“Perico, or parrot, was what Dad called me sometimes. It was from a Mexican saying about a parrot that complains how hot it is in the shade, while all along he's sitting inside an oven and doesn't know it..."  
Victor Martinez

Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida  
Victor Martinez  
HarperCollins 1996

Grade Levels  
9-12

Curriculum Area  
Language Arts • Social Studies

National Language Arts Standards  
NL-ENG.K-12.8

DEVELOPING RESEARCH SKILLS  
Students use a variety of technological and information resources (e.g., libraries, databases, computer networks, video) to gather and synthesize information and to create and communicate knowledge.

Objectives  
To provide a range of culturally diverse literature meeting students’ needs to understand themselves, understand worldviews and other cultures.

To provide meaningful, authentic opportunities to read vocabulary in a variety of contexts; language in a cultural context.

Overview  
The story of Manny Hernández propels readers into the heart of a Mexican American boy "who trusts too much." Using fresh, metaphorical language, Martínez captures Manny's tests of courage and masculinity, and his sense of self and place as he works alongside migrant workers in a chili pepper field, drives through an upperclass neighborhood with his teacher, and tends his grandmother's garden. Yet the central setting for the story is Manny's home, where, amidst his family's love, fear and loyalties he is most able to reflect and begin to build a future. His vision, relationships, and judgments will enable young adolescents and their teachers to explore the social and personal complexities of finding a place for oneself that is spacious enough to hold the myriad, precise insights and experiences of Latinos in the United States.

Author's Background  
Victor Martinez grew up in California in a family of twelve children. His parents were migrant laborers from Mexico. Their experiences inspired his writings. Victor Martinez says that his background "makes up the stuff of his work." Mr. Martinez has also worked as a field laborer, welder, truck driver, firefighter, teacher, and office clerk.

Victor Martinez's poems, short stories, and essays have appeared in such prestigious publications as Si, El Andar, The Bloomsbury Review, and the High Plains Literary Review.

Victor Martinez lives with his wife in San Francisco. Parrot in the Oven: mi vida, winner of the National Book Award the Américas Award and the Pura Belpre Award, is his first novel.

http://www.harperchildrens.com/rgg/rggparrot.htm

Urban Dreams Project, Oakland Unified School District provides an extensive lesson plan menu with activities developed by L. Delaney: Skyline High School
Resources

Martinez, Victor. *Loro En El Horno: Mi Vida.*

Martinez, Victor. *Parrot in the Oven: Mi Vida.*

Internet Websites

HarperCollins Readers Guide
http://www.harperchildrens.com/rgg/rggparrot.htm

Parrot in the Oven Lesson Plan
http://urbandreams.ousd.k12.ca.us/lessonplans/parrot/

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