

# Jaguar

By Francisco X. Alarcón

some say  
I'm now almost  
extinct in this park

but the people  
who say this  
don't know

that by smelling  
the orchids  
in the trees

they're sensing  
the fragrance  
of my chops

that by hearing  
the rumbling  
of the waterfalls

they're listening  
to my ancestors'  
great roar

that by observing  
the constellations  
of the night sky

they're gazing  
at the star spots  
on my fur

that I am and  
always will be  
the wild

untamed  
living spirit  
of this jungle

Francisco X. Alarcon, "Jaguar" from *Animal Poems of the Iguazu*. Copyright © 2008 by Francisco X. Alarcon. Reprinted by permission of Lee & Low Books.

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A prolific writer for adults and children, Francisco X. Alarcón was born in California and grew up in Guadalajara, Mexico. Alarcón returned to the United States to attend California State University at Long Beach, and he earned his MA from Stanford University. Latino and gay identity, mythology, the Nahuatl language, Mesoamerican history, and American culture are all portrayed in Alarcón's writing. He served as director of the Spanish for Native Speakers Program at the University of California at Davis, and taught for the Art of the Wild workshop and the California Poets in the Schools program.

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