

MCC Student Earns National Recognition for Poetry

By **Rachael Bouley** - 01/24/2019

A local community college student has received an exciting award for his poetry prowess! Please learn more about Jacobo Perez and his creative endeavors, as shared by Dawn Zimmer of Mesa Community College:

Mesa Community College student Jacobo Perez received the coveted first place honor at a national literary competition sponsored by the League of Innovation, a consortium of community colleges across the nation.

His poem, "How to Cross the Border Illegally or How to Make Tamales de Rajas," was submitted to the national League Competition, along with other first-place Maricopa County Community College District Creative Writing Competition winners from all 10 Maricopa Community Colleges.

Their work was adjudicated by national judges and first-, second-, and third-place winners, along with the honorable mentions, were chosen in the categories of essay, fiction, one-act plays and poetry.

Perez said the award makes him very proud. "But what makes me most proud is knowing my family and teachers and friends know and talk about my accomplishment," Perez said. "Their recognition means a lot to me. I also boast about a praising commentary by the national poet laureate Tracy K. Smith, which also makes me very happy."

The League winners received a Certificate of National Merit, a \$500 award from the League for Innovation in the Community College and will be published in the League's Student Literary Competition publication.

"This recognition by MCC and the League of Innovation for the Community Colleges will encourage me to search for the poetry circles in my community and to continue reading, learning and dedicating time to poetry," said Perez, who plans to graduate from MCC in Spring 2019. "My career goal is to be a Spanish teacher and to seek out advice and help from my favorite teachers at MCC who teach English and creative writing—Dr. Bob Baron and Josh Rathkamp."

Perez said the poem was inspired by real-life personal stories about undocumented people that needed to be shared and by the Mexican-American writer Miguel Mendez.

"I wanted to write a poem that switched from something logical to something false and made up, but with intentions of becoming a simple and ignorant truth," Perez said. "I also wanted to recreate the actual nervousness of what I felt hearing the stories blended with a soothing comfort of safety. What also inspired my poem was the humility, intelligence and courage of the Mexican people I grew up knowing and our family's Mexican culture."

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The League for Innovation in the Community College is an international nonprofit organization with a mission to cultivate innovation in the community college environment. Learn more at League.org.

Source: <https://www.mesacc.edu/news/press-release/mcc-student-takes-home-first-place-national-poetry-competition>

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Submitted by: [Dawn Zimmer](#)

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I am a multimedia journalist and proud graduate from the Walter Cronkite School of Journalism & Mass Communication. I am originally from Minnesota, and I love learning about my second home, Arizona, and all of its awesome communities through my contributions to My Local News! When I was a little girl, I created my own "newspaper" for my neighborhood and spent all my time writing, printing and sending each edition to my loyal subscribers (AKA my family and neighbors!). Now, it's a dream come true to be able to write everyday and have a positive impact on communities through my reporting. In my free time, I love to travel, hike, cook and spend time with my family and friends.