



# Pura Belpré Award



Multicultural Book Award Presentation

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INFO 6520

Fall 2022





## Pura Belpré (1899-1982)

Established in 1996, the Pura Belpré Award was created in honor of Pura Belpré, the first Latina children's librarian at the New York Public Library in 1921. She was inspired to share her love of literature through storytelling, especially stories of Puerto Rican folklore. She wrote several children's books and became passionate in outreach programs for Puerto Rican and Spanish-speaking children.

Figure 2. Illustration of Pura Belpré reading to children. Adapted from "Planting Stories: The Life of Librarian and Storyteller Pura Belpré," by Paola Escobar, 2019, retrieved from [Harper Stacks Teaching guide](#).



## Award

“The Pura Belpré Award is presented annually to a Latino writer and to a Latino illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children” (American Library Association [ALA], 2021). “For purposes of this award, “Latino” is defined as people whose heritage emanates from any of the Spanish-speaking cultures of the Western Hemisphere” (ALA Belpré Medal Manual, 2021).

According to The Pura Belpré Award Committee Manual (2021) “Outstanding” is defined as:

- Marked by eminence and distinction; noted for significant achievement.
- Marked by excellence in quality.
- Marked by conspicuous excellence or eminence.
- Individually distinct.

*Figure 2.* Teresa playing the piano. Adapted from “Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played The Piano For President Lincoln,” Rafael López, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.teachingbooks.net> Curriculum Guide from Simon & Schuster



## Award & History

This award is unique in that it is jointly sponsored by two American Library Association (ALA) divisions; Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA) and Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC). The third sponsor is ALA's affiliate known as REFORMA; The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-speaking.

Back in 1993, certain members of REFORMA and ALSC formed a Children's Book Award task force to develop a joint book award that honors and supports Latino authors and illustrators and support efforts to promote children's books that celebrate the Latino experience in the US.

After much planning, preparation, and waiting for final approval, the first awards were finally presented at the ALSC 1996 membership meeting at their Annual Conference in New York City. Currently the awards are presented at the ALA's Annual Conference held every June. The award was presented biennially, until 2009 where it changed to annually.

In 2000 an endowment was established to ensure long-term visibility of the award. Artist, Emanuel Martinez created the design of the medal, which portrays Pura Belpré with two children. In 2018, the age range of the award began to include Young Adult titles.

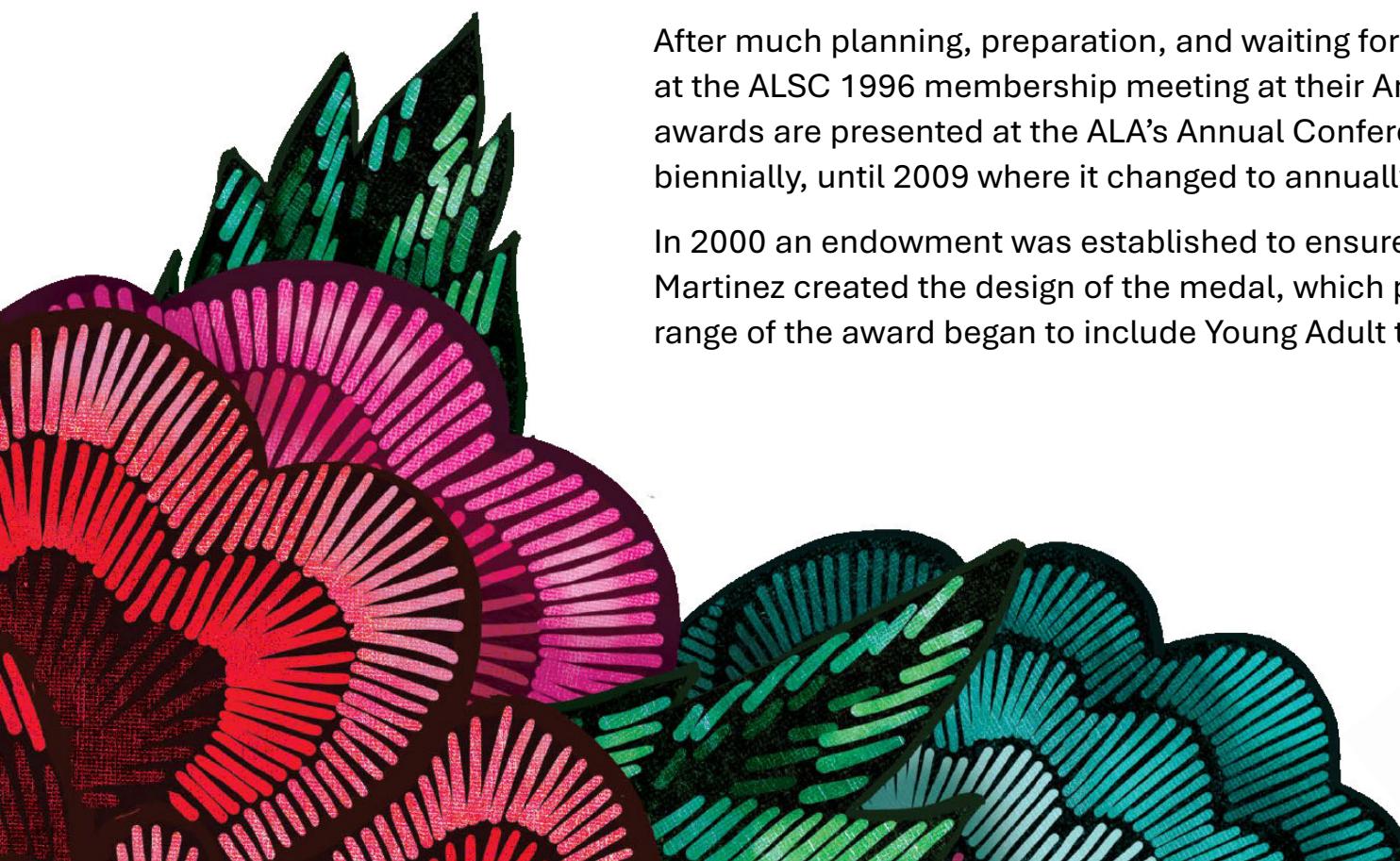


Figure 3. Flowers. Adapted from "Dreamers," by Yuyi Morales, 2013, retrieved from <https://www.teachingbooks.net/HolidayHouseEducatorguide>.

## The Committee

The Belpre committee consists of an appointed meeting chair and a total of six members; 3 appointed members of the ALSC and 3 from REFORMA (ALA Belpré Medal Manual, 2021). The committee shall consider all forms of writing such as fiction, non-fiction and poetry and written in English, Spanish or bilingual format. The selected books must be published in US or Puerto Rico during the preceding year. Recipients must be resident or citizens of the US or Puerto Rico.

and clouds bucked and kicked across the wild sky  
like angry mules.

### American Library Association

Website: <https://www.ala.org/>

### ALA Division Sponsors

Young Adult Library Services Association (YALSA)

Website: <https://www.ala.org/yalsa>

Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC)

Website: <https://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpe>

### ALA Affiliate

The National Association to Promote Library & Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA)

Website: <https://www.reforma.org/pura-belpre>

*Figure 4. Revolution In Venezuela. Adapted from “Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played The Piano For President Lincoln,” Rafael López, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.teachingbooks.net> Curriculum Guide from Simon & Schuster*





### **ALA Award Seals**

Purchase award seals front print or digital through American Library Association

<https://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/seals>

### **Bulk and Digital Award Seals**

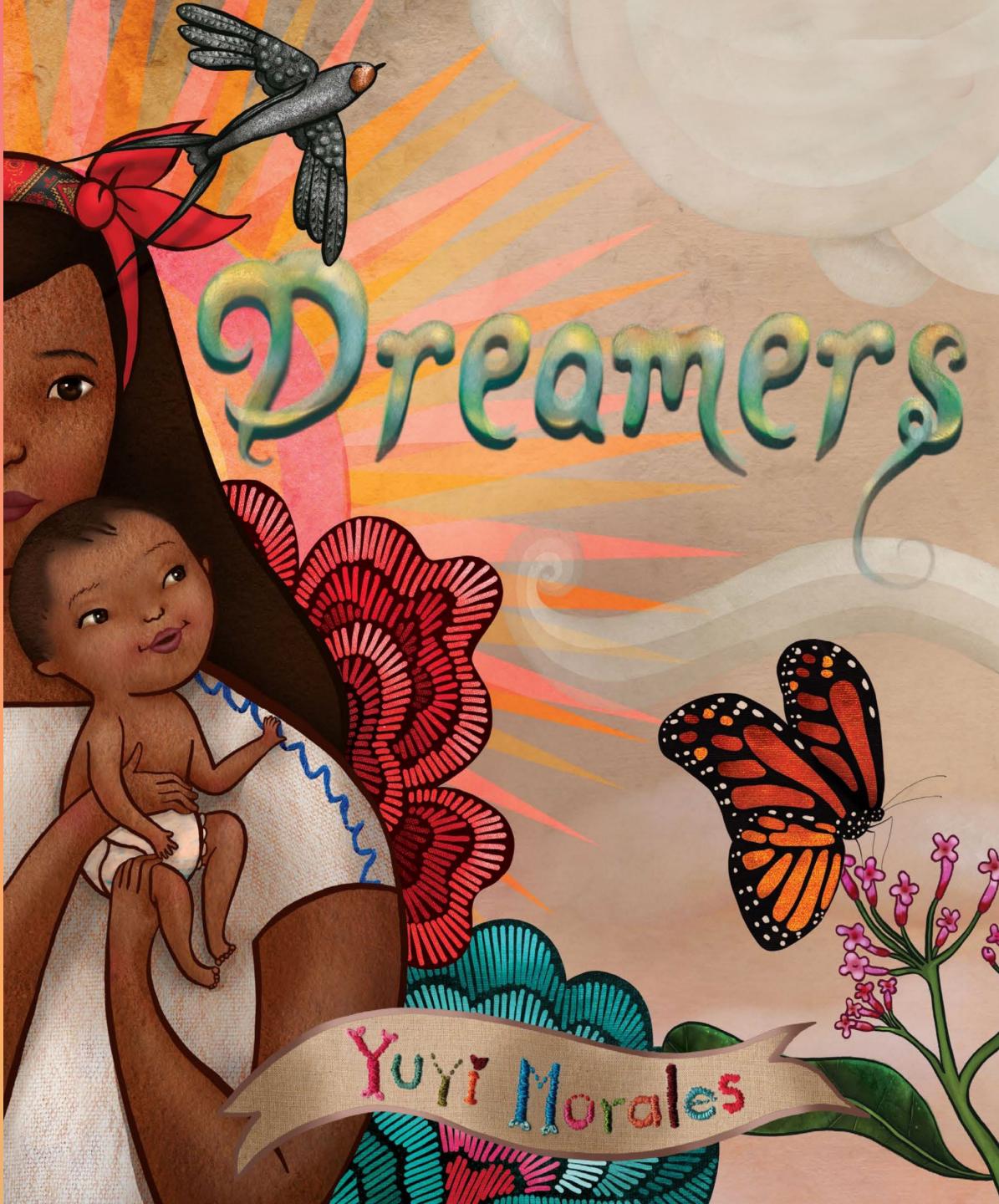
<https://www.ala.org/awardsgrants/awardseals/bulk-and-digital>



*Figure 5. Pura Belpré Medals. Adapted from "Pura Belpré Award to Celebrate 20th Year." by American Libraries, (2015, October 14). <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blog/s/the-scoop/pura-belpre-award-to-celebrate-20th-year/>*

*Figure 6. Pura Belpré storytime with children. Adapted from "The New York Public Library. 115th Street, story-telling group, African American children with Miss Pura Belpré," by New York Public Library Archives, The New York Public Library, <https://digitalcollections.nypl.org/items/510d47d9-8237-a3d9-e040-e00a18064a99>*





## Dreamers (2018)

Written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales  
Illustrator Winner 2019

**Grade level:**  
Pre-k to 2

**Genre:**  
Nonfiction  
Picture Book  
Biography  
Memoir  
Cultural

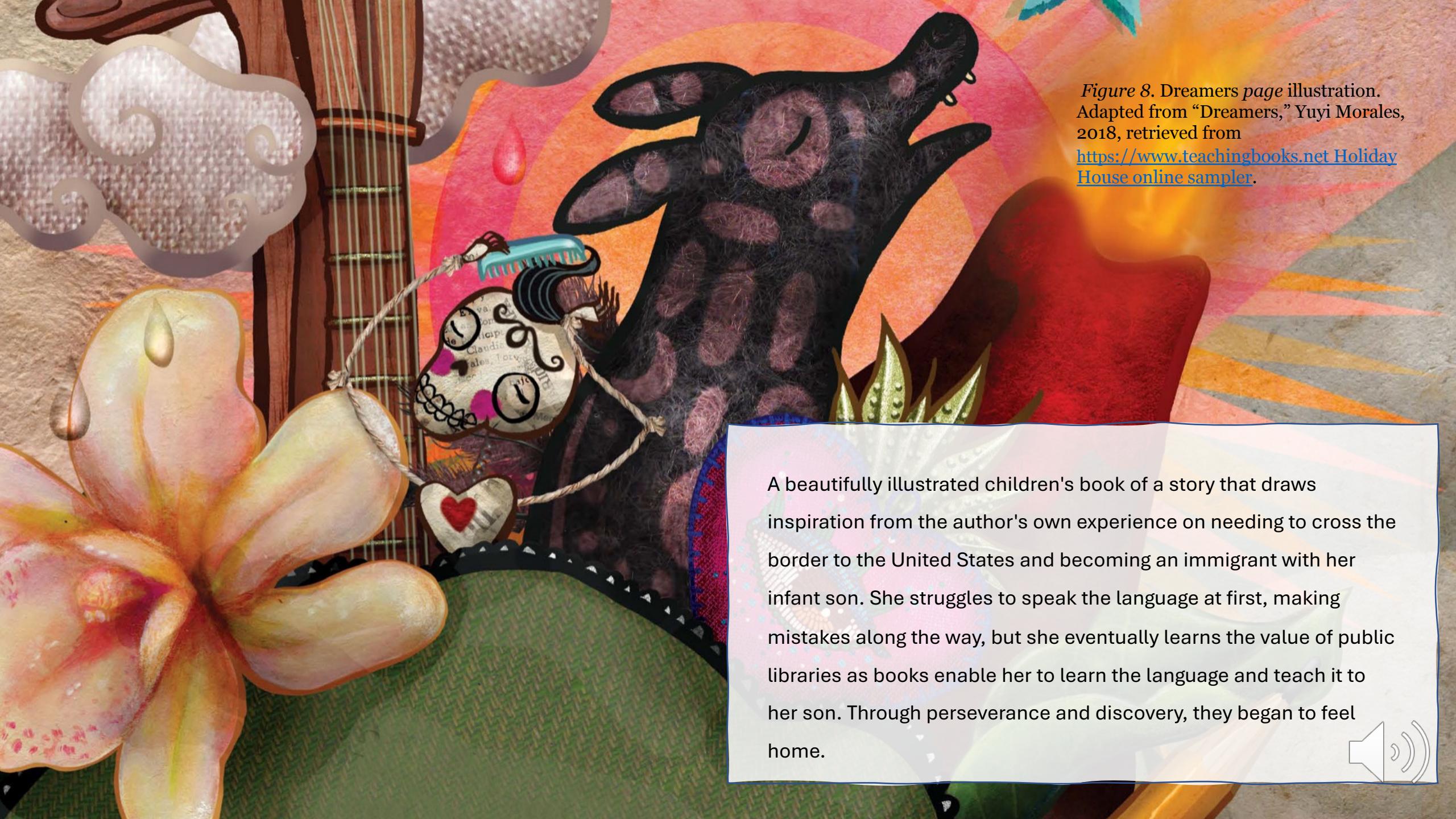
**Cultural Experiences:**  
Immigrant/Refugee  
Latino/US

**Education Curriculum:**  
Social Studies  
English Language Arts



Figure 7. Bookcover illustration. Adapted from “Dreamers,” by Yuyi Morales, 2018, retrieved from [https://www.teachingbooks.net/HolidayHouse\\_Educator\\_guide](https://www.teachingbooks.net/HolidayHouse_Educator_guide).





*Figure 8. Dreamers page illustration.*  
Adapted from “Dreamers,” Yuyi Morales,  
2018, retrieved from  
[https://www.teachingbooks.net/HolidayHouseonline\\_sampler](https://www.teachingbooks.net/HolidayHouseonline_sampler).

A beautifully illustrated children's book of a story that draws inspiration from the author's own experience on needing to cross the border to the United States and becoming an immigrant with her infant son. She struggles to speak the language at first, making mistakes along the way, but she eventually learns the value of public libraries as books enable her to learn the language and teach it to her son. Through perseverance and discovery, they began to feel home.





Figure 9. Bookcover Illustration. Adapted from "Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played The Piano For President Lincoln," "Rafael López, 2019, retrieved from <https://www.teachingbooks.net> Curriculum Guide from Simon & Schuster

## Dancing Hands: How Teresa Carreño Played the Piano for President Lincoln (2019)

Written by Margarita Engle, Illustrated by Rafael López  
Illustrator Winner 2020

**Grade level:**

Preschool-3

**Genre:**

Biography  
Nonfiction  
Picture Book

**Cultural experience:**

Latino/US

**Education Curriculum:**

History  
Music  
Spanish

Known as the lioness of the piano, young Teresa, an immigrant in the U.S. captivated and brought joy to many people during the time of hardship; the height of the Civil War. Teresa shared her beautiful songs throughout theaters and had the honor to play the piano for President Lincoln. This book's captivating illustrations and the story's poetic language unfold and tell a remarkable story of a brave and resilient girl.



"A story that will slam the power of poetry  
and love back into your heart."

—LAURIE HALSE ANDERSON,  
author of *Speak* and *Chains*



## The Poet X (2018)

written by Elizabeth Acevedo  
Author Winner 2019

**Grade-Level:**

6-10

**Genre:**

Realistic Fiction  
Poetry  
Young Adult

**Cultural  
Experience:**

Immigrant  
Latino  
African American

**Education:**

English Language Arts  
Spanish



Xiomara, a 15-year-old Dominican American, has a lot to say about her life growing up in Harlem. Feeling misunderstood, bound by rules, bullies, maturing, and a budding romance, Xiomara pours her feelings, frustrations and passion through writing her own poems, secretly. But, when her school launches a new poetry slam club, will Xiomara be brave enough to face her fears and share her voice?

Figure 10. & Figure 11. (next slide) Bookcover. Adapted from “[Teaching Guide](#),” by Carnegie and Kate Greenaway, 2019 retrieved from [Teaching Books.net](#).





"The world is almost  
peaceful when you  
stop trying to  
understand it"

## Additional References

ALA. (2022, November 11). *Pura Belpré Award*. <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpre>

ALA. (2021). *The Pura Belpré Award Committee Manual*. ALA.  
<https://www.ala.org/alsc/sites/ala.org.alsc/files/content/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal/Pura%20Belpre%20Manual2020.pdf>

ALA. (2022, November 18). *Pura Belpré Award to Celebrate 20th Year*. *American Libraries*. <https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/blogs/the-scoop/pura-belpre-award-to-celebrate-20th-year/>

Pilgrim, J. (2005). Belpré, Pura. In B. E. Cullinan, & D. G. Person (Eds.), *Continuum encyclopedia of children's literature*. Continuum. Credo Reference:

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Teaching Books. (2022) *The Poet X*. <https://www.teachingbooks.net/tb.cgi?aid=30025>

Vectoreezy. (2022 November 9). *Papel Picado (Slide 1)*. <https://www.vecteezy.com/vector-art/10883655-papel-picado-perforated-paper-background>

## Check it out:

[List of Pura Belpré Winners 1996-2021](#)

*Figure 12. Skelton.* Adapted from “Dreamers,” Yuyi Morales, 2018, retrieved from [https://www.teachingbooks.net/Holiday\\_House\\_online\\_sampler](https://www.teachingbooks.net/Holiday_House_online_sampler).

