CERVANTES, LORNA DEE (1954–)

“all the doors in my mind suddenly opened and everything was put into place…”

The San Francisco born Cervantes credits her creative family for her poetic aspirations. Influenced by the idealism of the Chicano movement and energized by social protest in high school, Cervantes took part in the antiwar movement, the school feminist debate team, teach-ins, and the Chicano cultural movement. In 1972, her Chicano theater group accepted an invitation to participate in a Latin American Theater Festival in Mexico City. She wrote up to five poems a day on that occasion. While there, she recited poetry between acts. Her most celebrated poem, “Refugee Ship,” was translated into Spanish and later appeared in her first book, *Emplumada,* (1981). In 1974 she began to publish her own chapbooks, and eventually the literary journal, *Mango,* was born. Cervantes wrote the manuscript for *From the Cables of Genocide: Poems on Love and Hunger* (1991). The book gained wide recognition nationally and internationally and won the Latino Literature Prize and the Paterson Poetry Prize.