



Featured Writer

RICHARD BLANCO
5th Inaugural Poet of the U.S.

Selected by President Obama as the fifth inaugural poet in U.S. history, Richard Blanco is the first Latino, immigrant, and gay person to serve in such a role. Born in Madrid to Cuban exile parents and raised in Miami, the negotiation of cultural identity characterizes his four collections of poetry: *How To Love a Country*, *City of a Hundred Fires*, which received the Agnes Starrett Poetry Prize from the University of Pittsburgh Press; *Directions to The Beach of the Dead*, recipient of the Beyond Margins Award from the PEN American Center; and *Looking for The Gulf Motel*, recipient of the Paterson Poetry Prize and the Thom Gunn Award. He has also authored the memoirs *For All of Us, One Today: An Inaugural Poet's Journey* and *The Prince of Los Cocuyos: A Miami Childhood*, winner of a Lambda Literary Award. His inaugural poem "One Today" was published as a children's book, in collaboration with renowned illustrator Dav Pilkey. *Boundaries*, a collaboration with photographer Jacob Hessler, challenges the physical and psychological dividing lines that shadow the United States. And his latest book of poems, *How to Love a Country*, both interrogates the American narrative, past and present, and celebrates the still unkept promise of its ideals. Blanco has written occasional poems for the re-opening of the U.S. Embassy in Cuba, *Freedom to Marry*, the Tech Awards of Silicon Valley, and the Boston Strong benefit concert following the Boston Marathon bombings. He is a Woodrow Wilson Fellow and has received numerous honorary doctorates. He has taught at Georgetown University, American University, and Wesleyan University. He serves as the first Education Ambassador for The Academy of American Poets.