



## Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) 2024 Américas Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature

The Américas Award is given in recognition of U.S. works of fiction, poetry, folklore, or selected non-fiction (from picture books to works for young adults) published in the previous year in English or Spanish that authentically and engagingly portray Latin America, the Caribbean or the Latinx community in the United States. By combining both and linking the Americas, the award reaches beyond geographic borders and multicultural boundaries, focusing instead on cultural heritages within the hemisphere. The award is sponsored by the [Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs](#) (CLASP).

The Américas Award winners, honor books, and commended titles are selected for their:

1. Distinctive literary quality
2. Cultural contextualization
3. Exceptional integration of text, illustration, and design
4. Potential for classroom use

The winning books are honored each year in a special celebration.

The annotated bibliography below was written by members of the 2024 Américas Award Committee.

### 2024 Américas Award Winners

***Mexikid*** written and illustrated by Pedro Martín. Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN 978-0593462294

*Mexikid*, written by Pedro Martín, is a captivating and humorous coming-of-age story that explores family dynamics, cultural heritage, and the journey of self-discovery. The story centers around young Pedro, who admires the legendary tales of his Abuelito, a former crime-fighter and Mexican Revolution participant. Despite his admiration, Pedro is initially apprehensive about Abuelito moving in with his already large family, which includes his eight siblings.

As Pedro's family embarks on a memorable road trip to Mexico in a crowded Winnebago to

bring Abuelito back to the United States, the adventure is filled with laughter and poignant moments. Throughout the trip, Pedro forms a deeper connection with his Abuelito, uncovering family stories and learning valuable life lessons. This journey not only strengthens Pedro's bond with his grandfather but also helps him understand what it means to grow up and find his own "grito"—a metaphor for his voice and identity. Through humor and heartfelt moments, *Mexikid* delves into themes of family, cultural pride, and the significance of understanding one's roots, making it an engaging read for middle grade audiences (Grades 5-9).

**[Saints of the Household](#)** written by **Ari Tison**. Farrar, Straus, Giroux (Macmillan Publishers), 2023. ISBN 978-0374389499

*Saints of the Household* is a compelling coming-of-age story about two Bribri (Indigenous Costa Rican) twin brothers as they navigate their father's abuse and constant comparisons while striving to finish high school. The novel encapsulates themes of anger, power, resilience, community, friendship, love, and brotherhood. As the boys embrace their identity, the story intricately explores the complexities of navigating Indigeneity in the USA. Narrated in the alternating points of view of the brothers, the tale switches between verse and traditional narrative, enhancing its potential for classroom use. This poignant work is authored by an Indigenous Costa Rican writer of African descent. (Grades 8–12)

## 2024 Américas Award Honor Books

**[9 Kilometers/9 kilómetros](#)** written by **Claudio Aguilera**, illustrated by **Gabriela Lyon**, and translated by **Lawrence Schimel**. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2023. ISBN: 978-0802856005

*9 Kilometers* describes a daily walk to school in Chile through the eyes of a young narrator who muses on the length of the walk, as measured in different ways. For example, “I read in a book once that a snail can travel 5 meters in 1 hour. That means it would need more than 70 days to travel 9 kilometers.” The route extends under fences, through a forest, across waterways and fields, and along roads. The unnamed narrator moves through the world independently, exploring the natural world, musing on the ways the walk feels long some days and short on others, and always playing with arithmetic as a way of describing the experience.

The illustrations reinforce the theme of youthful independence in the natural world. The narrator moves through a world of greens and blues and is often depicted as a tiny figure in the midst of a big landscape. At the end of the book, the author has included illustrated notes about other young

walkers around the world, as well as the birds included in the book. This story provides a wonderful window onto young life in rural Chile along with wonderful ways to use math to describe the world. (Grades Kindergarten-3)

***Brighter than the Sun*** written by **Daniel Aleman**. Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (Hachette Book Group), 2023. ISBN: 978-0316704472

This incredibly moving story follows a girl who bears the responsibility of supporting her single-parent family. As the only family member born in the USA, she crosses the border for a job that allows her to provide for her family. Her journey offers a unique perspective on immigration, diverging from the traditional border-crossing narrative. Here, the American Dream takes on a less romanticized connotation. The story presents a refreshing, gentle, yet poignant portrayal of the labor women perform to hold their families together. (Grades 9 and up)

***Hispanic Star: Sylvia Rivera/ Hispanic Star en español: Sylvia Rivera*** written by **Claudia Romo Edelman and J. Gia Loving** and illustrated by **Cheyne Gallarde**. Roaring Brook Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-1250828149

In this thoughtful biography of transgender activist Sylvia Rivera, Edelman and Loving seek to educate readers about Rivera's childhood and rise to prominence during the Stonewall Riots. Despite her tumultuous youth, during which she was periodically unhoused, Rivera came to be known as one of the foremothers of revolution for LGBTQIA+ rights. Interspersed with various snapshots about other activists, historical context, and discussions of terminology, this nonfiction book invites readers to learn not just about Rivera, but about the world that she lived in and helped create. Be sure to check out the entire series of Hispanic Star biographies. (Grades 3 and up)

***Spanish is the Language of My Family/ El español es la lengua de mi familia*** written by **Michael Genhart** and illustrated by **John Parra**. Neal Porter Books (Holiday House), 2023. ISBN 978-0823450046

*Spanish Is the Language of My Family*, written by Michael Genhart and illustrated by John Parra, is a touching children's book that explores family bonds, cultural pride, and triumph in a spelling bee. The story follows a young boy preparing for his school's Spanish spelling bee with the help of his beloved abuela. As they study together, she shares her experiences from a time when speaking Spanish in school was prohibited, contrasting with her grandson's opportunity to celebrate and use their language. This historical context motivates the boy to excel and honor his heritage.

Inspired by real stories from the author's mother, Genhart's book delves into the resilience of Latino families and the joy of sharing one's native language across generations. Parra's vibrant illustrations add emotional depth, capturing the warmth of family connections and the cultural richness of the Latino community. The book, also available in a Spanish edition titled *El español es la lengua de mi familia*, celebrates bilingualism and cultural pride, making it an engaging read for younger audiences. (Grades Preschool-3)

## 2024 Américas Award Commended Titles

[\*Ancient Night/Noche Antigua\*](#) written by David Álvarez with David Bowles. Levine Querido, 2023. ISBN: 978-1646142514

With captivating, glowing illustrations and poetic text, this children's book is perfect for classroom use to enhance Indigenous storytelling, creation stories, and cultural connections. It narrates how the sun was created through the tale of Rabbit and Opossum, who fight over the liquid that keeps the moon shining. The story's resolution can guide students into deeper conversations about regrets and restorative problem-solving, making it an engaging educational tool. (Grades Preschool-3)

[\*Aniana Del Mar Jumps In\*](#) written by Jasminne Mendez. Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN: 978-0593531815

This verse novel offers an unvarnished view of the trials and traumas of being diagnosed and then living with a chronic illness. When Aniana begins experiencing debilitating pain after swimming, her favorite sport, though an activity she must conceal from her fearful mother, she goes through a series of doctors' appointments and days filled with pain and fear. She is ultimately diagnosed with juvenile idiopathic arthritis, and the news is devastating. But, she must learn to live with both her illness and with her mother's anxieties about the water. (Grades 3-7)

[\*¡Ay, Mija! : My Bilingual Summer in Mexico\*](#) written by Christine Suggs. Little, Brown Ink, 2023. ISBN: 978-0316591928

Christine Sugg's graphic memoir explores their first solo trip to Mexico when they were a teenager. The Christine of the book is reluctant to travel, anxious about their ability to speak Spanish, and worries that they won't fit in with their Mexican relatives. Christine is immediately accepted in Mexico and welcomed with open arms. They enjoy time with their relatives,

especially their grandparents, but worry about their own mother's impending arrival to Mexico. Though the two sometimes don't get along—and stand in as clear analogues for the culture clash Christine experiences as half Mexican and half white—Christine eventually reconciles these disparate parts of herself. Confronting undocumented immigration, bicultural identity, and cultural rifts, this graphic memoir is beautiful, funny, and touching. (Grades 7 and up)

***Benita and the Night Creatures/Benita y las criaturas nocturnas*** written by Mariana Llanos and illustrated by Cocoretto. Barefoot Books, 2023. ISBN: 979-8888590027

In this picture book, Benita wants nothing more than to read at night, but the monsters in her room have other ideas. The monsters, all various interpretations of Peruvian cryptids and folk creatures, attempt to scare Benita, who is unfazed. The book's humor lies in Benita's unflinching attitude toward these supposedly terrifying monsters, as it simultaneously allows readers to learn about Peruvian while dispelling possible fears about monsters under the bed. (Grades Preschool-5)

***Benito Juarez Fights for Justice*** written by Beatriz Gutierrez Hernandez. Godwin Books (Macmillan Publishers). ISBN: 978-1250257772

This engaging biographical picture book introduces young readers to the life and legacy of Benito Juárez, one of Mexico's most revered leaders and champions of democracy. Through vibrant illustrations and accessible storytelling, *Benito Juárez Fights for Justice* follows Juárez's journey from his humble beginnings to his pivotal role in shaping Mexico's history. For educators, this book serves as an excellent resource for teaching about Mexican history, civil rights, and the ongoing fight for equality and justice. Students can explore themes of resilience, perseverance, and the power of education in overcoming adversity. The book's emphasis on Juárez's commitment to democratic values and Indigenous rights provides opportunities for discussions on civic engagement, cultural diversity, and the importance of standing up for one's beliefs. Additionally, the book's bilingual text (English and Spanish) supports language learning and cultural appreciation in the classroom. By highlighting the inspirational life of Benito Juárez, this book encourages students to become agents of positive change and to embrace the ideals of justice, equality, and human rights. (Grades 2-7)

***Best Amigas*** written by Patricia Santos Marcantonio. Fitzroy Books, 2023. ISBN: 978-1646033737

Juana and her friend Diane live across the street from each other in suburban Texas. Juana is the shy middle child in an outgoing Mexican American family that hosts friends, neighbors, and

family on holidays. Diane is the confident only child of a white father and a Mexican American mother who struggles with alcohol addiction. At the outset of the novel, the two of them are heading into sixth grade, where Juana is determined to overcome her shyness and small social circle by trying out for the cheerleading team. Juana, the narrator, is primarily concerned with interactions within her peer group, including the fact that she is being bullied. Meanwhile, Diane struggles with the increasingly dangerous effects of her mother's alcoholism. Juana is oblivious to many of the details of Diane's experience, but still does her best to be supportive when she perceives that Diane is upset. This presents interesting opportunities for discussion about the nature of friendship, especially in situations where one friend faces much more complex difficulties than the other. (Grades 3-7)

***Breaking to the Beat*** written by **Linda J. Acevedo** and illustrated by **Frank Morrison**. Lee & Low Books, 2023. ISBN: 978-1643796390

*Breaking to the Beat* tells the story of “a shy Puerto Rican boy” named Manolo, growing up in the Bronx, New York City, in the 1970s. Over the course of the story, the main character gets past his shyness and develops confidence and fame as a breakdancer. Manolo and his crew, the Boriquén Breakers, are fictional, but the book is set within the real history of the birth of Hip Hop and Afro-Latine participation in that process. In addition to relevant vocabulary, the book paints a picture of a creative community that emerged despite the city's utter abandonment of the Bronx. The illustrations mirror the tenor of the words, with visual nods to the work of Ernie Barnes, graffiti artists, and comics. At the end of the book, the author provides a short historical account of the origins of Hip Hop, in addition to an illustrated vocabulary list. (Grades 1-5)

***Colorful Mondays: A Bookmobile Spreads Hope in Honduras*** written by **Nelson Rodríguez and Leonardo Agustín Montes**, illustrated by **Rosana Faría and Carla Tabora**, and translated by **Lawrence Schimel**. Eerdmans Books for Young Readers, 2023. ISBN: 978-0802856166

This vibrant picture book brings to life the inspiring true story of Rubén Darío Raudales, a Honduran teacher who founded a bookmobile to bring the joy of reading to remote villages. *Colorful Mondays* celebrates the transformative power of education, literacy, and perseverance in the face of adversity. For educators, this book serves as a powerful tool for promoting values of community service, resourcefulness, and the pursuit of knowledge. Students can explore themes of access to education, cultural preservation, and the role of books in fostering hope and imagination. The book's rich illustrations, created by a collective of Honduran artists, offer opportunities for discussions on artistic expression, storytelling traditions, and the importance of diverse representation in literature. Additionally, the book's bilingual text (English and Spanish) supports language learning and cultural appreciation in the classroom. By highlighting the



impact of Raudales' bookmobile, *Colorful Mondays* encourages students to become agents of positive change and to recognize the profound difference that a single person's vision and dedication can make in their communities. (Grades Kindergarten-3)

***Doodles from the Boogie Down*** written and illustrated by **Stephanie Rodriguez**. Kokila (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN: 978-0451480651

This graphic novel follows the story of Steph, an 8th grade Dominican American girl attending Catholic school in the Bronx, New York City. While her friends and classmates debate which of the city's Catholic high schools they want to apply to, Steph decides she wants to attend LaGuardia High School of Music & Art and Performing Arts. However, her Dominican-born mother is convinced public schools are dangerous and doesn't believe the arts offer a viable future in the US. Her friends are also unsupportive. Meanwhile, Steph's world opens up as she learns about different forms of art across the city. Through the course of the novel, Steph (eventually) learns how to forge her own path while maintaining honest relationships with friends and family. (Grades 3-8)

***How to Speak in Spanglish*** written by **Mónica Mancillas** and illustrated by **Olivia de Castro**. Penguin Workshop (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN: 978-0593521809

In this delightfully illustrated book, Mónica Mancillas celebrates the vibrant and culturally rich phenomenon of Spanglish – the blending of Spanish and English words and phrases. *How to Speak Spanglish* offers a unique and engaging way for students to explore language, identity, and the experiences of Latine communities in the United States. Educators can use this book to foster discussions about code-switching, cultural hybridity, and the role of language in shaping personal and communal narratives. The book's playful approach and relatable examples make it an accessible resource for students to appreciate the creativity and resourcefulness inherent in Spanglish, while also challenging monolingual biases. Additionally, the book provides opportunities for language arts activities, such as creative writing exercises or analyzing the linguistic patterns and evolutions present in Spanglish. By embracing this dynamic linguistic fusion, *How to Speak Spanglish* encourages students to celebrate their multilingual identities and develop a deeper understanding of the diverse cultural tapestry that enriches our communities. (Grades Preschool-3)

***Jovita Wore Pants: The Story of a Mexican Freedom Fighter/Jovita llevaba pantalones: La historia de una mexicana que luchó por la libertad*** written by **Aida Salazar** and illustrated by **Molly Mendoza**. Scholastic Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-1338283419

Aida Salazar's debut picture book tells the real-life story of Jovita Valdovinos, a revolutionary who assumes the identity of "Juan" to serve as a soldier. Jovita cuts her hair, wears pants, and leads her fellow freedom fighters during the Cristero Revolution to seek religious freedoms. The book includes luminous and dynamic illustrations by Molly Mendoza, as well as an Author's Note from Salazar explaining that Valdovinos was a distant relative of hers. Through telling a story that is lesser known within the scope of the Mexican Revolution, this picture book offers a new perspective on revolution, gender, and freedom. (Grades 1-5)

***Mi maestro tiene tatuajes/My Teacher Has Tattoos* written by Darren Lopez and illustrated by Bhagya Madanasinghe.** Soaring Kite Books, 2023. ISBN: 978-1953859952

This delightful bilingual picture book follows a young student's initial surprise and evolving appreciation for their teacher's tattoos. *Mi maestro tiene tatuajes/My Teacher Has Tattoos* provides an engaging way to promote linguistic diversity and cultural awareness in the classroom. The vibrant illustrations by Bhagya Madanasinghe complement the narrative, inviting readers to explore the deeper meanings behind the teacher's body art. Educators can use this book to spark discussions about overcoming assumptions, respecting differences, and the rich stories and traditions that tattoos can represent across cultures. Additionally, the book offers opportunities to explore themes of identity, self-expression, and the transformative power of education. By celebrating both languages and the value of open-mindedness, *Mi maestro tiene tatuajes* serves as an excellent resource for fostering an inclusive and culturally responsive learning environment, while also encouraging students to embrace their authentic selves and the diversity around them. The book is available in both English and Spanish. (Grades Kindergarten-3)

***Mi Papá es un agricultor/My Father, the Farm Worker* written by J. Roman Pérez Varela and illustrated by Jose Ramirez.** Lil' Libros, 2023. ISBN: 978-1948066754

*Mi papá es un agricultor/My Father, the Farm Worker*, written by J. Roman Pérez Varela and illustrated by Jose Ramirez, is a touching bilingual picture book that honors the hardworking farm workers crucial to our food supply. Narrated from the perspective of a proud son, the story vividly describes his father's tireless efforts in the fields from sunrise to sunset to provide for their family. This heartfelt narrative captures the essence of the sacrifices and hardships farm workers endure, shedding light on their significant yet often overlooked contributions.

Pérez Varela's eloquent storytelling, coupled with Ramirez's vibrant illustrations, brings to life the beauty of the natural world that farm workers cultivate and the emotional depth of a family's bond. This bilingual English-Spanish book fosters appreciation for cultural and linguistic diversity within the farming community. It is an important educational tool, promoting empathy



and understanding of farm workers' vital role in society, and is a valuable addition to both home and classroom libraries. (Grades Preschool-3)

***Only for a Little While/Por un ratito*** written by **Gabriela Orozco Belt** and illustrated by **Richy Sánchez Ayala**. Balzer + Bray (HarperCollins Publishers), 2023. ISBN: 978-0063206632

*Only for a Little While*, written by Gabriela Orozco Belt and illustrated by Richy Sánchez Ayala, is a touching picture book that explores themes of family, resilience, and adaptation. The story follows Maribel and her sister as they temporarily move in with their extended family after their father loses his job, bringing feelings of uncertainty and discomfort as they adjust to a bustling household filled with noisy cousins. Belt's narrative seamlessly weaves in Spanish words, enriching the cultural authenticity and bilingual appeal of the story, while Papi's comforting reassurance that their stay is only "por un ratito" (just for a little while) helps the girls find solace in their new environment.

As the girls begin to embrace the positives of their situation—such as having playmates, enjoying lively meals, and experiencing warm bedtime snuggles—Maribel discovers that living with Tía Carmen's family isn't as daunting as she initially thought. Sánchez Ayala's vibrant illustrations beautifully capture the dynamics of a loving, extended family and the everyday moments that bring joy and connection. The artwork complements the text by visually depicting the warmth and chaos of a crowded household, as well as the intimate, tender moments between family members. (Grades Preschool-3)

***Our Roof is Blue/Nuestro techo es azul*** written by **Sara E. Echenique** and illustrated by **Ashley Vargas**. Charlesbridge (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN: 978-1623542337

*Our Roof Is Blue* recounts the experience of living through a destructive hurricane in Puerto Rico through the eyes of a young girl. Rather than focusing purely on her own experience of the storm, the narrator tells the story of her role as an older sister during the storm and its aftermath. Through the narrator's eyes, we learn about her attempts to be strong and calm for Antonio, her brother, during the storm. The trauma of the storm causes Antonio to stop talking. The narrator gently encourages him, without pressuring him, by including him in play and storytelling. This book invites conversation about the traumatic aftereffects of extreme weather events and the ways communities can help each other emotionally, in addition to materially. (Grades Kindergarten-3)

***Papá's Magical Water Jug Clock/El barrilito mágico de papá*** written by **Jesús Trejo** and illustrated by **Eliza Kinkz**. Minera (Astra Publishing House), 2023. ISBN: 978-1662651045

In his debut picture book, *Papá's Magical Water-Jug Clock*, Mexican American comedian Jesús Trejo crafts a humorous and heartwarming tale highlighting the value of essential resources like time and water. The story follows young Jesús, who joins his landscaper father for a Saturday workday. Excited about the "magical" water jug that doubles as a clock, Jesús takes his responsibility seriously but ends up sharing the water with thirsty animals, leading to the jug emptying before the workday ends.

Eliza Kinkz's vibrant illustrations capture the lively spirit of Jesús and his whimsical interactions with the animals, enhancing the narrative's humor and heart. Through this endearing story, Trejo imparts a valuable lesson about resourcefulness and managing time and water wisely, while exploring themes of responsibility, empathy, and the loving bond between a father and son. *Papá's Magical Water-Jug Clock* will resonate with young readers, especially those who identify as class clowns or high-spirited individuals, as they empathize with Jesús's well-intentioned efforts. (Grades Preschool-3)

**[Patchwork Prince](#)** written by **Baptiste Paul** and illustrated by **Kitt Thomas**. Dial Books for Young Readers (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN: 978-0593463444

A poignant and visually stunning picture book, *Patchwork Prince* tells the story of a young prince whose mom made his cloths out of discarded fabric scraps while he longs to play outside like other children. Through lyrical text and breathtaking mixed-media illustrations, the book explores themes of self-acceptance, empathy, and the beauty in our differences. For the classroom, this book offers a powerful tool for discussions on diversity, inclusion, and challenging societal norms and assumptions. It also provides the space to consider the ramifications of fast fashion. Students can analyze the rich symbolism and metaphors, while also appreciating the book's celebration of imagination and creativity. The intricate illustrations, blending fabric textures with vivid colors, provide ample opportunities for art activities and projects. Ultimately, *Patchwork Prince* delivers an uplifting message about embracing one's uniqueness and finding joy in pursuing dreams, making it a valuable addition to any educational setting that aims to foster empathy, self-confidence, and critical thinking skills in young readers. (Grades Preschool-3)

**[Pedro & Daniel](#)** written by **Federico Erebia** and illustrated by **Julie Kwon**. Levine Querido, 2023. ISBN: 978-1646143047

Told in alternating points of view, Erebia's semi-autobiographical novel follows brothers Pedro and Daniel as they navigate their abusive childhood and their own individual reconciliations with

their sexualities. Daniel, the more outgoing of the brothers, initially seeks to become a priest but, while away at seminary, contracts HIV and eventually develops AIDs. Pedro, who is always the more demure of the brothers, must watch as Daniel, his one ally in the world, is taken by the epidemic affecting their community. Heartbreaking and breathtaking, this novel unflinchingly addresses colorism, homophobia, and childhood trauma. (Grades 9 and up)

**[Secrets We Tell the Sea](#)** written by **Martha Riva Palacio Obon** and translated by **Lourdes Heuer**. Bloomsbury Children's Books, 2023. ISBN: 978-1547608164

This is a profound emotional story that deals with difficult themes and topics as it shows the struggles of a young girl navigating a dysfunctional life. The story shows the world through a young person's eyes, narrated in beautiful prose. The young girl faces loss, abuse, and abandonment, while simultaneously learning about the power of family, friendship, and forgiveness. As she is taken by her mother to her grandma's house, she tells us about her memories and experiences as if her reality is merged with the ocean. Everything is told through similes and metaphors where her mother's abusive boyfriend becomes a barracuda and life struggles become sea storms and floods, yet death and abandonment are as real as the pain and grief they create. *Secrets We Tell the Sea*, originally published in Spanish in Latin America, is a book that can introduce Latin American literature and writers to the classroom. (Grades 3-6)

**[Sincerely Sicily](#)** written by **Tamika Burgess**. HarperCollins, 2023. ISBN: 978-0063159600

An interesting read about a Black Panamanian girl, Cicily, who learns about her identity through her family's intergenerational stories. When she gives a presentation about her culture, her classmates question her cultural heritage as Panamanian because she is Black. *Sincerely Sicily* guides the readers to learn about Panama's history, important black Panamanian and Indigenous peoples, and embracing identity from hair styles, to history, to social expectations and standing up for oneself. (Grades 3-7)

**[Spare Parts \(Young Readers' Edition\): The True Story of Four Undocumented Teenagers, One Ugly Robot, and an Impossible Dream](#)** written by **Joshua Davis** and adapted by **Reyna Grande**. Farrar, Straus and Giroux (BYR, Macmillan Publishers), 2023. ISBN: 978-0374388614

This inspiring true story follows a team of undocumented Mexican American high school students who defied all odds and won a prestigious robotics competition. *Spare Parts* not only celebrates the power of determination and teamwork, but also sheds light on the challenges faced by undocumented immigrants and their families. For educators, this book serves as a powerful tool for fostering discussions on immigration, social justice, and the pursuit of the American

Dream. Students can analyze the complex sociopolitical issues surrounding immigration policies, while also exploring themes of resilience, perseverance, and the transformative potential of education. The book's engaging narrative and relatable characters provide opportunities for character analysis, critical thinking, and empathy-building exercises. Additionally, *Spare Parts* offers a valuable resource for STEM education, highlighting the importance of diverse representation and inclusive learning environments. By sharing this remarkable true story, the book encourages students to embrace their potential, challenge stereotypes, and understand the multifaceted experiences of undocumented individuals and their contributions to society. (Grades 4-8)

**[Stand as Tall as the Trees: How an Amazonian Community Protected the Rain Forest/Con la cabeza en alto: Cómo una comunidad amazónica protegió la selva](#)** written by **Patricia Gualinga and Laura Resau** illustrated by **Vanessa Jaramillo**. Charlesbridge (Penguin Random House), 2023. ISBN: 978-1623542368

This picture book highlights the importance of Indigenous voices as they fight for environmental justice. Patricia grew up in her Ecuadorian Kichwa Village in the Amazon. Her story highlights the ongoing active struggle to protect the Amazonian forest. The poetic narrative and beautiful illustrations will engage students as they learn about the role that Indigenous communities play in environmental conservation. Teachers will benefit from the book's resources including a glossary and information that supports understanding individual Indigenous groups rather than supporting a monolithic or pan-Indigenous representation. The focus on social justice and agency combined with the back matter all contribute to the book's teachability. (Grades 1-5)

**[The Broke Hearts](#)** written by **Matt Mendez**. Atheneum/Caitlyn Dlouhy Books (Simon & Schuster), 2023. ISBN: 978-1534404489

In this gripping young adult novel, Matt Mendez crafts a powerful narrative that explores themes of grief, family dynamics, and the complexities of navigating identity as a Mexican American teenager. *The Broke Hearts* follows the story of Nacho, a high school senior grappling with the aftermath of his twin sister's tragic death and the fracturing of his once-close-knit family. For educators, this book offers a poignant entry point for discussions on mental health, coping mechanisms, and the importance of support systems during times of crisis. Students can analyze the nuanced characterizations and examine how Nacho's cultural background shapes his experiences and perspectives. The book's authentic representation of a Latinx family and their emotional journeys provides opportunities to explore themes of intergenerational relationships, cultural traditions, and the challenges of straddling multiple worlds. Additionally, Mendez's lyrical prose and masterful storytelling make *The Broke Hearts* an excellent choice for literature circles and creative writing exercises. By delving into this powerful narrative, students can

develop greater empathy, self-awareness, and an appreciation for the rich tapestry of Latine experiences. (Grades 9-12)

***The Last Slice: A Three Kings Day Treat* written by Melissa Seron Richardson and illustrated by Monica Arnaldo.** Little, Brown Books for Young Readers (Hachette Book Group), 2023. ISBN: 978-0316436298

Worried that she will be the one saddled with the figurine of the baby Jesus in her slice of la Rosca de Reyes, Marta refuses to eat her cake (even though this is the first year she is allowed to do so). This picture book humorously depicts Marta's various attempts to avoid the cake, and Monica Arnaldo's colorful illustrations support Marta's antics. Eventually, Marta is coaxed to eat her slice and makes peace with her piece of the cake. (Grades Preschool-3)

***The Prince and the Coyote/ El príncipe y la coyote* written by David Bowles and illustrated by Amanda Mijangos.** Levine Querido, 2023. ISBN: 978-1646141777

This incredible work of historical fiction recounts the history of the formation of the Mexica (Aztec) Empire through the story of Prince Acolmiztli, better known as the poet-king Nezahualcoyotl. Acolmiztli began his life as the heir apparent to the throne of Acolhuacan, based in the city of Tetzaco, on the opposite side of Moon Lake from Tenochtitlán. Many characters and events in the book, including Acolmiztli, are actual historical figures and events. The tale traces Acolmiztli's education, his flight from the city after an attack by the Tepaneca Empire, his time in the wilderness under the protection of a coyote, and finally his eventual ascent to rule the city of his birth under the new Mexica Empire. The author situates the story within a rich, multi-layered cultural context enabling the reader to interpret characters' actions within the politics and belief systems of the Aztec world. This worldbuilding is aided by the use of beautiful illustrations and parts of the story communicated in verse. Acolmiztli is an appealing hero: a creative poet and drummer as well as a thoughtful, determined leader. The complex narrative is carried by his warm, complex relationships with many people, including his two love interests, the non-binary diplomat Izcalloh and the young peasant woman, Sekalli. (Grades 7 and up)

***Tierra, Territa/Earth, Little Earth* written by Jorge Tetl Argueta, illustrated by Felipe Ugalde Alcantara, and translated by Elizabeth Bell.** Piñata Books, an imprint of Arte Público Press, 2023. ISBN: 978-1558859678

To showcase the connection of indigenous worldview, this trilingual picture book illustrates reciprocal relationships with Mother Earth. Born from the writer's own indigenous roots, the poetry and colorful illustrations will invite young artists, readers and writers to create their own

compositions about the earth. Other important aspects of his book are the poems in Spanish and English plus the Nahuatl version in the back. It is a great resource to talk about Indigeneity, native languages and voices. (Grades 1-3)

***Two Green Birds*** written by **Geraldo Valério**. Groundwood Books, 2023. ISBN: 978-1773067957

Francisco lives close to his Grandma Antonia in a town in Brazil. They have a warm relationship and spend time together eating, doing errands, and working in Grandma Antonia's flower garden. The story, told in Francisco's voice, begins when Grandma Antonia acquires two small wild green parakeets from a friend. Initially, she and Francisco are excited to have the birds, which have been placed in a cage in the backyard. However, over the ensuing days they grow concerned. The birds will not eat and seem sad and listless, rather than joyful and energetic. Francisco and Grandma Antonia seek help and try several unsuccessful tactics to make the birds happy. Finally, a wild flock of parakeets visits the yard and Francisco realizes that there is only one solution to the birds' unhappiness. In addition to its clear moral, this story foregrounds Francisco's experience of his community, including his relationships with family and neighbors, his delight in various pastimes, and his realization about the parakeets. (Grades 1 and up)

***Veó, Veó, I See You*** written and illustrated by **Lulu Delacre**. Atheneum Books for Young Readers (Simon & Schuster), 2023. ISBN: 978-1665911917

*Veó, Veó, I See You*, written and illustrated by Lulu Delacre, is a poignant children's book that captures resilience and community spirit during challenging times. The story follows Marisol, her brother Pepito, and their mother, Mami, a renowned cook at Rosita's Cafe. When the restaurant closes due to a contagious virus, the family continues to deliver Mami's delicious arroz con pollo to their housebound relatives. As they traverse their neighborhood, Marisol and Pepito observe various essential workers performing their duties, inspiring Marisol to create the game "Veó, veó" (I Spy) to acknowledge and appreciate these vital contributions.

Lulu Delacre's vibrant illustrations bring to life the diverse characters and bustling neighborhood scenes, emphasizing the importance of essential workers and promoting empathy and community awareness. The book subtly addresses the impacts of a pandemic on daily life and reinforces themes of gratitude and solidarity. *Veó, Veó, I See You* serves as a beautiful reminder of the power of community and the importance of valuing each other's efforts, with its bilingual format fostering cultural and linguistic inclusivity. (Grades Preschool-3)

***Water Day*** written by Margarita Engle and illustrated by Olivia Sua. Atheneum Books for



Young Readers (Simon & Schuster), 2023. ISBN: 978-1665918718

*Water Day*, written by Margarita Engle and illustrated by Olivia Sua, is a heartwarming picture book that celebrates the joy and resilience of a small Cuban town as they await the weekly arrival of the water man. The story centers around a young girl and her neighbors who eagerly anticipate the water man's visit, bringing hope and renewal to their town. Engle's lyrical prose emphasizes the importance of cooperation and perseverance in the face of scarcity.

Through the young protagonist's eyes, readers experience the excitement leading up to the water man's arrival, symbolizing life and sustenance for the community. Sua's vibrant illustrations complement Engle's text, depicting lively scenes of the community coming together. *Water Day* celebrates resourcefulness and communal support while highlighting the global issue of water scarcity. Engle's storytelling encourages young readers to appreciate water's vital importance and understand the challenges faced by communities without a reliable supply. This joyful book is a perfect addition to home and classroom libraries, fostering empathy and awareness. (Grades Preschool-3)