

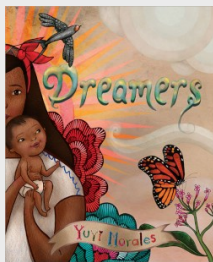
YUYI MORALES

SOÑADORA

Organized by the NCCIL

Dreamers

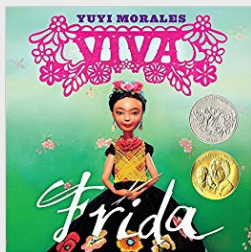
Dreamers is about making a home in a new place. Yuyi and her son Kelly's passage was not easy, and Yuyi spoke no English at the time. Together they found a remarkable place; the public library.



ART & ILLUSTRATION

Viva Frida

This story chronicles the different stage of Frida Kahlo's life that made her an artist. Written and illustrated by Yuyi Morales in collaboration with photographer Tim O'Meara.



"I was born in the city of flowers, Xalapa, Mexico, where the springs came out from the sand, or so the story says. Once I was a child, but I spent most of that time thinking about extraterrestrials and waiting for them to come in their UFO to take me away.

I tried to be a psychic; I wanted to move things with my mind. I practice to be an acrobat too—and broke many things at home. Then I grew and became an artist and a writer. Oh, well. When I grow old I dream in becoming a professional liar. You know, those kind of people that tell stories and everybody goes, 'Ahh, Ohh!'"
(yuyimorales.com)

"Morales's stunning mixed media illustrations celebrate the power of children's books and libraries and the ability of immigrants to create new lives and stories."
(Corbett, 2014)



BIOGRAPHY

Yuyi Morales (pronounced "ZHOO-zhee") was born in Xalapa, Mexico. Being a competitive swimmer, she studied Physical Education at the University De Xalapa, hoping to become a gym teacher. In 1994, she married Tim O'Meara and moved to San Francisco. When she brought their son to the library, she was amazed at the huge number of book choices in the children's section. She learned English by reading stories to her son. She was inspired when she saw the art in the books, so she bought some paint, took creative writing extension classes at U.C. Berkley and, beginning in 1997, met with an author/illustrator group which stayed together and supported each other for sixteen years. In 2000, she received a Don Freeman Grant and has been illustrating and writing ever since. In recognition of Viva Frida, Morales received the [2015 Caldecott Book Honor](#). She has received the Pura Belpré Award for illustration six times, including in 2015 for Viva Frida.

Interview with the Artist

Porter: When I hear you retell your story, one thing I find so moving is that you came here with very little English. So when you discovered picture books in the library, you were able to read them with Kelly because of the illustrations. And Kelly was learning how to read at the same time.

Morales: I knew a few words, but I couldn't read the text. But if I looked at the illustrations... it was like magic. It *is* like magic! I want to make sure that in my books, you can read the story even if you can't completely make out the text. It wasn't that different than falling in love with someone who understands you. My infatuation with picture books was real. I wanted to go to the library every day.

Porter: So you found books that inspired you, but you were also inspired to create your own books.

Morales: I was so homesick. I copied the picture books I loved. I also used the library to find books about anything—including making books. There was one on making handmade paper. There was another book on how picture books are made. I tried to recreate that story in *Dreamers*.

Porter: Yes, with the mother sewing the book. And I think one of your original handmade books actually made it into our book!

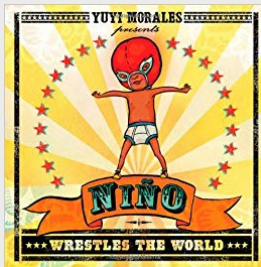
Morales: The last book on the last page is actually scanned from my first handmade book. It was a fantasy story of Kelly visiting his grandparents in Mexico. I wrote it in Spanish because I wanted to be able to communicate with Kelly. No one I knew could read it.

Porter: And the books you made as a child are on the title page. What else inspired the artwork of *Dreamers*?

Morales: When I started making the book and was looking for inspiration I was drawn to street art, so I wanted the two characters in the book to be walking in a city. I'm also a big admirer of Mexican folk arts and crafts. In *Viva Frida*, I used some techniques like the embroidery of her dress. I wanted to do the same for *Dreamers*, which again led to finding that knowledge at the library. My mother created so many things in our house, with her hands. She sewed, she embroidered. With my hands, I tried to do the same. I'm inspired by so many things, a color or a texture, metalwork, textiles. I had no idea how *Dreamers* would look in the end.

Niño wrestles the World

A fun, colorful story about a boy wrestling with imaginary monsters (including an Olmec Head and La Llorona) and battling his younger sisters. Joyful book about imagination, play and siblings.



Just a Minute

Señor Calavera arrives unexpectedly at Grandma Beetle's door. He requests that she leave with him right away. "Just a minute," she says. This imaginative English-Spanish counting book captures the imagination of all young readers!



Pura Belpré Award

The Pura Belpré Award, established in 1996, is presented to a Latino/Latina writer and illustrator whose work best portrays, affirms, and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in an outstanding work of literature for children and youth. It is co-sponsored by the Association for Library Service to Children (ALSC), a division of the American Library Association (ALA), and the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish-Speaking (REFORMA), an ALA affiliate.

The award is named after Pura Belpré, the first Latina librarian at the New York Public Library. As a children's librarian, storyteller, and author, she enriched the lives of Puerto Rican children in the U.S.A. through her pioneering work of preserving and disseminating Puerto Rican folklore.

Yuyi Morales has received this honor six times, most recently for her book "Dreamers."

Works Cited

Corbett, Sue. “Yuyi Morales: PW Talks with the Award Winning Illustrator.” *Publisher’s Weekly*, 18 Jul 2014, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/63359-yuyi-morales.html>

“About the Pura Belpré Award” American Library Association- <http://www.ala.org/alsc/awardsgrants/bookmedia/belpremedal/belpreabout>

“Corazon de Yuyi” Yuyi Morales- <http://www.yuyimorales.com/me.htm>

“In Conversation: Yuyi Morales and Neal Porter” *Publisher’s Weekly*, 16 Aug. 2018, <https://www.publishersweekly.com/pw/by-topic/childrens/childrens-authors/article/77766-in-conversation-yuyi-morales-and-neal-porter.html>

“Yuyi Morales” Wikipedia, Wikipedia Foundation, 6 Feb 2020. https://en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Yuyi_Morales

Additional Resources

<http://www.yuyimorales.com/2.htm>

Learn more about Yuyi and her books! You’ll also find fun art projects based on her beloved illustrations.

<https://youtu.be/8mu8mZLmewI>

Video showing the process of creating “Viva Frida.”

