

way. In order for these four women and their mates to be able to obtain “a little love” they have to struggle, on a daily basis, with all the stress of living in a large cosmopolitan area in the twenty-first century in the United States. The four women in the novel are intelligent, thoughtful individuals and not stereotypes. While women’s liberation has brought them partially through a new way of life in a new country, the “promised land” is still on the horizon. Men and women must toil in the new playing field in order to find a role that is both fulfilling for the couple and for the individual. The struggles continues ....

The authors of *A Little Love* have announced that their novel has been purchased by Hollywood for a possible future movie. Getting the novel to a bigger public would be positive; however, one wonders if the humor and the beautiful language will survive the shift from paper to big screen. One of the greatest triumphs of this novel is the smoothness in which the authors go from English to Spanish and vice versa. Their translations of the Spanish language into English are not literal, but rather poetic, and the result is a wonderful tapestry of the bilingual mind at work.

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***HAVANA HEAT: A LUPE SOLANO MYSTERY***

by Carolina García-Aguilera

New York: William Morrow, 2000 \$24.00

This is Lupe Solano’s fifth outing as a Cuban-American detective fighting crime in Miami, Florida, and it is terrific. The novel is a thrill a minute, accompanied by instructive material on Cuban heritage. Carolina García-Aguilera’s literary creation of a liberated female detective with plenty of style and humor hits the mark once again. We now find Lupe romantically involved with a Cuban-American lawyer whom she met in the previous novel: *A Miracle in Paradise* (1999). Professionally, Lupe has gained a reputation, as of late, as an art expert since she has helped several clients regain stolen works of Cuban art. Because of such a reputation, Lupe is hired simultaneously by two clients in *Havana Heat* to help them with their art related problems. The first investigation has to do with finding a missing art dealer who sold a stolen Cuban painting, and the second, with retrieving a medieval tapestry that an exiled family had to leave hidden in Cuba when they fled the communist island back in 1961. The subject matter lends itself to an investigation of the buying and selling of Cuban art around the world. The Castro government has confiscated many works of art from Cubans who abandoned the island. These works cannot be sold legally, since the Castro government is not the legal rightful owner, but illegal sales are quite common. After the fall of the Soviet Union, the Cuban government has tried to obtain money by selling most of the masterpieces of Cuban art owned by Cuban museums and thus significantly reducing the country’s art patrimony. Lupe’s investigation also shows that the Cuban government has notably benefited financially, not only by selling the artistic heritage of the nation but also by selling fake works of art.

In some ways, *Havana Heat* is similar to the first novel of the series: *Bloody Waters*, where Lupe has to infiltrate herself into Cuba in order to bring back the mother of an adopted Cuban-American little girl dying of leukemia. Previously, Lupe returned to a Cuban fishing village. This time she returns to Havana to unearth the medieval tapestry brought to Cuba by

Christopher Columbus on one of his latest voyages. Lupe is accompanied, on both illegal trips, by Barbara Pérez, an eccentric Afro-Cuban boat captain. In Cuba, Lupe painfully describes an apocalyptic Havana. Castro's transformation of the pearl of the Caribbean into a ghost of its former self is indeed traumatic, like going back in time to the nineteenth century. Lupe has inside help with this job from a female art restorer, who also has her own agenda, which is revealed in the novel. Lupe succeeds in Cuba, but not without first running into the missing art dealer from Miami who has been trailing her. Lupe, although diminutive in size, has enough experience to get the upper hand when the art dealer is distracted by Lupe's companion.

Lupe Solano returns exhausted to Miami, but in a few days, with the help of lawyers, art experts, and the Cuban art restorer, she is able to settle all the mystery in a fair manner. Lupe Solano, like many other feminist detectives, does not always solve the enigmatic cases in a way that is satisfactory for her clients, Lupe's ethical concerns are above those of some of her clients because the most important thing for this detective is not necessarily to regain the status quo, but instead to find the best ethical solution for all.

In *Havana Heat*, as in her other novels, Carolina García-Aguilera has so many interesting issues going on at the same time that even after reading about the plot, the reader will find sufficient excitement to keep reading until the very last page, without being able to put the book down and, without realizing it, learn a great deal about Cuban master painters, and the current political situation of this communist island ninety miles away from Key West, Florida.

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***MI MOTO FIDEL: MOTORCYCLING THROUGH CASTRO'S CUBA***

by Christopher P. Baker

Washington: National Geographic Adventure Press, 2001 \$26.00

*Mi Moto Fidel: Motorcycling Through Castro's Cuba* combines two popular features of travel books within one tome, in this case the combination includes an exotic destination: Cuba, the forbidden island, and an unusual mode of transportation: a motorcycle. Motorcycle transportation in travel literature reached a high philosophical plateau with the publication of Robert M. Persig's *Zen and the Art of Motorcycle Maintenance*, a life manual for the seventies, and more recently another good motorcycle journey was published, although less lofty: *Investment Biker: On the Road with Jim Rogers* (1994). This is another life manual, but this time for older and richer individuals trying to learn more about the international financial market by traveling around the world on a motorcycle. The Cuba travel book genre has had several worthy samples during the nineties, some of the most popular have been: Tom Miller's *Trading with the Enemy: A Yankee Travels Through Castro's Cuba* (1992), Christopher Hunt's *Waiting for Fidel* (1998), and most recently Andrei Codrescu's *Ay Cuba!: A Socio-Erotic Journey* (1999).

Christopher Baker's book, *Mi Moto Fidel* is more successful than the three travels books previously mentioned because of the motorcycle that he was able to bring to and use in Cuba. Baker's motorcycle allows him to travel by himself with much less restriction than prior visitors who had to make travel arrangements through the government. Christopher Baker is a British travel-guide-writer living in California, a confessed leftist, and a *bon-vivant*. His experience in