

MARTÍNEZ, DEMETRIA (1960–)

“Life is too short to work at a job that requires hose, heels, and forty hours a week. Why settle for a career when one might have a calling.”

As a teen-ager, the writer Demetria Martínez, kept a diary where she recounted the problems she faced as a shy, somewhat overweight girl. Following graduation from Princeton University in 1982, she began to write poetry. A collection titled *Turning* appeared in print five years later. Involved with the Sanctuary Movement, a group that provided shelter to refugees, Martínez' sympathy with the cause as evidenced from her writings, was used against her in a court of law; she allegedly smuggled two Salvadoran immigrants into the country. Cleared of the charges, the writer continues to fight for social justice. Her best-known work, *Mother Tongue* was published in 1997 and received the Western States Award in Fiction. That same year she published her second collection of poetry, *Breathing between the Lines*, and in 2002 she published *The Devil's Workshop*.