

## UH Mānoa Associate Professor Wins Literature Award

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Courtesy: University of Hawai'i

Craig Santos Perez, associate professor of English at the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa, will receive the American Book Award for his book "from unincorporated territory [guma']."

Sponsored by the Before Columbus Foundation, The American Book Awards recognizes excellence in American literature without any bias or restriction. Unlike other awards, there are no losers, only winners. The only criteria for the award is that the work chosen is an outstanding contribution to American literature according to the judges.

Perez said he hoped the award would "open new doors and opportunities" for him in an email interview.

"I hope educators will teach my book in various courses," Perez said. "And I hope readers interested in Pacific literature will find my work a valuable contribution."

Perez is only one of 14 to receive the award, which will be given out on October 25 at the SFJAZZ Center in San Francisco.

### **A life's story**

The book is a representation of various poetic forms and highlights the importance of origins and customs among the changing American cultural terrain. Perez also wanted the book to shed light on the militarization in Guam since 1898 when it became a U.S. territory.

"The book is mostly autobiographical, though there are poems about family members, as well as poems written in persona," Perez said. "The book took me about three years to write. Many of the poems were crafted over time through careful revision."

A native Chamoru from Guam, Perez left home with his parents in 1995, then moved to Hawai'i in 2010, according to his website. After high school, he earned a B.A. in Art History & Literature from the Johnston Center of Integrative Studies at the University of Redlands in 2002. Followed by a MFA in Creative Writing from the University of San Francisco four years later. At the moment, he is currently finishing his Ph.D. in Comparative Ethnic Studies at University of California, Berkeley.

In Fall 2011, Perez was hired as an associate professor in the English Department of UH Mānoa. He currently teaches Pacific Literature and Creative Writing.

Guam Legislature passed a resolution in 2010 recognizing Perez "on behalf of the people of Guam, honor and commend Craig Santos Perez for his meritorious ability to eloquently convey his thoughts, feelings and spirit through his writings, thereby bringing national recognition to both his work and his island home."