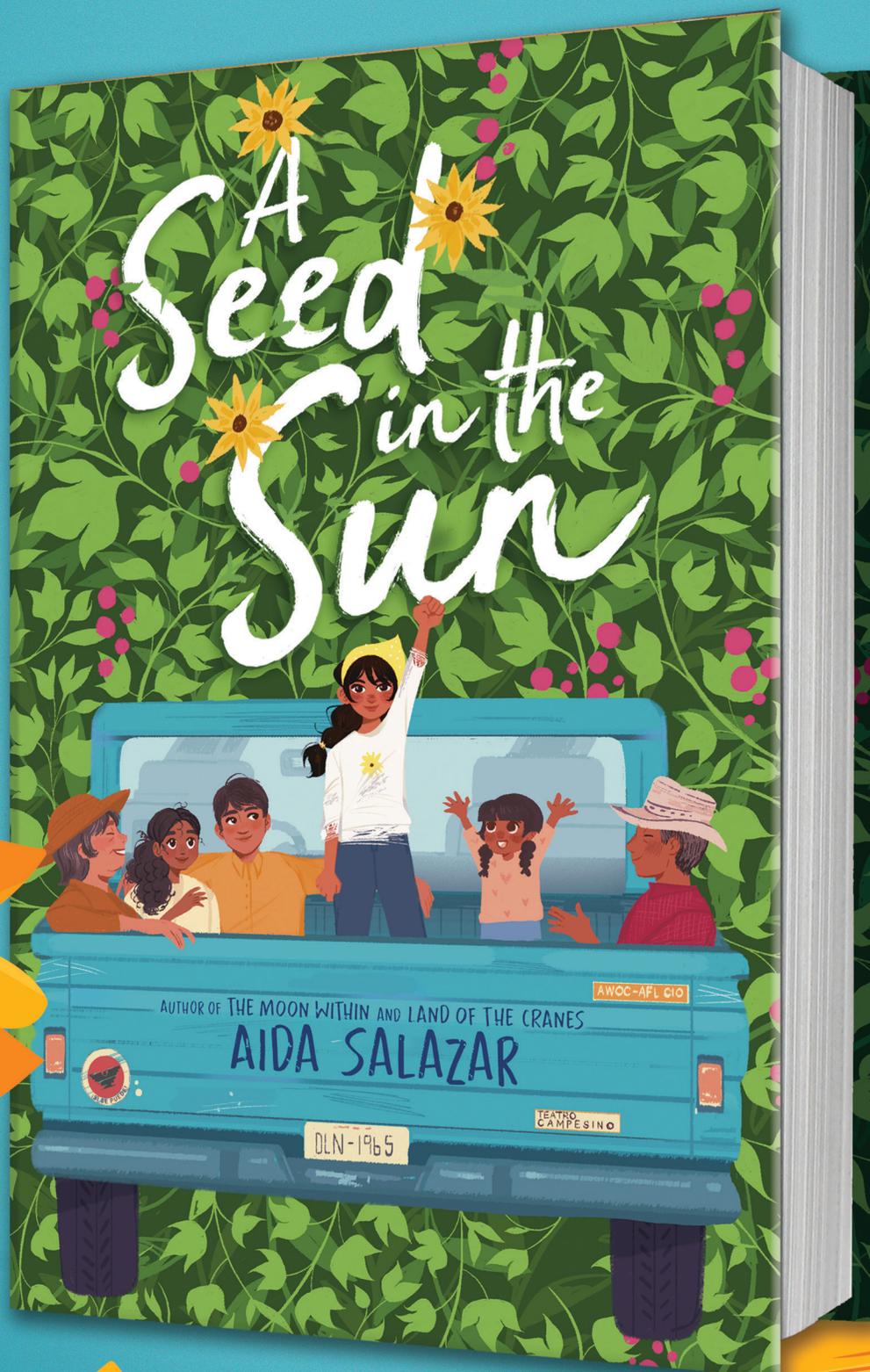


AN EDUCATOR'S GUIDE TO



ABOUT THE BOOK

Lula Viramontes aches to one day become someone whom no one can ignore: a daring ringleader in a Mexican traveling circus. But between working the grape harvest in Delano, California, with her older siblings under dangerous conditions; taking care of her younger siblings and Mamá, who has mysteriously fallen ill; and doing everything she can to avoid Papá's volatile temper, it's hard to hold on to those dreams. Then she meets Dolores Huerta, Larry Itliong, and other labor rights activists and realizes she may need to raise her voice sooner rather than later: Farmworkers are striking for better treatment and wages, and whether Lula's family joins them or not will determine their future.



DEAR EDUCATOR,

We bring to our reading of A Seed in the Sun our experiences as social justice-centered teachers of bilingual and multilingual children, teacher educators, and researchers. We also consider the conversations we've had with children and educators on poetry, particularly how novels in verse have opened conversations in classrooms and libraries by inspiring children and their teachers to approach poetry in a different way. Reading A Seed in the Sun not only nurtures our reading life through the poetic form, but also allows us to learn about the struggles of farmworkers, the coalitions formed, and how different family members navigated the challenges, raised their voices, and learned to take a stand for justice. We can't wait to hear about the ways this book opens conversations on social movements, family relationships, following your dreams, and exercising your voice and power to help the most vulnerable.

¡Sí, Se Puede!

—CARLA ESPAÑA AND LUZ YADIRA HERRERA

CARLA ESPAÑA, PhD is an Assistant Professor of Bilingual Education and Puerto Rican/Latinx and Latin American studies at Brooklyn College, City University of New York. She is the coauthor of *En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students* and cofounder of the En Comunidad Collective with Dr. Luz Yadira Herrera.

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PREPARATION FOR READING:

Setting the Scene with Multimodal Texts

Spend some time setting the scene for this reading by engaging with some of the following texts and media. This list includes those sources recommended by author Aida Salazar (as you read on the back matter of *A Seed in the Sun*). We've added the links and other favorite sources from our work with schools.

PHOTOGRAPHY / PHOTO ARCHIVES

- [Harvey Richards Photo Archive 1955–1966](#) at Estuary Press
- [Bob Fitch Farmworker Photo Archive](#) at Stanford University
- [Jon Lewis Photo Archive](#) at Yale University
- [Walter P. Reuther Library](#) at Wayne State University
- [Claudio Beagarie Archive](#) at Boise State University

DOCUMENTARIES / FILMS / VIDEOS

- [Dolores](#), directed by Peter Bratt for PBS
- [Harvest of Shame](#), directed by Edward R. Murrow
- [The Delano Manongs](#), directed by Marissa Aroy
- [Adios Amor](#), directed by Laurie Coyle
- [César Chávez](#) (biopic), directed by Diego Luna
- [Chicano! History of the Mexican-American Civil Rights Movement](#), part two, “The Struggle in the Fields”
- [Dolores Huerta on El Teatro Campesino](#)
- [Luis Valdez “I Am Theater”](#)

ORAL HISTORY ARCHIVES

- [Farmworker Movement Documentation Project](#) at UC San Diego Library
- [Stories of 2020: Agricultural Workers](#) at the National Museum of American History Behring Center
- [Bracero History Archive](#)

SOCIAL MEDIA GRAPHICS

- United Farm Workers Labor Union account @UFWupdates on [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#), United Farm Workers on [Facebook](#)



PREPARATION FOR READING:

Considering Genre and Format

Engage students in a conversation using the following questions as a guide. You can choose to read the first or a few of the first poems together and discuss your responses to the questions below. Another approach is for student groups to take on a different focus from the list below as you start the book together.

GENRE PREPARATION: READING HISTORICAL FICTION

- How can we prepare to read a historical fiction text?
- What other texts have we read that take place in a particular time period with significant historical events?
- What do we need to keep in mind about language when reading historical fiction texts?

HISTORICAL TIME PERIOD AND PERSPECTIVE

- Who is speaking? What do we learn about their experience?
- What events are shaping the character's experiences?
- How does the poem show character development?

STRUCTURE AND FORM

- What does the poem look like?
- How do the words and topic of the poem inform how stanzas are formed?
- Are there particular words or lines that are placed in a unique way?

FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

- What are some examples of poetic language that we use in our lives?
- What are examples of poetic language we've seen in other texts?
- What are some of our favorite types of figurative language (metaphor, simile, sensory language, and symbolism)?



A POETRY FRAMEWORK:

Poetry for teaching, healing, and resistance

As we engage with the verses in this text, we want to draw from the poetry for teaching, healing, and resistance framework (España, C., & Herrera, L. Y. (2020). *En Comunidad: Lessons for Centering the Voices and Experiences of Bilingual Latinx Students*. Heinemann.) that can help us peel back the layers of meaning embedded in poetry. For instance, in a first read, we might apply a poetry for teaching lens and consider what the poem is teaching us about something. Perhaps we learn about the characters, their lives, their struggles. In a second read, poetry for healing, we might consider how a poem shows an aspect of healing or fulfillment. For instance, we might notice a character's growth or victory. Finally, for poetry as resistance, we might consider the ways that the poem shows some level of resistance to harmful actions or narratives. For instance, we might take note of how a character takes a stance against an injustice like unfair gender roles, violence, or exploitation. This framework enables us to "sit" with a poem and look at it through a specific lens during each read. We selected a few poems from each part of *A Seed in the Sun* and described examples of how we would use the poems for instructional purposes, as inspiration for writing (mentor text), and for student group discussions using the poetry for teaching, healing, and resistance framework.

A POETRY FRAMEWORK:

Poetry for teaching, healing, and resistance

Part one begins with the Mexican proverb, “They tried to bury us but they didn’t know we were seeds.” We can ask students if they’ve seen or heard this proverb before and display some results of an image search with the proverb. It is common to see the proverb on graduation caps, murals, artwork, and protest posters. Ask students to discuss what this proverb means to them.

Poem for Instruction: “Remolino / A Whirl” (pages 3–4)**Poetry as Teaching: Perspective**

We immediately learn of several challenges in the protagonist’s life with this first poem: losing their voice, working in the fields, and dealing with Papa’s angry words and belt.

Poetry as Teaching: Structure and figurative language

*while the heat of a too-hot California day
fell on our
arched
backs
like barrels
of sun*

(p. 3) Discuss the shape that is formed by the placement of the words in this poem. This is also a helpful start to a discussion on the work conditions from the perspective of the protagonist. The comparison of the heat to barrels of sun shows us how strenuous this work is, alerting us to one of the many challenges this child faces (losing her voice is the other one we learn about in this first poem).

Poem for Student Group/Class Discussion: “Light Blue Schoolhouse” (pages 8–9)**Poetry as Teaching: Perspective**

Consider the importance of going to school for Lula. How can we interpret the great meaning that school has for Lula?

Poetry as Teaching: History

What other challenges do migrant farmworkers’ children face that we learn about in this poem?

Poetry as Resistance: Role of School

What role does school play in Lula’s life?

What advice does Concha give Lula about school? How does this advice compare to the type you’ve received about going to school?

Poem for Student Group/Class Discussion: “Escabs” (pages 12–13)**Poetry as Teaching: History**

What do we learn about the Filipino workers’ demands and strike?

Poetry as Healing: Protest as Form of Healing

What does “They’re in huelga” mean (p. 12)? How can protesting (striking; usually a first method of resistance) be considered a way towards healing?

Poetry as Resistance: Injustice in Society and in the Home

How does this poem touch upon the resistance to injustice in society (how Filipino workers were treated and what they did about it) and in the family (how Papá “saves his sweetness for the babies”)?

Poem as Writing Mentor Text: “To School” (pages 21–22)

Some of our favorite memories with our students involve experiences where we see the world through their eyes, support them in the development of their ideas, and witness the joy in the sharing of their learning. The poem “To School” is a wonderful way to connect with activities that involve community walks (inside and/or outside of the school) and sensory language to describe how we see our world. Maybe students are already familiar with the following picture books on community:

- *Last Stop on Market Street* by Matt de la Peña, illustrated by Christian Robinson
- *My Papi Has a Motorcycle* by Isabel Quintero, illustrated by Zeke Peña
- *Everything Naomi Loved* by Katie Yamasaki and Ian Lendler
- *Alejandria Fights Back!* / *¡La Lucha de Alejandria!* by Leticia Hernández-Linares and The Rise-Home Stories Project, illustrated by Robert Liu-Trujillo
- *Dream Street* by Tricia Elam Walker, illustrated by Ekua Holmes

As well as middle-grade book clubs on the topic community with the following:

- *Take Back the Block* by Chrystal D. Giles
- *Sofía Acosta Makes a Scene* by Emma Otheguy
- *The Epic Fail of Arturo Zamora* by Pablo Cartaya
- *When Life Gives You Mangos* by Kereen Getten
- *The Moon Within* by Aida Salazar

These books also prepare students for this discussion and writing. Here is one way to set up a writing activity that involves processing the poem and an opportunity for students to write their own:

1. *Reread the lines that show sensory language. Discuss the use of sensory language to help paint a picture of a scene.*
2. *Discuss the dialogue between Concha and Lula, focusing on Concha’s dreams and plans to “support” the family. Add to previous interpretations of this character based on what we know so far.*
3. *Bring back the images shared in preparation for reading this book, especially those with signs that had the following: “NFWA,” “AWOC AFL-CIO.” Lula says “It’s all a broken puzzle / we don’t understand” when she and Concha see these signs on their way to school (p. 22).*
4. *“But I can’t form the question / and keep walking / with my unknowingness / toward school” (p. 22). The poem ends with this line, providing an authentic way to describe how a child might feel when seeing something unfamiliar to them, especially when accompanied by shouts and connected in some way to conversations that the family had at home. This is a powerful line because we are reminded of the importance of language and context. Share examples of times when knowing what to name something helped.*
5. *Invite students to write their own “To School” poem, borrowing some of the lines:*
 - a. *“We walk a path of / _____ / _____ / _____ and _____ / to school.”*
 - b. *[Write a line of dialogue that a friend or family member might say when walking with them]*
 - c. *[Write a line of dialogue that the writer might say in response]*
 - d. *“I squint my eyes at [describe what they see in the distance]”*
 - e. *“as I hear [describe what they hear in the distance on their way to school]”*
 - f. *“I point out [describe something that stands out on their way to school]”*
 - g. *[End with something about their way to school/community that they’d like to learn more about]*

Poem for Instruction: “Lucrecia” (page 35)

The poem “Lucrecia” is a lovely addition to an ongoing text set on name stories. Several of us love to read name story picture books and early readers. These include: *Alma and How She Got Her Name* by Juana Martinez-Neal; *Your Name Is a Song* by Jamilah Thompkins-Bigelow, illustrated by Luisa Uribe; *Sarai and the Meaning of Awesome* by Sarai Gonzalez and Monica Brown; and a classic like *My Name is Maria Isabel* by Alma Flor Ada. Name stories written in poetry form also present us with opportunities to share our name journeys. Not all students may be aware of how their name came to be—some may not have the connection with a family member to find out (due to foster care, family separation policies, or other discriminatory practices outside of their control). For other children, their given name is not the name they prefer to use, especially for our trans children and youth and others who opt for a name they have chosen for themselves. Given these realities, we recommend providing options for a writing task. Children can write about their name or a name they’d like to have or a name story of a family or friend who would like to share those details. Next, students can revisit “Lucrecia” and borrow some lines and structure. For example:

Stanza 1: [Focus on who picked that name and where they got the idea from]

“_____ named me _____,”

Stanza 2: [Focus on why this was important]

Stanza 3: [Use sensory language to emphasize what was important]

Stanza 4: [End explaining what this name means]

Poem for Student Group/ Class Discussion: “A Flower Heart” (pages 41–42)

Poetry as Teaching: Figurative Language

Return to the last stanza of the poem:

*Papá is a cactus plant
who lives in the harshest conditions
with a prickly shell
and a desert flower
who blooms only once a year.*

(p. 42)

Share examples of metaphors that are commonly used by students or that they’ve seen in other texts. Return to this stanza in the poem, “Flower Heart,” and share your own observations of a cactus plant. Ask students to share their observations of Papá so far in the text. For example, you can ask the following to support students’ understanding of the cactus plant as a metaphor for Papá:

- Why is Papá compared to a cactus plant in this metaphor?
- What do you know about the cactus plant?
- What do you know about Papá so far? Return to the different places that mention Papá’s reactions (to Lula’s missing voice, the strike, Mamá’s health, and Concha’s dreams) and share your observations.

Poetry as Teaching: Perspective

Using a shared document like a class chart or a digital version like a Google document, revisit any notes on the conditions of migrant farmwork with the whole class.

- What are the harshest conditions of the migrant farmwork life that Papá faces?
- In contrast, what brings Papá joy?

Poems for Student Group/ Class Discussion: “Hidden” (pages 46–47) and “El Malcriado Too” (pages 56–57)

PART TWO:
GERMINO
CONTINUED

Poetry as Teaching: History

Set up the students in groups to view different primary sources from the National Farm Workers Association (NFWA) and the Agricultural Workers Organizing Committee (AWOC). Students can revisit the poems along with the primary sources. Students can discuss what the primary sources teach them and how these poems contribute to their understanding of what is happening with the farmworkers.

Poetry as Teaching: Perspective, History, and Character Development

The following chart lists some highlights from poems on different themes from these first two parts in the book. This is a resource that students can discuss in groups to review what they’ve learned so far about characters in the book and track the changes along two lenses: family relationships and farmworkers’ experience.

FAMILY

“I want to be one of the reasons Papá smiles.” (p. 16)

“The loving air Mamá / breathed into the room / was cut / by / each/ of / his / hard / steps.” (p. 59)

“I wish to see the warmth / I know is inside of him.” (p. 67)

“Papá, we have to take her to the farmworker’s clinic, / I / say, not trying to hide how desperate I feel.” (p. 103)

“Doesn’t he think we have rights too?” (p. 111)

“When Concha complains, / Mamá says the home is ‘woman’s work.’ / ‘Así son las cosas.’ / I agree with Concha / that’s not ‘just the way things are.’ / They shouldn’t be, anyway.” (p. 107)

FARMWORKERS AND ACTIVISM

“Josesito said escab means traitor because we are cross- / ing their picket line.” (p. 12)

“I recall the stench of chemicals / left behind on our clothes / though we wash it off / in the irrigation canals / from where we also drink.” (p. 38)

“Mamá has been hurt by pesticides” (p. 37)

“Escúchame, you have to pay us for the time we worked, / Papá delivers with his earthen voice.” (p. 79)

“Yes, we can. Sí se puede. If we do it, together.’ Dolores says while landing one closed fist into the palm of the other hand.” (p. 86)

“What I saw was someone fighting for everyone, Papá.’ / Rafa says.” (p. 90)

PART THREE:
BROTE

Part three begins with a quote from Martin Luther King Jr. Students might already be familiar with quotes from Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ask students to share other quotes and how this one compares to what they know. Have them discuss how this quote might be an example of foreshadowing (an indication of what is to come). Students can revisit their ideas after they’ve finished reading this part of the book.

Poem for Instruction: “Susto” (page 101)

Poetry as Teaching: Perspective and History

Share with students your observations so far on what Lula has witnessed, from conversations in the home to walks to schools and classmates’ discussions. Create a visual like a timeline or list of incidents that lead Lula to this moment, when we read “how unfair it all seems to me now” (p. 101). This includes the lessons we are learning about the struggle for workers’ rights. Ask students what else they might add to your timeline or list to answer the following question with you: “How does Lula come to the realization of unfairness?” Extend this analysis to students’ own lives. After sharing an example of your own journey of realization when something wasn’t right, ask if any students feel comfortable in giving other examples. Let students know that you will return to this topic throughout the book—especially in Part Five, when we look at how Lula’s dream and voice take shape, helping students see the power and hope in the resistance to injustice.



Poetry as Healing: Healing from a Susto

In this poem we learn about the ways that Lula’s family processes a “susto” (a scare). Discuss with students some beliefs from family and caregivers that have been passed down from one generation to the next.

Poetry as Resistance: Growing an Awareness and Raising our Voice

Return to the stanza:

*We do have rights, like Dolores said.
We should be paid well for this hard work.
We should be able to take breaks to drink water.
We shouldn’t be shot at when we protest.*
(p. 101)

Lula realizes the incredible amount of injustice in their lives and the glimmer of hope provided by those protesting. Ask students to join you in considering this stanza and the last line of the poem where Lula is wondering what they’ll have to do as a family to convince Papá to strike. What do we think Lula will do to persuade her Papá?

Poem for Student Group/ Class Discussion: “Women’s Work” (page 107)

Poetry as Teaching: Perspective

At this point in the story, we see that Lula is not only growing in her awareness of unfairness with farmwork and who gets to protest, as we read in “Susto,” but also in the gender expectations at home. Lula and Concha perceive their roles in their family differently than the adults. Their brother, Rafa, also knows that these expectations are unfair. Discuss with students how these expectations impact everyone in the family.

Poetry as Resistance: Creating a New Narrative of Women’s Work

Seeing Dolores as a leader in the movement advocating for farmworkers’ rights is a type of work that is different from what we see in this poem. Open up the conversation on ways that Lula and Concha might resist this imposition of gender roles in the family. What could they say and do? How might their parents respond? Partner students to create a poem in response to “Women’s Work.”

Poem as Writing Mentor Text: “Mind Glimpse” (pages 112–113)

In the poem “Mind Glimpse,” Lula reflects on her inability to remember her dreams, but can recall bits and pieces of some and is puzzled as to why she never dreams about the circus (which she loves!). Students can write about their dreams or daydreams and use descriptive language to describe some details about the places, people, or things involved. Students can revisit “Mind Glimpse” and borrow some lines and structure.

For example:

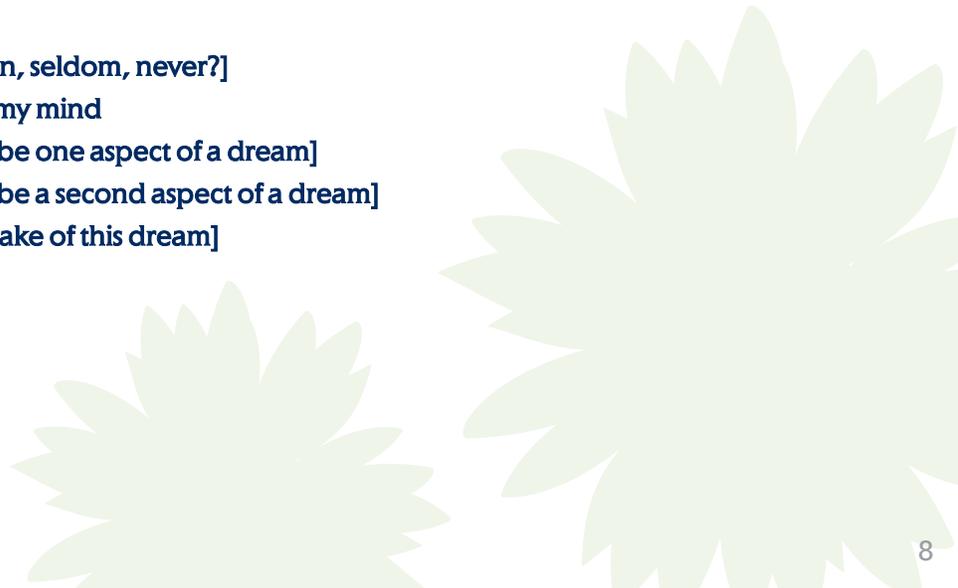
Stanza 1: I _____ remember my dreams [often, seldom, never?]

Stanza 2: In the morning, I catch glimpses in my mind

Stanza 3: [Use descriptive language to describe one aspect of a dream]

Stanza 4: [Use descriptive language to describe a second aspect of a dream]

Stanza 5: [Write a line that shows what you make of this dream]





PART FOUR: CAPULLO

Poem for Instruction: “Beating Back Violence” (pages 141–142)

Poetry as Teaching: Perspective and History

It is helpful to take a moment to track the character of Papá up to this point in the book.

After reading this poem, we can consider how Papá is changing and the impact that meeting César Chávez has on his and his family’s life. Invite students to join you, asking them to consider what they know about non-violent social movements and how this poem adds to their understanding of their impact.

Poetry as Healing: Processing Changes in Parenting and Discipline

Papá’s changes deeply impact the children, which we can read in their reactions: “I cover my mouth to stop from crying” (p. 142). Discuss with students what they know so far about how Papá’s parenting impacts the children. How might this change also influence the family’s perspective on Papá? How does this poem address intergenerational trauma around violence?

Poem for Student Group / Class Discussion: “Pickup Truck Cheerleaders” (page 150–151)

Poetry as Teaching: Perspective and History

- What do we learn about the ways that entire families were involved with the struggle for workers’ rights?
- What are some popular chants that are associated with the farmworkers’ movement?

Poetry as Healing: Awareness on the Road to Healing

- The poem says, “We are doing the things he expects of us” (p. 151). How does this show the tension that Lula feels as she is doing what her father expects her to do while she’d rather be on the picket line? How is this awareness part of healing?
- How do we see Leonor’s influence on Lula in this poem?
- How are Leonor and Lula’s families different regarding how the families see their kids’ roles in the strike?

Poetry as Resistance: Paths of Resistance

- What does resistance look like for Lula in this poem?

Poem as Writing Mentor Text: “Patience” (page 156)

In the poem “Patience,” Lula reflects on what she learns and doesn’t learn in school, as well as what she might be missing from school. There are several great picture books that show the challenges in school life and ways children respond. Some of our favorite reads on this topic include *Schomburg: The Man Who Built a Library* by Carole Boston Weatherford, illustrated by Eric Velasquez, and *The Day You Begin* by Jacqueline Woodson, illustrated by Rafael López. Students can write about what they learn and don’t learn in school.

For example:

Stanza 1: In school, / we don’t learn about / _____ [content]

Stanza 2: In school, / _____ [analysis]

Stanza 3: In school, / we learn about / _____ [content]

Stanza 4: In school, / _____ [analysis]

Stanza 5: [Write a line that explains why this matters to you.]



Part Five begins with a quote by Dolores Huerta. By now, students have learned a lot about la causa and can consider how their understanding of the movement influences their interpretation of the quote. Students can share their learning of labor justice up to this point in the book and what this quote contributes to that understanding.

Poem as Writing Mentor Text: “After-School Commotion” (pages 170–172)

Return to the last stanza of the poem:

*My daydreams and la causa
have come together to give me
a new thing
to dream
and be
someday.*

(p. 172)

The poem “After-School Commotion” not only introduces students to El Teatro Campesino, the traveling theater of the union (more on that in the next poem), but is also a helpful text to engage in discussions on children’s dreams. Maybe you’ve shown students video clips of Marley Dias’ #1000BlackGirlBooks campaign (and her book, *Marley Dias Gets It Done: And So Can You*) or you read books that nurture children’s dreams of the kind of people they’d like to be when they grow up, the experiences they’d like to have, and the connections they’d like to build. For example, a middle-grade book like *Stand Up, Yumi Chung!* by Jessica Kim or picture books on people throughout history like *Drum Dream Girl: How One Girl’s Courage Changed Music* by Margarita Engle, illustrated by Rafael López, may form part of your classroom library collection, inspiring young

readers to dream big. This poem’s last stanza provides another opportunity for readers to think about their dreams and what in their life has reminded them to follow them. One quick classroom activity can involve the following:

1. Reread “After-School Commotion.”
2. Discuss what more we are learning about Lula.
3. Jot down a few thoughts (as a list or narrative) about our own dreams connected to experiences we’d like to have and connections we’d like to create with others.
4. Discuss our writing with a writing partner.
5. Return to our writing to create a short stanza like the one in “After-School Commotion,” borrowing the line, “My daydreams and _____ / have come together to give me _____”

Poem for Instruction: “El Teatro Campesino” (page 173)

Poetry as Teaching: El Teatro Campesino

Share video clips and images of El Teatro Campesino with students to tell the story of their work of advocacy through theater (see the resource list at the beginning of this guide). Discuss the following:

1. How was El Teatro Campesino formed?
2. Who founded and participated in El Teatro Campesino?
3. How did El Teatro Campesino’s performances inform communities about the farmworkers’ struggles?
4. What does the poem “El Teatro Campesino” teach us? How does it contribute to what we learn from the primary sources?

Poetry as Resistance: Theater as Resistance

The students have learned a lot about the migrant farmworker experience, especially through the eyes of the young protagonist, Lula. Now that they’ve also read this poem and engaged with primary sources like the video clips and images, what would their own “El Teatro Campesino” poem share? Partner students to create lines together where they take their notes or observations from the primary sources and put them into poetry lines like those on page 173. Their writing serves as an example of resistance to a dominant, hurtful narrative of farmworkers.

Poem for Student Group/ Class Discussion: “Outlawed” (page 182)

Poetry as Teaching: Women in Social Movements

1. How does this poem show the ways that people were silenced?
2. Revisit some other poems that also show women leaders in the movement, along with this poem. Who were the women involved in this movement? Why is it important to be aware of women leaders, especially during this time period?
3. How does this poem show the power of language in social protest?

This last part of the novel ends with a quote by Cesar Chávez. Have students share what this quote means to them and the changes they would make to their life considering this quote and other lessons from the book.

Poem for Instruction: “Pilgrimage” (pages 235–237)

Poetry as Teaching: Pilgrimage as Protest

1. Up to this point, we’ve read about different forms of protest. In this poem, we learn about the pilgrimage. Discuss the protest strategy involved in the pilgrimage to Sacramento.
2. Show social media images from the United Farm Workers account (@UFWupdates on Instagram), including those of the farmworkers’ vigils and pilgrimage in 2022 seeking the California Governor’s signature on AB2183.

Poetry as Healing: The Role of the Arts in Healing

The poem “Pilgrimage” ends with: “El Teatro Campesino will be there to lift spirits with actos and canciones!” (p. 235). Discuss with students how we started learning about El Teatro Campesino as a way for the community to discover the struggle and methods of resistance. Now, let’s add how El Teatro Campesino uses their performances to bring joy to those advocating for change. Ask students to share other kinds of artistic expressions that they’ve seen or learned about when studying social movements.

Poem for Student Group/ Class Discussion: “Brazos Abiertos” (pages 250–251)

Poetry for Healing: Apologies and Changing Our Actions To Not Cause Harm to Others

Lula has been waiting for a long time to feel a connection with her Papá. We can see how this happens in “Brazos Abiertos,” as she finishes her performance with El Teatro Campesino. Students can discuss the events that led up to this point and what Papá’s words mean to the children. There is also something powerful expressed at the end of the poem as the family listens to Dolores Huerta’s speech: “Feeling connected / to one another / and to our purpose / to carry on” (p. 251). Have students discuss what connects the family now and how this moment is different from the first few scenes in the book.

Poem as Writing Mentor Text: “March” (page 255)

This culminating scene of social protest with the family and community marching to Sacramento is one that can help us understand other examples of activism and organizing. Some of our favorite books to read to expand on these conversations include:

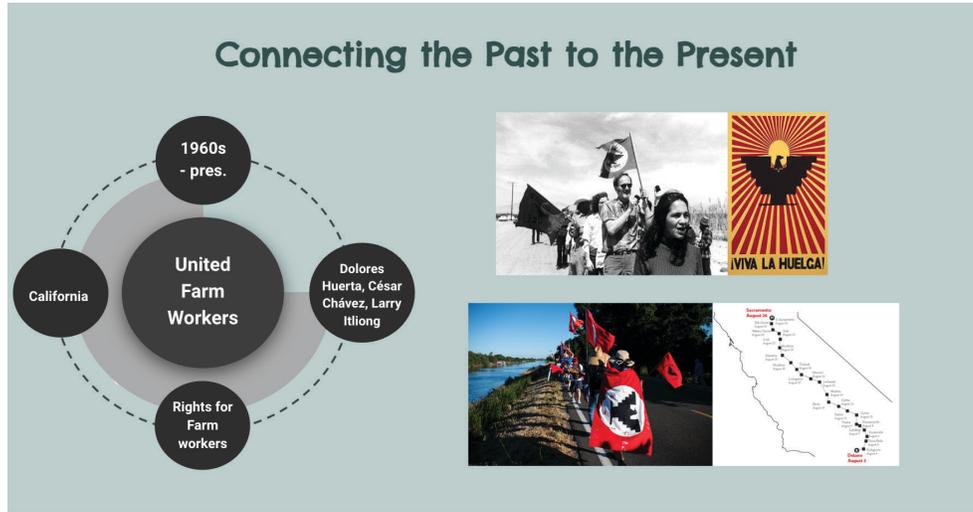
- *Alejandria Fights Back! / La lucha de Alejandria!* by Leticia Hernández-Linares and The Rise-Home Stories Project, illustrated by Robert Liu-Trujillo
- *Separate Is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family’s Fight for Desegregation* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *Journey for Justice: The Life of Larry Itliong* by Dawn B. Mabalon and Gayle Romasanta, illustrated by Andre Sibayan
- *If You’re a Kid Like Gavin* by Gavin Grimm and Kyle Lukoff, illustrated by J Yang
- *Oh the Things We’re For!* by Innosanto Nagara
- *Undocumented: A Worker’s Fight* by Duncan Tonatiuh
- *We Rise, We Resist, We Raise Our Voices* edited by Wade Hudson and Cheryl Willis Hudson

Reading this poem also shows us how we can teach others about activism through poetry. Students can work in groups to read a picture book, excerpt from an anthology, or excerpt from a middle-grade novel on activism. They can take notes on what they learned about a particular method of activism (protest, strike, pilgrimage, vigil) and discuss how it compares to the experiences of the farmworkers in *A Seed in the Sun*. Finally, students can create a community poem with their group (or as a whole class activity). Each student can write their own poem, select a favorite line, share their reasoning behind selecting that favorite line, and contribute that line to a group/class poem. The class/community poem can be written on chart paper with each student writing their own line or students writing their line on a sticky note and then having a conversation on placement in the poem, moving the notes around. This type of culminating activity allows for children to bring together what they’ve learned about poetry, activism, and collaboration in creating something together. For an art extension activity with this community poem, students can revisit the poem, “What the Picket Signs Read” (page 121), make a list of what their picket sign would read for the social movement they studied, and create one.

EXTENDING OUR LEARNING

Connecting the Past to the Present

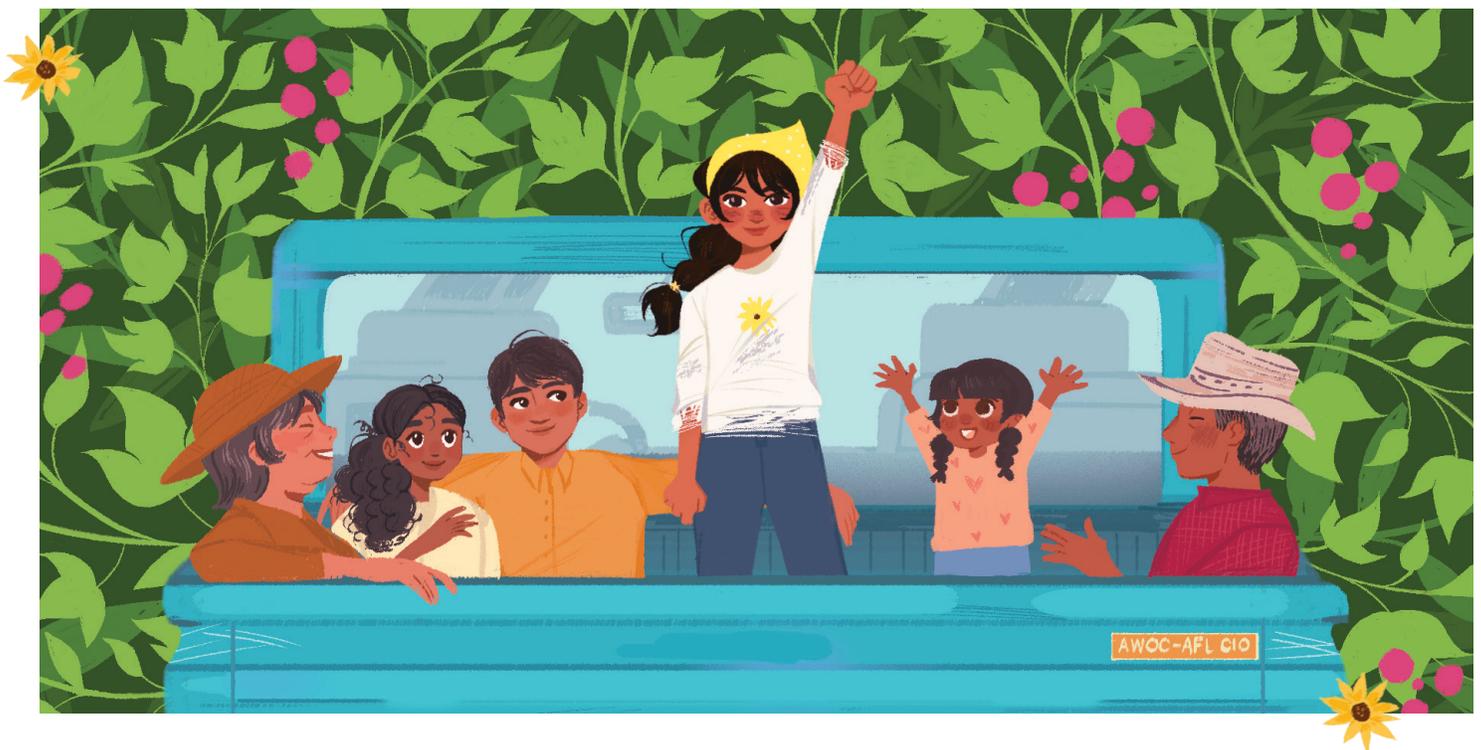
One way we can continue our conversations after we've finished the book with our students is to create visuals to teach others about the connections between past and present social movements. For example, the visual below presents images from the farmworkers in the 1960s and those in the summer of 2022.



Class Poetry Anthology

Another extension activity includes taking the short poems written throughout the reading and editing them for a class anthology. Students can work in partnerships or small groups to give one another feedback. The anthology can form part of the classroom and/or school library collection.

El Teatro Campesino: Students can create scripts for short scenes from *A Seed in the Sun* and perform them in small groups or for other classes if this is a reading across the grade. Some students can prepare some remarks that teach the audience about El Teatro Campesino before they watch the performance.





ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Aida Salazar is an award-winning author, arts activist, and translator whose writings for adults and children explore issues of identity and social justice. She is the author of the critically acclaimed middle grade verse novels, *The Moon Within* (International Latino Book Award Winner) and *Land of Cranes* (Américas Award, California Library Association Beatty Award, Northern CA Book Award, NCTE Charlotte Huck Honor, Jane Addams Peace Honor, and International Latino Book Award Honor). Her more recent novel is *A Seed in the Sun*. Her other works include the picture book anthology *In the Spirit of a Dream: 13 Stories of Immigrants of Color*, the forthcoming biographical picture book *Jovita Wore Pants: The Story of a Mexican Freedom Fighter* (Spring 2023); and the anthology, *Calling the Moon: Period Stories by BIPOC Authors* (Spring 2023). Aida is a founding member of LAS MUSAS, a Latinx kidlit author collective. Her story *By the Light of the Moon* was adapted into a ballet production by the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance and is the first Xicana-themed ballet in history. She lives with her family of artists in a teal house in Oakland, CA.

PRAISE FOR *A Seed in the Sun*

★ “Blend[s] real issues and events with engaging characters, turning the past into a living, breathing thing.”

—BOOKLIST, STARRED REVIEW

★ “Makes complex history tangible.”

—BOOKPAGE, STARRED REVIEW

★ “Poignantly told.”

—SCHOOL LIBRARY JOURNAL, STARRED REVIEW

★ “A powerful coming-of-age story filled with evocative language.”

—HORN BOOK, STARRED REVIEW

