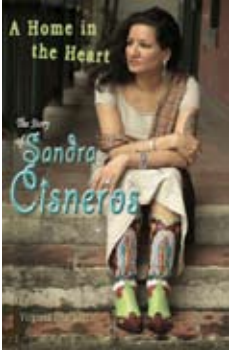


AMERICAN ORIGINALS

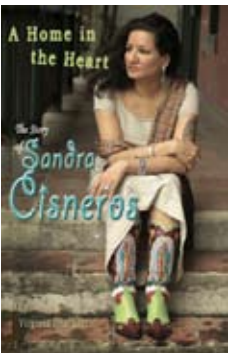


The Horn Book Guide

2005

Brackett, Virginia. *A Home in the Heart: The Story of Sandra Cisneros* 128 pp. Morgan LE ISBN 1-931798-42-7 \$23.95

(4) YA World Writers series. Brackett explores Cisneros's Chicana heritage and its influences on her writing. The focus is primarily on her feelings of isolation and her attempts to feel at home with her surroundings and culture. The well-researched but sterile and disjointed text included brief literary analyses of Cisneros's writings as well as discussions of her political activism. Timeline. Bib., ind. NCP



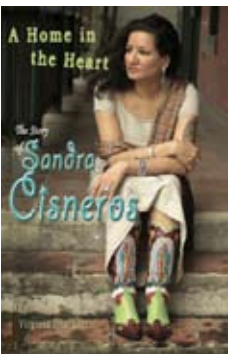
Booklist

December 2004

Brackett, Virginia. *A Home in the Heart: The Story of Sandra Cisneros*. Jan. 2005. 128 p. illus. Morgan Reynolds, lib. ed., \$21.95 (1-931798-42-7) Gr. 7-12.

Brackett's lively account, one of the first for YAs on this landmark writer, shows Cisneros crossing borders not only as a Chicana traveling between Chicago, San Antonio, and Mexico and as a woman who defies traditional family roles but also as a writer who makes readers think about what it means to be American. Her classic autobiographical novel, *House on Mango Street*, published 20 years ago, continues to inspire writers everywhere. Along with information on older books, Brackett includes chapters on Cisneros' acclaimed poetry and recent fiction and on her role as an activist. Accompanying the view of success is a moving perspective on Cisneros' struggle to find her voice and to find a room of her

own and the space to write. Full source notes, including references to articles, interviews, and Web sites, will lead readers to more information about the writer who celebrates her "wicked, wicked ways." –Hazel Rochman



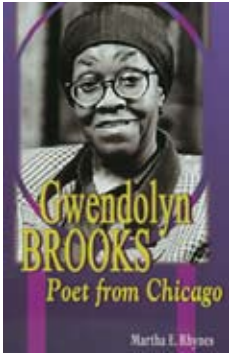
Book Notes

December 2004

Brackett, Virginia. *A Home in the Heart: The Story of Sandra Cisneros*

Another artist who defies convention is author Sandra Cisneros. Virginia Brackett writes about her life and work in *A Home in the Heart* (Morgan Reynolds), a biography for high school readers. Although Cisneros grew up in Chicago, she eventually found a home in San Antonio. Her uncertainty about how she fit into American and Mexican cultures contributed to her dissatisfaction with school, and her poverty added to her feelings of insecurity even after she was accepted at the prestigious University of Iowa Writers' Workshop graduate program. For years she struggled to find time for her own writing while teaching at schools and universities to make a living. Her decision to forego marriage and a family to concentrate on her writing reveals her determination to serve as a voice for Mexican Americans,

particularly women. The text includes brief discussions of some of Cisneros' most widely-read books, including *The House on Mango Street* and could serve as background reading for classes that consider her works.



School Library Journal

April 2003

Carter G. Woodson Honor Book

Rhynes, Martha E. Gwendolyn Brooks: Poet from Chicago, 112 p. (World Writers Series) photos, bibliog, chron, index, notes, Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds, 2002. PLB \$21.95 ISBN 1-931798-05-2) Gr 6 Up

A biography of the award-winning African American poet. Rhynes follows her subject through the various stages of life and the readers come to feel as though they know Brooks and understand how she grew and continually questioned her beliefs over the course of her life, from 1917 to 2000. The times are reflected in her poetry as stories/commentaries and the author provides ample opportunities for readers to see what a truly gifted poet Brooks was.

The writing is clear, lively, and detailed. Average-quality, black-and-white photographs appear throughout, mostly of fellow writers mentioned in the text, but only tangentially related to the subject. There are very few pictures of Brooks herself. A solid resource for African-American History Month, Women's History Month,



School Library Journal

April 2003

Hart, Joyce. Native Son: The Story of Richard Wright, 128 p. (World Writers Series)

photos, bibliog, chron, index, notes, Web sites. CIP. Morgan Reynolds, 2002. PLB \$21.95 ISBN 1-931798-06-0). LC 2002013686.

Gr 6 Up—A full portrait of one of the seminal African-American writers of the 20th century. Hart follows her subject from his poor Southern childhood to his struggles as a young man in Chicago to his literary success and notoriety and the end of his life in Europe. Wright's best known works—at least to high school students—are Native Son and Black Boy, both of which are major reference points and sources for the text. The author explains Wright's involvement in the Communist Party, which at one point facilitated his writing but would turn out to haunt his achievements; his love life; and his influence on such artists as James Baldwin

and on cultural institutions like Broadway theater and the Paris Review. Occasional black and white photographs highlight people and places of import to his story, as does a standard time line. The writing is accessible and flows smoothly. While Robin Westen's biography (Enslow) is hard to beat, this one is a worthwhile addition. —Andrew Metlow, Chicago Public Library.