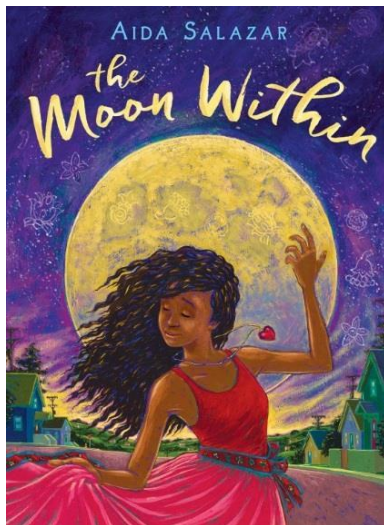


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★ “A worthy successor to *Are You There God? It's Me, Margaret*”  
—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

# THE MOON WITHIN

By Aida Salazar



Written in brilliant verse by debut talent **Aida Salazar**, **THE MOON WITHIN**, is a modern, coming-of-age story that follows eleven-year-old Celi Rivera as she learns to navigate friendship, family tradition, and growing up.

Celi's life is rapidly changing as she approaches her twelfth birthday, leaving her confused. She dreads the arrival of her period, partly because she has questions that she is too embarrassed to ask adults, but mostly, it's her mother's insistence that Celi have a “moon ceremony” to celebrate her first menstruation that leaves her feeling perplexed. A proud Xicana tradition that Celi's mother and their community have reclaimed, the “moon ceremony” honors the transition from girl to woman, but Celi isn't sure that her changing body is something that should be celebrated.

Meanwhile, Celi's best friend Magda is also going through a change, asking Celi to use he/his pronouns and call him Mar as he transitions into a *xochihuah*, “people who danced between / or to other energies / than what they were assigned at birth.” While this revelation leaves Celi initially shocked and confused, the spirit of their friendship is stronger. However, the bond of that friendship is threatened when Celi's first crush Iván, says cruel things about Mar. Celi finds herself torn between being loyal to her best friend and the possibility of experiencing her first kiss with the boy of her dreams. Can she find the strength to take a stand and become the person she wants to be?

**Aida Salazar** is a writer, arts advocate, and home-schooling mother who grew up in South East LA. She received an MFA in Writing from the California Institute of the Arts, and her writings have appeared in publications such as the Huffington Post, *Women and Performance: Journal of Feminist Theory*, and *Huizache Magazine*. Her short story, *By the Light of the Moon*, was adapted into a ballet by the Sonoma Conservatory of Dance and is the first Xicana-themed ballet in history. Aida lives with her family of artists in a teal house in Oakland, CA.

## **The Moon Within**

By Aida Salazar

Arthur A. Levine Books / Scholastic

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Praise for  
**THE MOON WITHIN**

★ “This novel contains **rich descriptions** of Mexica rituals and **provides a unique perspective** on gender fluidity and the bonds of unbreakable friendship.”

—*School Library Journal*, starred review

★ “An authentically middle school voice and diverse Latinx cast make this book **a standout.**”

—*Kirkus Reviews*, starred review

“[This] verse novel, delivered in effortless Spanglish, offers **an excellent portrait of the way many people live their mixed heritage** now. Pair it with Nikki Grimes’ *Planet Middle School* for diverse and poetic looks at periods, first crushes, and the ups and downs of relationships with family and friends.”—*Bulletin of the Center for Children’s Books*

“This is **a lovely, relatable story** about anyone who is torn between their impulses—fueled by frustration or anger—and the desire to do what’s right by family and friends, especially when it’s difficult. The words really use up the space on the pages in creative ways, and the author reveals cultural aspects of Latinx (especially Xicana) and Caribbean peoples in **rich detail.**”

—*Booklist*

“This is a fascinating tale that **blends ancestral traditions from two cultures, while portraying modern dilemmas.** Salazar’s poetry is as lovely and graceful as the dance scenes.”

—**Margarita Engle**, National Young People’s Poet Laureate and Newbery Honor-winning author of *The Surrender Tree*

“With conga-pulsed lyrics, Aida Salazar pulls us into the coming of age of eleven year Celi. She initiates readers into the conversation of Bomba, the girl-woman circle, divine twin energies and the many moon-tide powers of a Latina pre-teen. This is a book whose form and content, vision and depth I find **revolutionary and culturally ecstatic.** In these times, **here is the liberation verse our youth and all have been waiting for** – Brava-Bravo!”

—**Juan Felipe Herrera**, U.S. Poet Laureate and author of *Jabberwalking*

“Aida Salazar has reached deep into our indigenous past to explore in **beautiful, poignant** poetry what it means to become a woman at the intersection of community and self. Rooted in ancestral lore yet vibrantly modern, *The Moon Within* is a **touching, powerful, and important** novel in verse.”—**David Bowles**, Pura Belpré Honor-winning author of *The Smoking Mirror*

“**Lovely and amazing**...a heartbreaker, in every wonderful way. Salazar’s vivid and accessible verse brings us the coming-of-age story we’ve been longing for. **Poignant, funny, and deeply moving**, *The Moon Within* is a story told with an abundance of love and respect—a gift straight from the center of Salazar’s heart to readers everywhere.”—**Olugbemisola Rhuday-Perkovich**, author of *Eighth-Grade Superzero* and co-author of *Naomis Too*