

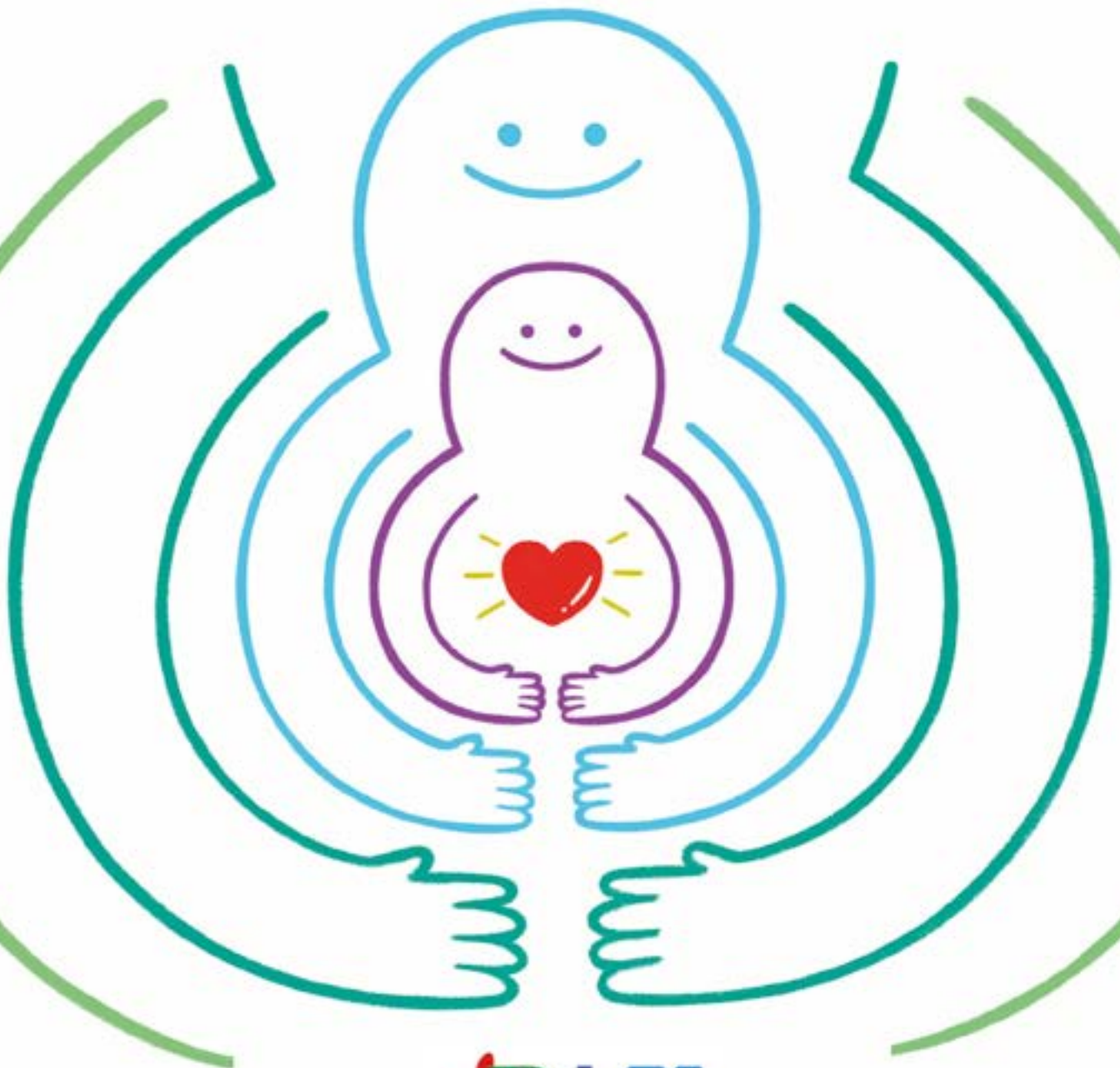
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June

VOCES & TINTAS

In English

*Magazine of Latin America and the Caribbean
International Board on Books for Young People.*

SOLIDARITY



*i*BbY
LATINOAMÉRICA
Y EL CARIBE

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VOCES & TINTAS

VOCES & TINTAS. *In English* magazine is an initiative of the sixteen countries that make up IBBY Latin America and the Caribbean.

Voces & Tintas seeks to be a [dissemination](#) channel from and for the region, based on our mission to promote international understanding of [children's and youth literature](#).

The key foundations that guide the development of our content are the construction and representation of childhood, adolescence and youth; the exercise of [mediation](#) practices; the transformation and projection of the [book ecosystem](#), reading and the cultural industry; as well as highlighting the work of organizations that support and promote literature for children in the region.

We believe in [exchange spaces](#) that are enriched by the voices of all the countries in our region and by the oral, artistic, graphic, audiovisual, academic and literary [expressions](#) that compose them.

Thanks to our bilingual version and the articulation of all these expressions, we hope to reach different countries, instances and ways of understanding our cultural ecosystem.

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DEDICATION

Solidarity: a word that invites us to look at the other

Many times, we ask ourselves what solidarity really means. Is it helping someone in a difficult moment just out of moral commitment? Is it a deeply human quality that drives us to care for, accompany and lend a hand when someone needs it?

Solidarity also implies recognizing oneself in the other. Identifying their pain, understanding their circumstances and, from there, building bonds that not only serve to resolve a specific situation, but also strengthen the resilience that all people carry within.

In this note, we do not intend to address the topic from philosophical, sociological or psychological perspectives. Our intention is another: to open a space for reflection, brief but necessary, that invites us to think about what it means for us to be supportive.

Therefore, we have invited specialists in children's and youth literature to share their views, stories and experiences. Because we believe that literature, from an early age, can be a powerful bridge to cultivate this essential value: solidarity.

ILLUSTRATION: Sarah Amaro



Main article **FRESH INK**

WHEN CHILDREN'S AND YOUTH LITERATURE BECOMES SOLIDARY AND FIGHTING

By **Lola Rubio**



Diploma in Childhood and Youth Narratives, Flacso (2018). Senior Specialist in Children's and Youth Literature, graduated from CePA-GCBA Postgraduate Program (2010). Editor graduated from FFyL-UBA (2003). Promoter of Children's and Youth Literature at Banco del Libro, Venezuela (2007). National Professor of Painting, graduated from the Prilidiano Pueyrredón National School of Fine Arts (1989).

She was president of ALIJA (Association of Children's and Youth Literature of IBBY Argentina) from 2019 to 2021, and has belonged to this national section of IBBY since 2008.

She was a jury member for the Hans Christian Andersen International Award (IBBY) in 2016 and 2018, and for the Barco de Vapor-SM Argentina Award in 2019. She is the editor of works for children and youth at Fondo de Cultura Económica of Argentina. She has worked as a school librarian for 25 years; she was a university professor in Publishing (UBA).

She designed the cultural strategy of the Arnaldo Orfila Reynal Cultural Center, of the Fondo Bookstore, in Buenos Aires. She designed and directed the Huellas collection, in Ríos de Tinta, Tinta Fresca.

Lola tells us: “One day she happened to work in a library, by chance and desperation, and understood that she should have always been there. And the inevitable question arose: “Are these children’s books?”. She still thinks about that question and her answers vary constantly. Studying Publishing was an epiphany. She is very happy among books. She tried a lot of other things: painting, cello, running, tango, but in those she remains eternally disoriented. When she reads and things sound wrong to her, she often wonders what the original was like before its translation and curses her difficulty with languages. She is among books all day, as a librarian, as an editor and as a mediator. And she enjoys it very much.

Breaking down ideas, and trying to define well what we understand by solidarity as a thematic category in children’s and youth literature (CYL), we set out to search for those stories in which two or more people can give and, above all, give themselves, that is, put their body at stake, risking themselves for a greater good that may not directly benefit them. Quite a pretension, isn’t it? “All for one as in Fuenteovejuna”, by Félix Lope de Vega¹, a colleague from ALIJA recalled. In our life in society we do not always see behaviors of this style, or we see them occasionally, in the face of a catastrophe, as epiphanies of the best of human nature. And, nevertheless, we expect CYL to be endowed with quality works that express and highlight this trait.

We will leave in suspense, for a while, the debate about “values” as a category of literature and the moralizing pretensions we have about production destined for young people (readers in citizen formation?): unlike “plain” literature destined for adults (readers of full morality?).

¹The play *Fuenteovejuna* was written by Félix Lope de Vega, approximately between 1616 and 1619.



Surely the most adverse circumstances are those that allow this selfless and total solidarity to come into play.

We see it in ***Fuera de mi mundo*** by Lydia M. Carreras², two teenagers from very distant social classes, one rich and the other a “cartonera”³, are put to the test during a historic storm that devastates the city; it is solidarity that saves them and unites them forever despite belonging to very different worlds. ***El partido de la muerte*** by Pepe Gálvez and Guillem Escriche⁴, a graphic novel, suggests a bloody historical event: during World War II, German forces occupied Ukraine. The local team, FC Start, challenges the notion of “racial superiority” by winning matches against the occupation forces. These Ukrainian footballers will resist the oppressors and give their lives for this challenge. They know that there is a high risk in winning these matches, that they will pay dearly for the humiliation felt by the German army. This graphic novel is notably more faithful to the facts, and more exciting, than the two or three film versions of the same episode. There is solidarity in ***Rosa Blanca*** by Roberto Innocenti⁵, who does not quite understand what is happening far away, in that field behind the fence, but she senses that those children are hungry and does not hesitate to help them secretly.

Is there any in ***¡Sálvate Elías!*** by Elisabeth Bami and Bernard Jeune⁶, where those who help him save himself put themselves at risk, however that “help” comes protected by an envelope with money... World War II and the Holocaust have produced many great works, including ***Number the Stars*** by Lois Lowry⁷: in this novel we see the courage of many Danes to save their Jewish compatriots from Nazi extermination, pulling their lives at risk.

² *Fuera de mi mundo*, Lydia M. Carreras. Buenos Aires: Norma, 2011. Torre de Papel Collection.

³ “Pepenadores,” “chichafores,” “buzos,” “cirujas” are various terms for those who collect garbage and materials from the street for recycling.

⁴ *El partido de la muerte*, Pepe Gálvez and Guillem Escriche, Mexico: FCE, 2024. Popular Graphic Novel Collection.

⁵ *Rosa Blanca*, Roberto Innocenti. Salamanca: Lóguez, 2002.

⁶ *¡Sálvate Elías!*, Elisabeth Bami and Bernard Jeunet. Seville: Kalandraka, 2006..

⁷ *Number the Stars*, Lois Lowry. Madrid: Espasa Calpe, 1991.

For the philosopher Emmanuel Lévinas, solidarity is a form of responsibility that manifests itself in free and selfless giving towards the other. This responsibility does not expect reciprocity. Lévinas considered that ethics is the first philosophy and that the moral nature of human beings is more fundamental than the rational. For him, the relationship with the other is an ethical experience that gives rise to humans. In line with this thought, ***Todos los soles mienten*** by Esteban Valentino⁸, a dystopian and heartbreaking novel, tells the story of a group of young people who - aware that the sun is cooling, the Earth contracting and that the end of life is inevitable and near - seek a solution for the survival of humanity. They designate four of them to save themselves in the Sanctuary, even at the cost of the death of the others: they know that those who do not manage to enter the sanctuary will die. There is a renunciation of life itself, which will allow the survival of other companions. As young people, they have realized that youth is often at a disadvantage compared to adults. Their voices, their life, are not considered despite what adults declare. The reality is that young people understand that only they can save themselves and that no adult will do anything to keep them alive.

⁸ *Todos los soles mienten*, Esteban Valentino. Buenos Aires: Loqueleo, 2018. Red Series.



Thinking about books that deal with solidarity leads us back to debating whether LIJ is obliged to do things that society does not always do, to ask ourselves if it comes to fulfilling an educational function, not only for young people obviously, but also for adults who read with young people.

Can we ask young people to read about feelings or actions that are not present (or not always present) in our society? Do we really adhere to the idea that reading about a certain value will change the values of those who read?

On the other hand, going back to the definition of the concept of solidarity, is an (isolated) supportive character the same as a collective behavior—a group, a people—that shows solidarity? We are inclined to think about collective behaviors, about a renunciation that will generate a greater impact, even a delayed one, for a group of beings.

A work that stands out for recounting the intensity of the struggle that a group of people is capable of to remain genuine, dignified, and free at the cost of consensus, sacrifices, and renunciations, to bring its members to a state of greater well-being for all is **La saga de los confines** by Liliana Bodoc⁹. We asked the author Paula Bombara, a friend and great admirer of the work of the Argentine writer who died in 2018, why “**La saga**” can be thought of as a great example within global youth literature of solidary construction, and she told us:

“In this trilogy, solidarity is part of the constitution of each character; we read it in old Kush, a wise woman who is wise because she is old, when she kneads the bread and says that it will only be ready when it is shared among all; we see it in the wizards, like Kupuka, when he strives for his visions to alert and help the armies; we see it in those who study, like Nakín de los Búhos, who spends his life memorizing codices so that future generations do not lose their memory”.

⁹ *La Saga de los Confines*, vol. 1 *Los días del venado*, vol. 2. *Los días de la sombra*, vol. 74.

Considering that it is an epic fantasy and, therefore, it highlights heroic protagonists, individuals from each region, who often make their decisions alone, it is pertinent to highlight the presence of love for their people in the thoughts that lead to decision-making. Each protagonist advances in their adventure because they know they are supported by the love of and for their people, each hero feels on their shoulders the hope that their people have placed in them and that elevates them to think of others before themselves, both to fight against the common enemy and to reach consensus with the rest of the allied peoples. In the trilogy, the value of discussions to achieve these collective advancement decisions is very well developed, highlighting that when there is honesty, understanding between people and solidary action will appear. It is clear to me that Liliana links collective solidarity with the conquest of sovereignty and the happiness of people, and that movement seems very interesting to me as an open question from the literary text to its readers: do we become happier when we make decisions in tune and in sync with others? **La Saga de los Confines** clearly answers yes, when it states that “Hate retreats when men sing”¹⁰.

¹⁰ Liliana Bodoc, closing phrase of “*Los días del fuego*,” Grupo Editorial Norma, 2004.



The reading of ***En zapatillas***, by Mónica Jurjevic¹¹, is very moving, a novel that shows a unique and painful moment for the generation of young Argentines who are now between 35 and 45 years old.

Although the novel focuses on the life of Martín, his girlfriend Mariana who dies, and the teacher

Helena who will help him put the tragedy

into words, what is clear is that it is an event that marks an entire generation. On the night of December 30, 2024, hundreds of young people gathered to listen to a rising rock band, Callejeros, at República Cromañón. A closed, unprepared venue, which would become the sarcophagus of 194 young people when a flare exploded, and the entire place caught fire. The journalistic chronicle, the multiple trials, and the investigations showed how many young people exposed themselves again and again to rescue dozens of others who were trapped, unconscious, or injured in the darkness, smoke, and flames. The story of the fateful night of Cromañón is one of total solidarity. Several of these spontaneous rescuers later died or were severely injured. Again, as in the initiatory readings in which young people must walk the hero's path to fulfill pledges, overcome trials, young people are alone. Adults have left them to their fate. That is what the investigation showed: neither public power nor regulations could protect these young people, who gave their lives for a night of joy and celebration.

¹¹ Mónica Jurjevic, "En zapatillas". Buenos Aires: SM, 2021. (Gran Angular Award).

Rereading María Teresa Andruetto's work ***Hacia una literatura sin adjetivos***¹², we find her question: "Does literature have any utility, any functionality in the formation of a person?" (2009; 33 ff.), she argues that it is to build us. It is that product of culture that we resort to getting to know ourselves, to find echoes that do not appear elsewhere, to ask ourselves questions, to inhabit other times and spaces. And she warns (and we warn and adhere) that children's and youth literature is often assimilated to the functional and utilitarian, leaving aside the aesthetic (which is thus reserved for "plain" literature) and that truly fertile ground of uncertainty, questioning, and multi-meaning. A beautiful example of a story of solidarity and empathy, but one that is woven among unclear and inconclusive situations, is ***Auggie Wren's Christmas Story*** by Paul Auster¹³. It is the story of a petty thief, a pickpocket, who forgets a wallet in a store. The person who attends him, just on Christmas Eve, decides to go to the address listed and deliver the wallet. When he arrives, he is attended by a blind old woman who mistakes him for her grandson. The person who returns the wallet maintains the fiction of being the grandson, accompanies the old woman alone for hours, does her shopping, shares a succulent Christmas meal with her and, when he goes to the bathroom, "unintentionally" steals a camera that the real thief grandson has surely hidden there. It is a beautiful and moving story of solidarity at Christmas where one of the central protagonists steals and lies... and is supportive.

¹² María Teresa Andruetto, *Hacia una literatura sin adjetivos*, Córdoba: Comunicarte, 2009. La Ventana Indiscreta.

¹³ Paul Auster, illustrations by Isol. *El cuento de Navidad de Auggie Wren*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana 2003.

Curiously, there is work that was not intended to educate, train, or cultivate young people and that has had an enormous impact on readers of all ages, the media, and sales, causing an unusual solidary reaction. The government of the Province of Buenos Aires bought and distributed Dolores Reyes' book **Cometierra**¹⁴ for secondary schools, for the "Identidades Bonaerenses" program. Very reactionary groups were offended by a fragment in which the first sexual relationship between two young people is recounted and the work was labeled pornographic. Nothing could be further from the content of this novel, which is indeed full of pain, sadness, and violence towards women. The "cometierra" is a young clairvoyant who can help clarify crimes, of course at the cost of her own anguish. This is a work that is not in the literary system for young people, but since its release it captivated the attention of thousands of secondary school students and readers, and their teachers who brought this story set in a marginalized and marginal area of the Buenos Aires Courban to the classrooms and gave them a powerful and liberating source of conversation. After the persecution that was unleashed against the author and her book in the media, dozens of authors, editors and cultural agents gathered to do a collective reading at the Picadero theater in Buenos Aires¹⁵.

How do we escape from Ray Bradbury's **Fahrenheit 451**¹⁶ to let ourselves be caught by "**Cometierra**"? Literature became CYL (Children's and Youth Literature) by spontaneous adoption of readers (like so many other great works that were not written specifically for young people), and it became supportive and a celebration against silence and censorship.

¹⁴ Dolores Reyes, *Cometierra*. Buenos Aires: Sigilo, 2019.

¹⁵ Paul Auster, illustrations by Isol. *El cuento de Navidad de Auggie Wren*. Buenos Aires: Sudamericana 2003. Daniel Gigena. "Cometierra took the stage in the voice of more than one hundred writers." Buenos Aires: La Nación, November 23 109 2024. Online <https://www.lanacion.com.ar/cultura/cometierra-subio-a-esce-na-en-la-voz-de-mas-de-cien-escriitores-nid23112024/>

¹⁶ Ray Bradbury. "Fahrenheit 451." Buenos Aires: Debolsillo, 2005.



MARÍA GIRÓN 2022



FROM VOICE TO VOICE

Reviews

ARGENTINA

Mientras duermen las piedras.

María Cristina Ramos Buenos Aires, 2009. Edelvives.

“Lucía, Rafa and Lito live with their mother on the banks of the river that has silent, songless stones. And there, on those banks, life unfolds, with its sorrows and joys, with laughter and pain, with injustices, but also with dreams and illusions that will allow them to think that something better has to happen to them. And it will,” thus the invitation from the back cover of the book that is part of the Alandar collection.

Lucía is the one who tells the story: the voice of the middle sister, between Rafa and Lito. And she tells us, with her childlike observation, the situations that the family and the neighborhood go through amidst many adversities: poverty, lack of work and opportunities.

As the sole economic and emotional support for the three children, their mother is accompanied by the attentive gaze of two other women: the grandmother and the teacher. The grandmother often provides food, but also affection, stories, and care. The teacher is the one who teaches them to organize themselves to be able to move forward and overcome obstacles.

The protagonist tells us how adults and children, with the help of the teacher, meet to look for Rafa, who has gotten lost in the river during the night. But also, from then on, they decide to face and seek a solution “together” to the neighborhood’s problems amidst the crisis: power outages, the community garden project.

The stones and the river are silent witnesses to what each of these characters think, feel, and do.

Lucía’s voice, a beautiful poetic voice, created by María Cristina Ramos, describes, tells, and shows us and young readers the power of resilience and how unity, solidarity, and support make it easier to overcome any problem or obstacle. **Diana Kovach. IBBY ALIJA.**

CUBA

Las lunas de Gaza

Leidy González Amador. Cuba.

The encounter between two different worlds and cultures. Sarín and Gabriel meet in Gaza, amidst the fury of a genocidal war that never ends, the struggle between Israelis and Palestinians that ends the lives of men, women, and children. Amidst horror and death, friendship, complicity, and love emerge. There is beauty even in the nocturnal landscape of war when an Argentine and a Palestinian conceive the miracle of love. With skill and emotion, Leidy González Amador (Santa Clara, 1988) takes us to a story of solidarity and high feelings that we will never forget. The author has published: *Con la cabeza en las nubes*; *Hoy es martes*; *Brizna*; *El perro que le tenía miedo a la noche*; *El acuario de Onfard*; *A quién le importa un perro pinto?*, and *Todas las ovejas van al cielo*. In 2023, she won the El Barco de Vapor International Award for *Faruk y la cabra*.



Mariposas en el estómago

Anthology by Eldys Baratute and Enrique Pérez Díaz.
Cuba.

The fear of the child who feels uncomfortable in the tight suit of a body that does not belong to him, the one who sees his relative who then transforms into a princess, the one who is supposed to be attracted to his best friend, the girl who challenges dolls and wants to play with boys, the teenager whose body gives him signals that, like a magnet, drag him to his partner, the child whose elders behave dysfunctionally and not like the family they pretend to be. All these and more arguments make up the selection "Mariposas en el estómago," a title inspired by one of its most amazing stories, which features narratives that bring us closer and sympathize with so many lonely children who do not understand the world.

Enrique Pérez Díaz.



El bebé más lindo del mundo

Niurki Pérez. Cuba.

A child is found in a dumpster by a loving Fantasma who lives in a dilapidated house inhabited by a series of ghosts, each with a past worthy of the best Gothic novel. With this incredible plot, Niurki Pérez (Sibanicú, 1964) immerses us in a hallucinatory and absurd world, which with great tenderness makes us reflect on childhood as an "ideal stage of existence" and warns us about the real problems of coexistence in a real world that is far from perfect, with a fun and wifly story that, in her own words, will move us to "petrification"... In *El bebé más lindo del mundo*, Niurki Pérez, with the skill that characterizes her in each literary delivery, returns her gaze to early childhood to give us a tender story of a baby who must get used to surviving among a rather dysfunctional family of ghosts. The book tacitly speaks to us of that intangible solidarity that can arise between very different beings who come to understand and love each other.

Enrique Pérez Díaz.



Escuelita de los horrores

Enrique Pérez Díaz. Cuba

“Parody, intertextuality, ironic quotes from horror literature and cinema, in short, the great game on the edge of the Third Millennium and throughout a fun neo-Gothic adventure is what the other Enrique, alias Rigoberto Fidelio Apolonio Pancrecio Bicicleto Monopatínico del Transvaal, experiences among the frightful teachers and no less terrifying students of the Escuelita de los Horrores, in Rocas Altas. The result? Laughter, riddles, reflection, the intrigue of an original novelistic world and, of course, all the “horrors” that the reader desires to get goosebumps from head to toe.” This is what Ena Lucía Portela

would write when, still hallucinating about this text, she wrote the back cover note for the first (Cuban) edition of this book, which in 2007 (and again in 2015) won the “Puertas de Espejo” Prize from the José Martí National Library, for being the most demanded fiction work

that year in Cuban libraries. Narrator, critic, journalist, editor and researcher, Enrique Pérez Díaz once again turns his gaze to childhood problems, especially coercion and abandonment, in a delirious, joyful story, in which childhood is marvelously vindicated, that childhood that never lets itself be domesticated and is capable of being supportive with itself to overcome the worst enemies.

Nora Lía Sormani



GUATEMALA

La gallina y el monstruo

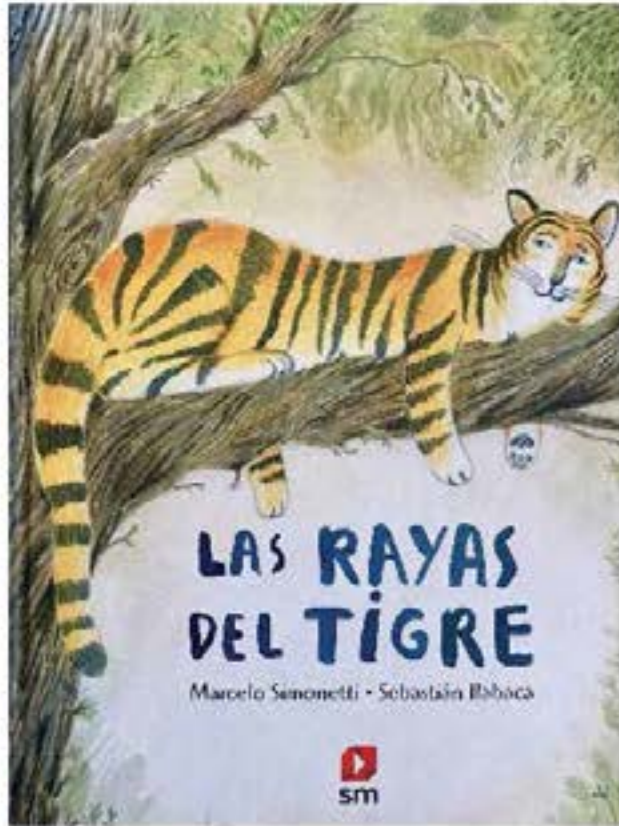
Triunfo Arciniegas. Illustrator: Mariana Ruíz Johnson.

How can a children's book reflect the multiple facets of solidarity? In 2022, Editorial Cataplum from Colombia launched the second edition of *La gallina y el monstruo*, a work by Triunfo Arciniegas with illustrations by Mariana Ruiz Johnson. This charming book, aimed at the youngest readers, uses characters familiar to the child's universe to address the value of solidarity in a simple but profound way. The story transports us to the world of Mama Hen and her six chicks, endearing characters for early childhood. Although the plot presents moments of tension, such as the fear of a monster living in the nearby forest, the illustrations overflow with color and joy. When Mama Hen confronts the supposed danger, she discovers that the “monster” is a lost chick that needs care. With a gesture of solidarity, she and her chicks adopt him as part of the family, demonstrating that empathy and mutual support can transform any situation.

CHILE

Las rayas del tigre

Marcelo Simonefli and Sebastián Ilabaca, 2018.



This book tells the story of a curious noble tiger who decides to walk and arrives at an unknown jungle. There, he meets another species of animals, humans, with whom he shares and is moved. The experiences he observes in that place lead him to feel compassion that puts the protagonist's empathy into action, giving the only thing he must give, as a sign of solidarity. Thus, he begins to leave a deep mark on others with his stripes, the same ones that make him unique and that allow us to know his story.

Pequeño Verde

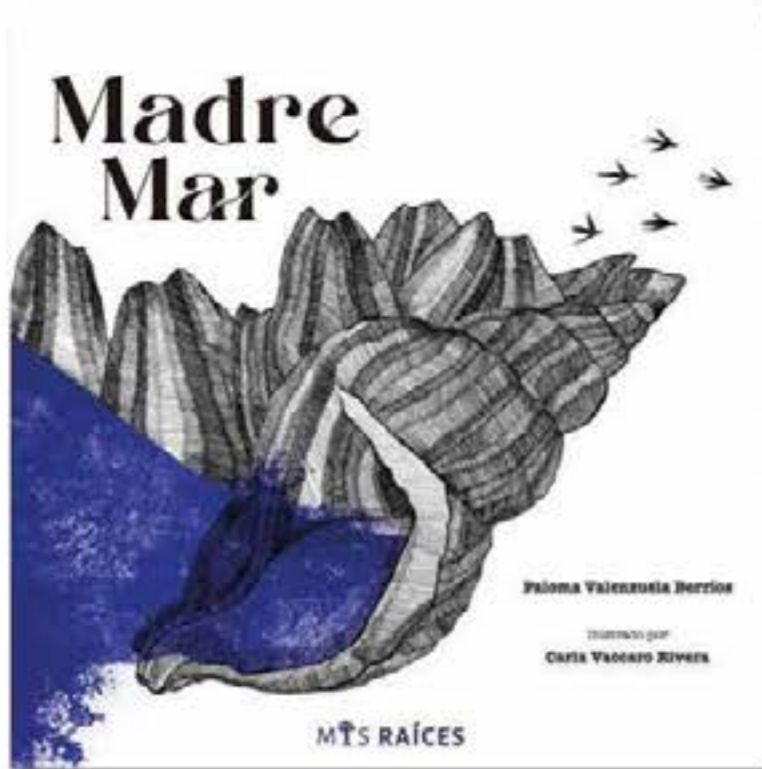
Paulina Jara Straussmann/ Gabriela Germain Fonck, 2019.

Through a poetic narration, *Pequeño Verde* tells us the journey of a seed from a forest to the city, propelled by the wind. The seed falls into a hole and begins to germinate, but its growth is interrupted when it encounters a cement barrier. It is then that the insects and spiders that live underground, working together as a team, manage to break the cement. Finally, the seed can germinate and transform into a majestic tree. This story invites us to reflect on the power of collaboration in nature.



Madre Mar

Paloma Valenzuela Berríos and Carla Vaccaro Rivera, 2023.



Madre Mar is a story inspired by an event that, in 2007, moved the cove “El Soldado” in Talcahuano: the fall into the sea of a 15-year-old girl. Through polished decimas and subtle illustrations, the theme of solidarity amidst adversity and the deep connection between mother and daughter is addressed during the two days of searching for

the young woman, carried out by fishermen and tactical divers. The blue tone of the illustrations conveys the intensity and omnipresence of “the Sea” and the gray tones portray the hardness of the rocks, the passage of birds, and the softness of outstretched hands. A book of high aesthetic value and a contribution to the centenary tradition of the “décima” as a vehicle for memory and local heritage.

Mi hermano Árbol

Sergio Gómez, 2015.

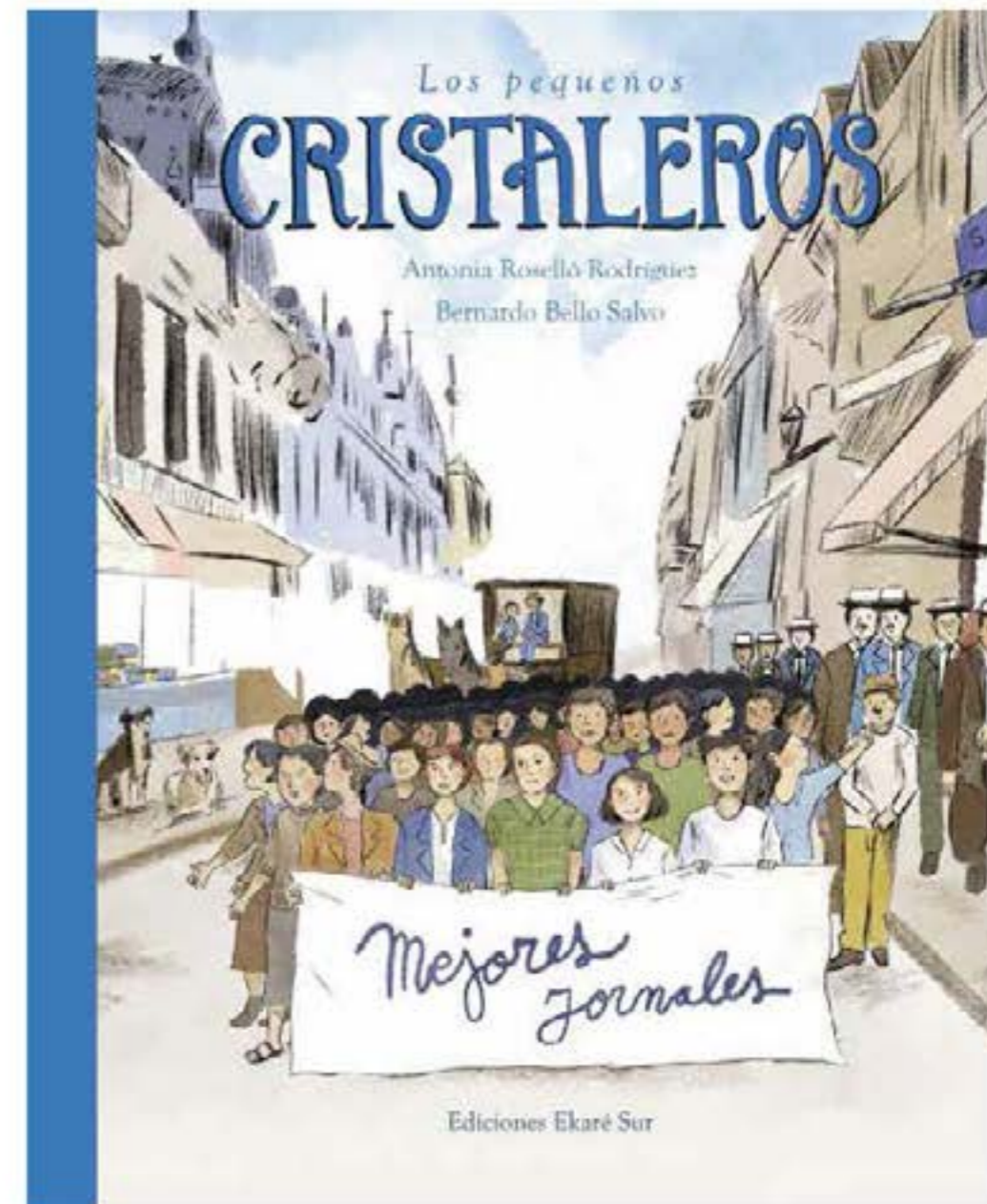
Esteban’s life seems perfect, or at least that’s how his younger brother presents it. He has a family, friends, is a good student, an athlete, and is about to enter university, but an accident changes everything and from that fateful event, everything seems to turn gray around him, now Esteban must continue life in a wheelchair. Thanks to a conversation with a teacher, both brothers discover that by helping each other and helping others, life has a new meaning.

Los pequeños cristaleros

Bernardo Bello Salvo - Antonia Roselló Rodríguez, 2023.

In February 1925, the first strike of child workers took place in Chile, a historical event that marks a key moment in the struggle for labor and children’s rights in the country. This work delves into the reality of these childhoods marked by precariousness, portraying with sensitivity and commitment the context of that transcendental event. With a close narrative style and accompanied by evocative illustrations that complement and enrich the story, the work follows the daily life of a child worker who, along with her mother, faces the adversities of her reality. Through her eyes, we see the constant effort to live a childhood that circumstances snatch from her, dealing with obligations that are alien to her age and should be unthinkable. Beyond showing the protagonist’s individual struggle, the narrative weaves a profound reflection on how the child community unites, organizing itself to collectively face the injustices that oppress them. This movement not only demonstrates the capacity of children to

act as political subjects, but also highlights how, even in the most adverse conditions, cooperation and mutual support emerge as powerful tools for social change. Work thus highlights the value of children's rights, presenting them as true agents of change who, with courage and determination, demonstrate the strength and value they possess. The work thus becomes a vehicle for education and awareness, showing that solidarity can transform realities and that the youngest have the power to question and reshape social structures.



WITH TWO PENS

Interviews



Dialogue with María Girón

IBBY CAT, OEPLI



What are the biggest challenges when illustrating the value of solidarity for a children's and youth audience?

First of all, I have to clarify that solidarity, along with many other values such as joy, empathy, or friendship, is implicit in my work because that's how I see the world. It comes naturally to me. But it is rare that I illustrate with the specific intention of transmitting concrete values. In any case, what I do focus on and strive for is to transmit moods, emotions, and sensations.

Obviously, solidarity is an important and fundamental value in my life. And I am convinced that in my work in the coming years this tendency to see the positive and most human side of things will remain present.

What role does illustration play in transmitting stories of solidarity that reach the hearts of children?

On the one hand, illustration is a very powerful language, and it is also universal. With it, you can capture the reader's interest in a very direct, instantaneous way, like lightning. On the other hand, I have always thought that the best way to reach people's hearts is by speaking from my heart, from my emotion, from my feelings.

How do you select colors, shapes, and style when illustrating scenes of solidarity to make them attractive and understandable for children?

As I said before, there have been few times when I have voluntarily and consciously tried to illustrate scenes of solidarity.

But one comes to mind. It is the last double-page illustration of the album *Con los Brazos Abiertos*, published by Kalandraka and written by the poet Antonio Rubio. The book itself is a song to freedom and solidarity. In the image, there is a group of children from all over the world who happily join hands. In the scene, they are arranged in a spiral shape.

Do you think illustrated books can open important conversations about solidarity at home and at school?

Of course. All books can open interesting conversations. About any topic. Also, about solidarity. I find it wonderful that the book object has this detonating power, like a domino piece. As a result of reading, sparks, questions, new ways of seeing and understanding life are ignited. After reading, it is easy to start reflecting on many things. A book opens doors; a book invites you to explore unexplored paths.

Do you think illustrated books can open important conversations about solidarity at home and at school?

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Your illustrations always elevate the accompanying texts, interact with them, add to them.

When I illustrate, I always keep in mind how to complete what the words say. My illustrations are, or try to be, a celebration of the text. And this is something that seems key to my way of working. It is not enough for me to just illustrate, because saying what is already said in words makes no sense to me. What I want is to elevate what is said. With my images I contribute, complement, underline, I walk by the side, I move away, I get closer, I present a detail... I am constantly looking for ways to evoke.

Because here the most important thing is what ignites inside the reader: memories, emotions, ideas, reflections, shivers... What the text says matters little, what matters is what IT SAYS TO YOU. What an image tells matters little, what matters is what YOU SEE IN IT.

Have you ever thought about what you would like your contribution to the world of children's illustration to be?

Lately, I've been wondering why I illustrate what the purpose is. I don't know... maybe it's because I've crossed the forty-year mark. I'm more intense, more reflective. I'm looking for a deeper meaning in everything. And I like to think that I have a vital mission, and that I have come to this world with a very specific "why." Whatever it is, I let myself be guided by my intuition, which tells me to continue this way, not to be afraid, to dare to explore new paths. And I have the impression that I am getting closer and closer to understanding what my contribution is. I believe it has to do with caressing souls and helping the children of the world to move away from their most earthly realities to end up finding themselves, face to face with their own truth.



ILLUSTRATION: MARÍA GIRON

WITH TWO PENS

What adults don't want children to know



By Irene Vasco
Colombia

Good intentions

When it comes to children, adults are filled with good intentions, more or less naive, more or less informed. We want to protect them from pain and keep silent about certain topics that we consider “difficult,” drowning the deep anxieties that little ones feel and do not know how to express. We assume they don’t notice anything, we whisper, we speak in low voices, we turn some aspects of life into taboos, we forbid words and, apparently, we close the door to the real world.

But that reality is undeniable. And if we try to deny it, monsters and ghosts appear that are born, live, and grow, sometimes excessively, in children’s fantasy. Without words, dialogues, questions, and answers, the existential doubts that torment and hurt more than we want to assume, scream, vociferate, without order or harmony, in children’s minds.

Thinking about how to tell without hurting them, how to heal the wounds that open when children experience something that torments them, we can resort to literature, which helps to tell truths without telling them. We channel, organize, and articulate information about that reality, tributing it to fictional characters, so that children can go through situations that cause harm, strengthening themselves instead of collapsing. We begin to transmit this information in the first lullabies, in the stories we read to them, or in the stories we put in their hands.

Lullabies and sad truths

From the first lullabies, amidst rhymes and music, the mother sings to her baby about the hard moments they are living. Then come the stories, the first novels, fiction that parents can use to let their children know (without knowing it) how beautiful and difficult life is.

Poetic words begin to inhabit the baby's psychic world through the mother's voice, who, while lulling her newborn, begins to transmit both the real world and the symbolic world, exclusive property of the human being. The lulling voice is also the voice of the complaining mother. The child listens to her as a poem, with such rhythm and harmony, that he falls asleep despite the strict content of the sad song:

*Sleep my child in the
cradle, for there is no
corn porridge nor milk.*

*Sleep my child in the
hammock, for there is
no corn porridge nor
cow's milk.*

*Work hard, my child,
there's no time to play,
no time to dream life,
you're already living it.*

*What is my mom do-
ing? Where is dad?*

*There are ten siblings:
we must work.*



Throughout a child's development, we exchange lullabies for narratives. Although we may not realize it, stories are responsible for revealing us, for telling us about ourselves as human beings, even in the smallest secrets. Otherwise, they would not interest us, they would be empty, there would be no inner dialogue between the story and us, and we would abandon them for their banality.

Uncensored stories

Stories, with their structures, allow us to wander through hardships and enemies and look at ourselves in a distorted reflection. We invent mirages and believe in them. We play that Little Red Riding Hood is a naive girl walking through the forest and let the popular words, full of insinuations and hidden codes collected by Charles Perrault, do their work inside the child's mind.

-I am your granddaughter, Little Red Riding Hood, and I bring you a cake and a pot of butter that my Mother sends you.

The Wolf shouted, softening his voice a little:

-Pull the latch and the bar will fall.

Little Red Riding Hood pulled the latch and the door opened.

The Wolf, seeing her enter, said as he hid in the bed under the blanket:

-Leave the cake and the pot of butter and come lie down with me.

Life, death, sexuality

While life is recreated through narratives, while these pass from generation to generation, we introduce children to other stories, those written by classical and contemporary authors, who know, as good authors, that children are beings who deserve their respect and that nothing should be withheld from them, no subject concerning their feelings and emotions. Life and death, sexuality, freedom, war, joy, dreams, sadness, and frustrations are all themes that must be part of the repertoire of what is told to children. The market offers everything from beautifully illustrated albums like *El ángel del abuelo* by Jufla Bauer, aimed at early readers, to very realistic novels, aimed at mature readers, like *Un puente hasta Therabitia* by Katherine Paterson, which talk about death.

If the book has true literary quality, if it is truly a work of art, it will offer each reader, from their personal history, something to interpret between the lines, allowing them to peek into reality from fiction.

In this way, by exposing children to literature, we can be calm, pretending to be naive, believing that we are hiding what causes so much pain. Secrets are revealed without us having to expose them, and expose ourselves, to explanations that we often cannot express in our own words. If children ask and want to know more, we can easily find an answer after reading the books. If they don't ask, we can keep silent. The time will come when some story, some characters will open the door to their deepest concerns and the children themselves will ask: "tell me that story again." 262 Unconsciously, the child will be looking for answers to very inner questions.



What to do when reactions are unleashed?

How to accompany safely?

Sometimes a story can move a child so much that they start crying inconsolably. The problem is not the story. The story has only allowed the child to release some concern, some ghosts that torments them.

The loving and welcoming arms of the narrator help to mitigate the pain.

Afflative eyes and ears can discover what is hidden beneath the violent reaction. In this way, not only is the child helped to recognize and repair what hurts them. They also perceive that they are very important to others. The person who tells and accompanies them establishes an increasingly close emotional bond.

Singing, lulling, reading poetry is the best accompaniment in moments of insecurity and fear. The rhythm, the cadence of the voice, the emotion that is shared, the paused repetition offers the child the proper dose of affection and attention so that they soon regain their tranquility. Sometime later, very possibly the same child will ask you to please resume reading that story that caused such a strong reaction.

In these cases, it is good to remember the words of Bruno Beflelheim:

“Stories undoubtedly provide unique help to the child, who is often unable to visualize concretely, on their own, their fears and hopes or to identify them clearly.

Fairy tales, in particular, by presenting characters onto whom they can project their hopes and fears, offer solutions to this problem.

For this reason, that is, because fairy tales bring out the child’s anxieties, some have mistakenly argued that they instill fear in him. Those who think this forget that man had more than enough reasons to invent fairy tales and that these would not have taken place if such reasons for being told and listened to with delight did not weigh so heavily on them. They play, as stated, a very important role, especially because they give rise to undetermined anxieties becoming concrete and, at the same time, more manageable.”

Final recommendation

Read with your child, your student, your grandchild. Through stories, the world is reconstructed, what we are and what we want to be, what has been lived and what is not possible, what is and what is not, including

what we do not want to see, such as death itself. These representations allow us to face difficulties, constantly building and rebuilding ourselves. We can touch the world through fiction, order it, reorder it, domesticate it.

And most importantly, while producing all these effects on your child, they will know that they are loved more than anyone in the world because the stories also assure them that the characters who go through difficulties in the stories are like them and that there will always be someone by their side to help them out of trouble. You, by the way, will relive the pleasure of reading stories perhaps already forgotten. The certainty of sharing the pleasure will be the best reward that both your child and you will receive.



CIRCLE OF VOICES

Children's experience regarding solidarity

Guatemala

Daniela Sandoval, 16 years old, Guatemala.

"For me, solidarity consists of providing support to others according to our possibilities, not only materially, but by showing our humanity. The greatest act of solidarity is to be aware of the circumstances that each person lives, understanding that each life is completely unique."

Dylan Barrientos, 13 years old, Guatemala.

“Solidarity is when you care about what happens to others and you want to help them. It’s like your part of a team and everyone works together to achieve something. When someone is sad or needs help, solidarity is being there for them, listening to them and doing what you can to make them feel better. It’s also important to be supportive of people you don’t know, like those who live on the street, the sick, if you can donate to them or just be kind when you see them.”

Alyssa Velásquez, 16 years old, Guatemala.

“Solidarity means being there for others, supporting them unconditionally in their difficult moments, offering understanding, time and help without expecting anything in return. It is a deep act of empathy that goes far beyond words: it is demonstrating with concrete actions that others are not alone and that they can always count on us.”



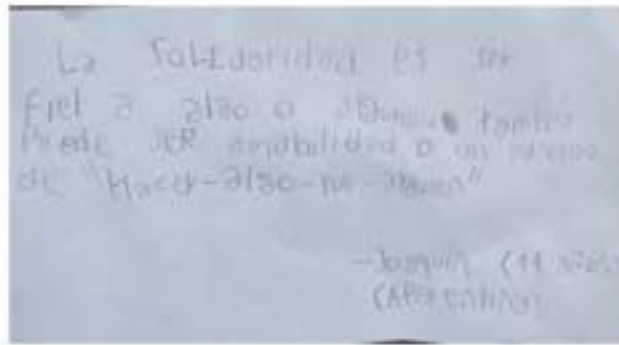
ARGENTINA

Martín, 8 years old, and Joaquín, 11 years old, are brothers. Both live in the City of Buenos Aires, Argentina.

When their mother Magalí (a colleague from ALIJA) invited them to answer the question for this bulletin, they did not hesitate to write what they consider solidarity to be. This is the transcription of their notebooks:

Martín says: “I believe that solidarity is helping others.”

While Joaquín replies: “Solidarity is being loyal to something or someone. It can also be kindness or an adjective for Doing-something-for-someone.”



Solidarity according to a young Argentine

Tomás, 15, did not hesitate to answer his aunt Cecilia's (an ALIJA colleague) question about solidarity with a volunteering experience he carried out thanks to an invitation from his school: "Every Thursday we would go to schools in needy areas to give support classes to teenagers my age, to explain, teach and help them, especially in mathematics. I have also had to work with women aged 50 or 60, giving them school support for high school." When asked about the experience, he replied: "It was quite hard to see the reality face to face of those boys and girls my age, who live a different life from ours, and who fight every day to achieve the studies they are asked for."

DOMINICAN REPUBLIC

Shenoa Soriano Cuello. 4th Grade. 9 years old.

Solidarity

"It is a value that helps us to be aware of the needs of others. It helps us to maintain peace"



ILLUSTRATION: Sarah Amaro

A wonderful adventure

"This story teaches you to be grateful and supportive by giving a little bit of yourself."

Stecy Asencio Reyes. 5th Grade. 10 years old.

Once upon a time there was a family whose country was in bad shape. So they had to go to the Dominican Republic to have a better life. And on their way to the Dominican Republic, they had no money or a home to spend the night. They were a family of 4 members. The father was called Balion and the mother Sarah, the older sister Kiara and the younger Leila.

A young woman who loved children saw them on the street and felt very bad seeing them. The young woman thought she should help them. But she did not have the resources to take them to her house. The next day she went, brought them food and blankets, and they thanked her.

A few days later she went with food and gave them the news that she had gotten the father a job. He was very happy. Time passed, the father worked hard until he became a rich man. Then he went to visit the young woman to give her the best gift she had always wanted, to have a daycare. And so everyone lived happily ever after.



My being changed

"It doesn't matter if something is prettier than the other, what matters is the intention and the love with which it is made."

Alaisha Castillo Rodríguez. 5th grade. 10 years old.

Once upon a time there was a girl named Gloria. She was very arrogant and didn't like to be bothered. She had a friend named Tayla. One day Tayla went to Gloria's house. When Tayla arrived, Gloria was sitting on the grass and said: Shall we play?

Of course, replied to Gloria.

Let's play in the kitchen. Tayla replied.

While they were playing, Tayla was missing toys.

"Can you give me your stove?" To which Gloria replied: "No!" How can it be that you didn't take your toys? And now you want mine, it always happens.

I'm leaving your house! Tayla said.

What do you want? You always want to win and besides that you think you're more important than everyone else. Gloria stood there looking at her and reflected; -Excuse me, forgive me.

And from that moment on she stopped being so arrogant. Then, she asked her mom to buy toys for Tayla. But not only for Tayla, but also for other children who had needs.

The Surprise for Kukú

Jaslyn Omaris Asencio Suero. 4th Grade. 9 years old.

Once upon a time, in a small town lived a shoeshine boy named Kukú. He worked to buy medicine for his grandmother, whose name was Margarita. Kukú's mother had abandoned him, leaving him with his grandmother. Everyone in that small town loved him very much. He ran many errands for people. Three Kings' Day arrived and the family had no money to give him a gift. It happened that a neighbor decided to gather all the neighbors to give Kukú a gift.

When Kukú went out into the streets, he realized they were empty, he found no one. The people were at a neighbor's house. Kukú kept walking, he had lost hope of finding anyone. Then he saw a neighbor who blindfolded him and led him to the house where everyone was gathered.

Upon arrival, they greeted him with a joyful uproar and shouted SURPRISE! and took off his blindfold. He was surprised with so many toys they had for him; there was a bicycle, a ball and many, many more things. But, the most important thing was not the gifts he received. Rather, they paid for the operation his grandmother needed. Kukú was so happy that he jumped for joy.

The Envious Lady

Eilyn Marín Martínez Fernández. 5th Grade. 10 years old.

Once upon a time there was a lady named Linda. She was very envious and wanted all the things that other people had. She would get very angry when she couldn't get them. The more Linda saw things in others, the more she desired them.

One day she decided to steal to get them, and the neighbors started complaining. Seeing this, Linda felt a little bad, thought about her actions, and decided to apologize. She also returned everything she had taken.

That's how she learned that envy and ego were not good feelings.

From then on, she dedicated herself to helping people in need.



Eilyn Marín Martínez Fernández. 5th Grade. 10 years old.

Once upon a time there was a girl named Gabi, who was very kind and everyone in the town loved her very much. One day Gabi got very sick. The neighbors decided that each one would stay with her. At night they took care of her, until after a few months, she recovered. And she bought a gift for the neighbors who had been taking care of her. It happened that Gabi, being such a good girl, was rewarded with a beautiful doll.

URUGUAY

Christopher is Venezuelan, 21 years old, and has been living in Montevideo for five years.

“Solidarity is a fundamental value for society.”

Christopher, what is solidarity to you?

Solidarity is one of the fundamental values for society, it is the value of helping without expecting anything in return. It is a value that helps us create bonds with people and makes us better.

For me, solidarity is a value that is created from a very young age, which goes hand in hand with empathy, it drives us to analyze and think about the situation of the other person, whether it is a bad moment or a good one, where then solidarity comes in, the desire to help whoever needs it without expecting anything in return.



CHILE

Pia Antonia Carrasco Escobar, 6 years old.

My name is Pía and today I'm going to talk about solidarity. Once a friend of mine went to school and didn't bring lunch and I gave her my lunch and then she was very happy. Goodbye.

Inés Urrejola Hevia, 8 years old.

"When a classmate is sad or needs help, I worry about them, comfort them, and ask an adult for help if necessary. If someone bothers me, even if it makes me angry, I try to understand them and explain that something is wrong with them. For me, being supportive is helping and listening."

Magdalena Paz Carrasco Escobar, 9 years old.
Hello, I'm Magdalena. For me, solidarity is important because we have to care about others and not just ourselves. Last year I met a girl who couldn't go to school because she had nothing. I gave her some things: shoes, clothes, school supplies, and so she could go. That's all, bye."

Margarita Arenas, 9 years old, Puerto Varas.

"In my class there's a girl who never brings lunch. I bring a liflle, but she never has any, so I gave her some of mine. That makes me happy."

Elena Poblete Arias, 11 years old.

In a small village lived a rich man. He was a good person, in fact every night he left some coins for needy people. Surprised, they began to gather and share the coins with other needy inhabitants. Finally, this small village became a supportive community, and all thanks to a small gesture of kindness.



OWN VOICE

Opinion Column

SOLIDARITY



By Emilia Gallego
IBBY Cuba

Solidarity, just like that, without another word to accompany it. Alone. Faced with the overwhelming inevitability, because a “I can’t!” is impossible and a “I don’t want to!” is unthinkable, I assume and at the same time I dive, I delve into my memory in search of words that come to my aid and then I find it crouching in my ancestral memories, with its eyes disproportionately wide with the astonishment of sleeplessness, devouring the darkness and silence that frightens and has been challenging it.

The leap, half feline, half simian, that crosses the threshold of its cave lasts only an instant.

Upon crossing that threshold, it assumes, though it still ignores it, the first destiny that initiates our complicity. Outside, the moon implanted high up like a seal begins to name the night for it, its sounds, its smells and fear. It overcomes itself and as its confidence grows and, half feline, it sees in the darkness, and, half simian, it deftly eludes obstacles, it begins to experience courage, the taste for the unknown and that uncontrollable urge to go further that, from now on, will be its adventure companion.

From the horizon that reaches and escapes it, the river calls to it. Its tireless, serene and clear flow attracts it with the concept of dialectics that will definitively enamor it when it approaches maturity. Where does it come from? Where is it going? For the first time, it asks the big question: Who am I? It kneels moved, reverent before the unknown, and, when it decides to refresh itself from the sweat of fear and the long walk, it sees it, sees itself, sees us.

It doesn't understand what that strange being is doing there, fixed in the river's current, looking at it, while in every crevice of its body loneliness and uncertainty are dissolving to give way to a warm sensation of companionship and protection.

Tomorrow, and the next day and again and again, almost deafened by the boisterous play of the children around it, it will again conjure the image that once sheltered it from the river, and, upon recognizing it, it will become absolute master of what it is, of what it was, of what it will be.

This knowledge anticipates its destiny: the difficult and sometimes cruel baffle that day by day it will have to wage for the defense and conservation of its memories, for the reason of its being and the guarantee of its preservation.

It is already becoming different, without ceasing to be the same, when each night it returns with its own and barely manages to ask itself, again and again, before the dying flames of the bonfire what the light of the new day will bring. Light, days without names yet, but already an awareness of the world that was gaining strength in the night of nights, when words did not yet exist, the first ones, those that found, because as Octavio Paz said, "they are shared words." But we cannot be careless with words either, because we cannot hesitate, nor trust in the insolent and predatory avalanche of ambition and immoderate violence that threatens to crush us.

I and the other and the other, the few and the many, identity and solidarity, the two foundational and inseparable faces of the humanity we are, the same humanity that, between lights and voices, imagines and builds with the notes of each word and the flashes of a fraternal bonfire, an unassailable refuge, an impregnable fortress, wherever there is a single child, a single young person, a present, a hope to defend and embrace. othes, school supplies, and so she could go. That's all, bye."

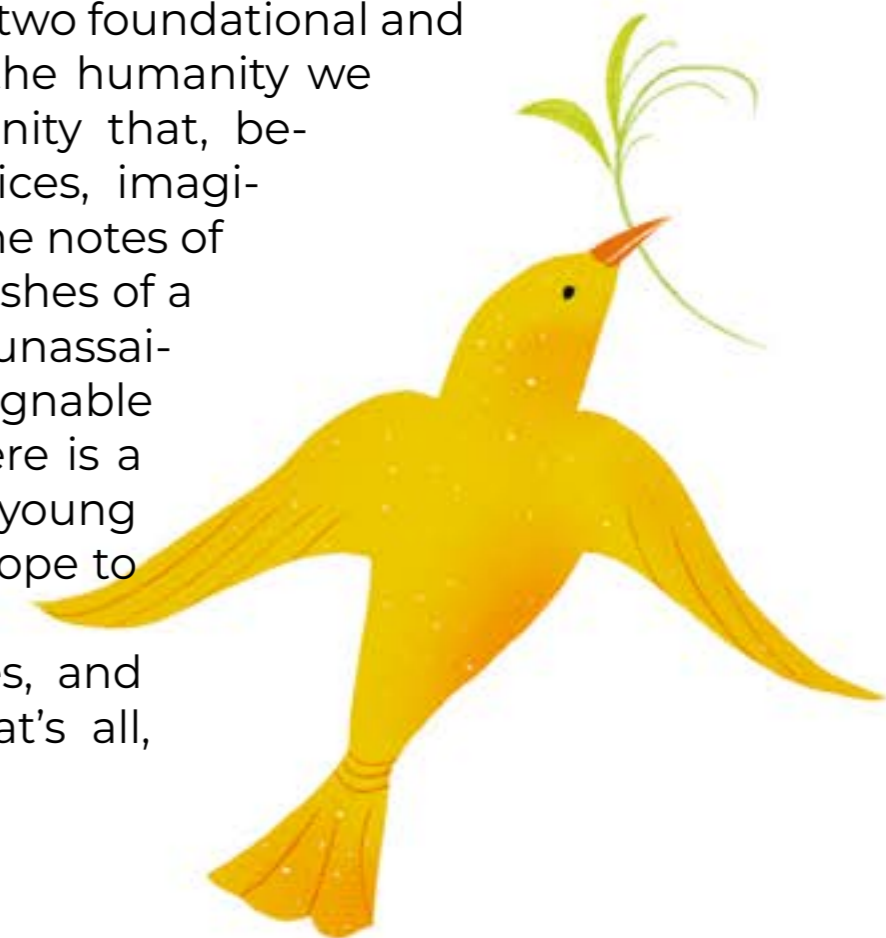


ILLUSTRATION: Sarah Amaro

It is not only, although such a matter is not negligible, about slogans, campaigns, endless marches against wars, in favor of peace and the preservation of our Planetary Home. It is, in essence, about being definitively and absolutely convinced, without any benefit of doubt, once and for all, that as Amos Oz warned us: "If there is any hope, it is the power of imagination. The power with which a person can imagine themselves in the place of the other."

ILLUSTRATION: Sarah Amaro

BACKGROUND: Montserrat Vargas



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In memoriam
MARINA COLASANTI
(1937 - 2025)

