



Margarita Engle received the 2016 (Pura) Belpré Author Award for *Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings: A Memoir* (Atheneum/Simon & Schuster).

Her acceptance remarks were delivered by a representative from Simon & Schuster at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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



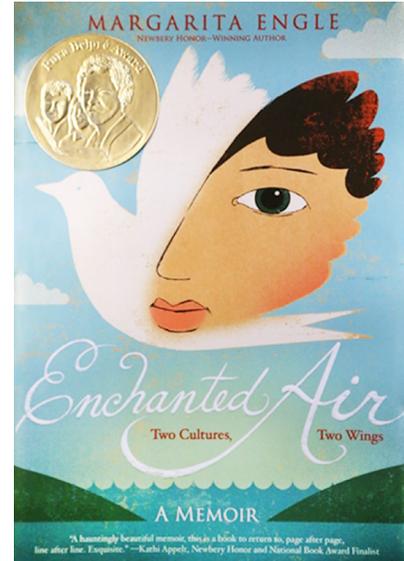
Belpré

AUTHOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Thank you! Gracias, y gracias a Dios! I am so incredibly grateful to the Pura Belpré committee, REFORMA, ALSC, my editor Reka Simonsen, Justin Chanda, Candace Greene McManus, Michelle Leo, illustrator Edel Rodríguez, and everyone at Atheneum/Simon & Schuster.

I've written many historical novels, but writing nonfiction about my own life was terrifying. Some of the memories were joyful, but others were excruciating. I chose to focus on travel, those childhood summers with the extended family in Cuba. I decided that free verse would allow me to transform the past into present tense, bringing childhood emotions back to life, and softening the blow of history with the rhythmic comforts of language. Even though this book was written at a time when there was no public glimmer of hope for renewed relations between Cuba and the U.S., I wanted it to be read as a story about hope.

During the same week when advanced review copies of *Enchanted Air* arrived on my doorstep, President Obama announced that U.S.-Cuba diplomatic relations would be restored after 54 years of Cold War hostility. My memoir, written as a plea for peace and reconciliation, had been transformed into a song of thanks.



When I dedicated *Enchanted Air* to the world's estimated 10 million stateless people, I had no way of knowing that by the time it was published, there would be more than fifty million, many of them children and teens who visit your libraries. I hope this book will not just speak to Latinos, with our wide variety of reasons for being unable to visit *abuelita y los primos*, but also to readers from other backgrounds, who might feel divided or doubled for any reason, half belonging and half shunned. Many adult children of immigrants have told me they share my sense of an invisible twin left behind. We grew up wondering. We grew up imagining.

Margarita Engle is a Cuban-American author who grew up in Los Angeles, spending summers in her mother's homeland of Cuba. She has written numerous verse books, and has received three Belpré Author Awards and three Belpré Honors. *Enchanted Air* also has won an inaugural Walter Dean Myers Award Honor, the inaugural Arnold Adoff Teen Poetry Award, and the Lee Bennett Hopkins Poetry Award. Engle lives with her husband in central California.

FUN FACT: Margarita trained as a botanist and agronomist before becoming a full-time poet and novelist.



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AUTHOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

We live in the space between countries. In my case, that space was both an ocean, and the hyphen between words.

From *Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings* by Margarita Engle

NO PLACE ON THE MAP

After those first soaring summers,
each time we fly back to our everyday
lives in California, one of my two selves
is left behind: the girl I would be
if we lived on Mami's island
instead of Dad's continent.

On maps, Cuba is crocodile-shaped,
but when I look at a flat paper outline,
I cannot see the beautiful farm
on that crocodile's belly.
I can't find the palm trees,
or bright coral beaches
where flying fish leap,
gleaming
like rainbows.

Sometimes, I feel
like a rolling wave of the sea,
a wave that can only belong
in between
the two solid shores.

Sometimes, I feel
like a bridge,
or a storm.

After the loss of travel rights, written words became a refuge. I hope *Enchanted Air* will help young readers see that all our stories are important, and that when we share them, we begin to understand each other, developing empathy, which is the first step toward peacemaking.

From *Enchanted Air: Two Cultures, Two Wings* by Margarita Engle

REFUGE

The ugliness of war photos
and the uncertainty of TV news
join the memory of FBI questions
to make me feel like climbing into
my own secret world.

Books are enchanted. Books help me travel.
Books help me breathe.

When I climb a tree, I take a book with me.
When I walk home from school, I carry
My own poems, inside my mind,
where no one else
can reach the words
that are entirely
completely
forever
mine.

Thank you!

Gracias, y gracias a Dios!



David Bowles received the 2016 (Pura) Belpré Author Honor for *The Smoking Mirror* (IFWG). His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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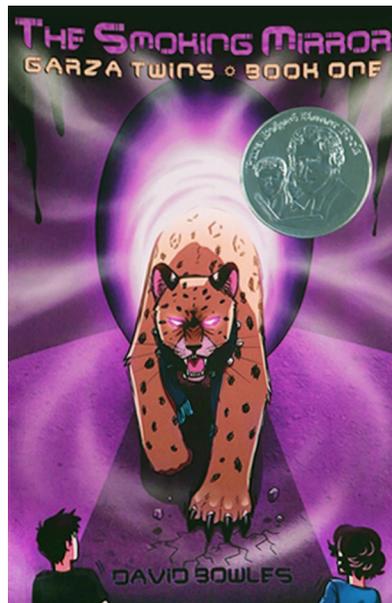
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AUTHOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

The 2016 Author Honor Book Award... *¡qué emoción!* Thanks to the Pura Belpré Award committee, REFORMA and ALSC, as well as to Gerry Huntman and the rest of the team at IFWG for believing in the Garza Twins and their romp through Mesoamerican mythology. I'd also be remiss if I didn't mention the unending support of my wife Angélica and our three children—Helene, Charlene, and Angelo.

Of course, the people I really owe a debt of gratitude are librarians in general. Sure, I learned my love of *leyendas y cuentos* at the knee of my Grandmother Garza, in my *tías'* kitchens, on my *tío's* ranch, from my father's bedtime tales. But it was librarians who took my hunger for story and transformed it into literacy, guiding me through the stacks to books they knew would bridge the gap between my family's working-class lore and the widened vistas reading could afford me.

Then, during my teenage years—abandoned by my father, living on food stamps in Section 8 housing, fleeing gangs and violence and drugs—I sought refuge in the libraries of our little border town. Those saints of the printed word protected this strange, brooding *güero*, allowing me to escape the growing darkness of my life and find a path out of the projects in the pages of those books.



When my own kids came along, I couldn't wait to share all those worlds I had traveled. It became our custom to read books together—especially long, whopping fantasy and science-fiction series. Yet as we talked about what we loved and hated, we noticed a trend: so many of these adventures featured Anglo protagonists facing off against European monsters and gods. People of color, when they appeared, tended to be side-kicks at best. We could find characters like us in realistic fiction, sure, but speculative works? Not so much.

Wouldn't it be cool, we mused, to open

David Bowles grew up in South Carolina and south Texas in a family with deep Mexican-American and Southern roots. He received bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees from the University of Texas-Pan American. Bowles, who has spent over twenty years in education as a school teacher, administrator, and university lecturer, is also a translator, poet, and critic. He lives in the Río Grande Valley of Texas.

FUN FACT: David's book review column, "Top Shelf," which appears weekly in *The Monitor*, a regional newspaper, was recognized with an award for journalistic excellence by the Texas Associated Press in 2015.



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AUTHOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

the pages of a book and find, perhaps, a Latina facing off against Aztec and Maya gods? And we laughed because, sad to say, it seemed pretty unlikely.

The seed had been planted, however. As I went about other work—researching border legends, translating Nahuatl poetry—it put down roots and began to grow into a tale, informed by both aspects of my self: deep-rooted Mexican lore and the well-worn conventions of Western fantasy. Then Garza Twins blossomed in that *nepantla* of my bifurcated heart.

At its core *The Smoking Mirror* is a story, not about a solitary chosen one who must vanquish evil on his own, but about a broken-hearted brother and sister who find their magical powers are not enough, will never be enough. The only way they can dispel the darkness is through the support of a family and community who love them.

You see, that's the lesson I learned just a few miles from the Río Grande, books piling up around me. Without authors, illustrators, librarians, teachers, friends, *tíos*, *abuelos*, centuries of tradition...I would have been

devoured by despair. But with them at my side—*juntos en la eterna lucha*—I was able to survive.

Now I want to be part of that support team. I want kids like me to read about Carol and Johnny Garza's trek through the Underworld and to discover the power of solidarity, to take pride in their community, *en sus familias, en su historia*. The honor you've bestowed on me today makes it more likely that they will.

Mil gracias a todos.



Meg Medina received the 2016 (Pura) Belpré Author Honor for *Mango, Abuela, and Me* (Candlewick), illustrated by Angela Dominguez. Her acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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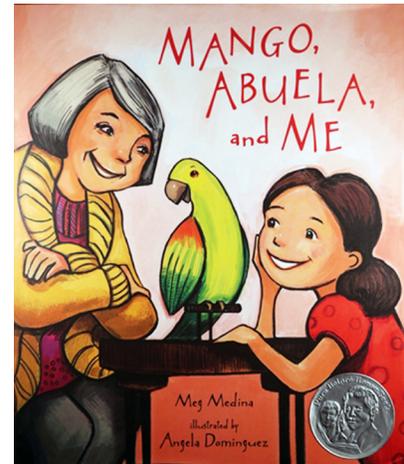
AUTHOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Thank you, everyone.

It's such a pleasure to be here with you all on the occasion of the twentieth anniversary of the Pura Belpré Award. I want to thank the 2016 committee for selecting *Mango, Abuela, and Me* as an Honor Book, especially during this very symbolic and important year for this award. I'm grateful to the Pura Belpré committee members—this year's group and the volunteers from every year prior—for having been so generous with their time and expertise, and for having the sheer grit to insist on an award that celebrates the Latino experience in the US.

This is and always will be a most meaningful award for those of us who receive it. At least, it is that way for me. It has been earned by some of my literary heroes and is an affirmation of who we are in the deepest and most personal way. It is an award that celebrates roots, loss, and the gaining of a new identity. It is also an award that I believe has opened doors for so many of our voices to be heard in classrooms and libraries across the country.

I am so proud that *Mango, Abuela, and Me* has been recognized with the honor. *Mango* is a story about a girl, an abuela, and a parrot. But mostly it's a story about family and love — two essential ingredients for happy



children. Through that lens, I looked at how language is both bridge and barrier in the lives of Latino families.

Those of us who grew up pecking for the right words in Spanish to tell our mothers about our lives know this experience well. And those elders who have ever longed to have closer relationships with their American-raised children, grandchildren, nieces, and nephews know that particular frustration, too. And of course, for the 4.4 million students who are enrolled in English as a Second Language programs in the US, the daily challenge of expression, of being heard, and of being respected across cultural lines is a living reality.

I want to thank Angela Dominguez for her beautiful illustrations; my editor, Kate Fletcher, for all the ques-

Cuban-American author Meg Medina writes for children of all ages. Her novel *Yaqui Delgado Wants to Kick Your Ass* won the 2014 Belpré Author Award, a CYBILS Fiction award, and the International Latino Book Award. In 2014, Medina was named one of LatinoStories.com's Top Ten Latino Authors to Watch. Medina lives with her family in Richmond, Virginia.

FUN FACT: When she is not writing, Meg works on community projects that support girls, Latino youth, and literacy.



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AUTHOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

tions and all the ways she makes me a better writer with each project we take on. I want to thank my agent, Jen Rofé—now on maternity leave with her first baby—for her tireless advocacy.

To Candlewick's marketing and publicity team, I owe huge gratitude. They are tireless about researching and experimenting with creative ways of reaching our families—most especially in offering my books in dual-language editions. I couldn't ask for a better team.

Thank you, everyone, for bestowing such an honor on this book. Thank you for celebrating Latino families. And thank you, most of all, for giving me a voice.



Rafael López received the 2016 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Award for *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl's Courage Changed Music* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt).

His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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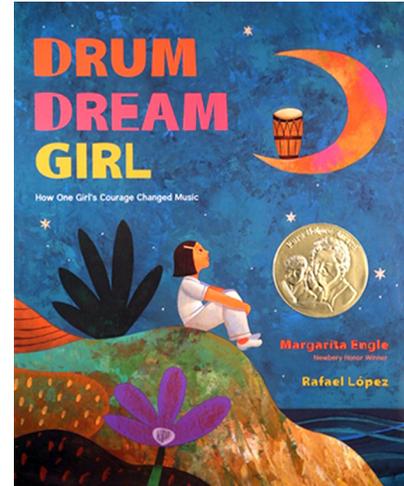
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ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Back in the mid-1950s, a young woman secretly enrolled in the UNAM School of Architecture in Mexico City. She joined the first generation that moved into the brand-new modern campus. A big deal! 293 male students and only seven women enrolled that year—pretty shocking numbers! But that didn't seem to bother her. Ever since she was a child, she had always wanted to build things for other people. She loved building for her younger sisters, too. As a fourteen-year-old, she didn't hesitate to test drive the small wooden plane she put together with an old thin bucket and some pieces of lumber for wings, confidently pushing her younger sister Carmen off the rooftop of their house for a test flight, with very predictable consequences. Thankfully, Carmen survived and the unexpected results didn't deter the young builder from continuing to build things.

And build she did: models of dreamy houses, impossibly tall circus tents, castles and caves and fantasy cities made of balsa wood and cardboard that she shared with her sisters and friends.

She rode a red bicycle to school, wore mostly pants, and was the shortstop of her school softball team, earning the regional record for the fastest stolen bases—and the most scraped elbows. She wore her hair short, to



the dismay of her parents and amusement of her sisters, and argued convincingly that it made for faster time around the bases.

And she continued to build things, secretly determined to one day become an architect.

Then there was the day when her father found out about her secret. He confronted her, insisting that an architectural career was nonsense and something only men do and to please consider becoming a seamstress, a nanny, or anything that girls should do until she could find a good husband to care for her. He also told her that he would stop paying for her education if she didn't quit this “nonsense.”

Rafael López grew up in Mexico City. His artistic style has its roots in Mexican surrealism, dichos, and myths. He received a Pura Belpré Honor and the Américas Award in 2006 for his first children's book, *My Name Is Celia*, written by Monica Brown. López also is an acclaimed muralist and has designed community-based mural projects nationwide. He divides his time between San Miguel de Allende, Mexico and San Diego.

FUN FACT: Rafael was the artist who created the USPS Latin Music Legends postage stamps.



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ILLUSTRATOR AWARD ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

She took a deep breath, calmly looked him straight in the eye, and told him she had already made up her mind. She would continue to build things, and would pay for her own education, if necessary, by cooking and catering for parties. You see! She was good at cooking, too!

She built wondrous cakes in the shapes of buildings.

As a graduate student, she got her first job assisting a famous furniture and interior designer from Cuba, a woman whom she greatly admired for her own resolution to break with the status quo of the time by doing something girls didn't traditionally do. After a long and productive stint, she fell in love with another architect, whom she married. They decided to start a small architectural firm. However, she told her husband that she needed creative independence to pursue her own dream projects—and continued to build.

As years went by, she found a new passion, the love of sharing what she had learned with other young women who also wanted to build things. She decided to become a teacher of architecture at the same campus where she had attended school, and then taught structural design, planning, and materials for over twenty-five years. She took her students on field trips to construction sites, where the big buildings were being built. Together they wore big helmets and heavy leather boots, climbing over chunks of lumber and ducking under massive pieces of steel, going up rickety scaffolds to dizzying heights to look down at the stuff being built. She looked around for a long time and smiled, and the students smiled, too. It made her feel alive and happy, and they were happy, too.

I remember visiting her in her classroom and seeing her passion for teaching, the love she gave her students, and the love they gave back. These young girls saw in her someone they could aspire to become one day.

Although I was only six years old, it feels as though it happened yesterday!

Why are these memories so clear? Because she took me there! She is my mother. Meet my drum dream girl.

The email arrived in the afternoon and Margarita Engle's powerful and inspirational poem lit up my screen. Based on a true story about a young girl who dreamed of becoming a drummer in a place that didn't approve of girl drummers, her struggle resonated with me as the story of my own mother. All I had to do was close my eyes and see that same determination through the spirit of a brave young girl on an island of music, in a city of drumbeats, not afraid to change the status quo, not afraid to change history.

This was a story of determination, a story I dared to dream would give me the opportunity to tell children they were free to dream, to become anything they wanted to be. It was a double dose of blessing: connecting to a familiar subject and the opportunity to collaborate with someone I had respected for so many years. Margarita Engle! I clearly remember saying YES with my heart before I blurted out, "Sure, this looks interesting."

Adding to this emotion was the fact that this was the story of a young musician. You see, I've always pretended to be a musician; just ask my family. I was five years old and living

in Mexico City when my bohemian uncle Ruben, a passionate musicologist, taught me to play the guitar. Too small to play it sitting down, I had to hold it upright like a bass. Other instruments soon followed, now permanent guests in our house, including a set of congas, bongos, and anything that makes noise. Just ask my son! See, I'm especially crazy for Cuban music, and over a decade ago I visited Cuba. Why? Because it was there and it was hard to go! Exotic, mysterious, forbidden—the magnetism was intoxicating. I organized a trip with a few likeminded friends also enchanted by the allure of the forbidden island of drumbeats. We experienced the beauty of the land and the warm smiles of people making music and singing their stories. Creating this book also gave me the opportunity to reconnect with this surreal and magical place.

I immersed myself in the story to learn all I could about this young heroine. Who was she? What did she look like? Searching for her name, Millo, the closest thing I found was that Milo is a chocolate and malt powder mixed with hot or cold water or milk to produce a beverage popular in many parts of the world. I sifted deeper on the Internet, surprised to find very little about her. Then it dawned on me what Margarita was doing. She was digging for stories of unsung heroes, and it was up to me to find out all I could, because this was a story that needed to be told.

At the same time, I like to think Margarita was channeling Pura Belpré's spirit, bringing to light an overlooked brave little girl, forgotten and ignored inside the pages of traditional history books. I can imagine Pura whispering in Margarita's ear the importance of telling the story of Millo Castro



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Zaldarriaga, a young Cuban girl who at an early age wanted to be a percussionist. What a ridiculous notion! In 1930s Cuba, drumming was only for boys! Margarita's poetic words about our hero unafraid to dream something so different, something others did not dare to dream, fueled every multi-colored brushstroke.

There are many people to thank, because creating a book takes a village!

Stefanie Von Borstel, my insightful agent, who brought Margarita's story to my doorstep. She and Adriana Dominguez have opened many doors of opportunity for me.

My editor, Jeannette Larson, for her sensitivity and experience that brought this book to a higher level. Thank you for your wise and spot-on advice, for your patience and friendship.

Thank you to Houghton Mifflin Harcourt for championing diverse books and diverse stories.

To my wife, Candice, for being my biggest supporter and fan all these years, even during my classic dark moments of self-doubt, for smiling

and looking me in the eye to reassure and remind me that illustration is my calling.

To my son, Santiago, for sharing his beautiful inner world and inspiring me to become a better and more understanding father.

And to Margarita Engle, for giving me the once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to let my brushes play with her poetic and powerful words.

Last, I want to thank the committee and REFORMA for their vision, resolve, and commitment to tell our stories.

And, of course, Pura.

Here we are in 2016, celebrating the twenty-year legacy of Pura Belpré. Her vision has opened doors of opportunity for Latino and Latina writers and illustrators to share authentic stories of our own cultural experience.

But this moment of hope comes at a time of reflection. There are those who want to close doors, to build walls, to keep diversity out. They tell us we should fear those who are different, be suspicious of anyone who

disagrees with our point of view. But words and images have the power to make convincing change. We must work hard and commit ourselves to this task, because with our stories we can teach that diversity is not a danger to be feared. Diversity is not a wall. Diversity is a bridge to trust, respect, enlightenment, and innovation.

It all begins by encouraging children to open a book and be inspired to reach their full potential, making sure they can see themselves in the pages of books because life is so much more than a single story. With diverse stories we go beyond stereotypes and misrepresentations to affirm that each life is different, unique, worthy of being recognized—another stitch in the bright tapestry of stories.

There has never been a more important time for us to stand up and stand together.

I would like to ask the writers and illustrators whose diverse voices have been heard in the past twenty years because of the Pura Belpré to stand up and be recognized.

Thank you!



Antonio Castro L. received a 2016 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for *My Tata's Remedies = Los remedios de mi tata* (Cinco Puntos), written by Roni Capin Rivera-Ashford. His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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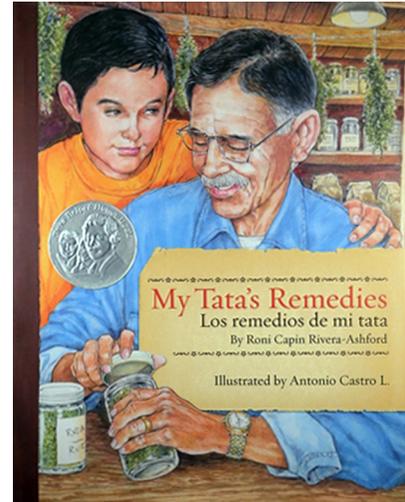


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ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

When Cinco Puntos offered me the chance to illustrate *My Tata's Remedies*, I was excited because my own grandmother used traditional medicine. If my legs ached, Abuela would wrap them with herbs soaked in rubbing alcohol. Actually, one of the herbs she used was marijuana! Tata's story also made me remember my grandmother's home, which was marked by warm hospitality. I reflected on those things as I was illustrating, trying with each image to show the love and generosity that are such a part of our Mexican culture. It was a rich pleasure to illustrate this book. Imagine my delight to be doubly rewarded with the Pura Belpré award!

I am honored to accept this award and thankful to the members of the Pura Belpré committee for giving it to me. I am also grateful to Lee, Bobby and John Byrd of Cinco Puntos Press for asking me to illustrate *My Tata's Remedies* and to Roni Capin Rivera-Ashford for writing this wonderful story of a grandfather's love for his grandson. I am especially pleased



that in illustrating *My Tata's Remedies*, I've been able to work together with my son Antonio Castro, who designed the book. When he was young, he used to sit in my studio and watch me work. Now that he has grown, we are working together again on the design and illustration of beautiful books like *My Tata's Remedies*.

Antonio Castro Lopez (L.), born in Zacatecas, Mexico, has lived in the Juarez-El Paso area most of his life. He has illustrated numerous children's books, including *Barry, the Bravest Saint Bernard*, *Pajaro Verde*, *The Treasure on Gold Street*, *The Day It Snowed Tortillas*, *The Gum-Chewing Rattler*, and most recently, *My Pet Rattlesnake*, his fourth collaboration with renowned storyteller Joe Hayes. His work has been exhibited in galleries and museums in Texas, Mexico City, Oaxaca, Spain, and Italy.

FUN FACT: In 2005, the government of the State of Chihuahua, Mexico, commissioned him to paint a mural for the government palace. The mural commemorates the anniversary of the Battle of Tomochic.



Angela Dominguez received a 2016 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for *Mango, Abuela, and Me* (Candlewick), written by Meg Medina. Her acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Hello, Everyone!

I'm so happy to be here today. I'm delighted to be here among friends, colleagues, and my family. I know my family is especially happy to be here because tomorrow we are going to see Harry Potter and then Disney World later on in the week.

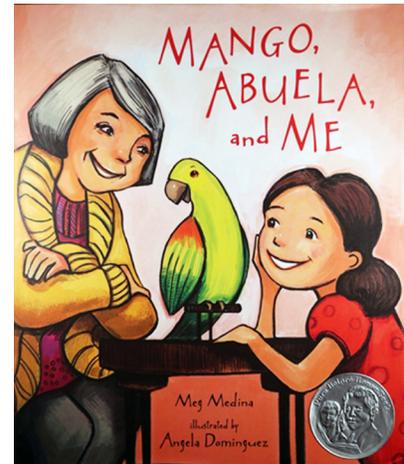
In all sincerity, this is incredible. I can't believe I'm up here again about to receive my second Pura Belpré Honor.

When I received the honor for *Maria Had A Little Llama*, it really did change my life. It gave me that extra validation I needed to leave San Francisco and move to New York to be closer to the center of publishing.

It's a decision I'm so grateful I made. Now living in New York, not only am I surrounded by peers, but I'm also constantly inspired. I've been able to write more and had the time to create more projects. Plus, it's pretty easy to have fun there.

Now, here we are, the second time around, and my life has gotten a definite upgrade again. The opportunities and experiences I have had since winning the honor for *Mango, Abuela, and Me* have been amazing.

I also feel especially lucky to have my mom here today. I won't say too much because last time I cried. I swore



there would be no onstage crying. So this time...I'll keep it light.

"Hey, Mom! You know you're amazing. I love you."

I also am lucky to have my big brother here. He was pretty much a second dad to me growing up.

"Hi, *hermano*. Love you."

Growing up, my mom, *hermano*, and I were the "Three Amigos" (minus the mariachi costumes.)

It was a pretty great childhood, but like everyone else there were challenges that made us stronger (and maybe slightly neurotic).

For example, we, the original three amigos, were alone in the States. The rest of my family, my mom's family,

Angela Dominguez was born in Mexico City, raised in Texas, and lived in San Francisco before settling in her current home of New York. She creates children's picture books, including *Maria Had a Little Llama*, which was a 2014 Belpré Illustrator Honor Book. Dominguez also teaches at the Academy of Art University and enjoys presenting at schools and libraries to many different ages.

FUN FACT: Angela was honored in 2013 with a Distinguished Alumni Award from the Academy of Art University.



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ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

lived in Mexico. We moved to United States when I was still a baby or toddler.

For whatever reason, call it creativity or mild dyslexia, my English and Spanish got jumbled. So we focused on English in the home and school. I mean I still heard Spanish constantly and could understand, but I was very reluctant to speak Spanish. This meant when my extended family came to visit, there was a language barrier between my relatives and me. I could understand them, but like Mia in the book, I spoke very *poquito* Spanish.

It's a very helpless feeling, being near someone who you know, but can't fully communicate with. People struggle with that even when there isn't a language barrier.

That is what really drew me to illustrate Meg's lovely story. I could relate to Mia. I also liked that in the story

she and Abuela overcame that language barrier.

I'm so happy now that it's published that other people are able to relate to the story as well, and I'm honored that I was able to play a small role in the book.

There are just a few extra people I need to thank.

First of all, my wonderful expanded family: my sister-in-law, Jessica, my niece, and nephew—who are also here today. "Hi, Elias and Elanna!"

Then my friend, Erika, who shared with me dozens of pictures of her Abuela, who I used as inspiration for the character design.

Heather McGee at Candlewick for her helpful art direction.

Meg Medina, for writing such a lovely, moving story. Meg, it's been wonderful to get to know you more since

working on the book. I feel lucky to be connected to you now.

And of course I'd like to thank my agent Linda Pratt. Thank you for your support, help, and guidance. Thank you for putting up with my over-eagerness. I wouldn't be where I am without you.

Finally, I'd like to thank the committee. There's nothing better than feeling like I have a community who supports me, especially one that is doing such good work.

I'm so grateful for this honor.

Thank you!



Duncan Tonatiuh received a 2016 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for *Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras* (Abrams). His acceptance remarks were delivered at the Belpré Celebración on Sunday, June 26, 2016, during the American Library Association Annual Conference.

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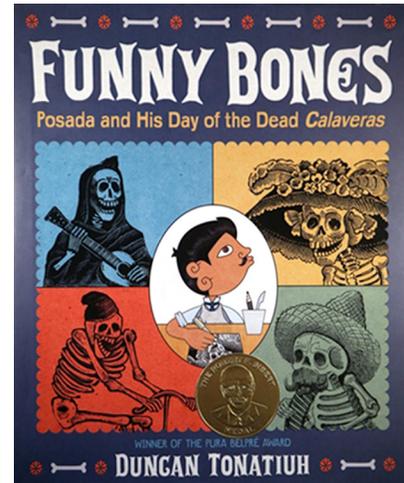
ILLUSTRATOR HONOR ACCEPTANCE SPEECH

Good afternoon. It is great to be here. I want to thank Ana-Elba Pavon and the committee for this honor. And I wish to congratulate the Pura Belpré, and all the people who make it possible, on its 20th anniversary. I greatly appreciate and I am very proud that my books have been consistently recognized by the award.

I want to congratulate my fellow authors and illustrators. I am happy that I have been able to spend time with several of you. You are not only my colleagues, you are my friends. I feel fortunate to be a part of this supportive, creative, and strong community.

I want to thank Abrams for making this book possible: Howard, my editor, who continuously publishes quality multicultural literature; Maria, who did an excellent job with the typography and design of the book; Jason, who is always working and making sure the book gets into the right hands; and the Abrams team as a whole, who have always been supportive of my work and have always made me feel welcomed.

José Guadalupe Posada was an extraordinary artist. His images are very popular. Most people have seen his calaveras or have seen calavera drawings inspired by them. Unfortunately he remains a largely unknown figure. I hope my book helps young readers learn about his life and his art. I also



hope the book will encourage kids to celebrate and learn about the different traditions associated with the Day of the Dead. El Día de Muertos is a truly special holiday. It is remarkable to find color, light, and joy in an aspect of life that can be so daunting and somber.

This year, more than ever before, I have become aware of the fact that aging, illness, and death are a part of life. I have come to appreciate the Day of the Dead in a more visceral way. My parents—my mom especially—have been dealing with some very serious and complicated health issues. I want to dedicate this honor to them and to my daughter, my wife, and my brother for working together and making the best out of challenging times.

Duncan Tonatiuh was born in Mexico City and grew up in San Miguel de Allende where he lives today. He graduated from Parsons School for Design in New York City. He is an author and illustrator and his books have won numerous awards, among them the Belpré Medal, Sibert Medal, Tomás Rivera Mexican-American Children's Book Award, The Américas Award, and Jane Addams Children's Book Award.

FUN FACT: Duncan's work is inspired by ancient Mexican art. He strives to create books that honor the past and have relevance for people, especially children, today.



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