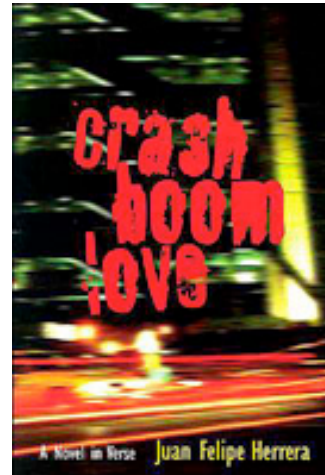


"A bird is known by its song."
Juan Felipe Herrera



Crashboomlove

Juan Felipe Herrera
University of New Mexico Press 1999

Grade Levels

9-12

Curriculum Area

Language Arts • Social Studies

National Language Arts Standards

NL-ENG.K-12.8

DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS

Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

National Social Studies Standards

NSS-G.K-12.2 PLACES AND REGIONS

Students should understand how culture and experience influence people's perceptions of places and regions.

Objectives

To provide a range of culturally diverse literature meeting students' needs to understand themselves, understand worldviews and other cultures.

To provide meaningful, authentic opportunities to read vocabulary in a variety of contexts; language in a cultural context.

Overview

In this novel in verse--unprecedented in Chicano literature--renowned poet Juan Felipe Herrera illuminates the soul of a generation. Drawn from his own life as well as a lifetime of dedication to young people, *CrashBoomLove*

helps readers understand what it is to be a teen, a migrant worker, and a boy wanting to be a boy.

Sixteen-year-old César García is careening. His father, Papi César, has left the migrant circuit in California for his other wife and children in Denver. Sweet Mama Lucy tries to provide for her son with tales of her own misspent youth. But at Rambling West High School in Fowlerville, the sides are drawn: Hmong vs. Chicanos vs. everybody vs. César, the new kid on the block.

Precise and profound, *CrashBoomLove* will appeal to and resonate with high school readers across the country. *Winner of the 2001 America's Award and selected by the New York Public Library Books for the Teenage List.*

"Herrera paints a devastating, yet ultimately hopeful portrait of Cesar Garcia, a 16-year-old Mexican teen growing up in the American high-school culture of Fowlerville, California"

Cesar is the classic example of America's throwaway teen, a young man constantly in the wrong place at the wrong time who, because of his language and cultural differences, becomes more and more marginalized. It is also the story of an educational system that can occasionally make the difference in both teens' and adults' lives and futures . . . a roller-coaster tour de force, remarkable for its ebullient portrait of hope and survival.

Activity

Author's Background

Renowned poet, Juan Felipe Herrera is currently teaching Chicano Studies at California State University at Fresno. He has received two Pushcart Prize Poetry nominations, the Smithsonian Notable Children's Book Award, the Ezra Jack Keats Award, the Americas Award, and an Academy of American Poets nomination for the William Carlos Williams Poetry Award. He founded the multimedia poetry theatre, Teatro Tolteca, in Los Angeles in 1971 and the poetry percussion troupe, TROCA, in San Francisco in 1983.



Juan Felipe Herrera

Author Page Curbstone Press Website 2001

Activity

Don't know how it all started. The frozen feeling,
This fender inside wanting to crash against everything.
Blown out blue night. My face.

With "*CrashBoomLove*", poet and professor Juan Herrera has provided a powerful and illuminating voice to a generation of youth across America. Intense, riveting and powerful, the award-winning novel, written entirely in verse, is the story of Cesar Garcia, a 16 year-old boy whose life in a southern California migrant town is becoming increasingly self-destructive. Recently abandoned by his father, Cesar and his Mama Lucy find themselves alone, attempting to make sense of their lives without Papi's reassurance of a brighter future. Neither the lulling of Selena's voice or the mind-numbing effects of drugs or alcohol are enough to bring Cesar anything but a moment's relief from the incessant challenges for power, friendship, girls, comfort, and repose.

Laden with intense themes, *CrashBoomLove* is not a light read. However, in addition to increasing cultural awareness and recognition, the novel readily provides the springboard for rich discussion involving delicate and critical issues including cultural understanding, conflict resolution, community, friendship, gangs, drug, and alcohol use.

This compelling novel is sure to resonate strongly among high school readers for its riveting account of the life of a young boy struggling every day to hold onto memories of his father, his culture, and his dignity during volatile times

Suggested Accompanying Activities

Style analysis

As the story is written in verse, it provides an opportunity for class discussion and observation of the author's unique style and use of language. Discuss the author's use of:

- Subjective imagery
- Tone
- Symbolism
- Use of both Spanish and English languages and how this affects the story verse and why the author chose to write in this fashion
- Mysterious and compelling chapter titles

Character analysis

Discuss how the character changes from the beginning of the story to the end. How does the tone, imagery change from the beginning of the story to the end and parallel the change in Cesar?

[Juan Felipe Herrera Teacher Resource File <http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyjl/herrera.htm>]

Resources

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Calling the Doves/El canto de las palomas*. Children's Book Press. 2001.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Cinnamon Girl: letters found inside a cereal box*. HarperTempest. 2005.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Crashboomlove: A Novel in Verse*. University of New Mexico Press. 1999.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Featherless/Desplumado*. Children's Book Press. 2004.

Herrera, Juan Felipe. *Upside Down Boy/El niño de cabeza*. Children's Book Press. 2000.

Internet Websites

Juan Felipe Herrera Author Page

<http://www.curbstone.org/authdetail.cfm?AuthID=62>

Juan Felipe Herrera Teacher Resource File

<http://falcon.jmu.edu/~ramseyil/herrera.htm>

Magical Realism-Juan Felipe Herrera

<http://www.magicalrealism.com/authors/170.html>