



The CUNY-NYSIEB Guide to Translanguaging in Latino/a Literature

Vanessa Pérez Rosario, Ph.D.
with
Vivien Cao



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The CUNY-NYSIEB Guide to Translanguaging in Latino/a Literature

Introduction

The CUNY-NYSIEB Guide to Translanguaging in Latino/a Literature offers analysis of language use in 32 works of Latino/a literature that are appropriate for Grades PreK-12, analyzing seventeen books for Grades K-6 and fifteen books for Grades 7-12. The analysis of each book includes lexile level, themes, author biography and website, a list of additional supplemental resources for each work of literature, a summary of the book, and an analysis of the way that the author uses translanguaging, the flexible use of linguistic resources (García 2014), in literature. While lexile levels can provide a guide to teachers when selecting books for students to read independently, often these texts can also be read aloud in class to examine the theme, the characters, and the translanguaging craft that is present in the texts. *The Guide to Translanguaging in Latino/a Literature* has two main objectives; it offers teachers culturally relevant literature suggestions and it helps deepen our understanding of bilingualism and the language practices of bilinguals through literature.

The Guide is aligned with the core principles of the CUNY-NYSIEB project to develop the multilingual ecology of the school and see bilingualism as a resource. Not only will these wonderful works of literature by Latino/a authors contribute to the multilingual ecology of the school library and classroom, but also they explore bilingualism and bicultural identities in a way that leads to a deeper understanding of bilingualism. The Guide examines the role of translanguaging in these works, examining how Spanish is used in the text reflecting authentic language use of Latino communities in a way that is both enriching and empowering for the bilingual reader.

Latino/a authors often translanguague for literary effect. In many of the selected texts, Spanish and English are used flexibly by characters reflecting the everyday language of Latino/a bilinguals. In the literature, Spanish often appears as the language used in the home and is spoken among family members and relatives, because it is often the language the older generation feels most comfortable speaking. It is also spoken at home to preserve a family language and culture among the younger generation. Spanish is incorporated into a scene for literary effect in order to indicate that the experience was lived in Spanish, although it is being retold in English. Spanish is peppered into a scene in a way that alludes to it being the predominant language of use. Other times Spanish is worked into an intentional pun or play on words to highlight a language miscommunication. When this is the case, there is usually a learning opportunity or some cultural insight for the characters or for the reader.

Spanish typically appears in the selected texts as a means of affirming or negotiating cultural identity. For example, the persistent referencing of los Estados Unidos by one family living in Texas signifies that their idea of home will always be their homeland of Mexico (*Under the Mesquite*). Another way that Spanish represents culture is in the identification of culturally specific traditions and customs that do not have an American equivalent and thus lack an English translation. This includes terminology for traditional foods and religious customs that are not only of Hispanic origin, but also reflect the regional differences among Latin American cultures, drawing from the African and indigenous populations present in different parts of Latin America and the Caribbean that form part of the history and culture of a place. The identification of cultural concepts and values often appear in Spanish as they do not translate well across cultures and languages. For example, the concepts of gender, sexuality, and race in Latin America differ from those notions in the United States. For this reason, these terms are not often translated into English. They would lose their meaning and cultural specificity in translation. Sometimes a Spanish phrase, expression, slang, or song appears in-text for cultural resonance. To connect language to history, politics, and geography, proper Spanish names are retained for discussing wars, political movements, or indigenous peoples (just to mention a few). Finally, by translanguaging in one or more of the ways detailed above, Spanish is used to establish a Spanish-speaking setting for the work of literature if so dictated by the story.

Analyzing the way that Latino/a authors create bilingual texts reflects our definition of dynamic bilingualism based on the work of Ofelia García (2014). García's understanding of bilingualism moves away from a strict separation of language to a more flexible and realistic language use that reflects emergent bilinguals whole linguistic repertoires. In various writings, Grosjean (2010) has insisted on a holistic view of bilingualism, in which:

The bilingual is an integrated whole who cannot easily be decomposed into two separate parts. The bilingual is not the sum of two (or more) complete or incomplete monolinguals; rather, he or she has a unique and specific linguistic configuration. The coexistence and constant interaction of the languages in the bilingual have produced a different but complete language system. (p. 75)

As readers, we can see this displayed and analyze it in the language use of Latino/a bilingual characters in the literature included in this Guide. Characters often use their full linguistic repertoires flexibly, mirroring the language use of the community.

Gloria Ladson-Billings (1995) made the argument for culturally relevant teaching that means that teachers use students' backgrounds and knowledge to help them meet the demands of the curriculum. Ladson-Billings describes culturally relevant pedagogy as one that utilizes "students' culture as a vehicle for learning" (p. 161) Research shows that bringing culturally relevant texts into the classroom helps bilingual students connect to the material; it increases their reading proficiency and are thereby more engaged (Ebe, 2010; Freeman, Freeman, &

Ebe, 2011). In the face of policies and educational practices that promote a monolingual or monocultural ideal, Paris (2012) takes the work of Ladson-Billings a step further to offer what he terms ‘culturally sustaining pedagogy,’ which seeks “to perpetuate and foster – to sustain – linguistic, literate, and cultural pluralism as part of the democratic project of schooling” (p. 93). Bringing the works of literature included in this guide into the classroom will not only embrace the language practices, cultures, and identities of bilinguals by reflecting them in written texts, but will also help bilingual students draw upon their background knowledge to comprehend the reading. It will also lead to rich writing experiences and dialogue about the nature of their own bilingualism. (Please see Celic & Seltzer, 2012-2013, pages 13-19 on how to bring culturally relevant literature into the classroom).

While research tells us that students are more engaged when they are reading texts that are relevant to their lives, Latino/a writers powerfully make the case for culturally relevant literature. Grosjean (2010) insists that bilingual writers are exceptional bilinguals, and they are exceptional members of the bilingual community because of their mastery of language and their ability to write creatively in more than one language. Their highly developed use of language helps us to better understand our own bilingualism and our need for culturally sustaining literature. In an interview, Puerto Rican novelist, Esmeralda Santiago is asked how she became a writer. Her response is a moving argument for the need for culturally relevant literature:

In the process of reading these books about young people, I discovered that I didn’t exist in the literature of the United States. There were no books about Puerto Rican girls in Brooklyn. I think that I was driven to be a writer because I didn’t exist in the literature, and therefore didn’t exist in the culture. I simply wasn’t there. (Esmeralda Santiago, cited in Heredia & Kevane, 2000, p. 129)

In the same interview, she goes on to explain what it feels like to be a young person who does not find themselves represented in the culture.

I was a child who could not find myself in the literature. There was no one telling my story. I don’t want that to ever happen to any child or any woman. To really see yourself as nonexistent is the worst kind of insult that a person can have. It’s one thing to feel that you don’t belong, we all feel that at one time or another. But there’s a whole segment of our population, of our humanity that feels like they don’t exist. That’s what I felt when I came to the United States. (Esmeralda Santiago, cited in Heredia & Kevane, 2000, p. 133)

U.S. Latino/a literature is deeply preoccupied with language. Latino/a authors through their characters often reveal the anxiety many Latinos/as feel around language as they are expected to speak two languages. English to claim their sense of belonging to the United States, and Spanish to identify as Latino/a and remain connected to their home countries.

However, Latinos/as, are often perceived as not speaking either language well. Translanguaging for Latinos/as has been described as an “act of bilingual performance” by García (2014), that resists the historical and cultural positionings of English or Spanish monolingualism. It offers the alternative of performing a dynamic bilingualism that releases language from the constraints of both an “Anglophone” ideology that demands English monolingualism for U.S. citizens, and an ideology of Hispanism that condemns U.S. Latinos for speaking “Spanglish” (Otheguy & Stern, 2010), or for their “incomplete acquisition” of their “heritage language” (Otheguy & Zentella, 2012). This quote by author Junot Díaz aptly captures the way that bilingualism and translanguaging can be empowering for Latino/a bilinguals. He pointedly describes the way that languages exist flexibly for bilinguals.

For me allowing the Spanish to exist in my text without the benefit of italics or quotations marks a very important political move. Spanish is not a minority language. Not in this hemisphere, not in the United States, not in the world inside my head. So why treat it like one? Why ‘other’ it? Why de-normalize it? By keeping Spanish as normative in a predominantly English text, I wanted to remind readers of the mutability of languages. And to mark how steadily English is transforming Spanish and Spanish is transforming English. (Junot Diaz, cited in Ch’ien, 2005, p. 204)

The concept of translanguaging goes beyond code-switching. Code-switching refers to the mixing or switching of two static language codes. As Junot Díaz notes in the above quote, choosing to use both languages flexibly resists notions of languages as pure and static. Bilingual speakers whose language practices do not conform to what are perceived as static language codes are stigmatized and excluded. Translanguaging releases speakers from having to conform to the codes of monolingualism. It is the enactment of a dynamic bilingualism.

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Latino/a Literature: Grades PreK-6

Alma Flor Ada

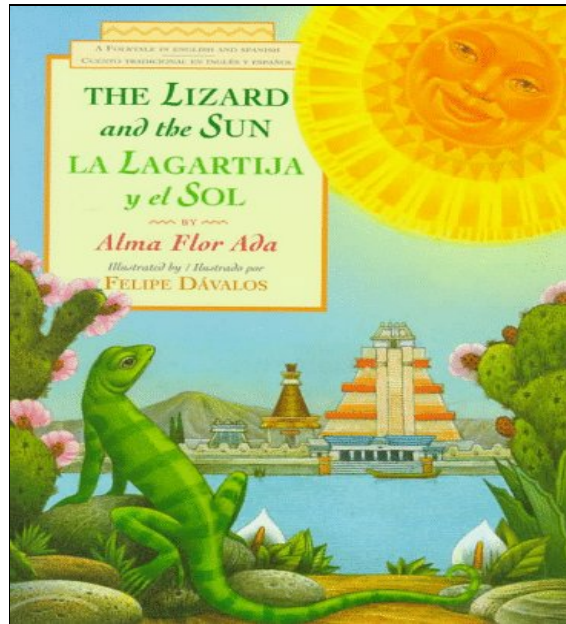
(1938 -)



Alma Flor Ada, Professor Emerita at the University of San Francisco, has devoted her life to advocacy for peace by promoting a pedagogy oriented to personal realization and social justice. A former Radcliffe Scholar at Harvard University and Fulbright Research Scholar she is an internationally re-known speaker. Her professional books for educators, include *A Magical Encounter: Latino Children's Literature in the Classroom*, and *Authors in the Classroom: A Transformative Education Process* co-authored with F. Isabel Campoy, about their work promoting authorship in students, teachers, and parents.

To read more visit her website: <http://almaflorada.com/>

The Lizard and the Sun/ La lagartija y el sol



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
580L	PreK-3	3-8	Folktale	1997

Theme

Mexican folktale, life in the Aztec empire, nature, perseverance, importance of not giving up

About the Book

Written as a folktale, this book tells the story of a time long ago when the sun disappeared. The animals, plants and people were concerned and afraid because everything remained dark. This had never happened before. They searched high and low for the sun, but could not find it. While many became discouraged, there was a little lizard who never stopped searching for the sun until she found it.

Translanguaging in Literature

This is a bilingual book that offers English and Spanish text side-by-side.

Additional Resources

Read interview about the author in English:

<http://www.colorincolorado.org/read/meet/ada/>

And in Spanish: <http://www.colorincolorado.org/leer/autores/ada/>

Find a bilingual mini lesson on the book in English and in Spanish:

<http://almaflorada.com/the-lizard-and-the-sun-la-lagartija-y-el-sol/>

Julia Alvarez

(1950 -)

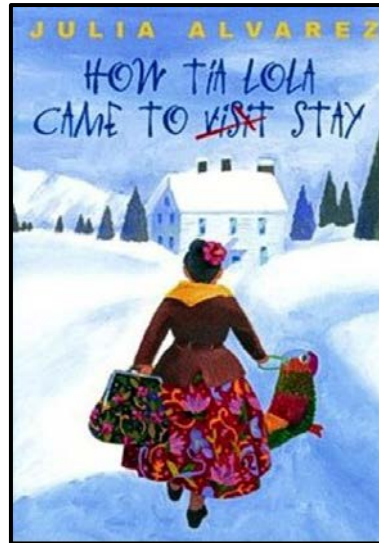


Julia Alvarez was born in New York City to Dominican Parents. She spent the first ten years of her childhood in the Dominican Republic before her family moved back to New York for political reasons. Alvarez's novels for young readers include *Return to Sender*, *Finding Miracles*, *Before We Were Free*, and *How Tía Lola Learned to Teach*. Her award-winning books for adults include *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents*, *Yo!*, and *In the Time of Butterflies*. She lives in Vermont with her husband and is a writer-in-residence at Middlebury College.

Read a more extensive biography in her website:

<http://www.juliaalvarez.com/>

How Tía Lola Came to ~~Visit~~ Stay



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
740L	3-7	8-12	Novel	2002

Theme

Family, divorce, starting over, cultural heritage, cultural pride, transitioning from urban New York to rural Vermont , making friends, santería

About the Book

This is a humorous story about Miguel and Juanita, who are barely adjusting to a move from New York City to rural Vermont, when their mother Linda invites tía Lola to come visit. Since Linda is now a single parent, she hopes tía Lola can help watch over the children, teach them Spanish, and expose them to Dominican culture. Juanita, who is younger, has an easier time accepting change than Miguel. At first Miguel is embarrassed by tía Lola. He's worried that her flamboyant personality, Dominican pride, and lack of English will not only make her stand out, but will make him stand out as well. And he's having a hard enough time trying to fit in and make new friends. As it turns out, the things that make tía Lola different actually draw people to her. Soon tía Lola has befriended the whole town and inadvertently helps Miguel make new friends too. Tía Lola has many adventures with them, including a fun-filled trip to New York City to visit Miguel and Juanita's papi, planting a sculptural garden in their Vermont home, painting the house purple, planning a surprise party for Linda's birthday, and a Christmas vacation to the Dominican Republic. Seeing how happy tía Lola is to be back on the island, Miguel realizes just how much she means to him, and worries she might not want to come back to Vermont. But tía Lola, who is dressed as Santa, assures him there is nothing to worry about.

Translanguaging in Literature

Spanish words are used throughout the text to highlight Dominican culture and heritage, as well as to represent a bilingual home. Family members are addressed in Spanish names such as *mami*, *papi*, and *tía* and the children are often called terms of endearment like *tiguerito*, *mi'jo*, and *amor*. The use of Spanish here highlights the way that it is a home language and the language of intimacy for many Latino families.

Many Latino and Dominican foods with no English translation are introduced. For instance, some spices that *tía Lola* brings with her from the island include: *hierbabuena*, *hojas de guanabana*, *ajíes*, *verdura*. The children are exposed to many ethnic Dominican foods for the first time, such as: *salchichón*, *pastelitos*, *quipes*, *empanaditas de queso*, and *habichuelas*, *puerco asado*, and *ensalada de aguacates*.

Tía Lola introduces the children to the religious practices of *Santería*, an Afro-Caribbean religion. As *Linda* explains to *Miguel*, *tía Lola* is a *Santera*, or “a doctor who works with magic instead of medicine.” (p. 15) There is much ritual that goes with it, like the *pañuelos* that *tía Lola* wraps around her head.

Since *Miguel* and *Juanita* were born in the United States, *Linda* likes having *tía Lola* around to help preserve their Spanish-language skills. *Linda* constantly stresses the importance of speaking Spanish, which the children do mainly to please her. However, they move between their languages fluidly or “what [*Miguel*’s] mother and father call the English with a sprinkling of Spanish that *Miguel* and *Juanita* speak when they think they are speaking Spanish.” (p. 59)

Translanguaging occurs in the novel primarily through *Miguel* and *Juanita*’s interactions with *tía Lola*. Initially *tía Lola* can only speak and understand Spanish, which leads to comical situations, like the time *Miguel* announces “*Te quiero mucho*” over the airport intercom--one of the few Spanish phrases he remembers--to guide his lost aunt whom he barely knows (p. 11). *Miguel*’s use of the phrase unintentionally does more than just make his aunt feel oriented by a familiar language, it makes her feel connected to her family. When *tía Lola* prepares authentic *huevos rancheros* for a picky customer at their friend *Rudy*’s restaurant, she asks the customer: “¿*Quiere más?*” *Miguel*, trying to be helpful, says: “That means, *Do you want more?*” (p. 48). The customer snaps that he knows the meaning and would like more *por favor*. It’s clear from this exchange that Spanish does not distance *Miguel* from non-Latinos as much as he thinks it does, and that there is still universality to ethnic things, like good food.

Tía Lola loves to tell stories, some of which are about their large Dominican familia, but also fictional tales like the one about *ciguapas*, mysterious creatures with backward feet that only come out at night. *Miguel* and *Juanita* help *tía Lola* learn English. At first she is resistant because she is just in town for a visit. But once it’s clear that she’ll be staying longer, the children help her improve her English dramatically. By the end of the novel, *tía Lola* tells a whole story in English. *Linda* is overjoyed, saying: “It’s so important to me, *tía Lola*, that you came to Vermont and learned English so you remain connected to us. And so important that you [*Miguel* and *Juanita*] hear *tía Lola*’s stories so you can always stay connected to your past.” (p. 118-119)

Additional Resources

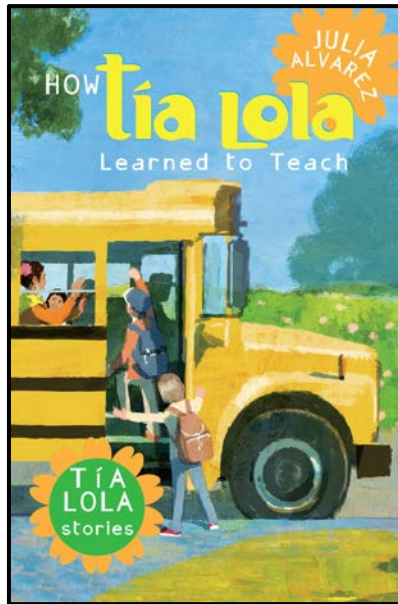
This *Tía Lola* Blog contains different types of resources, ranging from lesson plans, to writing prompts to fan letters that others who have read the books have contributed:

<http://www.tialolastories.com/how-tia-lola-came-to-stay.php>

The publisher of the *Tía Lola* series released an education guide:

https://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375869143.pdf

How Tía Lola Learned to Teach



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
810L	3-7	8-12	Novel	2010

Themes

Blended families, cultural heritage, cultural pride, courage, bilingualism, immigrants.

About the Book

In order to help tía Lola feel less lonely while her niece Linda is at work, and her great niece Juanita and great nephew Miguel are at school, the family comes up with the idea to have tía Lola become a school volunteer. She could give Spanish lessons to the students, which might also help Ofie and her sister, two Mexican immigrants, adjust more quickly to their new environment. At first tía Lola is reluctant – growing up in the Dominican Republic she never made it past the fourth grade. But tía Lola turns out to be a hit among the students and she embraces her new sense of purpose. Even Miguel's embarrassment over tía Lola's flamboyant personality are replaced by feelings of pride for having such a popular aunt. Juanita benefits from the new arrangement, too, when tía Lola helps her overcome an overactive imagination that has been distracting her from school work. When Miguel and Juanita's father drives up from New York City to make a big announcement, that he and his girlfriend Carmen plan to marry, Miguel has mixed feelings. Later, during a trip to visit his father, Miguel creates a dangerous situation for himself that Carmen rescues him from, which helps him feel closer to her. Carmen becomes even more of a hero to the family when she finds them an immigration lawyer named Vincent, who helps tía Lola secure permanent residency status in the U.S. The elementary school's annual year-end picnic celebrates the fact that tía Lola gets to stay, as well as the town's growing bilingualism. One sad thing they must confront is that Ofie and her sister, along with their parents, are being deported back to Mexico.

Translanguaging in Literature

Spanish in the text is italicized for emphasis. Since a large part of the story is about tía Lola teaching Spanish to an English-speaking community, much of the Spanish spoken in the novel is followed by an English translation or explanation.

Spanish words are peppered throughout to highlight Dominican culture and heritage, as well as to represent a bilingual home and community. Family members are addressed by names such as mami, papi, tía, and abuelitos, and the children are often called terms of endearment like amorcito and mi'jo. Spanish is the language of intimacy for this the family.

Many Latin American and Dominican foods and traditions with no English translation are introduced. These aspects of Dominican and Latin American culture would lose their flavor and significance if translated into English. At home tía Lola makes suspiros and caballitos, while a family friend, Rudy, serves dishes like arroz con habichuelas at his Latin American restaurant. There are also numerous fiestas and special occasions for which tía Lola makes a piñata. One such occasion is carnaval, a big celebration right before Lent, which is a commonly observed holiday in Latin American countries. A school-wide carnaval is used as an excuse to celebrate Ofie's birthday, since her traditional Mexican parents have never observed her birthday but are very familiar with carnaval. This makes the event an opportunity to bridge the two cultures.

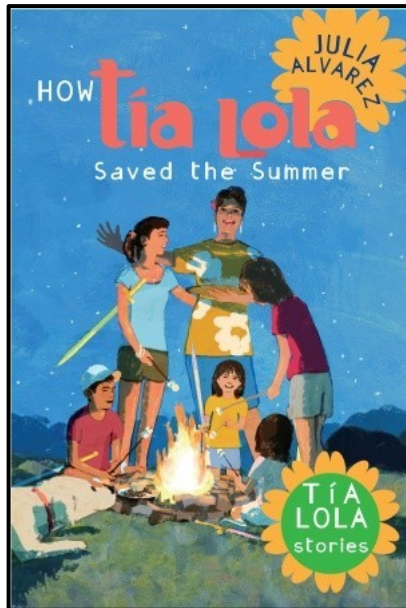
Tía Lola loves using expressions and sayings that contain a lesson, so the heading of every chapter is one of her Spanish sayings followed by the English translation. For example, the heading of Chapter 2 is "En el país de los ciegos, el tuerto es rey," (p. 13) which translates to "In the land of the blind, the one-eyed man is king." This chapter is about how tía Lola may lack confidence in her ability to teach, but in a place where no one knows Spanish as well as her, she is the best candidate for teaching it. The saying is repeated often throughout the chapter as the lesson behind it emerges in the storytelling. Language, like lessons and morals, serve the universal purpose of promoting communication and understanding. This type of translanguaging demonstrates that the things that seem to make us different actually make us more similar than we think.

Additional Resources

This *Tía Lola* Blog contains different types of resources, ranging from lesson plans, to writing prompts to fan letters that others who have read the books have contributed:
<http://www.tialolastories.com/how-tia-lola-learned-to-teach.php>

The publisher of the *Tía Lola* series released an education guide:
https://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375869143.pdf

How Tía Lola Saved the Summer



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
850L	3-7	8-12	Novel	2011

Themes

Blended families, getting along, individualism, independence, baseball, summer vacation.

About the Book

Miguel and Juanita’s mom, Linda, has invited her new friend Victor and his three daughters up to their house in Vermont for a week-long vacation. This will also be an opportunity for the families to spend time together since Victor has expressed interest in relocating his family from New York to Vermont. Knowing that the trip is really for Victor’s benefit, his daughters Victoria (14), Essie (11), and Cari (4) try to make the best of things. Miguel and Juanita’s tía Lola has prepared a week’s worth of activities to keep everyone busy. Between treasure hunts, neighborhood adventures, baseball games, an Independence Day BBQ, and a big party that even Miguel and Juanita’s father, Daniel, drives up for with his parents and his fiancé Carmen, the week shapes up to be more fun and exciting than anyone could have imagined. Victor’s daughters become enamored of Vermont and now want more than anything to move here, but it’s ultimately up to Linda, who has reservations that things are moving too fast. With some deep thinking and encouragement from tía Lola’s magic sword, Linda decides to slay her fears and go with her heart--which belongs to Victor.

Translanguaging in Literature

Spanish in the text is italicized for emphasis. This book focuses on Spanish usage less than the previous two, since both tía Lola's character and the community are now bilingual. But there are still moments where Spanish is incorporated to highlight Dominican culture. Family members are addressed by names such as mami, papi, tía, abuelito, abuelita, and mi'jo. When Miguel and Juanita's grandparents come to visit, the kids are lovingly showered with besitos and abrazos. To reflect the community's bilingualism, a few non-Dominican characters are also addressed by terms of endearment, like the assistant baseball coach who is called Owensito (which is humorous because he is very tall), and the family's landlord, Colonel Charlebrois, who is reverentially called Coronel. Regardless of their cultural heritage, characters often greet each other with common Spanish greetings like buenos días and hasta luego.

Several Latin American and Dominican foods with no English translation are introduced such a pastelitos and mangú.

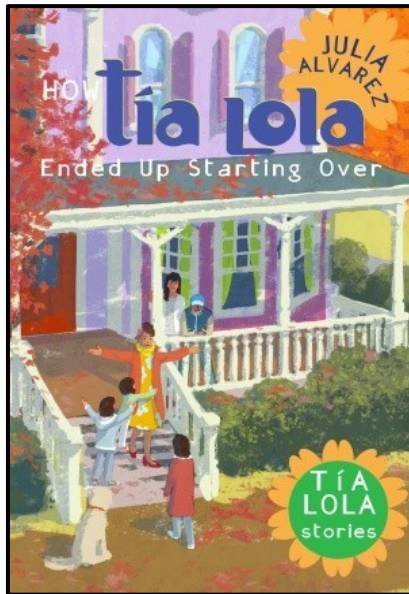
As with the previous books, tía Lola loves using expressions and sayings that contain a lesson. When she uses one of her sayings, like "Donde manda capitán no manda soldado," it is followed by an English translation: "Where the captain is in charge, the soldier can't give orders." (p. 122) Since tía Lola is now bilingual, some of her sayings are delivered in a mix of English and Spanish, like, "A word to the wise is *suficiente!*" (p. 130). Language promotes communication and understanding and moral lessons. This type of translanguaging demonstrates that being kind and wise has no cultural or language boundaries.

Additional Resources

This *Tía Lola* Blog contains different types of resources, ranging from lesson plans, to writing prompts to fan letters that others who have read the books have contributed:
<http://www.tialolastories.com/how-tia-lola-saved-summer.php>

The publisher of the *Tía Lola* series released an education guide:
https://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375869143.pdf

How Tía Lola Ended Up Starting Over



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
830L	3-7	8-12	Novel	2011

Themes

Blended families, following your passion, revenge, prejudice, forgiveness, bed and breakfast establishments.

About the Book

Victor and his three daughters, Victoria, Essie and Cari, have relocated to Vermont so that Victor and Linda, Miguel and Juanita's mother, can test out their new relationship. Linda's former landlord, Colonel Charlebois, has kindly offered to rent out part of his large house to Victor and the girls. Knowing money is tight for Victor, tía Lola and the kids come up with an idea to convert Colonel Charlebois' house into a bed and breakfast. With the Colonel's blessing, a weekend test run proves successful and convinces everyone that a B&B is a good idea. Everyone, that is, except for Mrs. Beauregard who runs a B&B down the street. Mysterious things start to happen at the Colonel's house, especially when guests are staying at the B&B, leading Tía Lola to believe that someone is trying to sabotage their new business. A wedding at the B&B is nearly cancelled because the groom is given the wrong address. A water polo team staying at the B&B finds their equipment has been tampered with before an important match. Most disturbing of all, Colonel Charlebois' health seems to have deteriorated judging from an increase in his napping habits. Miguel and Essie try to get to the bottom of things and discover that the Colonel's longtime housekeeper, Henny, is Mrs. Beauregard's daughter. With an intervention by Mrs. Beauregard's sister and an act of kindness on Miguel's part, Mrs. Beauregard apologizes for all of the mischief that she has caused. This resolution comes just in time for everyone to celebrate Colonel Charlebois and tía Lola's birthdays.

Translanguaging in Literature

In this fourth and final of the *Tía Lola* books, both tía Lola and the community are now bilingual. Characters often practice their Spanish by using common greetings like buenos días and bienvenida. Tía Lola loves her sayings and in previous books used them to help the children learn Spanish and remember important motivational lessons. Sayings often reflect cultural beliefs and do not translate easily. Some of those sayings reappear in this book, for example “Buenas razones cautivan los corazones.” (p. 136) Throughout this book tía Lola’s recurring mantra is “No hay problema!”

The family is proud of their Dominican heritage and use Spanish whenever possible. Family and friends are addressed by Spanish names and terms of endearment such as mami, papi, tía, abuelito, abuelita, and mi’jo. As in many works of Latino/a literature, Spanish is the home language and the language of intimacy.

Tía Lola explains to the children the concept of a Dominican familia and how it is different from a typical nuclear family in America. A familia can include a lot of tíos, tías, primos, primas, and many amigos. That is why their familia in Vermont includes their mother’s boyfriend, their father’s fiancé, their landlord (whom they affectionately call el Coronel), and so many others. Because the concept of family is different in the Dominican Republic, the word familia is often used in Spanish as “family” has a different cultural connotation.

The community where the story takes place is welcoming of tía Lola, except for Mrs. Beauregard, who resents the new and competing B&B. Tía Lola is so thrown by a prejudice-tinged confrontation with Mrs. Beauregard that she falls back on Spanish and stammers “¿Qué pasa?” (p. 27). Tía Lola slips into Spanish as a defense mechanism; her problem-solving instinct is to react in a language she is comfortable with. But it incites Mrs. Beauregard further, who tells tía Lola that in America people speak English, and hands her a letter that contains accusations like “decent Americans [are] being prevented from earning a living because of people like you.” (p. 30) This exchange demonstrates how language can be used as a platform for prejudice.

A “ñapa” is a Latino/a cultural concept with no direct English translation. It is the idea that one can ask for a little more when one gets to the end of something. Fittingly it is the subject of the final chapter, which is devoted to each member of the family expressing what it is they are grateful for and what ñapa would make them even more grateful.

Additional Resources

This *Tía Lola* Blog contains different types of resources, ranging from lesson plans, to writing prompts to fan letters that others who have read the books have contributed:

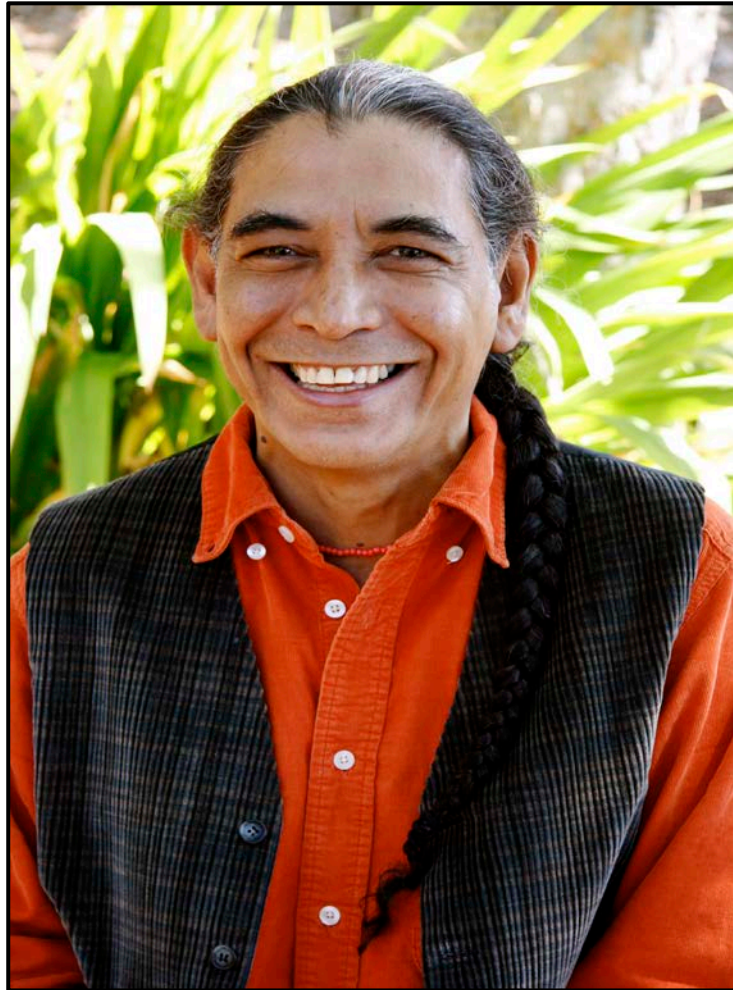
<http://www.tialolastories.com/how-tia-lola-ended-up-starting-over.php>

The publisher of the *Tía Lola* series released an education guide:

https://www.randomhouse.com/catalog/teachers_guides/9780375869143.pdf

Jorge Tetl Argueta

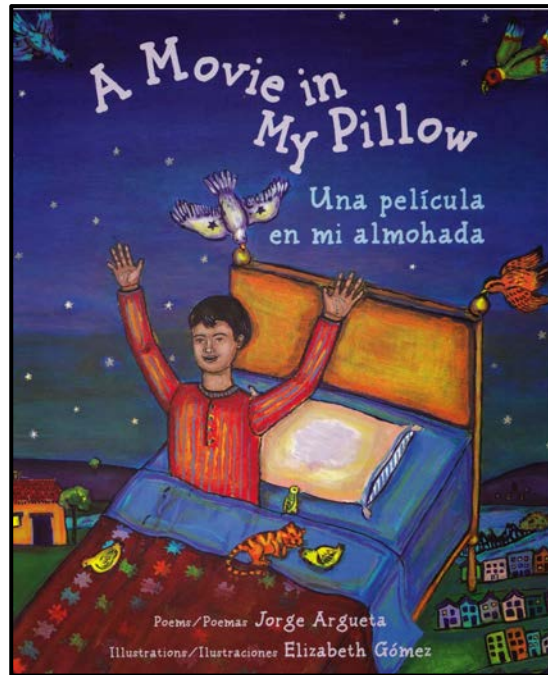
(19?? -)



Jorge Tetl Argueta was born in El Salvador and moved to San Francisco, California as a child in 1980 for political reasons. He belongs to the Pipil Nahua Indian nation from El Salvador. As a celebrated poet and writer, his bilingual children's books have received numerous awards. His poetry has appeared in anthologies and textbooks. He won the America's Book Award, among other awards for his first collection of poems for children, *A Movie in My Pillow*. He was the Gold Medal Award winner in the 2005 National Parenting Publications Awards (NAPPA) for *Moony Luna/Luna, Lunita Lunera*. His other works for children include *Xochitl and the Flowers*, 2003 America's Award Commended Title, *Trees are Hanging from the Sky*, *Zipitio*, *Talking with Mother Earth*, *The Little Hen in the City* and *The Fiesta of the Tortillas*.

Read more about the author in his website:
<http://www.jorgeargueta.com/author-page.html>

A Movie in My Pillow / Una película en mi almohada



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	K and up – 6	6 and up	Picture book, Poetry	2011

Themes

Immigration, family, cultural pride, Salvadoran history, traditions, bilingualism.

About the Book

In the introduction to the book, the poet includes a brief history of the violent civil war in El Salvador that led his family to flee that country and emigrate to San Francisco, California. These autobiographical poems are about Jorge and his father adjusting to their new life. Jorge misses his mother, brothers, grandmother, and friends who are still in El Salvador, where life is bleak due to a civil war. He especially misses his grandmother, who used to tell many stories about her Pipiles heritage, an indigenous people of El Salvador. Jorge makes a new friend, Tomás, who reminds him of a friend from home. When Jorge's mother and brothers are finally able to join the family in San Francisco, Jorge is excited to be their tour guide around the city. They establish a new family tradition of taking a walk every Saturday morning on 24th Street.

Translanguaging in Literature

Each poem is written in Spanish and accompanied by an English translation. The English versions are written mostly in English with Spanish retained sparsely. Whenever a Spanish word is used, the poet adds a footnote to explain its meaning.

Spanish is used for words that originate from the culture, and therefore lack an English equivalent. Jorge longs for home in the poem “Pupusas.” The “tasty cheese-meat pies made of corn, a specialty of El Salvador”(p. 9) remind him of his mother back home. The poem “My Bicycle” mentions cumbias, which the poet explains is “a joyful tropical dance, very popular in Latin America.” (p. 16)

In the poem “Voice from Home,” Jorge’s grandmother sends him a tape of herself speaking and singing in Spanish and Nahuatl, which the poet’s footnote explains “is an indigenous language spoken in parts of Mexico and El Salvador.” (p. 25) Like the bilingual reader, Jorge’s grandmother is also bilingual. The poem demonstrates how language is not only a form of communication that enables Jorge to keep in touch with his grandmother, it also represents El Salvador’s rich cultural history and that bilingualism is a part of that history.

In learning English, Jorge is becoming tri-lingual. The poet derives a sense of pride from being bilingual, which is evidenced in the poem, “Language of the Birds.” He writes of being able to now speak English in addition to Spanish, however in his dreams he speaks Nahuatl. His grandmother tells him it is the language of the Pipiles, which a footnote explains “are an indigenous people of El Salvador who speak Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs” (p. 26). This poem establishes a strong connection between language, culture, and ancestry. Bilingualism is not just about speaking more than one language, it is also about different cultures becoming a part of one’s history.

Additional Resources

Various activities and exercises for using this book in the classroom:
<https://www4.uwm.edu/clacs/aa/book/pdf/movie.pdf>

Monica Brown

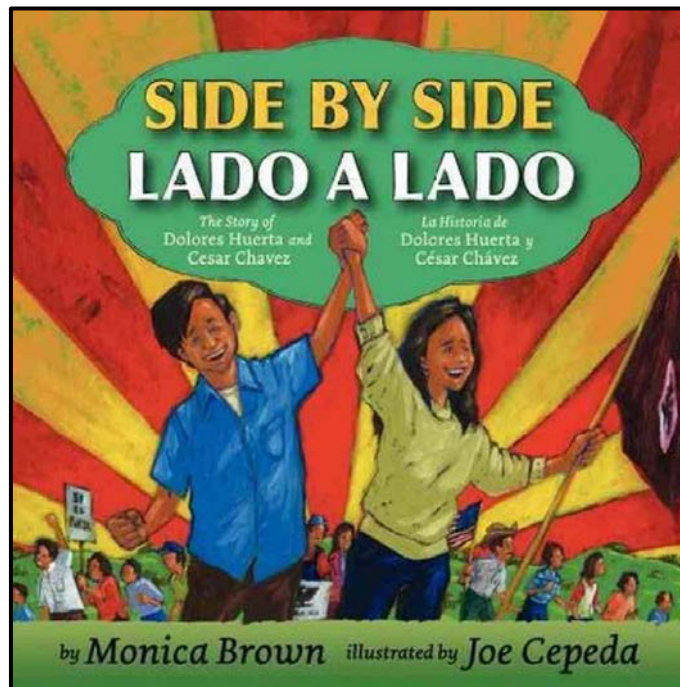
(1969 -)



Monica Brown is a Peruvian American author of children's books. She brings historical characters to life for young readers in her biographies. She has published numerous books, including *Side by Side: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez/Lado a lado: La historia de Dolores Huerta y Cesar Chavez* (Rayo/HarperCollins); *Tito Puente, Mambo King/Tito Puente, Rey del Mambo* (Rayo/HarperCollins); *Pelé, King of Soccer/Pelé, el rey del fútbol* (Rayo/HarperCollins); and *Chavela and the Magic Bubble* (Clarion). Brown is currently a Professor of English at Northern Arizona University. She specializes in U.S. Latino/a and Multicultural Literature. Her scholarly publications include *Gang Nation: Delinquent Citizenship in Puerto Rican and Chicano and Chicana Literature* as well as articles and chapters on Latino/a literature and cultural studies.

Read a more extensive author biography on her website:
<http://www.monicabrown.net/about/>

**Side by Side: The Story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez /
Lado a Lado: La Historia de Dolores Huerta y Cesar Chavez**



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
870L	PreK-3	4-8	Picture book	2010

Themes

Migrant farm work, Chicano experience, discrimination, United Farm Workers, standing up for what is right, social justice, making the world a better place, fighting poverty, believing in a cause, leadership

About the Book

This book tells the story of Dolores Huerta and Cesar Chavez as children. Dolores Huerta was born in New Mexico, moved to California, and later became a teacher. Cesar Chavez was born in Arizona and moved to California where he became a farm worker. The two grew up in poverty. In California they met and decided to struggle against the injustices and inhumane treatment of farmworkers. The story recounts how Dolores Huerta organized a boycott against buying grapes. Cesar Chavez refused to eat as a way to show his belief in the cause. When many people told them both that they would not be able to organize the farmworkers, they did not listen, and instead said, “Sí, se puede.” (p. 23) Even though they were told that it could not be done, they continued to believe in their cause. They are remembered in history today for organizing the farmworkers. Dolores Huerta is also remembered for helping to pass immigration reform in 1986.

Translanguaging in Literature

This book is bilingual with side by side English and Spanish text. There is little translanguaging that happens with the exception of two important phrases. The first is when Cesar and Dolores commit to fighting for “*la causa*.” The word is written in Spanish and the text is italicized. Also the now historic phrase, “*Sí, se puede*” appears in Spanish. These words remain in Spanish because of their historic significance. They have become symbolic of the Chicano/a movement and the struggle for equal rights for immigrants and their descendants.

Additional Resources

On her website, Monica Brown has a curriculum guide that includes guiding questions, discussion ideas, and worksheets:
http://www.monicabrown.net/teachers/Side_by_Side_Curriculum_Guide.pdf

René Colato Laínez

(1971 -)

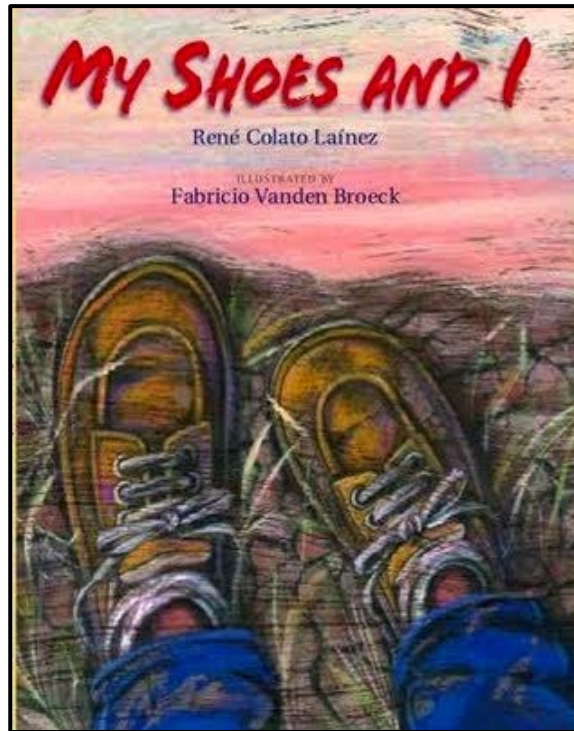


René Colato Laínez was born in El Salvador and moved to Los Angeles with his father after his country became involved in a civil war. In his bio on his website he tells of the difficult journey they made through Mexico to the United States. He says that he always loved to write as a child and was inspired by his uncle who was an important writer in his home country. He is the author of *I Am René*, *the Boy*, *Waiting for Papá*, *Playing Lotería*, *René Has Two Last Names* and *The Tooth Fairy Meets El Ratón Pérez*. His picture books have been honored by the Latino Book Award, the Paterson Prize for Books for Young People, the California Collection for Elementary Readers, the Tejas Star Book Award Selection and the New Mexico Book Award. He was named “Top Ten New Latino Authors to Watch (and Read)” by latinostories.com. He is a graduate of the Vermont College MFA program in Writing for Children & Young Adults. On his website, he notes that his goal as a writer is to produce good multicultural children's literature. He aims to write stories where minority children are portrayed in a positive way, where they can see themselves as heroes, and where they can dream and have hope for the future.

Read more about his life and his works on his website:

<http://reocolatolainez.com>

My Shoes and I



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
330L	K-4	5-9	Picture book	2010

Themes

Family, immigration, life-changing journey, change

About the Book

Mario could not be more excited that he and his papá are going to be reunited with mamá soon. For Christmas, mamá sent Mario a pair of shoes, which papá says will be perfect for their long trip from El Salvador, through three countries, to join mamá who now lives in the United States. After many harrowing experiences during the journey and much wear on his beloved shoes, Mario and papá finally reach mamá for a joyful reunion.

Translanguaging in Literature

The story is written in English with repetition of certain Spanish words and phrases. The last page provides a translation of the nursery rhyme that is repeated by Mario in the story.

Mario calls his parents papá and mamá, which retains a sense of culture and identity. This also reminds the reader that although this story is being told in English, it was lived in Spanish.

Mario loves his shoes because they were a gift from mamá, and because they will help him get to her. As such, there are two phrases that he often repeats.

When a new leg of the journey begins, Mario says: “*Uno, dos, tres*, my shoes and I are ready to keep going.” Not only does the number repetition assist beginning readers who are learning to count, readers already familiar with the numbers may associate them with the count-off for a race. Counting off each leg of the journey is a sign of Mario’s positive attitude; the familiarity of these numbers also serve as a bridge between Mario’s past life lived in Spanish and the new life to which he is headed in the United States.

Whenever Mario’s shoes incur new damage, he sings to them: “*Sana, sana, colita de rana.*” Translated it means: “Heal, heal, little frog’s tale.” It is part of a nursery rhyme that is sung by Latin American and Latino/a parents to their children when they get hurt. The familiarity of the Spanish rhyme is meant to be a source of comfort. By reassuring the shoes that he will care for them no matter what happens, Mario is reassuring himself that everything will be okay even if he’s uncertain about what to expect in the United States.

Spanish is used for words that do not have an English translation, such as *carne asada* (a traditional beef dish) as well as other food dishes.

Spanish is used when they first spot *la frontera* (the border), which is clarified by papá’s dialogue: “We are close to the United States border.” (p. 18) Again, use of a *frontera* is a way to bridge cultures. Mario recognizes this foreign country, the United States, through a phrase that is familiar to him; his father’s explanation, likely spoken in Spanish, is written here in English to indicate a new cultural and language presence.

Additional Resources

René Colato Laínez, on his website, has resources for teachers to use side-by-side with his book: <http://myshoesandi.weebly.com/for-teachers.html>

Jane Medina

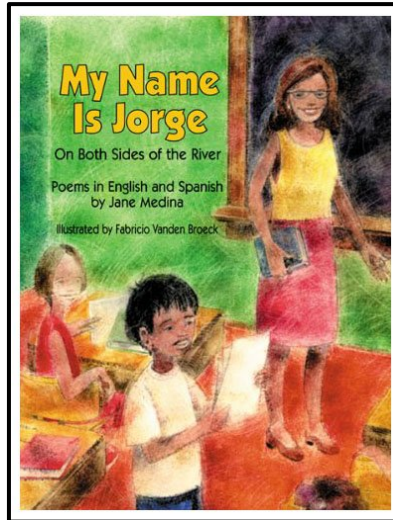
(1953 -)



Jane Medina grew up in California. She is a writer and a teacher who began writing poetry as a teenager. Her poetry captures the emotions of children. Her children's books include *My Name Is Jorge: On Both Sides of the River*, *The Dream on Blanca's Wall*, and *Tomas Rivera (Green Light Readers Level 2)*. She has been an elementary school teacher for over twenty-eight years working mostly with Latino/a youth. She writes books of poetry and stories drawing from her experiences as a teacher.

Read a more extensive author biography:
<http://www.answers.com/topic/jane-medina>

My Name is Jorge: On Both Sides of the River



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
340L	K-4	5-9	Poetry	1999

Themes

Cultural identity, immigration, prejudice, discrimination, fitting in, friendship

About the Book

This is a book of poems written in both Spanish and English about Jorge and his family who have just immigrated to the United States from Mexico. Jorge has difficulty getting used to new customs, learning English, and fitting in with his classmates. Medina explores the painful experience of adjusting to a new language and culture through her main character. Just as he starts to make a new friend, he learns that his abuelita is sick and the family must return to Mexico. The last page contains a “Glossary of Selected Terms.”

Translanguaging

Each poem is written in English and Spanish. Formal titles for family members (mamá, papá, tíos, tías, abuelita) are used in both versions, which sustains a sense of cultural identity -- a strong theme throughout the book.

Poem: “Relajando/Relaxing” (p. 12)

Many of the poems retain some of the same phrasing for both the Spanish and English versions, employing italics to denote the secondary language. For instance, in this poem about learning English, the English version includes the line: “*con mi gente...*with my friends!” In the Spanish version, the italics are reversed: “¡*con mi gente...*with my friends!” This underscores the meaning equivalency, as well as the fact that both languages can serve as the primary language.

Poem: “La tarjeta de la biblioteca/The Library Card” (p. 14-17)

In this poem about prejudice and trying to obtain a library card, mamá's dialogue is always written in Spanish, while Jorge's written dialogue varies, signaling his bilingualism. When mamá is intimidated and wants to leave, Jorge's dialogue reads: "Necesitamos una tarjeta, Mamá!" (p. 14) The second time she wants to leave ("Vámonos, m'ijo"), Jorge's response is: "But, Mamá, we can't go! I need the books for school." (p. 16) Even though both times he is speaking to her in Spanish, the switch to English in written form is a way of extending the ideas initially expressed in Spanish. When the librarian denies mamá's application for a card, Jorge's dialogue ("Vámonos, Mamá") (p. 17) switches back to Spanish. Based on his indignant tone and the echo of mamá's earlier dialogue, we know he is actually speaking to her in Spanish to assert a sense of cultural identity.

Poem: "La fotografía/The Photograph" (p. 18-19)

The English version of this poem incorporates several Spanish words (*quinceañeras*, *bailes*, *bautismos*) that follow a list of other typically photographed occasions. The Spanish version of the poem lists all of the occasions in Spanish. Here language is employed as a bridging tool for learning new English words.

Poem: "T-Shirt/T-Shirt" (p. 24-25)

This poem is an exchange between Jorge and his teacher, who would like him to address her as Mrs. Roberts instead of teacher. The Spanish version is written entirely in Spanish, yet italicizes the words *Teacher* and *Mrs. Roberts* during moments where Jorge is trying to adapt to this new cultural formality. The italics denote learning opportunities. When Mrs. Roberts further points out that Jorge's pronunciation of "teacher" sounds like "t-shirt," Jorge asks if she can stop pronouncing his name like "George." This exchange demonstrates that cultural sensitivity is a part of the language learning process, an understanding that should apply to both teacher and student.

Poem: "Buenos días/Good Morning" (p. 26)

The theme of this poem is fitting in and making new friends. Jorge feels self-conscious because some kids sing *Buenos días* at him. When a classmate named Tim says "Bye, Jorge," Jorge is caught off guard and responds with, "Good morning." He is trying to fit in after being made to feel left out. His reaction indicates emotional trauma due to the insensitivity of a few classmates. But when Tim simply says "See you tomorrow" without reacting to Jorge's flub, Jorge's response is "Hasta mañana." Without the anxiety of being made fun of, Jorge feels more comfortable. His response in Spanish is not about language, it is about feeling a connection with the other students which defies cultural boundaries.

Poem: "La recitación/Recitation" (p. 30-33)

Jorge is asked to recite a *poesía* called "Mi patria" in front of the class. He is proud, not only because he gets to share a poem about his home country, but also because the honor of being called on reminds him that he used to be the smartest student in "el 3er grado." This exemplifies how learning a new language can be a difficult transition. Comprehension of English is not a measure of one's intelligence; nor should it diminish cultural identity. When Jorge stands up to recite his poem, Mrs. Roberts turns into "my maestro, mi tocayo: el maestro Jorge Santillana." (p. 32) Jorge concentrates *con las palabras*, his focus on the physical expression of words--not necessarily the

meaning of the words themselves--to affect the audience. This illustrates how communication is not only about language; expressing oneself can transcend the limitations of language.

Additional Resources

Read a short interview with the author: <http://calstate.fullerton.edu/titan/2005/medina/>

Nicholasa Mohr

(1938 -)



Nicholasa Mohr is one of the most widely published Puerto Rican writers in the United States. Born to parents who came to New York City with the massive migration of Puerto Ricans to the city during World War II, Mohr grew up in the Bronx and studied art at the Students' Art League. She became a well-known graphic artist. Her art agent once asked her to write about the experience of growing up Puerto Rican as a young woman in the Bronx, perhaps expecting sensationalist tales of crime, drugs, and gang activity. The stories Mohr wrote were quite different, and she had difficulties getting editors interested in publishing her work. *Nilda*, her first novel, appeared in 1973. Birthed in the culture of the Nuyorican Movement, a rich arts movement of the 1970s, this book is often seen as the counter-part to Piri Thomas's novel *Down These Mean Streets* (see page 95). *Nilda*, as many of Mohr's books do, tells the story of growing up Puerto Rican in New York prior to the Civil Rights Movement from a young girl's perspective. Today, Mohr has written thirteen books, primarily aimed towards young adults, and has won numerous awards for her writing. She lives in East Harlem.

For more information on the author, visit her webpage:
http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/mohr_nicholasa.php

Felita



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
580L	3-4	8-10	Novel	1979

Themes

Family, moving, discrimination, dealing with conflict, dealing with loss

About the Book

Eight year old Felita lives in Harlem with her family. Her parents have decided that they will be moving to a new neighborhood that is a 20-30 minute walk from her current neighborhood. She is sad about moving and leaving her friends and grandmother behind. The novel addresses issues of racism, discrimination and prejudice that come up when Felita moves to a new neighborhood that is predominantly Irish and German. The girls and adults in the new neighborhood mistreat her and question whether they should call her a “nigger” or a “spic.” Felita turns to her grandmother who helps her to manage her feelings of disappointment with her friendships and other difficult emotions. Her brothers and mother also face discrimination and eventually the family decides to move back to their old neighborhood. The story explores issues of conflict resolution and dealing with loss of a loved one.

Translanguaging in Literature

This short novel is written mostly in English, however, the author chooses to insert Spanish words at times throughout the text. Spanish is used to identify family members for example, mami, papi, abuela, mi hijita. This highlights the way that Spanish is associated with home and family. Felita does not use Spanish at school. In addition, Spanish is used to name foods that are specific to Puerto Rican culture and do not have a direct translation in English such as dulce de leche and piragua. At one point Felita translates this to a kind of snow cone again highlighting the way there is no direct translation. Spanish is also used for expressions which are typical of Puerto Rican Spanish such as mira, muchacho, bendito, bueno. They are often used in Puerto Rican Spanish as fillers in a conversation. The author uses them here to remind us that Felita's family is of Puerto Rican descent. When Felita speaks to family members, especially her grandmother, the author lets the reader know that they speak to each other in Spanish although the novel is written in English. Including these Spanish expressions is a reminder that the members of this family often speak to each other in Spanish. Other Spanish language expressions in the text include: por favor, por Dios, and mi Felita.

There is an interesting exchange in the text that takes place between Felita and her grandmother. Felita turns to her grandmother when she faces discrimination in her new neighborhood. Her grandmother at one point gives her the following advice:

“And when these ignoramuses criticize or correct you because you use Spanish words, let them know how much better off you are. Look how you and I can speak in Spanish together. This already makes you twice as smart as people who only speak one language. Finally, when anyone says, ‘Go back to where you came from’ or ‘You don’t belong here,’ tell them Puerto Ricans, whether they’re born on the island of Puerto Rico or here in the mainland United States, are American citizens.” (p. 57)

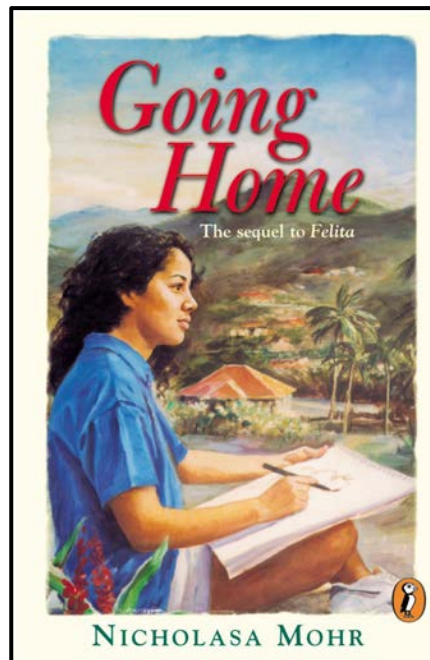
The validation of Felita's language which is so closely tied to her identity comes from her grandmother, not from school or the outside world.

Additional Resources

Read more about the history of Puerto Ricans in the United States. This site also offers short video clips on the history of Puerto Ricans in New York:

<http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rican-studies/open-courseware>

Going Home



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
680L	3-7	8 and up	Novel	1986

Themes

Family, growing up, making friends, gender roles

About the Book

In *Going Home*, the sequel to *Felita*, eleven year old Felita is in the fifth grade and soon to become a señorita (a young lady). Felita goes to Puerto Rico to spend the summer with her great uncle tío Jorge who lived with her grandmother for many years in New York and now returned to Puerto Rico to retire. This is Felita's first visit to the island.

Translanguaging in Literature

In the story, gender roles are important as Felita's parents begin to treat her differently since she is soon to become a señorita. Gender terms such as títere, un hombre, un hombrecito, and señorita are always in Spanish in the text signaling the way that gender identities are culturally specific. Referring to Felita as a young lady instead of a señorita does not carry the same cultural significance. As Felita and her brothers are being taught Puerto Rican, culturally appropriate gender roles for men and women, Spanish is always used.

Mohr also uses Spanish here in ways that are similar to her use of Spanish in *Felita*.

Family members are referred to in Spanish, for example, tío, tía, abuela, abuelita, mami, papi. The Spanish words used to show respect for elders is also used, Doña and Don.

Cultural expressions are also in Spanish in the text, such as basta, mira, bueno, por Dios, Buena suerte as a way to highlight the character's identity and to remind the reader that these characters are bilingual.

Language, identity and belonging are important concerns in this story. Language is a marker of belonging, fitting in and group identity. Both learning English and learning Spanish are important concerns for these characters. Identity concepts like Nuyorican vs. Puerto Rican and the way they are tied to language are introduced.

Learning English is something that concerns Vicente Dávila "Vinnie" a recent immigrant to New York from Colombia, and a student at Felita's school. He approaches Felita one day after school and asks her if she will teach him English and he will help her practice her Spanish. Felita likes the idea, but is concerned her parents will not allow her to study after school with a boy. Felita's brother Tito supports her when she approaches her parents to ask for permission. He says about Vicente Dávila:

"Aw, man, Papi," Tito spoke up, "come on, admit she's got a point. The kid wants to be accepted, to be like one of us. That's all. All the other kids will keep right on teasing him until he learns our ways. That's just the way it is, and he ain't gonna learn regular expressions and how to fit in with other kids from a teacher" (p. 43).

When Felita's family takes her to Puerto Rico to drop her off for the summer, Felita and her brothers struggle at times with their Spanish. At times they become self-conscious and shy about speaking in Spanish because they are made fun of by the Puerto Rican children. In one scene where Felita is playing with the girls she met at her tío Jorge's church she begins to withdraw because she doesn't feel confident about her Spanish. Felita says: "I was beginning to feel uneasy about my Spanish. 'I don't know. I don't think I should play'" (p. 117).

The girls respond to her by calling her names, "Come on, don't be so sensitive, Yankee!" (p. 118). Other girls say, "Listen, gringita, all you have to do is try. Come on, now—" (p. 119).

Felita responds: "Hey! I cut her right off. 'My name is not Yankee or gringita, my name is Felita! Don't you call me by those names! You understand?'" My Spanish became loud and clear." (p. 119)

Anita responds, "Let's do something different to please Ms. Nuyorican here from the big city, who is too good to play with us." (p. 119)

Felita reflects on what happened that day with the other girls. She says: "All my life I've been Puerto Rican, now I'm told I'm not, that I'm a gringa. Two years ago I got beaten up by a bunch of mean girls when we had moved into an all-white neighborhood. [. . .] At home I get called a 'spic' and here I'm a Nuyorican." (p. 122) Felita is made fun of for both her use of English and Spanish. Her language is used as a way to exclude her and she remains at the margins of both dominant U.S. and

Puerto Rican culture.

Additional Resources

Lesson Plan with discussion questions and suggestions:

<http://www.google.com/url?sa=t&rct=j&q=&esrc=s&source=web&cd=15&cad=rja&uact=8&ved=0CGUQFjAO&url=http%3A%2F%2Fwww.howardsstuff.com%2Fgoho.doc&ei=uo6XU80Ep7SxBJeVgCA&usg=AFQjCNE4UXmpIP-z4QwvINSJGaPh8xSlqQ>

Read more about the history of Puerto Ricans in the United States. This site also offers short video clips on the history of Puerto Ricans in New York:

<http://centropr.hunter.cuny.edu/education/puerto-rican-studies/open-courseware>

Pam Muñoz Ryan

(1951 -)

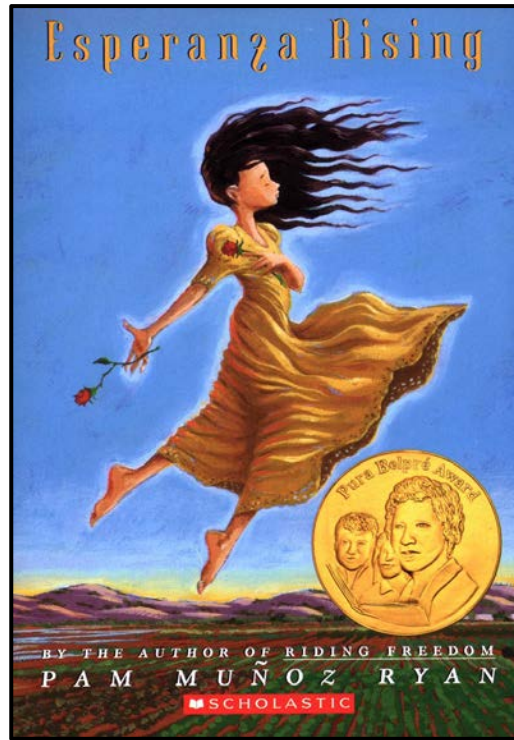


Pam Muñoz Ryan was born and raised in Bakersfield, California. She is half Mexican and learned about books and her Mexican heritage from her grandmother who lived near her in Bakersfield. She has written over thirty books for young people, from picture books for the very young to young adult novels, including the award-winning *Esperanza Rising*, *Becoming Naomi Leon*, *Riding Freedom*, *Paint the Wind*, and *The Dreamer*. She has received numerous awards including the National Education Association's Civil and Human Rights Award, the Virginia Hamilton Award for Multicultural Literature, and the Willa Cather Literary Award. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees at San Diego State University, and now lives in North San Diego County with her family.

To read a more extensive bio please visit the author's website:

<http://www.pammunozryan.com>

Esperanza Rising



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
750L	5-7	11 and up	Novel	2000

Themes

Immigration, Mexico, class and race differences in Mexico and the United States, hardship, perseverance, farm workers

About the Book

Esperanza Rising is a novel set in Aguascalientes, Mexico in 1924. The protagonist, Esperanza Ortega, is an only child and the daughter of wealthy farm owners who live at a ranch they have named, El Rancho de las Rosas. On her thirteenth birthday, her world is turned upside down when her father who was out of town on business is murdered by bandits on the road. Esperanza's mother determines that it is not safe for them to stay in Mexico. Shortly after, Esperanza and her mother make the journey north to cross the border into the United States to work as migrant farm workers. As readers, we follow Esperanza during this life-changing year which begins on her thirteenth birthday with the death of her father and her journey as she begins to heal. In their new life in California, Esperanza is a worker on the farms rather than the daughter of the landowners. This is quite a difficult adjustment for her. When her mother falls ill and the farm workers strike for better working conditions, Esperanza must search inside for a way to rise above her difficult circumstances. This is a beautiful story that highlights some of the different reasons why people migrate. The novel also explores issues of race and class in both Mexico and the United States.

This title is also available in Spanish and titled: *Esperanza renace*.

Translanguaging in Literature

The novel is written primarily in English with key signal words, concepts and phrases in Spanish. Because farming is so important to Esperanza and her family, the titles of the chapters are different fruits, vegetables and nuts, suggesting that each chapter takes place during the harvest of the produce mentioned in the title. All chapter titles are in Spanish with translations available in English. Both the first and the last chapter are titled “Las Uvas” (Grapes), indicating to the reader that the novel takes place in the span of one year.

The novel includes many sayings in Spanish. Often these sayings are expressed by the grandmother who lives with Esperanza and her family in Mexico. Expressions are often specific to different cultural groups and not easily translatable. The author tends to leave these expressions in Spanish, with a translation following in English.

As with much Latino/a literature, cultural concepts are not translated into English. Some examples of this are the quinceañera or a girl’s debut party which happens after the girl turns fifteen. This tradition has a class connotation to it, although today girls of all social classes in Latin America participate in it. The quinceañera is the time when young women dress up in white gowns and are presented to the sons of the richest families. After this, young women are allowed to be courted and married.

Words like mantilla are not translated either as they are the lace shawls that women often wear to cover their heads in Spanish culture. Other terms included in Spanish are references to the culture such as “piñata” a concept that does not have an equivalent in English. Words for foods that are typical of the culture are not translated such as tamales, frijoles, tortillas, enchiladas.

Family names are often written in Spanish, such as señor, señora, tío, tía, hija, mamá, and papá. Reminding the reader that Spanish is a home language and often spoken with the family.

Additional Resources

Teacher’s guide published by Scholastic: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/esperanza-rising-teachers-guide>

Lesson Plans: <http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/lesson-plan/esperanza-rising-lesson-plan>

Amada Irma Perez

(19?? -)



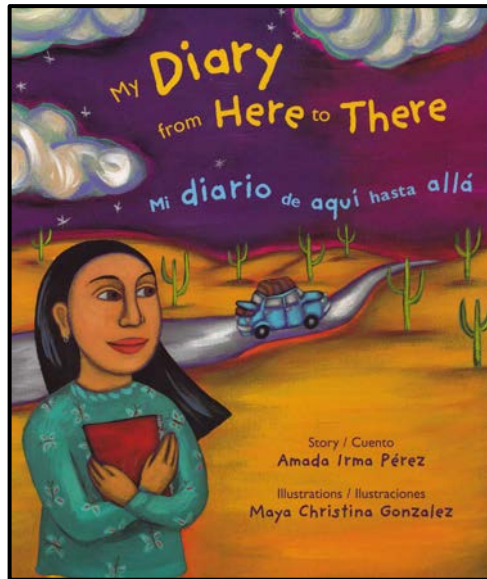
Amada Irma Perez was born in Mexico and moved to California as a child. She is an educator and writer. She was a teacher for more than 25 years when she wrote her first story in 1998. Her book, *My Very Own Room - Mi propio cuartito* won numerous awards including the prestigious, Tomás Rivera Children's Book Award, was inducted into the Latino Literature Archives of the University of Southwest Texas, San Marcos, and is given to every newborn in San Antonio, Texas through the Library Foundation's "Born to Read" program. It has sold more than fifty thousand copies. Her second bilingual picture book, *My Diary from Here to There-Mi diario de aquí hasta allá* won awards including the Pura Belpré Honor Book Award. Her third book, *Nana's Chicken Coop Surprise-Nana, que sorpresa!* was published in 2007.

Perez is a leading advocate of programs encouraging multicultural understanding through the universal themes she explores in her books. She has been a frequent presenter at local, state, national, and international conferences. She also visits schools, libraries, community centers, and bookstores offering writing workshops and motivational talks. She lives in Ventura with her husband, Arturo, who is also a teacher and their two dogs. She has two grown sons, Marco and Nico.

Please visit the author's website for more information on the author and her books.

<http://www.amadairmaperez.com/biography.php>

My Diary From Here to There / Mi diario de aquí hasta allá



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
720L	K and up	5 and up	Picture book	2002

Themes

Family, immigration, migrant workers, crossing the border

About the Book

Written in the style of diary entries, the author Amada Irma Perez, tracks her family's journey from Juárez, Mexico to Los Angeles, California. Papá is a migrant worker who can no longer find work in Mexico. Amada is sad to leave her home and best friend, Michi, but her brothers are excited. While papá travels on to California to obtain green cards for the rest of the family, Amada, her mother and brothers stay with her grandparents in Mexicali near the border. Eventually a letter from papá arrives which says he found seasonal work and met an inspiring man named Cesar Chavez, who intends to fight for better working conditions for farmworkers. Papá also asks for patience because many other families are trying to obtain green cards. Back in Mexicali, Amada worries her family might be overstaying their welcome. When the green cards finally arrive, there is a big farewell party, at which Amada's grandmother gifts her a new diary so that she can continue writing to keep her language and culture alive. Amada and her family make it through the chaotic border crossing in Tijuana, then take a bus to Los Angeles where papá is waiting. The author includes a short biography of herself on the last page. The back of the book is an illustrated map that details the route the family took from Mexico to California.

Translanguaging in Literature

The story is written in Spanish, followed by an English translation.

The English version is written mostly in English, with some Spanish retained to identify family members, papá, mamá, tío, tía, m'ija, and traditional foods that do not have an English translation, tortilla, tamales, pan dulce. This incorporation of Spanish maintains a sense of cultural identity.

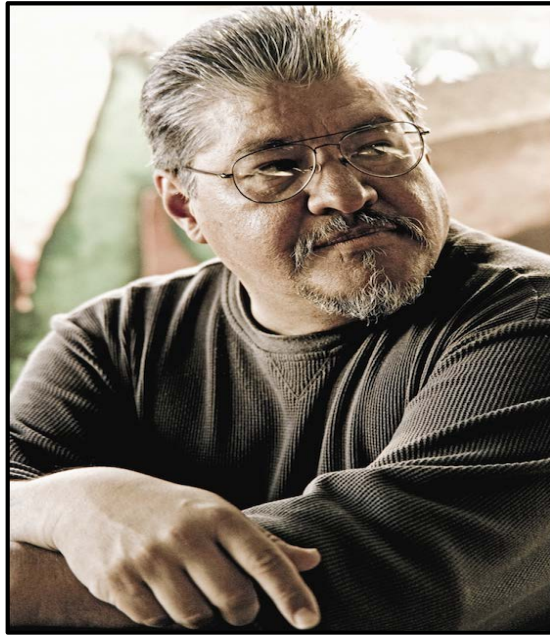
Additional Resources

Watch the author read the book on youtube:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Q39Edifc218>

Luis J. Rodríguez

(1954 -)



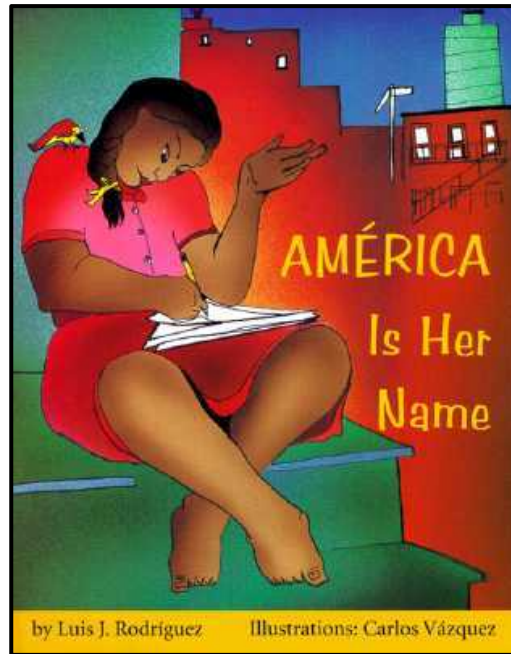
The son of Mexican immigrants, Luis J. Rodríguez has emerged as one of the leading Chicano writers in the country with fifteen published books in various genres including memoir, fiction, nonfiction, children's literature, and poetry. Luis's poetry has won a Poetry Center Book Award, a PEN Josephine Miles Literary Award, and a Paterson Poetry Book Prize, among others. His children's books—*América is Her Name* and *It Doesn't Have to be This Way: A Barrio Story*—have won a Patterson Young Adult Book Award, two Skipping Stones Honor Awards, and a Parent's Choice Book Award. He is the author of the short story collection, *The Republic of East L.A.* (2001), and the novel, *Music of the Mill* (2005), among other works.

Rodríguez is best known for the 1993 memoir of gang life, *Always Running: La Vida Loca, Gang Days in L.A.* Now selling more than 400,000 copies, this book garnered a Carl Sandburg Literary Award, a Chicago Sun-Times Book Award, and was designated a New York Times Notable Book. It became a stage play by the Cornerstone Theater Company at the Mark Taper Auditorium in the L.A. Public Library from 2003-2005 to 6,000 high school students. Written as a cautionary tale for Rodríguez's then 15-year-old son Ramiro—who had joined a Chicago gang—the memoir is popular among youth and teachers. One Los Angeles Public Library official said *Always Running* is the most checked out book in their vast library system. Despite its popularity, the American Library Association called *Always Running* one of the 100 most censored books in the United States.

To read more about the author, including an interview with him, go to:

<http://www.luisjrodriguez.com/index.htm>.

América is Her Name



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	K-4	5-9	Picture book	1998

Themes

Immigration, school, violence, learning English, feeling out of place, discrimination, the power of writing, the power of poetry

About the Book

This is a moving story about América Soliz a nine year old Mixteca Indian girl who moves to the Pilsen Barrio of Chicago with her family from their hometown of Oaxaca, Mexico. América misses everything about her hometown and feels out of place in Chicago where she experiences prejudice and discrimination. At school, she overhears the teachers and students talk about her being “illegal.” She has lost her strong, open and free voice in Chicago. Then Mr. Aponte, a Puerto Rican poet, visits her ESL class and América reclaims her voice. The students are encouraged to recite and write poetry in English and in Spanish. Mr. Aponte tells the children “When you use your words to share feelings with somebody else, you are a poet, and poets belong to the whole world. Never forget this.” América begins to write and cannot stop. She knows that she now belongs right where she is because she, too, is a poet and poets belong everywhere.

Translanguaging in Literature

This children's story is written mostly in English. There are very few Spanish words used in the text with the exception of names of family members such as tío, papi, mamá, and m'ija, the term América's parents use to refer to her. The familial names are in Spanish in the story highlighting that Spanish is a home language.

In addition, there is one moment early on in the story where América notes that one of the neighborhood men sells helados, which are real fruit, ice cream sticks. Spanish is used here to make the distinction between helado and ice cream which is not an accurate translation. Helados are made out of real fruit.

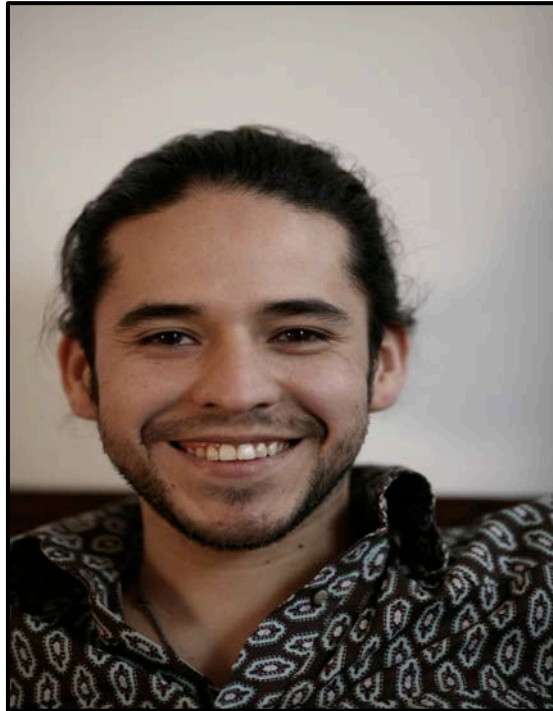
The true translanguaging moment of the story is described entirely in English and takes place in the ESL class when Mr. Aponte, the Puerto Rican poet, visits the classroom. In contrast to Miss Gable, the ESL teacher who is depicted as someone who is always yelling, Mr. Aponte seems to get along well with the students right from the start. He speaks to the class in Spanish and asks them "Who likes poetry?" (p. 10) He invites the students to recite poetry in Spanish. América recites poetry for her classmates in Spanish. Given permission to translanguague and use her full linguistic repertoire which includes English, Spanish, and Mixteco she has a breakthrough moment and cannot stop writing. She finds her sense of purpose and a sense of belonging through language.

Additional Resources

Read more about the Mixtec people of Mexico: <http://www-rohan.sdsu.edu/~mixtec/>

Duncan Tonatiuh

(19?? -)

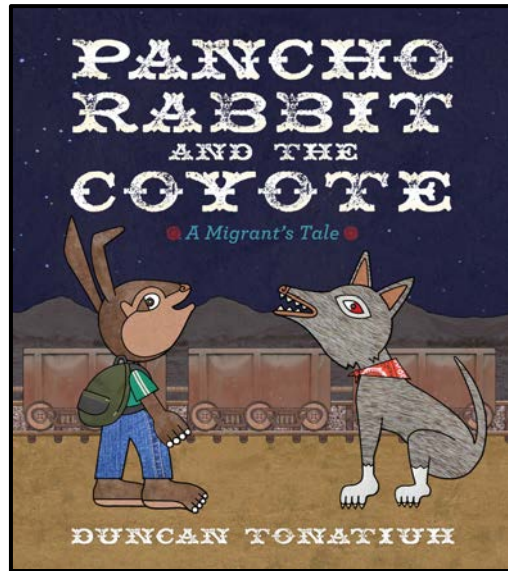


Duncan Tonatiuh (toh-nah-tyou) is an award winning author and illustrator. His book *Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* is the first book to receive two honorable mentions, one for the illustrations and one for the text, from the Pura Belpré Award for a work that best portrays, affirms and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in children's books. The book was featured in USA Today, The Chicago Sun, The Houston Chronicle among other major publications because it deals with the controversial topic of immigration. He is also the author of *Diego Rivera: His World and Ours Dear Primo*, and *A Letter to My Cousin*. His newest book, *Separate Is Never Equal*, tells the true story of Sylvia Mendez, a child in the 1940s of Mexican and Puerto-Rican descent who was not allowed to attend a "White's Only" school. Thanks to the efforts of her parents and the local Latino community, legal segregation in schools in California ended. Tonatiuh was born in Mexico City and grew up in San Miguel de Allende. He graduated from Parsons The New School for Design and from Eugene Lang College in New York City in 2008. His work is inspired by Ancient Mexican art, particularly that of the Mixtec codex. His aim is to create images that honor the past, but that address contemporary issues that affect people of Mexican origin on both sides of the border.

For more information on the author, visit his webpage:

<http://www.duncantonatiuh.com/about.html>

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	1–4	6–9	Picture book	2013

Themes

Family, migrant farm workers, crossing the border

About the Book

Pancho Rabbit and his siblings are looking forward to their father's return from El Norte. Papá Rabbit has been there for two years working in the great carrot and lettuce fields. The family prepares a big party for papá Rabbit's homecoming, but he fails to appear. Pancho decides to go in search of his father and packs a bag of his father's favorite foods for the long journey to El Norte.

Along the way he meets Señor Coyote who offers to be a guide in exchange for food. At the border, they encounter hungry snakes and Pancho must part with more food. Once in El Norte, Pancho and the coyote take shelter in a hut. With the food completely gone, the coyote decides he will eat Pancho. Before he can, papá Rabbit and his friends show up to rescue Pancho. Papá Rabbit and his friends had been waylaid after getting robbed by crows, and then got lost in the desert. They heard Pancho's cries for help and found their way to his hut.

Back at home, papá expresses concern that if there is not enough rain, he might have to go back to El Norte to find work.

The "Author's Note" provides a brief history of immigration, undocumented workers, and immigration reform, as well as a list of relevant websites. There is also a "Glossary" for Spanish words that are used in the story.

Translanguaging in Literature

The story is written mostly in English, incorporating some Spanish words when formally identifying adult characters or naming common foods and cultural traditions that do not have an English equivalent.

Most of the adult characters are addressed formally, like Papá Rabbit, Señor Rooster,” and Señora Duck. Sometimes a character is referred to only by title, as is the case with Pancho’s Mamá. Not only does this reflect youngsters being respectful towards their elders, it also implies that cultural heritage is a component of that respect.

To celebrate Papá Rabbit’s return to the rancho, the family decides to throw a party. Many of the foods and traditions that go into preparing for the “fiesta” are mentioned in Spanish and italicized for emphasis. The family hangs papel picado to decorate the patio, and listen to música as they work. The foods prepared by Mamá include mole, a heap of warm tortillas, and a jugful of aguamiel.

In the story, the United States is identified as El Norte. Use of this common term introduces a complex range of signifiers. It is where papá, who is a migrant worker, stays for long stretches of time to earn money, but it is not his home like the rancho. There is a long journey to get there, and there is a big fence that is difficult to bypass. El Norte is also where papá gets robbed and later, lost. Pancho experiences some of these risks first-hand when he is forced to pay-off snakes to gain entry into El Norte, and later walks a long distance under treacherous circumstances. Furthermore, the coyote who offered to be his guide to El Norte turns out to be a predator. The risks and dangers associated with El Norte signify that migrant work is a desperate financial option for families and one that comes at great risk and sacrifice.

Additional Resources

The author’s blog offers pictures, a summary, and videos with a Ted talk and student poems: <http://duncantonatiuh.wordpress.com/2014/01/15/pancho-rabbit-and-the-coyote/>

Leyla Torres

(1960-)



Leyla Torres was born and raised in Bogotá Colombia and since an early age has been interested in the visual arts. She graduated from Universidad de la Sabana in Bogotá with a fine arts and teaching degree in 1981. In 1985 Leyla moved to New York City where she studied printmaking and lithography at the Art Students League. She also spent many hours researching children's literature at the Central Children's Room of the Donnell Library on 53rd Street, just opposite the Museum of Modern Art. Besides writing and painting, Leyla enjoys visiting schools, sharing with children her knowledge and perspective on the creative process while demonstrating how they too can tap their creative potential. As a practitioner and advocate of origami for more than twenty years, Leyla also enjoys sharing and teaching about this art of paper folding.

Visit her website to learn more: <http://www.leylatorres.com/>

Subway Sparrow/Gorrión del Metro



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	PreK-3	3-8	Picture book	1993

Theme

Multiculturalism, collaboration across languages, overcoming language barriers

About the Book

When a sparrow is trapped in a subway car in Brooklyn, New York, passengers of different ages, cultures and backgrounds work together to help free the sparrow. A young English speaking woman first expresses her concern for the frightened bird, and soon after, a Spanish-speaking man and Polish-speaking woman come to her aid. Even though the passengers do not speak the same language they come together out of concern for the sparrow and are able to overcome language barriers to free the bird.

Translanguaging in Literature

The story is narrated in English. When the sparrow lands on a Spanish-speaking man's hat, he speaks in Spanish to the young woman who is trying to free the bird. It then lands close to a Polish-speaking woman who joins the other riders on the train. The text includes Spanish and Polish dialogue that is loosely translated by English speakers on the train. These diverse speakers overcome their language differences in their common concern for the sparrow.

Additional Resources

Some suggestions for using the book in the classroom:

<http://2009bookclubblog.blogspot.com/2007/02/subway-sparrow-by-leyla-torres.html>

Jonah Winter

(1962 -)

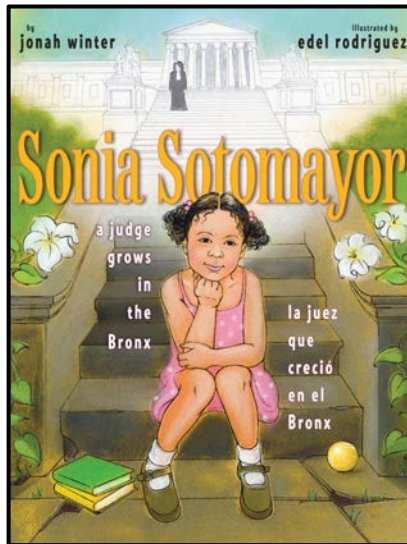


Jonah Winter is the author of many picture book biographies, including the New York Times bestseller *Barack*. His other books include *Here Comes the Garbage Barge*, *Sonia Sotomayor*, and *Roberto Clemente*. He is also a poet and a painter.

Read more about the author here:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/contributor/jonah-winter>

Sonia Sotomayor: A Judge Grows in the Bronx / La juez que creció en el Bronx



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
840L	PreK-4	4-9	Picture book	2009

Themes

Hard work, prejudice, setting goals and accomplishing them, diabetes, perseverance

About the Book

The book tells the story of Supreme Court Justice Sonia Sotomayor's journey from her childhood growing up in the Bronx to the highest court in the nation. Justice Sotomayor was raised by a single mother who worked hard to put her two children through school. Sonia's father died when she was a child. Her mother studied at night to better herself and become a nurse. The book tells the story how Sonia was inspired by her mother's hard work and perseverance to accomplish her goals of becoming a lawyer and a judge. She did not let anything interfere with her desire for success, not her diabetes diagnosis or her humble family background. With hard work she became the first Puerto Rican appointed to the Supreme Court, the highest court in the nation.

Translanguaging in Literature

This book is bilingual with side by side translations on each page. A few Spanish words are included in the English text to reference cultural aspects such as music and food.

Additional Resources

Teaching books is a website that consolidates different resources on the internet to one page. It contains interviews with the author, lesson plans, book readings etc.:

<http://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?tid=22772&a=1>

Read an interview with the author here:

<http://www.scholastic.com/teachers/article/jonah-winter-interview-transcript>



Latino/a Literature: Grades 7-12

Raquel Cepeda

(1973 -)

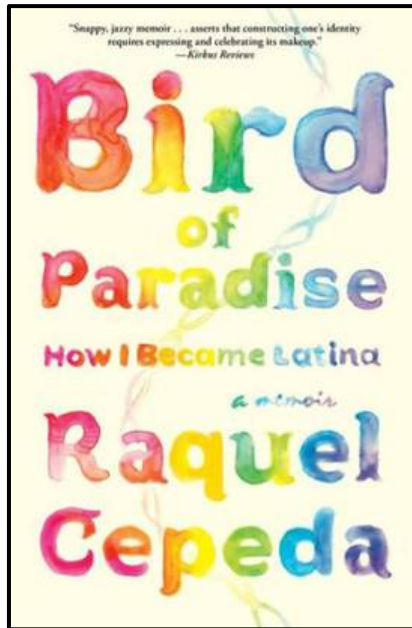


Raquel Cepeda was born in Harlem to Dominican parents. She is a journalist, critic and, most recently, an autobiographer. In 2001, Cepeda was named editor-in-chief of *Russell Simmons' One World* magazine. In 2007, Cepeda co-produced, wrote and directed the feature documentary *Bling: A Planet Rock*. Cepeda's memoir, *Bird of Paradise: How I Became Latina*, was published by Atria Books in March 2013. She has created a teaching guide for educators to accompany her memoir which can be found on her website.

Visit the author's website for more information:

<http://djalirancher.com/about/#sthash.m5DTewOp.dpbs>

Bird of Paradise: How I Became Latina



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	9-12	14-18	Memoir	2013

Themes

Family, coming of age, race, history of the Dominican Republic, Latina identity, ancestral DNA

About the Book

In *Bird of Paradise*, author Raquel Cepeda digs into her family history for a better understanding of who she is as a Latina born in Harlem to Dominican parents. When her parents' relationship hit hard times, Cepeda was sent to live with her maternal grandmother in Santo Domingo as a child. After her parents separated, her mother had a string of men who came in and out of her life. Her father married a European woman. Although Cepeda had a difficult relationship with her father, she lived with him and her step-mother in upper Manhattan. In the 1980s, she immersed herself in hip hop culture and grew up to become a successful journalist and documentary filmmaker.

In the memoir, her father's battle with heart disease leads her to want to know more about her ancestry. She embarks on a journey to understand her family roots through ancestral DNA. This leads her to reconnect with members of her family that she had lost touch with. She soon realizes that the strands of her family DNA stretch around the globe. The second half of the book is dedicated to discovering her ancestral roots as a Dominican and Latina. She concludes that as a Latina her ancestors come from around the world, making her a global citizen.

Translanguaging

Spanish is brought into the text in ways that are similar to other Latino/a writers, but also in some unique usage that is tied to the themes prevalent in the book such as love, family, and race.

Spanish-language terms of endearment are used when characters express affection, such as *papi chulo*, *bonbon*, *reina*, *caramelito*, *mi querido*. In this way, Cepeda uses Spanish as a way to express intimacy.

Spanish is also used when writing about culturally specific foods, such as *arroz*, *maduros*, *mangú*, *plátanos*, *bacalao*, *pollo guisado*, *cafecito*, *moro con pollo*.

Cultural concepts that pertain to sexuality and gender roles are often expressed in Spanish, reminding the reader that notions of gender and sexuality are culturally specific and often do not translate across borders and languages. Some examples of this are male gendered identities that are specifically Dominican, such as *rubirosas* and *tigere*. More general Latin American and Caribbean terms of masculinity include *mujeriego* and phrases such as *yo te voy a enseñar hacer hombre*, *coño*. For a man who lacks Dominican machismo, such as Raquel's uncle, he is derogatorily referred to as a *desgraciado maricón*.

The cultural concept around Dominican womanhood is captured in a woman's dress or more specifically, we might say in her shoes. The term *tacónes* are often used to evoke a woman's femininity and sexuality, as it is used to refer to Raquel's mother frequently throughout the book. Women who are thought of as someone who spends too much time outside the home is called *una recogida* a gendered and cultural understanding of womanhood that doesn't easily translate into English language or American culture, since it is not viewed as unseemly for women to occupy public spaces. The terms *mujer*, *dama*, and *muchachita* are also frequently used in Spanish reinforcing the idea that norms of gender are culturally specific and do not translate seamlessly across cultures.

Cultural traditions that pertain to religion are often found in Spanish, as Afro-Dominican religious beliefs permeate Dominican culture and are geographically specific. Some of these terms are: *brujo*, *bruja*, *brujería*, as well as *una cabeza de chivo*, *collares*, *con los caracoles* and religious figures such as *Changó Macho*, *Niño de Antocha*, *Virgen de la Altagracia*, *Madrina de santo*. Spanish is also used for the tradition among families, particularly children and adults, which entails the child asking the parent or guardian for a blessing: "*Bendición, papi (mami)*," the child says. The parent or guardian responds: "*Que Dios te bendiga, my son.*" (p. 100)

Most of the Spanish words in the text surround the complicated and slippery notion of race, a concept that is also culturally and geographically specific, adding to its complexity. The great number of terms used to describe race here are only a small fraction of those that circulate in the Dominican Republic and much of Latin America. Some racial terms refer to skin color, such as *café con leche*, *prieta/prieto*, *mulata/mulato*, *mulata áspera*, *morena*, *trigueña/trigueño*, *leche condensada*, *espresso*,

blanquito/blanquita, avena, and jabao. Some of the terms refer to hair texture as a signifier of race, for example “pelo lacio, hair in between Bueno y malo,” (p. 238) and pajón. Others refer to national origin such as indio/india, africana/africano, haitiano/haitina, and chino/china. The great number of racial terms used highlights the complicated and ambiguous nature of race. It also refers the colorism of the Dominican Republic.

Spanish is also used when Cepeda recounts Dominican history and makes reference to historical terms that are not much in circulation in popular culture today, but would be found in history books such as the Spanish encomiendas, conquistadores, la república, and haciendas. She also uses more traditional racial classifications used the Spanish during the colonial period, such as negros bozalez, negros ladinos, indios, afro-indios, mestizos, concluding somos una mescolanza, which is one of the arguments the book sets out to make. As people who have roots that stretch around the globe, Latino/as are in fact, citizens of the world.

Additional Resources

A book review on Ebony.com: <http://www.ebony.com/entertainment-culture/review-raquel-cepedas-soaring-bird-of-paradise-123#axzz34Hby2gIa>

Find the official *Bird of Paradise* curriculum here: <http://djalirancher.com/books/bird-of-paradise-how-i-became-latina/for-educators/#sthash.4DIXpPKb.dpbs>

Sandra Cisneros

(1954 -)

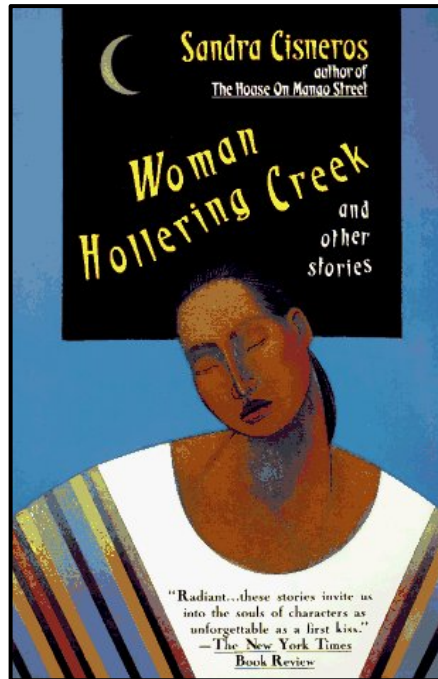


Sandra Cisneros is the author of several books including *The House on Mango Street*, *Caramelo*, *Loose Woman*, and, most recently, *Have You Seen Marie?* She is the founder of two organizations that serve writers, the Macondo Foundation (now administered by the Guadalupe Cultural Arts Center) and the Alfredo Cisneros del Moral Foundation. Sandra is also the organizer of the Latino MacArthur Fellows (Los MacArturos). She has been honored with numerous awards including the MacArthur Fellowship, two National Endowment for the Arts Fellowships, and a Texas Medal of the Arts. Her books have been translated into more than twenty languages and published internationally.

To read more about the author, please visit her website:

<http://www.sandrakisneros.com/bio.php>

Woman Hollering Creek



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
960L	7-10	12 and up	Short stories	1992

Themes

Female stereotypes, immigrants, identity, poverty, sexuality, gender roles, masculinity, motherhood, physical abuse, sexual abuse, how women relate to men, Mexico, Texas, living in a border town.

About the Book

Woman Hollering Creek is a collection of short stories about Mexican women characters who struggle with their sense of identity. Certain female stereotypes recur such as the naive child, the virgin, and the scorned lover. The book is divided into three sections.

The first section is titled: "My Lucy Friend Who Smells Like Corn." (p.1) Most of the young girls in these stories are looking to construct a sense of identity based on where they live and on a growing awareness of their sexuality.

The second section titled, "One Holy Night," (p. 25) is comprised of two stories that revolve around deception. In the first story a 14 year old girl is manipulated and then impregnated by a 37 year old man, who turns out to be a serial killer. In the second story the reputation of a missing girl is questioned, which dissolves into sympathy when she's presumed dead. The girl later turns up alive.

The third section is titled: "There Was a Man, There Was a Woman." (p. 41) In this

section women and girl characters yearn for better lives, pinning most of their hopes and dreams on male characters who fail them. These men characters start off as loving and protective, but eventually reveal darker sides that are untrustworthy, abusive, or emotionally unavailable.

Translanguaging in Literature

Sandra Cisneros' use of Spanish in these stories reflects the varying degrees of biculturalism among her characters. Most of the characters are Mexican-American with a strong connection to Mexican culture and Spanish language at home. Family members are referred to by Spanish names and terms of endearment such as: mamá, abuelito, abuelita, tía, tío, m'ijo, mi'jita. Mexican Spanish slang terms are also used: chones, chichis, nalgas.

Many Mexican culturally specific foods that do not have a direct English-language translation or U.S. equivalent appear in Spanish: nixtamel, churros, torta, huevos rancheros, paella, carnitas, barbacoa, tamales, mole, chilaquiles.

Culturally specific concepts such as a *tocaya* and religious practices such as worshipping la Virgen de Guadalupe or praying to one's patron saint are explored. The story "Little Miracles, Kept Promises" (p. 116) is episolaric, comprised of letters that people have written to their patron saint. Even though Texas residents write all of the letters, some letters are entirely in English, and some are entirely in Spanish. A few letters seamlessly integrate English and Spanish, for example: "Thank you por el milagro de haber graduado de high school. Aquí le regalo mi retrato de graduation." (p. 123)

The role of language itself is explored in several stories. In "Mericans," (p. 17) a woman tourist politely asks a Mexican-American boy in Spanish if she can take his photo. He replies in Spanish, but then shocks her when he calls out to his sister and her friend in English. "We're Mericans," is his explanation (p. 20). In "Never Marry a Mexican" (p. 68) a woman's American lover fetishizes her Mexican ethnicity, calling her Malinalli, Malinche, and mi doradita. The woman says "I liked when you spoke to me in my language. I could love myself and think myself worth loving." (p. 74)

Spanish is incorporated most heavily in "Tepeyac" (p. 21) and "Eyes of Zapata" (p.85), the two stories that take place in Mexico. This use of language helps establish a sense of location for these stories.

The theme of shame and language are prevalent in the collection. Among the many reasons for shame, there is shame associated with being from Mexico and lacking English language skills. Conversely there is shame associated with being a Mexican-American who doesn't know any Spanish.

Additional Resources

A website that contains additional resources, further reading, reviews etc.:

http://www.edb.utexas.edu/resources/booksR4teens/book_reviews/book_reviews.php?book_id=129

Angie Cruz

(1972 -)



Angie Cruz was conceived in the Dominican Republic and born in 1972 in New York City's Washington Heights. She traveled to the Dominican Republic every summer until she was sixteen years old. She attended La Guardia High School concentrating on Visual Arts and later studied Fashion Design at Fashion Institute of Technology. In 1993, four of her children stories were featured on BET's Story Porch. Soon after, she gave up her fashionista lifestyle to become a full-time college student at SUNY Binghamton where her love affair with literature and history began. She graduated from the New York University, MFA program in 1999. Her passion for literature fueled her desire to be active in the community. Angie Cruz has contributed shorter works to numerous periodicals including *Latina Magazine*, *Callaloo* and *The New York Times*. She has won numerous awards including The New York Foundation of The Arts Fellowship, Barbara Deming Award, Yaddo, and The Camargo Fellowship. She has published two novels, *Soledad* and *Let It Rain Coffee*. She currently is teaching creative writing at the University of Pittsburgh and is working on her third novel.

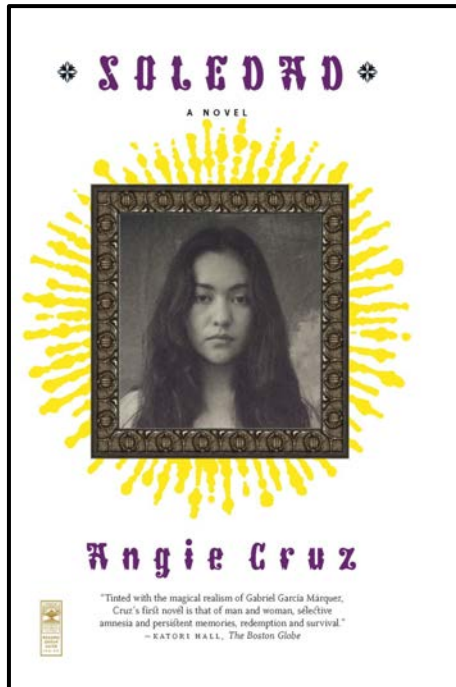
Read more about Angie Cruz on her website:

<http://www.writing.pitt.edu/people/faculty/angie-cruz>

Read interview with Angie Cruz here:

<http://www.nyu.edu/calabash/vol2no2/0202108.pdf>

Soledad



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	11-12	16-18	Novel	2002

Themes

Family, being caught in between two worlds and two cultures, exploitation of women, sex tourism in the Dominican Republic, globalization

About the Book

Soledad is a novel about a young Dominican woman who was born and raised in the Washington Heights neighborhood of Manhattan. Eager to leave el barrio behind after high school the protagonist, Soledad moves downtown to the Village, attends Cooper Union Art School and works at a gallery. She tries to assimilate into this world, but is called back to Washington Heights to help care for her mother who has fallen into a deep depression and refuses to speak. Soledad is torn between these two seemingly incompatible worlds.

When she returns to Washington Heights to take care of her mother, Soledad is forced to confront family secrets and the world that she is so determined to leave behind. Going back home helps her to better understand her mother and the women in her family. The process of return helps the women in the family reach peace with themselves and who they are. Soledad comes to understand that her mother has suffered a great deal of trauma and abuse from men of various backgrounds, Dominican, European, and American. Towards the end of the novel, Angie Cruz uses the literary device of flashbacks, when Soledad is literally confronted by the ghosts of her mother's past who are unleashed and who have been haunting her mother, Olivia,

for many years. Fighting the demons of the past help to heal the mother - daughter relationship as both women heal themselves through a deeper understanding of their past.

Cruz explores the exploitation of Dominican women on a global scale and the sex tourism of the Dominican Republic, a social problem that currently haunts the nation.

Translanguaging in Literature

Angie Cruz weaves the use of Spanish into her novel *Soledad* seamlessly without italicizing the Spanish words or setting them apart in quotation marks. Her use of Spanish in the English text reflects the everyday language of Latino/as in the United States who flexibly use their full linguistic repertoires when they communicate. Examples of this can be found throughout the text. Here are just a few of examples:

When Doña Sosa is speaking with her granddaughter, Soledad, about her mother she says: “I truly think that algo le pasa a las mujeres cuando le dan demasiado tiempo para pensar.” (p. 12)

Victor speaks to Ciego and says: “Yeah right. Los años made you crazy, old man.” (p. 34)

When Doña Sosa’s husband dies, Soledad watches and listens to her grandmother’s reaction: “My grandmother mumbles, Ay mi querido Fernando, forty five years contigo. What will I do without you?” (p. 181).

This type of flexible use of English and Spanish is found throughout the novel, spoken by characters that have lived in the United States for a long time and integrate both of their languages flexibly into their daily expressions.

As with other Latino/a authors, Angie Cruz uses Spanish when she is writing about cultural concepts that do not have direct translations into American culture. Some of these include concepts for the family and gender, which differ between the Dominican Republic and the United States. When she writes about these ideas she uses Spanish words such as la familia and una señorita and mujer. Similarly, ideas around race are different in the two countries and Cruz uses terms like blanquita, morena, and cocola to refer to the racial identities of Dominican characters. Cruz also uses Spanish when referring to religious and spiritual practices and beliefs that do not translate to American culture, such as una limpieza, despojo para el cuerpo, bruja, La Botánica, and la Virgen Altagracia.

As with other works included in this guide, Cruz uses Spanish to refer to members of the family such as abuelo, abuela, tía, tío, mami, papi, reflecting the way that Spanish is a family language in the United States and used to convey intimacy.

Character names carry significant meaning in Cruz’s works and are often symbolic of the character in some way. These names are often in Spanish, such as Gorda, Flaca,

Soledad, Ciego, Iluminada, and La Viuda.

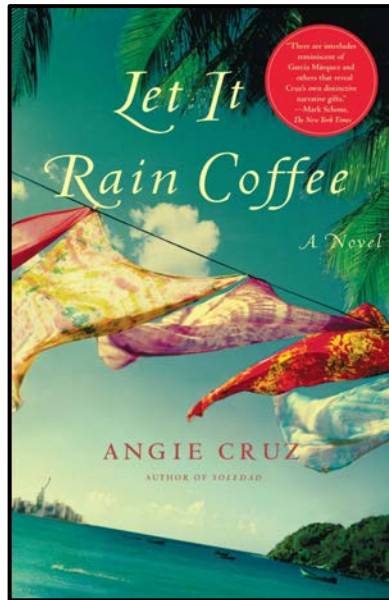
Curse words are often included in the book in Spanish, such as coño, pendejo, No me jodas, carajo, cabrón. When characters are speaking English they will often use interjections and expressions in Spanish as a marker of Dominican identity, as in pobre, no mi'ja, esta loca, chica, bueno, ay Dios mío, diosito, ¿qué pasa?"

Much of the dialog that takes place between characters when they are in the Dominican Republic is written in Spanish as a way to remind the reader that portions of this novel take place in a life that was lived in Spanish and in a Spanish speaking environment. In this way, Cruz uses Spanish for literary effect to evoke the setting (see pp. 78-79). It is significant that Olivia, Soledad's mother, kept a journal of the men she slept with for money when she was a young woman in the Dominican Republic in Spanish. The weight of Olivia's past is what leads her to sink into this deep depression where she falls silent. She returns to her past first through her journal and then through a trip to the Dominican Republic, where she is able to reclaim her voice.

Additional Resources

Reading Group Guides: <http://www.readinggroupguides.com/reviews/soledad>

Let it Rain Coffee



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	11-12	16-18	Novel	2005

Themes

American Dream, Trujillo, Dominican Republic, dementia, aging, U.S. foreign policy in the Caribbean, immigration, memory, desire, leadership, globalization

About the Book

Angie Cruz's second novel explores the illusory nature of the American Dream and many of the obstacles that stand in the way of achieving this ideal, so deeply ingrained into American mythology.

The main character of the novel, Esperanza, leaves her husband, children, and extended family behind in the Dominican Republic in search of the American Dream. She is propelled forward by her obsession with the American TV series, *Dallas*. She names her children, Bobby and Dallas, after the show. She dreams of moving to Texas and living in a ranch, but never makes it further than the Bronx.

Esperanza feels that her ambitions are threatened when her father-in-law, Don Chan, who is approaching 80 years of age and is recently widowed, moves from the Dominican Republic to New York City to live with her family. His arrival creates conflict in the Colón family that is already living in tight quarters. Don Chan reminisces about the Dominican Republic and the past. His stories make his son, Santo Colón, desire to visit his home country after so many years abroad. This angers Esperanza who only wants to look forward, and has no desire to think about the Dominican Republic or the past. Don Chan and Esperanza appear almost as alter egos. In the Dominican Republic, Don Chan helped to establish a revolutionary community

called Los Llanos, whose members countered the Dictator Trujillo's capitalism and harsh ways. On the other hand, Esperanza is driven by a naive desire for the American Dream, wealth and materialism. The plot of the novel alternates between the community of Los Llanos in the 1960s and the Nueva York of the present.

After a series of misfortunes strike the Colón family, Esperanza agrees to return to the Dominican Republic for a visit with her adolescent children.

Translanguaging in Literature

Angie Cruz uses Spanish in the novel in similar ways to other Latina/o authors. Her use of Spanish often does reflect the everyday language of bilinguals in the United States who frequently alternate between Spanish and English.

Terms of respect or affection for others are often in Spanish such as Don and Doña, Señor/a. Familial names such as papá and mami also appear in English. Expressions used to refer to people such as viejo, mujer, diosito, muchachos, and amor are often in Spanish.

Proper names of characters are important in this novel and are often symbolic. For example, Esperanza translates to Hope, which seems appropriate since she has a naive and unrealistic belief in the American Dream. Caridad translates to Charity; Santo to Saint, and Miraluz Altagracia means High Grace and is the name of one of the characters who struggles against oppression, capitalism, and the Trujillo dictatorship. La Virgen de Altagracia is also the protector of the Dominican Republic. In contrast, the second generation is given American names, such as Bobby and Dallas.

Names of places often appear in Spanish, such as Los Llanos, Nueva York, and Quepasó Street, a fictitious street in Washington Heights.

Curse words are often in Spanish, which reflects the use of bilingual speakers who might feel more comfortable swearing in their home language. Examples of this in the novel include, coño, maldita sea, vete a la mierda, pendejo.

As in other readings, names of typical foods that have no translation are expressed in Spanish such as salchichón, Malta Morena, empanadas, helado de coco, habichuelas con dulce, pastelitos, plátanos, pan de agua, pernil, arroz, habichuelas, and tostones.

There is a seamless use of Spanish and English in many cases, reflecting the everyday language of bilinguals. An example of this is:

“La maldita television has them. Muchachos, your grandfather's home, Santo yelled.”
(p. 11)

For literary effect, much of the simple dialog that takes place when the characters are in the Dominican Republic is in Spanish. This reminds the reader of the setting of the plot.

Popular expressions and exclamations are often in Spanish, again reflecting the way

that Latinos inflect their English with Spanish. Some examples of this are: “Ay por Dios!” “Por favor,” “Ay, ay, ay el dolor,” “¡Que estúpida!”

Cultural expressions and refrains are used in Spanish as they are culturally specific and often difficult to translate. Here are a few examples:

“Te dan un ala y te quitan el corazón”

“Dime con quien tu andas y te diré quien eres”

“En la lucha siempre, pa’lante”

There is a critical moment of tranlanguaging in the text which ties in closely to the plot. In this moment the author uses the play on words for literary effect. After the community of Los Llanos disappeared, many of its members left the Dominican Republic. However, Miraluz Altagracia, the women who worked alongside Don Chan to create this idyllic community, never left the island. She remains behind and works with many women in a factory for a multinational company sewing women’s undergarments. Her role in the factory line was to stitch the Victoria Secret labels into the seams. At one moment in the novel, she begins to reflect on the label:

“---Victoria, Miraluz said to herself, was like victory, --Victoria Secret. Must be like a secreto. Victoria Secreto.

It was a strange name for a bra. Who was Victoria? What secret did she have? El Secreto de Victoria sounded like the name of a soap opera. Or was it el Secreto de la Victoria?” (p. 223).

As Miraluz continues to reflect on this new discovery, the Secret of Victory (El secreto de la Victoria), she becomes excited as she thinks of a way to free herself and the women who work at the factory from the piece work they are engaged in, the low wages and oppressive working conditions. She organizes the women at the factory. They will begin their own lingerie label called El Secreto de la Victoria, where they will work together as a collective. Miraluz calls this work capitalism with a conscience. Once again, Miraluz is able to imagine a way to move beyond oppressive conditions that stifle her and her country.

Additional Resources

Academic article analyzing of the novel:

http://www.academia.edu/5402994/Dominican_Dreams_Diasporic_Identity_in_Angie_Cruz_Let_It_Rain_Coffee

Junot Díaz

(1968 -)

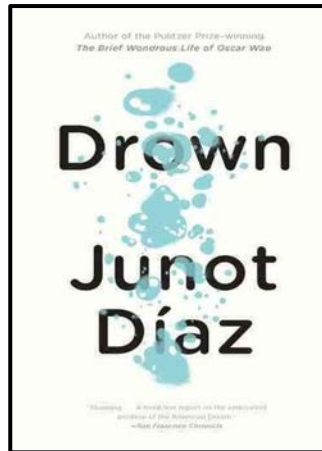


Junot Díaz was born in the Dominican Republic and raised in New Jersey. He is the author of the critically acclaimed *Drown* and *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, which won the 2008 Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Critics Circle Award. His newest collection of short stories *This Is How You Lose Her* (2012) is a New York Times bestseller and National Book Award finalist. He is the recipient of a MacArthur “Genius” Fellowship, PEN/Malamud Award, Dayton Literary Peace Prize, Guggenheim Fellowship, and PEN/O. Henry Award. A graduate of Rutgers College, Díaz is currently the fiction editor at *Boston Review* and the Rudge and Nancy Allen Professor of Writing at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. He is the cofounder of Voices of Our Nation Workshop.

Read more about the author by visiting his website:

<http://www.junotdiaz.com/about/>

Drown



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
830L	9-12	14-18	Short stories	1997

Themes

Coming of age, sexuality, masculinity, immigration, Dominican Republic

About the Book

Drown is a collection of short stories about the immigrant experience, specifically about being young, male, and Dominican. Several of the stories are loosely tied together by a narrator, Yunior, who spends the first half of his childhood in the Dominican Republic, impoverished and abandoned by a father who schemes to marry an American in order to bring his family to the United States. The family does eventually reunite in the United States, but there problems only escalate. They are destitute, Yunior's father is a liar and a philanderer, his mother is traumatized, and Yunior slips into a life of promiscuity, stealing, drugs, and other delinquencies.

Translanguaging in Literature

Junot Díaz uses Spanish in his collection of short stories *Drown* without offering the reader a glossary and he does not italicize or set the Spanish apart in quotation marks. Spanish is woven into the primarily English text seamlessly.

Spanish is often used to refer to different members of the family such as tío, tía, mami, papi, abuelo, abuela. The understanding of family and familial bonds is different in the Dominican Republic than it is in the United States. For this reason, Díaz often uses the word familia to refer to family. Díaz dedicates this book to his mother. It is significant that the dedication is in Spanish and reads: "Para mi madre." The use of Spanish to name family members is a reminder to the reader that Spanish in the United States is a home language and is often spoken between family members.

Slang and swear words are often included in Spanish, although at times Díaz uses similar words in English. Some of the swear words included in Spanish are chinga,

chocha, toto, pinga, coño, pato, pendejo, cabrón, zángano. The use of slang in Spanish suggests a familiarity with the language as these terms often do not appear in a dictionary and are usually known by those who are close to the culture.

Díaz also uses a word that Yuniór made up and likes to use that is a cross between Spanish and English, *stupidos*, demonstrating the way that bilinguals often play with language and highlighting Yuniór's hybrid identity as a U.S. Latino.

Dominican Spanish is inserted into the text in the form of common and popular expressions such as *vaina*. Other popular expressions are also included in the text such as *olvidate*, *tranquilo*, *cuídate*. The indigenous word for the Dominican Republic *Quisqueya* is also used at times.

Masculinity and more specifically Latino/a and Dominican masculinity are important themes for Junot Díaz. He uses a variety of terms to refer to manhood in Spanish, as concepts of gender are culturally specific and do not translate: *muchacho*, *tíguere*, *puto*, *desgraciado*

As a reminder of the transnational reality of U.S. Latino/as (and here specifically Dominicans), there are references to Spanish language newspapers such as *El Nacional* and *El Diario*. These newspapers are able to keep U.S. Latino/as informed of events in their home countries, events that do not often make mainstream U.S. media.

The names of foods are often included in Spanish, giving the stories a Dominican and U.S. Latino flavor. Some of these foods include *pastelito*, *tostones*, *chicharrones*, *sanchocho*, *yuca*, *pernil*, *guanabana*, *lechón*, *ropa vieja*, *pollo guisado*, *plátanos*.

Imitating the language of bilinguals and Latinos in the United States, Díaz uses Spanish for emphasis as he does here: "Many, many murderers. Muchos murderers." (p. 176) Díaz often weaves English and Spanish into his writing reflecting the spoken language of U.S. Latino/as. An example of this is listed below:

"There wasn't a tree in the barrio I couldn't climb and on some days I spent entire afternoons in our trees, watching the barrio in motion and when Abuelo was around (and awake) he talked to me about the good old days, when a man could still make a living from his finca, when the United States wasn't something folks planned on." (p. 72)

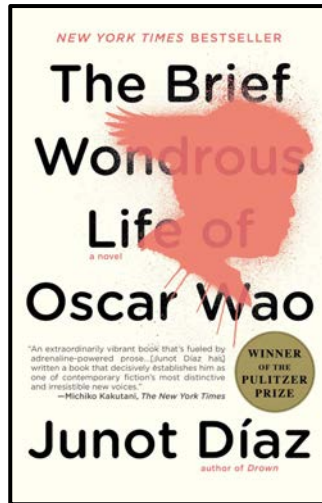
Additional Resources

Lesson Plans and Study Questions: <http://www.bookrags.com/lessonplan/drown/>

Interview with Junot Diaz discussing his central character, Yuniór:
<http://www.npr.org/2012/09/11/160252399/fidelity-in-fiction-junot-diaz-deconstructs-a-cheater>

Academic Article on *Drown* by Vassar College Professor Lizbeth Paravisini:
<http://faculty.vassar.edu/liparavi/article/RevisitingThoseMeanStreets.pdf>

The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
1010L	11-12	17+	Novel	2007

Themes

Dictatorship, Trujillo, Dominican history, Dominican/Latino identity, masculinity, machismo, love, colonialism, oppression

About the Book

The novel's main character, Oscar de Leon, is a nerdy son of Dominican immigrants. His obsession with science fiction, books and improving his vocabulary alienates him from other young men in his community, as he does not fit the mold of Dominican masculinity. The novel is narrated through the eyes of various characters all in search of redemption and leads the reader through the darkest corners of a country under dictatorial control that reverberates throughout the country and its diaspora. As a way to counter the *fukú* curse that has plagued the country and its people since the arrival of Columbus, Oscar sets out in search of a pure and unadulterated love, which comes at a high price.

Translanguaging in Literature

In Junot Díaz's novel *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*, Spanish is used in similar ways to his first book *Drown*. His use of Spanish is woven seamlessly into English. Díaz does not set Spanish apart in italics or quotation marks. His use of language is more developed and sophisticated in the novel than in the short stories, as he includes in the novel African American Vernacular English and more Spanish. Díaz uses a variety of Dominican Spanish, Standard American English, hip hop and African American vernacular linguistic registers, and in so doing redefines the scope and voice of the American novel. Translanguaging here is about interactions, and it is a language that exists between languages. The plurilinguistic of Oscar Wao highlights the languaging of diasporic communities in urban centers that come into contact with these different registers.

Some examples of how Díaz weaves Spanish and English can be found below, imitating the everyday language of U.S. Latinos:

“My paternal abuelo believes that diaspora was Trujillo’s payback to the pueblo that betrayed him.” (p. 5)

“And since her mother was una maldita borracha (to quote Oscar’s mom), Olga smelled on some days of ass, which is why the kids took to calling her Mrs. Peabody.” (p. 13)

“She was cabeza dura and I was . . . exigente. But it all turned out for the best, she sighed.” (p. 75)

The Spanish that appears throughout the text as noted above gives the novel a Dominican flavor.

Díaz uses terms that refer to race in Spanish since the understanding of race in the Dominican Republic is based on colorism and various terms are used to indicate a person’s race. Some of examples of these include jabao, trigueña, moreno, bamba, un blanquito, negra, prieta. The understanding of race is culturally specific and is not compatible with U.S. notions of race based on the one-drop-rule.

Dominican masculinity is one of the central themes of the novel. Terms that refer to masculinity and manhood appear in the novel in Spanish, since understanding of gender and gender roles are culturally specific. Some of these terms are: bachatero, Casanova, macho, que hombre, enamorado, buenmoso, caballero, cuero, maricón, pariguayo.

Just as the concept of masculinity is a central concept in the novel, understandings of womanhood play a significant role in the novel. Some terms used to refer to different types of women include: sucia, una muchacha respetable, señorita, puta, ciguapas, mujerón total, cuero.

Words that refer to family members such as abuelo, abuela, madre, hijo, hija, appear in Spanish reminding the reader that Spanish is a home language in the United States. Terms of endearment such as mi amor, querido, amor, also appear in Spanish, highlighting that Spanish is the language of intimacy, love and family for many U.S. Latino/as.

Foods often appear in Spanish to add a Dominican flavor in the novel, some foods are: achote, dulce de coco, plátanos, bacalao, caldo de pollo.

Swear words and slang appear throughout the novel in Spanish: pendeja, hija de la gran puta, no me jodas, jodido, coño, zángana, mamaguevo.

Additional Resources

The New York Times book review:

http://www.nytimes.com/2007/09/04/books/04diaz.html?_r=0

Book Guide prepared by librarian at Smith College:

http://www.massbook.org/reading_guides/OscarWao_guide.pdf

Martín Espada

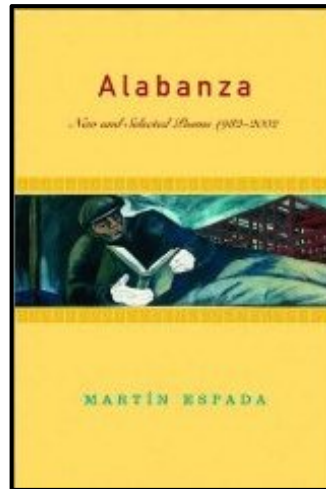
(1957 -)



Called “*the Latino poet of his generation,*” Martín Espada was born in Brooklyn, New York to Puerto Rican parents in 1957. He has published more than fifteen books as a poet, editor, essayist and translator. His latest collection of poems, *The Trouble Ball* (Norton, 2011), received the Milt Kessler Award, the Massachusetts Book Award and the International Latino Book Award. *The Republic of Poetry* (Norton, 2006) received the Paterson Award for Sustained Literary Achievement and was a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize. A previous book of poems, *Imagine the Angels of Bread* (Norton, 1996), won an American Book Award and was a finalist for the National Book Critics Circle Award. Other poetry collections include *A Mayan Astronomer in Hell’s Kitchen* (Norton, 2000), *City of Coughing and Dead Radiators* (Norton, 1993), and *Rebellion is the Circle of a Lover’s Hands* (Curbstone, 1990). His work has been widely translated; collections of poems have been published in Spain, Puerto Rico and Chile. His book of essays, *Zapata’s Disciple* (South End Press, 1998), has been banned in Tucson as part of the Mexican-American Studies Program outlawed by the state of Arizona. A graduate of Northeastern University Law School and a former tenant lawyer, Espada is currently a professor in the Department of English at the University of Massachusetts-Amherst.

This bio was taken from the author’s website. Please visit the website for interviews and essays by the author: <http://www.martinespada.net/>

Alabanza



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	7-12	12 and up	Poetry	2003

Themes

Puerto Rico, Puerto Rican history, religion, death, war, poverty, prejudice, racism, migrant farm workers, refugee, immigrants, tenement housing, injustice, hard work

About the Book

Alabanza is a collection that spans twenty years of poetry by Martín Espada, and includes a glossary of Spanish terms as well as an index of topics and titles. Prior to becoming a professor, Espada was a tenant lawyer. Much of his poetry reflects the stories of those he represented, stories of the poor and downtrodden – many of them immigrants -- whose rights were violated by unfair policies or corrupt landlords. Espada’s poetry covers broader topics as well, including the histories of political unrest in Puerto Rico and other Hispanic nations, and the mental, social, and financial burden of being an immigrant living in America. What unifies Espada’s poetry in this collection is his empathy for the victims of injustice and his admiration of their will to survive.

Translanguaging in Literature

Alabanza uses Spanish words and phrases sparingly. When they are used it is to provide a specific context, often to highlight a particular location or situation. Because the use of a word or phrase is also specific to the structure of each poem, there is usually minimal explanation of terminology within the poems. For this reason, there is a glossary included with the collection. A notable exception to this is the poem “El señor está muerto.” (p. 42) In this poem, a father has passed. When his son reports “El señor está muerto” to the funeral home, and when a priest eulogizes “Francisco Espada era un hombre contento, porque durante su vida tenía la oportunidad de dar,” (p. 43) the English translation follows both sentences. Spanish, in this case is not meant to engage with terminology, it is meant to show that

this experience was lived in Spanish.

In “Mariano Explains Yanqui Colloquialism to Judge Collings” (p. 45), a judge asks an interpreter if the prisoner understands his rights. After the question is translated, the prisoner yells “¡Pa’l carajo!” The prisoner’s response is a Spanish obscenity, which according to the glossary is virtually untranslatable.

The poem “My Native Costume” (p. 144) explores racism. The narrator, a lawyer, realizes he has been encouraged to don something like a guayabera, a type of embroidered shirt commonly worn in the Caribbean, at his speaking engagement. This regional clothing has no American equivalent.

Many of Espada’s poems are about Puerto Rico and its history. In “Colibrí” (p. 65), set in the mountains of Jayuya, Espada remembers the Indio Taíno, the indigenous people of Puerto Rico and compares them to hummingbirds – colibrí – frantically darting from Spanish conquerors. In “En la calle San Sebastián” (p. 203), which details a celebration to mark the end of a war, this sentence repeats itself in the poem as every other line. The refrain, which means “On Saint Sebastian Street,” stylistically resembles a chant or a march. That it is written in Spanish highlights the setting for the poem, Old San Juan. Both of these poems are examples of how Spanish is used to establish Puerto Rico as a setting.

Other Latin American countries are also mentioned. In “Searching for La Revolución in the Streets of Tijuana” (p. 214), the narrator and a friend cross the border into Mexico looking for burritos with *mole*. Mole is a type of Mexican sauce made with chocolate and has no American equivalent. The narrator notices how much the town caters to tourists and college kids from San Diego. When the narrator innocently asks a peddler “¿Dónde está La Revolución?” meaning “Where is Revolution Street?” the peddler replies, “Más allá” to imply “Far from here. Keep walking.” (p. 215) For Espada, the narrator’s question is a pun on a common Spanish saying, a call to fight: Where is the revolution? Spanish is used very specifically to deliver the pun, as well as to establish culture (cuisine), location (Mexico), and political/historical humor of Latino/as.

The collection’s namesake is a poem titled “Alabanza: In Praise of Local 100” (p. 231), dedicated to 43 restaurant workers who lost their lives during the 9/11 attacks on the World Trade Center. Alabanza which means praise, often in a religious sense, is repeated throughout the poem in the same way that Allahu Akbar might commonly be used by someone of Muslim faith. Spanish is cleverly purposed in this way to pay tribute to the immigrants (many of Hispanic heritage) who lack the same visibility as other 9/11 victims.

Additional Resources

Lesson Plans: <http://www.readwritethink.org/classroom-resources/lesson-plans/poetry-sound-sense-848.html?tab=4>

Interview with the author: <http://www.solidarity-us.org/site/node/3350>
http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/terrorism-july-dec02-espada_9-12/

Extended biography and analysis of Espada's work:
<http://www.poetryfoundation.org/bio/martin-espada>

Find additional essays, profiles and interviews:
http://www.martinespada.net/Home_Page.html

Cristina García

(1958 -)



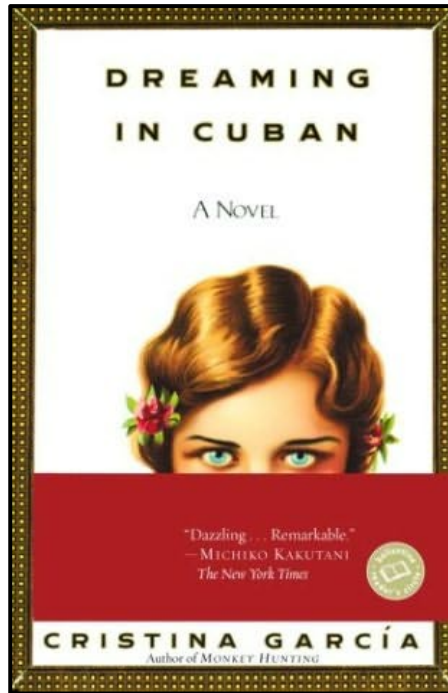
Cristina García, born in Cuba and raised in New York City, is a renowned journalist and fiction writer. She received her Bachelor's degree in Political Science at Barnard College, and continued her education at Johns Hopkins University, School of Advanced International Studies, receiving a Master's degree in International Relations in 1981. After working in Germany for a short period of time, García turned to journalism, writing for *The New York Times*, *The Boston Globe*, and *Time Magazine*.

In 1990, she left her job at *Time Magazine* to pursue her love of writing fiction. She has written six novels: *Dreaming in Cuban*, *The Agüero Sisters*, *Monkey Hunting*, *A Handbook to Luck*, and *The Lady Matador's Hotel*. She published a collection of poetry, *The Lesser Tragedy of Death* and started writing novels for young adults, her most recent titled *Dreams of Significant Girls*. She is currently a professor of creative writing at the Texas State University, San Marcos.

To learn more about the author, visit her webpage:

<http://www.cristinagarcianovelist.com>

Dreaming in Cuban



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
960L	10-12	15 and up	Novel	1993

Themes

Family, exile, immigration, first-generation, communism, Cuban revolution, mysticism, santería, American Dream, identity, physical abuse, sexual abuse, mental health

About the Book

Dreaming in Cuban tells the story of three generations of Cuban women. The novel is told from various perspectives highlighting the impact of the Revolution on the different generations of women in one family and the relationships between the women. The novel has four main characters, Celia, Lourdes, Felicia, and Pilar—women of the del Pino family, who each have a different reaction to the revolution. Celia, the matriarch of the family is a Castro supporter and remains on the island. Her daughter, Lourdes, leaves Cuba to escape the violence of the revolution with her husband and settles in New York City. Felicia, Lourdes’s sister remains on the island and turns to a santería for solace after several failed relationships. Pilar, Lourdes’s daughter, is a rebellious teen who serves as a bridge between her mother and her grandmother, and symbolically the United States and Cuba.

Translanguaging in Literature

In *Dreaming in Cuban*, Spanish words and phrases are italicized to set them apart from the primarily English text.

García uses Spanish to describe important elements of Cuban political culture post-1959 revolution, such as gusano, El Líder, yanquis, compañeros, compañera (s), Socialismo o muerte.

García makes rather extensive references to Afro-Cuban religious traditions and many of those terms appear in Spanish or in the African root words of Santería. Some examples of this are santera, santero, santería, La Madrina, oggun, orishas, oddu, melé, batá, babalwo, obi, ellife, elekes, yerba buena, panaldo, ikin, opelé, ouanga, casa de santo.

References to Catholicism appear in the novel in Spanish, such as La Virgen de la Caridad del Cobre, and La Inmaculada. The special oils purchased at the botánica (spiritual shop) are listed in Spanish: “amor, sígueme, yo puedo y tú no, ven conmigo, and dominante.”

Other religious and spiritual expressions also appear in Spanish in the novel such as por Dios, brujita, bruja, botánicas, gitanas. The importance of the religious practices of santería and Catholicism in Cuba highlight the syncretic nature of Cuban culture. It helps the reader understand that much of Cuban culture is African-based and that African traditions brought to the island by the transatlantic slave trade are still alive today and form an important part of the culture. The fact that these religious practices are then brought to Latino communities in New York where Cubans, Puerto Ricans and Dominicans live highlights the transnational identities in these communities. Lourdes is able to find many of the items she needs for these spiritual practices in Harlem.

In addition to religion, other elements of Cuban culture often appear in the novel in Spanish as a way to retain its Cuban flavor. Typical forms of Cuban music are named in the text in Spanish such as danzón, guaracha, mambo, cha-cha-chá because they have no direct translation into English. Foods that do not have an equivalent in American culture are included in the text in Spanish such as ropa vieja, arroz con pollo, natilla, carne asada, guarapo, yuca, palomilla.

Family names remain in Spanish such as abuela, hija, tía, abuelo, tío, papi, papá, mamá, highlighting that the language is a home language in the United States and used among family members. Similarly, terms of endearment and affection are included in Spanish such as mi querido, mi corazón, chiquitico, mi amor, mi cielo, mi hijo, mi hija, mi reina stressing again that this is the language of the home and the language of intimacy for U.S. Latino/as.

Additional Resources

Academic analysis of the novel: <http://home.fau.edu/emachado/web/garcia.pdf>

Summary and discussion questions: <http://www.enotes.com/topics/dreaming-cuban>
<http://latinoliterature.blogspot.com/2012/03/dreaming-in-cuban-questions-to-explore.html>

Guadalupe García McCall

(19?? -)

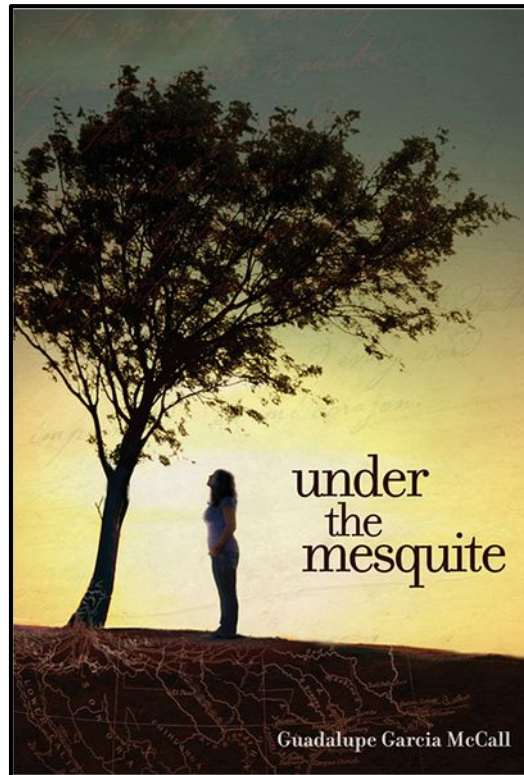


Guadalupe García McCall was born in Piedras Negras, Coahuila, Mexico. Her family immigrated to the United States when she was six years old. She grew up in Eagle Pass, a small, border town in South Texas. Eagle Pass is the setting of her debut narrative poem, *Under the Mesquite*, released in the fall of 2011 from Lee & Low Books. After high school, she went off to Alpine, in West Texas, to study to become a teacher. She has a BA in Theatre Arts and English from Sul Ross State University. There, she met her husband, Jim. They have three grown sons, James, Steven, and Jason. They've lived in Somerset for several years now. They love living the simple life in the country, where they get to be close to what McCall loves, nature.

For more information on the author, visit her webpage:

<http://guadalupegarciamccall.com/Biography/>

Under the Mesquite



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
990L	7 and up	12 and up	Narrative poem	2011

Themes

Family, cancer, grief, growing up, cultural identity, friendship, responsibility, being the oldest, living in a border town, acting, writing to heal

There is a glossary of “Names, Spanish Words, and Cultural References” in the back of the book.

About the Book

Written in verse, this is the story of Lupita, the eldest of eight siblings, whose life changes dramatically when her mother is diagnosed with cancer. The family lives in the small town of Eagle Pass, Texas, near the border of Mexico. Lupita’s father drains their life savings in order to pay for her mother’s medical care, which sometimes requires both parents to be far away from home. With both parents preoccupied with her mother’s health, Lupita is left to care for her brothers and sisters, a task that owes much to the kindness of family and neighbors. During this time, Lupita’s only emotional outlets are acting and a journal she maintains of thoughts and poetry. Under the guidance of a teacher named Mr. Cortes, Lupita develops her acting skills, which involves exercises to help shed her accent. This leads friends to accuse her of trying to sound white. Lupita’s friends steal her journal and learn just how much their cruelty has affected her; they decide to support her acting--and as it turns out she’s a natural.

After Lupita's mother passes away, Lupita goes to stay with her grandmother in Mexico where she reconnects with the land and thinks about her future. Against her father's wishes, Lupita applies to and is accepted by a college far from home.

Translanguaging in Literature

The book incorporates Spanish liberally. Usually the use of Spanish is followed by an English explanation to clarify the word or phrase's meaning, unless the English is a cognate.

Spanish is used for identifying family members *papi*, *mami*, *abuela*, *tía* as well as for affectionate nicknames "*m'ija*, *hermanita*, *abuelita*", which retains a sense of cultural identity.

Spanish is also used to identify typical Mexican dishes such as: *nopales en salsa*, *pinole*, *los elotes calientitos*, *testales*, and *agua de tamarindo*.

The United States is always referred to as *los Estados Unidos*, which maintains its signification as a place that is continually seen through the lens of the homeland, Mexico. Even though half of Lupita's siblings are born in Texas, the family is still connected to its Mexican family and roots. The chapter "En los Estados Unidos" (38) is about living in America but longing for aspects of Mexican culture. Lupita's mother points out, though, that there are unique benefits to living in a border town and getting to belong to two worlds.

The chapter "Señorita" (p. 73) is about everyone's expectations for Lupita now that she is 15 years old. Even though the family cannot afford to pay for a *quinceañera*, there are still cultural expectations for how a young Mexican woman should present herself. Lupita resists the pressures from her friends, sisters, *tías*, and *mami* to get dolled up, arguing that *en los Estados Unidos* teenagers don't dress up like *muñecas*. This instance of translanguaging is a cultural negotiation; Lupita's use of Spanish infers that she is owning her identity as a Mexican-American and will decide just how "Mexican" she wants to be. This voice of maturity, given to her by a Mexican rite of passage, is used to articulate her sense of Americaness.

In the chapter "To be or not to be Mexican" (p. 78), Lupita's friends Mireya and Sarita tease her for her pronunciation of certain Mexican foods, claiming, "You talk like you wanna be white" (p. 80). Lupita resents their hypocritical definition of Mexicaness: "Should I wear a *rebozo* too?" she asks, thinking of *abuela Inez's* white shawl (p. 82). Lupita's sister, Victoria, shares these words of wisdom: "Being Mexican...means being there for each other. It's togetherness, like a *familia*." (p. 83) While Lupita struggles with her identity coming from a bicultural and bilingual community, Victoria's words illuminate the fact that cultural identity is rooted in community. It is about the shared experience of cultural pride, which does not necessarily derive from any outward appearance or performance. This lesson is later exemplified during the family's spring break in Mexico, where Lupita points out that "*Papi* is *guero*, not dark like we are." (p. 85)

Additional Resources

Book trailer: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a4D70BoguoA>

Educator's Guide created by staff at the University of New Mexico:

http://laili.unm.edu/outreach/common/educators-guides/2013-05_Under-the-Mesquite.pdf

Publisher's website has additional information and podcasts by author:

https://www.leeandlow.com/books/391/hc/under_the_mesquite

Achy Obejas

(1956 -)

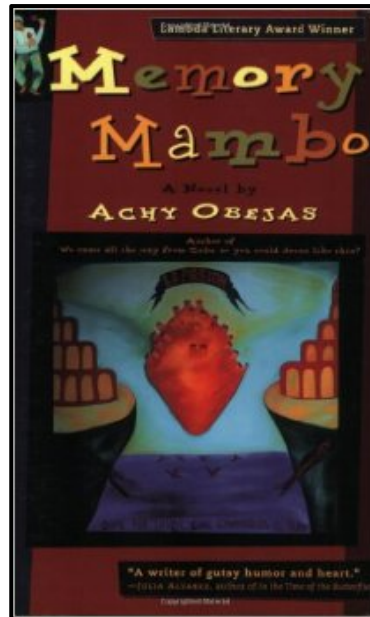


Achy Obejas is a Cuban American writer, journalist and translator. Her novels include, *Memory Mambo*, *Days of Awe*, and *Ruins*. She is also the author of *We Came All the Way from Cuba So You Could Dress Like This?*, a collection of stories and *This is What Happened in Our Other Life*, a collection of poems. She has translated many novels, including Junot Diaz's *A Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. She was one of the first faculty members in University of Chicago's Creative Writing Department. She is currently the Distinguished Visiting Writer at Mills College in Oakland, CA.

For more on the author visit her webpage:

<http://achyobejas.com>

Memory Mambo



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	11-12	17 and up	Novel	1996

Themes

Memory, exile, Cuban Revolution, sexuality, Lesbian, secrets, denial, family, sexual abuse, machismo

About the Book

In *Memory Mambo*, Achy Obejas explores the nature of memory and truth by following the Casas family into exile from Cuba to Chicago. The family settles in Chicago after the 1959 Revolution where they own and run a laundromat. The protagonist, Juani Casas, is a 24 year old lesbian who left Cuba at the age of six. Her memories of her home country are patchy and often made up of pictures, and family stories. As Juani continues to explore and uncover family secrets many of which were left behind in Cuba, she discovers deceit, adultery, abuse and violence that seem to only bring the family closer together, rather than tear them apart.

Translanguaging in Literature

Achy Obejas uses the Spanish language in *Memory Mambo* in ways that are similar to other Latina writers of her generation. The Spanish included in the text is listed in the glossary at the back of the novel. Obejas sets the Spanish apart throughout the text by italicizing it.

References to family are included in the novel in Spanish, such as tío, tía, papi, abuela, primo. This reminds the reader that Spanish in the United States is a home language and often spoken among family members.

Typical Cuban dishes are included in Spanish as they often do not have an equivalent in English. They would require a description in English. Keeping the names of foods and dishes in Spanish brings Cuban flavor to the novel. Some of the dishes referred to in the novel are boliche, moros y cristianos, malanga, arroz con leche, arroz con gandules, cabrito, cafesito, caldo gallego, flan, fufú, guarapo, maduro, mamey, materva, mojito, plátanos, picadillo, tres leches, yuca con mojo.

Slang and derogatory words such as tortilleras (lesbians), qué carajo, tremendos cojones, carajo, comemierda, coño are included in the novel in Spanish.

The novel contains several references to music, and these references appear in Spanish as the names of musical styles do not have a translation, such as cha-cha-chá, mambo, Nueva Canción/Nueva Trova, rumba, merengue.

Cinta magnética (duct tape) has special significance in the novel and appears in Spanish throughout. Juani's father claims throughout the novel to have invented a formula for duct tape while living in Havana that he called cinta magnética. He says that as he was preparing to escape from the island, the sample of the tape was left behind and the formula was stolen by the CIA. This cinta magnética was to be his claim to fame and bring him a fortune, but it was left behind in Cuba when he left the island. This story ties into the larger theme of elusiveness of memory and the past. It also ties into the themes of denial in the novel, explored by Obejas. She explores how enmeshed this Cuban family is and how they are unable to speak of the past and their lives openly.

Words that refer to Cuban politics appear in Spanish in the text, such as milicianos, yanquis, Marielito, compañero/compañera, gusano/a, Moncada, barbudos, chivato, marrano. Many of these words reference ideologies that mark important moments of Cuban history and ideology around the Cuban Revolution of 1959 and would lose their political significance if they are translated.

References to race are included in Spanish since there are multiple terms that reference color and phenotype in Cuba, such as café con leche, pasitas, mulata and are not equivalent to the one-drop-rule understanding of race in the United States. Another reference to race in the novel is the saying caminen siempre por la sombra. It is commonly spoken by parents to their children asking them to stay out of the sun so that they will not get too dark and the family secret of mixed racial ancestry will not be brought to light.

Additional Resources

Interview with Achy Obejas:

<http://smallaxe.net/wordpress3/interviews/2010/10/27/interview-with-achy-obejas/>

Summary and analysis of the text:

http://voices.cla.umn.edu/essays/fiction/memory_mambo.html

Discussion questions:

http://www.skokielibrary.info/s_read/rd_discussion/questions/Memory-Mambo.pdf

LGBT Lives in Cuba: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=v_ehlBEktPU

Tomás Rivera

(1935 - 1984)

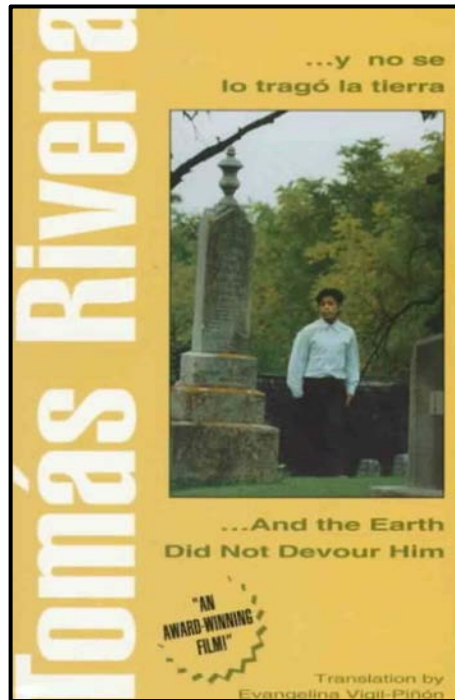


Tomás Rivera was a Chicano author and poet. He was born to migrant farm workers in Texas. He received his bachelor's at Southwest Texas State University and his Ph.D. at the University of Oklahoma. His most renowned novel, *y no se lo tragó la tierra*, written in a stream-of-consciousness style is a foundational Chicano literary text.

You will find more information on the author in:

http://college.cengage.com/english/lauter/heath/4e/students/author_pages/contemporary/rivera_to.html

. . . y no se lo tragó la tierra/. . . And the Earth did not Devour Him



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	9-12	14-18	Novel	1971

Themes

Migrant farm working, Chicano experience in the 1950s, family, discrimination, memory

About the Book

. . . y no se lo trago la tierra/ . . . And the Earth did not Devour Him (1971) is a milestone in Chicano literary history, set in the social and political context of migrant farmworkers in the Southwest during the 1950s. Literary critics often consider it the foundational Mexican American novel. Written in a unique style, Rivera uses South Texas Spanish with some dialogue exchanges in English to explore the world of the Chicano migrant farmworker. The novel does not use a narrator or an expository style, but rather a complex narrative created of subjective impressions that are intentionally disjointed, written in a stream of consciousness style. The story narrates the year in the life of an anonymous migrant farmworker male child. Through his experiences as a young boy, we see him mature and watch the development of his political and social consciousness.

Translanguaging in Literature

The novel is written primarily in Spanish, with some translanguaging in English. The English language is used mostly by figures of authority in U.S. society that exist outside of the Chicano community. For example, English is used by the janitor and the principal of the school when they are debating what to do with the Mexican child who fought back after being bullied and hit by another child at school. The anonymous child listens as the janitor and the principal speak in English about expelling him from school and sending him back to work in the fields. English is also spoken by Mall Security when the mother is accused of stealing Christmas gifts for her children.

English seeps into the Spanish spoken by the community when they speak about American cultural concepts and traditions that have become a part of their world and have no translation into Spanish. Examples of this include “report card,” “Santa Claus,” (spelled Santo Clos) and Christmas (Crismes). The tradition of receiving gifts from Santa Claus on Christmas morning does not exist in Latin America. Families celebrate on Christmas Eve or Noche Buena and children receive gifts from the three kings on Three Kings Day (January 6).

English also makes its way into the language of the community as it becomes Americanized and Anglicisms make their way into the Spanish of the Southwest. Examples of this include lonche, and “Me traian un presente.” (p. 25)

English is used by the young woman, Juanita, who seems to have adopted more liberal or what is perceived to be more “American” views on men and love. Although she has promised her love to Ramón, she continues to be courted by other men, using English as she whispers an easy “Love you, Ramiro” to a young man on the dance floor. (p. 50)

Throughout the novel the reader is witness to the damaging effects of migrant farming on the family. As the child’s aunt and uncle die from tuberculosis, the community cares for their children. As the young boy witnesses these events and others like these, we see the growth of his political and social consciousness. A very telling example of this is when one night he tests the religious beliefs that his mother has put faith in. He goes out into the night and challenges the devil to meet him. He calls out to the devil, but he doesn’t come. The boy comes to the conclusion that heaven and hell must not exist. All he hears is the sound of his own voice, suggesting that it is up to the community to act if they are to lift themselves out of the oppressive conditions that they are living in at that moment in history.

Additional Resources

Lesson Plans, worksheets and activities:

http://www.glencoe.com/sec/literature/litlibrary/pdf/earth_did_not_devour.pdf

Discussion questions, summaries and audio clips by scholars discussing the novel:

<http://www.learner.org/workshops/hslit/session4/aw/work1.html>

Background information on Cesar Chavez and the farmworker's movement to contextualize the novel: <http://www.pbs.org/itvs/fightfields/cesarchavez.html>

Esmeralda Santiago

(1948 -)

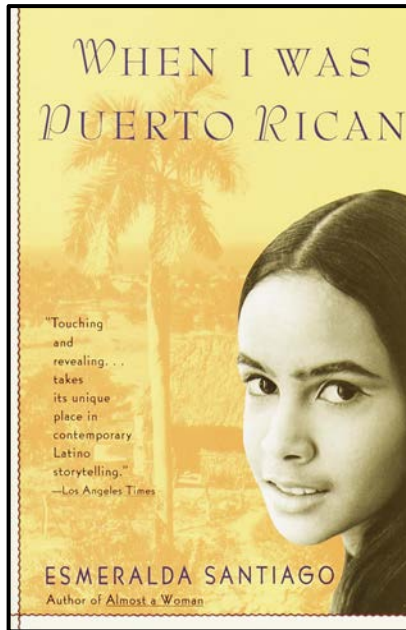


Esmeralda Santiago was born in San Juan, Puerto Rico and she came to the United States at the age of thirteen. She is the eldest of eleven children. Ms. Santiago attended New York City's Performing Arts High School, where she majored in drama and dance. After eight years of part-time study at community colleges, she transferred to Harvard University with a full scholarship. She graduated magna cum laude in 1976. In 1977, she and her husband, Frank Cantor, founded CANTOMEDIA, a film and media production company, which has won numerous awards for excellence in documentary filmmaking. Her first book, *When I Was Puerto Rican*, is a memoir of her journey from Puerto Rico to Brooklyn. Her first novel, *América's Dream*, was published in six languages, and was an Alternate Selection of the Literary Guild. Her second memoir, *Almost a Woman*, received numerous "Best of Year" mentions, in addition to an Alex Award from the American Library Association. Her third memoir, *The Turkish Lover*, has received enthusiastic reviews as "an earthy, heartfelt tale of liberation, desperation, and the crippling grip of love." (Booklist) Santiago is co-editor of the anthologies, *Las Christmas: Favorite Latino Authors Share Their Holiday Memories* and *Las Mamis: Favorite Latino Authors Remember their Mothers* both published by Knopf. She is also the author of the illustrated children's book, *A Doll for Navidades*.

For more information on the author, go to her webpage:

<http://www.esmeraldasantiago.com/biography>

When I was Puerto Rican



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
1020L	11-12	17 and up	Memoir	1971

Themes

Immigration, family, coming of age, learning English, determination, perseverance

About the Book

When I Was Puerto Rican, published in 1993, is Esmeralda Santiago's first book. The memoir is a coming-of-age story that begins in rural Puerto Rico in the 1950s, where the author lived with her parents and seven siblings. Her parents had a tumultuous relationship. They fought frequently about other women and her father came and went as he pleased. Following the migration patterns of many Puerto Ricans in the middle of the century who were in search of work, Esmeralda's mother moved the children from rural Puerto Rico to Santurce in search of work. When they hit upon hard times in Santurce, they migrated to Brooklyn, New York where some of Esmeralda's family members lived.

In Brooklyn, Esmeralda tells of the challenges she faced when her teachers wanted her to repeat a grade because she did not know English. She was placed in a special education classroom because of her low English language skills. Fortunately, her teacher, Ms. Brown, recognized her talent and helped to move her along. Much of the memoir tells of the challenges she faced in the New York City public school system, and how she overcame these challenges with hard work, determination and the support of her teachers. Esmeralda's perseverance paid off as when against the odds she is first accepted into the performing arts high school in Manhattan and later accepted to Harvard University.

Translanguaging in Literature

Santiago first wrote the book in English, including some Spanish words and phrases. She later wrote the book in Spanish. It is the only book that she wrote in both languages. She wrote her subsequent books in English and had them translated into Spanish. This section on translanguaging in literature focuses on her English version of the book.

While the book is written primarily in English, Esmeralda Santiago opens every chapter with a Puerto Rican saying in Spanish. She does offer an English language translation of the saying. Translations of such cultural expressions always seem to lose some of their weight and significance. Opening the chapters with these cultural expressions helps to keep Puerto Rican culture and wisdom alive in the book.

As with many other Latina/o writers, Santiago uses Spanish to name foods such as pasteles, ron cañita, piragua, morcellas, sancochos, ñames, yautías, alcapurrias, pan de agua, mavi, tembleque, asopao, arroz con dulce, achiote. Many of these foods and dishes are particular to Puerto Rico and do not have direct English translations. To add the terms in English would require a description, which is available for readers in the glossary at the back of the book. It's interesting to note that after the U.S. occupation of the island and as the U.S. presence grew during the first half of the twentieth century, U.S. foods were more prevalent on the island and Santiago then makes the distinction for certain foods referring to them as huevos Americanos and salchichas Americanos noting that they are different than Puerto Rican foods. However, they have become part of the cultural fabric of the island and are still referred to in Spanish.

Because ideas around race are different in the Caribbean than in the United States, racial terms appear in the book in Spanish such as negrita, pasitas, café con leche, moreno, negro highlighting the ideas of colorism present on the island that differ from the one-drop-rule in the United States.

Puerto Rico also has various home remedies for illnesses that are made of plants and teas, and the names of these remedies are included in the book in Spanish, as they do not have a direct translation in English. Some of these home remedies are alcoholado, purgante, curandera.

There are other aspects of Puerto Rican culture that defy translation. This includes musical instruments that are typical to Puerto Rico such as the cuatro and the guiro. The maracas are not only found in Puerto Rico, but are typical of Latin America and are not translated. There are musical forms that are typical to Puerto Rico which also do not have translations such as the aguinaldo. The bolero is a particular form of Latin American music that is similar to a ballad in English, but would lose its regional specificity if translated.

There are other Puerto Rican traditions that also appear in Spanish such as velorio, artesanías, parrandas, públicos. These aspects of Puerto Rican culture have no correlation in U.S. culture making them difficult to translate.

Additional Resources

Discussion questions: <https://www15.uta.fi/FAST/US1/SPAN/when-ipr.html>

Summary, lesson ideas, and audio clip of the author:

<http://www.learner.org/workshops/hslit/session4/aw/work2.html>

Watch Santiago discuss the title of her book:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZiQLSRTyUIY>

The first two memoirs were combined into one film, titled *Almost a Woman*. You can purchase the DVD on Amazon or another similar site or find it at a library. This PBS website offers background information for teaching the film and book such as history of Puerto Rico and interviews with the author:

http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/masterpiece/americancollection/woman/ei_santiago.html

Sonia Sotomayor

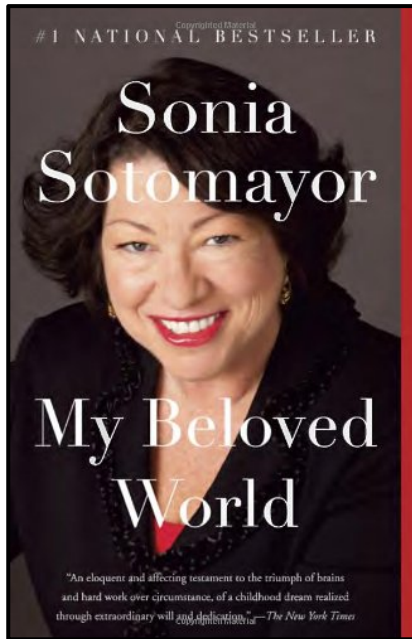
(1954 -)



Sonia Sotomayor was born and raised in the Bronx. She attended Princeton University, earning a B.A. and graduating summa cum laude. She received her J.D. from Yale Law School. She has served as a judge in the U.S. District Court, Southern District of New York; the United States Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit; and, most recently, she was appointed as Associate Justice of the Supreme Court in 2009.

For more information on the author, please go this webpage:
<http://www.supremecourt.gov/about/biographies.aspx>

My Beloved World



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
NA	9-12	14 and up	Memoir	2013

Themes

Family, perseverance, justice, coming of age, importance of having a history to ground yourself in, be true to who you are, importance of education, determination

About the Book

My Beloved World is the memoir of Supreme Court Justice, Sonia Sotomayor. This is an inspiring story, as Justice Sotomayor is the first Latina and only the third woman appointed to the highest court in the United States. In this memoir, she recounts her journey from a Bronx housing project to the federal bench. She shares in this intimate portrait the many challenges and obstacles she faced as a child. Her parents migrated to New York City from Puerto Rico. Her father was an alcoholic who died when she was nine years old. She was diagnosed with insulin dependent diabetes when she was a child. Her mother worked hard to provide a stable home for her and her brother, while also going to school at night to become a nurse. Sonia remembers being inspired by her mother's work ethic. It was because of this example that she worked hard to get good grades in school.

In the memoir, she goes into great detail about her application to Ivy League universities even though she really did not know what they were. She writes of how lonely and isolating that environment was for her when the majority of the students there were not like her, but rather came from privileged backgrounds. Ultimately, she prevailed and graduated top of her class from both Princeton University and Yale Law School.

Sotomayor goes into quite a bit of detail about the justice system in the United States and into her love of justice. She writes about particular cases and experiences that helped to shape her as a judge. This is a truly inspiring book for any young man or woman who is trying to find their place in the world.

Translanguaging in Literature

My Beloved World was written primarily in English; the author also published a Spanish version of the book titled *Mi Mundo Adorado* (Vintage Español). Here we provide analysis of the English version. While the memoir is written in English many Spanish words make their way into the text. Spanish appears more frequently early in the memoir when Sotomayor is still living at home with her family in the Bronx. She makes it clear that Spanish is a home language for the young Puerto Ricans who were raised in the Bronx, a language that they never studied formally in school.

Spanish is used to refer to family members such as, titi, abuelita, tío, papi, mami.

Spanish is also used to talk about many foods that are particular to Puerto Rican culture. Examples of this are, sofrito, recaó, china, rabo de conejo, tembleque, quenepas, grosellas, tamarindos, lechón asado, chile gas, pasteles, arroz con gandules.

Spanish is also used for sayings that are particular to Puerto Rican culture, such as el jurutungo Viejo, guague, quinqué, guagua, vámonos de parranda. Spanish is used to express cultural concepts and traditions such as public mourning and wearing black for an extended period of time as a way to honor the deceased, el luto.

Spanish is used to express religious and spiritual traditions and rituals that do not translate into the English language or American culture, such as santos, brujería, espiritistas, velada. It is also used for the family religious ritual of children asking their elders for blessings, “la bendición, abuelita.” To which the grandmother responds, "Que Dios the bendiga, te favorezca y te libre de todo mal y peligro." (p. 26) When praying to the rosary, Spanish is also used.

It is notable that as Sonia grows older, leaves for college and then recounts her professional life she uses less and less Spanish. The world that she moves into in college, as a lawyer and later as a judge, has less space for the Spanish language. Spanish remains a home language and a language of the family. Puerto Rican culture does not easily find its way into the new world she inhabits, although it continues to live in her heart.

Additional Resources

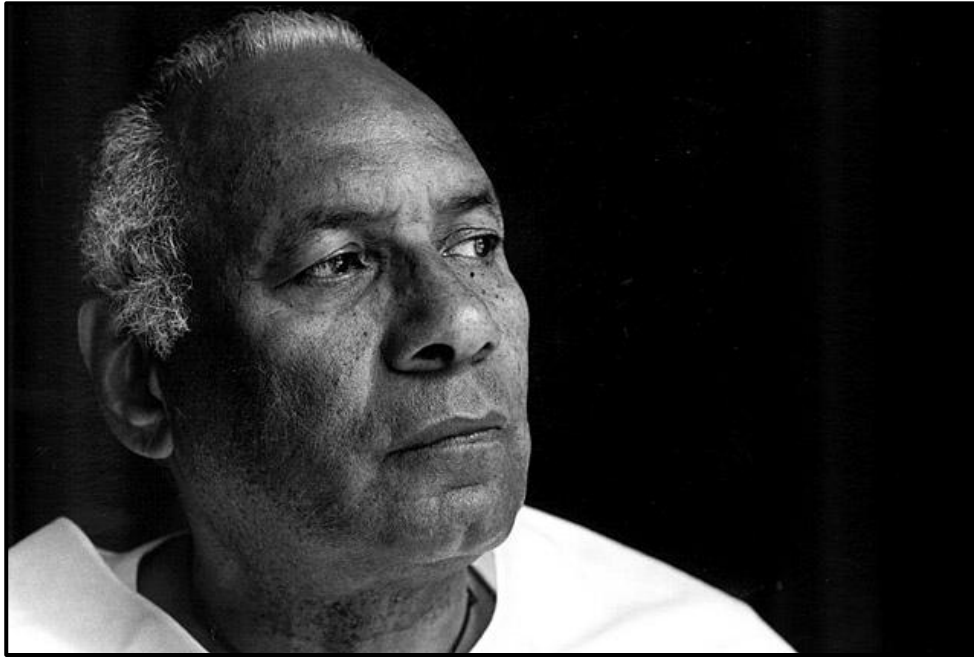
Random House for High School Teachers:

<http://www.randomhouse.com/highschool/catalog/display.pperl?isbn=9780307594884>

The New York Times book review: <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/01/22/books/my-beloved-world-a-memoir-by-sonia-sotomayor.html?pagewanted=all>

Piri Thomas

(1928 - 2011)

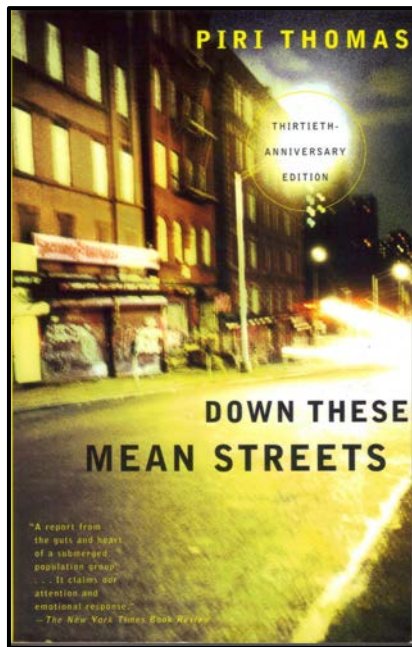


Born Juan Pedro Thomas, of Puerto Rican and Cuban parents in New York City's Spanish Harlem in 1928, Piri Thomas began his struggle for survival, identity, and recognition at an early age. The vicious street environment of poverty, racism, and street crime took its toll and he served seven years of incarceration. But, with the knowledge that he had not been born a criminal, he rose above his violent background of drugs and gang warfare, and he vowed to use his street and prison know-how to reach hard core youth and turn them away from a life of crime. In 1967, with a grant from the Rabinowitz Foundation, both his career and fame as an author were launched with his autobiographical novel, *Down These Mean Streets*. After more than 25 years of being constantly in print, it is now considered a classic and the first Nuyorican novel. He is also the author of *Savior, Savior, Hold My Hand*, *Seven Long Times*, and *Stories from El Barrio*.

To read more about the author visit his website:

<http://cheverote.com/texts/theworldofpt.html>

Down These Mean Streets



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
820L	9-12	14-18	Memoir	1967

Themes

Race, Afro-Latino identity, blackness, discrimination, drugs, gang activity, family dynamics, Puerto Ricans in New York in the 1930s, sexuality, masculinity, machismo, turning your life around, making good choices

About the Book

Down These Mean Streets first published in 1967 is considered the first Nuyorican novel and a foundational literary text. Although the book is labeled a memoir, it has many of the narrative elements of a novel. The book explores life in East Harlem's El Barrio in the 1930s. The Great Depression was a challenging period for many Americans, and Thomas narrates its impact on Puerto Ricans living in New York at that time. Many lived a life that was surrounded by violence and racism. While the term Afro-Latino was not in circulation in the 1960s when this book was written, we might also read this text as an example of the first Afro-Latino novel. As the protagonist, Piri sets out to understand his place in the world, and is confronted with the racism in the world around him as well as the anti-black racism that exists within the Puerto Rican community. Piri struggles with the question about whether he is black or Puerto Rican. Although his family members repeatedly tell him that he is not black, he experiences the world as a black man. One of Piri's best friends is a young African-American man named Brew. He helps Piri understand that people look at the color of his skin and see him as a black man. Throughout the journey of the novel, Piri comes to understand his identity as an Afro-Puerto Rican, helping the reader understand that blackness and *Latinidad* are not mutually exclusive.

Over time, Piri continues to make bad choices that lead him down a path of crime that land him in jail. In jail he has time to reflect on his poor choices and decides to turn his life around. He is determined that he will not make choices that will lead him to jail a second time. Piri Thomas became an award winning writer and a contributing member of society. He devoted his life to helping urban youth find meaning and purpose in life, through his writing and by speaking to youth across the country. The themes and content of the book are relatable to high school aged students and older readers, yet the lexile level is lower, making this a good choice for older readers who are reading below grade level.

Translanguaging in Literature

Down These Mean Streets is written primarily in an urban street English of New York City, with some Puerto Rican Spanish terms and expressions. The book includes a glossary at the back with a translation of all terms in Spanish.

When dialogue in the home takes place among family, friends who visit, and between the parents, Spanish is often used. This emphasizes the idea that Spanish is the language of the older generation as well as a home language. We can see an example of this on page six when Piri's father has friends over to play dominoes.

Other examples that show the language shift from the first to the second generation can be noted when Piri's mother takes him along to the Home Relief Office after his father loses his job. Piri serves as a language broker and translates between his mother and the investigator at social services. In Puerto Rican culture there is a tradition where the children ask their parents and grandparents for a blessing by asking for la bendición and the parent will reply, as Piri's mother does, "Que Dios te bendiga y te guarde." (p. 91) However, Piri asks his mother for blessings in English and his mother replies in Spanish.

On the streets, Piri tends to speak in a street English with lots of slang in both English and Puerto Rican New York Spanish. While speaking mostly in English, he will include Puerto Rican expressions, such as caramba, chévere, mira, gracias and suerte. As Piri begins to understand his place in the world, his friends become increasingly important to him. He spends more time with them than he does with his family. He uses a variety of words in Spanish to refer to his friends, including amigo/os, panín, panita/as. Panita or pana are Puerto Rican words used to refer to someone who is close friend. It is a term of endearment, used to indicate a tight bond.

Along these same lines, Spanish is used to refer to the close bonds of family members, for example hijo, padre, madre, tía, tío, and familia.

Spanish is often used throughout the book to refer to racial terms which are culturally specific. Puerto Rican understanding of race differs from U.S. racial ideologies and this can be noted in the variety of terms that Piri uses to talk about race, such as moreno/a, negrito, Latinos, blanco/a, trigueño(a), puertorriqueño, moyetos.

Additional Resources

Lesson Plans: http://www.ourprisonneighbors.org/Down_These_Mean_Streets.pdf

Helena Viramontes

(1954 -)



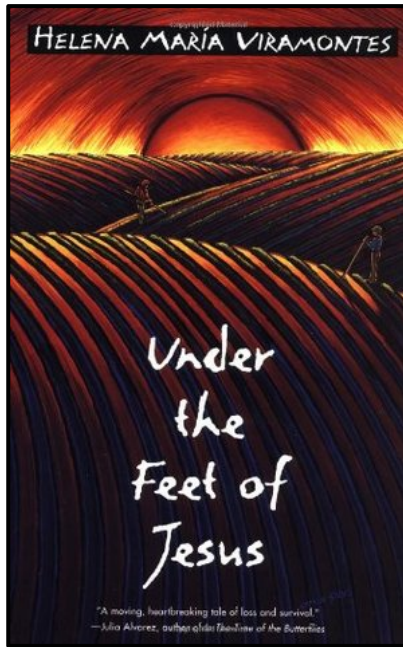
Helena Maria Viramontes was born in East Los Angeles, the daughter of a construction worker and a Chicana housewife who raised six daughters and three sons in a community that offered refuge for relatives and friends crossing the border from Mexico into California. Viramontes worked twenty hours a week while earning her B.A. from Immaculate Heart College, one of five Chicanas in her class. She then entered the graduate program at the University of California at Irvine as a creative writing student, but she left in 1981 and completed the requirements for the M.F.A. degree after the publication of her stories.

Viramontes began to place her stories in small magazines such as *Maize* and *XhismArte Magazine* as well as the anthology *Cuentos: Stories by Latinas* (1983). Her first book, *The Moths and Other Stories*, was published in 1985 by Arte Publico Press in Houston, Texas. In 1989 Viramontes received a National Endowment for the Arts Fellowship grant. In 1993 she published her second book of short stories, *Paris Rats in E.L.A.* Her first novel, *Under the Feet of Jesus*, followed in 1995.

Helena Maria Viramontes has received critical acclaim for her short stories for their masterful depictions of Chicano culture. She mainly writes about people she has known since childhood, especially family and friends. With regard to her parents' influence on her writing, the author states: "If my mother showed all that is good in being female, my father showed all that is bad in being male." Viramontes focuses on the struggles and sufferings of Chicana women with their households, their culture, and their society.

For more detailed author information, go to:
<http://www.stuartbernstein.com/viramontes.html>

Under the Feet of Jesus



Lexile Level	Grades	Ages	Genre	Date Published
1000L	9-12	14 and up	Novel	1966

Themes

Migrant farm work, undocumented migration

About the Book

Under the Feet of Jesus is a powerful novel about a young California migrant worker's dream of becoming a geologist. Estrella is thirteen when she arrives in her new temporary home with her younger siblings, her mother Petra, and her mother's new partner, Perfecto. Estrella's ebullient spirit is contrasted with Petra's coping, mid-thirties fatigue. *Under the Feet of Jesus* narrated by Estrella in a stream-of-consciousness style, highlights the challenges of migrant families from a woman's perspective. The book is often seen as the feminist counterpart to Tomás Rivera's novel . . . *y no se lo tragó la tierra*.

Translanguaging in Literature

Viramontes's use of translanguaging in the novel is sophisticated and nuanced. While the older generation, specifically Petra and Perfecto, use Spanish more regularly throughout the novel, the younger generation, Estrella, her siblings and cousins, use English primarily when speaking to each other, but Spanish when speaking to their mother and Perfecto.

Throughout several of the scenes, the mother is often singing songs in Spanish under her breath. Her singing in Spanish signals to the reader her Mexican identity.

Viramontes weaves Petra's Spanish, with Estrella's stream-of-consciousness in English:

--Ya no hay ajo. And this was all she needed to say. The mother ate five cloves of garlic pickled in vinegar every day to loosen her blood and ease her varicose veins; without garlic, her veins throbbed." (pp. 61-22)

This strategy allows Petra to speak mostly in Spanish without losing the reader. The mother, however, does speak English as noted in one of the key exchanges between Estrella and Petra in the novel. Estrella returns to the home on the farm where they are working. She has been running and is out of breath:

--Something's out there, Estrella said.

--Ya cállate before you spook the kids." (p. 62)

The mother here switches languages mid-sentence using a colloquialism in English "spook" suggesting that she is quite familiar with English.

She tells Estrella:

--Don't run scared. You stay there and look them in the eye. Don't let them make you feel you did a crime for picking the vegetables they'll be eating for dinner. If they stop you, if they try to pull you in the green vans, you tell them the birth certificates are under the feet of Jesus, just tell them. The mother paused, still not turning around, and Estrella could see the track of bra etched across her T-shirt back." (p. 63)

This is one of the few instances where we hear the mother speak English. It is significant that at this moment she chooses to speak in English, precisely when she is letting Estrella know that they belong in this country. They play an important role in society although it is not often acknowledged. At this moment Petra speaks in English as she speaks of the family's incorporation into this country.

Additional Resources

Academic article on themes of violence in the novel:

http://www.genders.org/g47/g47_burford.html

More on the author: <http://voices.cla.umn.edu/artistpages/viramontesHelena.php>

More on the book and links to background information to contextualize the novel:

<http://performance.millikin.edu/literaturecasebooks/viramontes/biography.htm>



Appendices

Additional List of Latino/a Books

Grades K-6

1. *Me llamo María Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada
2. *My Name is María Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada
3. *The Circuit: Stories from the Life of a Migrant Child* by Francisco Jimenez
4. *My Name Is Gabito: The Life of Gabriel García Márquez/ Me llamo Gabito: La vida de Gabriel García Márquez* by Monica Brown
5. *Waiting for the Biblioburro* by Monica Brown
6. *El Bronx Remembered* by Nicholasa Mohr
7. *Nilda* by Nicholasa Mohr
8. *Mexican Whiteboy* by Matt de la Peña

Grades 7-12

1. *Efrain's Secret* by Sofia Quintero 780L Ages 14-18
2. *Bless Me, Ultima* by Rudolfo Anaya 840L
3. *House on Mango Street* by Sandra Cisneros 870L
4. *Riding Low on the Streets of Gold: Latino Literature for Young Adults* edited by Judith Ortiz Cofer
5. *How the García Girls Lost Their Accent* by Julia Alvarez 960L
6. *Song of the Water Saints* by Nelly Rosario
7. *Dancing Home* by Alma Flor Ada and Gabriel Zubizarreta
8. *The Other Side / El Otro Lado* by Julia Alvarez

Additional Collections of Poetry by Latino/a Authors for Grades 7-12

1. *Song of the Simple Truth: Obra poética complete/the complete poems of Julia de Burgos*, edited by Jack Agueros
2. *Letters to my Daughter: A Collection of Short Stories and Poems about Love, Pride, and Identity*, by Nancy Arroyo Ruffin
3. *One-Bedroom Solo*, by Sheila Maldonado
4. *AmeRícan*, by Tato Laviera
5. *La Carreta Made a U-Turn*, by Tato Laviera
6. *Aloud: Voices from the Nuyorican Poets Café*, edited by Miguel Algarin and Bob Holman
7. *Red Hot Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Being Young and Latino in the United States*, edited by Lori Marie Carlson and Oscar Hijuelos
8. *Cool Salsa: Bilingual Poems on Growing Up Latino in the United States*, edited by Lori Marie Carlson and Oscar Hijuelos
9. *Killer Cronicas: Bilingual Memories* by Susana Chavez-Silverman
10. *My Father Was a Toltec: And Selected Poems 1973-1988*, by Ana Castillo
11. *The Republic of Poetry*, by Martín Espada
12. *Imagine the Angels of Bread*, by Martín Espada
13. *Touching the Fire: Fifteen Poets of Today's Latino Renaissance*, edited by Ray Gonzalez
14. *A Rush of Hands*, by Juan Delgado
15. *From the Other Side of Night/Del otro lado de la noche: New and Selected Poems*, by Francisco Alarcón

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