

Pablo Cartaya's
Multilingual/Multicultural
WRITING EXERCISE

Weaving another language into English text can be used for any language, across any culture and gives literature the power to be truly diverse. In this exercise, take a moment to consider your personal background.

Answer the following:

- 1) Where do you come from?
- 2) Where do your parents come from?
- 3) Where do your grandparents come from?
- 4) Where do you ancestors come from? Burgess says the English language is constantly evolving. Maybe at some point in your personal history, there was a relative who spoke creole. Or Greek. Or Shona. Or maybe came from a remote village in Ireland where the dialect is so difficult to discern, you'd have to live there for years before you can understand it. Dig into that background and draw out a character. What does he or she look like? Where is she?

Consider this character's cultural history for a moment. Now think about the language of that cultural history. Let go of what the proper grammar is, or the correct way to write a standard sentence in English. Combine the two to build a diverse landscape, a sense of atmosphere, and a give a voice to your character.

Consider all of this and then see where the language takes you:

- 1) Weave that language and background into an opening scene with this character. Give this character a voice.
- 2) Write a drinking song this character will sing.
- 3) Build and cultivate more scenes with this same voice.