



# Ana Veciana-Suarez

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*Time stretched into distance, blending past and future.*

— from *The Chin Kiss King* (1997)

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## Quick Facts

- \* Born in 1956
- \* Cuban-American journalist, novelist, and essayist
- \* Author of *The Chin Kiss King* (1997)

## Biography

Ana Veciana-Suarez was born in Havana, Cuba in 1956. By 1962, her family had fled Cuba and settled in Miami, Florida. She graduated summa cum laude from the University of South Florida. She has worked for *The Miami News*, *The Palm Beach Post*, and currently for *The Miami Herald* as a syndicated columnist. Several anthologies have published her commentaries, and she has won many awards for her writing which include a first place Sunshine State Award in 1995 and a first place Excellence in Feature Writing in 1996. She lives in Miami, Florida with her husband, David Freundlich and has five children. Her son, Ben Suarez, created a website honoring his mother.

Veciana-Suarez’s Cuban heritage is evident in her novels though it is not her only focus. Her first novel *The Chin Kiss King* (1997) is the story of three generations of women: grandmother, daughter and granddaughter. Cuca, the grandmother, is an exile from Cuba who practices herbal medicine and talks to her dead ancestors. Adela, Cuca’s daughter, plays the lotto and dresses flashy to catch the glances of men. Mirabel, Adela’s daughter, is most conformed to the American culture and sees her grandmother’s herbal medicine as a waste of time. The three women unite and begin to accept one another when faced with the difficulty of Mirabel giving birth to Victor who is physically and mentally disabled. The Cuban culture is an important part of their lives, but Veciana-Suarez writes this into the novel so well that any reader can connect with the characters.

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# Ana Veciana-Suarez

## Biography continued

*Birthday Parties in Heaven: Thoughts on Love, Life, Grief, and Other Matters of the Heart* (2000) is a collection of beautifully written essays commenting on Veciana-Suarez's life. Her essays are poignant and humorous. Every essay is relevant and leaves a thought provoking impression. Though many of the experiences discussed in the novel are common, such as parents giving their teenager the keys to the car, disagreements between spouses, and selling a house filled with memories, Veciana-Suarez adds insightful comments that provide a positive twist to worrisome or sad situations.

Veciana-Suarez's most recent novel, *The Flight to Freedom* (2002) is a fiction novel directed toward young adults and follows the adolescence of Yara Garcia. Yara and her family flee the Communist regime of Fidel Castro in 1967, when she is thirteen years old. Her family settles in Miami, Florida with the intention of moving back to Cuba as soon as the government is overthrown. In the meantime, Yara and her family are faced with the challenges of adjusting to a new culture. Yara struggles with the difficulty of a new school, language, and friends and the tension that forms between her parents. Yara records her thoughts in a diary that her father gives her, which allows the reader to experience the move to America through the thoughts and feelings of Yara as a young women—something Veciana-Suarez accomplishes with clarity and believability.

Veciana-Suarez has also contributed to two non-fiction books: *Miami: The Magic City* and *Hispanic Media, U.S.A.: A Narrative Guide to Print and Electronic Hispanic News Media in the United States*. Veciana-Suarez is proud of her Cuban heritage which is revealed in her writing.



# Ana Veciana-Suarez

## Biographical Timeline

- 1956- Ana Veciana-Suarez is born in Havana, Cuba
- 1963- Ana Veciana-Suarez comes to the United States from Cuba
- 1987- publishes *Hispanic Media, USA: A Narrative Guide to Print and Electronic Hispanic News Media in the United States*
- 1990- publishes *Hispanic Media: Impact and Influence*
- 1991- receives a \$5,000 individual artist fellowship award
- 1995- wins First place- Sunshine State Award from the Society of Professional Journalists, South Florida Chapter
- 1995- wins Penny- Missouri Award
- 1995- wins Second place- national headliner award for local columns
- 1996- wins First place- excellence in featured writing, commentary category from the American Association of Sunday and Featured Editors
- 1997- publishes *The Chin Kiss King*
- 1998- wins Second place- Sunshine State Award for commentary from the Society of Professional Journalists
- 2000- publishes *Birthday Parties in Heaven: Thoughts on Love, Life, Grief, and other Matters of the Heart*
- 2002- publishes *The Flight to Freedom*



# Ana Veciana-Suarez

## Selected Bibliography

### Works by the author

*Birthday Parties in Heaven: Thoughts on Love, Life, Grief and other Matters of the Heart* (2000).

*The Chin Kiss King* (1997).

*El Ray De los Besos* (1998).

*Flight to Freedom* (2002).

*Hispanic Media: Impact and Influence* (1990).

*Hispanic Media, U.S.A.: A Narrative Guide to Print and Electronic Hispanic News Media in the United States* (1997).

*Miami: The Magic City* (2000).