

# Edna Iturralde

nominated by iBby Ecuador for the

## Hans Christian Andersen Award

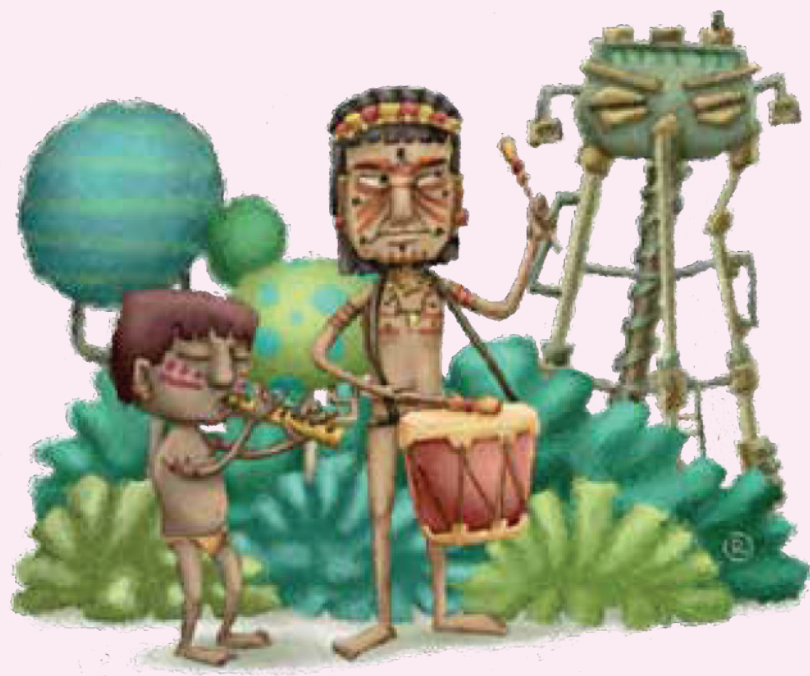


**Girándula**

ASOCIACIÓN ECUATORIANA  
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## Edna Iturralde - A Short Biography\*

Over her 45-year career, Edna Iturralde has become an icon of Ibero-American literature for the young. She is Ecuador's most prolific and versatile writer for the young and its pioneer of ethnohistorical literature for children. She founded, and for eleven years edited, Ecuador's first free children's magazine, which approximately 225,000 children read every week. Prestigious companies have published, and frequently republished, seventy of her books in Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Central America, Cuba, Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Cameroon, and the United States. She has written for ages five to seventeen on a diversity of themes, including: legends, myths, and fantasy; history and biography; social and environmental issues; and ethnohistory and multiculturalism. A prestigious panel of experts in children's literature selected her book *Green Was My Forest* as one of the ten best Latin American children's books written in the twentieth century. In 2020, she won the II Edition of the Special Recognition Cervantes Chico Ibero American Award.

Edna was born to Enrique Iturralde and Edna De Howitt on May 10, 1948, in Quito the capital of Ecuador. Her father, an air force pilot, died in an airplane crash on her first birthday.

By reading to her every night, Edna's mother imbued her with a love of books. When her mother remarried, Edna lived mostly with her Ecuadorian grandmother and her Palestinian grandfather. Her grandmother told Edna about the *chagras*, cowboys, driving cattle in Ecuador's high pastures on her family's *haciendas* (farms) below the volcanoes. Her grandfather told her about growing up in Jerusalem and read her stories from *The Thousand and One Nights*. Flowers filled her grandparents' garden where Edna told stories to her beloved dogs and dolls and daydreamed on her swing, and her imagination blossomed. (see: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RUoyYWfE4vs>)



When her fifth-grade class could not find a suitable play to present at a school assembly, Edna wrote one, a wise teacher accepted it, and it was performed to enthusiastic applause. Soon her classmates were asking her for made-to-order stories: about a new baby brother or sister, a pet, or a trip. Edna had found her vocation and dreamed of it becoming her profession.

\* Garcia Padrino, <https://www.scbwi.org/membership>

*Excerpt from Edna's short story 'The Garden of the Golden Spiders' –*

*"Curious, the Girl got off her swing and went to see. They were tiny spiders of a delicate yellow color that the sun turned gold. She felt surrounded by magic; in that moment it wouldn't have seems strange to her if the flowers had begun to talk to her. A sensation of happiness flooded her, now that she never again would feel lonely without friends to play with; she would simply come sit on her swing and from there travel to the stars, visit enchanted castles, cross the sea on pirate boats, and slide down the rainbow...and all this from her garden, the garden of the golden spiders."*

In 1965, when Edna was in eleventh grade, it was unimaginable that a girl would participate in Ecuador's national public speaking contest. Nonetheless, she insisted on her right to compete with her boy classmates to represent her school. She was selected and became not only the first girl to compete for, but the first girl to win, the Ecuador National Award for Oratory.

Upon graduating from high school, Edna declined a scholarship to study international law in Switzerland and instead became a tourist guide for Intra-Travel's 'South American Adventure Tours.' She became an expert in guiding tourists on visits to Indigenous peoples in their jungle villages and highland markets and in explaining Ecuador's turbulent history and Quito's beautifully preserved colonial center. In fact, her stories and humor so delighted tourists that they voted her the company's outstanding South American tour guide. Her imagination, creativity, and enterprising spirit revealed itself even more when she founded Quito's first boutique, Carnaby Street, which sold the clothes and jewelry she designed herself.

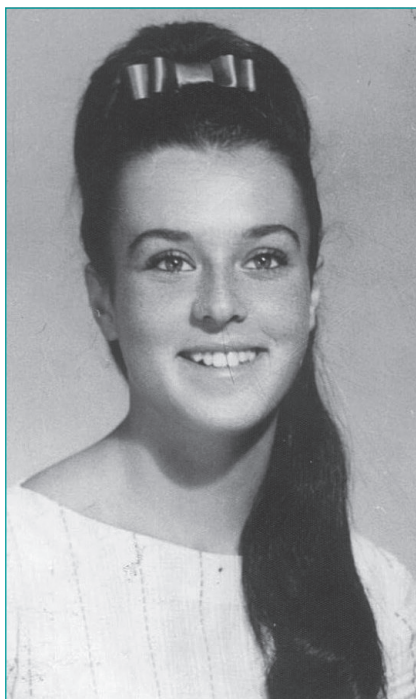
In 1970, after she married a Dutch businessman, Edna's yearly visits to Holland widened her cultural experiences. Her husband died in an airplane crash in 1982, leaving her alone to care for four children. In 1985, she remarried an American forester, which gave her the new experience of spending summers in upstate New York. From this marriage, she has two more children.

In bringing up six children, Edna not only acquired a profound and practical understanding of child psychology but also kept alive her own 'inner child,' the imaginative source that she says inspires her writing and



is manifested in her literature's empathy for young people's joys and worries, delights, and frustrations. Edna's literary career started with the stories she told her own children. She says, "*I had to repeat my stories word-for-word, or my children would quickly remind me of the original story. So, I had to write the stories down.*"

In 1981, *Panorama*, a supplement of the Quito newspaper *El Comercio* began to publish Iturralde's stories. In 1982, she founded a children's magazine, ***La Cometa*** (*The Kite*) and edited it for eleven years. Her seventy books have made an important contribution to what has been called a "boom" in Ecuadorean children's literature.



Edna's six children and 12 grandchildren live variously in Ecuador, the United States, Brazil, The Netherlands, and France. Except for annual summer visits to upstate New York, Edna continues to live in Quito, Ecuador with her husband and four dogs.





# Edna Iturralde's Contribution to Literature for Young People

## Fecundity and Diversity

The number and diversity of her literary production are Edna Iturralde's most obvious contributions to literature for young people from ages 5 to 17. Over eleven years, she produced 572 issues of the children's magazine *La Cometa* filled with her own stories and comics. As of 2024, she is the author of 70 published books, many of them reprinted frequently. Jaime García Padrino, Professor of Language and Literature Didactics (Children's Literature Profile) at the Complutense University of Madrid, has commented:

*The contribution of the writer Edna Iturralde to Children's and Young Adult Literature is one of the most outstanding in Ecuador and Latin America, both for the number of her works published so far, as well as for the variety of topics addressed, the solid documentation used, the remarkable rigor of her biographical and historical stories and, above all, the high quality of her writing.<sup>1</sup>*

Over her 45-year writing career, Iturralde has woven a wide range of themes into her literature. Manuel Peña Muñoz, the Chilean writer, literary researcher, and specialist in Latin-American literature for the young, has commented:

*One of the most active writers of children's literature today is Edna Iturralde with an extensive narrative work that has been published in Ecuador, Peru, Argentina, Colombia, Central America, Cuba, Mexico, Spain, and the United States. The variety of her themes and the depth of the content addressed in her books make her worthy of a prominent place in the world of children's and young people's literature. Her books highlight the different Latin American cultures with the purpose of connecting children with their roots through a literature rich in documentation and artistic resources.<sup>2</sup>*

Enrique Perez, the distinguished Cuban writer and critic of literature for the young, divides Iturralde's books into four categories. Her **Multi-cultural and Ethnohistorical** literature is set in Ecuador's contemporary, historical, and pre-historical cultures, including those of its Indigenous peoples, 'chagras' and 'montubios', who are Andean and coastal farmers and cowboys, 'cholos', who live along Ecuador's Pacific coast, and Afro-Ecuadorians. Her **Social and Environmental** literature includes 75 short stories that humorously impart good values and habits to children,

1 García Padrino, Jaime. 2011. From a recommendation letter to the Astrid Lindgren Award 2012 selection committee.

2 Peña Muñoz, Manuel. 2017. From a recommendation letter to the Astrid Lindgren Award 2018 selection committee.

stories about animals in danger of extinction, and adventure novels that expose older children to the issues of civil conflict, HIV/AIDS, femicide, and forced migration.

Her **Historical and Biographical** literature includes biographies for young children of Simon Bolivar, Miguel de Cervantes, St. Francis, Sor Juan de la Cruz, and Zelia Nuttall, biographies for older children of Simon Bolivar and Osvaldo Guayasamin, three historical novels of the struggle for independence from the Spanish Empire, and a book of historically accurate stories about how Ecuador's principal soccer teams were founded. Many of the books in the previous categories include fantasy, myths, and legends. In the **Fantasy, Legends, and Myths** category, however, there are many books with these elements, including a saga about dragons on a mysterious planet, the myths and legends of Latin America, and the most famous love legends from twelve countries.

In sum, Iturralde's 70 published books and 572 issues of *La Cometa* demonstrate an astonishing fecundity and diversity of literary production for the young.

## Literary and Aesthetic Quality

Iturralde's greatest contribution to literature for young people is the superb literary and aesthetic quality of her literature, derived from her use of literary processes and configurations, including powerful beginnings and endings, ingenious plots, effective syntactic forms, evocative images and figures of speech, and efficacious choice of words and sound patterns, all enwrapped in, or calculated to show and produce, that key ingredient for great literature for the young: empathy. The following paragraphs identify and analyze, albeit briefly, these elements of Iturralde's literature.

### Beginnings and Endings

Beginnings and endings are especially important in stories for the young. The former incites their interest; the latter induces their satisfaction. Three examples must suffice to demonstrate Iturralde's mastery of both.

*The Bridge of the Coyotes'* first sentence plunges the story into a situation of extortion, danger, and superstition:

*Celestino Lopez, whose first name was not Celestino and whose family name was not Lopez, closed the door of his car, looked again at the moon, and walked faster. He didn't like that red circle around it.*

The book's last sentence resolves that situation by answering David's question about why parents would take the risk of emigrating with their children:

*Then, he answered himself with a reason that was as old as the world: love.*



The first twelve paragraphs open the story “**Butterflies**”, in ***When the Guns Fell Silent***, by slowly and methodically describing details of the house, the family ancestry, drinking tea, and preparing for prayers. The next twelve paragraphs end the story with action: bombers fly overhead; a pick-up truck stops; children jump out; Ahamed remembers, runs, screams, and snatches up the bomb that looks like a butterfly. The story ends with one word that summarizes adults’ wartime betrayal of children: butterflies.

The first paragraph and last paragraphs of ***Tears of Angels*** function as bookends to the story:

*Jaime was awakened by silence. That fleeting moment some cities experience - between dawn and sunrise - when the ball of noise pauses, suspended above the concrete ring of buildings, before bouncing back against the pavement, transformed into sound.*

And the last paragraph ends with silence:

*Outside, the night came to play in the city. The hours passed, and between the first light and dawn, the ball of noise stopped bouncing until it remained completely still and silent, suspended over the maze of streets and buildings, waiting to launch itself into the new day.*

These are three examples, but any one of Iturralde’s stories shows her skill at beginnings and endings that capture children’s interest.

## Plots

Five examples illustrate Iturralde’s ability to conceive plots that perfectly match her stories’ themes, actions, and target age groups, although hardly doing justice to their richness, ingenuity, and variety. Thus, in ***Whirlwind*** a little girl uses her imagination to reconcile herself to the death of her beloved horse. For older children, the plot of ***The Brothers That Harvested Fairy Tales*** is suitably more intricate: two brothers go back in time to correct the injustice in the Brothers Grimm’s fairy tales that stepmothers are mean. ***Between Condor and Lion***, for even older children, explores the theme of *mestizaje*, the fusion of Spanish and American Indigenous cultures and people, through a plot in which the daughter of an Inca princess and a Spanish conquistador explores her roots in Ecuador and in Spain. ***Hurrah for Soccer!*** imagines the situations and conversations that led to the founding of Ecuador’s principal soccer teams. In ***Simon Was His Name***, African spirits, Bolivar’s nursemaid, Manuela Saenz, Bolivar’s great love, and Bolivar himself, tell the story of Bolivar’s life. In sum, these five books are examples of how Iturralde conceives plots that convincingly carry stories and their themes into young readers’ intellects and hearts.



## Settings and Background

A few examples indicate, although do not fully reveal, Iturralde's ability to establish settings and backgrounds for her stories with language appropriate for the different ages of her readers. Thus, "*every night, Martina looked at the sky from the window of her house and wished to be able to fly to the stars and arrive at the moon*" establishes the setting for ***Martina, the Stars, and a Slice of the Moon***, a book for the very young, and "hear me with your eyes" establishes it for ***Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz***, a book for older children. Iturralde writes exceptionally effective backgrounds and settings in her pioneering ethnohistorical and multicultural stories. For example, the first paragraph of "The Hunt" in ***Green Was My Forest*** conveys how central hunting is to the Shuar culture: Tukup knew

*that if he were to become lost, he would become a laughingstock. The same thing would happen if he came back empty-handed. Everyone admires a good hunter, and he is the pride of his parents and esteemed by the tribe's shamans.*

Similarly, in the first chapter of ***The Wind Will Accompany You***, Iturralde makes the soul of her book equal to the soul of the Ecuadorian 'chagra', the Andean cowboy:

*To be a 'chagra' is something that one feels deep inside. In your soul is the spirit of the mountains, of the hills, of the volcanoes, of the rivers, and of the paramos. In his heart is the love of the earth – to sow it, to take care of it, and to harvest it. In his spirit, honor; on his lips, a smile, even amidst pain.*

In short, Iturralde's stories flow from her wonderful settings and backgrounds as water bubbles up from a spring.

## Syntactic Form

A form of parallelism in the first eight paragraphs of ***Walkers of the Sun***, her novel about the origins of Ecuador's Saraguro Indigenous people, explosively expands a "*rumor like the buzzing of thousands of bees*" first into "*a rumble of thunder*" then into a mountain "*disgorging ten thousand warriors*" and finally into a description of the all-powerful, "*Sapa Inka, King of Kings, the Son of the Inti, the Sun God, the only mortal who could drink his light,*" ruler of a vast and magnificent empire. By selecting words and phrases, such as "*rumor,*" "*disgorge,*" "*golden liter,*" "*war drums with human skins,*" and "*skin and head of a puma,*" that evoke power, grandeur, and mystery, Iturralde reinforces and magnifies the effect of her parallelism. Moreover, the growth from a rumor to an emperor in these beginning paragraphs refers backward to how the Incas expanded from an insignificant wandering tribe to rulers of an empire and forward to how Crystal Flower, the heroine, matures from a sheltered Virgin of the Sun into an intrepid leader of a journey along the Royal Road and the first mother of





the Saraguro Indigenous peoples. Iturralde's literary skills thus create an aesthetic that reverberates within her readers' minds and stimulates their creativity, imagination, and curiosity.

## Images and Figures of Speech

The first two chapters of *The Islands Where the Moon Is Born* exemplify Iturralde's use of images and figures of speech to great aesthetic effect. "*The people who don't appreciate your sister are those who look in a pool of water and, instead of seeing the reflection of the sky, see only mud,*" establishes Maria Carola, who has Downs Syndrome, as the story's heroine. By contrasting the simile "*alike as two drops of water*" with the statement, "*we are different though,*" Iturralde stimulates the reader's curiosity about the twins' characters. "*The tarpaulin worked loose and beat like the wings in the wind*" foreshadows the twins becoming seagulls. That the "*pink and blue sky of the early morning was like the painting of the goddess Venus stepping out from the middle of a huge shell*" anticipates how the Moon later opens "*like a shell, and the silhouette of a woman emerged walking toward us.*" Iturralde describes Galapagos animals with scientific accuracy but uses personification to portray, also accurately, their habits and characters: Earnest, a nocturnal seagull, hides his head between his legs because he is bashful; Don Vitrolo, a male sea lion, roars because he is bossy; blackfish, pigfish, parrotfish, triggerfish forget what they were saying, since fish have short memories. In sum, Iturralde effectively uses metaphors, similes, and personification to present and deepen the story's plot, themes, and characters.

## Dialogue

Dialogue between Slim and Jaime in Chapter Seven of *Tears of Angels*, Iturralde's novel about street children, illustrates Iturralde's literary skill in choosing the precise words and sound patterns for her dialogues, creating atmosphere, developing characters, and reinforcing themes. Thus, although the children are eating a stale, two-day-old piece of cake, establishing their complete poverty, that Slim says, "*If you chew the candies with your front teeth...they will taste even sweeter, and it will sound funny,*"<sup>3</sup> reveals her optimistic and enthusiastic character. Her on-the-spot invention and recital of the story that the candies on the cake are "*tears of baby angels*" demonstrate her imagination and awareness of her own tragic life. By contrast, Jaime's pedantic reply, "*Of course candies are made in candy factories,*" and his uncertainty about whether Slim is joking or knowledgeable



3 Quite wonderfully Slim's description of biting into the candies could be a street child's spoken version of John Keats' verses in his "Ode to Melancholy":

"Ay, in the very temple of delight,  
Veil'd Melancholy has her sovran shrine,  
Though seen of none save him whose strenuous tongue,  
Can burst Joy's grape against his palate fine."

indicates his rural background, where a ‘spade is a spade,’ and where he had never encountered either evil or poetry. Slim’s declaration that the littlest angels are the ones whose tears turn into candies beautifully summarizes the theme of the book. That she abruptly stops conversing, jumps up, and changes the subject, conveys that Slim refuses to lament her sad situation or to stop dreaming. Thus, Iturralde’s dialogue, through its words, rhythm, and seeming simplicity, creates a moving aesthetic experience.

## Contrast

The four sentences of the first paragraph of *Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes* contrast adjectives to convey effectively both Don Quixote’s and Sancho Panza’s characters and Miguel de Cervantes’ writing style - the reason for his fame and, therefore, the essence of the biography. That Don Quixote was a “famous knight” contrasts with “he rode a skinny and old horse.” Then the phrases “supposed to be,” “since it was nothing but a title – given to him by the same knight,” and “since he bore neither shield nor lance” sow doubt about Sancho Panza’s assumed character of a squire. The fourth sentence then confirms that doubt by describing Sancho Panza as simple, good-natured, and ingenious. Thus, through her selection of words and phrases, by the end of this paragraph Iturralde has already portrayed the essence of Sancho Panza’s and Don Quixote’s characters. Moreover, in that description, she has foreshadowed that her biography of Cervantes has the same theme as his novel *Don Quixote*: how difficult it can be to distinguish reality from imagination, a theme that the Iturralde sums up in the brilliant phrase, “Maybe Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra made us up, or maybe we made him up.” Through her selection of words, Iturralde creates contrasts that engage children and stimulate their imagination and curiosity.

## Innovations

### Ecuador’s First Free Weekly Children’s Magazine

To promote the habit of reading among children, in 1981, Iturralde persuaded the editor of *Panorama*, a supplement for adults of the newspaper *El Comercio*, to add a section only for children called Ecuadorian Stories, where one of her stories appeared every week. For the same purpose, in 1982, she founded the first children’s magazine created in Ecuador, *La Cometa*. It was distributed for free every Saturday in the newspaper *Hoy*. Every week, from 1982 to 1994, for a total of 552 issues, she filled its 16 pages with games, puzzles, and stories she invented herself. Considering that *Hoy*’s circulation on Saturday was 75,000, mostly to families, and that at that time, there were usually three children in each family, it is possible that at least 225,000 children read *La Cometa*. People still tell Iturralde how they enjoyed reading *La Cometa* as children. Iturralde left *La Cometa* to start writing full-time, but the magazine’s publication, Iturralde’s legacy to the young readers she loved so much, continued for another twenty years



until *Hoy* stopped being published. Moreover, other Ecuadorian newspapers also began to publish weekly children's magazines.

## Ethnohistorical Children's Literature

Iturralde is the Ecuadorian pioneer of ethnohistorical literature for children. Ethnohistorical literature combines people's cultural characteristics with their historical background. Iturralde has explained why she began to write ethnohistorical literature:

*When interviewing parents and teachers before writing **To Be and To Share**, the stories I wrote for UNICEF about values and habits, I became aware that Ecuadorians' lack self-esteem and pride in their own country. I decided to write stories that would make Ecuadorian children know about and take pride in Ecuador's diverse people, wonderful cultures, and thousands of years of pre-history and history. My first such book was **Green Was My Forest**, about children from seven Indigenous peoples in the Ecuadorian Amazon and the first Ecuadorian literature for the young based on Ecuador's ethnic cultures. I combine cultural elements with my imagination to turn ethnohistory into engaging adventure stories.*

With that purpose, Iturralde has included ethnohistorical and cultural elements in many of her other stories and novels. In September 2025, Santillana Ecuador will publish her newest ethnohistorical novel, **The Lords of the Dreams**, about the Tsachila, an Indigenous people of Ecuador's western lowlands.

Eliana Bojorque P., professor of literature at the University of Azuay in Cuenca, Ecuador, says:

*Iturralde is a rigorous researcher who uses ethnographic methodologies of participant observation. She lives with the communities she respectfully describes, and this aspect of her extensive work has served as an example for other writers in Ecuador and throughout Latin America.<sup>4</sup>*

Iturralde's ethnohistorical literature has expanded the scope and depth of Latin American children's literature and, thereby, her young readers' imagination, cultural awareness, and appreciation.



<sup>4</sup> Bojorque, Eliana. 2022. From an unpublished essay on Iturralde's ethnohistorical literature.

Iturralde comments the following about her ethnohistorical writing:

*In an era of globalization, to speak of multicultural and ethnic children's literature - or rather, to write a type of literature that aims to disrupt and reclaim spaces that were relegated to oblivion by the dominant cultures of nations, where the ethnic becomes politically correct and folkloric, but nothing truly changes due to a profound ignorance of 'who we are' and a glaring indifference to finding out - is a challenge that I have fully embraced.*

## Past and Continuing Achievements

### Green Was My Forest – One of Ten ‘Essential’ Latin American Children’s Books of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century

In 2008, Foundation SM Spain asked Dr. Jaime García Padrino, professor of Language and Literature Didactics at the Universidad Complutense de Madrid, to coordinate the preparation of a *Canon of Latin American Literature for Children and Young Adults*. Seventeen people from relevant organizations related to the development and promotion of children’s literature in Latin America drew up a list of authors from each Latin American country, considering their representativeness and whether their contributions have been significant for the development of children’s and young people’s literature.<sup>5</sup> The participants exhaustively investigated the work of the main writers of children’s and young people’s literature from 1850 to 2012. Foundation SM proposed to the same team, joined by other specialists and institutions, to participate in creating a *Cannon of Latin American Children and Young Adult Literature*. From the initial list of the 151 best children’s and young adult books written in the twentieth century, the team selected ***Green Was My Forest*** as one of the ten ‘essential’ Latin American children’s and young adult books written in the 20th century.

### Encouraging Writing of Children’s Literature

For 45 years, through her example, organizational efforts, and teaching, Iturralde has encouraged literature writing for the young. Many children wrote her letters that she published in ***La Cometa***. She taught children from a group called ECOFUTURE how to make their own magazine and taught creative writing to foreign exchange students at the San Francisco of Quito University. In 1996, Iturralde founded Ecuador’s first organization for promoting children’s literature and illustration, the Union of Writers

<sup>5</sup> ALIJA, IBBY Argentina and the National Reading Plan of Argentina, the Bolivian Reading Association, the National Library of Colombia, Banco del Libro of Venezuela, the International Program of Approach to Children’s Literature of Panama, and the Uruguayan Academy of Children’s Literature, The Uruguay Academy of Children’s Literature, IBBY Chile, Paraguay Academy of the Spanish Language, The National Council of Books and Reading of Chile, The Institute of the Book and Reading of Peru, The Association of Researchers of Children’s Literature of Costa Rica, the Association of Reading and Writing of Puerto Rico, The Puebla Council of Reading in Mexico, and IBBY México.



of Literature for the Young (UDELI), which subsequently evolved into the Girandula-IBBY. During frequent school visits, she always encourages children to use their imagination to conceive and write their own stories.

#### A GRATEFUL LETTER TO EDNA ITURRALDE

9 August 2020

Dear Edna,

“Hope’ is the word that my daughter Amalia uses when she talks about meeting you in person. I am sure she will want you to sign all your books that she has. I say – in person – because she knows you through me. I have told her that 34 years ago you taught us to write stories and, what I loved the most, texts for comics. We were crazy boys and girls who were invited to a communications workshop and surprise - you were there! We enjoyed the workshop and learned so much! We were so enchanted that upon our return to Riobamba, we created our own magazine. You motivated us so much...you have no idea. I’m Lilia, the eight-year-old girl. I belonged to the group called Ecofuturo Children. We grew up with your stories and my mother used your books in her classroom. The time came to share your stories with my children. Now I am talking as Lilia, the 38-year-old, and I want to thank you for all you did for me...

A hug with the arms of an eight-year-old and of a thirty-eight-year-old.

Lilia Quevedo M.

### Pathbreaker of Ecuadorian Literature for Children

Iturralde is a pathbreaker for Ecuadorian literature for the young. Dorris Aroba, an Ecuadorian writer and expert on children’s literature, has written:

*If there is a boom in the literature of this genre in Ecuador, a great part of this joy must be attributed to Iturralde, for it was she who lit the fuse and has kept it burning with her uncommon capacity for communication and imagination comparable to that of a child’s: infinite, always full of whys and wherefores and reflections.<sup>6</sup>*

In 1981, when Iturralde began her literary career, there were few Ecuadorians who wrote children’s literature, bookstores stocked mostly foreign, imported, and expensive children’s books, no foreign publishing company published Ecuadorian children’s literature, and no schools had children read Ecuadorian children’s literature. Iturralde was the first author of literature for the young to be published regularly by an Ecuadorian newspaper (in the *Panorama* magazine). The Ecuadorian branch of the Spanish publisher Santillana, S.A. chose her book ***Green Was My Forest***, and the Colombian publisher Group Norma, S.A. chose ***Crazy Beard and the Great Secret*** and ***Adventure in the Llanganates*** as their first publications of Ecuadorian literature for the young. These books’ commercial success encouraged other publishers, local and international, to publish Ecuadorian children’s writers. Girandula-IBBY has been possible and successful largely because the international publishing firms in Ecuador decided to publish Ecuadorian literature for the young.

<sup>6</sup> Aroba, Dorris. 2013. Unpublished essay about Edna Iturralde’s literature prepared for Iturralde’s nomination for the ALMA.

## Portraying and Reinforcing Equality

Iturralde demonstrates her profound belief in the equality of humans, regardless of their differences of skin color, culture, age, health, economic status, and physical condition, and intellectual ability, in her literature's protagonists, such as the Afro-Ecuadoreans of *...And His Heart Escaped to Become a Bird*, the Indigenous peoples of *Green Was My Forest*, the grandmother heroine of *J.R. Machete*, the HIV/AIDS-infected children in *The Day of Yesterday*, the poor street children of *Tears of Angels*, the blind boys of *The Brothers that Harvested Fairy Tales*, and the girl with Down's Syndrome in "The Song of the Mountains." Iturralde's literature particularly emphasizes the equality of the sexes. She says she once heard a literary critic, say, "For a woman, Edna Iturralde does write well," and comments, "That harsh criticism about the capabilities of women motivated me to write with more zeal and dedication." Her literature convincingly portrays female and male characters who are equal in capabilities, courage, and initiative. In *Walkers of the Sun* a brave, resourceful girl guides the migration of Incas from Cuzco to Saraguro. Rosa Zarate, who usually goes unmentioned in Ecuadorean histories, is the heroine of *A Horse, a Rose, and a Story of Rebellion*. In *The Garden of the Golden Spiders*, girls prove equal to boys in climbing greased poles or becoming fire fighters. A mother and sister are two heroines of *The Girls of the Rain*.

## Promoting Reading To and By Children

Throughout her career, Iturralde has found ways to encourage young people to become habitual readers. In 1996, for the Educational Development Center (EDC), a non-governmental organization from the United States, she wrote the scripts for "Lets Play Theater", a long-distance radio program designed to develop very young children's imagination. To encourage parents to read to their children, Iturralde has produced YouTube videos called "Adventures of Edna and Rufina", in which she reads to a puppet called Rufina who loves listening to stories (see [Edna y Rufina – Edna Iturralde](#) ). School districts with Spanish-speaking students in nineteen states of the United States have selected five of Iturralde's books for inclusion in the 'Common Core' reading curriculum established in the United States during the administration of President



Obama. However, Iturralde's most important contribution to encouraging children to read has been the hundreds of unpaid visits she has made to Ecuadorian, Colombian, Central American, and Mexican schools, in which she has persuasively talked to children and their parents about the pleasures and benefits of reading.

## Increasing the Status of Children's Literature in Ecuador

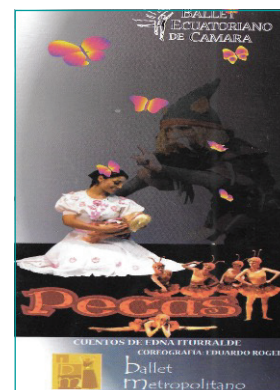
When Iturralde began her writing career, children's literature was not taken seriously in Ecuador; it was the 'Cinderella' of Ecuadorian literature. Iturralde has made a significant contribution to converting it into a princess. Of course, her literature itself contributed to raising the status of Ecuadorian children's literature. However, she has also persuasively presented and explained the scope and importance of children's literature in many newspaper, magazine, radio, and television interviews. The media has also publicized her numerous national and international awards. Her literature has been the basis for non-literary art forms, such as the ballet performed by the Ecuadorian National Ballet Company based on her story "Freckles and the Cucarachas" and a symphonic poem commissioned by the National Symphony of Ecuador based on the chapter from her book *The Children of the Macaws*. In short, since 1981, Iturralde has contributed frequently and imaginatively to the current high status in public perception of Ecuadorian children's literature.

## Increasing Unity and Self-Esteem Through Children's Literature

Ecuador's diversity of ethnic and cultural groups often triggers suspicion and strife. One of Iturralde's most significant achievements is writing literature that inculcates her young Ecuadorian readers with more comprehension of and pride in their country's people and cultures. José Antonio Gómez, a distinguished Ecuadorian historian and literary critic, has written,

*Edna Iturralde is the first Ecuadorian author who, in pursuit of our integration as a society, shows children our ethnic differences and the rich cultural variety to unite us and give us a sense of national identity and self-esteem.*<sup>7</sup>

Optimistically, citizens who empathize with each other are more likely to create the conditions for Ecuadorians to become happy and prosperous



### EL COMERCIO

CULTURA

## Edna Iturralde Builds Bridges Between Cultures



The literature of the Ecuadorian writer Edna Iturralde is populated with characters and stories that are based on ethnohistory, multiculturalism, and interculturality.

19 de diciembre de 2017 - 02:38

<sup>7</sup> Gómez, Antonio. 2005. In an article about Edna Iturralde in the Ecuadorian newspaper El Universo.





# Appreciative Letters, Essays, and an Interview With Edna Iturralde

# 3

## Letter of Recommendation from the Minister of Education, National Government of Ecuador



REPÚBLICA  
DEL ECUADOR

Ministerio de Educación

Quito, 24 Septiembre 2024

Alegria Crespo Cordovez  
MINISTRA DE EDUCACIÓN DE ECUADOR

Distinguished members of the jury for the Hans Christian Andersen Award:

It is an honor for me to recommend the renowned Ecuadorian author Edna Iturralde, a remarkable writer of the rich Latin American Children's and Young Adult literature, for the Hans Christian Andersen Award. Throughout her extensive career, from her first work published in 1981 to her latest, set to be published in 2025, her sixty-five books, including novels and short stories, have captivated the imagination of multiple generations of children in Ecuador, as well as in other Ibero-American countries and the United States.

Edna Iturralde's works stand out for their great variety of genres (ethnohistory, biography, social themes, fantasy, and ecology) and the range of her readers' ages (from 5 to 17 years old). With remarkable skill, Iturralde flexibly adapts her language to the themes of her works and the ages of her readers. Each of her works expands the horizons of her readers, broadening their understanding of reality in all its complexity. At the same time, her works offer a fresh and renewing perspective on the great truths of human life. While rich in details about specific places, events, themes, and situations, her stories are filled with adventure. This stimulates the interest of children and young people, fostering lifelong readers.

Indeed, the perspectives expressed by the children and young people who are the characters in Iturralde's works demonstrate that she has never lost the joy, curiosity, enthusiasm, and confidence in the future that are so characteristic of childhood and youth. Thus, despite being an experienced and mature woman, each of her works authentically reflects her inner child.

It is worth noting the importance of Iturralde's works in the formal education of Ecuadorian children and young people. Her works have been read by hundreds of thousands over a period of more than 40 years. The experience of reading an Iturralde work has transformed countless children and young people into passionate readers. The beneficial effects of reading habits on the character and mental development of young children are well known. In this way, with her imagination, dedication, and writing skill, Iturralde has made a significant contribution to our country and to Ibero-America and the United States.

Edna Iturralde has received several national and international awards. One notable example is the Cervantes Chico Ibero-Americano Award, granted by Spain.

In conclusion, Edna Iturralde is an outstanding candidate and deserves to be distinguished with the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

Sincerely,

Firmado electrónicamente por:  
ALEGRIA DE LOURDES CRESPO CORDOVEZ

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Código postal: 170507 / Quito-Ecuador  
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## Edna Iturralde<sup>8</sup>: A Universe on Paper by Enrique Pérez Díaz<sup>9/10</sup>

### Initial Reflections

- It is said writers must embody the soul of their times, representing the lives of their contemporaries, the issues that shake their homeland (or the wider world as their homeland) and capturing the pulse of every event that stirs people in their sense of existence. Only then can their work resonate in people's hearts, making it something they feel, live, suffer through, enjoy, and come to love.
- A writer should not craft their fiction thinking solely of entertainment but of justice. They should approach literary work as both a challenge and a forge a crucible that will shape future readers to be intelligent, sensitive, and enthusiastic, instilling in them a fervor for social justice and understanding among all.
- Writers are not created in laboratories or academia. While they can acquire knowledge from studies, research, and constant updating, they must possess a unique sensitivity, an unconventional and deeply committed worldview, and a discerning eye that enables them to sift through the chaos around them to uncover what is essential.



8 Quito, 1948). Writer for children, adolescents and young people of outstanding regional trajectory, with 75 published works and who has received the main awards of her land and the continent, among which it is worth mentioning: 2020 winner of the Ibero-American Cervantes Chico Award for Children's and Young People's Literature Alcalá de Henares. City Council of Alcalá de Henares, Madrid, Spain: 2019; nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) Swedish Arts Council; 2019 Skipping Stones Award 2019, from the United States given to international books with multicultural themes with the book, *Green Was My Forest*, Mandel Vidal Press (translation Jessica Powell); 2019 decoration Women for Freedom, awarded by the plenary of the Council of Founders of the Bolivarian Confraternity of America Santa Fe de Bogotá 2018/Quito March 19, 2019; 2018 nominated for the XIV Ibero-American SM Prize for Children's and Young Adult Literature; 2018 nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA) Swedish Arts Council; 2016 decoration National Cultural Merit Matilde Hidalgo de Procel Tenth National Meeting Fundación Manta Mujer 2016 Manta Ecuador; 2015 selected by the Ministry of Public Education, SEP 2015 contest (Ministry of Public Education of Mexico); *Los pájaros no tienen fronteras-Leyendas y mitos de Latinoamérica*, Editorial Santillana Alfaguara Mexico; 2014/2015 Girándula/IBBY Ecuador Outstanding Honor Diploma *Los hermanos que cosechaban cuentos de hadas*, Editorial Santillana Alfaguara, Ecuador; 2014 Honorable Mention Premio Darío Guevara Mayorga de literatura infantil y juvenil (Ilustre Municipio de Quito); *¡Viva el fútbol!*, Editorial Santillana Alfaguara, Ecuador; 2014 Manuela Sáenz Libertadora del Libertador Decoration in the International Grade of First Class Council of the Bolivarian Confraternity of America, Santa Fe de Bogotá 2014; 2014 International Latino Book Award United States of America First Prize *Los pájaros no tienen fronteras-leyendas y mitos de Latinoamérica*, Editorial Santillana Alfaguara, Ecuador, Colombia and Mexico; 2014 five of his books are part of the "common core", (Transversal Curriculum for schools with Spanish-speaking students.) *Conoce a Miguel de Cervantes*, *Un día más y otras historias*, *Caminantes del Sol* and *Y su corazón escapó para convertirse en pájaro*, *Verde fue mi selva*, for public/spanish-speaking schools in several cities in 19 states, among other prestigious awards and distinctions. Her book *Conoce a Zelia Nuttall* was recommended by School Library Journal to every school library in the country in 2024 to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15).

9 Essay prepared in September-October 2024 for the nomination of Ecuadorian author Edna Iturralde for the Hans Christian Andersen Award.

10 Havana, Cuba, 1958). Writer, journalist, researcher, critic, and editor. His work for children, adolescents, and young adults is known on several continents and has been translated into 15 languages. He has moved fluently along the paths of realism and fantasy. He has worked for the press for more than 40 years. He is a member of the Cuban Committee of IBBY, and in 2014, he was chosen as a jury member for Cuba for the Hans Christian Andersen Award. He currently directs the Cuban Observatory of Books and Reading, and in 2023, he received the National Publishing Award, which is given in his country for lifetime achievement.

- A great Cuban poet asserted that poetry “is a silence that someone with very fine hearing was able to listen to,” and it is only in true writers that this virtue exists—the ability to be both listener and observer, discerning through reason what most benefits humanity, empowering and fostering growth. Only in this way does a writer achieve greatness, becoming a messenger, whose words others gladly receive.
- Great writers, though sometimes self-referential and revealing aspects of their personality in each storyline, are exceptional witnesses to human progress, who often catch glimpses from their privileged position as relentless observers, always determined to offer the truth.
- They are also artisans of sentiment, realism, and the purest ideals, and their work can help shape readers’ identities, guiding them away from the conventional and amorphous mediocrity that sometimes permeates the publishing world.
- The sincerity of their written voice is what most distinguishes them and enables them to endure in the reader’s universe—that unique touch each of their books possesses, found nowhere else, which makes them innovators, sometimes even precursors of later trends.
- The most authentic writers were (and continue to be) avid readers, never satisfied, perpetual seekers of treasures, constantly striving to renew themselves without ceasing to be true to who they are. They are neither complacent nor boastful, yet they are demanding, cautious, and genuine creators of powerful narratives that captivate their audiences, conquering other unimaginable universes.



## Edna Iturralde – A Great Latin American Writer

These reflections come to mind as I think of Edna Iturralde. Her 70 books form such a diverse body of superb aesthetic and literary quality that she has become one of the most iconic, influential, and prolific current writers of literature for the young in Latin America. She is considered an icon of Ibero American literature for young people in the volume *Milestones of Ibero American Children and Young Adult Literature*.<sup>11</sup> In 2010, her book *Green Was My Forest* was selected by a panel of twenty-seven experts in Latin American children’s literature as one of the ten best books written in Latin America in the twentieth century.

Over forty-five years, Iturralde has continuously innovated with new themes and styles; each of her books, her ‘paper children,’ as she calls them, has come into the world with the freshness of a newborn baby. Originally available only in Ecuador’s diminutive market, her books have now been published in Ecuador, Colombia, Peru, Central America, Cuba, Mexico, Spain, Argentina, Cameroon, and the United States. Her literature’s diversity

<sup>11</sup> Robledo, Beatriz Helena (Editor). 2013. *Hitos de la literatura infantil y juvenil Iberoamericana (Milestones of Iberoamerican Children and Young Adult Literature)*, Fundacion SM. (Prepared by literary experts in collaboration with the Luis Ángel Arango Library of the Banco de la República de Colombia, on the celebration of the II Iber-American Congress of Language and Children and Young Peoples Literature (CILELIJ)).

and high quality have engendered a love for reading in the Spanish-speaking young of the Americas, exposing them to accurate but moving representations of a wide range of historical, social, ecological, and fantastical situations and issues, thereby tremendously expanding their cultural experiences, and vigorously stimulating their imagination and creativity.

Iturralde's literature is grounded in a superb aesthetic and literary style born naturally from the humanist breadth with which she identifies the essence of peoples' behaviors and viewpoints. Regardless of the plots, characters, cultures, or locations of her stories, Iturralde always writes with a skin-deep sensitivity for the thoughts and emotions of her young protagonists, which is reflected in her masterful use of emotion, dialog, humor, and rhythm to convey to her young readers empathetic, genuine, profound, and nuanced word portraits of her characters. Dorris Aroba, an Ecuadorian writer, has commented:



*Iturralde is not a historian; through her works, children and young people get a glimpse of the past. She is not an anthropologist, but her writings radiate an ethnic and human component. She is not a magician; nevertheless, she creates magical worlds in which it is possible to dwell with the imagination. She is a writer who, like a good researcher, travels through the territories she writes about, documents herself in archives, talks to the people, and from there creates fictional stories.<sup>12</sup>*

Diversity, stylistic, argumentative, and conceptual characterize Iturralde's literature. The depth and high caliber of her writing give her literature solidity and verisimilitude no matter its theme or age level. She combines her versatile and fertile imagination with meticulous research to write fascinating stories placed within credible cultural, historical, geographic, ecological, and sociological settings. Avoiding polemics or histrionics, she bravely incorporates current social issues, such as drug use and trafficking, crime and violence, emigration and human trafficking, illegal migration and internal armed conflict, and environmental degradation, into lucid literature that is at times adventurous, at times lyrical, at times heartbreaking, but always grips its young readers' imaginations, emotions, and intellects. Her stories open to young readers the inner joys and anguishes of her characters, whether they are historical or mythical heroes or children who have been swept up in events beyond their understanding and alien to their previous experiences. Iturralde's immense imagination, human charisma, narrative talent, and all-encompassing empathy enable her to direct each new story she sets her mind with a sure compass. The respected Ecuadorian literary critic Laura Jarrin, has written about Iturralde:

*I can imagine her transfigured into a fairy with curly black hair, weaving with her wand, stitch by stitch, an extraordinary mantle of fantasy in which her characters find the proper space for adventure, suspense, the encounter with the past, seasoned with the spice of magic, the possible and the impossible.<sup>13</sup>*

<sup>12</sup> Arroba, Dorris. 2013. Unpublished essay about Edna Iturralde's literature written for Iturralde's nomination for the ALMA.

<sup>13</sup> Jarrin, Laura. 2015. Revista 'La Familia' of the newspaper *El Comercio*.



My judgment of the aesthetic and literary quality of Iturralde's literature is widely shared among writers and critics of Latin American literature for the young. Aside from many laudatory articles in magazines and newspapers, her books are printed, sold, and read in many of the Spanish-speaking countries of the Americas as well as the United States. In Mexico, the Ministry of Education has selected and printed five of her books for distribution to public school libraries. In the Central American countries, her books are read by many schoolchildren. In the United States, nineteen states have selected her books to include in the 'Transversal Curriculum for Schools with Spanish-Speaking Students,' often known as the 'Common Core.' Her books have been awarded by the United States children's magazine *Skip-ping Stones* three times, and Barnes and Noble Bookstores has selected her books *Get to Know Miguel Cervantes* and *Get to Know Juana Ines de la Cruz* for display in its stores during Hispanic Heritage Month.

## A Review of Iturralde's Literature

I will review some of her books to give depth and substance to my previous general statements about the superb quality of Iturralde's literature. I have grouped them by their principal themes, although I recognize that many of Iturralde's books blend two or more themes. Within each category, I proceed from books for the youngest to books for young adults. The categories are Multi-culturalism and Ethnohistory, Social and Environmental Issues, History and Biography, Magic, Myths, and Fantasy.

### Multi-Culturalism and Ethnohistory

Iturralde, unique in America and a key piece of the Ecuadorian national identity, is the first Ecuadorian author who, in pursuit of integration into society, shows children and young people their ethnic differences and wide cultural variety. She draws on her fertile imagination to weave ingenious stories that intensely engage the young by merging adventure stories with the riches of ethnohistory and multi-culturalism. Her sensitivity to the ethnography from which our American identity has been forged, and her meticulous research make her an expert in writing stories that fascinate the young but emerge from ethnohistorical and ethnocultural roots. Iturralde's imagination perfectly harmonizes with the cultures where she places her stories. She creates solid, convincing protagonists, heroes, and heroines who perform exceptional feats within environments that she delineates with social, historical, and ethnic fidelity. Pilar Cernuda, the distinguished Spanish journalist, has written:

*I have not known an author more rigorous in her documentation, and more enthusiastic in explaining the origins, land, history, people, and customs to children and adolescents of her country. And I have not known a writer with greater sensitivity, delicacy, and courage in confronting difficult circumstances. Edna Iturralde's literature possesses the exceptional quality of understanding children and adoles-*



*cents and of having a very special spirit and ability to communicate. Her imagination equals that of children, which, as all adults know, is infinite, always full of whys and reflections that fill us with questions.<sup>14</sup>*

Although quite distant from their usual interests, Iturralde has blended the themes of ethnohistory and cultural roots into six of her books for six-to-eight-year-olds. ***Two Volcanic Superheroes*** tells how a guinea pig and an alpaca, animals associated with Ecuador's highland rural cultures, deactivate the Cotopaxi volcano. ***Alligators Don't Eat Alligators*** tells how a 'montubio', a person from Ecuador's western tropical forest, boasts he can ride an alligator and what happens to him when he tries. ***Tales of the Yasuni*** portrays the cultures of the Indigenous people who are protecting the Yasuni National Park. ***The Big Ones Will Go, and the Smalls Ones Will Stay*** is a story about how two lowland Quechua boys living in Ecuador's Amazon forest trick a farmer who tries to cheat them.

In ***Dreams With a Chocolate Flavor***, a fairy and a librarian interview the fairies of coffee, cacao, potatoes, and other Ecuadorian fruits and vegetables. About ***J.R. Machete***, in which a boy from Ecuador's coast participates in the tumultuous events of Ecuador's Liberal revolution, the Ecuadorian historian Jenny Estrada commented:

*This book rescues elements of cultural identity and revalues transcendent historical facts. It leaves a profound message of hope and allows us to glimpse the right path to bring children closer to the knowledge of our history. J.R. Machete is a classic of its genre in Ecuador and in any Spanish-speaking country.<sup>15</sup>*

***The Wind Will Accompany***, based on the culture of the rural people who live in Ecuador's central highlands, is sprinkled with comic elements and intrigues. In their fight against evil, two 'chagra' children, together with a group of gypsies, a clever donkey, a brave sheep, a rapid horse, and a wise parakeet, enter the world of Ecuadorian legends where they have adventures that parallel those of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza.

In 2010, a distinguished panel chose ***Green Was My Forest*** as one of the ten 'essential' books written in Spanish for children during the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Its twelve short stories, told through children's eyes, transmit the harmonies and disharmonies in the lives of six Indigenous peoples living in the Ecuadorian Amazon. Franciso Delgado, a distinguished Ecuadorian writer and critic of literature for the young, has commented on this book:

*Iturralde carried out exhaustive research on the Achuar, Shuar, Warorani, Secoya, Siona, Lowland Quichua, and Cofán cultures and peoples with praiseworthy rigor. She read abundantly about these peoples, visited them, lived with them, and talked to shamans, farmers, hunters, fishermen and gatherers, elders, women, men, and children.*



<sup>14</sup> Extract from Cenudo's presentation in Madrid of ***Green Was My Forest***.

<sup>15</sup> Estrada, Jenny. 2004. Summary of ***J.R. Machete*** on the back of its first edition.

*As a result, she offers us sociological and literary radiography of Indigenous groups that Spanish-speaking Ecuadorians knew mostly only by hearsay in thirteen beautifully plotted stories, full of beautiful images, in which “An orange sun paints the humidity of the environment with small prisms of colors” and “the canoe crosses the waters amid an orchestra of crickets, cicadas and toads” The stories are a hymn to Amazonian human, plant, and animal life told in fluid prose to create a superb aesthetic that stimulates young people’s imagination and widens their cultural experience.<sup>16</sup>*

In *The Walkers of the Sun* the 11-year-old heroine, Kispi Sisa (Crystal Flower) escapes from being sacrificed to the Sun God and intrepidly leads a group of Incas from Cuzco to southern Ecuador, where descendants of Incas now live in Saraguro. Dr. Segundo Moreno Yáñez, a professor of archeology at the Catholic University of Quito, wrote:

*Edna Iturralde - as the invisible apus, the spirit of the Andes, and as a new ‘amawta’, a wise storyteller, has accompanied a family, an ‘ayllu’ from Cuzco sent by the Inca Tupak Yupanki as ‘mitmas’, or colonists, to settle in a beautiful region to the north of the Tawantinsuyo, the Inca Empire.<sup>17</sup>*

Eugenia, the heroine of *Between Condor and Lion*, is the brave and intelligent daughter of the Inca princess Ninacuro Yupanqui and Diego de Sandoval, a Spanish conquistador. She survives many adventures as she seeks to understand and appreciate her Spanish and Inca cultural roots. Iturralde’s great achievement in this novel is to present the Inca and Spanish cultures as equally worthy sources of Latin America’s predominant ‘mestizo’ culture.

*Miteé and the Song of the Whales* tells how an 11-year-old boy from the Machalia Culture, which 3,500 years ago dominated what is now the Ecuadorean coast, goes on the first raft voyage between the coast of Ecuador and the Isthmus of Tehuantepec in Mexico. Iturralde dedicated this novel to the sailboat navigators over enormous distances on the Pacific Ocean. In the words of the professor of archeology at the University of Santiago de Guayaquil, Jorge Marcos Pino:

*The ability to combine different planes of space and time, to mix fantasy and history, to string together like little jewels erudite data and curiosities throughout the plot, all always timely and pleasing, show a talent and a craft for which the reader can only be grateful.<sup>18</sup>*

The fourteen stories, striking for their stylistic diversity, in *...And His Heart Escaped to Become a Bird* transmit to children Iturralde’s historical concept of the tragedy of Africans being hunted, captured, and enslaved,

<sup>16</sup> Delgado, Francisco. 2024. From an unpublished essay on Iturralde’s literature.

<sup>17</sup> Moreno Y., Segundo. 2002. Review of *Walkers of the Sun* published in the newspaper *El Comercio*.

<sup>18</sup> Marcos, Jorge. From the preface to the book *Miteé and the Song of the Whales*.



the pertinence of their myths, and their tenacious survival in body and spirit. In her presentation of this book, a homage to Afro-Ecuadorians, Catherine Chalá, a leader in the Network of Afro-American and Afro-Caribbean women, commented:

*The way Edna Iturralde writes her book, ...**And His Heart Escaped to Become a Bird**, a tribute to the Afro people, makes all of us who know her admire her, like her work, her literary aesthetics, and the empathy it generates. This makes us read it and share it with all the children and young people around us, but not only that, this 'frica' as we Afros say, this taste and love that Edna puts into everything, goes beyond the limits of the world of children's literature, publishing houses and awards. Thank you for being a great 'Babalu,' and for making us see life through the eyes of girls and boys.<sup>19</sup>*

These stories convey with astonishing empathy the feelings and thoughts of Africans who were forcibly transported to Ecuador and of their descendants who have participated in the country's tumultuous history. The stories effectively bring children closer to the harshest realities of the history of slavery in the Americas and convey how these Africans valiantly retained their identities and cultures. Cuban teachers have told me that their students could learn about their ancestors' experiences in no better way than by reading these stories. I, and many other Cubans, have reacted emotionally to these stories because their narrative style, aesthetic beauty, and historical verisimilitude convinced me that some ancestors of mine may have had similar experiences. They are proof of the powerful emotions and empathy that Iturralde's writing can induce in readers of all ages.

About *The Children of the Macaw*, whose plot is based on the ethno-history of the Ecuadorian Cañar Indigenous peoples, Osvaldo Encalada, an Ecuadorian expert in children's literature and a writer, commented:

*Edna goes back ten thousand years to tell through the mouths of the yachaks -the medicinal women of the Cañar ethnic group- the throbbing history of their people; but not everything is verifiable. Edna Iturralde weaves a tapestry with the threads of history and with the subtle, magical, and changing threads of fantasy intertwined with humor. She models characters, creates situations, imagines love, invents myths like that of the dark cloud and the drought: if the water is imprisoned in the cloud, what must be done is to open holes to free it, and how to achieve this prodigy? Easy: throw a porcupine against the cloud-jail. The work of this author is singular and unique in the commendable task of recovering ancestral roots and putting them in a simple and beautiful literary language.<sup>20</sup>*

The Spanish Publisher Edelvives, from Zaragoza Spain, has published Iturralde's latest ethnohistorical and multicultural novel, about the Ecu-



<sup>19</sup> Chala, Catherine. 2005. A prominent Afro-Ecuadorian leader.

<sup>20</sup> Encalada, Osvaldo. 2007. Published in the Ecuador newspaper *El Mercurio*.



dorian Andean highland Indigenous group the Otavalo, *The Grandfather Who Wove Stories*.

## Social and Environmental Issues

*Stories of the Yasuni* is a collection of short stories for young children whose setting is the Yasuni National Park of Ecuador, the most biologically diverse place on earth. Commissioned by UNICEF, Iturralde wrote three volumes with witty and humorous stories to exemplify such values as sincerity, punctuality, respect, courtesy, and tolerance. For example, in “The Man Who Swallowed the Word Thank You (A Very Fat Story)”, swallowing a thank-you causes severe constipation while saying it endows likability, in “When the Hours Fell Sick”, the hours are so sickened by impunctuality that they fall off the clocks, and in “Susan and the Lie of the Long Braids” a lie becomes pear-shaped and shadows its creator while her braids grow unusually rapidly. Likewise, the resolution of mysteries in *Crazybeard the Pirate* and *The Great Secret* reassures sometimes doubting children of their parent’s love. *The Mystery of Colored Poops* irreverently appeals to young children’s fascination with poop while suggesting that persistence is sometimes rewarded.

For older children, *One Day More and Other Stories* creates empathetic bonds between its young readers and endangered animals, such as the ‘chorongo’ monkey, the pink dolphin, the Andean toucan, the jaguar, and the spectacled bear that expand children’s range of consciousness and may sometimes help these animals to survive. For example, the story “The Song of the Mountain” beautifully communicates how a little girl with Downs syndrome and an orphaned spectacled bear become friends, thereby sensitizing young readers about how to treat ‘different’ children naturally. In *Under the Moonlight*, the life of a ten-year-old girl changes dramatically when rebels attack her forest village in western Cameroon. For two years, she survives alone in the jungle. Then, she makes the decision to make the risky journey to the city to return to school. The story powerfully focuses on the perspective of one innocent child of the millions currently caught up in conflicts on how to manage, adapt to, and overcome the devastations to their lives adults cause in their civil conflicts. *Maria Mangrove*, filled with humor, mystery, and a touch of romance, is a splendid novel of magical realism featuring a mythical character who inhabits the mangroves and the community’s decision not to let that marvelous place, the source of their life, be taken from them.

For pre-teenagers, Iturralde portrays the complexities and emotions associated with social and environmental issues in ways that make their eyes sparkle rather than glaze over. The adventure story of *The Islands Where the Moon is Born* uses the fantastic setting and animals of the Galapagos Islands to expose children to three social and environmental themes: how, when forced, people and animals courageously adapt to new environments



and circumstances; how determination based on solidarity can conquer evil plans; and how a 'special' child may have capabilities that a normal child lacks.

In a perfectly constructed plot, *Tears of Angels* uses warm, well-structured, believable characters, criminal intrigue, dreams of betterment, and clear, natural dialogues to denounce society's blindness towards the hundreds of thousands of children who roam the streets of Latin American cities. Cecilia Ansaldo Briones, a professor of literature at the University of Santiago of Guayaquil, comments:

*In the presence of Edna and her literature, one can appreciate a phenomenon of interest, receptivity, and editorial precision, written with impeccable style and at a good pace. She, so acute in finding the problematic vein of reality that gives her material for her fiction, on this occasion sets her sights on two related problems of the Latin American context: immigration in search of job opportunities and child street wandering.<sup>21</sup>*

Iturralde's books for teenagers are courageous and subtle adventure stories that often tackle difficult themes. *The Day of Yesterday* takes adolescents into the world of a teenage girl, Daniela, who, through no fault of her own, has been infected by the AIDS virus. Together with three other teenagers, she escapes from a school hospital and hides in a boat with the plan to escape to the United States, where they will seek a cure. She finds out that there are moments when our life as we know seems to stop in the past, lost in time and space. The young protagonists of this novel discover not only the importance of living in the present but also the fact that "we all own a star where our name is written so that we can be remembered."

The twelve moving short stories in *When the Guns Fell Silent* the psychology, emotions, and decisions of pre-adolescent children caught up in the civil, armed conflicts that occurred or are still occurring in Israel and Palestine, Afghanistan, Northern Ireland, Colombia, Chechnya, Bosnia, Liberia, Rwanda, Sudan Iraq, Sri Lanka, and Spain. Iturralde's narrative ability and aesthetic sensitivity enable her to inject tenderness, nobleness, and even hope, into a daring topic for stories for the young. Her empathy with her protagonists permits her to penetrate their psychology when suddenly confronted with violence and danger they had never experienced or even imagined possible. In sum, it is an original and powerful addition to Spanish language children's literature.

*The Girls of the Rain* is a suspense and action-filled juvenile detective novel that denounces the femicide that has been occurring over decades in the Mexican border city of Juarez. Iturralde structures the plot to be entertaining rather than only tragic. Her adventure ventures into gloomy, chaotic venues, such as tattoo stores where Saint Death is venerated, but concludes with a message about the power of loyalty and love.

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<sup>21</sup> Briones, Cecilia Ansaldo. 2005. From an article in the Guayaquil newspaper *El Universo*.

## History and Biography

*The Dream of Manuela*, one of Iturralde's four biographies for children ages seven to ten, narrates the life and portrays the character of the Ecuadorian revolutionary heroine Manuela Saenz. In *Meet Simón Bolívar*, Bolivar's dog and horse recount how he led his army across the rugged and snowy Andes. Don Quixote narrates the life of Cervantes to Sancho Panza in *Meet Miguel de Cervantes*. While recounting how Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz became a nun so that she could write, the elegant style of *Meet Sor Juana Ines de la Cruz* dovetails with the literature of that great Mexican poet of Spain's Golden Age. In *The Dog, the Lamp-lighter, and a History of Liberty*, the first volume of Iturralde's three-volume history of the revolution against the Spanish Empire, a dog tells the historical events that occurred during the first uprising in Quito against the Spanish Empire.

For older children, the second volume in that history series is *The Horse, the Rose, and A History of Rebellion*, this time told by a horse. For the same age group, in *Johnny Tallarin: Who Is Shouting From So Far?* his computer transports Johnny back to August 10, 1809, when the patriots in Quito gave the 'First Cry of Independence', and he not only serves and participates in the revolution but even resolves some of its difficulties. Iturralde delightfully describes the history of the founding of Ecuadorian soccer teams in *Hurrah for Soccer!* which the sports editor of the Quito newspaper *El Comercio* described as

*a series of chronological 'passes' (chapters) that delightfully trace the history of Ecuadorian soccer. In these sparkling stories, full of humor and witty dialogues, soccer fans will learn the details of how teams were formed and named.*<sup>22</sup>

*The Condor, the Hero, and a History of Independence*, the final volume of Iturralde's series about Ecuador's fight for independence, is for pre-teenagers, and its narrator is a condor. The book's beautiful, magical, and often humorous narrative style makes children live, feel, dream, judge, and appreciate this important era of their country's history and exposes them to heroic episodes that school history lessons do not always recount, such as the African soldiers from Tolita and the mothers and children who defended Quito with homemade weapons. *I Have Painted for Three Thousand Years* is a captivating biographical novel that reveals the inner and outer lives of the great Ecuadorian painter Osvaldo Guayasamin and the two concerns that drove his creativity: a desire for world peace and his Indigenous ancestry.



<sup>22</sup> Rojas, Carlos Augusto. 2015. Sports Editor of the Quito newspaper *El Comercio*.

***Simon Was His Name***, a biographical novel about Simón Bolívar, adroitly portrays his human and heroic qualities to young adults. Its combination of readability, agility, and depth creates a narrative style that makes it exceptional, even among many of Iturralde's exceptional books. Three interwoven voices tell their perspectives on the intimate and heroic aspects of Bolívar's life: Hipolita, his Afro-Venezuelan nanny, with her African rites and magic, who substituted for his dead mother; Manuela Saenz, his great love and brave ally; and the Liberator himself, who recalls his struggles for freedom as he lies dying.

### Legends, Myth, and Fantasies

Jorge Dávila, a professor of literature at the University of Cuenca and one of Ecuador's principal writers and literary critics, has commented as follows on Iturralde's magical and fantastical literature:

*Edna's books fulfill the Horatian principle of the sweet and the useful. They are beautiful and educational because of the simplicity with which they tell a story; because of the values of loyalty, love, respect for tradition, fighting capacity, courage, and dedication to a cause shown by her characters, because the transcendent lessons reach the heart first. But they are fruits of creativity, of the search for beauty, of a permanent vital testimony expressed with art; they are, therefore, literary productions whose target audience is young people, but which do not exclude any potential reader. One only must read her books to confirm everything that has been said and enjoy an overflowing fantasy that builds singular worlds.*

*She has created hundreds of characters and stories in different situations and landscapes with a strong inclination towards the development of multicultural, historical, and anthropological themes. The author manages to bring to the field of letters a description that until then had corresponded only to anthropologists...her literary vision, far from deforming, illuminates reality through fantasy. She uses metaphors, comparisons, and similes with great beauty in her descriptions.*<sup>23</sup>

***Where do Fairy Babies Come From?*** charmingly, tenderly, sweetly, and magically introduces very young children to baby fairies who have been born in flowers, seas, rainbows, dew drops, and even ice cream parlors in the sky. For older children, ***Martina the Stars and a Slice of Moon*** describes how an Afro-Ecuadorian girl brings stars for her mother's stove and a slice of the moon to be her grandmother's cane. ***Chocolate-Flavored Dreams-A Tale of Fairies and Elves***, Mercha, a young woman librarian, rescues a tiny fairy from inside a bottle. Without help, the fairy cannot continue



<sup>23</sup> Davila, Jorge. 2016. Published in the newspaper *Hoy*. No website is available because *Hoy* is no longer published.



her work of writing a guide to all the distinct types of fairies in Ecuador because her damaged wings have not yet re-grown. As she helps the fairy continue her research, Mercha learns about the potato fairy, the corn fairy, the cocoa fairy, and the banana fairy – and falls in love.

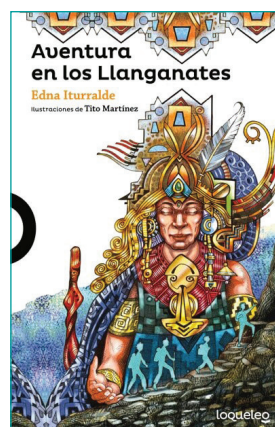
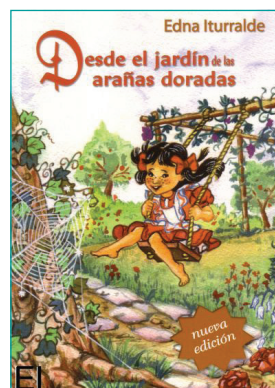
*From the Garden of the Golden Spiders* demonstrates Iturralde's authentic creativity for small children in twenty-seven stories that mix, as they do, reality and fantasy. Some use animals to portray human characteristics: in "Night of Cats" caterwauling becomes joyful music and in "Trapi-to, the Little Stray Dog", a homeless dog befriends an old circus lion. Others magically make kites talk, scarecrows feel lonely, and robots fall in love with a toaster. Yet others challenge pre-conceptions: the heroines in "The Girl Firefighter" and in "Things of Boys" demonstrate that a girl's agility and courage can equal that of a boy.

Olivia, the heroine of *Olivia and the Blue Unicorn*, is a dreamy, mischievous little girl who finds adults' actions often dissatisfying. As her parents are driving her to a dentist appointment, she hears the famous Cuban song "The Blue Unicorn" by Silvio Rodríguez on the radio. Then the blue unicorn himself appears and accompanies her on an adventure to Jubalun, a mysterious planet, where she helps him oppose visual pollution and the use of children in advertisements for grown-ups in ugly and misleading billboards plastered on beautiful landscape and discovers why the blue unicorn was lost.

*Adventure in the Llanganates*, now read by two generations of Ecuadorians and a national classic, relates the adventures of four friends and their dog as they search for the lost city in the mysterious Llanganates Mountains of Ecuador where the Inca Atahualpa's gold treasure is rumored still to lie hidden. *Next to the Sky* recreates scenes of Quito during her childhood, with its folklore, antidotes, and personalities. About this book, Alejandro Carrion, a highly respected Ecuadorian literary critic, said,

*Edna Iturralde has come to dominate the most difficult of styles, a completely simple and supremely clear style. That's why her readers smile and, more than reading, hear her tell the story. Nothing is more difficult to do than what this writer has done effortlessly. To attain a story with this degree of simplicity, clarity, and life, discarding all pretenses to literary elegance or embellishment, is something incredibly difficult, achieved only through a writer's complete mastery.*<sup>24</sup>

*The Brothers That Harvested the Fairy Tales* celebrates the ability of the blind to overcome their disability, honors the Brothers Grimm on the bicentennial of their birthday, and questions the cliché that stepmothers are always mean. Luis and José are blind, but their stepmother has instilled in them a love for books by reading to them from Grimm's Fairy tales at bedtime. Given the love their stepmother shows them, the twins ask: why do Grimm's fairy tales portray stepmothers as mean? They decide to



24 Carrión, Alejandro. 1991. From an article in the Quito newspaper *El Comercio*.

change that, and Iturralde's ingenious and humorous changes to the endings of the original Grimm stories encourage their readers to develop and use their imaginations and creativity. Iturralde's attempt to write a horror story turned humorous when, in *The House the Forest Swallowed*, whose young hero must rescue Death from zombies, Dracula faints upon seeing blood, and the werewolf sings love songs. Death, the book's principal character, turns out to produce calm rather than fright. In *María Mangrove*, a novel of magic realism, Maria, a fantastic character, keeps a secret even from the boy who befriends her despite not knowing where she comes from or who she is. Their adventures convey, with some humor, much mystery, and a touch of romance, the life of the people who live in Ecuador's mangroves – and their anguish because their mangroves may be disappearing forever.

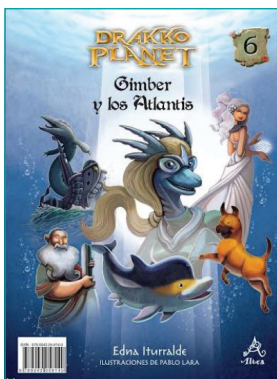
*Micky Risotto and the Chihuahua Dog* is the story of a boy who has a 'magic' computer called Wilma.com that takes him to different places. On his birthday, his favorite aunt gives him a chihuahua dog, so small that he is terrified that his friends will laugh at him. Wilma.com transports him to the 'World of the Smallest Creatures', which turns out to be inside a computer game. Using his imagination, Micky Risotto defeats an evil virus and saves the computer.

*Drakko Planet* is a twelve-book fantasy epic whose heroes are twelve boy and girl dragons who have learning disabilities and live on a planet that resembles Earth. Their magical powers enable them to defeat the Zuberans, iron-clad beings that attack Drakko Planet from outer space. In this saga, Iturralde's imagination has exploded in a firework of adventures combined with ecological and social themes. What more could one expect from a mythical fantasy saga written by this 'magician of literature'?

For older children, two of Iturralde's most outstanding books retell traditional legends and myths. About *Birds Have No Borders: Legends and Myths from Latin America* the Ecuadorian journalist and literary critic Edgar Freire has written:

*Iturralde masterfully retells legends and myths from the twenty-one Latin American countries and delivers them to us with a new brilliance, full of mischief, humor, and wisdom. Although some of us may have already heard these folklore tales, such as the well-known legend of La Llorona from Mexico, the way they have been rewritten makes us feel as if we are hearing them for the first time. These short, entertaining stories offer us a profound glimpse into the richness of each country's oral tradition...and connect us to our past and that of our brothers and sisters throughout the Americas.*<sup>25</sup>

*And It Surged From the Flight of the Butterflies* retells love legends from the oral traditions of countries from around the world. Iturralde skillfully adapts her narrative style for each story to the rhythm and culture of its country. Voices as dissimilar that of an Irish leprechaun and the wind of



<sup>25</sup> Edgar Freire. 2013. From an article in the Ecuadorian newspaper *La Hora*.

the Venezuelan Guajira peninsula guide readers through a gallery of love types: at first sight, supernatural, contrite, forbidden, and tragic. Iturralde's prose converts the reader from simply a spectator to a co-protagonist in these love stories. Cecilia Ansaldo commented about this book:

*The cultural parade is wide and varied, so Arabia, China, India, Ireland, Mexico, Russia, Colombia, Eskimos, Ecuador, Venezuela, and Spain have provided the materials for a bubble of love to concentrate the reader's gaze without distancing itself from the framework of the actions. Do not think that the stories neglect the themes of war, adventure, or mythical elements. That is why it is worth reading. It is great literature.*<sup>26</sup>

## Conclusions

*"My life is filled with my writing. For me, writing and living are the same thing"-Edna Iturralde*

- This phrase by Edna Iturralde could very well serve us to understand the reasons that support and guide her literary work to build a more initiative-taking, critical and evolved reader, a human being up to the challenges of this time.
- I believe that an element that endorses Edna Iturralde's work even more, is her constancy and the boldness of her literary exercise that have made her remain for almost five decades in the panorama of Latin American literature.
- Like few authors, Edna moves with equal ease among audiences of different ages and literary empathies, because she knows, how to build reader identities, based on her findings, contributions, and proposals.
- Moreover, her approach to the forgotten, meaning ancestral ethnic groups that fight against the economic and political forces that threaten to destroy them and in defense of the memory of the founders of our nationalities, make her a valuable voice that empowers the most just ideals of all Americans.
- Her vision of the scourges suffered by children on the planet, whether in urban or wilder territories, makes her a defender of the most legitimate human rights and of the environment and the ecology of the planet's ecosystems.
- Sensitizing children and adolescents to these issues shows that her work, without wielding banners or slogans, tackles any taboo subject, because for her there is only a story told with the necessary grit and soul to catch the reader.
- Edna Iturralde is a powerful voice that rises, like that of so many great writers for children, in defense of who sometimes outraged and misunderstood childhood that languishes in a cruel and alien world.

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<sup>26</sup> Briones, Cecilia Ansaldo. 2014. From an article in the Ecuador newspaper *El Universo*.

- Her sensitivity and love for social justice make her a sure spokesperson for that Latin American and universal childhood that needs to be protected and vindicated, as she knows how to do. That is why she has selflessly collaborated in projects with UNICEF and other organizations to support the most just enterprises in pursuit of saving children in vulnerable areas.
- I believe that, like few other authors for children, adolescents and young people in the continent, Edna Iturralde endorses the principles of those of us who are committed to forging a transversal reading identity, which conditions the birth of a more integral, consistent, and decisive citizen.
- Rarely in life does an author achieve this longed-for resonance with a work written from the heart, which does not follow fashions, nor molds or other conventions that enslave thought. Iturralde is faithful and enthusiastic in her writing, faithful to childhood, enthusiastic in its empowerment and defense.
- Redeeming the childhood of today, as she does, will lead to better citizens who in the future will come to save this ill-fated planet that our species, poisoned by ambition, sometimes takes pleasure in destroying.
- Re-reading any of her books of whatever nature, always shows us that she is an author of diverse paths that meet and that after each new reading we discover shortcuts previously unseen and issues that surprise us for first time.

I believe that Edna Iturralde's literary work significantly validates any recognition given to her dedication and invaluable contributions. Such recognition could serve as a fitting means for her work to reach and be shared in areas of the world where it has yet to arrive, thanks to its strength, consistency, ecumenical vision of the planet and its people, and her desire to convey a message of love, friendship, tolerance, and world peace. These messages are essential in a world being torn apart by wars, violence, and the mistreatment of the very nature that sustains and protects us.





## Edna Iturralde's Ethnohistorical Literature by Dr. Theodore MacDonald<sup>27/28</sup>



HARVARD

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

COMMITTEE ON DEGREES IN SOCIAL STUDIES

I was a Peace Corps Volunteer in Ecuador in the late 1960s and am now a cultural anthropologist at Harvard University. I do field research among Ecuadorian Amazon's Indigenous peoples. Besides being fine literature, the stories in *One Day More and Other Histories: Stories of Animals in Danger of Extinction* and *Green Was My Forest* concern the dilemmas and threats Indigenous peoples in Ecuador's Amazon region are trying to resolve.

The stories in *One Day More and Other Stories* accurately portray how Indigenous children observe and communicate with monkeys, dolphins, toucans, spectacled bears, Andean condors, turtles, armadillos, jaguars, and anacondas and how polluted rivers, deforestation, and wildlife trafficking are changing the forest homes of Ecuador's Amazonian indigenous peoples. I have often observed such interactions between Indigenous children and wild animals in the Ecuadorian Amazon and, unfortunately, have seen first-hand how exploitation has drastically changed much of the environment in which those children and animals live.

The stories in *Green Was My Forest* identify differences among the cultures of seven indigenous groups in Ecuador's Amazon region: the Achuar and Shuar in the southeast; the Lowland Quichua and Waorani in the central region; and the Secoya, Siona, and Cofán to the north of the Napo River, whose lands have been overrun by oil wells and pipelines. The book's first two stories particularly impressed me because they accurately and sensitively portray how cultural changes occur among these Ecuadorian Amazon ethnic groups.



In "The War", the sudden death of his older brother causes the village shaman to call the village men into his hut and incite them to prepare to attack a neighboring village. Tetsém, a young girl, sees a red globe zoom out of the hut and realizes that it is 'meset', the word for war. With the help of a doe that is her dead grandmother's spirit, she traps the globe, carries it back to the village in her basket, and tells the shaman that she has brought

<sup>27</sup> Unpublished essay on the ethnohistorical literature of Edna Iturralde.

<sup>28</sup> Lecturer, Committee on Degrees in Social Studies, Faculty Affiliate, David Rockefeller Center for Latin American Studies, Harvard University <https://scholar.harvard.edu/tmacdon>

it to prevent war. Although the shaman jeers at her, Tetsém's older brother defies him, saying he doesn't want to go to war. As, one by one, the other men agree with him, "*the red ball fades, turned into a black and wrinkled lump that fell to the floor.*" The village people then sit around laughing while Tetsém sings the song of the brave, "*Wi, wi, wi, uuuuuuuu...I, I, I do not know fear...*"

"**The Vaccine**" imaginatively but accurately depicts the uncertainties the Achuar had about the origin of and cure for diseases. Chuji, a boy apprentice to the village shaman, says he won't let the white 'apachis' give him a shot for the measles, but his sister accuses him of being a coward. When Chuji proudly tells the shaman that he is not going to get the vaccine, the shaman reproves him, saying that the white men have brought other spirits that make the Achuar sick with unknown illnesses and that "*the white man's magic works for their diseases.*" Chuji then bravely offers his arm to receive the first shot.

Based on my experiences and research in numerous Ecuadorian Amazon villages, these two stories accurately capture the uncertainty, confusion, and blame that, until recently, a sudden death would cause in Indigenous communities of the Ecuadorian Amazon and how these communities are adjusting. "**The War**" reflects how Indigenous peoples are stopping inter-village and inter-ethnic fighting to unite politically and be better able to protect their forests and territories. "**The Vaccine**" reflects how shamans and elders now accept the efficacy of vaccines. Edna's stories are not only accurate but also support Indigenous people's efforts to prevent and cure recently introduced sicknesses, avoid inter-village divisions, and create Indigenous federations to defend Indigenous territories.

Edna's excellent literary skills speak quite impressively for themselves. In her cheery and friendly writing about Ecuador's Amazon Indigenous peoples, I have emphasized the imagination, accuracy, inter-ethnic understanding, and development concerns. I admire her writing and agree with her viewpoints. I have strongly recommended her books to Indigenous leaders and village teachers in Ecuador who share my concern with ethnographic, environmental, and human rights. I also strongly recommend ***Green Was My Forest*** to my American friends and Harvard students.

In summary, Edna Iturralde is a fine, imaginative writer for the young and an excellent ethnographic scholar. Her books reflect painstaking geographic research and her concern for ethnic differences and human dignity.



## An Interview With Edna Iturralde



Entrevista a Edna Iturralde: [Historias como puentes entre culturas](#)

Created November 18, 2024, by Cristina Freeman

With seventy published works, Edna Iturralde, winner of the 2020 Ibero-American Cervantes Chico Award, is recognized as a pioneer of a genre in children's and young adult literature: narrative ethnohistory.



Her stories cover themes ranging from magic to ecology and multiculturalism. With a mission to create stories as bridges to bring cultures closer together, Edna has shed light on social issues such as the over one million “street children” in Latin America *Tears of Angels*, or the ancient wisdom of the peoples living in the Amazon in *Green Was My Forest*. We are delighted to speak with her from *La Cometa* about her career and contributions to children's and young adult literature (LIJ).

### How do you manage to write children's and young adult literature with such a high aesthetic and literary level?

The aesthetic foundation of my literature is an emotional appreciation of beauty and hope, even in difficult situations. Writing has always been my passion, and I think my love for writing ensures that the messages and themes in my books resonate with my readers.

I consider my style poetic, building images through words and combining them in a way that allows readers to feel immersed in a scene or in a character's heart. I include colloquial language, touches of humor, and sparks of romance that make my work feel authentic, true to children's voices, and thus of high literary and aesthetic quality.

### In an era where children struggle to detach from computer screens, how do you manage to attract and stimulate their curiosity and imagination?

I'm not sure to what extent my readers set aside their screens to read my books, but I've noticed that what I write offers children and young people

stories they can't find on any platform or social media. My books introduce readers to magic and fantasy from a very Latin American perspective.

I connect deeply with children and the themes that spark their curiosity. I always start by imagining one or more characters in a situation. This interest creates within me a deep empathy for my protagonists that provides me with the most fitting words to narrate the story as its events unfold.

**You write for different age groups and on diverse topics. Are your aesthetic expressions equally varied?**

I write for children aged five to teenagers up to seventeen. Sometimes, I write about the same topics but approach them differently. When writing for younger children I use metaphors appropriately, understanding they're not as easy for younger children to grasp. For instance, some of my books for younger readers feature short chapters and characters designed to captivate their intended audience. These books also include dialogues, and while there are descriptions of places or characters, I don't dwell on them excessively. I write for all ages with the same love for them and the same desire to create for them an aesthetic literature that provokes their aesthetic reactions.

**You have a literary career spanning four decades. How have you managed to keep your literature fresh and innovative for so many generations?**

I'm thrilled when I hear that my books resonate with young readers. I've dedicated 45 years to children's and young adult literature, having produced seventy published books and, within some of them, many short stories. I believe the freshness of my literature stems from the way I pace my stories, making my narration dynamic so that readers don't get bored—rather, they become excited because they find excitement in my literature.

I make a point to listen to children when I visit schools. This helps me communicate with them in a simple and straightforward way when I write, using poetic language that evokes atmospheres and emotions while also keeping my readers turning the pages.

**How important do you think empathy is when writing for children and young adults?**

I consider myself a bridge of empathy through which diverse cultures, ethnicities, social issues, and ecological concerns flow and can connect, shake hands, get to know each other, and share through imagination and heart. The most important thing is that I put myself in their place—my 'inner child' steps into their shoes—and from there, my writing emerges.



### How do you think the diversity of your aesthetic expression influences your readers' cultural experience when they read your literature?

I think it's necessary for people to learn about different realities; what isn't known isn't appreciated or respected. I aim to achieve this through my literature, and I do it with deep respect. That's why some of my books address challenging topics like street children or migrations through dangerous routes, but you'll also find historical themes, fantasy, and narratives about Indigenous peoples—the narrative ethnohistory of which I am a pioneer in Ecuador.

I place immense importance on the beauty of writing. I believe this beauty must go hand in hand with the cultural knowledge I write about in my multicultural and ethnic books. I also travel to different territories to gather firsthand information, which I then use creatively, taking some literary liberties. I say I “*listen with my heart*,” and my readers feel my message.

### How would you summarize what you've achieved in your writing career, and how do you continue to reach new milestones?

I consider my seventy books as ‘children’ made from imagination printed on paper. Yet, the greatest achievement isn't the books themselves but the inspiration they've sparked in others. Often, during meetings with my readers, I hear children say that they didn't enjoy reading before reading my books and that now they do. Hearing that is the best reward I can receive.

My long journey toward new milestones is due to how I write. If I need to do research, I do it, but my style flows unconsciously into each book. It's not something I intentionally strive for; it emerges according to each work's path as I write it. My readers appreciate this and feel my literature is entertaining, making reading an adventure for them, and that's why my slogan is: “*Come to the adventure of reading*.”





## Awards and Other Distinctions

### Awards

- 2020 Cervantes Chico Ibero-American Award for Children's and Young People's Literature awarded by Municipal Council of Alcalá de Henares, Spain.
- 2019 U.S. Skipping Stones Award for *Green Was My Forest*
- 2019 Women for Freedom Award from the Council of Founders of the Bolivarian Confraternity of America, Bogotá, Colombia
- 2016 Matilde Hidalgo de Procel National Cultural Merit Award, Ecuador.
- 2015 Girándula/IBBY Ecuador Outstanding Honor Diploma for *The Brothers Who Harvested Fairy Tales*
- 2014 First Prize, International Latino Book Award for *The Birds Have No Boundaries: Legends and Myths of Latin America*
- 2014 Manuela Saenz Libertador Decoration in the International Grade of First-Class awarded by the Council of the Bolivarian Confraternity of America, Bogota, Colombia
- 2014 Girándula/IBBY Ecuador Outstanding Honor Diploma for *The Birds Have No Boundaries: Legends and Myths of Latin America*
- 2013 Skipping Stones Award for *The Birds Have No Borders: Legends and Myths of Latin America*
- 2013 First Prize of the International Latino Book Award for *When the Guns Fell Silent and Get to Know Simon Bolivar*; Second Prize for *The Day of Yesterday* and *Get to Know Miguel Cervantes*
- 2012 Honorable Mention Latin American Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature, Peruvian Academy of Children's and Young Adult Literature for *The Brothers Who Harvested Fairy Tales*
- 2012 Outstanding Honor Diploma from Girándula/IBBY Ecuador for *Simon Was His Name* and *Stories from the Yasuni*
- 2010 Darío Guevara Mayorga National Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature for *Simon Was His Name*
- 2010 Silver Rose Award for Woman of the Year for her contribution to the country with her literary work, Hogar Magazine
- 2008 Aurelio Espinosa Polit Grand Collar Decoration for Literature, Municipality of Quito

- 2008 Honorable Mention, Darío Guevara Mayorga Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature, Municipality of Quito for ***Where Do Baby Fairies Come From?***
- 2008 Girándula/IBBY Ecuador Outstanding Honor Diploma for ***The Horse and the Rose, The History of A Rebellion and Where Do Fairy Babies Come From?***
- 2006 Girándula/IBBY Ecuador Honor Diploma for ***When the Guns Fell Silent***
- 2006 Skipping Stones International Award for Children's Literature for ***One Day More and Other Stories***
- 2002 Municipality of Quito, Honorable Mention, Darío Guevara Mayorga Award for Children and Young People's Literature for ***J.R. Machete***
- 2004 Quitsa-To National Prize for the Arts in Children's and Young Adult Literature, Sucre National Theatre Foundation
- 2002 Skipping Stones International Award for Children's Literature for ***Green Was My Forest***
- 2002 Municipality of Quito, Honorable Mention Darío Guevara Mayorga Award for Children's, and Young Adult Literature for ***Walkers of the Sun***
- 2001 Municipality of Quito, Darío Guevara Mayorga National Award for Children's, and Young Adult Literature for ***...And His Heart Escaped to Become a Bird***

## Other Distinctions

- 2024 ***Conoce a Zelia Nuttall*** recommended by School Library Journal to every school library in the United States to celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month (September 15 to October 15).
- 2020 Nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA)
- 2018 Nominated for the XIV Ibero-American SM Award for Children's and Young Adult Literature by IBBY Ecuador



- 2018 Nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA)
- 2017 Named a 'Five Star Writer Who Leaves a Footprint in Honduras' by Santillana/Honduras
- 2016 ***Green Was My Forest*** and ***...And His Heart Opened to Become a Bird*** recommended to schools by the Texas Bookstore Organization
- 2016 Chosen a member of the Amazon Aid Foundation as 'An Artist of the Amazon' for her books about children and nature in the Amazon.



2015 Keynote speaker at the annual conference of the California Association for Bilingual Education (CABE)

2015 *Birds Have No Boundaries* selected by the Mexican Ministry of Public Education for distribution in all Mexican public-school libraries

2014 *Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes, One Day More and Other Stories, Walkers of the Sun, ...And His Heart Escaped to Became a Bird* and *Green Was My Forest* chosen for the United States Transversal Curriculum for Schools with Spanish Speaking Students

2014 Santillana/Ecuador and Penguin Random House/ Colombia publishes Drakko Planet the first fantastic epic by an Ecuadorian author

2014 Barnes and Noble chooses *Get to Know Miguel Cervantes* to display during Hispanic Heritage Month in the United States.

2013 National Symphony Orchestra of Ecuador performs *The Young Girl and the Snake – Origins of the Canar People* composed by the Ecuadorian composer Eduardo Florencia and based on a scene from *The Children of the Macaw*

2013 Named an icon of children's and young adult literature in the book *Milestones of Children's and Young Adult Literature in Ibero America* published by the SM Foundation, Madrid

2013 Chosen Woman of the Year for Literature by Hogar Magazine, Ecuador

2013 Nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA)

2012 *Tears of Angels* sells over 64,000 copies an Ecuadorian record for a children and young adult books

2009-12 Founds and is president of the Ecuadorian Academy of Children's and Young Adult Literature, attached to the Latin American Academy of Children's and Young Adult Literature.

2012 Awarded the Academic Merit Diploma by the Chilean Academy of Children's Literature

2012 Nominated for the Astrid Lindgren Memorial Award (ALMA)

2011 Outstanding Honor Diploma from Girándula/IBBY Ecuador for *Simon Was His Name* and *Stories from the Yasuni*

2011 Named 'Quiteña' of Honor by the radio stations Multimedia 106, Radio Urbana, and on-line newspaper Al Day for "her professional and literary achievements"

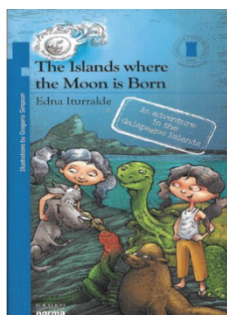
2010 Diploma from the Ministry of Education, Azuay Department of Education for *Green Was My Forest* having been selected as one of the ten "essential" books in the Canon of Latin American Children's and Young Adult Literature of the 20th Century



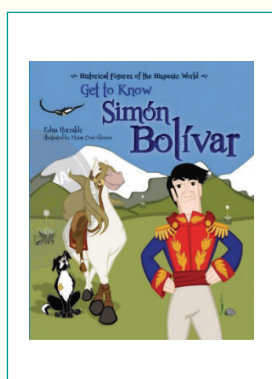
- 2010 Diploma Ministry of Culture of Ecuador - Undersecretary Southern Region for ***Green Was My Forest*** having been selected as one of the ten “essential” books in the Canon of Latin American Children’s and Young Adult Literature of the 20th Century
- 2010 Diploma of Honor Girandula/IBBY Ecuador for ***Green Was My Forest*** having been selected as one of the ten “essential” books in the Canon of Latin American Children’s and Young Adult Literature of the 20th Century.
- 2009 ***Green Was My Forest*** selected as one of the ten “essential” books in the Canon of Latin American Children’s and Young Adult Literature of the 20th Century by the SM Foundation and the Libraries of Chile
- 2008 Colombia edition of ***Tears of Angels*** outsells Gabriel García Márquez’s commemorative edition of ***One Hundred Years of Solitude***
- 2007 Chosen as one of the Twelve Essential Women of Ecuador by ***Vanity Magazine***, Ecuador
- 2007 Named “Five Star Writer” by Editorial Santillana Honduras because her books “leave a mark in Honduras.”
- 2007 The newspaper ***Hoy*** sponsors the Edna Iturralde Children’s and Young Adult Literature Contest to encourage new authors to write for children and young adults.
- 2007 Attends the New York Book Fair as a special guest
- 2006 The Metropolitan Ballet of Quito stages a ballet based on ***Freckles and the Cockroaches***
- 2007 Selected for ***Vistazo Magazine*** ‘list of Ecuadorians who have distinguished themselves in 2007
- 2006 Named “outstanding international author” by Norma for Ecuador for ***When the Guns Fell Silent***
- 2005 Nominated for the First Ibero-American Award for Children’s and Young People’s Literature Contest
- 2005 ***Green Was My Forest*** selected by the Mexican Ministry of Public Education for distribution to all Mexican public-school libraries
- 2004 Barahona Center for the Study of Children’s and Young Adult Literature in Spanish at San Marcos State University in California recommends her books
- 2003 ***...And His Heart Escaped To Become a Bird*** selected by the Mexican Ministry of Public Education for distribution in all Mexican public-school libraries
- 2000-03 Invited lecturer children’s literature at Dartmouth College, United States

## Translated Editions

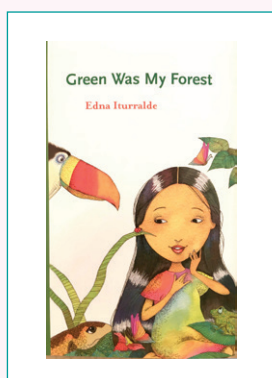
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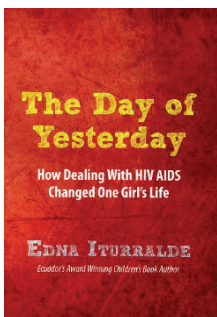
Original title:	Las islas donde nace la luna
English title:	The Islands Where the Moon Is Born
Translation:	Bruce S. Kernan
Cover:	Gregorio Simpson Pablo Lara
Illustrations:	Gregorio Simpson
Publisher:	2007, Norma, Ecuador 2014, WPR Books, United States
Status:	In print



Original title;	Conoce a Simon Bolívar
English title:	Get to Know Simon Bolivar
Translation:	Joe Hayes, Sharon Franco
Cover:	Itziar Cori Alvarez
Illustrations:	Itziar Cori Alvarez
Publisher:	2012, Santillana, United States 2019, Vista Higher Learning, United States
Status:	In print



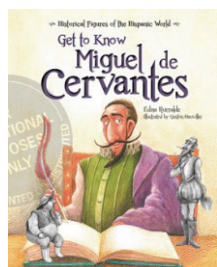
Original title:	Verde fue mi selva
Translation:	Jessica Powell
Cover:	Mauricio Maggiorini
Illustrations:	Mauricio Maggiorini, Eulalia Cornejo, Santiago Gonzalez
Publisher:	2017, Mandel Vidal Press, United States
Status:	In print



Original title: El día de ayer  
 English title: The Day of Yesterday  
 Translation: Bruce S. Kernan  
 Covers: Loricklaszzlo/Shutterstock  
 Pablo Lara  
 Illustrations: No illustrations  
 No Illustrations  
 Publisher: 2012, WPR Books, United States  
 2022, Mariano Rosa, Venezuela  
 Status: In print

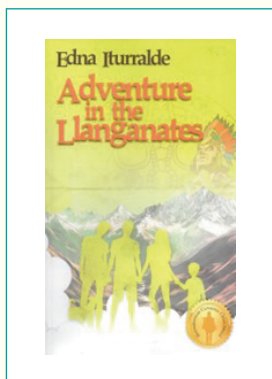


Original Title: Cuando callaron las armas  
 English title: When the Guns Fell Silent  
 Translation: Annie Perez  
 Bruce S. Kernan  
 Covers: Lorick Lazlo/Shutterstock.com  
 Pablo Lara  
 Illustrations: Images from internet  
 Publisher: 2012, WPR Books, United States  
 2022, Mariano Rosas, Venezuela  
 Status: In print

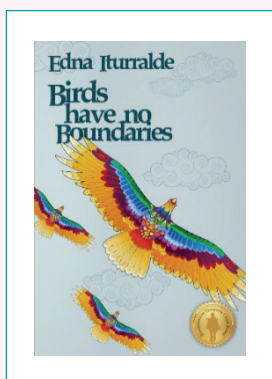


Original title: Conoce a Miguel de Cervantes  
 English title: Get To Know Miguel de Cervantes  
 Translation: Joe Hayes & Sharon Franco  
 Illustrations: Gaston Hauviller  
 Publisher: 2012, Santillana United States  
 2023, Vista Higher Learning, United States  
 Status: In print

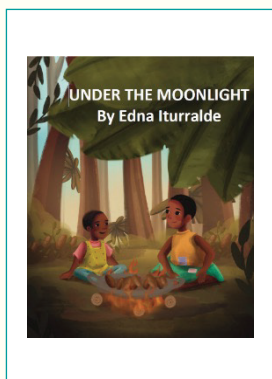




Original title: Aventura en los Llanganates  
 English title: Adventure in the Llanganates  
 Translation: Jessica Powell  
 Cover: Mariano Rosas  
 Illustrations: No illustrations  
 Publisher: 2022, Mariano Rosa, Venezuela  
 Status: In print



Original title: Los pájaros no tienen fronteras  
 English title: Birds Have No Boundaries  
 Translation: Bruce S. Kernan  
 Cover: Mariana Rosas  
 Illustrations: No illustrations  
 Publisher: 2022, Mariano Rosas, Venezuela  
 Status: In print



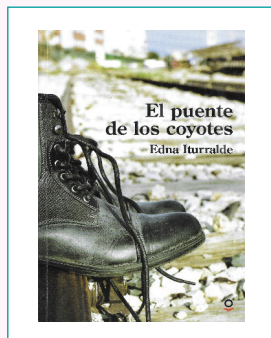
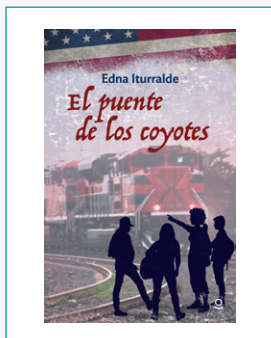
Original title: Bajo la luz de la luna  
 English title: Under the Moonlight  
 Translation: Bruce Kernan  
 Cover: Ana Vaillafraz  
 Illustrations: Ana Vaillafraz  
 Publisher: 2024, Global Pearls, Inc., Cameroon  
 Status: In print



# Ten of the Most Important Titles by the Candidate

6

## The Bridge of the Coyotes



Original title:	El puente de los coyotes
English title:	The Bridge of the Coyotes
Covers:	Unknown Barbara Taracena
Illustrations:	Nancy Novillo Sandra Corrales
Publisher:	2018, Santillana, Ecuador 2019, Santillana, Guatemala
Status:	In print

### The Plot

Francisco and Roberto flee El Salvador to avoid being forced into the Mara gang, and Hillary, together with her guard, La Chata, escapes from her kidnapper. When they accidentally meet, they travel north together, hoping for refuge in the United States. But first they must survive the infamous 'Train of Death.' A moving story that captures the tragedies and hopes of emigrants forced to emigrate by economic and criminal turmoil but optimistic about finding a better life in a new country.

## The Brothers Who Harvested Fairy Tales



Original title:	Los hermanos que cosechaban cuentos de hadas
English title:	The Brothers that Harvested Fairy Tales
Cover:	Roger Ycaza
Illustrations:	Roger Ycaza
Publishers:	2013, Santillana Ecuador 2016, Santillana México 2016, Santillana Guatemala 2017, Santillana United States
Status:	In print

### The Plot

The twins Luis and José journey through the world of fairy tales, meeting such characters as Snow White, Rapunzel, Cinderella. When they ask the brothers Grimm why fairy tales portray stepmothers as mean, the brothers give them an hourglass and challenge them to discover the reason before the sand runs out.

## The Birds Have No Boundaries – Legends and Myths of Latin America



Original title:	Los pájaros no tienen fronteras-leyendas y mitos de Latinoamérica
English title:	Birds Have No Borders-Legends and Myths of Latin America
Cover:	Adrezzinho
Illustrations:	Adrezzinho
Publishers:	2012, Santillana, Colombia 2013, Santillana, Ecuador 2013, Santillana, México 2014, Santillana, United States 2015, Public Education Secretariat, Mexico
Status:	In print

### The Plot

Iturralde conveys the cultural similarities and differences between Latin America's twenty-one countries in her original and imaginative re-telling of their most characteristic forty-two myths and legends.

## Micky Risotto and the Chihuahua Dog



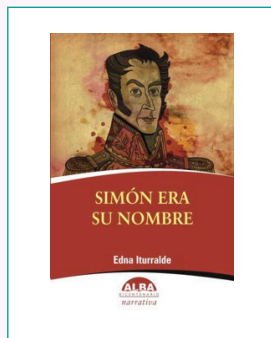
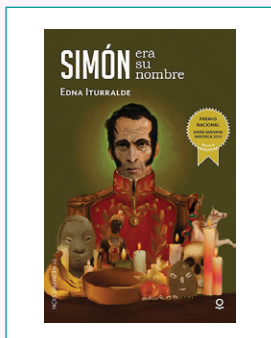
Original title:	Mickey Rissoto y el perro chihuahua
English title:	Mickey Rissoto and the Chihuahua Dog
Cover:	Ricardo Novillo Loaiza
Illustrations:	Ricardo Novillo Loaiza
Publisher:	2011, Santillana, Ecuador
Status:	In print

### The Plot

In a book full of cybernetic adventures, Mickey Risotto's aunt gives him a special birthday present: a Chihuahua dog. Mickey worries that his friends might laugh at him for having such a tiny dog. Before he can give the dog back, however, his magical computer takes them both to the world of the smallest kinds of animals, and he finds himself in big trouble inside a video game where crazy things begin to happen.



## Simon Was His Name



Original title:	Simón era su nombre
English title:	Simon Was His Name
Covers:	Unknown
Illustrations:	No illustrations
Publishers:	2010, Santillana, Colombia 2010, Santillana, Ecuador 2010, Gente Nueva, Cuba
Status:	In print

### The Plot

A biographical novel that portrays the life and character of the military genius and political visionary Simón Bolívar, 'The Liberator' of northern South America from Spanish imperial rule through three narrators: Hipolita, the Black slave who was his foster mother; Manuela Saenz, the love of his life; and himself, reflecting on his memories.

## The Day of Yesterday

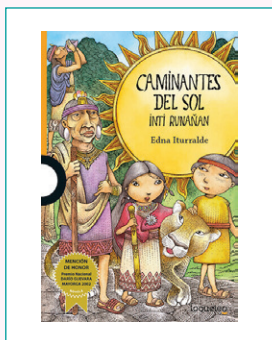


Original title:	El día de ayer
English title:	The Day of Yesterday
Cover:	Pablo Pincay
Illustrations:	No illustrations
Publisher:	2003, Santillana, Ecuador
Status:	In print

### The Plot

Thirteen-year-old Daniela's life nearly stops in the past when she contracts, through no fault of her own, HIV/AIDS. As she courageously attempts to migrate to in the United States to seek a cure, she discovers true friendship and love and that each of us "*owns a star, our very own star, with our name written on it so that we will be remembered.*"

## Walkers of the Sun



Original title:	Caminantes del Sol
English title:	Walkers of the Sun
Cover:	Santiago Gonzales
Illustrations:	Santiago Gonzales, Marco Chamorro y Luis Bencomo
Publisher:	2002, Santillana, Ecuador 2008, Santillana, Perú
Status:	In print

### The Plot

The Incas have just conquered an additional territory to the north called Saraguro. In Cuzco, Kispi Sisa, eleven, a Virgin of the Sun, is about to be offered to the Sun God. But the god Puma saves her, and the Inca Emperor sends her to help her grandfather lead a migration of Incas on the Royal Road to Saraguro. With the help of Puma and a magic staff, she becomes an intrepid leader and the ancestor of Ecuador's Saraguro Indigenous peoples. And Puma becomes the hill in the shape of a puma that still overlooks Saraguro.

## Whirlwind

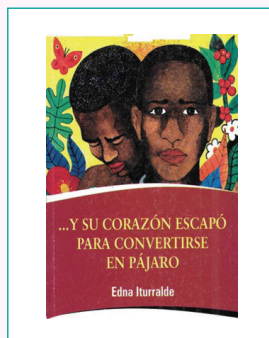
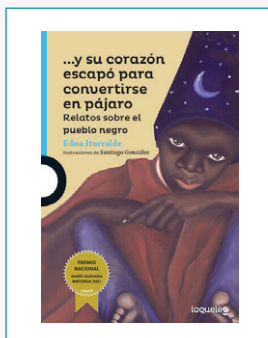


Original title:	Torbellino
English title:	Whirlwind
Cover:	Marco Chamorro
Illustrations:	Marco Chamorro
Publisher:	2002, Santillana, Ecuador
Status:	Not in print

### The Plot

A book about the difficult subject of death in simple prose that captivates very young readers. Jacinta, a little girl, is mourning for her beloved horse, Whirlwind, who one day “*stops swatting flies with his tail.*” Guided gently by her wise, loving grandfather, Jacinta uses her imagination to reconcile herself optimistically to a painful reality by looking at clouds, seeing one that has the shape of a horse, and exclaiming: “*Look, Grandpa, Whirlwind is galloping among the clouds!*”

## ...And His Heart Escaped To Become A Bird

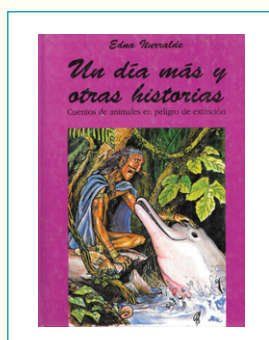
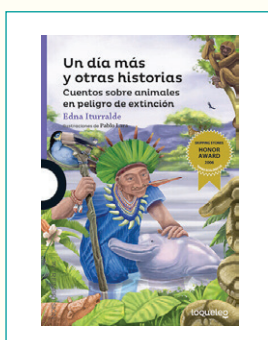


Original Title:	...y su corazón escapó para convertirse en pájaro
English Title:	...And His Heart Escaped to Become a Bird
Covers:	Francesca Rota Unknown
Illustrations:	Santiago González No illustrations
Publisher	2001, Santillana, Ecuador 2003, Secretariat of Public Education Mexico 2003, Santillana, United States 2005, Santillana, México 2005, Santillana, Colombia 2011, Gente Nueva, Cuba
Status:	In print

### The Plot

This book's fourteen stories, brimming with empathy, poetry, and imagination, resonate among all the people whose ancestors arrived in the Americas on slave ships. The first story recounts the African legend about Kamapa, a monster born from intolerance and selfishness and the last one tells a story of a love for humanity that conquers inter-racial hatred.

## One Day More and Other Stories



Original title:	Un día más... y otras historias
English title:	One day more... and Other Stories
Cover:	Pablo Lara Pablo Ortega
Illustrations:	Pablo Ortega Patricia Kernan Belén Guerrero
Publisher:	1993, UNICEF, Ecuador 2004, Santillana, Ecuador
Status:	In print

### The Plot

Ten magical stories about animals in danger of extinction in South America's forests, lakes, and rivers and their interactions with children. They invite one to learn the song of the mountain, travel with Tatu, the giant armadillo, swim through the sea with Chac-Chac, the green turtle, hear the warnings of a tiny hummingbird about the terrible Mister Smog, and share a mother monkey's hope to live one more day.





# List of the Five Representative Books Sent to the Jurors

7

## Green Was My Forest



Original title: Verde fue mi selva  
 English title: Green Was My Forest  
 Covers: Mauricio Maggiorini  
 Manuel Estrada  
 Katja Zerck  
 Illustrations: Mauricio Maggiorini,  
 Eulalia Cornejo  
 Santiago González

Publishers: 1998, Santillana, Ecuador  
 2002, Santillana United States  
 2002, Santillana, España  
 2005, Public Education  
 Secretariat, México  
 2006, Santillana, México  
 2006, Santillana, Colombia  
 2022, Cornelsen Verlag GmbH  
 Berlin, Germany  
 Status: In print

### The Plots

These thirteen short stories portray the forest culture and environment of seven Indigenous peoples who live in Ecuador's Amazon region. Knowledgeable, industrious Indigenous children harvest and prepare forest fruits and leaves for food and medicines. Other brave, intelligent Indigenous children help their people manage outside influences. Most of all, indigenous children absorb and reflect their cultures' appreciation for their forest home. Antun takes his friends, Ramu and Maskian, downriver to eat scrumptious ants; Tumtuan converses with his pet *chu*, a big, fat forest monkey. Maria Piaguaje becomes friends with Nane, the Moon, the son of the Spirit of Creation.

### The Author's Comment

*In the Ecuadorean Amazon, I saw dead animals floating down rivers made black by oil spills but I didn't want to write only about an ecological tragedy. So, I talked to Indigenous children about how they play, hunt, and learn, and these these stories came to me.*

### A Critic's Comment<sup>29</sup>

*Edna Iturralde masterfully writes wonderful, imaginative stories about the ethnic groups that live Ecuador's Amazon forest. She builds beautiful stories that explain to children the origin of things, why we are afraid of certain animals, what good shamans bring, and that the Amazon rainforest is a treasure of our planet.*

29 Cernuda, Pilar. 2004. A distinguished Spanish journalist. Extract from her unpublished presentation of *Green Was My Forest* in Madrid.

## Tears of Angels



Original title: Lágrimas de ángeles  
English title: Tears of Angels  
Covers: Juan Claude Constant I.  
C.M. Diaz Consuegra

Illustrations: Bladamir Tejo  
C.M. Diaz Consuegra  
Publishers: 2005, Santillana, Ecuador  
2007, Santillana/Colombia  
2008, Santillana, México  
Status: In print

### The Plot

A novel that realistically and movingly conveys the sad effect of parents' emigration in creating children of the streets. A country boy, Jaime, learns to survive on the streets from Slim, a streetwise girl, and together they outwit a nefarious criminal mafia. More than just a beautiful novel, this book is a call to care for society's invisible members.

### The Author's Comment

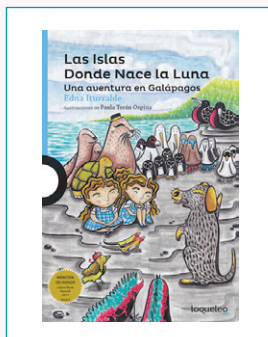
*I strive for my literature to promote tolerance, respect for diversity, and anti-racism. I have books on social issues that serve as a form of denunciation so that young people can learn, see, and become aware—for example, about street children. That's why I wrote **Tears of Angels**.*

### A Critic's Comment<sup>30</sup>

***Tears of Angels** is a deeply moving work that addresses one of the most sensitive of social issues: the deplorable situation of street children in Ecuador and much of Latin America. Through a simple yet emotionally charged narrative, Iturralde crafts a story that not only tells a tale but also invites readers to reflect on vulnerability, social exclusion, and solidarity. Far from being a grim narrative, the book also emphasizes resilience and optimism. Its portrayal of its characters not just as victims but as individuals with hopeful dreams and deep feelings fosters deep sympathy in readers for them and inspires young readers with empathy and social responsibility. In this book Edna demonstrates the transformative power of storytelling by giving a voice to those who usually go unheard and even unseen. Her stories have inspired several generations and instilled good values in many young people, thereby proving that literature can powerfully mold characters. This book, beyond being a beautiful novel, is a call to pay closer attention to those made invisible by society.*

<sup>30</sup> Delgado, Francisco. 2024. Ecuadorian author and critic of literature for the young. From an unpublished essay about *Tears of Angels*.

## The Islands Where the Moon Is Born



Original title: Lágrimas de ángeles  
English title: Tears of Angels  
Covers: Juan Claude Constant I.  
C.M. Diaz Consuegra

Illustrations: Bladamir Tejo  
C.M. Diaz Consuegra  
Publishers: 2005, Santillana, Ecuador  
2007, Santillana/Colombia  
2008, Santillana, México  
Status: In print

### The Plot

A mother, father, and twin sisters must flee to Ecuador from Colombia to escape fighting. One of the sisters, who has Down's Syndrome, and is “*special, fantastically special*”, makes friends with a sea gull on an Ecuadorian beach. The sea gull turns the girls into sea gulls and their dog into a pelican, and they all fly to the Galapagos Islands, ally with the native animals, and defeat a witch who plans to exterminate the native animals and turn the island over to pigs and goats. A magical novel that shows how living things, including humans, must learn to adapt to new situations. The novel balances adventure with humor while providing accurate information about the Galapagos animals.

### The Author's Comment

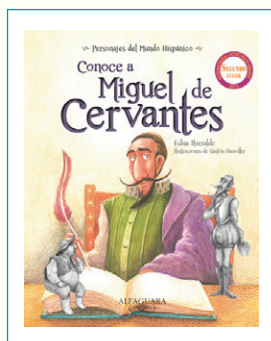
*I conceived this book when refugees were pouring into Ecuador to escape bitter fighting in Colombia. Their situation seemed analogous to the animal species in the Galapagos Islands whose ancestors had evolved to adapt to a new environment. Feral pigs and goats now threaten some of these species with extinction. Since the Galapagos Islands are so special, I wanted the book's heroine also to be special. Children with Down's Syndrome often have special abilities, so I gave my heroine the ability to communicate empathetically with animals.*

### A Critic's Comment<sup>31</sup>

*Reality and fantasy intertwine with the hidden talents of a special girl, a sense of humor that softens the harshness of the immediate; deep tenderness and magic join forces to create a narrative universe that envelops the readers, enchanting them, and leading them to a conclusion that breaks the stereotypes of good and evil.*

31 Davila Vasquez, Jorge. 2007. Extract of a review of *The Islands Where the Moon Is Born* in the Ecuadorian newspaper *Hoy*.

## Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes



Original title:	Get to know Miguel de Cervantes - Conoce a Miguel Cervantes (bilingual)	Illustrations:	Gaston Hauviller
Translations:	Joe Hayes Sharon Franco	Publisher:	Santillana USA 2012 Santillana Ecuador 2013 Vista Higher Learning 2019
Cover:	Gaston Hauviller	Status:	In print

### The Plot

Don Quixote tells his squire, Sancho Panza, the life and adventures of Miguel Cervantes: his loss of an arm in the battle of Lepanto, his failed attempts to escape from his Moorish jail; his work as a tax collector, and his writing of *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote of the Mancha*.

### The Author's Comment

*When I was six, my mother read Don Quixote to me, and I loved it because it is so full of adventure and romance. When I was fourteen, I read it to myself and wanted to learn more about Miguel de Cervantes. I read his biography and was surprised that he had almost as many adventures as Don Quixote himself. So when I was asked to write a biography of a famous Spanish writer for eight-year old children, of course I chose Cervantes. I thought children of that age would like that Don Quixote told the life of Cervantes. I have long wondered "whether Cervantes created Don Quixote, or Don Quixote created Cervantes."*

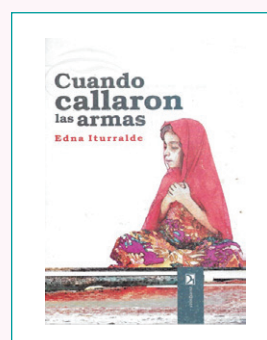
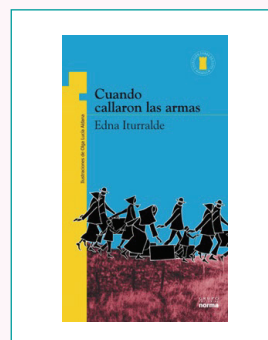
### A Critic's Comment

*Culture, aesthetics, and art revolve around this work, involving different writers eager to deliver this literary heritage across eras. In this vein, Ecuadorian children's literature author Edna Iturralde embarks on a new adventure featuring characters from the Hispanic world in her work **Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes**, through which she introduces young readers to this world of fantasy. The reading transcends the pages with its intrinsic musicality expressed in every line, alongside a palette of colors: clay tones, burnt reds, earthy oranges, and golden yellows accompany the characters on this dreamy journey.<sup>32</sup>*

<sup>32</sup> Castillo S. Maria Eulalia has a degree in information sciences and social communication and experience as a teacher, journalist, and editor. Extract from an article in the newspaper *El Mercurio*, Cuenca.



## When the Guns Fell Silent



Original title: Cuando callaron las armas  
 English title: When the Guns Fell Silent  
 Covers: Marcella Quiroz  
 Olga Lucia Aldana  
 Magnus Sorginus  
 Mauricio Jacome  
 William Ramirez Consuegra

Illustrations: Olga Lucia Aldana  
 Olga Lucia Aldana  
 No illustrations  
 No illustrations  
 No illustrations  
 Publishers: Santillana Ecuador 2006  
 Norma. Colombia 2007  
 Gente Nueva, Cuba 2012  
 Santillana USA 2015  
 Status: In print

### The Plots

These twelve astonishing and compassionate short stories accurately capture the experiences, emotions and reactions of children who face situations of internecine conflicts in Afghanistan, Bosnia, Colombia, Liberia, Spain, Northern Ireland, Israel and Palestine, Chechnya, Rwanda, Sudan, Iraq, and Sri Lanka. The stories provide sufficient background for each conflict and country to enable children to comprehend how misunderstandings, politics, and historical circumstances can lead to disagreements, fighting and horrendous consequences for children. They also convey how affection and wisdom can resolve conflicts.

### The Author's Comment

*One day, when I saw some children who were playing video games, in minutes shooting hundreds of realistic-looking humans, I realized how lucky some children are who know nothing about real conflicts and the suffering they cause. I decided to write a book about children immersed in*

conflicts. Although I sometimes cried when writing these stories, I thought they would help to stir people's consciousness about how conflict affects children. Nonetheless, the stories are not only about conflict but also about the human spirit in children –how they react to conflicts with courage, optimism, and resilience.

### A Critic's Comment<sup>33</sup>

Told from the empowering perspectives of youth *When the Guns Fell Silent* is an inspiring collection of heart-gripping short stories. This book is a realistic homage to the children of the world who have suffered because of war, religion, or other violent turmoil and reminds us of our basic humanity.



<sup>33</sup> Ortiz, Gonzalo. 2012. Ecuadorean literary critic and journalist. Extract from from a review of *When the Guns Fell Silent* in the newspaper *Hoy*.

## Published Reviews of the Books Submitted to the Jury<sup>34</sup>

### Green Was My Forest

National Columnists

**La Hora**

NOTICIAS ▾ PROVINCIAS ▾ OPINIÓN ▾ SERVICIOS ▾ PRODUCTOS ▾ 🔍 📱

7 November 2024

### Green Was My Forest by Rosalia Arteaga Serrano<sup>35/36</sup>

The infinite capacity of human creativity to refer to situations that arise or are born from the reality of a particular geography, is once again put to the test in the book '*Verde fue mi selva*', by the prolific Ecuadorian author **Edna Iturralde**, who recreates wonderful stories that occurred in diverse spaces of the native communities of Ecuador, and that, in some cases also penetrate the border reality that these peoples share with communities of the same ethnic groups in Peru and Colombia.

The protagonists are boys and girls entering adolescence and highlight the customs, habits, and traditions of the different peoples of the regions of Ecuador. Thus, she narrates beautiful stories that highlight virtues such as solidarity, curiosity, and the wisdom of the shamans of the different villages, which extends to the new generations.

Edna relies on the studies she has done on the people who are the protagonists of her stories. Thus, we have the Achuar, the Shuar, the Huaorani, the Secoya, the Kichwa of the east, and the Cofán. All of them populate the Amazon jungles and preserve their traditions to a greater or lesser degree.

The author uses narrative resources to present the reality of people who, in many cases, run the risk of becoming extinct because of the advances of the colonists, but she also tells us about the animal and plant species that populate this rich region of the planet.

The Amazon biome is a reference in multiple scientific studies; its importance for the planet's climate has been pondered, but little is said about the human groups that live there, hence the value of these beautiful stories by the author Edna Iturralde, which contributes significantly not only to the knowledge of children and young people in this area, but also to love this region so attacked.

<sup>34</sup> The published reviews have been translated from Spanish to English.

<sup>35</sup> Writer, editor, educator, Ecuador's first woman president; web site:

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Rosalia-Arteaga>

<sup>36</sup> Source: *Verde fue mi selva* – *Diario La Hora*

## Pages From the Jungle by María Belén Arroyo <sup>37/38</sup>

Tae is a little Cofán girl, cheerful and playful. She loses her voice one day when a black, viscous liquid spills into the river. Her family leaves her in a hut by the shore, hoping that the spirits of the jungle will help her. One by one, animals arrive to find out what is wrong with the girl. When the ladybug approaches her ear, Tae begins to cry. Her tears roll down, and they cleanse the oil as they fall into the water. What did the ladybug tell the girl? Nothing complicated, just that the jungle belongs to her forever, and it is her duty to care for it when others try to destroy it. The ladybug then explains to the other animals that all human beings, big and small, carry something inside called “hope.”



This simple, beautifully illustrated story is part of the book ***Green Was My Forest***, published in 1998. Edna Iturralde's book has just been recognized as one of the ten essential works of children's literature of the 20th century. The selection was conducted by the Fundación SM of Spain, with the support of the Directorate of Libraries, Archives, and Museums of Chile. The call brought together 151 nominated works.

*Verde fue mi selva* received the *Skipping Stones International Award* from the United States in 2002. This award recognizes multicultural and ethnic books. In 2005, the Secretariat of Public Education (SEP) of Mexico included it among the books that should be in classroom libraries as part of the *Towards a Country of Readers* program. It was selected from over 15,000 books.

For the people of the Amazon, this book offers a way to understand it through Edna Iturralde's sincere, broad, and sensitive heart. For those of us who do not belong to the rainforest, the book brings us closer to the reality of the Amazon and allows us to discover that it is there, very close, and is a part of us: people, animals, vegetation, united in the fragile harmony of a unique and special world.

<sup>37</sup> María Belén Arroyo: Political Editor at *Revista Vistazo* has worked at *El Comercio* and *El Universo* newspapers. She was a scholarship recipient in the second Foundation for New Ibero-American Journalism workshop with Gabriel García Márquez. Finalist in the Latin American Investigative Journalism Contest, *Colpin* 2018.

<sup>38</sup> Extract from an article in the Ecuadorian magazine *Vistazo* in 2010. No website.



# Tears of Angels

National Magazine

**Edu@news**  
revista educativa y cultural

December 2024

## Tears of Angels by Maria Augusta Cruz<sup>39/40</sup>

Edna Iturralde captivates us with her unmistakable grace and unique style, which are movingly reflected in her book *Tears of Angels*. The story, whose rhythm is so engaging that it's impossible to put down, immerses us in a series of events featuring children whose lives intertwine between reality and fiction. Through her literature, the author touches the hearts of a society that, unfortunately, has normalized indifference and apathy toward abandonment and corruption.

La Flaca, a girl who has been homeless since becoming an orphan, and Jaime, a boy marked by his father's migration and forced to live with his unkind aunt, share a reality of uprootedness. Both, burdened with dreams and determined to survive, embark on a path in search of hope. Jaime, a rural boy, and La Flaca, a street child, reflect thousands of minors facing vulnerability. This issue is not exclusive to Ecuador but extends throughout Latin America.

In the literary realm, the protagonists emerge as dynamic characters who evolve throughout the plot, leaving the reader with a sense of hope, as if their transformation process is far from over. Through their eyes, Iturralde introduces us to a harrowing reality where childhood purity is cruelly threatened by urban dangers and the mafias that corrode the social fabric.

Edna's words are filled with symbolism. The two children, alone and lost, find themselves at a crossroads — a point where the reader can discover that such moments can be transformative. They become opportunities for growth, where new friendships can form amid adversity.

Metaphors, similes, hyperboles, and detailed descriptions are essential elements of Edna's style, painting vivid images in the reader's mind. This is complemented by colloquial dialogues, filled with humor and familiarity, that we've all heard at some point and that make us smile in remembrance.

The use of an omniscient narrator helps clarify the author's intention by showing that behind the simple lives of two children lie deep fears and needs that go beyond the physical. Edna Iturralde employs accessible and emotional language, allowing young readers to connect with the characters and understand the gravity of their situations. Her narrative

<sup>39</sup> Master of Literature and Innovative Teaching.

<sup>40</sup> Source: [bfc5ed\\_c5fc82e1de974a258b3de71525f7c50e.pdf](https://www.bfc5ed_c5fc82e1de974a258b3de71525f7c50e.pdf)

flows seamlessly, weaving moments of tension and tenderness that keep the reader captivated from beginning to end.

Finally, Edna Iturralde weaves together various themes to show how children struggle to survive while preserving their humanity. La Flaca and Jaime become symbols of hope and resilience, and their stories invite young readers to reflect on society's responsibility to protect the most vulnerable. Reading this book is undoubtedly a call to awaken human sensitivity and promote actions of solidarity, generosity, and protection.

National Columnists

La Hora

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15 December 2024

## Tears of Angels - Ecuadorian Children's Literature by Sara Serrano Albuja<sup>41/42</sup>

*"When angels cry, their tears turn into little candy drops, but not the tears of the big angels, rather those of the little ones who cry during the night, which is when the bakeries are at work. Because it's warm inside, with those big ovens they have, the bakers leave the windows open, and the wind carries the tears of the angels, which fall onto the cakes, like the ones we're eating now."*

This tender explanation by "La Flaca" to her friend Jaime, "el Futre," while they savor some gifted pastries, depicts a scene of street children who struggle daily for survival, fighting against hunger and various dangers in the city. ***Tears of Angels*** is the name of this novel by Edna Iturralde, a writer from Quito who has dedicated her work to children's literature. Through her works, she also highlights traits of well-known myths and the cultural identity of Ecuador, emphasizing the geography and national references, as seen in *Verde era mi Selva* ("Green Was My Jungle") or *Llevo tres mil años pintando* ("I've Been Painting for Three Thousand Years"), a text that honors Oswaldo Guayasamín.

***Tears of Angels*** is the story of a heroic, brave, and clever girl who has lost her mother and aunt. Together with other children, she manages to sell candies on street corners controlled by a network of criminals exploiting child labor. La Flaca resolves everything by the end of the novel, like a detective omniscient figure or another type of angel. She saves her friend from the criminals' plans with the help of the police and priests, or "*curitas*," she had met in a shelter for street children.

41 Master's in literature and communication. Writer, cultural manager, communicator, educator, community work and participation, social researcher, advisor.

42 Source: "[Lágrimas de Ángel](#)", [literatura ecuatoriana infantil – Diario La Hora](#)

The migration of parents, driven by poverty and unemployment, causes Jaime, a boy from the countryside, to flee the few family ties he has left. By chance, he meets La Flaca and a group of candy-selling kids who sleep in two old buses in the southern part of the city. This place, described as a former train station turned municipal scrapyard, becomes their home.

Amid these harsh depictions of childhood struggles, Edna Iturralde mythically paints Quito:

*The city was set in a land of volcanoes and grew in the shadow of one of them, a volcano that, according to legend, was formed by two brothers, one older than the other. In the depths of the younger one lived Pichán, the feathered serpent, whose memory had faded from the minds of the people.*

## Las Islas Donde Nace La Luna (The Islands Where the Moon Is Born)

National News Magazine



18 November 2024

### Edna Iturralde, A Passion for Children by Simon Zavala<sup>43/44</sup>

Edna Iturralde, within Ecuadorian and Latin American literature—and I say this without any sort of chauvinism—is one of the most important writers of children’s and young adult literature. She stands out quantitatively for her extraordinary literary output—seventy published works, many of which have gone through multiple reprints—and qualitatively for her writing, rooted in a powerful and versatile imagination that fosters, especially in children, the flight of their own imagination and fantasy, encouraging them to create and explore new worlds, projecting their own authentic fantasies. Intentionally, as she is a skilled writer and an excellent educator—her works provide knowledge about important global issues, such as displacement and migration due to wars, science, history, geography, and nature, among others, in a clear, accessible, and entertaining way. Through her stories, she instills and reaffirms essential values in human behavior, such as friendship, unconditional loyalty, respect for others without discrimination, unwavering honesty, love for nature, and its ongoing preservation for

<sup>43</sup> Simón Zavala, Guayaquil, Ecuador. Poet and essayist. Jurist. Honorary Doctor in Literature from the World Academy of Arts and Letters. He has published 24 individual poetry collections and 6 collaborative works with Ecuadorian and Latin American authors. His work is featured in prominent anthologies published in Ecuador, Latin America, Europe, and Asia, as well as in the World Poetry Phonetic Archive “Voce Regina.” Almost all his poetic work has been translated into English, and many of his poems have been translated into French, Italian, Portuguese, German, Hebrew, Arabic, Romanian, Russian, and Greek. He has participated in numerous international gatherings around the world.

<sup>44</sup> Source: [Edna Iturralde, pasión por los niños - ECUADOR EN VIVO](#)

humanity's survival. These values are presented through masterfully woven plots and relatable characters with whom children and adolescents can immediately identify.

Moreover, her clear, comprehensible, and expansive language helps young readers improve their vocabulary, grammar, and reading comprehension skills, contributing to academic learning. It can even be said that Edna Iturralde's literature not only entertains and delights children and teenagers but also fosters the habit of reading—a habit that is increasingly rare in our country and throughout Latin America. Interestingly, her work also resonates with adult readers, as I have personally experienced.



Reflecting on Edna Iturralde's body of work and recalling some of her books I have read recalls **Heart (Cuore)**, written by Italian author Edmondo De Amicis. I read it at around ten years old. The book narrates the story of Enrico, an Italian schoolboy in Turin, through his school year's daily activities, recorded in a diary format. It highlights values such as friendship, affection, patriotism, solidarity, loyalty, and the responsibility of educators. From recounting and appreciating his experiences, one can discern the Italian and broader European society at the turn of the century, just before the First World War. **Heart** was first published in 1886, and my understanding of its historical context was enhanced by my parents—avid readers—who explained what was happening in Europe at the time.

Another author I cannot help but recall is Selma Lagerlöf, the Swedish writer born in 1858 and Nobel Prize winner in Literature in 1909. Her literary legacy includes fifty works, with her most iconic piece being **The Wonderful Adventures of Nils**, a classic in children's and young adult literature. It tells the tale of an imaginative and audacious boy who, after being shrunk by a sprite, travels across Sweden on the back of a wild goose. Through this journey, he narrates Sweden's most significant geographic features—mountains, plains, lakes, forests, and islands—in an engaging manner. As a remarkable teacher, Lagerlöf found a pedagogical way to teach Swedish geography to children.

Despite the ninety years separating their births, I draw a parallel between Lagerlöf and Iturralde. Both women share creative talent, perseverance in writing, a preference for children's and young adult literature, an educational style in structuring their stories, and a prolific output of published books. In a fair world, Edna Iturralde deserves recognition akin to a Nobel Prize for her contribution to literature.

Edna Iturralde's works are on par with notable authors in the genre, such as Italy's Elisabetta Dami (who writes under the pseudonym Geronimo Stilton), Spain's Laura Gallego García, England's Enid Blyton, Sweden's Maria Gripe (winner of the Christian Andersen Prize in 1974), and England's J.K. Rowling, famed for the \*Harry Potter\* series. The Ecuadorian author stands out for the aesthetic quality of her writing, its narrative vigor, the beauty of her imagery, the multitude of ideas she inspires in young

readers, and her rich, evocative vocabulary. Her stories maintain coherence, intrigue, and an engaging narrative rhythm while provoking emotional responses and reflection on the part of her readers.

One of her most notable works, *The Islands Where the Moon Is Born*, set against the enchanting backdrop of the Galápagos Islands, exemplifies her ability to balance literary quality with an educational and formative purpose. This novel captivates with its evocative plot, in which twin sisters, fleeing Colombia's armed conflict, dream of saving the islands from ecological threats. It highlights themes like familial love, solidarity, friendship, truth, courage, and the defense of nature, among others. Iturralde's writing ensures that children and adolescents remain connected to their youthful innocence, curiosity, and tenderness while encouraging critical thinking and appreciation for life's beauty.

In conclusion, Edna Iturralde's literature exemplifies how stories for children and adolescents can contribute to ethical, aesthetic, and intellectual development, fostering empathy, creativity, and a lifelong love for reading. Her work undoubtedly stands as a cornerstone of Ecuadorian and Latin American literature and deserves recognition on the global stage.

National Columnists

**La Hora**

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28 November 2024

## The Island Where the Moon Is Born<sup>45/46</sup>

Rosalía Arteaga Serrano

Much has been written about our famous archipelago, the Galápagos Islands, which are part of our national territory. Science, literature, and even fantasy have found a fertile space to expand, and undoubtedly many more will venture to express in words the inspiration this marvelous natural laboratory, a heritage site for humanity, provides.

However, one of the most beautiful children's stories about this magical place comes from the prolific Ecuadorian author Edna Iturralde, recipient of numerous literary awards.

The *Islands Where the Moon Is Born: An Adventure in Galápagos* is a book that blends magical elements, a passion for nature, human characters, anthropomorphized animals, landscapes, and themes of uprooting, separation, and the harshness of forced migration. Yet, it also leaves room for hope and reunions.

<sup>45</sup> Writer, editor, critic, first woman president of Ecuador.

<sup>46</sup> Source: <https://www.lahora.com.ec/editorial/columnistas-nacionales/rosalia-arteaga-donde-nace-la-luna/>



Edna describes twin sisters, one of whom is ‘special,’ making her subject to exclusion at times but also endowing her with wonderful qualities that set her apart and make her the protagonist. The sisters transform, fly alongside their pet, and discover that humans are the pets serving the animals. The sisters capture the hearts of readers, young and old alike, daring us to explore the magical world of children’s literature, which is literature for all.

Edna Iturralde sets another milestone with this book through her masterful storytelling and craftsmanship, which have become her trademark. She delivers a work that achieves multiple goals: beyond encouraging reading for fun, it imparts ethical lessons about the human and animal worlds and emphasizes the much-needed respect for nature that we must foster and inspire.

## Conoce a Miguel de Cervantes - Get To Know Miguel Cervantes



1 December 2024

### Walkers of the Time by Maria Eulalia Castillo S.<sup>47/48</sup>

Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra, a foundational literary figure of the Spanish Golden Age, left an indelible mark on world literature with his masterpiece *The Ingenious Gentleman Don Quixote de la Mancha*. Regarded by many as the father of the modern novel, Cervantes not only revolutionized storytelling but also provided a profound and critical insight into Spanish society. Through his writing, he reflected human complexity, irony, and paradox, creating a character that has become a global icon.

Culture, aesthetics, and art revolve around this work, involving different writers eager to deliver this literary heritage across eras. In this vein, Ecuadorian children’s literature author Edna Iturralde embarks on a new adventure featuring characters from the Hispanic world in her work *Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes*, through which she introduces young readers to this world of fantasy. The reading transcends the pages with its intrinsic musicality expressed in every line, alongside a palette of colors: clay tones, burnt reds, earthy oranges, and golden yellows accompany the characters on this dreamy journey.

<sup>47</sup> Degree in Information Sciences and Social Communication and in Graduate Degree in Publications. Experience as a journalist and editor.

<sup>48</sup> Source: [Caminantes del tiempo - El Mercurio](#)

Conversations are heard between Sancho Panza and Don Quixote, presenting his life and work to the reader, along with the protagonists' grievances towards their creator. This sensory vision, combined with battles against giants and windmills, makes the reading friendly and accessible to all audiences. The connection between the characters and the renowned 'Man of La Mancha' creates a familiar ambiance in the narration, where everyone knows each other while simultaneously doubting their own existence. Stories about the birth of this classic, familial settings, Cervantes' mother, children, and more biographical details, narrated through Quixote's voice, often lead shackles to seek freedom:

*Cervantes' mother acted as my lady Dulcinea would: desperate, she offered to pay a ransom, but it was only enough for one son. So, Cervantes chose for his brother to be freed while he remained in prison, bound with chains and shackles.*

All of Cervantes' experiences and stories are told through Don Quixote's voice, including feelings of abandonment and guilt towards his creator. Archaic words like 'palangana' (basin) and 'mendrugos' (crumbs) are presented in an initial glossary, clarifying the meanings left by the words' historical footprints. Sancho Panza is drawn to Quixote's dreams, tales, and internal conflicts, becoming a knight-errant who, in every scene, mirrors Cervantes himself.

Analyzing the aesthetic and literary qualities of *Iturralde's Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes*, one can infer that it anticipates its voice, echoing that of *Don Quixote de la Mancha*. The style reflects Romanticism's legacy—idealization of chivalry and the quest for adventure—and Realism's focus on everyday life, such as encounters with mills, soldiers, or armies that turn out to be peaceful sheep. This dynamic narrative visualizes a witness narrator, immersed in brief first-person encounters that act and participate simultaneously in the tales:

*Well, Cervantes was thrown into jail over some money mix-up. They say he claims he invented my existence there and published my story...*

The colloquial, conversational language impresses and captivates, with dialogues, doubts, questions, and uncertainties sparking interest and intrigue in the reader. It feels as if one is hearing the characters' voices and dialectal tones in real-time:

*That may be, but your Grace forgets they also said Cervantes claims you're completely mad from all the knight-errant adventure books you've read and that I'm a fool for going along with you.*

This non-linear narrative mentions scenes and plots from *Don Quixote*, with a clear, defined, and harmonious intention to captivate young children. It brings Cervantes closer to its audience. Between the lines, the author uses the "book within a book" technique, mentioning other events like the central and debatable mystery of existence, such as, "But

*Miguel de Cervantes had already written other works...” and “Who told him about us?”*

The creative way of presenting the “Prince of Wits” stands out. The brief narratives, coupled with illustrations imbued with the described colors, evoke emotions and sensations in the reader, contextualizing the story and culture with the characters of that era.

As the narrative progresses, Edna Iturralde highlights intertextuality, referencing a “magic carpet,” Merlin the Wizard, or Freston the Magician, enriching her text with additional meanings. This inclusion underscores mutual influence and transformation, adding her voice to a shared literary tradition.

Connections to Andersen’s works are evident, as he often blurs reality and fantasy to convey deep human truths, akin to the story *The Little Mermaid*, where a magical creature faces a foreign and cruel human world, or Quixote, who clings to ideals of nobility despite being an ordinary man. Like the swan in the story *The Ugly Duckling*, characters face life challenges that test their goodness and humanity, searching for identity in a hostile environment. Through their unique styles and symbolic narratives, both capture profound aspects that resonate across generations.

In this children’s narrative, Edna Iturralde contextualizes reality, truth, madness, and the search for meaning. Gastón Harville’s illustrations, accompanying the narration, emphasize imagination, transmitting the story’s fitting atmosphere and preparing the reader for a new experience. They subtly highlight the complexities of certain settings. Concepts like bravery, courage, loyalty, friendship, and perseverance are also explored. Parallel worlds of reality and fantasy open, balancing imagination with real-life events.

Teachers, as initial readers, can use this narrative to delve deeper into themes like the meaning of heroism and anti-heroism, subjective perception, and societal definitions of “normalcy.” These topics can foster group discussions, critical thinking, and image interpretation. The exquisite vocabulary, featuring archaisms, will intrigue young readers, encouraging them to uncover why the second “leg” in the letter “Q” hints at its origins and more.

This work has a significant cultural impact, intertwining art, music, and theater, and connecting with operas, plays, and musical compositions. Edna Iturralde emphasizes how literature builds bridges between cultures and fosters understanding. As she says, “*Literature creates bridges between cultures.*”

Edna Iturralde is a central figure in children’s and young adult literature in Ecuador and Latin America, leaving a profound mark on her readers with her inclusive and realistic stories. Her works stand out for addressing themes of cultural diversity, identity, and social values, fostering respect



and empathy between different communities. Through narratives that authentically reflect the experiences of Indigenous, Afro-Ecuadorian, and mestizo peoples and cultures, Iturralde has educated and sensitized young generations, promoting a pluralistic worldview. Her literary contribution has enriched Ecuadorian and Latin American cultural landscapes, making her an essential voice in global literature.

National Magazine

**Edu@news**  
revista educativa y cultural

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## Meet Miguel de Cervantes by Edna Iturralde - Eduardo Neira Nunes <sup>49/50</sup>

The universality of Cervantes goes hand in hand with that of his immortal character, Don Quixote. Since that magnificent work was published, both the character and the author have been the subject of countless texts written in various genres. However, when it comes to children's literature, little has been produced about Cervantes, making it a wise decision for the writer Edna Iturralde to contribute her work *Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes*.

It is also fitting that she approached the subject from the most appropriate perspective for her purpose: that of Don Quixote himself. Through this lens, Edna introduces young readers directly into the fantastical world of the ingenious knight-errant, placing these words in his mouth as he comments to Sancho about Cervantes: *"He has said that we are not real, that we are products of his imagination."*

This statement piques the young reader's curiosity as it provokes indignation in the loyal squire, who responds by saying that Cervantes must be just another storyteller wandering about and not worth paying attention to. In response, Don Quixote, ever true to his boundless imagination, claims that he knows Cervantes and even resembles him with his gaunt face, aquiline nose, and long mustache.

In this way, Edna captures the reader's attention by drawing a parallel between the character and his creator — a resemblance that could extend beyond mere physical appearance. Sancho, staying true to his loyal and credulous nature, cleverly replies: *"If he knows you, he must know that your grace exists in the flesh..."* and seizes the opportunity to joke: *"... or rather, in bones,"* offering a logical explanation for his master's emaciated appearance: *"That's why they call you 'The Knight of the Sad Countenance.'"*

Don Quixote agrees without offense, showing concern instead that



<sup>49</sup> Educator and editor of the Ecuador on-line magazine VerdEcuador.

<sup>50</sup> Source: [bfc5ed\\_c5fc82e1de974a258b3de71525f7c50e.pdf](https://www.verdecuador.com/verdecuador/wp-content/uploads/2024/12/bfc5ed_c5fc82e1de974a258b3de71525f7c50e.pdf)



Cervantes's claim might have been influenced by the magician Frestón (a fitting figure for Don Quixote's worldview), whom he suspects of manipulating Cervantes's mind to make him believe such nonsense. This, Don Quixote concludes, must be why Cervantes "*came to deny my real existence, yours, and that of my lady Dulcinea del Toboso.*"

What Don Quixote says about Cervantes stirs both antipathy and curiosity in Sancho, prompting him to ask about "*Cerveros Saanbeno.*" As usual, his mispronunciation makes Don Quixote eager to correct his squire immediately: "*His name is not Cerveros Saanbeno but Cervantes Saavedra.*" This brief and enjoyable dialogue between Don Quixote and his squire cleverly blends literary history with imaginative storytelling.

There is always a fitting moment to highlight a virtue, and it arises when Don Quixote emphasizes Cervantes's loyalty toward his fellow escapees by not betraying them, as well as his selflessness in allowing his brother — not himself — to benefit from the ransom money their mother could provide for them.

Don Quixote's relentless curiosity is evident when Sancho asks, "*Who told Cervantes about us?*" and speculates that it was Merlin the magician, leading Don Quixote to an imaginative conclusion: "*How else could I have known him?*"

When Sancho reminds him that Cervantes said he was completely mad, Don Quixote responds with a statement characteristic of his marvelous fantasy: "*As long as people keep reading our story, we will be real, no matter if they think us mad or foolish.*"

This phrase perfectly combines the act of reading with the reality of life — when we read, we live what we read, and if we live what we read, then what we read comes to life and becomes part of our reality.

Finally, Edna Iturralde puts another surprising phrase in Don Quixote's mouth: "*Perhaps Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra invented us, or perhaps we invented him.*" It could be said that Don Quixote and Sancho not only invented Cervantes but also countless dreamers who imagined characters like them, such as Tartarin of Tarascon, to name one.

It is worth noting that Edna Iturralde stays true to the original personalities of both characters, making them interact in their characteristic style. It would be delightful, not surprising, if in a future work, Don Quixote were to tell us about his adventures with Cervantes.

Another point to mention is that Edna Iturralde clearly places special attention on the illustrations in her books, as they perfectly correspond with the texts, granting them remarkable aesthetic richness. I remember seeing my daughters leaf through Edna's books repeatedly, even before they learned to read, while their mother read the stories to them. They would *reread* the tales just by looking at the pictures.



Edna Iturralde's extensive literary output, along with the numerous awards and recognitions she has received, testify to the literary value of her work, which goes beyond children's literature. She is a pioneer in writing books that teach children to love and protect nature. Additionally, her significant contribution to the ethnohistory of her country is evident in works like *Walkers of the Sun*, *Tales from the Yasuni*, and *Green Was My Jungle*, which even became subjects of study in some master's theses.

## When the Guns Fell Silent

National News



### Edna Iturralde Publishes A Book Against War by Maria Veronica Benitez<sup>51/52</sup>

To give a voice to those who have none and to confront those who fear speaking out, writer Edna Iturralde returns with ***When the Guns Fell Silent***, a book that calls for the pursuit of one of humanity's most cherished utopias: peace. Through magical, dreamlike, and real elements, this work transports its readers to places where the echoes of war still resound: Colombia, Central Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East. Its twelve stories, narrated with simple yet nostalgic beauty, depict children clinging to the survival of love and tolerance, even as they face hostile environments. 'Butterflies,' 'A Few Seconds More of Life,' 'When the Guns Fell Silent,' 'The Gold Medal,' 'Tigers Don't Have Wings,' 'Hallelujah,' and 'Pyramids' are just some of the stories that showcase strong traits of identity, sensitivity, and empathy -qualities that define this remarkable work. Although Edna Iturralde is considered a prolific and significant figure in children's and young adult literature, this book demonstrates that the game of war is not "kid's stuff" and that merely talking about it is not enough to cause its repression. For this reason, the book adopts a subtle approach that neither distorts the truth nor excludes adults as part of its audience,"



<sup>51</sup> Educator and editor of the Ecuador on-line magazine VerdEcuador.

<sup>52</sup> Source: Hoy Newspaper, Quito, Ecuador, May 6, 2006, Books section, p. 9 (no website).

## A Light Between Wars by Rosalia Arteaga S.<sup>54</sup>

Amid the frequent armed conflicts that erupt between and within countries, laden with horror and sorrow, it is refreshing and instructive to encounter a book by Edna Iturralde, an outstanding Ecuadorian author of children's and young adult literature. Her book *When the Guns Fell Silent* contains a profound sense of humanity, fraternity, and hope, even as it addresses the dramatic themes of conflicts that cause destruction and death.

Edna Iturralde is one of the most prolific Ecuadorian authors, known to young and adult readers alike for creating literature that goes beyond mere entertainment by also offering valuable historical and emotional insights. In this book, she explores recent human history, to bring us scenes of conflicts from Israel and Palestine—especially relevant today, given the recent outbreak of war there after the incursions of Hamas - Afghanistan, Colombia, Chechnya, Bosnia, Liberia, Sudan, Rwanda, Northern Ireland, Iraq, Sri Lanka, and the Basque Country. These stories remind us of the painful reality that we now are facing in our own Ecuador.

In some of these countries or regions, arms have now fallen silent, In others, conflicts remain alive. In all of them, conflicts have caused death and suffering, as the author poignantly and sensitively recounts in episodes narrated with the mastery of a seasoned storyteller.

Her descriptive beauty and subtle handling of hard topics do not obscure the realities of what happened or continues to happen in some countries. The stories are crafted with deep knowledge, based on the author's study of each conflict's history and geography.

Her characters, skillfully and beautifully portrayed, show that children and adolescents, despite their early age, are not exempt from the horrors of war. Robbed of their childhood, they often are indoctrinated, handed weapons to fight and kill, and used as cannon fodder.

Amid sometimes harsh descriptions, Edna brings a glimmer of light into the darkness, a spark of hope amid the fractures caused by human and national hostilities, by writing with an exquisitely descriptive beauty and profound empathy that evokes positive emotions amidst the brutality.

Reading this book by Edna Iturralde is deeply enriching, and I highly recommend it—especially now—to young audiences in need of nourishing words and beautiful sentiments.

<sup>53</sup> Source: [El Telégrafo - Una luz entre las guerras](#)

<sup>54</sup> Writer, editor, literary critic, educator.



# Complete Bibliography

## Books Published in Spanish<sup>55</sup>

### Desde el Jardín de las Arañas Doradas (From the Garden of the Golden Spiders)

1986, Quito, Publisher Arcoiris, reprints: 3 (1987,1989)

2004, Quito, Publisher Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana  
reprints 3 (2005,2007)

### Junto al cielo-cuentos sobre Quito (Near the Sky-Tales About Quito)

1990, Quito, Publisher Cosmos

2001, Quito, Publisher El Conejo, reprints: 5 (2003, 2008)

2009, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 3 (2011, 2014)

2021, Quito, Publisher Ediciones Salazar

### Aventura en los Llanganates (Adventure in the Llanganates)

1993, Quito, Publisher Casa de la Cultura Ecuatoriana,  
reprints: 1 (2000)

2003, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 13 (2004, 2015)

2018, Quito, Publisher Santillana, reprints: 4 (2019-2024)

### Un día más... y otras historias (One Day More and Other Stories)

1993, Quito, UNICEF Ecuador

1997, Quito, Publisher Imprenta Ecuador, reprints: 1 (1999)

2004, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 25 (2004, 2023)

2010, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints; 2 (2012, 21015)

<sup>55</sup> Click on the following link to see the covers of current editions of the books:  
<https://www.ednaiturralde.com/libros>

**Ser y Compartir - cuentos de valores (tres tomos)**  
**[To Be and To Share -Stories About Values – (Three Volumes)]**

1995, Quito, Ministerio de Educación/UNICEF

1998, Quito, Publisher Libresa/UNICEF, reprints: 20 (1999, 2012)

**Verde fue mi selva**  
**(Green Was My Forest)**

1998, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 28 (1998, 2024)

2002, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 4 (2004, 2015)

2004, Madrid, Publisher Santillana España,  
reprints: 2 (2005, 2007)

2005, México, SEP ((Public Education Secretariat,  
Ministry of Education) reprints 2 (2006,2007)

2006, Bogotá, Publisher Santillana Colombia,  
reprints: 15 (2006, 2018)

2006, México, Publisher Santillana México,  
reprints: 6 (2006, 2019)

2022, Berlin, Germany, Publisher Cornelsen Verlag GmbH

**Y su corazón escapó para convertirse en pájaro**  
**(...and His Heart Scaped to Become a Bird)**

2001, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 18 (2002, 2023)

2003, Florida, Estados Unidos, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 2 (2005, 2007)

2003, México, SEP (Public Education Secretariat,  
Ministry of Education), reprints: 3 (2004, 2012)

2005, México, Publisher Santillana México, reprints: 7 (2005, 2018)

2005, Bogotá, Publisher Santillana Colombia,  
reprints: 8 (2005, 2010)

2011, La Habana, Cuba, Publisher  
Gente Nueva, reprints: 1 (2012, 2013)



### **Torbellino (Whirlwind)**

2001, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 21 (2002, 2020)

### **Torbellino (Big Book Green)**

2001, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 3 (2002, 2004)

### **Torbellino (Big Book Yellow)**

2001, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 3 (2002, 2015)

2005, Bogotá Publisher Santillana Colombia reprints: 3 (2006, 2009)

### **Caminantes del Sol-Inti runañan (Walkers of the Sun)**

2002, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 24 (2003, 2023)

2003, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 4 (2004, 2009)

2007, Lima, Publisher Santillana Perú, reprints: 20 (2008, 2023)

### **El misterio de las bolitas de colores (The Mystery Little Colored Balls)**

2003, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 8 (2006, 2015)

2024, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints:1 (2024)

### **El pirata Barbaloca/El gran secreto (Crazybeard the Pirate/The Great Secret)**

2003, Quito, Publisher Norma, reprints: 8 (2004, 2015)

### **J.R. Machete (J.R. Machete)**

2003, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 9 (2004, 2018)

### **Entre cóndor y león (Between Condor and Leon)**

2004, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 12 (2005, 2015)



**Los grandes se irán y los chiquitos se quedarán**  
**(The Big Ones Will Go, and the Smalls Ones Will Stay)**

2004, Quito, Published by the Province Board of Pichincha.

**Lágrimas de ángeles**  
**(Tears of Angels)**

2005, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 30 (2006, 2024)

2007, Bogotá, Publisher Santillana Colombia,  
reprints: 26 (2008, 2018)

2008, México, Publisher Santillana México, reprints: 9 (2008, 2014)

**Miteé y el cantar de las ballenas**  
**(Miteé and the Song of the Whales)**

2005, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 11 (2006, 2024)

**Cuando callaron las armas**  
**(When the Guns Fell Silent)**

2006, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 18 (2006, 2024)

2007, Bogotá, Publisher Norma Colombia,  
reprints: 40 (2008, 2017) faltan

2012, La Habana, Cuba, Publisher Gente Nueva

2015, Florida, Estados Unidos, Publisher Santillana USA

**Cuando la tierra era nueva**  
**(When the Earth Was New)**

2007, Plan Nacional del Libro y la Lectura “José de la Cuadra”.  
Ministerio de Cultura y Patrimonio. Girándula/IBBY.

**Un país llamado Ecuador**  
**(A Country Called Ecuador)**

2007, Valencia, ISCOD-País Valenciano, Publisher Trabajo Solidario

**Los hijos de la Guacamaya**  
**(The Children of the Macaw)**

2007, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 13 (2008, 2024)

**Las islas donde nace la Luna**  
**(The Islands Where the Moon is Born)**

2007, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 7 (2008, 2015)

2018, Quito, Publisher Santillana, reprints: 6 (2018, 2024)

**El día de ayer**  
**(The Day of Yesterday)**

2007, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 14 (2008, 2024)

**¿De dónde vienen los bebés de las hadas?**  
**(From Where Do Baby Fairies Come?)**

2008, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 6 (2010, 2015)

**Te acompañará el viento**  
**(The Wind Will Accompany You)**

2008, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 9 (2009, 2024)

2018, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints 3 (2019, 2024)

**Olivia y el unicornio azul**  
**(Olivia and the Blue Unicorn)**

2008, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 10 (2009, 2018)

**El cóndor, el héroe y una historia de independencia**  
**(The Condor, the Hero and a Story of Independence)**

2008, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 8 (2010, 2018)

**El caballo, la rosa y una historia de rebelión**  
**(The Horse, the Rose and a Story of Rebellion)**

2008, Quito, Publisher Santillana, reprints: 8 (2010, 2018)

**El perro, el farolero y una historia de libertad**  
**(The Dog, the Lamplighter and a Story of Liberty)**

2008, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 11 (2010, 2019)

**Imágenes del Bicentenario. Historias de libertad,  
rebelión e independencia**  
(Images of the Bicentennial. Histories of Freedom,  
Rebellion, and Independence)

2009, Quito, Publisher Altea Santillana Ecuador

**Johnny Tallarín en: ¿quién grita desde tan lejos?**  
(Johnny Noodles in: Who Shouts from So Far?)

2009, Quito, Publisher Norma, reprints: 5 (2010, 2015)

**La leyenda del Arupo y otros relatos míticos y mágicos**  
(The Legend of the Arupo Tree and other Mythical  
and Magical Stories)

2009, Quito, Publisher Santillana Caja de Letras Ecuador,  
reprints: 1 (2011)

2017, Quito, Publisher Don Bosco reprints 3 (2018,2020)

**Pecas y las cucarachas**  
(Freckles and the Cockroaches)

2009, Quito, Publisher Santillana Caja de Letras, Ecuador,  
reprints: 1 (2011)

2022, Quito, Publisher EDINUM

**Lagarto no come lagarto**  
(Alligators Don't Eat Alligators)

2010 Girándula/IBBY, Quito, Ecuador

**Simón era su nombre**  
(Simon Was His Name)

2010, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 12 (2011, 2023)

2010, Bogotá, Publisher Santillana Colombia,  
reprints: 12 (2013, 2018)

2010, Santiago de Cuba, Publisher Gente Nueva, reprints: 1 (2012)

**Noche de gatos**  
(Cat's Night Out)

2010, Girándula/IBBY/UNICEF

**Cuentos del Yasuní**  
**(Tales of the Yasuni)**

2010, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 16 (2011, 2024)

**Llevo tres mil años pintando**  
**(I've Been Painting for Three Thousand Years)**

2011, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 12 (2011, 2024)

**Martina las estrellas y un cachito de luna**  
**(Martina, the Stars, and a Slit of the Moon)**

2011, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 13 (2012, 2023)

2015, United States, Publisher Santillana USA

**Micky Risotto y el perro chihuahua**  
**(Mickey Risotto and the Chihuahua)**

2011, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 7 (2012, 2018)

**Sueños con sabor a chocolate**  
**(Dreams with a Touch of Chocolate Flavor)**

2011, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 12 (2012, 2023)

**Conoce a Miguel de Cervantes/Get to Now Miguel de Cervantes**  
**(Bilingual Spanish/English Edition)**

2012, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 4 (2013, 2017)

2022, Boston, United States, Publisher Vista Higher Learning  
(eBook)

**Conoce a Simón Bolívar/Get to Know Simon Bolivar**  
**(Bilingual Spanish/English Edition)**

2012, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 4 (2013, 2017)

2022, Boston, United States, Publisher Vista Higher Learning  
(eBook)

**Conoce a Miguel de Cervantes**  
**(Get to Know Miguel de Cervantes)**

2012, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 4 (2013, 2018).

2013, Quito, Publisher Santillana

2018, Boston, United States, Publisher Vista Higher Learning,  
reprints 1 (2019)

**Conoce a Simón Bolívar**  
**(Get to Know Simon Bolivar)**

2012, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA,  
reprints: 3 (2014, 2018)

2022, Boston, United States, Publisher Vista Higher Learning  
(eBook)

**El sueño de Manuela**

2012, Quito, Publisher, Mantra Editores

2022, Quito, Publisher EDINUM

**María Manglar**  
**(Mary Mangrove)**

2012, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprints: 3 (2013, 2015)

2018, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 2 (2019, 2022)

**Las muchachas de la lluvia**  
**(The Girls of the Rain)**

2012, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 15 (2013, 2024)

**Los pájaros no tienen fronteras-leyendas y mitos de Latinoamérica**  
**(Birds Have No Borders-Myths and Legends from Latinamerica)**

2012, Bogotá, Publisher Santillana Colombia,  
reprints: 20 (2013, 2020).

2013, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 10 (2014, 2024)

2013, México, Publisher Santillana, reprints: 13 (2014, 2024)

2014, United States, Publisher Santillana reprints 2 (2015, 2016)

2015, México SEP (Public Education Secretariat, Ministry  
of Educations), reprints: no information (2017)



**Los hermanos que cosechaban cuentos de hadas  
(The Brothers that Harvested Fairy Tales)**

2013, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 5 (2014, 2022).

2016, México, Publisher Santillana México, reprints: 3 (2017, 2019)

2016, Guatemala, Publisher Santillana Guatemala, reprint: 1 (2018)

2017, Florida, United States, Publisher Santillana USA

**Drakko Planet (Saga 6 books) Books 1 and 2:  
Los doce de fuego / Jaune en Kru-urk  
(The Twelfe of Fire/Jaune in Kru-urk)**

2014, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador

2015, Bogotá, Publisher Penguin Random House Colombia,  
reprint: 1 (2019)

**Books 3 and 4: Rav y los elfos de las praderas / Kohaku y los  
nómadas del desierto de Kiir  
(Rav and the Elves of the Grasslands/Kohaku and the  
Nomads of the Desert of Kiir)**

2014, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador.

2015, Bogotá, Publisher Penguin Random House Colombia,  
reprint: 1 (2019)

**Books 5 and 6: Yantar y los duendes / Gimber y los Atlantis  
(Yantar and the Goblins/Gimber and the Atlantis)**

2014, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador.

2015, Bogotá, Publisher Penguin Random House Colombia,  
reprint: 1 (2019)

**Books 7 and 8: Gless y Glessum en el reino de los  
enanos / Karabe con los gigantes  
(Gless and Glessum in the Kingdom of the  
Dwarfs/Karabe with the Giants)**

2014, Bogotá, Publisher Penguin Random House Colombia,  
reprint: 1 (2019)

**Books 9 and 10: Anbar con las hadas /Ambru con el rey troll  
(Anbar and the Fairies/Ambru and the King of the Troll)**

2014, Bogotá, Publisher Penguin Random House Colombia,  
reprint: 1 (2109)

**Books 11 and 12: Elektrun con los zuberanos / La batalla final  
(Elektrum with the Zuberans/The Last Battle)**

2014, Bogotá, Publisher Penguin Random House Colombia,  
reprint: 1 (2019)

**La casa que el bosque se tragó  
(The House that the Forest Swallowed)**

2014, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, reprint: 1 (2014, 2015)

2018, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador reprints 4 (2018,2024)

**¡Viva el fútbol!  
(Hooray for Soccer!)**

2014, Quito, Publisher Santillana, reprints 4 (2015,2018)

**Y surgió en el vuelo de las mariposas  
(And it Emerged from the Flight of the  
Butterflies-Legends of Love)**

2014, Bogotá, Publisher SM Colombia 2 reprints (2014, 2105)

**Conoce a Juana Inés de la Cruz  
(Get to Know Juana Ines de la Cruz)**

2018, Boston, United States, Publisher Vista Higher Learning,  
reprints: 2 (2019, 2022)

**El domador de cerdos  
(The Pigs Tamer)**

2017, México, Publisher Santillana México, reprints 5 (2017, 2019)

**El pequeño Bun  
(The Little Bun)**

2018, Quito, Plan Nacional del Libro y la Lectura “José de la Cuadra”  
Ministerio de Cultura y Patrimonio/Girándula-IBBY-OEI  
(National Reading Plan “José de la Cuadra”, Ministry  
of Culture and Heritage)

**El pirata Barbaloca**  
**(Crazybeard the Pirate)**

2018, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 4 (2019-2023)

**El puente de los coyotes**  
**(The Bridge of the Coyotes)**

2019, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 3 (2019-2024)

2019, Guatemala, Publisher Santillana Guatemala  
reprints 3 (2020,2021)

**El gran secreto**  
**(The Great Secret)**

2021, Quito, Ecuador Publisher Salazar Editores

**Dos súper héroes volcánico**  
**(Two Volcanic Superheroes)**

2019, Quito, Publisher SM Ecuador

**El hermano del lobo**  
**(The Wolf's Brother)**

2022, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, reprints: 4 (2022-2024)

**Bajo la luz de la luna**  
**(Under the Moonlight)**

2023, Douala, Cameroon Africa: Published by Global Pearls

**Y llegó tocando el tambor**  
**(And He Came Beating the Drum)**

2022, Quito, Girándula-IBBY-OEI Ecuador

**Conoce a Zelia Nuttall**  
**(Get to Know Zelia Nuttall)**

2023, Boston, United States, Publisher Vista Higher Learning

**El abuelo que tejía historias**  
**(The Grandfather Who Wove Stories)**

2024, Zaragoza Spain, Publisher Edelvives.

## Anthologies

### La carrera (The Race)

1994, Quito, publisher Norma Ecuador, published in the school text *Sueños y palabras* (Dreams and Words)

### Guerra (War)

1995, Quito, UNICEF/Ministry of Education and Culture, anthology, *¿Quieres que te cuente otra vez?* (¿Do You Want Me to Tell it Again?)

### *El delfín rosado* (The Pink Dolphin)

1996, Quito, Publisher Santillana Ecuador, anthology, *Cuentos de mi país* (Stories From my Country)

### *Buscando a un Niño Jesús* (Looking for a Baby Jesus)

1996, Quito, UDELI (Union of Writers of Children's Literature), anthology, *Of Nativity Scenes, Poems and Pirouettes*

### *Al otro lado del arcoíris* (On the Other Side of the Rainbow)

1998 Ecuador/Peru University of the South, anthology, *Stories for Young People.*

### *Cosas de hombres* (Boy's Things)

2002, Quito, Publisher Norma Ecuador, school text *Dreams and Words.*

### *Hadas* (Fairies)

2004, Quito, Tintají Magazine.

***Los sapísimos detectives***  
**(The Frogs Detectives)**

2004/2008, Quito, Elé Magazine

***El día que las montañas desaparecieron***  
**(The Day the Mountains Disappeared)**

2006, Quito, Ecological Magazine Fidal Foundation.

***Lagarto no come a lagarto***  
**(Alligator Don't Eat Alligators)**

2007, Quito, UNICEF, anthology, **Stories to Dream of a Country.**

***La reina de los piratas***  
**(The Queen of the Pirates)**

2007, Bogotá, UNICEF/WFP (World Food Program), anthology,  
***La palabra lo logra: escritores y la infancia*** (Words Can  
Do It: Writers and Childhood)

***Cuando la Tierra era nuevecita***  
**(When the Earth was Very New)**

2007, Quito, UNICEF/Girándula/IBBY Ecuador published  
in Calendar of Values.

***Historia de la sonrisa***  
**(History of the Smile)**

2008, Quito: Girándula/IBBY, published in the Collection of stories  
for the Reading Marathon in Pediatric Hospitals.

***Butterflies***

2009, Quito, Mantra Editores, anthology ***Tales Along All the  
Paths of the Wind***

***Mariposas (Butterflies)***

2009, Uruguay, anthology **The Story and the Story Takers**, AULI  
(Uruguayan Association of Children's and Youth Literature)



**Un robot es un robot  
(A Robot is a Robot)**

2010, United States, Iguana Magazine.

**Los días de la Navidad  
(The Days of Christmas)**

2010, Mexico, Mundo Alijme Magazine

**Los días de la Navidad  
(The Days of Christmas)**

2010-2011, Quito, Elé Magazine.

**La medalla de oro  
(The Gold Medal)**

2011, Quito, anthology Complicit Letters, Girándula/IBBY Ecuador.

**El delfín rosado  
(The Pink Dolphin)**

2011, United States, Iguana Children's Magazine.

**Mariposas  
(Butterflies)**

2011, Quito, Quito-Lee Editions, Municipality of Quito,  
anthology *Infanatasia*

**Los días de la Navidad  
(The Days of Christmas)**

2011, Quito, Editorial Santillana Ecuador, anthology  
*Waiting for Christmas Eve*

**La estrellita que se cayó del Cielo  
(The Little Star That Fell From the Sky)**

2011, Madrid, Grupo Editorial, SL Baelín Lecturas.

**La mami más bonita del mundo  
(The Most Beautiful Mommy in the World)**

2012, Quito, Editorial Santillana Ecuador, published in  
the book *I Love My Mom*

**La barca de la Luna  
(The Boat of the Moon)**

2012, Cuba, anthology, **The Voices of Genius**

**Felicidad  
(Happiness)**

2012, Colombia Magazine 20 years of the Literary Game of Medellin.

**Un segundo más de vida  
(One More Second of Life)**

2015, Chile, Critical Anthology of South American  
Children's Stories Magazines.

**Dragones para la cena  
(Dragons for dinner)**

2016, Quito, Elè Magazine, Zonacuario

**El rio  
(The River)**

2018, United States, Pearson Educational Testing Service.

**Las cuatro conchas  
(The Four Shells)**

2019, United States, Houghton Muffin Harcourt  
Publishing Company.

**Los jardineros de la Luna  
(The Gardeners of the Moon)**

2024, Quito, Girándula/IBBY Ecuador, anthology,  
Cuentos de los secretos del polen y las flores  
(Stories of the Secrets of Pollen and Flowers)

## **Other Publications**

**Panorama Magazine El Comercio Newspaper**

1981, Quito. Ecuadorian stories (every Thursday)

1981-04-14, Quito, No. 40. **Trapito el perrito callejero**  
(Trapito the Stray Dog)

1981-03-30, Quito, No. 39. **La cajita de música (The Music Box)**

1981-03-16, Quito, No. 38. **Al otro lado del Arcoíris  
(The Other Side of the Rainbow)**

1981-03-02, Quito, No. 37. **Un cusumbo muy especial  
(A Very Special Coati)**

1981-03-12, Quito No. 35. **La fiesta de los enanitos (The Dwarfs' Party)**

1981-03-05, Quito, No. 34. **El niño y el general  
(The Boy and the General)**

1981-02-05, Quito, No. 32. **El espantapájaros bondadoso  
(The Kind Scarecrow)**

1981-01-08, Quito, No. 29. **Panchita la hipopótama balletista  
(Panchita the ballet-dancing hippo)**

### **La Cometa Ecological Magazine**

1982 to 1993, Founder, Director, and Editor, Quito, published weekly by Hoy Newspaper (572 Saturday editions) wrote text for the following serial comics with illustrations by Pablo Ortega

La patrulla del páramo (The Moor Patrol)

Los sapísimos detectives (The Frogs Detectives)

Los eco chicos (The Eco Kids)

¡Oh, la historia tralala...! (¡Oh, History, Tralala...!)





