



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

Driven to Discover<sup>SM</sup>

Voices  
from the  
Gaps

# Evangelina Vigil-Piñón

“

*And They Nod Their Heads Que Si.  
Little pieces fall off me every day. Like hilo  
strands of my long, black  
hair. Me siento, in idle restlessness, reviewing  
things once said or  
written, and wonder, if it means anything.  
Does it mean anything at all?  
My existencia quivers, and I cannot help it.*

— Nade y Nade

”



## Quick Facts

- \* Born in 1949
- \* Chicana poet, children's book author, and director
- \* Writer of *Thirty An' Seen a Lot* (1985)

## Biography

Evangelina Vigil-Piñón was born November 29, 1949 in San Antonio, Texas. Vigil-Piñón lived in San Antonio while growing up. She finally moved from San Antonio when she went to college. Her father's family is from Seguin, Texas, and her mother's family comes from San Antonio. Her mother's family emigrated to Texas in the early 1900s from Parras, Mexico. As a child, Vigil-Piñón lived with her maternal grandmother. This is where she heard stories about Mexico and the United States during the early 1900s. Vigil-Piñón credits her mother for her love of books and her father for her love of music.

Vigil-Piñón's interest in literature and music began early. As a sixth grader, her principal sent her to the Inman Christian Center, a private art school in San Antonio, where she was in attendance with people in their twenties. In the eighth grade, Vigil-Piñón won third place with a four-line poem that she composed.

This page was researched and submitted by: Chelsie June Hoskins, Courtney Elizabeth Manning, Kimberly Anne Neal, Joshua David LeFevre, Nicole Kristina Busken, and Jennifer Lynne Ciancio on April 19, 2004.



# Evangelina Vigil-Piñón

## Biography continued

In high school, Vigil-Piñón united her musical and poetic interests and wrote lyrics to the songs that she sang in a group with others from her neighborhood. Vigil-Piñón stated that she is inspired to write poetry from the world around her, from “the rhythm of time, the ticking of clocks, hearts beating. To [her] poetry is music. It is that song in our heart. Life is the dance to that music” (Johnson 308).

Vigil-Piñón earned a scholarship for business administration. In 1968 she enrolled in Prairie View A&M University. Vigil-Piñón then transferred to the University of Houston where she chose to major in English. In 1974, she graduated with her B.A. in English.



During her time in Houston after graduation, Vigil-Piñón composed her first collection of poems, *Tanteadas y malas tanteadas (Feeling the Way)*. She moved back to San Antonio in 1976. In 1977, at the Universidad Jacinto Trevino, she taught English Composition and American literature.

Vigil-Piñón’s first book, *Nade y Nade (Deeper and Deeper)*, was published in 1978. This book is a compilation of thirty poems that cover a variety of themes. Vigil-Piñón’s book, *Thirty an’ Seen a Lot*, was published in 1982. The poems within this book were composed in a six year time span. The book earned Vigil-Piñón the 1983 American Book Award.

Vigil-Piñón married Mark Anthony Piñón in 1983. Within the same year, the anthology, *Woman of Her Word: Hispanic Women Write*, was published. Vigil-Piñón was the editor of this anthology. She and her husband had their son, Marc Anthony Piñón, in 1984. Vigil-Piñón also wrote and directed a videotape called *Night Vigil*, which was released in 1984. Vigil-Piñón’s book, *The Computer is Down*, was published in 1987. In 1995, Vigil-Piñón translated Tomas Rivera’s novel *Y No Se lo Trago la Tierra (And the Earth Did Not Devour Him)*. In the fall of 2001, Vigil-Piñón published *El muumuu de Marina (Marina’s Muumuu)*. This is her first bilingual children’s book.



# Evangelina Vigil-Piñón

## Biography continued

Vigil-Piñón is currently a teacher at the University of Houston, where she teaches Mexican-American Literature and United States Hispanic Literature. She is also a songwriter and singer of Brazilian and Latin Jazz for the Houston Tranquility Base (Pena 1). Vigil-Piñón also hosts and produces “Community Close Up: Viva Houston,” for a local network news station in Houston, Texas.

## Selected Bibliography

### Works by the author

#### Poetry and Fiction

*Nade y Nade* (M and A Editions, 1978).

*Thirty An’ Seen a Lot* (poems) (Arte Publico Press, 1985).

*The Computer Is Down* (poems) (Arte Pulico Press, 1987).

Translator of *Y no se lo trago la tierra* (*And the Earth Did Not Devour Him*), by Thomas Rivera (Arte Publico Press, 1987).

Editor of *Woman of Her Word: Hispanic Woman Write* (Arte Publico Press, 1987).

Editor, with Julian Olivares, of *Decade II: An Anniversary Anthology* (Arte Publico Press, 1993).

*Nalina’s Muumuu* (Arte Publico Press, 2001).

#### Television

*Night Vigil* (De Colores Productions, 1984).

*El Diez y Seis de Septiembre* (KTRK-TV, 1995).

*La Familia: Strength and Struggle* (KTRK-TV, 1996).

*Viva la Raza: Latin Diversity in Houston* (KTRK-TV, 1996).

*Texas Chicano Soul: Little Joe y la Familia* (KTRK-TV, 1998).

Co-author, with Regina Hall, of *Portrait of a People: Houston’s Asian American Community* (KTRK-TV, 1998).

*The Hispanic Century* (KTRK-TV, 1999).

#### Work in Progress

*Aura of Inertia*, a book of poems.



# Evangelina Vigil-Piñón

## Selected Bibliography continued

### Works about the author

*Contemporary Authors* (GALE, 2000).

Garcia, Juan A., Theresa Cordova, and Juan R. Garcia. *The Chicano Struggle: Analyses of Past and Present Efforts* (Bilingual Press, 1984).

Johnson, Elaine D. "Evangelina Vigil-Piñón" in *Dictionary of Literary Biography: Chicano Writers*, ed. Shirley, Carl R. and Francisco A. Lomeli (Gale Research, 1992).

Pena, Carmen. "Evangelina Vigil-Piñón" (*Houston People*, 2004).

Ramirez, Arturo. *Mujer y literatura mexicana y chicano: Culturas en contacto*.