

René Colato Laínez

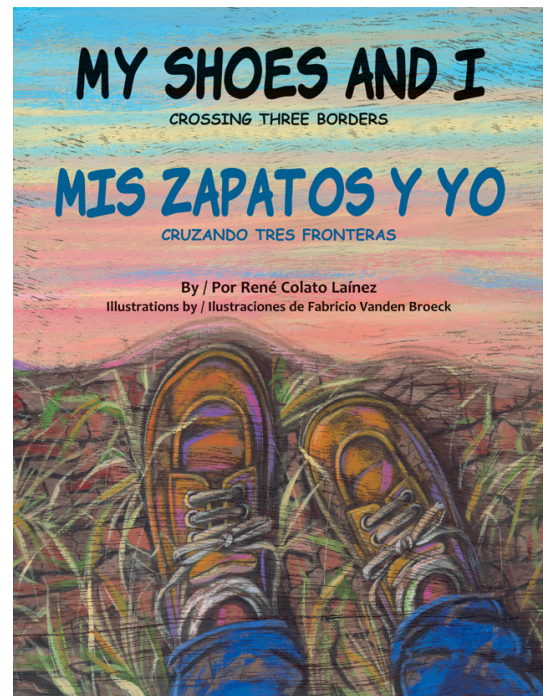
My Shoes and I: Crossing Three Borders



RENÉ COLATO LAÍNEZ is the author of numerous picture books for children, including *Mamá the Alien / Mamá la extraterrestre* (Lee & Low Books, 2016), *From North to South / Del norte al sur* (Children's Book Press, 2013), *René Has Two Last Names / René tiene dos apellidos* (Arte Público Press, 2009) and *I Am René, the Boy / Soy René, el niño* (Arte Público Press, 2005). He is an elementary school teacher in Los Angeles, California.

Young René's mother has sent him a new pair of shoes from the United States. He loves his new shoes. "They walk everywhere I walk. They jump every time I jump. They run as fast as me. We always cross the finish line at the same time."

René—with his new shoes—and his father set off on the long journey to meet his mother in the United States. He says goodbye to his friends in El Salvador, and "Uno, dos, tres, my shoes and I are ready to go." The trip is difficult. They take buses and walk across El Salvador, into Guatemala and then into Mexico. His brand-new shoes lose their shine, turning dirty and gray. They become elephants, pushing against the wind; race cars, fleeing hungry dogs; swim shoes, escaping floods; and submarines, navigating through sticky mud. When holes appear on the soles of his shoes, his father won't let him give up. "René, my strong boy, we want to be with Mamá." Sharing his own experiences, René Colato Laínez's moving bilingual picture book brings to life the experiences of many young children who make the arduous journey from Central America to the United States in search of a better life.



My Shoes and I: Crossing Three Borders

RRS connection to TEKS (2nd-3rd grade): Please refer to TEKS for English Language Arts and Reading:

- *Comprehension skills*
- *Response skills*
- *Author's purpose and craft*
- *Composition I: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--writing process.*
- *Composition II: listening, speaking, reading, writing, and thinking using multiple texts--genres.*
- *Inquiry and research*

Vocabulary:

- Migration
- Family separation
- Immigrant children and families
- Journey
- North American, USA
- Central American: El Salvador, Guatemala City
- Plaza
- Onomatopoeia-Crash, boom, bam!
- Mexico and Mexico City
- Hardship, challenges, resilience, agency, perseverance, strength
- Border
- Literary devices

Pre-reading engagement:

- What does an author do? Think about the title of the book? What does it tell us about the story? What do you think the story is about?
- What does an illustrator do? What did you learn about the illustrator? What does she/he do?
- Learn a little about the author, René. What information about René stands out?
- Ask your librarian to help you find more information about borders. What would you like to learn more about before reading the book?

While/post reading engagement:

- Meet René! René lives in El Salvador. Look for El Salvador on a map and describe its location. Is it North or South? What do you think the weather is like? Find other information about El Salvador.
- Why do you think René's mom lives so far away in the United States?
- Why do René and his father decide to join her?
- René loves the shoes that his mom sends him, he compares them to elephants. Describe your favorite shoes. Why do you love these shoes?
- Look for more pictures of Guatemala City. Use your drawing skills to draw a map of René's journey. Include important sites of each city.
- Describe René and his father. What personality traits do you think they have?
- They finally make it to the border with the help of a great pair of shoes. Think about how René feels and what his shoes mean to him.
- Yay! Mom is there to greet them. They family is finally back together. What will René tell his mom?

- Retell René's story to practice your response skills. You can work with a friend and take turns.
- Can you find any literary devices: Metaphor, Simile, Analogy, Allegory?
- Did you enjoy reading this book? Would you recommend this book to your friends?
- Write a book review with your opinion. You can also share your review of this book aloud.
- Read the author's biography at the end of the book.
- Don't forget to think about questions you would like to ask René.
- Make a welcome banner for René! Decorate it with drawings of your favorite page in the book.

Useful links:

- Author's website: <http://www.renecolatolainez.com/>
- Interview: <https://thelatinoauthor.com/featuredauthors/rene-colato-lainez/>
- Book Review: <https://latinosinkidlit.com/2019/12/05/book-review-my-shoes-and-i-crossing-three-borders-by-rene-colato-lainez-illus-by-fabricio-vanden-broeck/>
- YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCrauXIfd5cED4MF8jeb12FQ>
- Publisher's website: <https://artepublicopress.com/product/my-shoes-and-i-crossing-three-borders-mis-zapatos-y-yo-cruzando-tres-fronteras/>