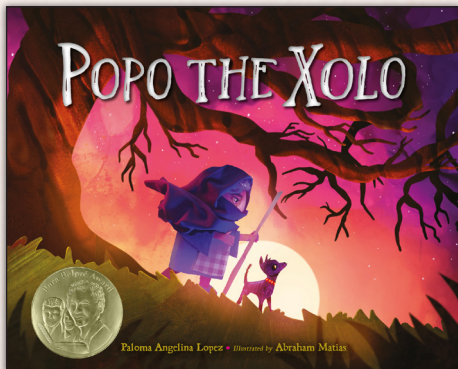


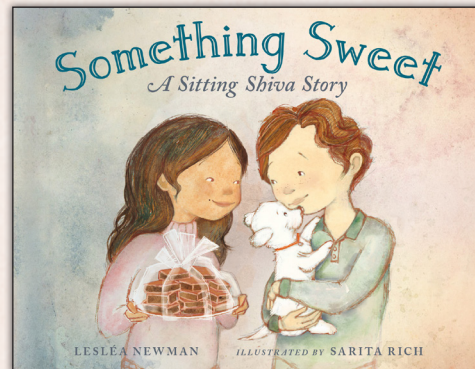
HARD TOPICS FOR KIDS

 Charlesbridge

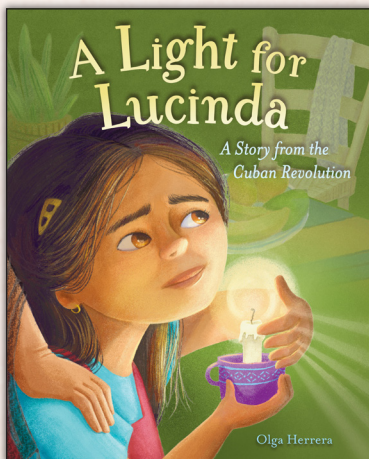
Children need guidance in hard times, but just when it's most important to talk with them, it can be difficult to find the right words. These stories provide entry points to talk about death, grief, mental health, and other difficult topics in an age-appropriate and supportive way.



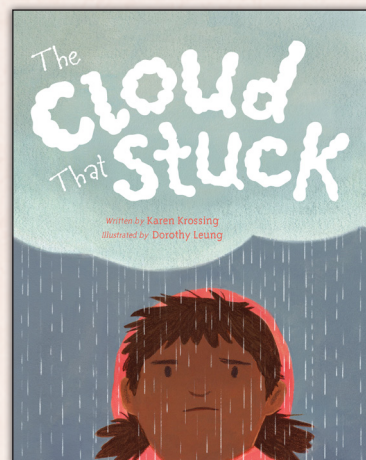
978-1-62354-457-7 English HC
978-1-62354-458-4 Spanish HC
Death and mourning
Cultural and spiritual role of xolo dogs



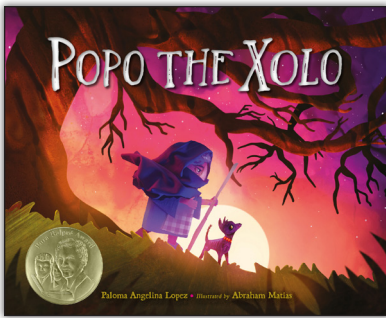
978-1-62354-571-0 HC
Death and mourning
Supporting a friend
Participating in another culture's rituals



978-1-62354-759-2 English HC
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Coping with change
Creating stability in community upheaval



978-1-62354-572-7 English HC
Coping with change
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Death and mourning

Cultural and spiritual role of xolo dogs



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Popo help Nana, both in life and on her journey to the afterlife?
2. What are the steps Nana goes through on her final journey? What are some of her thoughts and feelings while passing through the nine levels of Mictlān?
3. In the author's note, Paloma Angelina Lopez writes about how she found comfort when grieving her nana. What are some ways to connect with the memory of a loved one who has passed on?

MEMORY BOX ACTIVITY

Certain memories and special items from a loved one can help us feel connected to them.

When you feel ready, try collecting some meaningful items in a small box, photo album, or other clean and safe container. Some possible items for this memory box include:

- Photographs
- Letters, cards & notes
- Jewelry or clothing
- Pressed flowers or plants
- Mementos from an important place, like a brochure from a national park you visited together or ticket stubs from your loved one's favorite movie
- Written descriptions of your favorite memories with the person

- A copy of a poem, book, or music album the person loved
- A meaningful quote
- A craft or piece of art that the person created or that you created for them

If you wish, you can decorate your memory box and/or find a special place in your home to keep it safe. At times when you feel ready, or on significant dates such as a birthday or anniversary, you can share your memory box with a trusted person and talk about your loved one.

PET APPRECIATION TIPS

April 11 is National Pet Day in the United States, but you can show appreciation for your pet every day.

Consider these ideas to show your pet some extra love:

- Offer a delicious treat (look up safe treat foods for your pet's species!).
- Create a special place for them—build a doghouse for your pooch, put up a new cat tree for your feline friend, or add a new hide to your reptile's enclosure.
- Share affection in a way that your pet appreciates—gently petting your bird, carrying your rat around the house, or snuggling with your dog on the couch.
- Go on a trip to an exciting new destination, such as a new dog park or a hiking trail for your leashed cat to explore.



978-1-62354-571-0 HC

Death and mourning

Supporting a friend

Participating in another culture's rituals



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are some of Lizzie's ideas for cheering Joshua up? In the end, what helps Joshua feel better?
2. What are some of the shiva traditions that Joshua's family observes? How are they similar or different from other mourning traditions you know?
3. In the author's note, Lesléa Newman gives more information about shiva traditions. What did you learn from this note that was not shown in the book?

SOMETHING SWEET EVERY DAY

Joshua's grandfather tells him to eat something sweet every day, saying "life shouldn't be bitter."

What are some ways you can enjoy a literal or metaphorical sweet every day? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- Listen to a favorite song
- Get up early to watch the sunrise or wait up to watch the sunset
- Read a joke or poem
- Hug a loved one
- Play with a pet
- Visit a special place like a favorite park or a local museum
- Learn to make a favorite food or dessert

- Spend time in a garden or tending to a potted plant
- Appreciate the smell of the rain or a newly-opened flower

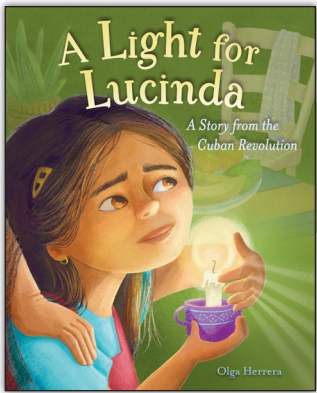
If you keep a diary, consider writing about your "sweet of the day" or using a small sticker to indicate days you enjoyed something sweet.

FAMILY STORIES

Many families have stories they like to tell about their loved ones, both living and passed on. Ask your grown-ups to share a family story with you!

You can extend this idea by using a phone or other device to record the story, writing it down and illustrating it, or asking multiple grown-ups in your family to share their favorite stories and gathering them into a collection.

There may even be a museum or archival project that is interested in collecting your family's stories for their records. You can find a list of some oral history centers and collections at the Oral History Association: <https://oralhistory.org/centers-and-collections>.



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Coping with change
Creating stability in community upheaval



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Dangerous and scary things are happening outside Lucinda's house in this book. How does her family protect each other and their neighbors? How does Lucinda give and receive help in this story?
2. What does Lucinda's mother tell her about the things her family can and cannot control?
3. In the author's note, Olga Herrera talks about the conversation that inspired this book. Have you been told stories about your family's history? How does your family acknowledge or connect with their history?

MY HELPERS ACTIVITY

On a spare piece of paper, draw someone in your life who helps you. This could be a family member, teacher, doctor, neighbor, or even a pet! Underneath your drawing, write a sentence describing the person and how they help you with their words, their actions, or in other ways.

Turn the paper over and think about how you can be a helper to others. Draw a picture or write a sentence describing how you can help.

RECIPE: MAMA'S PICADILLO

Follow along to create the dish Mama cooks in *A Light for Lucinda*!

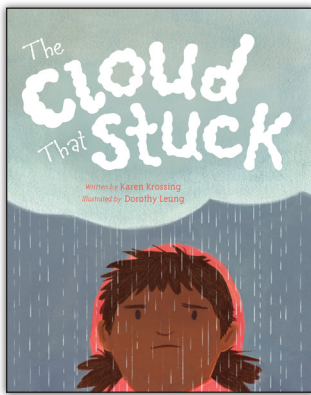
Ingredients

3 tablespoons olive oil
1 yellow onion, diced
1 green pepper, diced
2–3 garlic cloves, minced or crushed
1 bay leaf
cumin, oregano, salt, and pepper (to taste)
1 ½ pounds ground beef
½ cup white cooking wine
⅓ cup dark raisins
½ cup pimiento-stuffed green olives (sliced)
white rice (for serving)

Instructions

Always get a grown-up's help when cooking.

1. Start your sofrito (stir-fry). In a large pan over medium heat, add the olive oil, onion, pepper, garlic, bay leaf, and spices, and cook until the onion is translucent.
2. Add the ground beef and sizzle until browned. Add the white cooking wine, raisins, and olives, and keep mixing until the meat is thoroughly cooked. The picadillo will be juicy, but you can keep it over heat to evaporate some of the moisture if you wish.
3. Remove the bay leaf, serve the picadillo over white rice, and enjoy!



978-1-62354-572-7 HC
Coping with change
Mental health
Supporting a friend



DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. How does Tansy feel about her cloud at first? Why do you think her feelings change over time?
2. Who helps Tansy with her cloud? Are all their attempts to help successful? What are some things that each person tries before finding a way to help that is supportive for Tansy?
3. In the author's note, Karen Krossing talks about coping with problems that cannot be solved. What are some of the ways that Karen chooses to react to a challenging situation? Have you ever used these strategies when faced with a challenge? Who are people you can ask for support?

MY CLOUD

Draw the outline of a cloud in the middle of a blank sheet of paper. Inside the cloud, write down some things that are disappointing, frustrating, or scary—problems that you can't solve on your own.

Outside the cloud, write the name of a person or people who can help you when these problems occur. Think about Tansy's example in *The Cloud That Stuck*—how did she find a way to live with her cloud? Write down some things you can do to cope with the problems written in your cloud, either alone or with the support of others.

GROWING A GARDEN

Tansy finds a way to use her cloud to water a garden plot. Gardening is a fun activity that can be very supportive and relaxing. Try the following steps to start your own garden:

1. Seek the help of a grown-up for garden planning.
2. Assess your space: Do you have a backyard, a community plot, or a sunny windowsill? How much room do you have? What are the weather and soil conditions like? Will your plants need to grow in pots, or can they go directly in the soil?
3. Select your plant species and source seeds or cuttings. Consider finding native plants through a local conservation district, state parks program, or community nonprofit. Some organizations also run local seed banks, which can be a great way to find free or low-cost seeds. Don't forget pots, watering cans or hoses, stakes, trellises, and other necessary tools and supplies.
4. Plant and tend your garden. The plants may require daily or weekly attention. Even if nothing technically needs to be done on a certain day, you can still visit and admire your garden. Consider journaling about your plants or sharing pictures with friends and family.