

Literacy Work Propels Santa Monica Press and Publisher Jeffrey Goldman Into Young Adult Literature

Santa Monica Press, long known as an eclectic independent press with a Southern California bent to its list of high-quality books, recently announced that after 25 years publishing Adult Nonfiction, the press would be launching Santa Monica Press/Teen, featuring Young Adult Narrative Nonfiction and Historical Fiction. A percentage of sales from the entire YA line will be donated to non-profit organizations dedicated to promoting literacy.

The initial set of Young Adult (YA) books, being published in Winter 2022, features four titles—two novels and two memoirs:

- *Pork Belly Tacos with a Side of Anxiety: My Journey Through Depression, Bulimia, and Addiction* by Yvonne Castaneda
- *The Dressmaker's Daughter: A Novel* by Linda Boroff
- *Flowing with the Pearl River: Memoir of a Red China Girl* by Amy Chan Zhou
- *Ventura and Zelzah: A Novel* by J.G. Bryan

For the past decade, publisher Jeffrey Goldman has been heavily involved in the non-profit world, having served on the Board of Words Alive, a nonprofit literacy organization, as both a Board Member and as Board Chair. The power of YA really hit Goldman while working as a Words Alive Writing Facilitator at the Monarch School, which serves children impacted by homelessness.

"I knew from my own children's education and my friendships and support of the librarians at their school, that YA literature could have a powerful effect on a young person. But what I saw at Monarch School was how YA literature could literally change lives," Goldman marvels. "I decided that it was time for Santa Monica Press to take on a new challenge that could have a profound impact on young readers, while at the same time raising funds through the sales of the titles to help support non-profit literacy organizations such as Words Alive."

High school kids who barely had an interest in school sparked to the carefully chosen books in Words Alive's curriculum. "I remember one young man, brand new to the school, a junior in high school, who had been in and out of different schools and in and out of different juvenile detention situations. And this kid was one of the most amazing student writers I'd ever come across. But he thought nothing of it, because he had never had anybody at home to encourage him, until he read the book Words Alive gave him: Jimmy Baca Santiago's *A Place to Stand*. That memoir changed his life. He became devoted to his writing."

As to Santa Monica Press's first foray into YA, Goldman says, "True to our roots, it's a diverse mix. *Pork Belly Tacos* is written by a writer whose mother is Mexican and father

is Cuban, and explores a traditionally taboo subject in those communities. *Pearl River* is by an author who spent a good deal of her childhood in communist China. *Ventura and Zelzah* is a coming-of-age novel set in suburban Los Angeles in the 1970s, and *The Dressmaker's Daughter*, which is set in Romania, presents a new perspective of the Holocaust."

To top things off, the next release in the Santa Monica Press/Teen line is what Goldman claims is a book "in the grand tradition of the Great American Novel—only written by a Brit!" He pauses for effect, laughs, and then closes with, "I assure you we will always keep things eclectic here at Santa Monica Press."

About Santa Monica Press

Santa Monica Press has been publishing an eclectic line of non-fiction books for over 25 years. Our critically acclaimed titles are sold in chain, independent, on-line, and university bookstores around the world, as well as in some of the most popular retail, gift, and museum outlets in North America. Our authors are recognized experts who are sought after by the media and receive newspaper, magazine, internet, social media, radio, and television coverage both nationally and internationally. At Santa Monica Press, we're not afraid to cast a wide editorial net. Our list of lively and modern non-fiction titles includes books in such categories as pop culture, film, music, humor, biography, travel, and sports, as well as regional titles focused on California. We have recently added [Young Adult Fiction](#) and [Young Adult Narrative Non-Fiction](#) to our list! Remember to look for the shell!

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