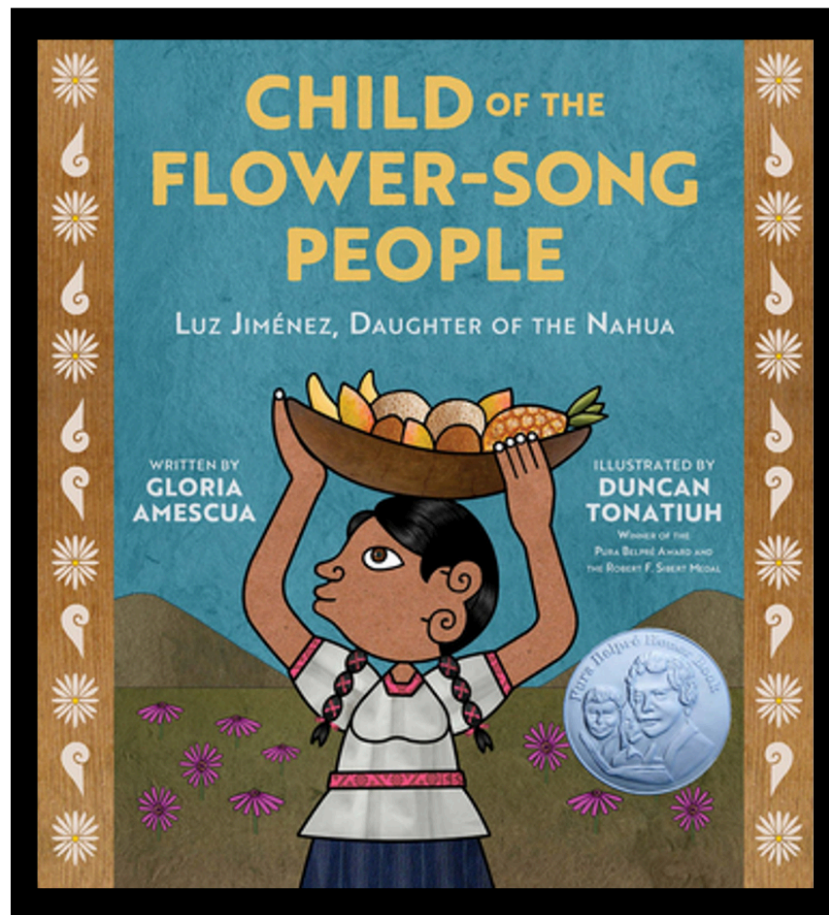


# Américas Book Award

## EDUCATOR'S GUIDE



PRODUCED BY THE CONSORTIUM FOR LATIN AMERICAN STUDIES  
PROGRAMS

WRITTEN BY KRISTINE WITKO & KATRINA DILLON



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

## ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This educator's guide was written to support using *Child of the Flower-Song People* in elementary, middle, and high school classrooms. Produced by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) on behalf of the Américas Award, it was written in 2024 by Kristine Witko, MA student in Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona with research and writing support from Katrina Dillon, Assistant Director of Outreach at the Center for Latin American Studies at the University of Arizona.

## ABOUT THE AMÉRICAS AWARD

CLASP founded the Américas Award in 1993 to encourage and commend authors, illustrators, and publishers who produce quality children's and young adult books that portray Latin America, the Caribbean, or Latinos in the United States, and to provide teachers with recommendations for classroom use. CLASP offers up to two annual book awards, together with a commended list of titles. For more information concerning the Américas Award, including additional classroom resources, please visit the [CLASP website](#).

The awards are administered by the Consortium of Latin American Studies Programs (CLASP) and coordinated by both Tulane University's Stone Center for Latin American Studies and the University of Arizona's Center for Latin American Studies. Generous support is also provided by Florida International University, Michigan State University, Stanford University, University of California, Berkeley, University of California, Los Angeles, UNC-Duke Consortium in Latin American and Caribbean Studies, University of Florida, University of Michigan, University of New Mexico, University of Texas at Austin, University of Utah, the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, and Vanderbilt University.

## ABOUT CLASP

CLASP's mission is to promote all facets of Latin American studies throughout the world. Its broad range of activities includes the encouragement of research activities, funding of professional workshops, advancement of citizen outreach activities, and development of teaching aids for the classroom.



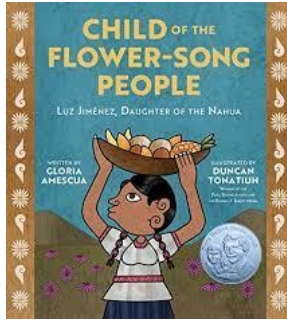
<b>ACKNOWLEDGMENTS</b>	<b>2</b>
About This Guide	2
About Clasp	2
<b>OVERVIEW</b>	<b>5</b>
Themes	5
Synopsis	5
Reading Level	6
Reviews	6
Awards	6
<b>Applicable Common Core Standards</b>	<b>7</b>
K-12 Reading	7
<b>Key Ideas and Details</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Craft and Structure</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>Integration of Knowledge and Ideas</b>	<b>7</b>
K-12 Writing	8
<b>Text Types and Purposes</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Production and Distribution of Writing</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Research to Build and Present Knowledge</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>About the Author: Gloria Amescua</b>	<b>9</b>
In Her Words: the Author's Note	9
<b>Classroom Relevance and Applications</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Lesson Plans and Activities</b>	<b>12</b>
<b>Pre-Reading Activities</b>	<b>12</b>
Vocabulary	12
Important People/Figures	13
Important Places	13
Activity 1: Picture Walk	13
Activity 2: Observation Charts	14
Activity 3: Think, Pair, Share: Identity Map	14
Activity 4: Review Of Genre	15
<b>Guided Reading Questions</b>	<b>16</b>
Before reading	16
During reading	16
After reading	17



<b>Post-Reading Activities</b>	<b>17</b>
Approach 1: Literacy Connections	17
“My Náhuatl”	17
Nahuatl Poetry	18
Approach 2: The Power of Words	18
Approach 3: Learning About the Indigenous Peoples in Latin America	19
Approach 4: Indigenous Language Research Activity	20
Approach 5: A Deep Dive into Mexican History	21
<b>Multimedia Resources</b>	<b>22</b>
Interviews With Gloria Amescua And Duncan Tonatiuh	22
Film And Audio About Luz Jiménez	22
<b>Complementary Literature</b>	<b>24</b>
Children’s Literature	24
Young Adult Literature	30



## OVERVIEW



*Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughter of the Nahua*

Written by Gloria Amescua

Illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh

Published 2021 by Abrams Books for Young Readers

ISBN: 9781419740206

## THEMES

Mexico, Indigenous Peoples, Nahua, Aztec, Colonialism, Mexican Revolution, Art, Biography, Oral Storytelling, Forced Acculturation

## SYNOPSIS

She was Luz Jiménez,  
child of the flower-song people,  
the powerful Aztec,  
who called themselves Nahua—  
who lost their land but who did not disappear.

As a young Nahua girl in Mexico during the early 1900s, Luz learned how to grind corn in a metate, to twist yarn with her toes, and to weave on a loom. By the fire at night, she listened to stories of her community's joys, suffering, and survival, and wove them into her heart.

But when the Mexican Revolution came to her village, Luz and her family were forced to flee and start a new life. In Mexico City, Luz became a model for painters, sculptors, and photographers such as Diego Rivera, Jean Charlot, and Tina Modotti. These artists were interested in showing the true face of Mexico and not a European version. Through her work, Luz found a way to preserve her people's culture by sharing her native language, stories, and traditions. Soon, scholars came to learn from her.



This moving, beautifully illustrated biography tells the remarkable story of how model and teacher Luz Jiménez became “the soul of Mexico”—a living link between the indigenous Nahua and the rest of the world. Through her deep pride in her roots and her unshakeable spirit, the world came to recognize the beauty and strength of her people.

The book includes an author's note, timeline, glossary, and bibliography.

## READING LEVEL

Grades 1+ / Ages 6+

## REVIEWS

★ “Amescua sensitively excavates the compelling story of the woman known as “the spirit of Mexico” . . . Tonatiuh’s hand-drawn, digitally collaged images mix motifs from Indigenous Mexican art with modern textures, celebrating the endurance and resilience of treasured traditions in a changing world.” – starred, *Publishers Weekly*

★ “Tonatiuh’s beautiful pre-Columbian illustrations provide a vivid play-by-play of events and evoke Jiménez’s ultimate impact on the art world. An author’s note gives more historical context, and a timeline, glossary, and bibliography make this a valuable source for student researchers.” – starred, *School Library Journal*

## AWARDS

- Pura Belpré Honor Book (2022)
- Américas Award Winner (2022)
- American Library Association: Notable Children's Books 2022
- International Latino Book Award Alma Flor Ada Winner
- Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature: Best Books of 2021
- School Library Journal: Best Books 2021
- 2021 Junior Library Guild Selection
- Chicago Public Library: Best Informational Books for Younger Readers of 2021



## APPLICABLE COMMON CORE STANDARDS

### K-12 READING

#### Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

#### Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.
- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

#### Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

#### Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.



## K-12 WRITING

### Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

### Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

### Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.





## ABOUT THE AUTHOR: GLORIA AMESCUA



Gloria Amescua (Ah MES qua) has been a writer since she was a child, writing poems and stories throughout her life. She loves books that reach a young person's heart, head, or funny bone and strives to do just that in her writing. Gloria's debut picture book biography, *Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughter of the Nahua*, illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh (Abrams Books), was awarded a Pura Belpré Author Honor. It was also a co-winner of the Américas Award and received three International Latino Book Awards (English): Alda Flor Ada (Gold), Best Educational (Gold), and Most Inspirational (Bronze). Her book received three starred reviews and was also a 2022 SCBWI Golden Kite finalist. It was listed as a Junior Library Guild Gold Selection, ALA Notable Books, SLJ's Best Books 2021, and various other Best of Nonfiction/Informative lists for 2021/2022. Gloria is an educator, poet, and children's book writer.

### IN HER WORDS: THE AUTHOR'S NOTE

Taken from "Author's Note" in *Child of the Flower-Song People*

"Julia Jiménez, later known as Luz Jiménez, came from a Nahua family in Milpa Alta, Mexico. Despite many obstacles in her life, she succeeded in being the teacher she always dreamed of becoming by honoring her culture.

At the University of Texas, Austin, I found a pamphlet announcing a symposium about Luz Jiménez in 2000, and I was immediately fascinated. Unfortunately, the meeting had already passed, but I kept the pamphlet anyway. In 2013, I wrote my first draft of this manuscript. I was drawn to Luz Jiménez, as both a teacher and as a Latina who grew up in Texas almost losing my Spanish language and culture. I've had to work at regaining both.

When we look at art that depicts a person, we rarely consider the real person behind the model. In 1997, a special exhibition in Mexico City focused on Luz Jiménez. This exhibit of paintings, drawings, sculptures, and photographs featured works by some of the most famous artists of the twentieth century who had lived and worked in Mexico: Fernando Leal, Diego Rivera, Davia Alfaro Siqueiros, Jean Charlot, Tine Modotti, and Edward Weston. All the art depicted Luz. Images of Luz are world-famous and appear in great murals in national buildings in Mexico City, hang in museums around the globe, and are sold as prints. Luz never sought the limelight and remained humble all her life. It took a lot of courage for her to become a model. She never told her mother about her modeling work. It wasn't something that Nahua women typically did.



Luz knew how to communicate her traditional Nahua upbringing through art and her native language. The Nahua called poetry *xochichicatl*, “the flower and the song” (*floricanto* or *flor y canto* directly translated into Spanish). I used the term “flower-song” to represent the Nahua spirit in Luz and the Nahua people.

Into the early twentieth century, Nahua still spoke Nahuatl and carried on many of their ancient traditions. Officials believed the native people held back progress in Mexico and sought to change the culture and language of the indigenous people. They jailed fathers if they or their families did not follow the new rules. As a result, younger generations began losing their language and customs. Around the world, including in the United States, conquering nations systematically have shamed indigenous speakers and tried to erase their culture in many ways. Luz’s legacy is helping new generations to treasure their native traditions.

I appreciate Dr. Kelly McDonough at the University of Texas at Austin, whose work on Luz Jiménez has been invaluable and who introduced me to Luz’s grandson, Jesus Villanueva Hernandez. I am very grateful to them both for generously sharing resources and for their support.”

## CLASSROOM RELEVANCE AND APPLICATIONS

*Child of the Flower-Song People* tells the real-life story of Luz Jiménez, a Nahua woman who was able to keep her culture alive by sharing it with others. By teaching anthropologists, artists, and professors about her traditions and language, Luz allowed others to achieve a greater understanding of the Nahua people and sent the world an important message: we are still here, and we have always been here.

Reading Luz’s story allows the teacher to raise questions about a variety of important topics, such as indigeneity, human rights, colonization, and oppression. While Luz lived through the Mexican Revolution (1910–1917), many of the experiences she endured were connected to the long-term consequences of La Conquista, including the lack of schooling for Indigenous children and the later requirement to learn Spanish language and culture. The marginalization of Indigenous peoples evolved to include new forms of violence over time, including the erasure of languages, cultures, and entire groups of people. Luz’s experience shows that activism can occur in different ways; even something as simple as remembering where you came from can be an act of resistance.

Luz’s efforts to maintain her native language, including her refusal to abide by a Spanish-only rule in school and her creation of a Nahuatl university course, illustrate the exclusionary nature of language policies. Language is such a powerful political tool that members of a dominant group may take extreme measures to limit or eradicate the use of minority languages. This book raises many important questions—who decides which languages are taught in school? What happens when only the dominant cultural values are emphasized or valued



in the curriculum? What are some ways to ensure that schools become inclusive spaces for learning? Why are language revitalization movements important?

Moreover, this story can spark discussions about culture and identity. Throughout the book, students see the different aspects of Luz's Nahua identity that she holds dear, such as her family's legends, traditions, language, and history. Students can explore all the aspects that make up their own identities and contemplate the intersections they notice. For example, how many of these aspects connect back to our culture? Is it possible to separate culture from language? What would you do if you were not able to express certain aspects of your identity? What would be a form of resistance?

Students can also discuss the importance of representation. Before Luz's work as a model, artists had focused on Mexico's Spanish heritage through paintings of light-skinned Europeans. These depictions were another example of the efforts to make Indigenous cultures invisible. Finally, in the 20th century, Mexican artists began honoring Indigenous peoples by painting them and their cultural traditions. Students can contemplate the importance of this shift. Why is it so crucial to have representation in art? This question can also be expanded to consider the media we have available today: why is representation important in films, TV shows, magazines, and more? Why is this visibility so powerful?

Despite her passing, Luz's legacy continues, and through *Child of the Flower-Song People*, a new generation can learn about her bravery and accomplishments. This book has important lessons for both teachers and students, illustrating the power of cultural preservation, representation, and resistance.



## LESSON PLANS AND ACTIVITIES

In addition to this guide, there are a number of other high-quality resources available to support educators in using *Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughters of the Nabua*. These have been linked below.

- [Abrams CHILD OF THE FLOWER-SONG PEOPLE Teaching Guide](#) from the [En Comunidad Collective](#)
- [Abrams CHILD OF THE FLOWER-SONG PEOPLE Guía de enseñanza](#) from the [En Comunidad Collective](#)
- [Study Guide on \*Child of the Flower-Song People: Luz Jiménez, Daughters of the Nabua\*](#) from the Central Texas Writing Project
- [Gloria Amescua's website](#) contains numerous teaching resources to support *Child of the Flower-Song People*.

## PRE-READING ACTIVITIES

Before reading the book with students, you may want to introduce some of the important themes, activate any prior knowledge, and generate interest and anticipation through the following activities and/or discussion questions:

## VOCABULARY

conqueror  
Nahua  
Nahuatl  
Aztec  
descendent  
atole  
tamale  
metate  
modern  
twentieth century  
colonized  
heritage  
native  
Indigenous  
anthropologist



revolution

## IMPORTANT PEOPLE/FIGURES

Luz Jiménez

Diego Rivera

Fernando Leal

Tina Modotti

Jean Charlot

Fernando Horcasitas

Tepozon

Malintzin

Teuhtli

Iztaccihuatl

Popocatepetl

## IMPORTANT PLACES

Milpa Alta

Mexico City

Chalma

Iztaccihuatl

Popocatepetl

## ACTIVITY 1: PICTURE WALK

Pique students' interest, activate prior knowledge, and introduce the book through a picture walk.

### PROCESS:

1. Show students the front and back cover of the book. Ask them to predict what they think the story will be about. Then, slowly flip through the pages of the book without reading any of the words. As students ask questions about each picture they see, guide them to make inferences based on their observations. Focus on who, what, when, where, why, and how questions such as: "What is happening here?" "What will happen next?" "Who do you think this is?" "How does this character feel?" "What do you notice about the characters on this page?" "How does this picture make you feel?" "Where does the story take place?" "How do you think the story will end?"



2. Once students have read the book, return to their thoughts and predictions, comparing them to the actual events of the story.

## ACTIVITY 2: OBSERVATION CHARTS

1. Explain to students that they are going to be working in small groups. Each group will rotate around the room to view and discuss each image. One person will be the recorder at each table. When looking at an image, students will spend at least one minute silently reflecting on what they see and thinking about the questions, “What do you see?” “What do you think is happening?” “How does this image make you feel?” Then, students will discuss their thoughts in the small group. The recorder will write down their reflections and answers to the questions on the observation chart. Sticky notes can also be used to record the group’s thoughts. Explain to students that they will have a set amount of time at each image. When time is up, the teacher will give a signal and each group will move to the next image.
2. Divide students into small groups. Place an image and marker at various tables or stations in the classroom. Direct each group to the table or station where they will begin. Begin the activity. Continue rotating groups through the images until each group has seen each image.
3. Hang up all of the observation charts with comments. As a whole group, discuss each image, giving students time to share and respond to what they posted. Keep the charts posted throughout the reading and discussion of *Child of the Flower-Song People*. Allow students to revisit them and discuss them as they think more about what the images represent.

## ACTIVITY 3: THINK, PAIR, SHARE: IDENTITY MAP

This activity allows students to consider how culture, language, and community impact our identity.

### Process:

1. Write the word “identity” on chart paper. Ask the class, “What does the word ‘identity’ mean to you?”
2. Students turn and talk with a partner. Select a few students to share their definitions.
3. Explain that your identity is who you are. Many different aspects make up our identity.
4. Write your name on the chart paper and say you will explain by mapping your identity.
5. Model writing different aspects of your identity (examples include “daughter/son,” “friend,” “teacher,” “tall,” “reader,” “New Yorker,” “Mexican,” “English speaker,” “Spanish speaker,” etc.).
6. Explain that some aspects of our identity describe how we connect to others, such as “friend.” Some describe our interests. Others may relate to our culture, language, and community.
7. Ask students to take out a piece of paper and write as many aspects of their identity as they can in two minutes. Tell them to write descriptions they would feel comfortable sharing with others.
8. Once students have finished, ask them to share with a partner. What do they notice?



9. Ask for volunteers to share with the class. List some of their examples on chart paper.
10. Ask students: which aspects of their identities have to do with language? (Circle them.) Which aspects of their identities have to do with culture? (Circle them in a different color.) Which aspects of their identities have to do with community? (Circle them in a different color.) Note that some aspects may be circled in more than one color. This could lead to a discussion about the interconnectedness of the facets of our identity.
11. Ask students questions such as: “Why is language important to our identity?” “Why is culture important to our identity?” “What about community?” “How would you feel if you were not allowed to express certain parts of your identity?” “How do these aspects of your identity connect?”
12. Once the class has read *Child of the Flower-Song People*, return to the chart papers. Now that students have read the book, what kind of identity map would they create for Luz Jiménez?

## ACTIVITY 4: REVIEW OF GENRE

Prepare students to read *Child of the Flower-Song People* by introducing or reviewing the genre of biography.

Process:

1. Write “fiction” and “nonfiction” on the board. Ask students, “How would you define a fiction book?” Have them turn and talk then select a few to share with the class.
2. Write down the shared class definition. (Ex. Fiction is a story or poem created from the author’s imagination. It may have characters, a setting, a problem, a solution, and a lesson learned.)
3. Ask, “How would you define a nonfiction book?” Have them turn and talk then select a few to share.
4. Write down the shared class definition. (Ex. Nonfiction is based on facts, real events, or real people. It explains, informs, or persuades by giving information).
5. Ask students to point out examples of fiction around the classroom. Then, ask them to point out examples of nonfiction. (Have some examples ready to use in case students need guidance.)
6. Explain that the genres of “fiction” and “nonfiction” are broad and actually contain different genres within them. One genre of nonfiction is called a biography.
7. Tell students that a biography is a type of nonfiction book that describes the life of a real person. On a piece of chart paper, write “Biography” and this definition.
8. Explain that biographies teach us about extraordinary people. Ask students: “What are some things we might learn in a biography?” Chart their answers. Examples may include their birth date, childhood, family life, school experiences, and accomplishments.
9. Hold up *Child of the Flower-Song People* and explain that this book is a biography of an important person, Luz Jiménez. Once you finish reading the book as a class, return to the chart paper and re-read the facts one may learn from a biography. Then discuss some of the facts they learned about Luz’s life.
10. Depending upon the age of students, use some of the resources in the back of the book to learn more details (such as the author’s note, the artist’s note, and the timeline).



## GUIDED READING QUESTIONS

### BEFORE READING

1. Do you think this is a fiction or nonfiction text? Why and what makes you think that?
2. This is a type of nonfiction book called a biography, which teaches us about an important person. Based on the title and the illustration, who will we learn about today? What do we know about her?
3. Read the blurb on the back cover. What have you learned? What do you still wonder?

### DURING READING

#### *Transferable Questions*

1. (Every few pages) What is the author teaching us?
2. What are some of the challenges this person faced? How did they overcome these challenges?
3. What were some of their accomplishments?
4. What was the most interesting thing you learned about this person?

#### *Text-Based Questions*

1. Luz listened to stories that have been passed down through generations. What do the stories teach her?
2. What do we learn about Luz and the Nahua? What does it mean when the text says the Nahua “lost their land, but did not disappear”?
3. At the beginning of the book, Luz learns a variety of things from her family, from how to work in the field to legends of the Nahua people. What are some of the things that she learns?
4. At first, why was Luz unable to go to school with the other children?
5. What was Luz forced to learn when she did attend the school? What language was she forced to speak? Why do you think that is?
6. Describe Luz’s experience at school. What kind of student is she?
7. During times of difficulty at school, what helps to give her strength?
8. What happened to Luz and her family during the Mexican Revolution? How do you think that made her feel?
9. Based on the illustrations and the words in the book, how is Mexico City different from Luz’s previous home in Milpa Alta?
10. What does Luz do for work? What does she show the artists?
11. Why do you think it was important that artists depicted native people such as Luz in their paintings?
12. Throughout the book, we see that Luz’s dream is to become a teacher. Is she successful in the end? Why or why not? What does she end up teaching the artists and scholars?
13. In the end, Luz teaches a professor about her language, Nahuatl. Why was this important?
14. How does Luz help to keep her culture alive?





## AFTER READING

1. Have you read any other biographies? How were they similar or different?
2. Have you read other books by the same author or illustrator? What were those books about and was this one similar or different?

## POST-READING ACTIVITIES

There are so many different ways one can approach a unit on indigenous rights. The context in which one is teaching is of paramount importance. We need to consider not only the age/grade level of the students but also their own personal backgrounds and family histories. As with any lesson, it's important to consider the needs of your students and plan accordingly. With this in mind, we've provided a variety of extension activity ideas and resources below that can be used in conjunction with *Child of the Flower-Song People*.

### APPROACH 1: LITERACY CONNECTIONS

To expand the literacy connections made when using *Child of the Flower-Song People*, consider including the readings discussed below.

#### “My Náhuatl”

Martín Tonalmeyotl is a Nahua poet, writer, teacher, and translator who has devoted his life to the destigmatization and awareness of Indigenous languages in Mexico. The first poem on this page, “My Náhuatl,” describes the author’s feelings regarding his native language and the challenges that the language has had to endure. The poem appears in English, Nahuatl, and Spanish. The poem can be found here: <https://www.worldliteraturetoday.org/blog/poetry/three-nahuatl-poems-mexico-martin-tonalmeyotl>. Note that two additional poems are listed below and may also be used for classroom instruction.

#### Process:

1. Give each student a paper listing the poem “My Náhuatl” in the three languages. Ask them to begin by reading in their strongest language (for instance, native Spanish speakers may choose to read in Spanish first).
2. Allow students five minutes to write a brief response to the poem. Some possible questions include:
  - a. What is the poem about?
  - b. How does it make you feel?



- c. What words or phrases stand out to you?
3. Ask students to share with a partner before sharing with the whole group. On a whiteboard, write down the words or phrases that students selected.
  - a. What kind of tone does the author evoke in the poem? How do you know?
  - b. Does the tone change from beginning to end? If so, how? What lines can you use as an example?
4. Connect to *Child of the Flower-Song People*: How does this poem connect to Luz Jiménez?
5. (Additional activity) Ask students to analyze the same poem in English, Nahuatl, and Spanish. What do they notice?

## Nahuatl Poetry

While “My Náhuatl” is a contemporary poem, these resources have poetry that was written by sages or wise men known as *tlamatinime*. All poems can also be found in the *Collección de Cantares Mexicanos* and have been translated into English. The first resource provides a short poem followed by a brief analysis:

<https://mesoamericanstudiesonline.com/2022/01/30/nahuatl-poetry/>.

The second resource provides longer versions of the poems without analysis:

<https://www.public.asu.edu/~kitsacat/poetry.html>. Students can conduct a poetry analysis and try to come up with their own meanings before reading the interpretations. They may also make connections between these poems and “My Náhuatl.” What similarities do they notice? What differences? Can they make a connection to Luz?

## APPROACH 2: THE POWER OF WORDS

### “NAU English Professor Monica Brown Weighs In On The Power Of Dehumanizing Language”

In this article from KNAU Arizona Public Radio, English professor and author Monica Brown discusses the use of language, specifically the word “deportable” to describe human beings. This article would pair well with the short story “90,000 Children,” as Brown takes a critical look at dehumanizing language that has been used to describe migrants. The article is available at:

<http://knau.org/post/nau-english-professor-monica-brown-weighs-power-dehumanizing-language>

#### Process:

1. Read or listen to the article as a class.
2. Discuss Brown’s argument on the word “deportable.” Ask students if they have heard this used before in discussions around immigration. As a class brainstorm other problematic words used to describe people who immigrate to the U.S.



3. Individually, in small groups, or as a class write a persuasive essay explaining why language such as “deportable,” “illegal,” or “alien” shouldn’t be used in discussions on immigration.

### **APPROACH 3: LEARNING ABOUT THE INDIGENOUS PEOPLES IN LATIN AMERICA**

#### **“At Div School, Centuries-old Aztec Language Speaks to the Present”**

In this article, Liz Mineo describes the experiences of a group of Harvard students taking a Nahuatl class, the same language that Luz Jiménez helped to teach at the College of Mexico City. One of the students, who grew up in a small pueblo in the south of Mexico, realizes that Nahuatl words had already been incorporated into her day-to-day language. She ends the article by emphasizing the need to preserve this cultural heritage. The article is available at the following link:

<https://news.harvard.edu/gazette/story/2022/04/centuries-old-aztec-language-speaks-to-the-present/>

#### **Process:**

- Read or listen to the article as a class. Listen to the audio of the student reading in the Nahuatl language.
- Read the quote at the end of the article: “When we speak our Indigenous language, we are breathing life into a past that others tried to erase....By remembering the past, we can co-create a new future that includes Indigenous languages. The future includes Indigenous peoples and language is one way to make sure we are not forgotten or forget ourselves.” Ask students to take a moment to think about those words, then turn and talk with a partner: What are their reactions? What do they think?
- Individually, in small groups, or as a class write a persuasive essay on the following topic: “Should Indigenous languages be taught in schools?”

#### **“A 16th Century Codex Tells a Story of Resistance to Colonial Rule”**

In this article, Sophia Zahner describes the importance of the Huexotzinco Codex, a collection of papers that outline a visual history of Indigenous resistance to Spanish colonial rule. Specifically, the Huexotzinco Codex describes the brutal actions of Nuño de Guzmán, a Spaniard who extorted the Nahuatl people for tributes that would have been considered excessive even by other Spaniards at the time. The Nahuatl people took legal action against Guzmán, using the Codex as evidence. They won their case. This article is available at the following link: <https://blogs.loc.gov/kluge/2022/06/a-16th-century-codex-tells-a-story-of-resistance-to-colonial-rule/>. Students can read this article as a stand-alone activity, or they may engage in the following exercise below to interpret the Huexotzinco Codex on their own.

#### **Process:**

- Tell students that today they will analyze the Huexotzinco Codex, a series of images drawn by Indigenous artist-scribes.
- Ask students to make a T chart on a piece of paper.



- Analyze the images of the Codex here: <https://mapas.wired-humanities.org/huexotzinco>. On one side of their T-chart, students may write their responses regarding the following prompts: What do they notice? What are they able to identify in the images? What story do they think it tells? What questions do they have? Students can share with a partner, and the teacher can chart some common responses on the board.
- Read Dr. Lauren Kilroy-Ewbank's analysis of the Codex (<https://smarthistory.org/codex-huexotzinco/>). The descriptions identify the images in the pictures and describe the measurements indicated by the artists. On the other side of the T chart, students can answer the following questions: What did they learn? Were their initial ideas similar or different from Kilroy-Ewbank's analysis? What is their opinion about the "tributes" paid by the Indigenous peoples to the Spanish colonizers?

#### **APPROACH 4: INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE RESEARCH ACTIVITY**

Although Luz Jiménez was not allowed to speak her native language, Nahuatl, in school, she later had the opportunity to teach it at the College of Mexico City. Nahuatl is a language spoken by many people today and is still a topic studied in schools, thanks to the contributions of Luz and others. However, Nahuatl is just one of many Indigenous languages spoken throughout Latin America. Examples of Indigenous languages spoken in Mexico, Central America, and South America include Nahuatl, Yucatec Maya, Mixtec, K'iche, Q'eqchi', Quechua, Guarani, Aymara, and more. The teacher can reach out to someone who teaches one of these languages and can ask for them to offer a mini-lesson on Zoom. Students may also be engaged by watching TikToks or Instagram videos of creators who promote Indigenous languages. One example is @klan\_cipaktli on Instagram, a Nahuatl teacher.

In the United States, there have been several initiatives to promote the study of Indigenous languages. The Foreign Language and Area Studies (FLAS) Fellowships Program is one example. FLAS fellowships offer a scholarship for university students who are interested in studying a less commonly taught language, including Nahuatl, Quechua, and Yucatec Maya. Students can research the course offerings at local universities to see if Indigenous languages are offered or if university students are able to obtain a FLAS fellowship to learn a language with another institution.

Another option is to break into groups to investigate a specific language using online resources. Students may choose to answer the following questions:

- What is the origin of the language? When and where did it begin?
- What language family is it in? What are some other languages in this family?
- How many people speak the language today? Where are they located?



- Historically, was this language taught in schools? Is it taught in schools today?
- What are some words in this language?
- What are some of the linguistic features of this language?

## APPROACH 5: A DEEP DIVE INTO MEXICAN HISTORY

### La Conquista

James Fredrick's article, "500 Years Later, The Spanish Conquest Of Mexico Is Still Being Debated" describes the questionable veracity of Hernán Cortés' narrative regarding The Spanish Conquest. According to Cortés, the Spanish conquistadors arrived at Tenochtitlán, where Emperor Montezuma II greeted them and peacefully acknowledged their divine right to rule the land. Cortés then claimed the Spaniards lived in Tenochtitlán peacefully until "rebellious" Aztecs launched an attack; after gaining reinforcements, the Spaniards returned to conquer the city. This story remained the dominant narrative for over 500 years. However, historians and archeologists investigated the evidence of this story and noted a variety of inaccuracies and omissions. This article illustrates the political nature of developing historical narratives and can lead students to analyze the following questions:

- Whose version of history is the dominant narrative? Why do you think that is?
- What is conveyed through this narrative? What purpose does that serve?
- What does this show us about the process of analyzing historical events?

This text was also part of a segment on NPR radio, and the audio version is linked at the beginning of the page. Frederick's article can be found here:

<https://www.npr.org/2019/11/10/777220132/500-years-later-the-spanish-conquest-of-mexico-is-still-being-debated>.

### The Mexican Revolution

*¡Viva La Revolución! An Educator's Guide to the Mexican Revolution* is a comprehensive teaching resource created by the University of New Mexico's Latin American and Iberian Institute. This 381-page guide provides a range of activities for 9-12 educators to use when teaching about the Mexican Revolution. As the resource describes, the Mexican Revolution was a watershed moment that changed the course of history in Mexico; however, it is an event that is often skimmed over in textbooks. Given that this was one of the first revolutions caught on film, the unit provides access to an archive of photos and two films that teachers can show to pique students' interest. The unit plan also includes a variety of dynamic activities, some of which are described below:

- **Scavenger hunt:** Each student will take on the role of a historical figure or a member of a group (such as a laborer from Veracruz). After reading about this individual's stance on the war, students will walk around the room to find people who match each of the questions on the scavenger hunt. One example is, "Find someone who was affected by the war. Who is this person? How was this person affected?"



- **Role-play:** During the Convention at Aguascalientes activity, students will break into four groups, each of whom will act in the interest of an important historical figure who attended the event. After reviewing information about their historical figure, students will write an analysis of their needs then “attend” the Convention at Aguascalientes and try to negotiate in their interests.

Students also have the chance to examine primary sources such as the Plan de San Luis Potosí, in which Francisco I. Madero challenged the longtime ruler of Mexico, Porfirio Díaz, declaring the 1910 elections illegal and calling for armed rebellion.

In addition to providing historical context and a timeline for teachers, the resource provides step-by-step lessons and supplemental media from other websites like PBS. The resource can be found here:

<https://laili.unm.edu/info/k-12-educators/assets/documents/mexican-revolution/complete-guide.pdf>.

## MULTIMEDIA RESOURCES

To complement and enhance teaching about *Child of the Flower-Song People*, we've compiled the following selective multimedia resources that are available at no cost online.

### INTERVIEWS WITH GLORIA AMESCUA AND DUNCAN TONATIUH

- Read “[Austin Writer Gloria Amescua on How Luz Jiménez's Life Inspired Her Picture Book](#)”  
This article illustrates Amescua's connection to Luz Jiménez, explaining how Luz's deep connection to her Nahua heritage made Amescua want to discover a deeper connection to her own Mexican culture.
- Watch “[Read Around the World | Author: Gloria Amescua](#)”  
Amescua provides an interview describing her early interest in writing and shares information about Luz Jiménez, with photographs and images of her depictions in paintings. She also delves into her writing process, including images of her initial brainstorming and subsequent revisions. The segment is best started at 1:50.
- Read “[Duncan Tonatiuh Wants Latino Children to See Themselves in Books](#)”  
Tonatiuh talks about the importance his work has for young children, and why it's so critical for Latino/a readers to see themselves in the books they read in this NBC article.

### FILM AND AUDIO ABOUT LUZ JIMÉNEZ

- Watch “[Doña Luz Jiménez – La Mujer Indígena Olvidada Más Conocida Por Todos](#)”  
This resource outlines a comprehensive history of Luz Jiménez, establishing her story in the context of the Mexican Revolution and describing the injustices she faced as an Indigenous woman. The resource also includes a variety of photographs of Luz and examples of her depictions in paintings. The video is in Spanish.



- Watch “[Doña Luz Jiménez / La Histeria de México](#)”

In this video recording of a podcast, the hosts describe a detailed history of Luz Jiménez, providing a general overview of her life and adding additional information about the Mexican Revolution and the artists with whom she worked. This video is in Spanish and can be watched or listened to as a podcast.



## COMPLEMENTARY LITERATURE

### CHILDREN'S LITERATURE

Titles marked with \* are Americas Award selections.

*A Land of Books: Dreams of Young Mexibcah Word Painters* by Duncan Tonatiuh. Harry N. Abrams, 2022.

A young Aztec girl tells her little brother how their parents create beautiful painted manuscripts, or codices. She explains to him how paper is made from local plants and how the long paper is folded into a book. Her parents and others paint the codices to tell the story of their people's way of life, documenting their history, science, tributes, and sacred rituals. Duncan Tonatiuh's lyrical prose and beloved illustration style, inspired by the pre-Columbian codices, tell the story of how—contrary to the historical narrative that European colonizers bestowed “civilization” and knowledge to the Americas—the Aztec and their neighbors in the Valley of Mexico painted books and records long before Columbus arrived, and continued doing so among their Nahuatl-speaking descendants for generations after the Spanish Conquest. From an award-winning author-illustrator, *A Land of Books* pays tribute to Mesoamerican ingenuity and celebrates the universal power of books.

\**A Movie in My Pillow/ Una Película en mi Almohada* written by Jorge Argueta and illustrated by Elizabeth Gómez. Lee and Low Books, 2007.

A young boy with two homelands and a delightful sense of wonder comes to life in Jorge Argueta's first collection of poems for children. Young Jorgito lives in San Francisco's Mission District, but he hasn't forgotten his native El Salvador. He recalls the volcanoes, the tasty cornmeal pupusas, and his grandmother's stories. As he changes from timid newcomer to seasoned city dweller, Jorgito's memories and new adventures form a patchwork of dreams -- the movie in his pillow -- that is perfectly suited to his new bicultural identity. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

*Aquí Era el paraíso / Here Was Paradise Selección de poemas de Humberto Ak'abal / Selected Poems of Humberto Ak'abal* and illustrated by Amelia Lau Carling. Groundwood Books, 2021.

A collection of poetry by one of the greatest Indigenous poets of the Americas about the vanished world of his childhood — that of the Maya K'iche'. *Aquí era el paraíso / Here Was Paradise* is a selection of poems written by the great Maya poet Humberto Ak'abal. They evoke his childhood in and around the Maya K'iche' village of Momostenango, Guatemala, and also describe his own role as a poet of the place.

Ak'abal writes about children, and grandfathers, and mothers, and animals, and ghosts, and thwarted love, and fields, and rains, and poetry, and poverty, and death. The poetry was written for adults but can





also be read and loved by young people, especially in this collection, beautifully illustrated by award-winning Guatemalan-American illustrator Amelia Lau Carling. Ak'abal is famous worldwide as one of the great contemporary poets in the Spanish language, and one of the greatest Indigenous poets of the Americas. Ak'abal first composed his poems in K'iche' in his mind before writing them down in Spanish.

*Diego* by Jeanette Winter and Jonah Winter. Dragonfly Books, 1994.

This story of Diego Rivera, the greatest muralist of Mexico—and of the world—is told in Spanish and English. Vibrant miniature paintings convey the sense of adventure and magic that marked Rivera's early years. And the story shows how his passion for painting and love for his country combined to make a powerful art celebrating the Mexican people.

*Diego Rivera: His World and Ours* by Duncan Tonatiuh. Harry N. Abrams, 2011.

Diego Rivera, one of the most famous painters of the twentieth century, was once just a mischievous little boy who loved to draw. But this little boy would grow up to follow his passion and greatly influence the world of art. After studying in Spain and France as a young man, Diego was excited to return to his home country of Mexico. There, he toured from the coasts to the plains to the mountains. He met the peoples of different regions and explored the cultures, architecture, and history of those who had lived before. Returning to Mexico City, he painted great murals representing all that he had seen. He provided the Mexican people with a visual history of who they were and, most important, who they are.

*El Areyto de la Pluma* by Tere Marcichal-Lugo and illustrated by Tere Marichal-Lugo. Independently published, 2019.

A los taínos y las taínas les encantaba bailar, cantar y contar cuentos. El areito de la plumate invita a bailar. Mueve tu cuerpo y tus manos de acuerdo a lo que te dice el texto, ¡y crearás tu areito!

*Ella Cara Deloria: Dakota Language Protect* by Diane Wilson and illustrated by Tashia Hart. Wise Ink Creative Publishing, 2020.

Ella Cara Deloria loved to listen to her family tell stories in the Dakota language. She recorded many American Indian peoples' stories and languages and shared them with everyone. She helped protect her people's language for future generations. She also wrote many stories of her own. Her story is a Minnesota Native American life.

*Feathered Serpent and the Five Suns: A Mesoamerican Creation Myth* by Duncan Tonatiuh. Harry N. Abrams, 2020.



Long ago, the gods of Mesoamerica set out to create humans. They tried many times during each sun, or age. When all their attempts failed and the gods grew tired, only one did not give up: Quetzalcóatl—the Feathered Serpent. To continue, he first had to retrieve the sacred bones of creation guarded by Mictlantecuhtli, lord of the underworld. Gathering his staff, shield, cloak, and shell ornament for good luck, Feathered Serpent embarked on the dangerous quest to create humankind. Duncan Tonatiuh brings to life the story of Feathered Serpent, one of the most important deities in ancient Mesoamerica. With his instantly recognizable, acclaimed art style and grand storytelling, Tonatiuh recounts a thrilling creation tale of epic proportions.

*Jovita Wore Pants: The Story of A Mexican Freedom Fighter* by Aid Salazar and illustrated by Molly Mendoza. Scholastic Press, 2023.

Jovita dreamed of wearing pants! She hated the big skirts Abuela made her wear. She wanted to scale the tallest mesquite tree on her rancho, ride her horse, and feel the wind curl her face into a smile. When her father and brothers joined the Cristero War to fight for religious freedom, Jovita wanted to go, too. Forbidden, she defied her father's rules – and society's – and found a clever way to become a trailblazing revolutionary, wearing pants! This remarkable true story about a little-known maverick Mexican heroine is brought vividly to life by her great-niece and Américas Award–winner Aida Salazar, and Eisner Award–honoree Molly Mendoza.

*Napi Funda un Pueblo/ Napi Makes a Village* written by Antonio Ramirez, illustrated by Domi, and translated by Elisa Armando. Groundwood Books, 2010.

In this story, Napí and her Mazateca community are displaced from their land because the government is building a dam. They journey to another land and Napí details what she saw and what has changed for her family. When her father suffers an injury, she finds her father's assistance. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

\**Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale* written and illustrated by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2013.

Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote opens with festive scenes of the Rabbit family preparing for Papá Rabbit's homecoming. Musicians, family and friends gather to welcome home Papá who had traveled north to work in the carrot and lettuce fields, years before. Plates of mole, rice and beans are prepared in anticipation of his arrival and the house is strung with papel picado. When Papá Rabbit doesn't arrive, his son Pancho decides to sneak away in the dark of the night to find him. The reader follows the young rabbit as he travels north with the aid of a sneaky coyote by train, by river, by tunnel, and by desert. Tonatiuh bravely presents the controversial issue of illegal immigration through the lens of a children's fable. Inspired by 14th century Mixtec codices and traditional folklore, the author / illustrator presents



the sometimes startling realities of many modern day immigrants in a form which can be appreciated by both young and old alike. (Grades Kindergarten and up)

Classroom Resources: [Educator's Guide for Pancho Rabbit and the Coyote: A Migrant's Tale](#) written by Katrina Dillon on behalf of CLASP.

*Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide* by Isabel Quintero and illustrated by Zeke Pena. Getty, 2018.

Graciela Iturbide was born in México City in 1942, the oldest of 13 children. When tragedy struck Iturbide as a young mother, she turned to photography for solace and understanding. From then on Iturbide embarked on a photographic journey that has taken her throughout her native México, from the Sonora Desert to Juchitán to Frida Kahlo's bathroom, to the United States, India, and beyond. *Photographic* is a symbolic, poetic, and deeply personal graphic biography of this iconic photographer. Iturbide's journey will excite readers of all ages as well as budding photographers, who will be inspired by her resolve, talent, and curiosity.

*Rainbow Weaver/Tejedora del Arcoiris* by Lindo Elovitz Marshall and illustrated by Elisa Chavarri. Lee & Low Books, 2016.

A young Mayan girl isn't allowed to use her mother's thread to weave, so with a little ingenuity she discovers how to repurpose plastic bags to create colorful weavings. Based on an actual recycling movement in Guatemala.

*Stand as Tall as the Trees: How an Amazonian Community Protected the Rain Forest* by Patricia Gualinga and Laura Resau and illustrated by Vanessa Jaramillo. Charlesbridge, 2023.

Patricia (Paty) Gualinga grew up in her Kichwa village in the Amazon of Ecuador where mystical beings called Amazanga help protect the forest. Paty traveled away from home for school until she was called back—companies that said the government sold them property were destroying her people's lands to look for oil. The Kichwa community worked with other Indigenous groups to bring the Ecuadorian government to the Court of Human Rights.

*Stolen Words* by Melanie Florence and Gabrielle Grimard. Second Story Press, 2017.

When a little girl comes home from school one day and asks her grandpa how to say something in his Cree language, he is sad that he cannot teach her. He tells her that his words were stolen from him when he was taken to live at a residential school as a boy. The little girl then sets out to help her grandpa find his language again.

*Talking With Mother Earth/ Hablando con Madre Tierra* by Jorge Argueta and illustrated by Lucia Angela Perez. Groundwood Books, 2006.



Raw, honest and powerful, these moving bilingual poems by noted Salvadoran poet Jorge Argueta explore a young native boy's connection to Mother Earth and how he is healed from the terrible wounds of racism he has endured. Tetl has learned from his grandmother about the spirituality of his ancestors, about how they viewed the earth as alive with sacred meaning. This helps him move from doubt and fear, created by the taunts of other children, to self-acceptance and a discovery of his love for nature.

*The Girl from Chimel* by Rigoberta Menchú with Dante Liano, illustrated by Domi. Groundwood Books, 2005.

Nobel Peace Prize winner and Mayan activist Rigoberta Menchú brings the world of her earliest childhood vividly to life in this colorful book. Before the war in Guatemala and despite the hardships that the Mayan people endured, life in the Mayan villages of the highlands had a beauty and integrity. This was forever changed by the conflict and brutal genocide that was to come. Menchú's stories of her grandparents and parents, of the natural world that surrounded her, and her retelling of the stories that she was told present a rich, humorous, and engaging portrait of that lost world. Domi draws on the Mayan landscape and rich craftwork to create the stunning illustrations that complement this engaging story.

*The Honey Jar* by Rigoberta Menchú and Domi and illustrated by Dante Liano. Groundwood Books, 2006.

The Honey Jar brings us the ancient stories her grandparents told her when she was a little girl, and we can imagine her listening to them by the fire at night. These Maya tales include creation myths, a classic story about the magic twins (which can also be found in the Popol Vuh), explanations of how and why certain natural phenomena came to exist, and animal tales. The underworld, the sky, the sun and moon, plants, people, animals, gods and demi-gods are all present in these stories, and through them we come to know more about the elements that shaped the Mayas' understanding of the world.

*The Journey of Tunuri and the Blue Deer: A Huichol Indian Story* by James Endredy and illustrated by Maria Hernandez de la Cruz and Casimiro de la Cruz Lopez. Bear Cub Books, 2003.

The Journey of Tunuri and the Blue Deer is a modern adaptation of a traditional Huichol story depicting a young child finding his (or her) personal task in life by connecting with the powers of nature. The story is told through the experiences of young Tunuri, who becomes lost in the woods. He meets the magical Blue Deer--a messenger between the worlds of mortals and deities--who introduces Tunuri to Father Sun, Mother Earth, and others in the natural world, while leading him back to his human family. Through this lovely tale and the vivid illustrations done in the medium of traditional Huichol yarn drawings, children can learn about their place in the sacred web of life.

*The Princess and the Warrior: A Tale of Two Volcanoes* by Duncan Tonatiuh. Abrams Books for Young Readers, 2016.



An Educator's Guide to *Child of the Flower-Song People* by Gloria Amescua

Izta was the most beautiful princess in the land, and suitors traveled from far and wide to woo her. Even though she was the daughter of the emperor, Izta had no desire to marry a man of wealth and power. Instead, she fell in love with Popoca, a brave warrior who fought in her father's army—and a man who did not offer her riches but a promise to stay by her side forever. The emperor did not want his daughter to marry a mere warrior, but he recognized Popoca's bravery. He offered Popoca a deal: If the warrior could defeat their enemy, Jaguar Claw, then the emperor would permit Popoca and Izta to wed. But Jaguar Claw had a plan to thwart the warrior. Would all be lost? Today two majestic volcanoes—Popocatepetl and Iztaccíhuatl—stand overlooking Mexico City. They have been admired and revered for countless generations and have formed the basis of many origin and creation myths. The integration of Nahuatl words (defined with a pronunciation guide in the glossary) into the narrative provides a rich opportunity to introduce and explore another facet of ancient Aztec culture. Take your child on an adventure back in time to a land of color and beauty.

*The Sea-Ringed World: Sacred Stories of the Americas* by Maria Garcia Esperon and David Bowles and illustrated by Amanda Mijangos. Levine Querido, 2021.

Fifteen thousand years before Europeans stepped foot in the Americas, people had already spread from tip to tip and coast to coast. Like all humans, these Native Americans sought to understand their place in the universe, the nature of their relationship with the divine, and the origin of the world into which their ancestors had emerged.

*The Youngest Sister* by Suniyay Moreno and illustrated by Mariana Chiesa. Greystone Kids, 2022.

In the Andean foothills, a five-year-old Quechua girl is entrusted with a big job: to collect a marrow bone from the neighbor for the family soup. A stunning debut from Indigenous author Suniyay Moreno. Picu's family is very poor. In the dry Andean foothills, her mother must feed fourteen people—her kids, her relatives' kids, and the hired hand's kids—every day. One morning, Picu, the youngest sister, is sent to get a marrow bone from a neighbor. The bone will add flavor and nutrition to the lunchtime soup. Her mother warns her not to dawdle on the two-hour walk, each way, through the wild landscape. But Picu can't help it! She marvels at the butterflies, samples the cactus fruit, and daydreams about using the marrow bone as a football. Will the neighbor let her family keep the bone after the soup is made? Will her mother let her play with it? And will she be punished for being so late?

*We Are Still Here! Native American Truths Everyone Should Know* by Traci Sorell and illustrated by Frane Lessac. Charlesbridge, 2021.

Twelve Native American kids present historical and contemporary laws, policies, struggles, and victories in Native life, each with a powerful refrain: We are still here! Precise, lyrical writing presents topics including forced assimilation, land allotment and Native tribal reorganization, termination, relocation,



self-determination, Native civil rights, the Indian Child Welfare Act (ICWA), religious freedom, economic development, Native language revival efforts, cultural persistence, and nationhood.

\* *Xochitl and the Flowers / Xóchitl, la Niña de las Flores* by Jorge Argueta and illustrated by Carl Angel. Children's Book Press, 2008.

Miles away from their home in El Salvador, Xochitl (SOH-cheel) and her family make a new home in the United States, but nothing is the same. Xochitl mourns a lovely garden and her family's small flower business, all left behind. Selling flowers on the street soon provides more than income for the Flores family: they begin to make friends with local storeowners and neighbors. But it is not until the family decides to start a nursery in its backyard that Xochitl begins to learn the true value of community in their adopted country. Basing his narrative on real-life events, prize-winning poet Jorge Argueta has crafted a tender, poetic, and moving story about a family's determination to set down roots and about their child's blooming among friends and neighbors. Artist Carl Angel's authentic and brilliant artwork splendidly documents this quintessentially American immigration story. (Grades Kindergarten and up) Classroom Resources: [Teacher's Guide to Xochitl and the Flowers](#) produced by Children's Book Press and Lee & Low Books.

*Zandunga The Taíno Warrior* by Robert Solano and illustrated by Stephanie Geyer. Alpha Couples LLC, 2021. Boys and girls ages 4 to 8 will love this bilingual story. Learn about the Taíno people, the indigenous people of the Caribbean Islands. Set in the land of precolonial Haiti and the Dominican Republic, this book follows the story of Zandunga, an ambitious young girl. Despite being a poor farm girl, Zandunga sets out to become a Taíno warrior. This story is an inspiration for children to use creative problem solving to overcome difficult challenges. Follow Zandunga on her quest to become a Taíno warrior.

## YOUNG ADULT LITERATURE

*Barefoot Dreams of Petra Luna* by Alda P. Dobbs. Sourcebooks Young Readers, 2022.

It is 1913, and twelve-year-old Petra Luna's mama has died while the Revolution rages in Mexico. Before her papa is dragged away by soldiers, Petra vows to him that she will care for the family she has left—her abuelita, little sister Amelia, and baby brother Luisito—until they can be reunited. They flee north through the unforgiving desert as their town burns, searching for safe harbor in a world that offers none.

*Migrant/Migrante* written by José Manuel Mateo and illustrated by Javier Martínez Pedro. Abrams, 2014.

A Mexican boy tells of his journey to the U.S. with his family. They must face many dangers to cross the border, only to experience the uncertainty felt by all illegal immigrants. The narrative is accompanied by



one long, beautifully vivid illustration reminiscent of pre-Hispanic codices, packaged as an accordion-style foldout frieze.

*Solimar: The Sword of the Monarchs* by Pam Muñoz Ryan. Thorndike Striving Reader, 2022. 208 pgs.

Award-winning author Ryan has masterfully crafted a story using cultural elements from Mexico with a generous sprinkling of magic. In this story of courage, determination, and ingenuity, readers will cheer on Solimar in her arduous journey to save what is near and dear to her heart." --Booklist "I advise you to tell no one about the gift unless you trust them implicitly." Ever since Solimar was a little girl, she has gone to the oyamel forest bordering her kingdom to observe the monarch butterflies during their migration, but always from a safe distance. Now, on the brink of her quinceañera and her official coronation, Solimar crosses the dangerous creek to sit among the butterflies. There, a mysterious event gives her a gift and a burden--the responsibility to protect the young and weak butterflies with her magical rebozo, or silk shawl. Solimar is committed to fulfilling her role, and has a plan that might have worked. But when her father, the king, and her brother, the prince, leave on an expedition, a neighboring king overthrows the kingdom and holds everyone left in the village hostage. It takes all of Solimar's courage to escape and then embark on a dangerous journey to save her kingdom, but she's not alone. Her pet bird, Lázaro, the butterflies she protects, and a magical rag doll, Zarita, are with her. Then, at a precarious moment, she meets a river boy who knows the rapids. Even with help, can Solimar save her family, the kingdom, and the future of the monarchs from a greedy king? Middle-grade fans of Pam Muñoz Ryan's *Esperanza Rising* will find a new Mexican heroine to love in Solimar and a fresh, magical story! (Grades 3rd -7th)

*The Corn Grows Ripe* by Dorothy Rhoads, illustrated by Jean Charlot. Puffin Books, 1993.

Can Tigre find the strength and courage to support his family? When Tigre's father is badly injured in an accident, the family is thrown into turmoil. Who will plant and harvest the corn that they need to survive—and to please the Mayan gods? The neighbors have fields of their own to tend, and Tigre's mother and grandmother cannot do it on their own. Twelve-year-old Tigre has never done a man's work before. Can he shoulder the burden on his own, and take his father's place?

*The Queen of Water* by Laura Resau and Marina Virginia Farinango. Ember, 2012. 368 pgs.

Born in an Andean village in Ecuador, Virginia lives with her family in a small, earthen-walled dwelling. In her Indigenous community, it is not uncommon to work in the fields all day, even as a child, or to be called a *longa tonta*—stupid Indian—by members of the privileged class of mestizos, or Spanish descendants. When seven-year-old Virginia is taken from her home to be a servant to a mestizo couple, she has no idea what the future holds. In this poignant novel based on her own story, the inspiring María Virginia Farinango has collaborated with acclaimed author Laura Resau to recount one girl's



An Educator's Guide to *Child of the Flower-Song People* by Gloria Amescua

unforgettable journey to find her place in the world. It will make you laugh and cry, and ultimately, it will fill you with hope. (Grades 6th and up)

*The Storm Runner* by J.C Cervantes. Rick Riordan Presents, 2018. 448 pgs.

Zane has always enjoyed exploring the dormant volcano near his home in New Mexico, even though hiking it is challenging. He'd much rather hang out there with his dog, Rosie, than go to middle school, where kids call him Sir Limps a Lot, McGimpster, or Uno — for his one good leg. What Zane doesn't know is that the volcano is a gateway to another world and he is at the center of a powerful prophecy. A new girl at school, Brooks, informs him that he's destined to release an evil god from the ancient Maya relic he is imprisoned in — unless she can find and remove it first. Together they return to the volcano, where all kinds of crazy happens. Brooks turns into a hawk, a demon attacks them in a cave, and Rosie gives her all while trying to protect Zane. When Zane decides to save his dog no matter the cost, he is thrust into an adventure full of surprising discoveries, dangerous secrets, and an all-out war between the gods, one of whom happens to be his father. To survive, Zane will have to become the Storm Runner. But how can he run when he can't even walk well without a cane? Feisty heroes, tricky gods, murderous demons, and spirited giants are just some of the pleasures that await in this fresh and funny take on Maya mythology, as rich and delicious as a mug of authentic hot chocolate.