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**NEW BOOK FROM LAURA CHESTER EXPLORES
CULTURE SHOCK ON THE U.S./MEXICAN BORDER**

Chappaqua, NY – Life on the U.S./Mexican border presents a clash of cultures and expectations that is explored with insight and dark humor in Laura Chester's new collection of short stories, ***Rancho Weirdo*** (Bootstrap Press). Chester's short fiction, accompanied by Haeri Yoo's quirky drawings, challenge our perceptions of the new Southwest—which includes snowbirds (winter residents), illegal immigrants, Native Americans, ranchers, and cowboys—whose fates intertwine in the harsh and beautiful Arizona landscape.

Chester, who lives in a remote area near the border, turns Southwestern stereotypes inside out in these bizarre and often hilarious stories. In *Rancho Weirdo*, when a woman offers food to illegal immigrants trekking north, they want a swim and a house tour, and when a New Yorker building a winter home in the desert encounters an Apache Indian's disturbing spirit, the unanticipated consequences offer Chester an opportunity to examine her characters' fears. *Rancho Weirdo* demonstrates an intimate knowledge of the underlying conflicts and comic possibilities inherent in border life.

According to poet, novelist, and screenwriter Jim Harrison, author of *Legends of the Fall*, *Dalva*, and *Returning to Earth*, "*Rancho Weirdo* is a wonderful book and will thoroughly enliven any reader of serious fiction."

Laura Chester has edited six widely-praised literary anthologies, most recently ***Eros & Equus: A Passion for the Horse*** (Willow Creek Press), with exquisite black and white photographs by Donna DeMari. Chester has selected prose and poetry from such writers as John Hawkes, Jane Smiley, Charles Bukowski, and D.H. Lawrence, that delves into the sensual relationship between human and horse. ***Heartbeat for Horses***, with color photographs by DeMari is for the younger reader, twelve years and older.

Laura Chester, www.laurachester.com, has written many volumes of poetry, prose, and nonfiction. Most recently, Willow Creek Press published her first two children's books,

Hiding Glory, and *Marvel the Marvelous*, as well as an anthology for young adults, *Heartbeat for Horses*. Donna DeMari and Chester also collaborated on the nonfiction book *Holy Personal: Looking for Small Private Places of Worship*, with an introduction by Thomas Moore. A few of Chester's other books include *Lupus Novice*, *The Story of the Lake*, *Kingdom Come*, and *Sparks*. She lives in Patagonia, Arizona, as well as the Berkshires of Massachusetts.

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