



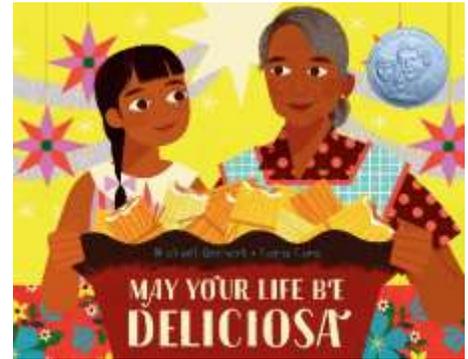
Pura Belpré Youth Illustrator Honor Acceptance Speech



Loris Lora received a 2022 (Pura) Belpré Youth Illustrator Honor for *May Your Life Be Deliciosa* (Cameron Kids, an imprint of ABRAMS), written by Michael Genhart. She delivered her acceptance remarks at the Pura Belpré Award Celebración held Sunday, June 26, 2022, during the ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC.

Thank you to the American Library Association and the Pura Belpré committee for this incredible honor. I am truly grateful to be here alongside my talented peers to accept this honor for the illustrations for *May Your Life Be Deliciosa*.

Like many of you know, creating a children's book is a group effort, and I'd like to thank and share this honor with the incredible people at Cameron Kids/ABRAMS: Director, Nina Gruener, Editor, Amy Novesky, my amazing Art Director, Melissa Greenberg, and of course the author of *May Your Life Be Deliciosa*, Michael Genhart, whose words connected with me the moment I read them. I feel incredibly lucky to have made this beautiful book with such an encouraging team.



When I was first approached to illustrate *May Your Life Be Deliciosa*, I was beyond excited to illustrate a book about making tamales! It was a chance to share my own culture and celebrate this incredible dish that so many Latine families enjoy. Like Michael, I also have fond memories of standing around the table shoulder to shoulder, laughing and connecting with family through stories as we assembled hundreds of tamales every Christmas Eve. Each one made with so much heart and pride. I distinctly remember the feeling of soaking corn husks in warm water; the smell of spicy peppers roasting on a comal; finding the perfect-sized oja, softly spreading masa over it, and filling it with plenty of salsa and meat before quickly folding it over into the most picturesque tamale ever made. Then finally, after a few

hours of waiting for them to cook, we'd unwrap the steamy tamales and enjoy them together!
(Apologies if I'm making anyone hungry!)

Part of the magic of *May Your Life Be Deliciosa* is that it seamlessly brings together word and image to tell a multigenerational story. Without a recipe in hand and only using her eyes, hands, and mouth, Abuela Pina not only demonstrates to her family how to make delicious tamales, she also gives them the special ingredients to make a delicious life like her own—filled with pride, family, and love. As a first generation Mexican-American, I couldn't help but think of my own family ancestry when making this book and how, through food, we are able to connect with our culture and previous generations. Like many children who have grandparents across a border, I've only met my abuelitas a handful of times but feel comfort in knowing that these delicious dishes are an extension of them and their love for their families.

In *May Your Life Be Deliciosa*, when Abuela finally packs the tamales into the large pot, leaning them up against each other, she says, “May you always have the support of family and community.” “Familia y Comunidad.” With that, I'd like to dedicate this honor to my own *family and community*. Thank you to my partner, Sam, for being so caring and being my biggest supporter. Mi mamá y papá, tíá, y toda mi familia, who thankfully enriched my childhood with our Mexican culture by carrying on those family traditions. To my wonderful teachers, instructors, and mentors I've had throughout the years, but most importantly, Steve Turk, who was my ultimate guide in becoming a children's book illustrator. He taught me the importance and impact children's picture books can have beyond what's on the page. To everyone who took the time to read *May Your Life Be Deliciosa* and connected with it, I stand here “*ergida y orgullosa*,” *tall and proud, to accept* for this incredible honor. Thank you, again!

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