

"Menéndez writes from the gut, expertly crafting the tensions and bitterness of misplacement, the suffocation of place. She also writes from the spleen; Menéndez's acerbic wit finds its way interstitially through the pages of this book, finding another gear for an already beautiful prose. The array of characters, all of whom have jumped out of a frying pan and into a fire, and specifically, into apartment 2B of the Helena, are escaping a past that won't let them be. They're immigrants and refugees whose hopelessness at times obfuscates their political realities: here isn't always better than there. At the center of this book, Menéndez has constructed a home, a building, a city; she's also drawn a line—possibly a circle—that stretches from imperialism to mental health."

—Alejandro Varela, author of *The People Who Report More Stress*

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Ana Menéndez has published five books of fiction: *The Apartment* (2023), *Adios, Happy Homeland!* (2011), *The Last War* (2009), *Loving Che* (2004) and *In Cuba I Was a German Shepherd* (2001), whose title story won a Pushcart Prize. She has worked as a journalist in the United States and abroad, lastly as a prize-winning columnist for *The Miami Herald*.

As a reporter, she wrote about Cuba, Haiti, Kashmir, Afghanistan, and India. Her work has appeared in *Vogue*, *Bomb Magazine*, *The New York Times* and *Tin House* and has been included in several anthologies, including *The Norton Anthology of Latino Literature*. She has a BA in English from Florida International University and an MFA from New York University.

From 2008 to 2009, she lived in Cairo as a Fulbright Scholar in Egypt. She has also lived in India, Turkey, Slovakia and The Netherlands, where she designed a creative writing minor at Maastricht University in 2011. For the past 20 years, she has taught at various writing conferences and programs including, most recently, Bread Loaf and the MFA Program for Writers at Warren Wilson College. She lives in Miami and is currently an associate professor at FIU with joint appointments in English and the Wolfsonian Public Humanities Lab.