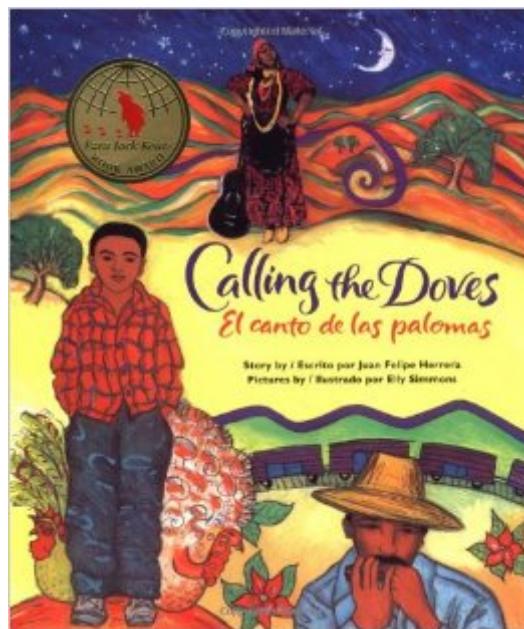


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Calling The Doves: El Canto De Las Palomas



Synopsis

Calling the Doves is poet Juan Felipe Herrera's story of his migrant farmworker childhood. In delightful and lyrical language, he recreates the joy of eating breakfast under the open sky, listening to Mexican songs in the little trailer house his father built, and celebrating with other families at a fiesta in the mountains. He remembers his mother singing songs and reciting poetry, and his father telling stories and calling the doves. For Juan Felipe, the farmworker road was also the beginning of his personal road to becoming a writer.

Book Information

Hardcover: 30 pages

Publisher: Children's Book Press (CA) (September 1995)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0892391324

ISBN-13: 978-0892391325

Product Dimensions: 10 x 8.6 x 0.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.9 out of 5 starsÂ [See all reviewsÂ](#) (9 customer reviews)

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Customer Reviews

This bilingual picture book tells the story of poet Juan Felipe Herrera's early years with his parents who were migrant farmworkers in California. Herrera's love for his poor hardworking parents is evident. The vibrant, vivid pictures by Elly Simmons combine with Herrera's Spanish/English text to make a delightful children's book that readers of all ages will enjoy!

This is a wonderful biography of the author Juan Felipe Herrera. This story is told in narrative style through the eyes of young Felipe who was born in California to his Mexican parents. Felipe describes the warmth and love he receives from both his mother and father. The illustrations are beautiful. The story is written in wonderful prose. Felipe tells us of his daily life in various migrant camps throughout California. I would definitely read this aloud to 2nd through 4th graders. A good way to explain to younger children what life is like for a migrant family.

I am a teacher and find this story a great example of personal narrative for my students. It also connects well with students of today.

Lovely story about growing up amongst migrant farm workers and the wonderful close relationships of family and friends. Herrera's own story reflects the beauty that is often found in the most unlikely places where there is no money for clothes or extra food or even a real home. The old adage about there being "some things that money can't buy" stands out vividly in his prose and shows honor and respect for a way of life, a culture, and a people who are often overlooked. The book would make a fine addition to an elementary or middle school classroom and is lovely read aloud. Kudos to Herrera and his achievements!

Recently, I excitingly told my young daughters we were going to wake up early and go berry picking at a *pick your own* farm. My three year old exclaimed *I don't want to pick berries at a farm I want to pick them at a store.* Although it was funny, it made me realize how disconnected we are as a society to our food sources and the nameless people who make it possible for us to have fresh fruits and vegetables on our tables. The stereotype of a farm worker is an adult male, but according to the National Farmworker Ministry, there are up to 500 of children and teens (under the age of 18) hired as farm laborers in fields across the United States. Many of these young people are undocumented immigrants or are part of migrant farm working families. Unfortunately, most of these hardworking people go unnamed and unnoticed. Migrant farm workers often follow the crops to sustain employment and many of the children of migrant workers go to school during the day and work several hours as well. This lifestyle can be very disruptive to students because they move several times a year and go from classroom to classroom often not bonding with teachers or other students. One child of migrant farmers influenced by the lifestyle and work ethic instilled by his parents was Juan Felipe Herrera, a poet, performer, writer, cartoonist, teacher, and activist, who in 2015 was appointed as the nation's first Chicano poet laureate. Herrera's publications include fourteen collections of poetry, prose, short stories, young adult novels and picture books for children with twenty-one books in total published in the last decade. Two of Herrera's books that depict the life of young migrant workers and the children of migrant workers are *Calling the Doves/El Canto de Las Palomas* (1995) and *The Upside Down Boy/El Niño De Cabeza* (2000). Both books are bilingual and are appropriate for elementary-age children and above. *The Upside Down Boy* is a memoir of the year

Herrera's migrant family settled down near San Diego, California in order to allow him to attend school for the first time. Juanito is overwhelmed by the new school, and he misses the *campesino* way of life. Everything he does feels abnormal and makes him feel upside down. He doesn't sync with the routine at school and when he tries to speak English, his tongue feels like a rock. Eventually he is able to find his voice through poetry, art, and music, with the help of a patient teacher and his supportive parents. Herrera's choice of words and the accompanying illustrations by Elizabeth Gomez tell a very important story about feeling *upside down* in a new situation in a way that young children can relate to and older students can use as a starting point for a deeper, empathetic discussion. The book was dedicated by Herrera to his third grade teacher, Mrs. Lucille Simpson, who inspired him to be a singer of words, and most of all, a believer in [his] own voice.

Calling the Doves won the Ezra Jack Keats Book Award, an award that celebrates and inspires exceptional new writers and illustrators, who are seldom recognized in the early stages of their careers when Herrera was not well known and new to the children's book circuit. The book bravely tells the stories of migrant workers, their struggles and their stories of travel, life on the road and random opportunities for work. The poetic vignettes and accompanying illustrations capture the unique culture of migrant workers from the point of view of a young boy. Like *Upside Down Boy*, this book is an excellent resource to discuss migrant workers. Herrera dedicated this book to Cesar Chavez to honor his work with United Farmworkers Union and to his parents who taught him that *inside every word there can be kindness*.

Additional Resources: Lee & Low Books, great friends of ours have both reviewed books plus two more in a four book collection at a discounted rate. Click [here](#) to learn more and continue to build a diverse classroom library. Lee and Low also provides a resource for using the books to teach and discuss Poet Laureate Juan Felipe Herrera with Students. Watch this video to see how Juan Felipe Herrera introduces Calling of the Doves and inspires young writers with tips for story writing. Plus he reads an excerpt in English and Spanish which makes for a great classroom introduction!

After using Juan Felipe Herrera children's books as a start for discussion, dig deeper with older students in this lesson plan, *Interpreting the Impact of Cesar Chavez's Early Years*, to see how Chavez's later work was influenced by his childhood as a migrant farmworker. Read our previous blog post, *The Power of Poetry and the Immigration Experience*, for ideas on how to incorporate poetry and picture books to teach immigration. We offer free lesson plans, resources, book/film reviews, and grants to #teachimmigration. Stay connected! Follow us on twitter @ThnkImmigration and our blog *Immigration In and Out of the Classroom*.

Outstanding positive vision expressed here by someone didn't have what we call an easy life.
gracias a Juan Felipe

I also bought the audible book in Spanish. I love listening to the recording while reading the book.
Delightful!

super neat :)

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