

Media Kit

María Dolores Águila



María is an award-winning, critically acclaimed Chicana author and speaker committed to telling stories of resilience and creativity that inspire and empower readers.

Meet María Dolores Águila

Rooted in the Mexican American experience, María's books celebrate the dreams and histories that shape her community. Her stories open doors for young readers to imagine and believe in their own possibilities.

As a speaker, María brings history and inspiration to life, offering audiences a deeper connection to the creative process behind her work. Her words stay with listeners long after the event, shifting perspectives and opening the door to new beginnings.

Through every book and conversation, María reminds audiences that stories have the power to change hearts, minds, and the world.



3

published
books

8

starred trade
reviews

10+

national awards &
honors

Book María For

María brings history, resilience, and creativity to every stage and conversation. She invites readers to see themselves in her stories of community, courage, and imagination.

Offerings

Keynote Talks – Inspiring presentations on history and the power of storytelling to spark change.

School Visits – Interactive readings, Q&A, and conversations that empower students to see themselves as storytellers and changemakers.

Community & Library Events – Warm, bilingual-friendly gatherings that celebrate culture and creativity.

Panels & Conversations – Thoughtful, dynamic participation in discussions about literature and identity.

Podcast Appearances – Engaging conversations about storytelling, identity, history, and the creative process, shared through accessible and thoughtful dialogue.

Media Appearances

María's work has been featured across national and regional media, connecting her stories with audiences of all ages.

KPBS Midday Edition – Guest Appearance

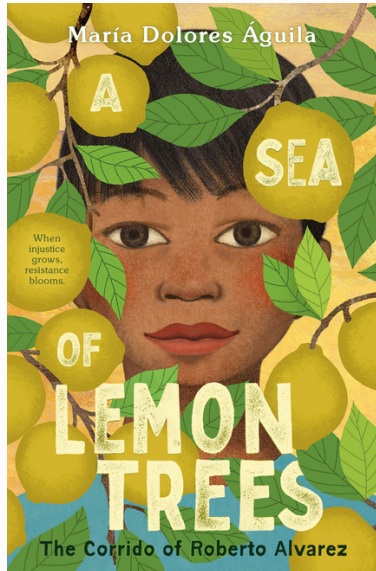
University of San Diego César Chávez Celebration – Keynote Speaker

MacKids Fall 2025 Preview – Keynote Speaker

MitúTV – Guest Appearance

Fox5 News – Guest Appearance

CBS 8 News – Guest Appearance



About A Sea of Lemon Trees

María Dolores Águila

Based on the true story of Roberto Alvarez and the Lemon Grove Incident, this vivid and uplifting middle grade debut novel in verse about one young child's courage to stand up for what is right, and the determination of the Mexican community is perfect for fans of *Esperanza Rising* and *Inside Out and Back Again*.

A Sea of Lemon Trees was published by Roaring Brook Press on September 16, 2025 (ISBN 9781250342614).

Awards and Recognition

Newbery Honor Book; Pura Belpré Honor Book; Scott O'Dell Award for Historical Fiction; Jane Addams Children's Book Award; NCTE Charlotte Huck Award; longlisted for the National Book Award for Young People's Literature; Publishers Weekly Best Books of 2025; New York Times Book Review 10 Best Children's Books of 2025.

Selected Praise

"This evocative novel in verse is beautifully crafted with both gravity and heart. Roberto's voice is powerful and lyrical, capturing feelings of fear and solidarity [...] A moving portrait of community resistance and a young boy's quiet courage."

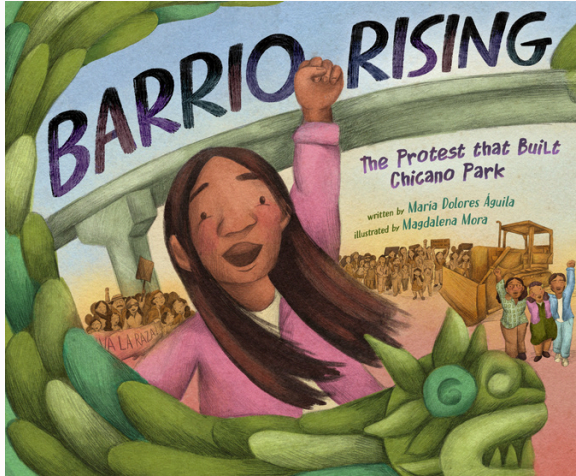
— Kirkus, Starred Review

"...This impeccably researched account, told via lucid, moving free verse, imparts timely, heartening messages about community activism ("When many people/ are brave together/ we can do things/ that seem impossible") that will resonate..."

— Publisher's Weekly, Starred Review

"...Águila's poetry in her first middle-grade novel is deft as she depicts bravery, cultural celebration, and the power of neighbors coming together[...] *A Sea of Lemon Trees* is flawlessly paced and full of lyrical pathos; a strangely sweet novel with a bitter aftertaste."

-Shelf Awareness, Starred Review



About Barrio Rising

María Dolores Águila
Magdalena Mora

A vivid historical fiction account of the community activism behind San Diego's Chicano Park—home to the largest outdoor mural collection in the U.S.—and just one example of the Mexican American community's rich history of resistance and resilience.

Barrio Rising is also available as an audiobook and in Spanish as *El barrio se levanta*.

Barrio Rising was published by Dial Books on June 18, 2024 (ISBN 9780593462072).

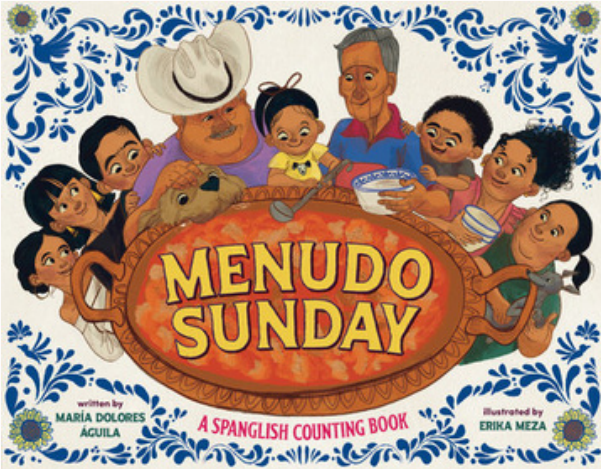
Awards and Recognition

2025 John and Patricia Beatty Literature Award in Children's Literature; One Book, One San Diego Children's Title; Jane Addams Peace Association Finalist; NPR's Books We Love; Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection; ALSC Notable Children's Recording; Center for the Study of Multicultural Children's Literature Best Books; Bank Street Best Children's Books in Spanish; Notable Social Studies Trade Book; Notable Book for a Global Society; ALA Sustainability Roundtable Best Sustainability-Themed Children's Book

Selected Praise

"A marvelous testament to barrio-based might."
— Kirkus, Starred Review

"A powerful work that celebrates community engagement at any age."
— Publishers Weekly, Starred Review



About Menudo Sunday

María Dolores Águila
Erika Meza

Sundays are the best: that's when a little girl and her mamá, abuelitos, tías and primos all gather together to eat yummy menudo, a traditional Mexican soup. But when playtime with the cousins and family dogs gets out of hand and Abuelito Esteban's special bowl of menudo breaks, everyone has to pitch in to make a new batch!

Menudo Sunday was published by Dial Books on August 5, 2025 (ISBN 9780593462256).

Awards and Recognition

School Library Journal Best Picture Books of 2025; Chicago Public Library Best Picture Books of 2025; named a Top 10 Title for Young Readers on the 2026 Rainbow Book List; featured in The Washington Post as one of the best new kids' books for the season

Selected Praise

"The abuelitos are a loving couple who warmly welcome their family to a celebration of love and connection; the counting and addition of well-chosen and highly supported Spanish is a bonus. Highly recommended."

— School Library Journal, Starred Review

"This emotionally layered counting book celebrates an extended Latinx family's Sunday tradition: gathering together for menudo [...] Águila's numerically driven narrative about a family experiencing life's ups and downs together."

-Publisher's Weekly, Starred Review

"As warm and welcoming as menudo con la familia."

— Kirkus

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