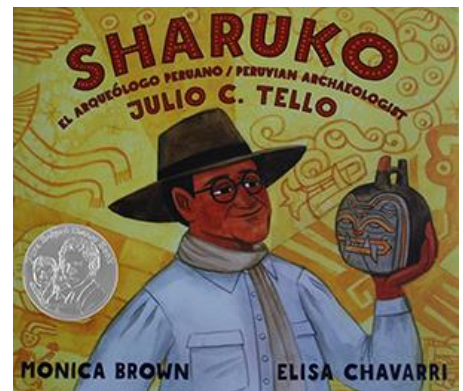




Pura Belpré Youth Illustrator Honor Acceptance Speech

Elisa Chavarri received a 2021 (Pura) Belpré Illustrator Honor for Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano/Peruvian Archaeologist Julio C. Tello (Children's Book Press/Lee & Low), written by Monica Brown. She delivered her acceptance remarks during the Pura Belpré Award Celebración held Sunday, June 27, 2021, on YouTube.

I am overwhelmed by the gratitude I feel for this honor and for those who have helped me achieve it. I remember how incredibly excited I felt the day I received the offer from Lee & Low to illustrate Monica Brown's book, *Sharuko: El Arqueólogo Peruano/Peruvian Archaeologist Julio C. Tello*. I was as thrilled that this book was being made, as I was to be given the opportunity to illustrate it.



The story of Dr. Tello is that of a man whose love and pride for his culture led him on a mission to discover more about his ancestors and to share his discoveries in a way that brought pride to all Peruvians but especially indigenous Peruvians like himself. Because of his incredible contributions I felt a strong desire as a Peruvian to portray our country and one of our national heroes in an exciting and beautiful way, as well as the responsibility as a non-indigenous Peruvian to portray as accurately and authentically as possible the story of this indigenous boy who became one of the most celebrated archaeologists of the Americas and the first person to study Peru's past through the lens of a Quechua-speaking indigenous man.

I was born in Lima, Peru, but came to the United States with my family at a young age. Thanks to my mother, Peru was kept very much alive in our home. Both of my parents spoke Spanish to us, and my mother cooked Peruvian food, played Peruvian music, and decorated the house with the stunning arts

from the markets, and replicas of Paracas tapestries, and Pre-Columbian ceramics. On trips back to Peru, museums and archeological sites were at the top of the list of places to visit. These trips were the highlights of my childhood, and I've always been drawn back. Though I may have, at times, felt a little shy about being different from my US friends, I felt deeply proud to be Peruvian, of my culture, and this magical, mysterious place where I came from. I realize now this was a gift my mother gave me by sharing her own cultural love, pride, and many varied interests with us. Her excitement was contagious, and that kind of contagious excitement over our cultures, roots, and sense of belonging, is one of the most wonderful things organizations like the Association for Library Service to Children, REFORMA, and Pura Belpré help foster.

My heartfelt thanks go out to the Association for Library Service to Children, REFORMA, the Pura Belpré founders, and the 2021 Pura Belpré Committee, for this wonderful honor, which I share with the incredible Monica Brown. I am extremely honored to see my name alongside that of this year's winners, especially illustration award winner Raúl The Third and those of the many past winners who inspire me so much. Thank you for supporting our work. I want to give a very special thank you to Monica Brown for writing this book and many others that instill such pride and joy in so many, my daughter included! Monica is one of the most gracious people I've ever had the pleasure of collaborating with, and collaborate we did! I am grateful for Monica's readiness to brainstorm the most sensitive illustrations with me and help me come up with a solution that celebrates the glories of the past while still taking into account a troubled history. Her encouragement has been invaluable, and I admire her greatly. Thank you to everyone at Lee and Low for the books you make, and to our editor Louise E. May for all the care and attention you gave this title. Gracias to Adriana Dominguez for your lovely Spanish translation. Thank you to my agents and friends at Painted Words, especially Lori Nowicki and my super-agent Claire Easton for helping amazing projects find their way to me. I could not do what I do for a living without the support and love of my family and friends. Thank you to my dear friend and virtual co-worker Jared Chapman who is often the first eyes on my work. To my parents, my in-laws, and my husband, you give me the peace of mind to work, knowing the kids are in great hands. To my children Lucía and Marcel, thank you for being the magical, hilarious, loving little people that you are, my constant inspirations and my biggest fans. To my mother, for the love of Peru and appreciation for people of all backgrounds you have instilled in me. For your excitement and help with research, and for helping with the perfect storm that was working alongside a five-year-old and two-year-old. Gracias, Mami.

Thank you to all of you for welcoming me into this amazing family of creators. This validation will help fuel my future work. I hope to be worthy of it, and I will treasure this always, GRACIAS.

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