

LATINO BOOK CLUB

January 2008

Volume 2, Issue 1

Next Meeting

February 23rd 2008
Saturday, 3-4:30 PM
Francesco's Cafe,
839 S. Kerr Ave.

Book Club Members

Lizzy Irvin
Jennifer Horan
Jacqueline Galbraith
Irene Henderson
Alicia Greenberg
Carol Hernandez
Haida Andrade
Fermin Recarte
Evelyn Hrabankova
Rachel Hatfield
Kathleen Jewell
Marcio Moreno
Marianella Jara
Pat Lerch
Kate Williamson
Joanne Mount
Kathy Fox
Nicole Strawn
Christine Vayo
Olga Joachim
Amrita Das

Book List

March 2008

Rudolfo Anaya, *Bless me, Ultima*

February 2008

Piri Thomas, *Down These Mean Streets*.

January 2008

Julia Alvarez, *How the García Girls Lost Their Accents*.

Membership Information

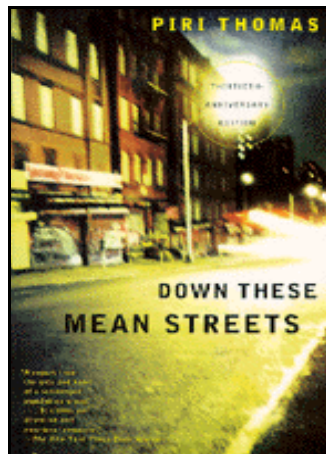
Contact Amrita Das
dasa@uncw.edu
910-962-2430

Books available at:

Pomegranate Books
4418 Park Ave.
910-452-1107

15% discount for club members.

BOOK OF THE MONTH FEBRUARY 2008



Down These Mean Streets (1967) is the autobiography of the author Piri Thomas, a dark skinned man of Puerto Rican and Cuban descent growing up in the poor neighborhood of “Spanish Harlem” or the *barrio* during the Depression years. As the title suggests, the author recounts his struggle to survive the harsh environment of street life, racism and poverty. This book is considered a classic among US-Latino literature, for its hard-hitting style and content. The book even after 40 years, reads like a contemporary novel dealing with issues of young men, racism, poverty and identity. *Down These Mean Streets* has been compared to Malcom X’s autobiography, for its obvious resemblance of tales of black men, surviving in spite of the wretched circumstances. Thomas is

working on another installment of his autobiography titled *A Matter of Dignity*.

Author

Juan Pedro Tomás, better known as Piri Thomas, was born and grew up in the Spanish Harlem of New York city during the Depression years. He struggled with poverty, racism and gang wars and was incarcerated for armed robbery for seven years. Once released he turned his life around to inspire and work for young kids and help them survive through the problems of street life. *Savior, Savior, Hold my Hand*

(1972), *7 Long Times* (1974) are some of his other prose. Thomas is also a poet and true to his roots has recorded the



reading of his poems in the genre “flow.” *Sounds of the Street* (1994) and *No Mo’ Barrio Blues* (1996) are his two albums. For more information on Piri Thomas visit <http://www.cheverote.com/piri.html>

Latino Book Club Blog

<http://latinobookclub.blogspot.com>