American male’s transition from boyhood to adult-

hood under the tutelage of Ultima, a wise *curandera* (faith healer) who introduces him to a magical and mysterious world unlike his own. Provides a view of rural life in northern New Mexico.

*Tortuga*, Berkeley: Editorial Justa Publications, 1997.

As in *Bless Me, Ultima*, this novel is about a young boy’s discovery of his own power; in this case, while he is hospitalized with a back injury that requires him to wear a cast over the upper part of his body.

Corpi, Lucha. *Delia’s Song*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1991.

Corpi is an important new woman’s voice in the novel. Her protagonist, Delia, struggles to give meaning to her young life first through familial loyalty, then political militancy, and finally a personal relationship.

Duran, Miguel. *Don’t Spit On My Corner*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1990.

A rare fictional view of growing up on the streets of East Los Angeles, this novel is based in part on the author’s personal experiences as a Pachuco gang member.

Fernandez, Roberta. *Intaglio, a Novel in Six Stories*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1990.

Draws on the author’s memory of six women who greatly influenced her concept of womanhood. The author questions traditional Hispanic attitudes and norms regarding women.

# Annotated Bibliography (cont.)

Martinez, Victor. *A Parrot in the Oven*. New York: Harper Collins, 1996.

Manny relates his coming of age experiences as a member of a poor Mexican American family and the struggle of coming to terms with what it means to be a man. Winner of the 1996 National Book Award.

Rivera, Tomas. *No Se Le Trago la Tierra (And the Earth Did Not Swallow Him)*.

Next to Anaya's *Bless Me, Ultima*, the classic Chicano coming-of-age novel. Deals with the life and death struggles of migrant farm workers in the U.S.

Rodriguez, Luis. *Always Running, La Vida Loca: Gang Days in L.A.* New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993.

A graphic and disturbing account of the author's own violent youth as a member of a Los Angeles street gang. Rodriguez tells his story for the benefit of his seventeen-year-old son, himself drawn to the lure of gang activity. While the book is redeeming for the poetry of the language and the author's triumphant escape from the gang life, it should be given careful attention before inclusion in a high school curriculum.

## Short Fiction

Cisneros, Sandy. *The House on Mango Street*. Houston: Arte Publico Press, 1983.

Cisneros recounts life in the barrio from the perspective of a young girl who grows up in a family of males, in a culture

dominated by men. She uses the metaphor of a house to symbolize a series of broken dreams her young narrator suffers during her preadolescent years. Excellent writing about a not-so-typical Mexican American experience of growing up in the Midwest.

Gonzalez, Genaro. *Only Sons*.

Gonzalez focuses in these seven stories on father-son relationships in Chicano families. He takes a hard look at various forms of dysfunctionality that afflict many families.

Soto, Gary. *Living Up the Street*. San Francisco: Strawberry Hill Press, 1985.

Soto's narrator relates with tenderness the wide range of experiences of growing up male in a Mexican American barrio. This book of recollections is aptly described as containing "unpretentious language of the heart."

*A Summer Life*. Hanover: University Press of New England, 1990.

A collection of short essays with a strong autobiographical substratum. Soto evokes with simple but startling imagery his childhood in Fresno, California.

*Baseball in April and Other Stories*. San Diego: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1990.

Appropriate for younger readers, this is a collection of delightfully playful vignettes about childhood and adolescence.

# Annotated Bibliography (cont.)

## General Anthologies

Gallo, Donald R, ed. *Join In: Multiethnic Short Stories by Outstanding Writers for Young Adults*. New York: Delacorte Press, 1993.

Seventeen authors, at the invitation of the editor, wrote stories featuring teenagers in America from various ethnic backgrounds.

Loughery, John, ed. *Into the Widening World: International Coming-of-Age Stories*. New York: Persea Books, 1994.

A collection of twenty-six short stories about young people, from twenty-two different countries.

Thomas, Joyce Carol. *A Gathering of Flowers: Stories About Being Young in America*. New York: Harper Collins, 1990.

Eleven diverse stories that address what it means to be ethnic and American. An excellent collection by distinguished writers, yet easier to read than those in *Into the Widening World*.

## Background Works

Eliade, Mircea. *Rites and Symbols of Initiation*. Woodstock: Spring Publications, 1985.

Anthropological analysis of Coming of Age rites in primitive societies.

Frisbie, Charlotte Johnson. *Kinaalda: A Study of the Navaho Girl's Puberty Ceremony*. Middletown: Wesleyan University Press, 1967.

Detailed account of Navaho girls' initiation into the "Blessing Way" with special attention to the function of music.

Ingpen, Robert R. *A Celebration of Customs and Rituals of the World*. New York: Facts on File, 1996.

Explores initiation rites, wedding feasts, harvest celebrations, religious rituals, and many other customs used around the world to mark all kinds of special occasions. Includes bibliographical references and index.

Meade, Michael. *Men and the Water of Life: Initiation and the Tempering of Men*. San Francisco: Harper San Francisco, 1993.

Prior, Katherine. *Initiation Customs*. New York: Thomson Learning, 1993.

Discusses the ceremonies through which young people become adult members of six major religions.

Reese, Lyn. *I'm On My War Running: Women Speak of Coming of Age*. Avon Books, 1983.

Seymour, Tryntje Van Ness. *The Gift of Changing Woman*. New York: H. Holt, 1993.

Describes the traditional coming-of-age ceremony for young Apache women, in which they use special dances and prayers to reenact the Apache story of creation and celebrate the power of Changing Woman, the legendary ancestor of their people. Includes bibliographical references.

# Coming of Age Novels

Coming of Age Novels: compilation provided by the Harold Washington Library Center, Literature and Languages Division

Akins, Ellen. *Home Movie*.

Joey Taylor's father is dead and her mother gone adventuring. Slowly growing obsessed with man in her strange piano teacher's films, Joey decides to head for L.A. to search for him.

Anderson, Jim. *Billaroby*.

During World War II, while a small Australian town dreads a mass escape of the Japanese POWs interned there, one family's secrets are gradually uncovered.

Ansa, Tina McEvoy. *Baby of the Family*.

Born with a caul, the veil of membrane that betokens mystical powers, the daughter of a prosperous black family in 1950s rural Georgia must learn to deal with her occult gifts.

Arnold, Madelyn. *Bird-Eyes*.

Sixteen-year-old Latisha, a lesbian and a runaway, is imprisoned in a mental institution, where she forms an alliance against repressive hospital authorities with a deaf woman forbidden to sign.

Arnow, Harriet. *Weedkiller's Daughter*.

At fifteen and a half-years-old, the daughter of a man committed to destroying subversives—the “weeds” of society—is ready to look for her own place in the world.

Baldwin, James. *Go Tell It On the Mountain*.

John experiences religious conversion in Harlem on his fourteenth birthday.

Barry, Lynda. *The Good Times Are Killing Me*.

Popular music keeps Edna Arkins going through the ups and downs of life in a changing neighborhood.

Benedict, Elizabeth. *The Beginner's Book of Dreams*.

Esme Singer finds her way amid the deluded dreams of her beautiful Lauren Bacall-look-alike alcoholic mother and her absent father, who is sure he'll be rich someday.

Brickner, Richard P. *After She Left*.

Growing up on New York's Park Avenue in the forties and fifties, Emily wants to be worthy of the mother who died trying to save Jewish refugees in Shanghai during the Japanese occupation.

Camon, Fernando. *The Fifth Estate*.

A peasant in post-World War II Italy meets an urban girl and falls in love with her and his dream of the city.

Capote, Truman. *Other Voices, Other Rooms*.

A thirteen-year-old boy goes to live with his father in a rundown Louisiana mansion full of eccentrics.

# Coming of Age Novels (cont.)

Carson, Michael. *Brothers in Arms*.

Fat, pious, and losing the chastity battle, a gay English schoolboy joins the seminary in hopes of straightening out his life and avoiding mathematics.

Corpi, Lucha. *Delia's Song*.

During the heyday of student protest, Delia leaves her male-centered Mexican American family for Berkeley.

Coulter, Hope Norman. *The Errand of the Eye*.

Allie McCain is born to an idealistic white family in Southern Louisiana during the civil rights era.

Emechta, Buchi. *The Bride Price*.

An educated Ibo girl in 1950s Nigeria is forced to leave city life and return to her chieftain uncle's village.

Ferry, Charles. *One More Time*.

Nineteen-year-old tenor sax player Skeets Sinclair tells the sentimental story of a World War II-era big band's final tour.

Garfield, Brian. *The Paladin*.

Winston Churchill recruits a fifteen-year-old schoolboy as a special agent and assassin.

Guy, David. *Football Dreams*.

A boy tries to use football to prove himself to his dying father.

Handke, Peter. *Repetition*.

In the summer of 1960 Filip Kobal leaves Austria on the trail of his brother who disappeared in Slovenia some twenty years earlier.

Janus, Christopher. *Miss Fourth of July, Goodbye*.

A young Greek immigrant girl faces down the Klan in 1917 West Virginia.

Kadohata, Cynthia. *The Floating World*.

A Japanese-American teenager moves endlessly around the Pacific Northwest with her parents, her brothers, and her hated grandmother.

Lauber, Lynn. *White Girls*.

In small-town 1960s Ohio, a white teenager finds adventure in the forbidden black section of town.

LeGuin, Ursula. *The Beginning Place*.

Hugh and Irene are called to protect the fantastical world in which they have taken refuge from painful reality.

MacEvoy, R.A. *The Third Eagle: Lessons Along a Minor String*.

A warrior descended from Native Americans travels among the galaxies' Seven Sentient Peoples and discovers the true purpose of his life.

Markandaya, Kamala. *Nectar in a Sieve*.

In India, a young woman adjusts to life as a peasant farmer's wife.

# Coming of Age Novels (cont.)

Mayerson, Evelyn Wilde. *No Enemy But Time*.

Always awkward, Hilary finds life begins to change when she makes friends with the “loose woman” of the Miami hotel where they both live.

O’Hehir, Diana. *The Bride Who Ran Away*.

Nineteen-year-old Grace Dowell breaks her engagement to her cousin and departs from the Northern California town their great grandfather founded as a utopian community.

Palmer, David. *Emergence*.

After surviving a nuclear blast, an eleven-year-old genius and karate expert must decide what to do next.

Panshin, Alexei. *Rite of Passage*.

In a society divided between the cultured society of starships and the rough colonies below, an ordeal on a frontier planet marks a young girl’s passage to adulthood.

Plante, David. *The Family*.

The son of a French-Canadian working-class family in Providence, Rhode Island, struggles with sex and Catholicism.

Price, Reynolds. *A Generous Man*.

Three days in the life of fifteen-year-old Milo Mustian of North Carolina, involving a snake girl, a mad dog, the python Death, and Milo’s brother, Rato.

Rivera, Edward. *Family Installments: Memories of Growing Up Hispanic*.

Determined to succeed where his relatives have failed, Santos Malangues recounts his family’s history.

Santiago, Danny. *Famous All Over Town*.

Chato, the son of a Mexican-American family in East L.A., looks back on his fourteenth year, when his neighborhood was bulldozed, his family fell apart, and he reached the age his father told him “makes him a man.”

Shields, David. *Dead Language*.

For stutterer Jeremy Zorn, language seems the key to life itself. Drenched in words by his journalist parents, he tries a variety of cures including acting, Latin, running, silence, singing, whispering, and an assortment of girls.

Welch, James. *Fools Crow-O*.

In post-Civil War Montana, a young Blackfoot tries to live up to the hero’s name his people have given him as he warns them of the threat to their way of life.

White, Edmund. *A Boy’s Own Story*.

As a young man tries to find love and to understand his emerging homosexuality, a faculty couple seduces him and tries to turn him on to Catholicism while his psychiatrist talks only about his problems. Followed by *The Beautiful Room is Empty*.

# Coming of Age Novels (cont.)

Wludyka, Peter. *The Past is Another Country*.

Alex, a model member of the Soviets' New Society in America, is ready for Moscow University and a career in the Party when he learns about Jesus, New York City (destroyed in a nuclear blast), and life before the Great Uprising.

Wolitzer, Meg. *This is Your Life*.

Erica and Opal grow up in the shadow of their mother, a hugely popular 200-pound television comedian.