



## Keynote Speaker

**Reyna Grande** is the author of the bestselling memoir, *The Distance Between Us*, (Atria, 2012) where she writes about her life before and after she arrived in the United States from Mexico as an undocumented child immigrant. The much-anticipated sequel, *A Dream Called Home* (Atria), was released in 2018.

Her other works include the novels, *Across a Hundred Mountains*, (Atria, 2006) and *Dancing with Butterflies* (Washington Square Press, 2009) which were published to critical acclaim. *The Distance Between Us* is also available as a young readers edition from Simon & Schuster's Children's Division–Aladdin. Her books have been adopted as the common read selection by schools, colleges, and cities across the country. Her most recent titles are *A Ballad of Love and Glory* (Atria, 2022), a novel set during the Mexican-American War, and an anthology by and about undocumented Americans called *Somewhere We Are Human: Authentic Voices on Migration, Survival and New Beginnings* (HarperVia, 2022).

Reyna has received an American Book Award, the El Premio Aztlán Literary Award, and the International Latino Book Award. In 2012, she was a finalist for the prestigious National Book Critics Circle Awards. In 2015 she was honored with a Luis Leal Award for Distinction in Chicano/Latino Literature and a Latino Spirit Award in 2021. The young reader's version of *The Distance Between Us* received a 2017 Honor Book Award for the Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature and a 2016 Eureka! Honor Awards from the California Reading Association, and an International Literacy Association Children's Book Award 2017.

Writing about immigration, family separation, language trauma, the price of the American Dream, and her writing journey, Reyna's work has appeared in *The New York Times*, the *Dallas Morning News*, CNN, *The Lily* at *The Washington Post*, *Buzzfeed*, among others. In March 2020, she was a guest on [Oprah's Book Club](#) television special.

Reyna is a proud member of the [Macondo Writer's Workshop](#) founded by Sandra Cisneros, where she has also served as faculty. She has also taught at Bread Loaf Writers Conference,

VONA (Voices of Our Nation's Arts), at the Under the Volcano Writer's Conference, and Grubstreet's The Muse and the Marketplace, among others.

Born in [Iguala, Guerrero](#), Mexico, Reyna was two years old when her father left for the U.S. to find work. Her mother followed her father north two years later, leaving Reyna and her siblings behind in Mexico. In 1985, when Reyna was nine, she left Iguala to make her own journey north.

After attending Pasadena City College for two years, Reyna became the first person in her family to set foot in a university. She went on to obtain a B.A. in creative writing and film & video from the University of California, Santa Cruz, and an M.F.A. in creative writing from Antioch University.