



## La Llorona

A Spirit unable to rest (Un ánima que no descansa)

*Nephtalí de León*

**Col. BIBLIOTECA JAVIER COY D'ESTUDIS NORD-AMERICANS**

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Nephtalí De León is a USA born and raised Chicano former migrant worker that became a Poet/Painter/Author/and Playwright. He has been published in several countries with his poetry translated into twelve languages. Growing up in the cauldron of borderland conflicts between USA and Mexico, by the edge of the river that divides both countries, the Rio Grande, he is no stranger to the myths, legends, and stories that form the world view of his multicultural native people. Present day native American migrants have been labeled and treated as strangers in their ancient homelands. Those who appropriated their lands now call them illegals, undocumented invaders. They administer their presence with such legal definitions in the courts of their own invention. It is in this arena that the author presents a timeless legend of a tortured and maligned spirit that refuses to die. The legend of La Llorona begins 500 years ago when invaders first came to the American continent. Reality went beyond surreal, and the Victim became the Culprit, was punished and condemned to wander unto eternity in hopeless pain for her crime, the worst any one can be accused of – the drowning of her own children! This centuries old legend is very much alive. Everybody knows her name – La Llorona.

Nephtalí De León is a Chicano writer known primarily for his poetry, children's stories, and essays. He is also credited with illustrating most of his books. He was born in Laredo, Texas in 1945 as the son of migrant workers. Although neither of his parents received much formal education, Nephtalí says that they were responsible for first exposing him to literature. He published his first book—Chicanos: Our Background and Our Pride—in the early 1960s during his senior year of high school. He then expanded his work to include poetry and plays, dabbling in mural art and children's stories on the side (his first children's book *I Will Catch the Sun* received great praise). He has been published in Mexico, France, the U.S., and Spain with his stories being translated into several other languages (German, Russian, Chinese, and Vietnamese). Currently, Nephtalí is a full-time poet, writer, and painter who performs lectures and poetry at schools and community events. De León depicts the «dreams, desires, and aspirations» of the Chicano people. He believes that Chicanos have been «held in psychological and spiritual bondage...and that they are cultural and intellectual hostages in American society». In his works he tries to trace how this predicament has developed throughout history and he also attempts to display the dreams and attitudes of the Chicano people. His writings are based on ancient Aztec language and culture.