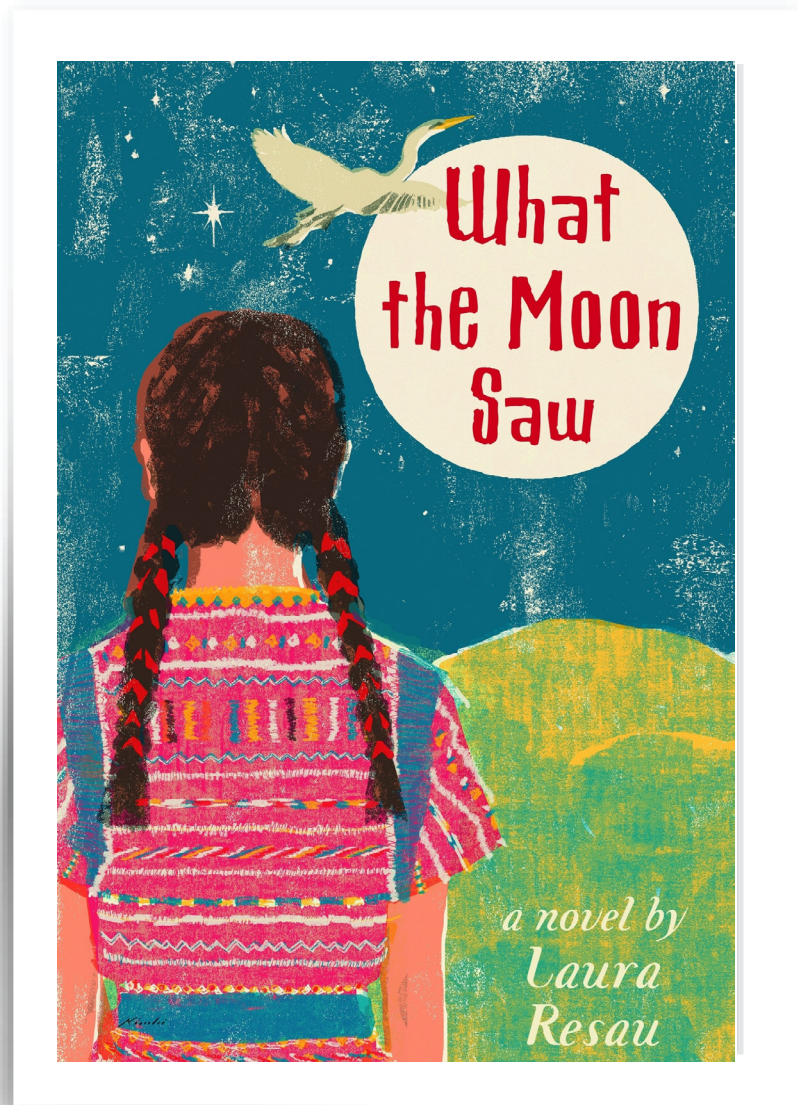


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teaching latin america through literacy



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Educator's Guide

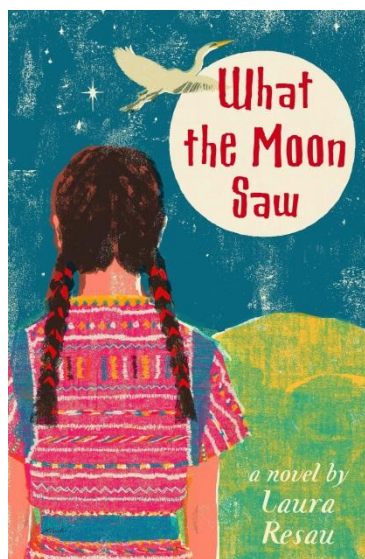
What the Moon Saw

Written by Laura Resau

Published by Delacorte Books, 2006 and Yearling, 2008

ISBN: 9780440239574

Age Level: 8-12



BOOK SUMMARY

Clara Luna's name means 'clear moon' in Spanish. But lately, her head has felt anything but clear. One day a letter comes from Mexico, written in Spanish: *Dear Clara, We invite you to our house for the summer. We will wait for you on the day of the full moon, in June, at the Oaxaca airport. Love, your grandparents.*

Fourteen-year-old Clara has never met her father's parents. She knows her father snuck over the border from Mexico when he was a teenager, but beyond that, she knows almost nothing about his childhood. When she agrees to go, she's stunned by her grandparents' life: they live in a simple shack in the mountains of southern Mexico, where most people speak not only Spanish, but an indigenous language, Mixteco.

The village of Yucuyoo holds other surprises, too--like the spirit waterfall, which is heard but never seen. And Pedro, an intriguing young goat herder who wants to help Clara find the waterfall. Hearing her grandmother's adventurous tales of

growing up as a healer awakens Clara to the magic in Yucuyoo, and in her own soul. What The Moon Saw is an enchanting story of discovering your true self in the most unexpected place.

AWARDS & RECOGNITIONS:

- 2008 Best Book for Young Adults
- 2008-2009 Texas Lonestar List Book, Texas Library Association
- 2008-2009 Volunteer State Book Award Master List
- 2007 Colorado Book Award Winner
- 2007 Arizona Young Adult Book Award Winner, Arizona Library Association
- 2007-2008 Maine Student Award List
- 2007 Américas Award Honorable Mention
- 2007 Colorado Authors' League Award
- 2007 New York Book for the Teen Age
- 2006 Booklist Top 10 First Novels for Youth
- 2006 Notable Social Studies Trade Book for Youth
- A Parents' Choice Recommendation
- School Library Journal Pick of the Week, Aug. 28, 2006
- A Junior Library Guild Selection

AUTHOR'S CORNER

A little bit about Laura Resau in her own words:



I was born thirty-some years ago in Baltimore City and spent the first ten years of my life there in old brick houses with alleys. When I was eleven, my family moved to a Baltimore suburb that used to be farmers' fields and woods. When I wasn't in school, I was exploring the woods and streams and discovering remnants of what used to be there—rusted fences, ancient farm tools, and abandoned barn.

After I earned my B.A. in Anthropology and French, I decided I wanted to go somewhere faraway, so I got certified in teaching ESL (English as a Second Language) and sent job applications around the globe. A small university in a town in Oaxaca, Mexico was the first to offer me a job, and I snatched it up.

I moved to Fort Collins, Colorado, got married to Ian, and after five years of revising *What the Moon Saw*, I had it published with Delacorte/Random House, the press that's published all my books. As I wrote my next novel, *Red Glass*, I worked with immigrant families and taught ESL (English as a Second Language) and Cultural Anthropology at my local community college in Fort Collins. My book *Star in the Forest* was inspired in part by my work and friendships with immigrant families in my community.

After Ian and I adopted our son from Guatemala, I decided to devote myself to being a full time writer and mother...and to finding plenty of excuses to travel. During this time, I've celebrated the release of *The Indigo Notebook*, *Star in the Forest*, *The Ruby Notebook*, and *The Queen of Water*. I still travel internationally, usually a few times every year. And of course, I always carry a notebook with me wherever I go!

In 2004, I became friends with María Virginia Farinango, an indigenous Quichua woman who was a student at the community college where I taught. We decided to collaborate on writing the true story of her amazing girlhood, which became the book *The Queen of Water* (released in 2011). While I was researching her life in the Ecuadorian Andes, I had some incredible experiences and heard fascinating stories that inspired me to write *I* (2009 release).

(The above compiled from the author's website at <http://www.lauraresau.com/about.html>)

What Resau said regarding her inspiration for this book:

“Staying with families in Mixtec and Mazatec communities has been incredibly exciting for me. I love participating in their everyday lives and learning about their thoughts on spirituality and healing. I hold a deep admiration for the older women in these communities, whose work never ends. Many are herbalists, midwives, and curers; they hold their families together, possess curiosity and wisdom, and are always ready to throw their heads back in laughter. Many women have heroically overcome the obstacles in their lives' racism, poverty, domestic violence, forced marriages, lack of formal education. These women's struggles and triumphs inspired the character of Helena in *What the Moon Saw*.

Pedro's character grew out of a certain sadness and sense of abandonment that I've noticed in Oaxacan villages. Many young people, especially young men, have moved away - either to Mexico City or to the U.S. - to try to provide a better life for their families. I've met many kids whose fathers are working in Chicago as dishwashers, in Washington state picking apples, or in North Carolina in the logging industry, to name just a few places. Some kids haven't seen their fathers for years. Some have never met their fathers because they left to work shortly before their child was born; these kids know their fathers only through videos and phone calls and photos. Some kids live with their grandparents because both their mother and father are working in the U.S.

Clara's spiritual journey was sparked by a sense of restlessness I had as a teenager, a feeling that there was something deeper, beneath the surface of life. Her search for identity as part of a multi-ethnic family in the 'burbs is something several people close to me have experienced-- my adopted Korean brother, my half-German husband, my half-Thai cousin, and my half-Puerto Rican neighbor (who I had a huge crush on in middle school).

Clara's father's struggle became clearer to me as I listened to the feelings of my friends and ESL students here in Colorado who are working in the U.S. to support their families in Latin America. It's a huge challenge for them to build a life here while maintaining strong connections to the families and communities they left behind” ([source](#)).

For more on Laura Resau check out the links below:

- [The author's website with all kinds of great resources](#). She has an entire section on her inspiration for the book, Click [here](#) to go directly to her page on *What the Moon Saw*.
- The Author's Blog—[Ocean in a Saucer](#)
- See the book trailer [here](#)

**USING *What
the Moon Saw*
IN THE
CLASSROOM**

I first read *What the Moon Saw* two summers ago and absolutely loved it. It's such a sweet story. It doesn't have the harshness or grittiness like some of the books we've reviewed for *Vamos a Leer*. It won't break your heart the way *Aristotle and Dante Discover the Universe* does. Yet, it's a beautifully written and moving read. I couldn't put it down.

One of my favorite lines comes early on in the book during a conversation between Clara and Abuela: "The most beautiful things in life are unexpected, Clara. They tear at the fabric of the everyday world. The world of patting tortillas and fetching water and washing dishes. They show you the deeper world, where you talk with the spirits of trees. Where you see the silvery threads connecting a leaf to a star to an earthworm" (p. 42). The longer Clara is in Yucuyoo with her grandparents, the more she comes to realize the truth in her grandmother's words. Away from the suburbs of Walnut Hill, Clara's understanding of the world changes drastically. She begins to see how those threads connect us to the world and the people we love. This change of perspective is also the impetus for Clara to reflect on who she is, what she values, and the kind of person she wants to be. Like many teenagers, Clara struggles with her identity and the desire to fit in. Early on in the novel, Clara is a girl who fits in among her friends at school, yet she's restless. While she doesn't realize it, she's searching for something more—"Now do you understand, Clara? Why your spirit was restless? I thought for a moment. "Because I was looking for something, but I didn't know what it was. Something hidden. The thing that makes me feel alive" (p. 174). In Yucuyoo she finds what she's looking for and allows herself to become the person she wants to be, not the person that her best friends from back home think she should be. While not filled with the angst of many books that tackle similar themes, Clara's transformation is still quite powerful and has the potential to provide the space for classroom discussions around identity, values, and acceptance.

Set in the village of Yucuyoo, in Oaxaca, Mexico *What the Moon Saw* is an excellent book to use to teach literacy through Social Studies. Through Resau's novel, students will learn about what rural indigenous life in Oaxaca, Mexico is like. Just as regions of the United States vary greatly, so do the countries of Latin America. Often our students get overly simplified pictures of what life is like in other countries, this book provides the opportunity to teach about the diversity of Mexico through discussions of indigenous groups and languages in Mexico. Resau references both Spanish and Mixteco words, demonstrating that not everyone in Mexico speaks just Spanish. As Clara's father's story unfolds, connections to the contemporary issues surrounding immigration are easy to draw out. The novel encourages students to move beyond polarizing statements about immigration and to think about it on a more personal level. Clara's father's experience could easily be the catalyst to discuss questions such as—What must one give up or sacrifice to immigrate? Why do people feel pressured to immigrate? What about the family left behind, what happens to them? How does immigration affect families who are separated?

It's the perfect book for younger teenage readers. It grapples with the same issues of identity that many of our students are struggling through. It provides the space to discuss important contemporary issues, while also providing content knowledge about Mexico.

LESSON PLANS & ACTIVITIES

The following lesson plans are comprised of two sections:

- A short section of suggested activities that can be used before, during or after the reading of the novel which are organized thematically by different subject areas
- Guided reading questions organized by parts of the book and extended response writing prompts. These questions have been written to support the types of reading and critical thinking skills required in standardized reading comprehension tests. The following key words and skills are highlighted: analyze, infer, evaluate, describe, support, explain, summarize, compare, contrast and predict.

There are a number of other great discussion guides with questions perfect for extended response or essay assessments that will complement the guide included here quite well. These have been linked to below:

- [Moodle](#)
- [Resau's Discussion Guide](#)
- [Reader's Log created by Beth Knees](#)
- [Random House Publication](#) with one-page guides to all of Laura Resau's young adult novels

Common Core Standards Addressed:

K-12

Reading

Key Ideas and Details

- Read closely to determine what the text says explicitly and to make logical inferences from it; cite specific textual evidence when writing or speaking to support conclusions drawn from the text.
- Determine central ideas or themes of a text and analyze their development; summarize the key supporting details and ideas.
- Analyze how and why individuals, events, and ideas develop and interact over the course of a text.

Craft and Structure

- Interpret words and phrases as they are used in a text, including determining technical, connotative, and figurative meanings, and analyze how specific word choices shape meaning or tone.
- Analyze the structure of texts, including how specific sentences, paragraphs, and larger portions of the text (e.g., a section, chapter, scene, or stanza) relate to each other and the whole.

- Assess how point of view or purpose shapes the content and style of a text.

Range of Reading and Level of Text Complexity

- Read and comprehend complex literary and informational texts independently and proficiently.

Integration of Knowledge and Ideas

- Integrate and evaluate content presented in diverse media and formats, including visually and quantitatively, as well as in words.

Writing

Text Types and Purposes

- Write arguments to support claims in an analysis of substantive topics or texts, using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
- Write informative/explanatory texts to examine and convey complex ideas and information clearly and accurately through the effective selection, organization, and analysis of content.

Production and Distribution of Writing

- Produce clear and coherent writing in which the development, organization, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
- Develop and strengthen writing as needed by planning, revising, editing, rewriting, or trying a new approach.

Research to Build and Present Knowledge

- Conduct short as well as more sustained research projects based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject under investigation.
- Gather relevant information from multiple print and digital sources, assess the credibility and accuracy of each source, and integrate the information while avoiding plagiarism.
- Draw evidence from literary or informational texts to support analysis, reflection, and research.

Guided Reading Questions

Prologue | Pages 1-2

1. Predict: What do you think the relationship between the woman and the girl is? What connects them? (p. 1-2)

Chapter 1 | Pages 3-18

1. What does Clara Luna mean? (p. 3)
2. What grade is Clara in? (p. 3)
3. Why do you think the replica of the neighborhood with the miniature version of herself bothered Clara? (p. 5)
4. Where is Clara's father from? How did her family end up in suburban Maryland? (p. 5)
5. What do both the woman and Clara see? What do you think this

- represents? (p. 7)
6. Why do you think getting in stream makes Clara feel the way she describes on her run back home? Have you ever done anything that made you feel that way? (p. 8)
 7. What do Clara's parents fear when they realize she's not sleeping in her room? (p. 9-10)
 8. Who is the letter from? What does it say? (p. 11-12)
 9. Do Clara's parents want her to go to Oaxaca? Why? Does Clara want to go? Why? (p. 13-16)
 10. What does Clara picture when she thinks of her grandparents' home? (p. 18)

Chapter 2 | Pages 19-41

1. How does Clara describe her grandparents when she first sees them? (p. 19)
2. Who does Clara look more like, Abuela or Abuelo? (20)
3. How many different buses do they have to take to get to the house? (p. 22-25)
4. In addition to Spanish, what language do Abuela and Abuelo speak? (p. 32)
5. What does their home look like? Is Clara surprised? How would you have felt if you were Clara? What would you have thought? (p. 35-37)
6. Clara is upset when she realizes there will be no movies, no computer, no entertainment for two months. She asks "Who am I without all these things that fill up my life?" (p. 37). What things fill up your life or define who you are or what you do? Who do you think you'd be without those things?
7. Who is Loro? What does he say to Clara? Who does it remind Clara of? (p. 39)
8. What is the one thing that Clara's father has told her about Abuela?(p. 41)

Chapter 3 | Pages 42-52

1. How old was Abuela when she took her first soul flight? (p. 42)
2. What does Ta'nu do? (p.43)
3. What happened to the young girl? Why did her parents bring her to Ta'nu? (p. 44)
4. What is holding the girl's spirit prisoner? (p. 45)
5. What does Abuela have to do in order to save both Ta'nu and the young girl? (p. 48-50)
6. What watches over Abuela while she is in her soul flight? (p. 50)
7. What is her spirit animal? (p. 51)
8. What does Abuela have to do after staying up all night? Why does she have to work while Ta'nu can rest? (p. 52)

Chapter 4 | Pages 53-71

1. Does Clara feel like her outside self matches her inside self? How does she describe it? Have you ever felt this way? Explain. (p. 53)
2. Where do Clara's grandparents get their food? How is this different

-
- from where your family gets their food? (p. 54)
 3. Is there a map of Yucuyoo? Why? (p. 58-59)
 4. What did Clara hear during her hike? What does she learn about this from her grandparents? (p. 59)
 5. Why did Abuela invite Clara to come to Yucuyoo for the summer? (p. 61)
 6. What happens when Clara turns over the rock she's laying on? Who warns her? (p. 65-66)
 7. What does Clara find out about the boy who saved her? (p. 69-70)

Chapter 5 | Pages 72-91

1. What happened the second time that Abuela took a soul flight? (p. 73)
2. How does Abuela's uncle feel about her? (p. 74-76)
3. How did Abuela's father die? (p. 78)
4. Where does Uncle Jose want Abuela to go? What will she do there? (p. 74, 79-81)
5. How is Abuela treated when she first arrives at don Manuel's house? How is this different from what she expected or the traditions of her village? (p. 86-87)
6. Who becomes Abuela's friend when she is working as a maid for don Manuel? (p. 87-88)
7. How does doña Carmen deal with don Manuel's treatment? What does she do to make herself feel better? (p. 90-91)

Chapter 6 | Pages 92-117

1. Is Pedro embarrassed when Clara catches him singing? How does Pedro's music make Clara feel? (p. 94)
2. Why does it surprise Clara that Pedro thinks of her as an American? How does she answer when Pedro asks her what she thinks she is? (p. 95-96)
3. How does Pedro describe himself? What can you infer from Pedro's answer about what he thinks of himself? If you had to predict what he is most sensitive about, what do you think it would be? (p. 96)
4. How does Pedro compare to Clara's friends and schoolmates back in the U.S.?
5. Clara initially loves the gifts her father brings her from work. What changes this? (p. 98)
6. Why does Clara have such a hard time drawing Pedro? What upsets Pedro? (p. 101-103)
7. Why did so many of the men leave Yucuyoo? (p. 105-106)
8. What does Clara dream about? What does Pedro tell her she should have done in her dream? (p. 107)
9. Why does Pedro's explanation of the meaning of his songs upset Clara? What does she think they're about? How does Clara defend her father? Why do you think she runs away from Pedro? (p. 109-113)
10. What makes Clara feel better the next day? (p. 116-117)

Chapter 7 | Pages 118-131

1. Why is Silvia so mean to Loro? (p. 119)
2. How does doña Carmen punish Helena? (p. 121)
3. What did doña Three Teeth do to end up in jail? (p. 126-129)

Chapter 8 | Pages 132-148

1. What does Abuela do for Clara? What does Clara realize about the heron? (p. 133-135)
2. How does the limpia change Clara? (p. 135-136)
3. What does Clara learn about her father while working with Abuelo? (p. 137-142)
4. What happens at the market? (p.142-146)

Chapter 9 | Pages 149-162

1. What does Silvia say to Helena when she stops by the jail? (p. 150)
2. What happens when Helena enters the dreams of Silvia? What does Silvia do as a result?(p. 151-153)
3. How has Silvia changed? (p. 154-155)
4. Who does Helena bring back to the village? (p. 156)
5. How does Uncle treat Helena when she returns? (p. 159-160)
6. How has Helena changed since she left the village? (p. 158-160)
7. How does Ta'nu help Helena understand that it is his time to die? (p. 160-162)

Chapter 10 | Pages 163-180

1. How do Clara and Pedro apologize to each other? (p. 164-165)
2. What happened to Pedro's father? (p. 166)
3. How did Pedro know that Clara was looking for the waterfall too? (p. 167)
4. What happened when students spoke Mixteco at school? What happened as a result? (p. 168)
5. What do Abuela and Clara do to help heal the young girl who was stung by the scorpion? (p. 170-172)
6. How does Clara's impression of Felipe and Diego change after she sees them with their sister? (p. 173-176)
7. How does Clara assure Pedro that she's not interested in Felipe? (p. 178-179)

Chapter 11 | 181-197

1. What does the man tell Helena they must do if they don't want the illness to spread to their village? (p. 184-185)
2. What does Helena's aunt need after she has the baby? Why is this dangerous? (p. 187-191)
3. How does Helena help the officer? Does he arrest her? (p. 192-196)

Chapter 12 | Pages 198-215

1. What is the purpose of the green feather, the egg, and the cocoa beans? (p. 198-199)
2. What are some of the things that Clara realizes she is thankful for? What kinds of things are you thankful for? (p. 199-200)
3. Clara has a feeling that something is going to happen soon. Predict what you think it is. (p. 200)

4. When one of the goats falls into the hole, Clara and Pedro realize that they've found something. What have they discovered? (p. 202)
5. How does Pedro get hurt when they're trying to leave the waterfall? How does Clara try to counter the sting of the scorpions? (p. 208)
6. How does Clara find her way out of the cave? (p. 211-214)

Chapter 13 | Pages 216-236

1. Why doesn't Helena want to get married? (p. 218-219)
2. How does Helena scare don Norberto so that he doesn't hurt her? (p. 221)
3. What do don Norberto and Uncle Jose agree upon? (p. 222)
4. How does Helena escape from don Norberto? (p. 227-228)
5. Who rescues Helena from dying in the forest? (p. 230)
6. What happens to doña Three Teeth once she is released from the jail? How does she find Helena? (p. 231-232)
7. How does Helena end up in Yucuyoo? (p. 234)
8. Who is the man with one green eye and one brown eye? (p. 236)
9. How does Helena meet Abuelo? (p. 235-236)

Chapter 14 | Pages 237-249

1. Who is Pedro's great grandmother? (p. 239)
2. Why do you think it's so hard for Pedro and Clara to explain about the waterfall? (p. 239-240)
3. What will Pedro's songs continue to remind Clara of even once she has returned to Walnut Hill? (p. 243)
4. Why do you think Pedro leaves instead of helping Clara to pack? What are Pedro and Clara feeling about her return to Walnut Hill? (p. 244-245)
5. Does Pedro come to say goodbye to Clara? What does he give her? (p. 248)

Chapter 15 | Pages 250-252

1. How has Clara's relationship with her Dad changed since her summer in Yucuyoo? (p. 250-252)

Epilogue | Page 253

1. What do you think the Epilogue is trying to tell us? (p. 253)
2. Do you think the Clara returns to Yucuyoo? Why or why not?

Reflective Writing Questions

1. Think about how girls were treated when Helena (Abuela) was growing up? Were men and women treated equally? How did Helena have to fight against the stereotypes to do what she wanted? What did she have to sacrifice in order to do this?
2. How does Clara's attitude toward Yucuyoo and her grandparents change throughout the novel? Think about how she felt about visiting before her trip and how she felt when it was time for her to return to Walnut Hill.
3. How does Clara change or evolve by the end of the novel? Is she the same person she was at the beginning of the book?

	<p>4. Through her trip to Mexico Clara learns a great deal both about her grandmother and her father. What does she learn about her father? How does this change her perception of him? How do you think this knowledge changes Clara?</p>
<p>ABOUT US & THIS GUIDE</p>	<p>The Latin American & Iberian Institute (LAI) receives resources from the U.S. Department of Education to support K-12 teaching about Latin America. Our goal is to provide a supportive environment for teaching across grade levels and subject areas so educators can bring regional and linguistic knowledge of Latin America into their classrooms. For more information and materials that support teaching about Latin America in the classroom, visit our website at http://laii.unm.edu/outreach</p> <p>Written by staff at the LAI, Vamos a Leer Educator's Guides provide an excellent way to teach about Latin America through literacy. Each guide is based upon a book featured in the Vamos a Leer book group. For more on Vamos a Leer, visit our blog at bit.ly/vamosaleer. This guide was prepared 4/2013 by Katrina Dillon, LAI Project Assistant, and Neoshia Roemer, LAI Graduate Assistant.</p> <p>To complement this guide, the LAI oversees the Vamos a Leer blog, which provides a space for exploring how to use literature to teach about Latin America, the Caribbean, and Latinos in the United States. In addition to promoting discussion, the blog shares relevant resources and curriculum materials. Visit the blog at the following address: http://bit.ly/vamosaleer.</p>