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WOW REVIEW

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WOW Review: Volume XIII Issue 2

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Language Diversity

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Introduction and Editors' Note

Ask adults what kept them reading as children and often the answer has to do with a book transporting them into new worlds of scenery, situations, and periods of history. This issue highlights books that transport readers into new languages, some more familiar like Spanish, some less so like Korean, Sanskrit or Vietnamese, and others very unique like Woiwurrung or Buli.

Authors, illustrators and publishers use various strategies when introducing languages to readers. Often words in other languages are inserted at key points with enough clues in the text or images to help readers make sense of unfamiliar words. *The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred* strategically replaces an English word on one page for the Spanish word on the following page, slowly building Spanish vocabulary in an imperceptible way. *Birrarung Wilam: A Story from Aboriginal Australia* uses the opposite strategy, replacing the Woiwurrung words with the English equivalent only on the following page, challenging the reader to look carefully at the visual and textual clues. In *Where's Halmoni?* Julie Kim uses dialogue, facial expressions and the protagonists' questions to help the reader make meaning of the Korean Hanguel characters interspersed in the text.

Publishers will sometimes choose to include a full translation of a text, either one above the other, or one language on the left page and the second language on the right page, creating a bilingual book. But one critical question is which language is first, because position on a page subtly places higher value on one language over the other. Sometimes publishers instead position two languages as equal in value and publish a book in each language as separate editions, such as in *Mi papi tiene una moto* and *My Papi Has a Motorcycle*.

Two books feature unique ways to introduce readers to new languages. In *Butterfly Yellow*, newly arrived immigrant Hång transcribes unfamiliar English words with Vietnamese pronunciations, giving readers a sense of how non-English speakers have to work to utter and understand new words. And in *What a Wonderful Word: A Collection of Untranslatable Words from Around the World*, readers are introduced to words that have no equivalent in English because of cultural differences.

Language learning is fun when new words are embedded in stories, and the books in this issue are simply fun to read! We invite you to learn some new food vocabulary as you follow Little Lobo and Bernabé making the rounds of the food trucks for their favorite Luche Libre star in *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat!* Read the familiar story of goats crossing a bridge but with a twist as the goats solve their food problem but also figure out why the giant under the bridge is so grumpy in *The Three Billy Goats Bueno*. Finally, enjoy *Evelyn del Rey is Moving Away* as Daniella describes the special relationship she has with "my mejor amiga, my número uno best friend."

Please consider submitting a review for our future issues. The editors welcome reviews of any children's or YA book that highlights intercultural understanding and global perspectives around these themes:

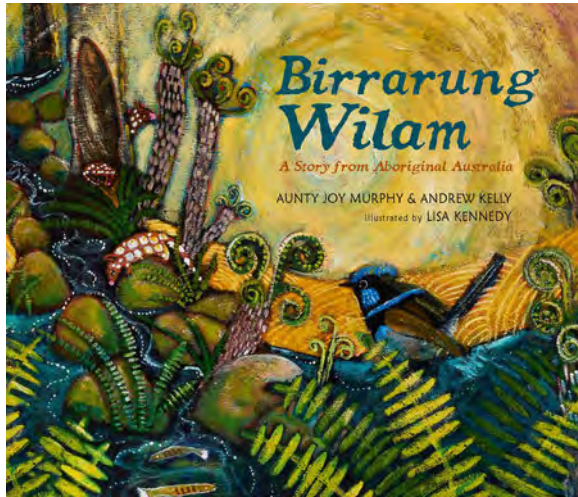
Volume 13 Issue 4: A Climate of Change (Summer 2021) - submission deadline: May 15, 2021. The editors welcome reviews of books with intercultural or global perspectives that feature a climate of change. The change can be literal (i.e., climate) or metaphorical in the sense of becoming more open or closed to changes in life, etc.

Volume 14 Issue 1: Open theme (Fall 2021) - submission deadline: August 15, 2021. The editors welcome reviews of children's or YA books that highlight intercultural understanding and global perspectives.

Susan Corapi and Prisca Martens, Co-Editors



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Birraring Wilam: A Story from Aboriginal Australia

Written by Aunty Jo Murphy and Andrew Kelly

Illustrated by Lisa Kennedy

Candlewick Press, 2019, 32 pp

ISBN: 978-1-5362-0942-6

In this lush written and visual narrative, readers travel along the Yarra River (Birraring) in south-eastern Australia, and discover many creatures who consider the river wilam (home). The narrative begins in the mountains, when rain falls on the earth and begins to trickle into streams. As the streams travel down through the mountains and onto the plains readers are

introduced to Australian wildlife as they interact with the river. For example, cockatoos fly along the river looking for seed-laden pinecones where the river has been dammed; kangaroos rest on their short forepaws to eat the river grass. The river is a refrain that runs through each page, both in the words (Birraring) and the images, turning this informational book into a lyrical story.

The insertion of words from the Woiwurrung language slows the reader down. Clues to the meanings exist in the images, and the English equivalent is frequently given on the following page:

Parnmin falls on djerang, flows down wirrip, and soaks into yeameneen beek (p. 6).

As more rain falls, baan begins to flow over yeameneen beek and gathers into yaluk (p. 8).

While comprehension of the narrative requires close attention to images and patience looking for clues, the experience of reading and understanding is rewarding. The words in the Woiwurrung language are all nouns so the illustrations give specific clues and invite readers to look closely. If baffled, the glossary at the back of the book is organized by thumbnail-sized reproductions of each double-paged spread, with the needed translation under each illustration. Many bilingual books insert words from another language into the narrative, but this book is unique because of the quantity of Woiwurrung words inserted into the text.

The images are stunning. Rendered in acrylics, aboriginal illustrator Lisa Kennedy incorporates facts about river life in a way that turns the informational book into a story. Aboriginal motifs in the images add beauty and mystery to river life along the way.

This book is unique in the way it creates a visual feast describing a river habitat. So, books that describe river habitats would be a natural pairing. The Yarra has changed with the arrival of settlers from Europe, so *Letting Swift River Go* (Jane Yolen & Barbara Cooney, 1995) would let readers experience the impact of civilization on a river, particularly that of building dams.

This book would also pair well with other bilingual texts that include words from languages that are not a part of the Romance or Anglo-Saxon linguistic family. For example, in *The Pencil*, authors Susan Avingaq, Maren Vsetula, and Charlene Chua (2018) intersperse words in Inuktitut as they tell a story of a family using their mother's precious resources of pencil and paper while waiting for her to return.

Aunty Jo Murphy (Joy Murphy) is an aboriginal writer, storyteller, advocate, and elder of the Wurundjeri people. "She is passionate about using stories to bring people together and as a conduit for understanding Aboriginal culture" (jacket flap). She collaborated on another title with Lisa Kennedy, *Welcome to Country: A Traditional Aboriginal Ceremony* (2018) that welcomes visitors to the Wurundjeri land. She was made an Officer of the Order of Australia for her service in social justice issues such as land rights and equal opportunity. She uses her art as a tool for reconciliation. She lives in Wurundjeri land in the state of Victoria.

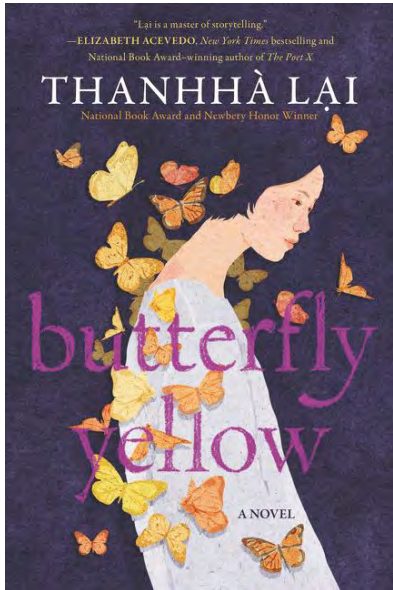
Andrew Kelly is the Yarra Riverkeeper and lives close to the Yarra in Melbourne, Australia. He is a member of the Waterkeeper Alliance (<https://waterkeeper.org/who-we-are/>), a global organization focused on environmental stewardship and water quality protection on a global scale. He has written other titles for adults and children.

Lisa Kennedy is a Trawlwoolway storyteller and artist from Tasmania, and lives in Victoria, Australia. She has collaborated with elders on several picture books including *Welcome to Country: A Traditional Aboriginal Ceremony* (Aunty Jo Murphy, 2018), *Respect with Boonwurrung Elder Aunty Fay Stuart Muir* (2020), and is currently working on *Sea Country* with Palawa Elder Aunty Patsy Cameron.

Susan Corapi, Trinity International University, Chicago



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Butterfly Yellow

Written by Thanh Hà Lai
HarperCollins, 2020, 284 pp
ISBN 978-0-06-222921-2

Winner of the 2019 Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction, *Butterfly Yellow* has a unique approach to portraying the language strategies of the Vietnamese main character, Hằng, who arrives in the U.S. to search for her younger brother. Six year earlier, her brother was taken from her arms to a plane during the chaotic fall of Saigon, a misunderstanding for which she continues to carry heavy guilt. When she finds her now nine-year-old brother, he wants nothing to do with her, claiming to remember nothing of their family or Vietnam. Set in

1981 Texas, eighteen-year-old Hằng takes a job on a nearby ranch, determined to find a way into her brother's memories and life. LeeRoy, an aspiring cowboy, becomes entangled in Hằng's search for redemption and in the gradual revelation of the painful secret of what happened on her boat journey to escape Vietnam. Hằng and LeeRoy serve as narrators of alternating chapters, portraying their love/hate relationship amidst Hằng's stubbornness and LeeRoy's unrealistic dreams. The story lingers long in the reader's memory, offering a deeply touching view of the continuing consequences of war.

Hằng uses Vietnamese syllables to pronounce English words in her conversations with others, a reflection of her strategy to make sense of this new confusing language through connections to her first language. Readers need to read aloud these syllables, sounding them out to make sense of what Hằng is saying. In addition, readers are supported by the strategy of having LeeRoy repeat much of what she says, checking his understandings of her dialogue. Lai says that she is a voice-driven author and storyteller and so strives to get inside the character's mind, in this case the mind of a character who is an English language learner and thinks in Vietnamese.

Lai's beautiful storytelling, full of warmth and powerful imagery, shines in this novel as does her ability to balance humor and trauma. Lai says that this book grew out of listening to stories from Vietnamese refugees as a reporter and deciding to write a book about healing rather than horror.

On her website, Lai talks about a memorial room in a Buddhist temple in San Diego that is full of photographs of those who have passed, including one section of black-and-white images, all of whom are young and who lost their lives in hopeful attempts to cross the sea as refugees. One image of a girl, staring with intensity, remained with her over many years. Lai researched what might have caused her to join the many Vietnamese who escaped after the war and imagined what she might have witnessed at sea. She decided to focus on what happens to Hằng upon landing in a safe place, instead of the horrifying journey across the sea. She set the book

in the Texas panhandle to portray a stark contrast between the lush greenness of her own land with the dry flat Texas landscape. Lai spent her adolescence in Ft. Worth, so drew upon those memories and on interactions with classmates to develop the character of LeeRoy.

Given Lai's positioning of herself as a voice-driver storyteller, pairing this novel with her middle-grade novels provides additional connections to language. Her award-winning novel-in-verse, *Inside Out & Back Again*, was inspired by her childhood experiences as a refugee fleeing from Vietnam to Alabama. In writing this book, she thought in Vietnamese, a tonal poetic language, and wrote in English, and so the verse format most effectively conveyed the voice she was hearing inside the character's head. In addition, her mother was a house poet and so her voice was inside Lai's mind as she wrote. This book also includes the character's struggles in learning English (a language that hisses like a snake). Her second novel, *Listen Slowly*, is a realistic fiction book about a Laguna Beach girl who reluctantly returns to Vietnam with her grandmother to search for family. Language again plays a prominent role, both in writing the distinct voices of the grandmother and the girl, but also as characters translate for each other from Vietnamese to English and vice versa.

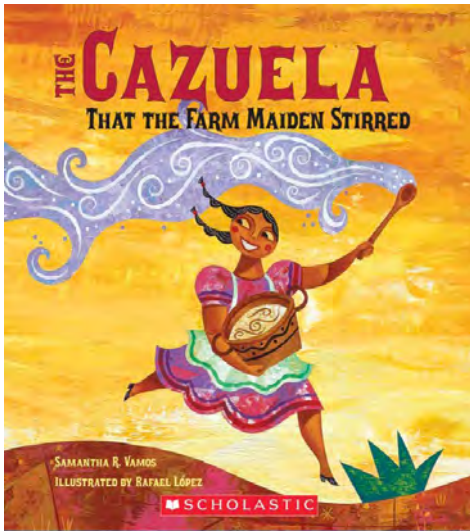
This book could be paired with books about language learners and communicating across languages, including picturebooks such as *Drawn Together* by Minh Le and Dan Santat (2018), *My Two Blankets* by Irene Kobald and Freya Blackwood (2014), *Mango, Abuela and Me* by Meg Medina and Angela Dominguez (2015), and *I'm New Here* by Anne Sibley O'Brien (2016). Novels that pick up on issues of immigration and language learning include *Pie in the Sky* by Remy Lai (2019) and *Other Words for Home* by Jasmine Warga (2019). *When My Name Was Keoko* (Linda Sue Park, 2012) and *The Language Inside* (Holly Thompson, 2013) would be excellent pairings to discuss how language is integral to culture. Finally, picturebooks about Vietnamese refugee experiences include *The Paper Boat* (Thao Lam, 2020), *Adrift at Sea* (Marsha Skrypuch and Tuan Ho, 2016), and *The Lotus Seed* (Sherry Garland and Tatsuro Kiuchi, 1993).

Thanh Hà Lai is a Vietnamese-American author of middle grade and young adult novels, who came to the U.S. from Vietnam when she was a child. Her first novel, *Inside Out & Back Again* (2011), which won the National Book Award and a Newbery Honor, is based on her childhood as a refugee in the southern U.S. She is currently writing a sequel to this book. She has worked as a reporter and lives in upstate New York with her family. She established a nonprofit organization, Viet Kids, Inc., that purchases bikes for poor students who live several hours from school. More information about Lai can be found on her website (<https://www.thanhhalai.com/>) and in the Author's Corner (<https://wowlit.org/blog/2020/11/01/authors-corner-thanhha-lai/>) by Susan Corapi.

Kathy G. Short, University of Arizona



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The Cazuela that the Farm Maiden Stirred

Written by Samantha R. Vamos Illustrated

by Rafael López

Charlesbridge, 2011, 32 pp

ISBN: 978-1580892421

In this cumulative tale, a farm maiden and farm animals prepare the arroz con leche (rice pudding) that will feed people at the town fiesta. The whole farm works together to gather and produce the ingredients needed for the dish. Personified animals play a pivotal role in helping the Farm Maiden prepare for the party. A community comes together to create the party...

but they get too distracted! Music is being made and fun being had when the cazuela (pot) almost overflows. Yikes! Everyone works together to stir again to fix the mistake. The farmers and animals give thanks, and then enjoy the food they worked so hard to make. Food brings communities together.

This book is masterfully written in a way that introduces Spanish words to children learning Spanish, and English words to children who speak Spanish. Vamos carefully includes one new word association on each page of the book by replacing an English word from the previous page with its Spanish counterpart and subsequently building upon the poem. A new element of making arroz con leche is added with the previous elements on each page. The tale thus builds upon itself in a cumulative tale, while reinforcing what was said before. Children can easily remember the word shapes, sounds, and meanings as they are repeated throughout the text. By the end of the story, children will be familiar with some new words (Spanish or English) as well as the process involved in cooking within a farm environment. Additionally, readers get a glimpse into an aspect of Latin American culture that they may not have known about before (the geographical setting is not specified). These engaging elements of language learning and cultural values earned this book the 2012 Pura Belpré Award.

Well-known illustrator Rafael López out did himself yet again with vibrant color work, intricate details, and clear animal personification. Picture-word associations are another important factor in language acquisition and Rafael's work clearly pairs words with pictures as the story progresses. Learning a language can be a daunting task for many, however, this story of the cazuela makes language learning fun and approachable. The poetic verse captivates the reader with rhythm and verse progressions. What better way to remember words than in lyrical form?

“...the cabra gave out spoons,
the gallina sang a tune,
the pato beat a tambor,
the burro plucked a banjo,
the vac shook a maraca,
and the campesino and the farm maiden danced...”

Because of the cumulative nature of this tale, any book written in the style of *This is the House That Jack Built* would pair well with this text. Samantha Vamos has written a sequel to this book in the same format entitled *The Pinata That the Farm Maiden Hung* (Samantha Vamos and Sebastia Serra, 2019). Implementing similar literary devices, *The Pot that Juan Built* (Nancy Andrews-Goebel and David Diaz, 2011) is a text of cumulative bilingual poetry related to Latinx culture. This text also includes historical elements alongside the poetry.

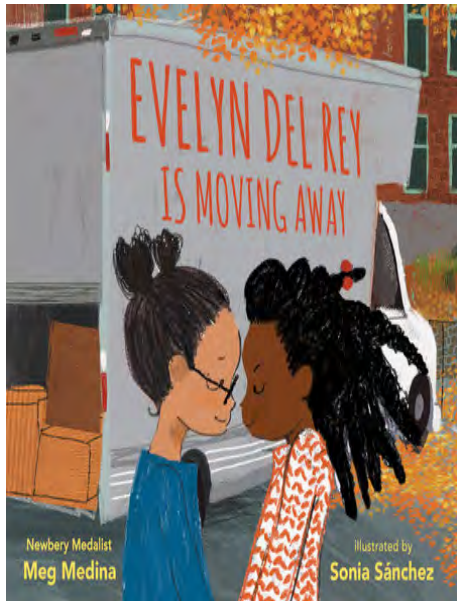
Samantha Vamos studied law and practiced both on the east coast and in the Chicago area. Her passion, however, has always been writing and her dream was to write for children. Now a full-time author, she has published nearly 10 titles including concept books like *Alphabet Boats* (Samantha Vamos and Ryan O’Rourke, 2018) and *Alphabet Trains* (Samantha Vamos and Ryan O’Rourke, 2015). She specializes in writing bilingual English-Spanish books as well as books for early childhood. Her first book *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* (Samantha Vamos and Santiago Cohen, 2009) won the 2010 Washington State Book Award and was described as “Best for Babies”.

Rafael López was born and raised in Mexico City immersed in a culture filled with artistic expression in the form of music, visual art, surrealism, and native culture which all contribute to his unique art style. He is an internationally recognized illustrator collaborating with the likes of Supreme Court Justice Sonya Sotomayor in *Just Ask!: Be Different, Be Brave, Be You* (2019) and Jaqueline Woodson in *The Day You Begin* (2018), both award winning books. Among other awards, López has won the Pura Belpré Award three times (2010, 2016, 2020) as a high caliber illustrator.

Christian Meyer, Des Plaines, IL



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Evelyn del Rey is Moving Away

Written by Meg Medina

Illustrated by Sonia Sánchez

Candlewick Press, 2020, 32 pp

ISBN 978-1-5362-0704-0

Meg Medina pulls at readers' heart strings as she reminisces about the importance of true friendship between two girls, Evelyn and Daniela, who are around the age of six or seven. We are introduced to Evelyn del Rey through the eyes of her best friend Daniela, "Evelyn del Rey is my mejor amiga, my número uno best friend". The two girls live directly across from one another in apartments in the city.

As the pages of vibrant colors turn, the fall leaves almost

jump off the page, leaving readers with a sense of the season. A moving van pulls up outside, showing brown cardboard boxes labeled with Evelyn's name and other odds and ends belonging to the family. Daniela is seen walking by with a look of sadness across her precious face.

The story of the beloved friendship continues with Daniela making her way to Evelyn's apartment. Through the eyes of Daniela and Evelyn, it almost feels as though you are inside with both girls viewing patterned wallpaper, iron stairs, and neighbors passing by as they go to Evelyn's apartment. There you find her pleasant, hard working mother, with bright clothes, finishing up packing the remaining boxes.

Daniela points out that she and Evelyn are like twins with a few exceptions. She says, "The walls in Evelyn's room are sunny yellow, while mine are pink like cotton candy". Daniela also paints a picture of the differences in their families, as she lives with her mami and hamster. Evelyn has a mami, papi, and cat.

Moving forward in the touching story, we find Daniela and Evelyn determining what they can create using an empty moving box. Daniela pretends to be a bus driver traveling about the busy city, moving past skyscrapers that are really beds. Suddenly, there is a knock at the door. It is Evelyn's and Daniela's mothers. They quickly hide. Daniela's mother calls for her to leave. The girls spin in circles, round and round, until it is time to go for the last time. Finally, the two make a plan to stay in touch, discussing summer visits and sleepovers.

Readers are left with a poignant ending, when the girls find some spare, sparkly stickers in the corner of Evelyn's room. Both Daniela and Evelyn press a glittery heart and butterfly sticker to each other's cheeks, taking a picture using, "¡Patata!" embracing one last time. Evelyn has moved away. Daniela's mami hugs her as she thinks of Evelyn, "I know she will always be my first mejor amiga, my numero uno best friend". The last page leaves us with a grownup Daniela looking fondly at a box of memories of her and Evelyn.

Author Meg Medina won the Jumpstart Read for the Record Selection (2020) award for this book, increasing awareness for critical and early literacy. *Evelyn del Rey is Moving Away* is a high-quality, culturally responsive children’s book in which readers experience diverse Latinx characters and Spanish words interwoven with English. Whether they are familiar with Spanish, or it is new to them, the story delights and engages even the youngest reader. The colorful illustrations along with the endearing story of friendship and family capture the attention of all.

Evelyn del Rey is Moving Away can be paired with titles that emphasize friendship in the face of separation. *Four Feet, Two Sandals* (Karen Lynn Williams, Khadra Mohammed, and Doug Chayka, 2007) describes friends in a refugee camp. *Cherry Blossom and Paper Planes* (Jef Aerts and Sanne te Loo, 2020) is the story of Adin and Dina who are separated by a move but creatively manage to stay connected by way of paper planes and cherry pits growing into cherry trees.

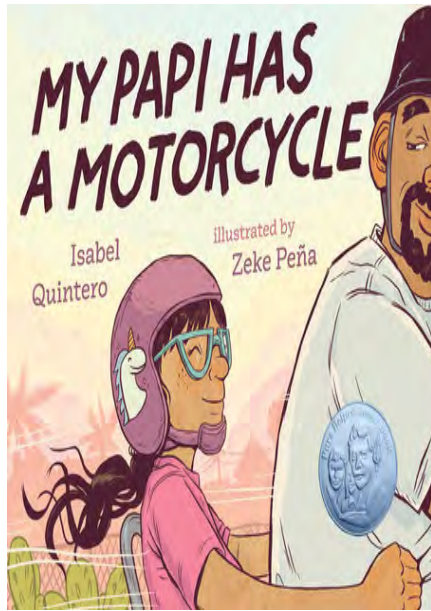
Meg Medina’s most recent books are the novels, *Merci Suárez Changes Gears* (2019) and *Burn Baby Burn* (2016), and the picturebook *Mango, Abuela, and Me* (2016). She has received a multitude of writing awards, including the Newbery Medal, a Charlotte Huck Honor, the Pura Belpré, and the Ezra Jack Keats award for new writers. Medina also supports many community projects for girls, Latinx youth, and literacy. More information about Meg can be found on her website (<https://megmedina.com/>).

Sonia Sánchez is an accomplished illustrator. In addition to *Evelyn del Rey is Moving Away*, her recent illustrations can be found in *A Crazy-Much Love* (Joy Jordan-Lake, 2019), *Raisins and Almonds* (Susan Taracov, 2019), *My Quiet Ship* (Hallee Adelman, 2018), and *The Little Red Fort* (Brenda Maier, 2018). Sonia has received several honors for her illustrations. Her book *Here I Am* (Patti Kim, 2013) was a Kirkus Best Book of the Year. Sonia Sánchez is from Barcelona and lives with her husband, son, and cat near the Mediterranean Sea. More information about Sonia can be found at her website (<https://soniasanchez.ultra-book.com/about-r133520-c668929>).

Darci L. Gueta, Texas A&M, Commerce



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Mi papi tiene una moto
My Papi Has a Motorcycle
Written by Isabel Quintero
Illustrated by Zeke Peña Kokila,
2019, 40 pp
Spanish ISBN: 978-0525554943
English ISBN: 978-0525553410

This everyday slice-of-life story celebrates a young girl's tender relationship with her father and the vibrancy of her Mexican American community. Each evening when her Papi returns from a long day of work, Daisy greets him with hugs and anticipation. He helps her snap on her unicorn helmet and off they roar on Papi's motorcycle. Vroooooom! Written from Daisy's point of view, readers are carried along as

daughter, father, and motorcycle "become a spectacular celestial thing soaring on asphalt". Their joy-filled ride takes them through a lively Mexican American neighborhood abounding with taquerías, churches, murals, family, friends, and stray cats. Each building connects with a piece of Daisy's life and cultural heritage—the market where Mami buys gummy bears, the murals that speak to justice for migrant labor, and grandmother's kitchen where the food always tastes better.

Family and friends in Daisy's neighborhood smile and nod in recognition of one another as Papi's motorcycle makes the rounds. Readers will delight in the bond between daughter and father and the comfort and support they give and receive in their close-knit community. Thanks to the illustrations, they will also want to don a helmet and jump on the back of a motorcycle!

Working in harmony, both the words and the artwork offer readers a rich sensory experience—bells ringing, children laughing, taste-filled memories of raspados (syrup-sweetened shaved ice), Abuelita's albóndigas (meatball and rice soup), and conchas (seashell-shaped pastries). As Daisy notes, "No matter how far I go from this place, or how much it changes, this city will always be with me". From the cover to the end papers, Zeke Peña's illustrations capture the movement and pure joy of the ride. The comic touches in familiar cartoon onomatopoeia and the speech balloons that convey snippets of conversation among community members add to the lighthearted tone of the book.

Mi papi tiene una moto and *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* has earned numerous awards including a Pura Belpré Illustration Honor Award and a 2020 Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award; it was also listed as a School Library Journal and a New York Times Best Children's Book of 2019.

Instead of a bilingual text, the publisher Kokila, an imprint of Penguin Books, offers this story in two separate editions-- one in Spanish, one in English. The book was originally written in

English. The translation in the Spanish language edition is faithful to the energy and sentiments expressed in the original. The Latin American Spanish vocabulary utilized by the Colombian translator Andrea Montejo more accurately reflects the Mexican American culture portrayed in this story than had the translator been from Spain.

The question as to whether a book should include both English and Spanish language in the same edition is complicated. Economically, schools' and libraries' limited budgets benefit by getting two books for the price of one. Also, in the classroom, it is more convenient for educators to have both languages easily accessible in one book. However, having the Spanish language text separate in its own book emphasizes the importance of the language both commercially and educationally-- Spanish then becomes a language worthy of existing as a sole means of communication, rather than as an appendage to English. For readers, the decision to publish in two separate editions honors and elevates the Spanish language and provides Spanish-speaking young readers and families with an unadulterated cultural experience. (We would like to see this become a trend.) The English version of the book includes Spanish language words in several speech balloons-- words that reinforce the Mexican American cultural setting of the story.

Mi papi tiene una moto/My Papi Has a Motorcycle can be paired with other daily life stories of children, families, and neighborhoods. These Spanish and English books with single language editions will pair well: *Última parada de la calle market* and *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña and Christian Robinson (2015); *Mango, Abuela y yo* and *Mango, Abuela and Me* by Meg Medina and Angela Dominguez (2015); and *Por todo nuestro alrededor* and *All Around Us* by Xelena González and Adriana M. Garcia (2019). For an English/Spanish bilingual book pairing consider *Tata's Remedies/Los remedios de mi tata* by Roni Capin Rivera-Ashford and illustrated by Antonio Castro (2015).

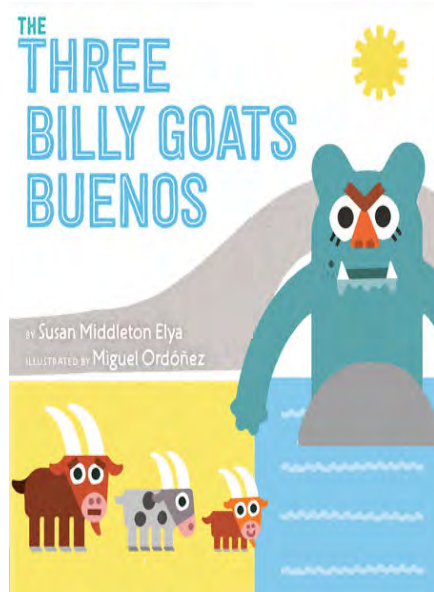
As her Amazon biography states, author Isabel Quintero lives and writes in the "Inland Empire of Southern California, where she was born and raised". In her author's note for this book, Quintero states the experiences she shares in *Mi papi tiene una moto* come from her own childhood memories of riding with her father and honor her Mexican American cultural heritage. She calls this book a love letter to her father and to Corona, California. To learn more about Isabel Quintero, visit her website (<https://laisabelquintero.com/>).

Zeke Peña is a cartoonist and storyteller from El Paso, Texas. He has collaborated with Isabel Quintero on two other books, *Gabi, A Girl in Pieces* (2014) and *Photographic: The Life of Graciela Iturbide* (2018). To learn more about illustrator Zeke Peña and see more of his work, visit his website (<https://www.zpvisual.com/>).

Mary Margaret Mercado and Judi Moreillon, Tucson, Arizona



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The Three Billy Goats Bueno

Written by Susan Middleton Elya

Illustrated by Miguel Ordóñez

G.P. Putnam's Sons, 2020, 32 pp

ISBN 978-0-399-54739-3

“How many creatures can pass me? ¡Ningunos!

You kids will be part of **mis desayunos!**”

Three little goats need to get across a rapidly running river only to discover that a grumpy gigante lives under the bridge and she is not letting anyone pass! But the three cabritos are not so easily dissuaded. They hatch a plan

to get by “the grumpiest troll in the land!” The smallest goat starts across and is confronted by the gigante, who threatens to eat the littlest goat for lunch. Explaining that the older brother would be much more delicioso, the troll lets the smaller brother pass. When the second goat approaches, readers have a sense of what will happen. But what about the third goat? How does the oldest brother get by the grumpy troll?

A bilingual remix of the classic tale of *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, *The Three Billy Goats Bueno* gives readers another way to think about the tale. With the clever use of both Spanish and English, readers will be charmed by the rhythmic retelling that comes with a modern twist. Bright, almost geometric illustrations in pencil, collage, and digital media expand the story and carry readers along on the cabritos mission of not only crossing the river, but of discovering the reason for the troll's grumpiness. The glossary in the front of the book addresses the use of Spanish vocabulary and word meaning, but it is the use of the language in context that creates such a delightful wordplay.

It is not only the wordplay that makes this book enchanting, however. It is the message contained within the story that allows for deeper thought and meaning making. By wondering why the troll is so grumpy, the older billy goat takes the story in another direction. The mission is no longer just to outsmart the troll so the river can be crossed, but perhaps, for the three billy goats to be of help to her. A lovely story, a great addition to the canon of *Three Billy Goats Gruff*, and a moral and visual journey that could serve as mentor text for young writers and artists, *The Three Billy Goats Bueno* is a story to be read again and again.

Books that would complement *The Three Billy Goats Bueno* could include any of the various Billy Goat Gruff tales from around the world. The earliest editions of the book were found in Norway, Germany, and Poland with slight differences. Modern reiterations and retellings such as *The Three Billy Goats Fluff* by Rachael Mortimer and Liz Pichon (2010), *The Three Billy Goats Gruff* by Jerry Pinkney (2017), *The Three Billy Goats Gruff/Los Trés Chivitos* by Carol

Ottolenghi and Mark Clapsadle (2009), and *Listen, My Bridge is SO Cool: The Story of The Three Billy Goats Gruff as Told by the Troll* by Nancy Loewen and Cristian Luis Bernadini (2018) allow readers to compare the stories, illustrations, and differing themes. Those interested can go back to the older European stories to gain a sense of how the story can mean different things and serve different purposes across time and geographical areas.

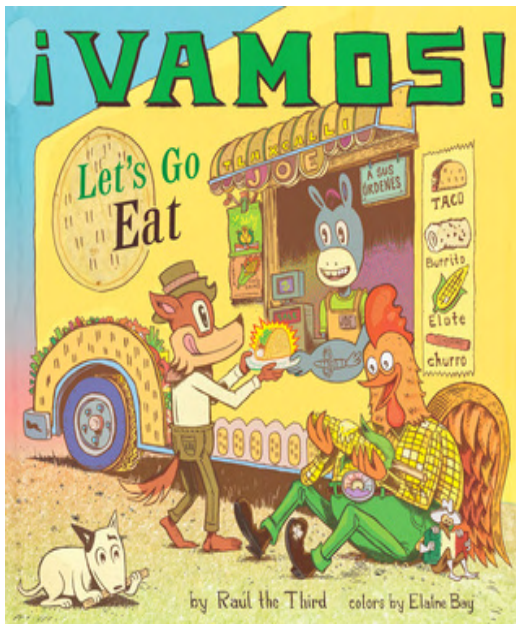
A prolific writer of books for young readers, Susan Middleton Elya is the author of additional bilingual remixed tales such as *La Princesa and the Pea* (Juana Martinez-Neal, 2017), *La Roja Riding Hood* (Susan Guevara, 2014), and *Rubia and the Three Osos* (Melissa Sweet, 2010). She also wrote *La Madre Goose: Nursery Rhymes for los Niños* (Juana Martinez-Neal, 2016), and *Fire! ¡Fuego! Brave Bomberos* (Dan Santat, 2016). Originally from Iowa, and a former teacher, she now lives in Northern California. More information about her and her books can be found at her website (<http://www.susanelya.com/about.htm>).

Miguel Ordóñez lives in Madrid, Spain, where he works as an illustrator of both children's books and other products. His picturebook, *Your Baby's First Word will be Dada* (2015) by Jimmy Fallon was honored by the Society of Illustrators. He has two other books with Fallon entitled, *This is Baby* (2019), and *Everything is Mama* (2017).

Holly Johnson, University of Cincinnati



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¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat!

Written and illustrated by Raúl the Third

Colors by Elaine Bay

Houghton Mifflin Harcourt, 2020, 32 pp

ISBN 978-1-328-55704-9

Welcome to a rich world of both food and language! Little Lobo and dog Bernabé deliver food to customers all over the city. His friend Kooky lets him know that he has an important delivery to make. Tonight is a big night for the Lucha Libre at the coliseum, and they have a very special customer. El Toro, the popular luchador, and his friends need some great food before the matches begin, and Little Lobo, Bernabé, and Kooky are the perfect amigos to get the job done! Jumping on Little Lobo's new bicycle, they visit all the food trucks, pick out the

most delicious street foods, and make the delivery just in time for lunch. They do such a good job, they are El Toro's special guests for the night's show.

An informative and fun picturebook with cartoon-like illustrations, *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat* is a celebration of street food, the Spanish language, and Mexican culture. Readers will be immersed into Little Lobo's world and the fantastic foods sold by street vendors around his city. Tacos, tamales, and elote, along with marranitos and frutas picadas fill the pages. Don't forget the salsa, queso, and guacamole! And to drink? ¡Aguas frescas! The bilingual narrative positions English and Spanish in harmony so readers can easily understand exactly what is occurring and thus can share in the celebration of food, those who create it, and then those who consume it.

Warning! Don't read this book if you are hungry. You will rush out to the nearest Mexican restaurant, and that might not be able to completely satisfy you or meet the richness of foods highlighted within this short text. It is apparent this book is not only a narrative, but a love letter to street vendors and Mexican American culture and food. But there is also the inclusion of those vendors creating great street fusions with the mention of Kimchi Kiosko, the blend of Mexican and Korean cuisine. A wonderful book for those who love food or learning Spanish and great fun for all readers.

Books that would complement *¡Vamos! Let's Go Eat* include other books celebrating Mexican American culture and street food. It could be paired with *Chef Roy Choi and the Street Food Remix* by Jacqueline Briggs Martin, June Jo Lee, and Man One (2017) or *The World Atlas of Street Food* by Sue Quinn and Carol Wilson (2017), both of which celebrate street food. It would make an excellent addition to a bilingual collection of Spanish/English books for those interested in language attainment. If interested in illustration styles, then *Vamos* would make a nice addition to a multicultural/global text set of both picturebooks and graphic novels for middle school students. Graphic novels could include *When Stars are Scattered* by Victoria Jamieson, Omar Mohamed, and Iman Getty (2020), *American Born Chinese* by Gene Luen Yang (2008), and *New Kid* by Jerry Craft.

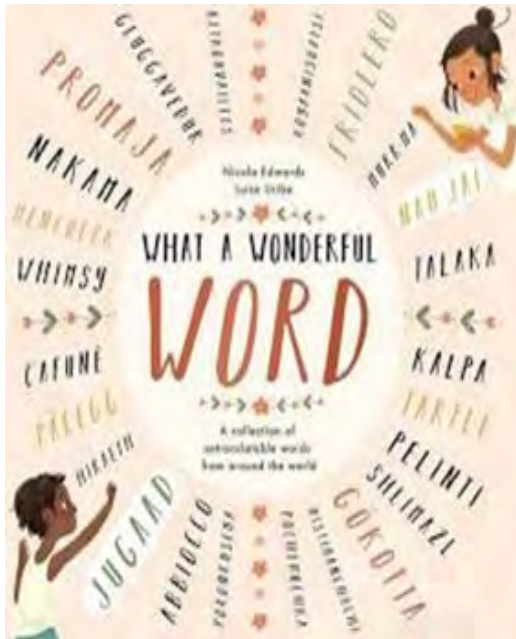
(2019). *Wink* by Rob Herrell (2020), *The Apartment: A Century of Russian History* by Alexandra Litvina, Anna Desnitskaya, and Antonia W. Bouis (translator) (2019), and *A Year Without My Mom* by Dasha Tolstikova (2015) could also be included in a discussion of illustration styles.

Raúl the Third is a Mexican artist and illustrator. Born in El Paso, Texas, he spent his youth on both sides of the border. He now lives in Boston with his wife and colorist, Elaine Bay, and their son, Raúl the Fourth. He won the Pura Belpré Award for *Lowriders to the Center of the Earth* (2016), authored and illustrated the popular *¡Vamos! Let's Go to the Market* (2019) as well as the *El Toro* series for younger readers and the *Lowrider* series for middle grade students. More information about Raúl can be found at his website (<https://www.raulthethird.com/>).

Holly Johnson, University of Cincinnati



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What a Wonderful Word: A Collection of Untranslatable Words from Around the World

Written by Nicola Edwards

Illustrated by Luisa Uribe

Kane Miller, 2018, 64 pp

ISBN: 978-1-61067-722-6

Have you ever heard the words “whimsy” or “gobbledygook”? If you are familiar with the English language, you probably have. These words are unique because they do not have a simple one word parallel when translated into other languages; they are “untranslatable”. Every language has rich words that sometimes take a lengthy explanation to be understood. This book explores and honors twenty-nine wonderful words from around the world. Paired with beautiful and

transportive illustrations by Luisa Uribe, Edwards introduces the reader to untranslatable words from the national languages of countries such as Sweden, Japan, and Brazil and from languages of a specific region, culture, or group such as Yiddish, Sanskrit, and the endangered language of Wagiman. Along with a thorough definition of the word, Edwards gives interesting facts about the culture, creation of the word, and uses of the word to give the reader greater depth of understanding. This book is filled with beautiful words such as gökotta which is Swedish meaning “to wake up early in the morning so you can go outside to hear the first birds singing” and funny words such as verschlimmbesserung, a German word for “a supposed improvement that makes things worse”. These words can be strange and wonderful and many can be used in commonly shared situational applications across cultures.

According to Ethnologue (<https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/how-many-languages>) there are over seven thousand languages spoken around the world which is more than 35 times as many countries that currently exist! There are 142 language families (<https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/largest-families>) in which each family is a group of languages that share a similar ancestor that, for many possible reasons, grew and spread and eventually divided, each division creating a different language. French, Spanish, Italian, and Portuguese grew from the Latin language which itself branched from another language. Languages within a language family may have many similarities but also possess a distinct richness apart from another. An untranslatable word is one that has no parallel in another language. “Sun” in English has a single word counterpart in almost all languages, but an untranslatable word very likely does not.

This book may be filled with words that are unique to a certain culture and language but most of the words amaze the reader with the way that they transcend cultures with their applicability. For example, who cannot relate to the amusing Buli word pelinti, meaning “to move food that is too hot around your mouth as you wait for it to cool down” (p. 51)? As a person who lives in a climate that gets a cold season, I certainly understand the Icelandic concept gluggavedur which means “weather that looks beautiful while you’re inside, but is much too cold when you step outside” (p. 11). Every

word in this book made me smile. I loved the words highlighted in this book and wish I could use them, or an English equivalent, in my everyday speech.

What a Wonderful Word has two obvious and rich themes: language and culture. One book that would pair well with the theme of language is *Frindle* (Andrew Clements, 1998) which is a chapter book that discusses the process of creating new words in a playful context. *Du Iz Tak?* (Carson Ellis, 2016) is a picture book in a gibberish language meant to exemplify how the reader can interpret an unknown language using the repetition of words and phrases, laws of semantics, and contextual and visual clues. *Drawn Together* (Minh Le and Dan Santat, 2018) is a book about bridging languages to form relationships without words.

Books that highlight diversity would also pair well. A wonderful book with the same theme of diverse cultures is *People* by Peter Spier (1980) which looks at people and their cultures across the world. *If You Lived Here: Houses of the World* by Giles Laroche (2011) takes the reader on a tour of different houses around the world and provides interesting information about differences in architecture which reflect the culture's needs. *This Is How We Do It: One Day in the Lives of Seven Kids from Around the World* by Matt Lamothe (2017) shows the similarities and differences of children worldwide. *Children's Illustrated Atlas* (DK & the Smithsonian Institution, 2016) and introduces children to using an atlas as a resource, giving them rich details of maps, countries, environments, and cultures.

Nicola Edwards is a children's book author and editor who lives in East London with her husband. She is the author of the *You Are My Little* books (illustrated by Natalie Marshall), including *You're My Little Bookworm* (2021), *You're My Little Firecracker* (2021), *You're My Little Christmas Wish* (2019), and *You're My Little Cuddle Bug* (2018). She also wrote *Happy: A Children's Book of Mindfulness* (Nicola Edwards and Katie Hickey, 2020), *When the Stars Come Out: Exploring the Magic and Mysteries of the Nighttime* (Nicola Edwards and Lucy Cartwright, 2019), *Goodnight World* (Nicola Edwards and Hannah Tolson, 2019), and many more.

Luisa Uribe lives in Bogotá, Colombia. She creates charming illustrations for books, websites, magazines, and exhibitions. In addition to *What a Wonderful Word*, other books she has helped create include: *Equis en Alemania* (Antonia Sanin and Luisa Uribe, 2014), *Cucufato y Pirurita* (Alexandra Samper and Luisa Uribe, 2012), *Sucesos en Monte Páramo* (Louis Sachar and Luisa Uribe, 2016), and *La Cabaña en el Árbol* (Gillian Cross and Luisa Uribe, 2014).

Madeline Brooks, Beach Park, IL



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Where's Halmoni?

Written and illustrated by Julie Kim

Little Bigfoot, 2017, 96 pp

ISBN 9781632170774

Where's Halmoni? is a realistic fiction graphic novel in which fantasy dominates the story plot to make two main characters' journeys possible in the book. A big sister (Nuna) and her little brother (Joon) visit their Halmoni's house, but there is no answer from their grandmother. The children start looking for her without knowing their "search" will take them on a long adventure beyond her house. After they search every corner of every room, they still cannot find their grandmother. Then Joon sees a new built-in closet he

has never seen before; he enters the closet, which takes Joon and Nuna to a new exterior. This visual narrative has semi-chapters in which each section starts with either a rabbit, tiger, fox or goblins joining the children on the journey looking for Halmoni. Each special character appears and give clues to solve the problem of finding the children's grandmother.

The hidden clues in beautiful illustrations styled like Korean folk art make this story fun and adventurous. *Where's Halmoni?* is such an important picturebook for several reasons. First, the Korean written language (Hangul) is integrated with the illustrations as part of the characters' narration of the story. For example, the first mysterious character, the rabbit, speaks Korean and his words are integral parts of the illustrations. Second, each chapter starts with a Hangul title followed by an English title. Also, each title includes a pronunciation guide so that a non-Korean audience can try reading the Korean titles. The story panels are not typical bilingual texts that English speakers skip over, but rather words in Hangul appear fun and occupy significant segments of the illustrations. Joon is helping the intended English-speaking audience by asking "What did it say?" and Nuna's responses to Joon, "I think it said it was tasty..." helps readers make meaning of the text. Nuna's stronger Korean skills help Joon and audiences understand what the rabbit says in Korean. It is a charming way to orchestrate two languages in a book. The book would be extra exciting if the readers are familiar with Hangul or Korean as their heritage language.

Even if readers don't understand the written Korean language, characters' dramatic facial expressions and body language in the illustrations give sufficient clues to the story flow. The power of the visual texts makes up for areas where the text is difficult, allowing readers to comprehend the stories through unspoken clues. Hangul in calligraphy styles and mixed with English appears to be fun and accessible. For example, a laughing sound in English, "he he he" is mixed with Korean laughing sign "ㅎ ㅎ ㅎ". Hangul is illustrated and placed cleverly so the characters provoke readers' curiosity and they want to understand instead of skipping it. The book invites the intended audience to look closely at visual texts in the illustrations.

Where's Halmoni is a clever book that recognizes children's previous literary experiences so that they can make intertextual connections with other books they know. Some of the story plots in this book remind young audiences of two famous classic children's books, *The Lion, the Witch, and the Wardrobe* by C.S. Lewis (1950) and *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1865). Nuna's and Joon's fantastic journey through a built-in closet and encounters with characters reminds readers of these classics, especially *Alice in Wonderland* when they meet the first character, a rabbit (Sung, 2019).

Korean-immigrant author Julie Kim's thoughtful and authentic Korean folk art illustrations have been selectively available in the United States. In her author's note, Kim writes, "Long ago my family moved from Korea to an unfamiliar land called America. The folktales followed us to our new home, just like the goblin door handle... Whenever something disappeared, my parents would still say, 'this must be dokkaebi (Goblin) playing tricks!' At night, stories of the tiger and the wily fox still gave us shivers". American readers may think dragons are Asian folktale creatures, not these seemingly common animals. Dragons in other Asian cultures like Chinese cultures are not the same as Korean folk cultures. Instead, Moon rabbit, the tiger, Korean Dokkaebi (Goblin), and Nine-tailed Gumiho (fox) are all common characters in popular Korean folklore and folk arts. Where's Halmoni rejuvenates the power of Korean folklore by in a modern fantasy framed by contemporary settings at the beginning and the end of the book. Korean folklore and folk arts are reborn with opportunities that allow young readers to make a wide range of connections to their literary knowledge and to create new interest in Korean culture, including language, folk arts, and literature.

Where's Halmoni? can be explored through a variety of sub-themes including sibling relationships, companionship on journeys, and Korean folklore. It can be paired with other books about sibling relationships such as *Tale of Dark Grimm* (Adam Gidwitz, 2010), *Sisters* (Raina Telgemeier, 2014), *Under the Broken Sky* (Mariko Nagai, 2019), and *A Place to Belong* (Cynthia Kadohata, 2019). The Korean Red Riding Hood, *The Sun Girl and the Moon* (Yangsook Choi, 1997), is great for talking about gender stereotypes and twists in Korean cultures.

Julie Kim lives in the Pacific Northwest where she loves to make small stories with big pictures. A graduate of Rhode Island School of Design, she has illustrated picture books, children's magazines, and book jackets. More information about Julie can be found on her website and in her blog (<http://juliekimillustrations.com/>).

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Yoo Kyung Sung, University of New Mexico



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