



Marjorie Agosín received the 2015 (Pura) Belpré Author Award for *I Lived on Butterfly Hill*, illustrated by Lee White (Atheneum/Simon & Schuster). Her acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 28, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Belpré Award, visit <http://bit.ly/belpre-award>.

ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children

REFORMA

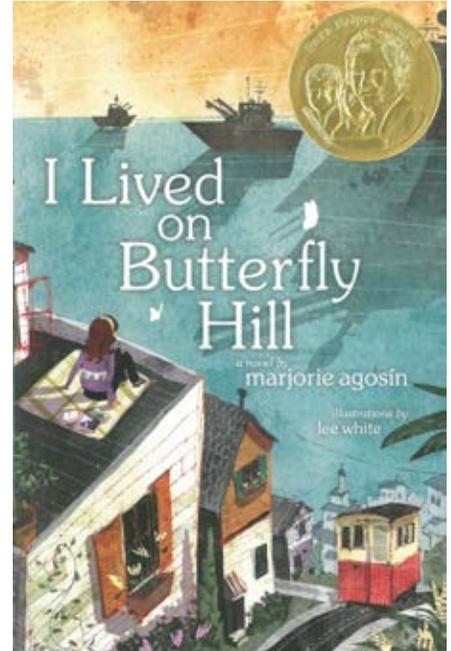
Belpré

AUTHOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Abuela Frida used to say that there are no coincidences and that the universe weaves its luminous magic. I am honored to be here and to receive the Pura Belpré award in Valparaíso sister city, San Francisco—where the hills are as whimsical as the ones of Valparaíso and where elegant cable cars run up and down this welcoming and beautiful metropolis. I am sure Celeste Marconi would have found joy wandering the many hills of San Francisco and getting lost in its mist and fog.

Celeste Marconi was raised in the same coastal geography. She would have recognized the names of the same flowers and trees, and her beloved bougainvilleas would have been a source of her joy. But Celeste grew up in the south of our hemisphere; she understood at an early age the economic injustices that surrounded her city and also understood that empathy and solidarity are the golden threads that can change our world.

The funiculars she rode were not as elegant as the ones in San Francisco, but she learned that abundance cannot be measured by material wealth. Instead, it must be measured by the love of strangers, the smell of cilantro and empanadas, and a table filled with family and laughter.



The bay of San Francisco was never surrounded by military ships and never had ships where torture was a regular practice. *I Lived on Butterfly Hill* speaks about a traumatic event in Chile, a deeply democratic country and my own country.

The young Celeste gazes at the world with a poetic and lucid imagination and understands the somber times ahead. She has learned to look beyond the visible and to allow herself to believe in intuition and the interpretation of signs. The world

Marjorie Agosín, poet, educator, and literary critic, was raised in Chile, the daughter of Jewish parents. Her family moved to the United States to escape Augusto Pinochet's regime. She received a BA from the University of Georgia and an MA and PhD from Indiana University. Among many honors, she received the Letras de Oro Prize for her poetry, presented by Spain's Ministry of Culture to writers of Hispanic heritage living in the U.S. She is a professor of Spanish and Latin American Studies at Wellesley College.

FUN FACT: In addition to many literary awards, Marjorie also has received honors for her work as a human rights activist, including the United Nations Leadership Award for Human Rights.



Belpré

AUTHOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

of magical thinking is as real as the dark world of the military—one that turns hers and her family's upside down. And yet, in spite of this world upside down—where the idealistic and the innocent are persecuted—this young girl learns the courage to find ways to believe in hope and to understand that underneath the gray sky of Maine where she becomes an exile, there is always light.

I have always wanted to write this novel for young adults and especially for the Latino community in the United States to show that we cannot look at our Americas as divided into the North and the South but as a fluid tapestry of possibilities. Perhaps Celeste understands that we are like the sea—like the rivers that flow from one continent to another and that by nature we are a free people.

Celeste—due to an eminent military dictatorship that changed the life of Chile for almost two decades—leaves her home, her friends, the downpours, and the earthquakes to another America: to the North where the days are frigid, where no one eats empanadas on Sunday, and where kitchens have no smell. She is like so many unaccompanied children all over the world who travel alone. Her parents are in hiding—her beloved world shattered.

I believe that we must not keep the truth from children. I believe they have an extraordinary political sensibility and a great sense of human solidarity. Thus, when I wrote this book, I wanted others to understand what it is like for a young adult to be an exile: to live in a landscape totally different from one's homeland, to lose a sense of self and a sense of belonging.

I am a bit like Celeste Marconi. I came to the USA without knowing any English—with my history teacher calling the Latin

American emigration despicable. At school no one really played or spoke to me except a Puerto Rican teacher named Ms. Rose. And I, unlike Celeste—who has two dear friends Kim and Tom, had none.

Perhaps this book had already begun to grow deep inside me from these first years of being in the US. I wanted to show that the Latino world is vibrantly rich in its literature, architecture, visual arts, and culinary traditions but, more so, that it is a continent of courageous and extraordinary people. I wanted to show that it is a continent where ordinary citizens act with extraordinary courage—to show that women like Pura Belpré, with their commitment to Latino literature and to the beautiful island of Puerto Rico, can mend our world and change it through the power of storytelling and resilience.

Celeste is a wiser and kinder person than I am, and I only wish to be like her. She understands that there is plenitude in both the skies of the North and the South and that macaroni and cheese does not taste too bad.

She makes friends. She gets to love the landscape of solitude, and she also gets to return victoriously back home to a democratic regime. Celeste understands that beauty—like rivers, like the sea—has no borders and that there are no frontiers, that we can be free with our will and with our power to imagine.

Abuela Frida tells her “you are what you imagine,” and Celeste imagines a new Chile. She creates literacy campaigns and believes that Democracy is solidarity and also the opportunity to hope. Abuela Frida, a Viennese refugee, forced to escape her own cherished city as a result of Nazism, teaches Celeste the importance of solidarity and human dignity, the incredible power of people to

make changes, and the power that lies in refusing to conspire with fascism. These early instructions in civic education become the life lessons Celeste takes with her from her first moments as a young exile in Juliette Cove, Maine, to her momentous return to Chile.

I began writing this acceptance speech in the city of Vienna where I came to look for traces, shadows, and threads of hope from the previous life of Abuela Frida, and I found her in the kindness of those who also wanted to know what happens to a country torn by the evil of fascism. I walked the same beautiful stairway that Abuela Frida walked the night of the broken crystals. I imagined her determined steps like all the steps of refugees who embark for freedom to new lands, and I understood the courage it takes to believe in the extraordinary power of freedom—a power that comes from always being responsible for one's actions and the lives of others. This is the lesson Celeste Marconi learned in the streets of Valparaíso. In the silence of Juliette Cove, she learned to participate in a republic of solidarity where the dreams of those most vulnerable remain always alive.

In spite of the political upheavals in her country and in spite of her status as a displaced child, Celeste turns adversity into possibility. She grows to understand that she also has a voice that will allow her to believe in the power of hope and transformation.

Celeste Marconi, from Chile—the land of Gabriela Mistral and Pablo Neruda—is resilient and courageous. Her educated background allows her to take this privilege with seriousness and to exercise the gift of empathy. As she writes, her beloved friends disappear in Maine due to the anonymity of poverty.



Belpré

AUTHOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Celeste says she belongs to all we love; we belong to sorrow and possibilities, to somber times and to lighter times, and, more so, to the restorative power of love.

May I add that we must also belong to Spanish and English, to Portuguese, to the north and the south, and to the sister cities of Valparaíso and San Francisco, so that our children will not live in fear of adversity or of differences. We must belong to all the languages

we love and to a world where the north and south intertwine into a beautiful tapestry of possibilities—a world where we can all live on butterfly hill.

I want to thank my editor, Caitlyn Dlouhy; my translator, E.M. O'Connor; my agent, Jennifer Lyons; and my friend, Lori M. Carlson. It is with their efforts, care, and close attention that this book was made possible. I am endlessly thankful.

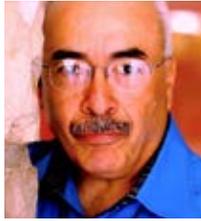
And finally, thank you to all of you. Thank you for believing in this story and in this very long and thin, beautiful country—like thin spaghetti, a country where people never forgot to laugh and where people never forgot to dream.

I invite you to come to Valparaíso and live on butterfly hill—to unfold your dream like copper wings.



Belpré

AUTHOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH



Juan Felipe Herrera received the 2015 (Pura) Belpré Author Honor for *Portraits of Hispanic American Heroes* illustrated by Raúl Colón (Dial / Penguin). His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 28, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

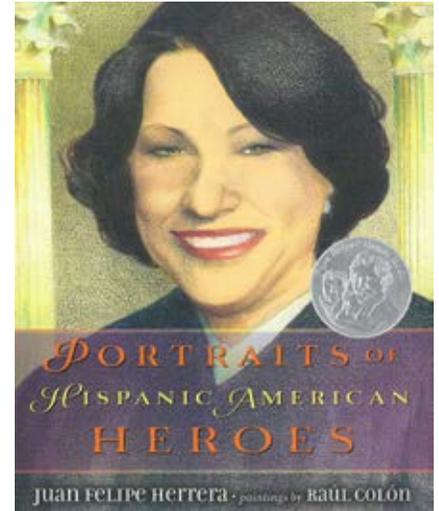
For more information about the Belpré Award, visit <http://bit.ly/belpre-award>.



Let me thank the heroes who are in-between the colors and lines of *Portraits of Hispanic American Heroes*. First of all, the Pura Belpré Award Committee, Lucia Monfried, tireless and generous editor of Dial books for young audiences, also REFORMA who co-sponsored the award with ALSC, Kendra Marcus, my patient agent, Raúl Colón, a genius artist, who with his multiple layers of hues called on the unique spirit of every countenance, and, without doubt, Margarita Robles, my partner, for her guidance and boundless support, my son, Joshua, who examined every line. I am honored to receive the 2015 Author Honor Book Award.

Heroes? It was not the first word I learned. It was not a word I entertained until 1973 when swashbuckling Chicano and Chicana muralists hammered their scaffolds and set them up in Chicano Park, San Diego. They put up their murals on the Coronado Bay Bridge extending over Logan Heights Barrio where my father parked his WWII avocado green Army truck in 1956 and found a tiny apartment for my mother and me.

Los muralistas painted portraits of heroes — Emiliano Zapata, Pancho Villa, and Las Adelitas of the Mexican Revolution of 1910. What about heroes before and after La Revolución? I asked myself. The word that I did recognize was “Voice.” My third grade teacher Mrs. Sampson had used it; she said, “You have



a beautiful voice, Juanito.” What could that mean? I asked myself.

Year after year, poem after poem and performance after performance, I worked hard at discovering that “voice,” the “voice of the community,” the “voice of my people,” the “voice of the oppressed,” the “voice” that everyone had — all of us. My “voice” was in there somewhere. But I did not know where — where was it?

When I wrote *Portraits of Hispanic American Heroes*, I continued my search, except this time it was a double-search: heroes and voices. Why? Because heroes have voices. Voices for the people, like Helen Rodríguez-Trías who stood up and demanded that the reproductive rights for Puerto Rican women be recognized

Juan Felipe Herrera, the son of migrant farm workers, grew up in California. He writes for adults and children; his publications include poetry, prose, short stories, young adult novels, and picture books for children. Herrera is a professor in the Department of Creative Writing at University of California, Riverside.

FUN FACT: Juan is also a community leader for youth-at-risk and migrant communities, and an actor with appearances on film and stage.



Belpré

AUTHOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

and their suffering be ended. Voices against all odds, like Dolores Huerta who faced the agri-business giants and with words made them sign just union labor contracts for farm workers, and voices that magnetized teenagers, like Jaime Escalante who put calculus at the reach of East L.A. high school students who were seen as math failures much less launching their school to the advanced calculus top five in the nation. Heroes have voices. But what will you do if the voices are buried?

You run to the bookcases, you run to the Special Collections section in the

library, you slide into every nook and cranny looking for information. Why? Because you are voice-hungry, you are hero-thirsty, because you are dying for heroes with voices. Real stories - why? Why? Because life needs hope, light, new horizons, because it needs true love. You are voice-feverish until the last story is complete. Is it? What about my voice?

My voice? My voice was possible if only I had hero-voices in my midst.

With this book I realized that Mrs. Sampson was my hero. My mother, Lucha, was my hero; my father, Felipe, was my hero.

Los Muralistas were my heroes. These twenty heroes – their portraits, their impossible and incredible lives showed me the way. Abandonment, loss, ridicule, even revolution could not stop them. Some were unknown, like my parents; some were noticed only in fragments, like stars half-lit. I bring them to you today under the full sun of the Pura Belpré Author Award. And, I thank you, you are the heroes. Muchas gracias.

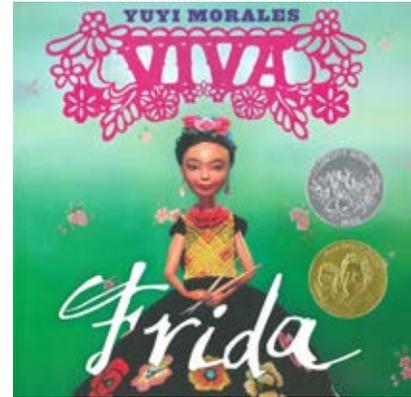


Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

I want to congratulate you. I don't know if you have heard, but you won the 2015 Pura Belpré Award. You did! And we are here to celebrate it.

Certainly my fellow authors and illustrators and I are the ones who get to climb the podium and get our pictures taken, and we even give the speeches, but we are just a little part of what you all have created. You are the ones who have been suggesting, insisting, demanding a more diverse body of children's literature. You are the Oralias and Sandras of this world, who could take it no more when the only multicultural books you found on shelves were riddled with inaccuracies and stereotypes, and who worked hard to establish awards like this with the mission to see cultural truths flourish. It has been you who asked that in books we find the voices that are seldom heard. It has been you who shared books such as the ones we are recognizing today, not only with passion but also with orgullo, with pride. All this time you have been writing and illustrating new chapters in the story of children's books, you know that, don't you? I am certain that many of you stay up late trying to figure out how to end this tale with hope and with the justice that happens when children get to see themselves as the protagonists



of their own lives. I am sure you have many more plot twists and cliffhangers to solve, but in the meantime let us celebrate what you have accomplished. You are creating a diverse legacy of quality children's books. As for me, it is an honor to receive this award on your behalf, as I am merely a little part of what has resulted after all the work you have done. And for that I thank you with all my heart.

Nancy, my Western Addition Branch children's librarian, Ana, my Richmond Branch children's librarian, where are you? The last time I saw the two most important librarians of my life, they didn't know they had changed my life forever—and neither did I. The last time I saw Ana was some time before my family and I left the city to go and live in the suburbs,



Yuyi Morales received the 2015 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Award for *Viva Frida* (Neal Porter/Roaring Brook). Her acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 28, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Belpré Award, visit <http://bit.ly/belpre-award>.

ALSC
Association for Library Service to Children

REFORMA

Yuyi Morales was born in Xalapa, Mexico, and currently divides time between California and Veracruz, Mexico. The artist, author, and puppet maker has won many awards for her work, including the Jane Addams Award, honoring books that promote peace, and the Golden Kite Award from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators. Morales has won five Belpré Medals and three Honors. Her book, *Just a Minute: A Trickster Tale and Counting Book*, appears on New York Public Library's "100 Top Children's Books of the Last 100 Years."

FUN FACT: Yuyi has hosted her own Spanish-language radio program for children.



Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

and she told me the story of how she had added some ten pounds to that little body of hers as she went on a week-long trip to another country—my brain associates Mexico with food, so I like to remember that she went to Mexico. When I met Ana, she was recuperating after suffering a stroke that made her have to look for books by walking slowly with a cane. But, like Frida Kahlo, Ana had wings for feet. My son, Kelly, adored Ana's hobble as she made her way to the place where all the mysteries were solved, where all the heroes dwelled, where all the incredible stories were waiting: the shelves of every section of the Richmond Branch library. As for Nancy, well, she practically lived right there in the children's section of the Western Addition Branch library, about four blocks from my house. Except for one or two days of the week, she was always there, and I needed her! Or else who would have walked me to the counter trying to explain to me, who understood so little English, that my son, who was barely two years old, could get a library card right that instant, and that so could I? And who else could have let me borrow all those special books that were supposed to stay in the library? Nancy knew she didn't need to worry about me disappearing with the goods; I was always there with my son the next day. And if she hadn't been there, who would have given me my first chapter book, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham*, that made me laugh so hard and then made me sob so painfully? My son was just a little kid when he read the book, and on the night he reached the chapter of the violence in Birmingham, he came to my bed crying, telling me that something terrible, terrible had happened, how could it be possible? "Mom, was it real?" We hugged. My son has since been shaken by the power of stories. Today he is in Beirut and Palestine trying to learn more, willing to understand better, hoping that he can answer for himself his own question.

I know it is a fact that books are the seeds that made him go. He is still being shaken by stories. Nancy, Ana, and the people of the Western Addition public library, many of your names I don't remember, but I could never forget you, wherever you are. Today you are receiving the Pura Belpré Medal.

Now, about that woman with the mustache, I can't tell the exact time when I first learned about Frida Kahlo, but my oldest memories of her come from when I was about eleven years old. When I was a child I loved drawing, and so I practiced by copying everything I saw. I copied from my family's portraits, and I copied from coloring books, and Disney characters, and even from romantic comic magazines that supplied my aunts and my parents with sultry stories every week. One was called *El Libro Semanal*—not at all for children—but I copied and copied hoping that one day I could draw things as magnificent as the torrid images I saw. The human face was my obsession. The almond shape of the eyes and the way the pupils fit inside, not too big and not too small, fascinated me; the contours of the lips and the shadows of the nose challenged me. And so, often times, I would go inside my room, I would close the door, and I would begin trying to recreate in my school notebook the shapes of my own face. To me this was an act that I kept hidden; I could not share it with anybody. What would my family or my friends think if they knew I was there looking at myself in the mirror and trying to draw myself?

It is said that during her life Frida created 143 paintings, 55 of which are self-portraits. And guess what?

Frida painted many of those works by looking in the mirror. She looked in the mirror and painted herself wearing jewelry, such as the hand-shaped earrings

Picasso gave her, or accompanied by her pet monkey, Fulang-Chang, her hairless dog, Xolot, her parrots, other creatures such as insects, and many plants. In her paintings, as well as in life, Frida crowned herself with her enormous braids, ribbons, and flowers, and wore long traditional Mexican dresses that covered the steel corset that supported her broken spinal column and concealed her leg that withered when she contracted polio at the age of six. In her self-portraits sometimes she is a little woman next to her enormous husband, the famous Mexican muralist, Diego Rivera; other times she is a little deer pierced by arrows; and sometimes she even is two Fridas.

So, eleven-year-old Yuyi, perhaps studying your own face in the mirror didn't have to be so shameful, after all.

A few years later a Mexican movie about Frida came out and it became a classic (*Frida, Naturaleza Viva*). I saw parts of it as my father watched it at home, but the story scared me. There seemed to have been so much pain in Frida's life, a suffering that she reflected in her paintings. I certainly didn't understand Frida's delirious taste for Mexican iconography, neither did I understand why a woman would dress with peasant dresses and rebozos, or shawls, a clear sign of lower class in Mexico, or why she wouldn't get rid of her fussy mustache or her unibrow. I felt just like the kids who one day yelled at Frida while she strolled the street of the USA, "Where is the circus?"

In 1994, when I immigrated to the USA, I was surprised to see the admiration people had for Frida Kahlo. People here called her a feminist, a visionary, and a woman ahead of her time. I saw her colorful image on buttons, posters, t-shirts—you name it. Some men and women even tried to look like her! I



Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

was confused. Frida seemed forced into representing a world beyond the one she had been a part of. I saw that she had been taken to be a symbol for feminism, for gay pride, for the rights of women, for Chicanos, for goddesses. Did Frida imagine she would provoke all of that? You know what I thought? I was sure Frida would throw una carcajada, a big bursting laugh about it. She was, after all, a traditional Mexican woman living a full life just like many Mexican women, wasn't she? But the truth was that I didn't know Frida. Until those years, I had connected her work to tradition (so much of her paintings resemble testimonial religious ex-votos) and I had also found her paintings tortuous and difficult to understand. I also perceived her role as an artist as overshadowed by her role as the suffering wife of one of Mexico's greatest painters.

I needed to make my own discovery of Frida. Just as I had learned with my son and those librarians, what better way to start to learn more, to understand more, and to answer for myself my questions than with a book?

Vivo la historia mas magnifica que jamaze ha dicho. And so do you. We live our stories and there is nothing more amazing that we could ever live. In my story there is drama, there is mystery, there is suspense, and there are books that keep me awake at night trying to figure out how chirriones I am going to make them. *Viva Frida* is a book made from imperfection and fragility and from holding to my mother's favorite saying from when I was a child: Yo todo lo sé, y lo que no sé lo invento: I know everything, and what I don't know, I make it up.

So, how does one tell the story of Frida Kahlo? Let me try to explain it to you. First you go to your writer's group and have a meeting, where you pick a ran-

dom piece of folded paper from a hat, and the words read "Baby Book." You then go home and write a story based in those words. As you can see, the connection between Frida Kahlo and "Baby Book" is not challenging enough so, next, you decide the craziest way to illustrate the story you just wrote. Like, for example, with stop-motion puppets like the ones you saw in a Tim Burton movie years ago. And with paintings too. And with photography and digital work as well. Do not hesitate because you have no idea how to do any of those things. In case of panic, remember what your mother said: I know everything, and what I don't know, I make it up. You can also make use of many other of your mother's teachings, like, for example, the embroidery she made you practice when you were a child, or how she taught you to use the sewing machine without breaking the needle when you were young. Remembering how your mother taught you to make a model of your elementary school building from cardboard boxes and plasticine will come in handy too. Remember, anything, even boring school assignments, when turning them into a creative project, can be like playing instead of like work.

Frida the puppet was made from fabric, stuffing, self-hardening clay, painted with acrylics, and I gave her hair by making her a wig from goat's fur. Her fingers were so tiny that the clay kept crumbling as I manipulated the steel and wire armature. I had early on decided I would not use latex to sculpt Frida, but instead I would make her as handmade as possible; I would deal with the imperfections. Many other elements had to be created: a silver key I learned to make from melting silver coins; a blue house made from insulating material; a dress embroidered in the style of Oaxacan regalia; shoes; animals; courtyards; papel picado . . . However,

the heart of illustrating *Viva Frida*, or any other story, is not in the technique that has been chosen, but instead in how we work within that technique to make the reader search, see, discover surprises, play, know, dream. I hope that when you and the children in your life put on winged boots made from clouds, you can enter a world where you realize that we all feel. It might be that compassion for the less fortunate and justice for all brings us to a place where we love and are loved.

These are our lives, and we are all part of the most magnificent story that has ever been told. We are creating it together. I offer you my back, my hands, my heart, to create a story worthy of all the work you have done—a story in which I give you all of what you have given me back, because I already have received so much from you. You are my friends, my teachers, my fellow creative souls—many of you are here, aren't you? You know who you are and I love you. You are my librarians, many of you saw me grow and change, as Nancy told me the last time I saw her years ago, "when you first came to the library you had sadness in your eyes, but now you don't have it anymore." You are my Diego Porter, the editor with whom I walked the streets of Coyoacán in Mexico City, where you ate grasshoppers with guacamole, and I took a picture to prove that you trust me and risk all insanity when I proposed something to explore together, just like we did when we made this book. You are my dancing troupe who welcomed me and helped me learn how to dance with a toddler holding my hand. You are my son's babysitter. You are my neighbors. You are my friend who took me to get my first tattoo while we talked and talked about life. You are my family who waits for me in Mexico. You are San Francisco and its streets where I walked, pushing a stroller, to discover every one of the



Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

branch libraries in the city. You are my writer's group of sixteen years, The Revisionaries, with whom I have worked, and risked, and revised, and learned not only how to be a productive author and illustrator, but also how to be a stronger human being. You are my father-in-law who made drawings on paper napkins to help me understand what words in English meant. You are my mother-in-law who put my son, the stroller, and me in your car one day and brought us for the first time to the place that would change

my life forever, the public library. You are my Clarke Street family with whom I have made life brothers and sisters and canciones, songs, too. You are the loving father of our son who walked next to me as I carried our baby in my arms while we crossed the border from Ciudad Juarez into El Paso, Texas, twenty-one years ago, and who spent days and days making sure that the photographs of this art were exactly what I needed to create this book. You are my radiant, gentle, justice-seeking, bookworm son. You have taught

me what passion for books is like since those first days when Nancy and Ana put books in your hands. You are the maker of stories that continues giving breadth to this narrative in which children from diverse cultures have an opportunity to see their reflection shine in the mirror of literature. And you, niño, niña, human being who is still little and young, you are the future author or illustrator who will come to accept the Pura Belpré Award one day. We all here can't wait to see you do it.



Susan Guevara received a 2015 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for *Little Roja Riding Hood*, written by Susan Middleton Elya (GP Putnam's Sons/Penguin). Her acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 28, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Belpré Award, visit <http://bit.ly/belpre-award>.



Belpré

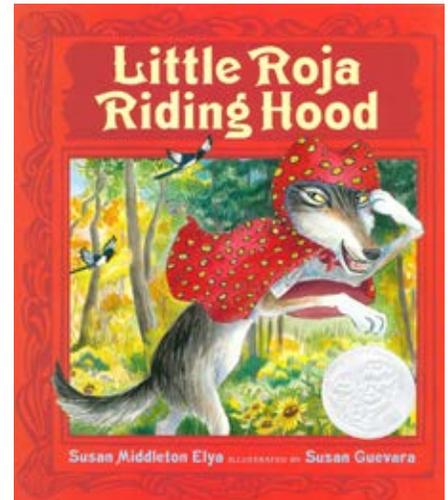
ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Thank you to the Pura Belpré Committee for this important recognition for illustrating *Little Roja Riding Hood*. It reminds me of what you taught me many years ago; you showed me the responsibility I have as a bookmaker to be completely honest and unflinching in drawing what I know to be true.

Thank you too, to my agent, Kendra Marcus, for suggesting to Putnam that I be the illustrator for Susan Elya's *Little Roja Riding Hood*. Thank you, Susan Elya, for your fine sensibilities with rhyme and Spanglish. The wacky unpredictable word, "Telenovelas" gave Little Roja's Abuela her romance-writing career.

I especially thank Susan Kochan and Cecilia Yung for working carefully and persistently with all the ideas I kept bringing to Ro's world. I feel fortunate to have another book under their care. Their commitment to making fine picture books, beginning to published-end, is unwavering and true.

All involved were patient with my exploration of what was most essential to the visual world of Little Roja. Art making—in this case, book making—is an exploration. There is a question to ask. I don't always know what it is beforehand. It is usually pulled from me by the work. Little Roja Riding Hood asked me this question, "How was I a brave and smart little girl?" I seemed so fearful back then. So afraid of the dark, afraid of the world



I didn't know, afraid of the Communists, the need to "duck and cover," the BOMB! Where was I safe?

I found I was safe with the ladybugs and dragonflies in my mother's garden. And safe when looking into the faces of the bearded iris and daffodils she had planted. I found safety in rocks I collected in the field at the end of my street. I found safety in the way the wind took my kite high over that field, as far over as the adjacent hi-way. It could have been my soaring confidence on the end of that string; I was so inspired. I found safety in my mother's lap and in my father's open arms when he waited for me to run into them upon his return from work at the steel mill. I found safety in the essence of life, that thing I can now call love.

Susan Guevara is a two-time Belpré medalist for her illustrations in *Chato's Kitchen* (1995) and *Chato and the Party Animals* (2000). She earned a BFA from the Academy of Art University in San Francisco and received honors at the Royal Academy of Fine Art in Belgium. She lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

FUN FACT: Susan studied independently with Flemish impressionist painter Remy Van Sluys.



Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

When I moved to New Mexico from California, I felt raw beneath the vastness of the high desert sky. The land is harsh and beautiful there. In the windy afternoons, I walked my dog and towed a kite behind us. The sunset skies are so unspeakably beautiful in New Mexico; they changed my life. The sky helped me recognize the miraculous wonder of my own existence. I marvel at how my body fills my lungs with oxygen and pumps blood into my veins. I wonder at how my mind can ponder the imponderable.

The world I illustrated for *Little Roja Riding Hood* is both that beautiful world of northern New Mexico and my world as a child. Little Roja reminded me that I spoke to flowers, and rocks and trees, and poufy clouds. And they spoke back. Small birds made small talk with me. A huge bumblebee appeared whenever I was really blue or when I was treated unfairly. Nature welcomed me and spoke to me and I knew I belonged on this earth. This is Little Roja's world, too.

There is a lot of fuss about identity and diversity in children's literature. We need to see ourselves mirrored back. We want our face and history to mean something. It is that longing to know, truly know, who we are.

"We are all made out of the same star dust," I said once on a panel discussing multicultural authenticity. What an unfortunate set of words to use at that particular moment. That statement pretty much "ixnayed" my chance to say more. What if we found our individuality, our uniqueness by recognizing we are all part of each other and the natural world. Isn't it marvelous to see you are as beautiful as the heaps of glowing clouds at sunset? You are that. You are beautiful! There is freedom and courage in knowing that. There are no stereotypes to worry about, no wrong expressions, no perfect way to say what you wish to say about your life. When you recognize that you are Beauty itself you won't be afraid to say, to write, to paint, to teach distinctly and uniquely. There is something deep within each one of us that wants a voice. Understanding we are part of the whole is the starting point for that voice. I don't know why it works like this, but it does. This is how we belong to our lives, each other, and the world around us. This is how we take responsibility for our entire world.

There is a Nahua concept that we are born with a physical heart and face but that as artists, poets, musicians, educators, and priests, we must create a deified heart and a true face. There are many ideas about how to deify one's heart.

To be truly honest in your work seems a good route to me. When your heart is deified, it shines a true reflection of who you are through your face. *Heart-making* and *face-making* give us strength. No more masking ourselves with the expectations of others.

Picture-book making is my process of combining heart and face. I search for the pacing, the metaphorical elements, the technique. I search for the world of each story. It frightens me to not know where I'm going or how I'll get there, but I still love this process. I love the characters and their worlds. I love the questions they ask of me. It is by this deep and great affection for my books that I have gifted myself to my readers. And it is this process that makes me grateful for all that makes me, me. I am grateful for my past, for my family, for all I learn while book making, for every single person I have worked and shared with on this path. This process shows me my life makes sense and allows me to share my True Face with you.

Thank you to all those who conceived, instituted, and participate in the Pura Belpré Award. Your service to literacy and the Spanish-speaking has enabled the courageous and beautiful voices of so many to finally be heard.



Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH



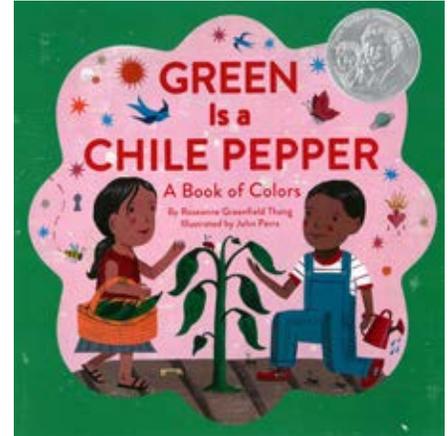
John Parra received a 2015 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for *Green Is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors*, written by Roseanne Greenfield Thong (Chronicle). His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 28, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

For more information about the Belpré Award, visit <http://bit.ly/belpre-award>.



Colors are everywhere! They are image. They are emotion. They are energy. Color is diversity. Color is life. Color is sacred. I see colors celebrated in countless stories and poems about glorious sunsets and striking far off landscapes. They are the kaleidoscope of vegetables, fruits, and spices, as bountiful flavors are prepared and cooked in Abuela's kitchen. They are seen splashed about in an infinite array of painted murals as directed from an artist's creative eye. They are the vibrancy of piñatas, ribbons, and banners at children's birthday parties. They are the details in the costumes worn by performers at Folklorico dances. They are the whispered, tender words of love used to describe a companion's eyes, skin, and hair. They are felt, through music, ideas, and memories. They are for all peoples and backgrounds. Color is everywhere...and I love color!

It was a pleasure to work on this picture book, *Green Is a Chile Pepper: A Book of Colors*. The narration revolves around two young Latino siblings who learn and discover a world of colors around them. Through their culture they contribute in making food, having fun with music, participating in costume and dance recitals, listening to great stories read aloud, experiencing Dia de los Muertos festivities, and just enjoying family gatherings and events. It is in these moments that I connected to the words



and story. They are a memento of me growing up with my family and all our similar experiences and adventures.

One of my favorite page spreads from the book is about a birthday piñata celebration. As I was coming up with concepts to create this sketch, my imagination easily created an abundance of ideas and images. When I was young we always had piñatas for family parties. Often our piñatas were in the shape of a large star or burro with bright colors and ribbons. I remember once asking my mom if I could have a brightly colored red Santa Claus shaped piñata for my birthday...in April!

Another favorite page of mine has to be the final spread, where all the characters in the book—adults and children—

John Parra is an illustrator, fine artist, designer, and educator. He has received many awards and honors for his books, including the Golden Kite Award from the Society of Children's Book Writers and Illustrators and the International Latino Book Award. He lives in Queens, N.Y., with his wife Maria.

FUN FACT: John's illustration clients have included: United Airlines, Boston Children's Hospital, Jeep/DaimlerChrysler, El Museo del Barrio, *Santa Clara Magazine*, Virgin Records, and many more.



Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

come together to cheer, “The world is a rainbow of wonder and fun: ribbons of colors rolled into one. In ponchos, serapes, and xylophones, too, these beautiful colors are waiting for you!” This page has many meanings, once again emphasizing that color and diversity are beautiful things we are all invited to celebrate, and that although each of us is different we are equally united as part of a large connected family.

It is an honor to be here today and receive this recognition for the art in my book. I would like to thank the American Library Association, ALSC, REFORMA, and this year’s Pura Belpré award committee for selecting my work. Thank you to author Roseanne Greenfield Thong for writing both *Green Is a Chile Pepper* and *Round Is a Tortilla*, which I had the privilege to paint. To my publisher, Chronicle Books, especially Melissa Manlove, Amelia Mack, Eloise Leigh, and the entire staff. I am supremely grateful for your wonderful support on all our picture book journeys.

I am thankful and thrilled to be included on a list with Yuyi Morales, Marjorie Agosín, Juan Felipe Herrera, Susan Guevara, and Duncan Tonatuih. They are all bright stars of immense creative talent whose work has given us many sublime inspirations.

Thank you to my parents, Del and Cecilia, for instilling in me a special love for reading and drawing among many other wonderful life lessons, for my older brother, Joe, the first artist I looked up to for inspiration, and my younger brother, Matt, for keeping my creative energies current and diverse, and finally a big heartfelt thank you to my wife, Maria, for all her guidance and love.

When I attend ALA it is with great pleasure that I look forward to this Pura Belpré event. Not only for the awards but for the community and family togetherness we all feel here, for it is a colorful and diverse celebration that brings me great joy and reminds me of a few lines from an old, well loved folk song, often sung at this gathering.

From: OF COLORS
*And that is why the great
loves
of many colors
are enjoyable to me.*

From: DE COLORES
*Y por eso los grandes
amores
De muchos
colores
me gustan a mí.*

Gracias! Thank you!



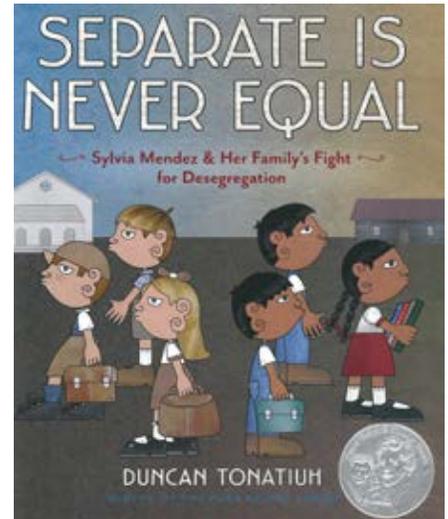
Belpré

ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

This speech was unavailable at the time of publication.



Duncan Tonatiuh received a 2015 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez & Her Family's Fight for Desegregation* (Abrams). His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 28, 2015, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.



Duncan Tonatiuh was born in Mexico City and grew up in San Miguel de Allende. He graduated from Parsons School for Design and from Eugene Lang College in New York City. His books have won numerous awards, including the Tomás Rivera Mexican American children's book award and Américas Book Award.

FUN FACT: Duncan created a large-scale mural, *The Snowy Codex*, in 2013 for the Akron (Ohio) Art Museum's exhibition, "Draw Me a Story," which celebrated Ezra Jack Keats's legacy and the power of picture books to promote visual literacy and cultural awareness.



For more information about the Belpré Award, visit <http://bit.ly/belpre-award>.

2015 PURA BELPRÉ AWARD COMMITTEE

Tim Wadham, Chair, Puyallup (Wash.) Public Library

Dr. Ramona Caponegro, Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti, Mich.

Maria Cotto, Pawtucket (R.I.) Public Library

Iris N. Ilagan, La Canada Flintridge (Calif.) Public Library

Louise Lareau, New York Public Library

Maria E. Rodriguez, Dallas Independent School District

Victor Lynn Schill, Fairbanks Branch Library, Houston