

Author Spotlight with Pat Mora



You've said that you're a writer because you're a reader. What book or books are you currently reading? Do you have a favorite genre or type of book?

I usually read a number of books at once. I'm currently reading *The Solace of Fierce Landscapes: Exploring Desert and Mountain Spirituality* by Belden C. Lane, *The Authentic Gardener* by Claire E. Sawyers, *The Maytrees* by Annie Dillard, and *Art & Love*, selected poems by Kate Farrell. I'm also skimming a number of books on poetic form. Poetry is my favorite genre.

You've traveled extensively, and there is often a strong sense of place in your work. What places have you connected with in your travels, and how have they influenced your creative process?

I'm looking out at the beautiful Sangre de Cristo Mountains and soft Santa Fe hills. I cherish this landscape and am deeply inspired by it. The desert, though stark and forbidding to some, is my home. Although I haven't visited the continents of Africa or Australia, I've been blessed to travel quite a bit. I've written essays about some of those trips in *Nepantla: Essays from the Land in the Middle*, recently published in paperback by the University of New Mexico Press. I've written nonfiction and poetry about travel in Latin America, Pakistan, India, Greece, Bali, and Japan, but I wouldn't say those trips influenced or altered my creative process: I read, mull, play on the page, revise and revise. I would say that by traveling in and out of the U.S., I was offered wonderful material. I revel in all kinds of landscapes, marveling at nature's wonders.

You've written over thirty books ranging from memoir to poetry to picture books. How do you find the time to write so prolifically, and where do you get ideas for so many books?

I'm constantly moaning to anyone who'll listen how much I long for more time to write. I feel very grateful to the editors, publishers—and readers!—who have cared about my work. My focus is the future, though, and how to find or create the time for the books that I long to write. Perhaps because I didn't invest in writing until I was in my thirties, I have more ideas than time to write.

***Join Hands* is a celebration of celebration itself, in a way that shows kids having fun and being silly. What is your favorite way to celebrate? How do you keep silliness in your own life?**

Family and friends are very, very important to me. I love to cook for my grown children when I can lure them to Santa Fe, and I like to have friends over for a meal. Occasionally, I have a gathering for women friends in the late afternoon and select a theme for our chatting as we nibble what I serve.

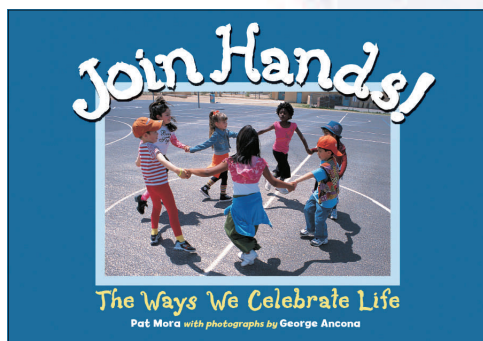
I love the question about silliness! I don't know that people would describe me with the word, but like my dad, I do love to tease, and I love to send my children e-mails about the silly mistakes I've made. I'll confess that I also enjoy making up preposterous things and saying them to my husband in a serious voice. He usually believes me.

You came up with the idea of El dia de los ninos/El dia de los libros, Children's Day/Book Day, a year-long commitment to connecting children to books, languages, and cultures that culminates in celebrations across the country on April 30th. What is the one piece of advice that you can give to parents who want to instill a passion for reading in their children?

Share bookjoy! I coined the word "bookjoy" because that's how those of us who love reading feel. If daily family reading time is fun and special, children connect reading with closeness and pleasure. Since children learn by example, it's important for children to see parents reading and enjoying books, magazines, newspapers, etc.

Pat Mora has won numerous awards, including the Golden Kite Award, a Pura Belpré Honor Award, and the National Hispanic Cultural Center Literary Award. In March of 2008 Pat was elected to honorary membership in the American Library Association, the ALA's highest honor in recognition of outstanding contributions of lasting importance to libraries. Pat is the mother of three children and lives in Santa Fe, New Mexico.

Books by Pat Mora



978-1-58089-202-5 • HC • \$15.95
978-1-58089-203-2 • PB • \$6.95
Ages 4-7

Friends come together to sing, dance, and play in this tribute to community.

Pat Mora weaves the repeating lines of a pantoum, a Malaysian poetic form, into a joyful celebration while George Ancona's energetic photos capture the ways of enjoying good times with others.

“Lively photographs celebrate both individuality and community.”
—*Kirkus Reviews*