



**Pedro and the
Monster Eaters**
**Pedro y los devoradores
de monstruos**

By / Por

Xequina María Berbér

Illustrations by / Ilustraciones de

C. Rod. Unalt



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Piñata Books are full of surprises!
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To Pedro Linares who gave the world this amazing and magical craft.

—XMB

*In memory of my beloved mentor Dennis Nolan,
and to keeping the flame burning.*

—CRU



A Pedro Linares quien le dio al mundo esta bella y mágica artesanía.

—XMB

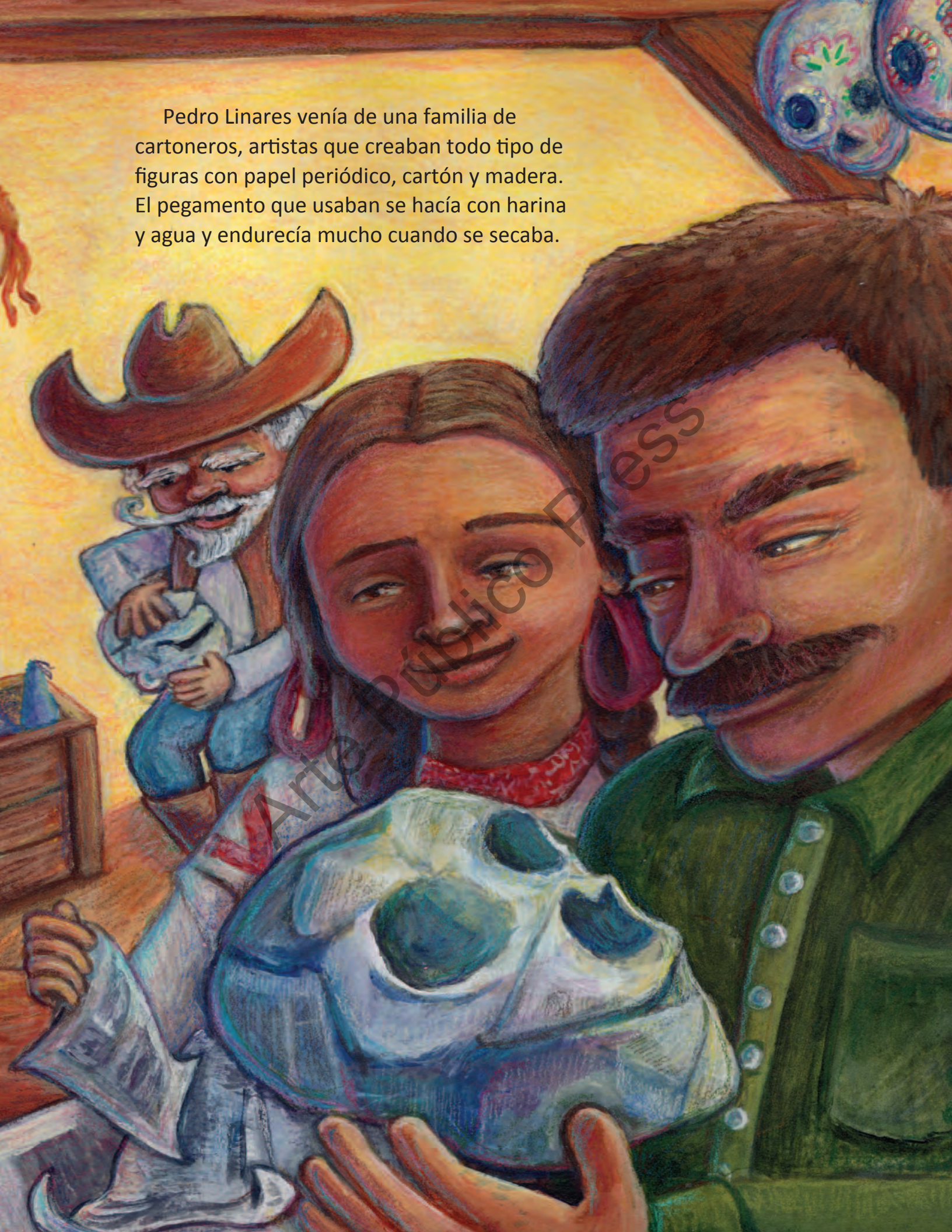
*En memoria de mi querido mentor Dennis Nolan y para mantener la llama
encendida.*

—CRU

Pedro Linares came from a family of *cartoneros*, artists who created all types of sculptures from newspaper, cardboard and wood. They used glue made of flour and water to harden the paper after it dried.




Pedro Linares venía de una familia de cartoneros, artistas que creaban todo tipo de figuras con papel periódico, cartón y madera. El pegamento que usaban se hacía con harina y agua y endurecía mucho cuando se secaba.



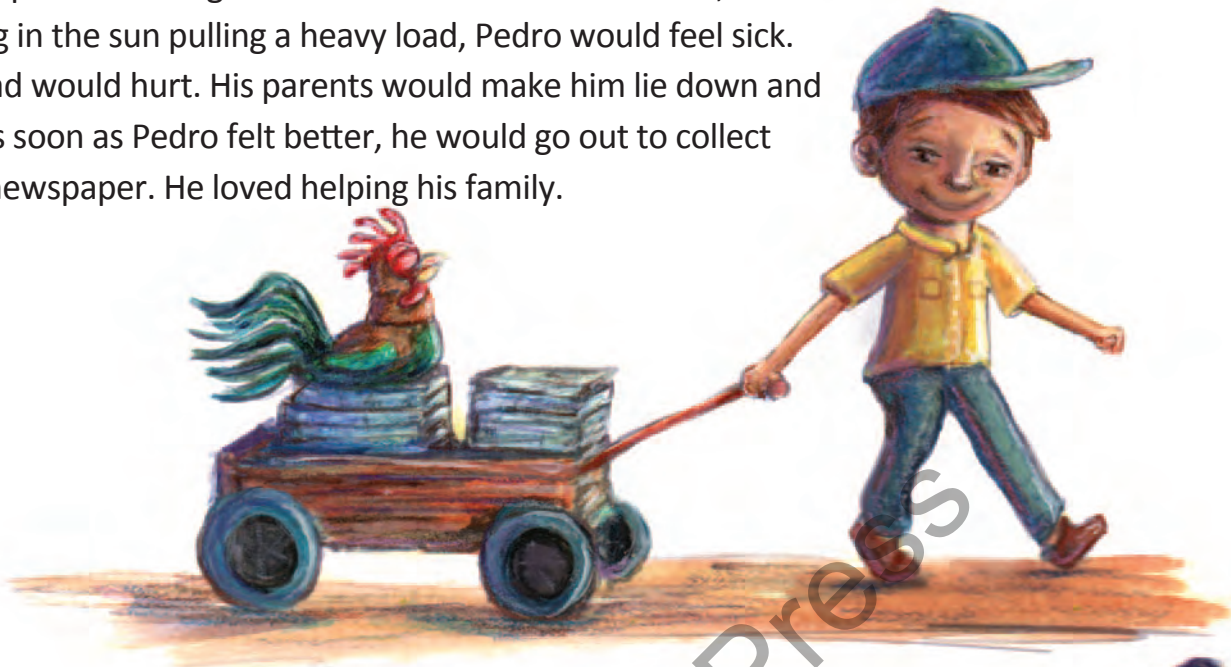
Pedro's whole family worked together to create piñatas, masks, toys and *mojigangas*. *Mojigangas* are giant puppets used in parades and festivals in Mexico. They are hollow so people can get inside and make them dance and twirl.





Todos los miembros de la familia de Pedro compartían el trabajo de crear piñatas, máscaras, juguetes y mojigangas. Las mojigangas son títeres gigantes que se utilizan en desfiles y festivales en México. Son huecos para que la gente pueda meterse adentro y hacerlos bailar y girar.

Pedro's job was to go around his neighborhood collecting old newspapers from neighbors and businesses. Sometimes, after walking in the sun pulling a heavy load, Pedro would feel sick. His head would hurt. His parents would make him lie down and rest. As soon as Pedro felt better, he would go out to collect more newspaper. He loved helping his family.



El trabajo de Pedro era ir por el barrio recogiendo papel de periódico viejo de los vecinos y negocios. A veces, después de caminar bajo el sol jalando la pesada carga, se sentía mal y le dolía la cabeza. Sus padres lo hacían que se acostara a descansar. En cuanto Pedro se sentía mejor, regresaba a buscar periódico. Le encantaba ayudar a su familia.







As Pedro grew older, his family asked him to help with the *mojígangas*. The large, colorful puppets are made to look like famous people, saints and even the devil. At the end of every parade, the *mojígangas* are all put into a big pile and burned. This is why Pedro's family had to make new ones every year.



Pedro became very good at pasting tissue paper over the molds used to shape the heads and bodies.

Cuando Pedro creció, su familia le pidió que ayudara con las mojígangas. Los grandes y coloridos títeres se hacían con caras de gente famosa, santos y hasta el diablo. Al final de cada desfile, las mojígangas se ponen en una pila y se queman. Por eso la familia de Pedro tenía que fabricar nuevas mojígangas cada año.

Pedro era muy diestro en pegar tiras de periódicos sobre los moldes que formaban las cabezas y los cuerpos.









Pedro really enjoyed making *mojigangas*. He would decorate them with big, colorful paper flowers and paint large faces with bright eyes and toothy smiles.

A Pedro le encantaba hacer las *mojigangas*. Las decoraba con flores grandes y coloridas hechas de papel y les pintaba caras grandes con ojos brillantes y sonrisas llenas de dientes.

One day Pedro became very ill. He had a high fever and his head hurt. He slept a lot and had very scary nightmares. In the dreams, the *mojigangas* came alive and chased him.



Un día Pedro se enfermó. Tenía mucha fiebre y le dolía la cabeza. Durmió mucho y tuvo pesadillas aterradoras. En sus sueños, las *mojigangas* estaban vivas y trataban de atraparlo.



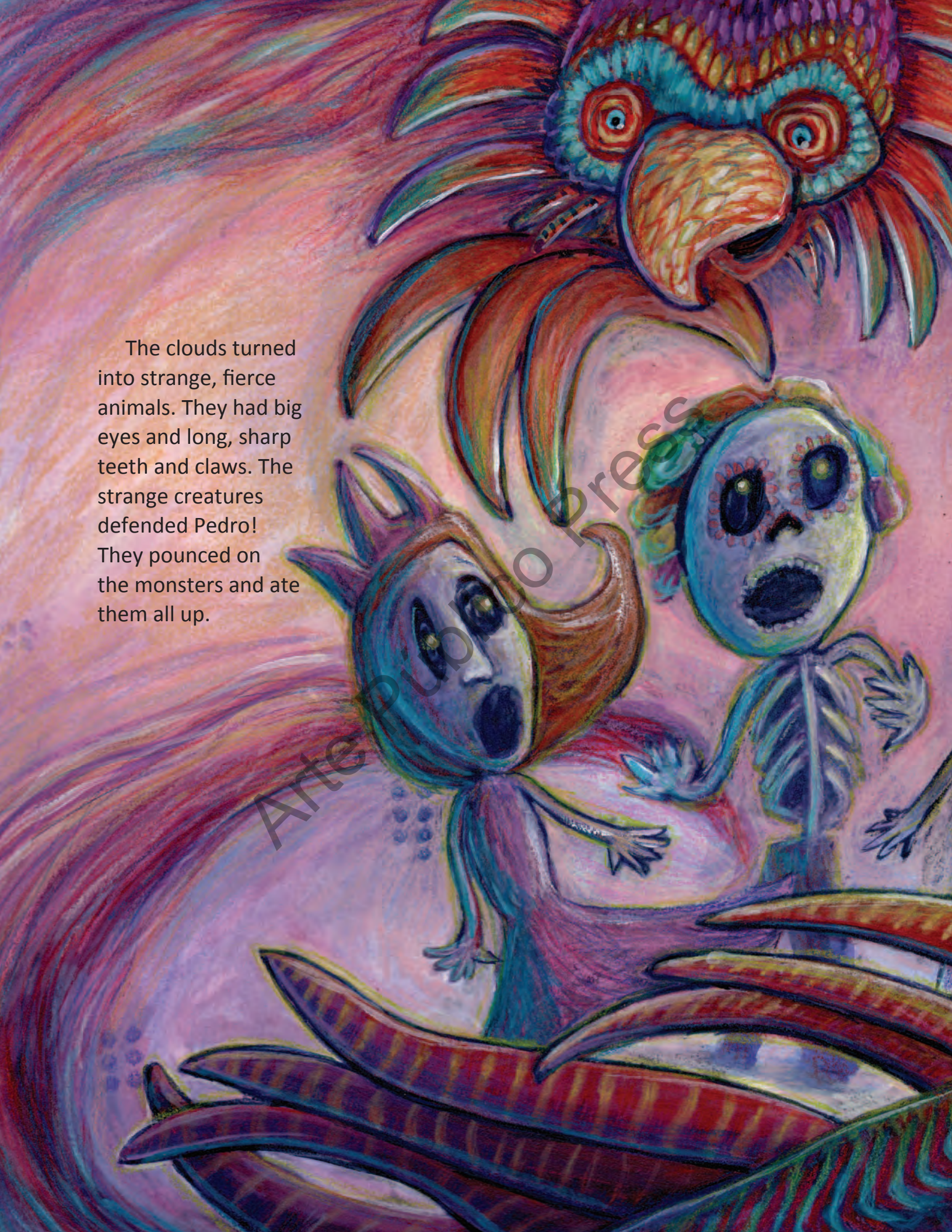


As the monsters chased him, Pedro ran and ran and ran to get away from them. Just when it seemed the monsters were about to snatch him up, he saw clouds overhead and the landscape around him changing shape.

Mientras los monstruos lo perseguían, Pedro corría y corría, tratando de alejarse de ellos. Justo cuando parecía que los monstruos estaban a punto de atraparlo, vio que las nubes y la tierra a su alrededor cambiaban de forma.



The clouds turned into strange, fierce animals. They had big eyes and long, sharp teeth and claws. The strange creatures defended Pedro! They pounced on the monsters and ate them all up.





Las nubes se convirtieron en animales extraños y feroces. Tenían ojos y garras grandes y dientes largos y afilados. ¡Esas extrañas criaturas defendieron a Pedro! Se lanzaron sobre los monstruos y se los comieron.



Once the monsters were gone, the strange animals gathered around Pedro. In spite of their scary appearance, they were kind.

“You are safe now. Those scary monsters will no longer terrorize you or give you nightmares,” they said.

“Thank you,” Pedro said, astonished “but what are you?”

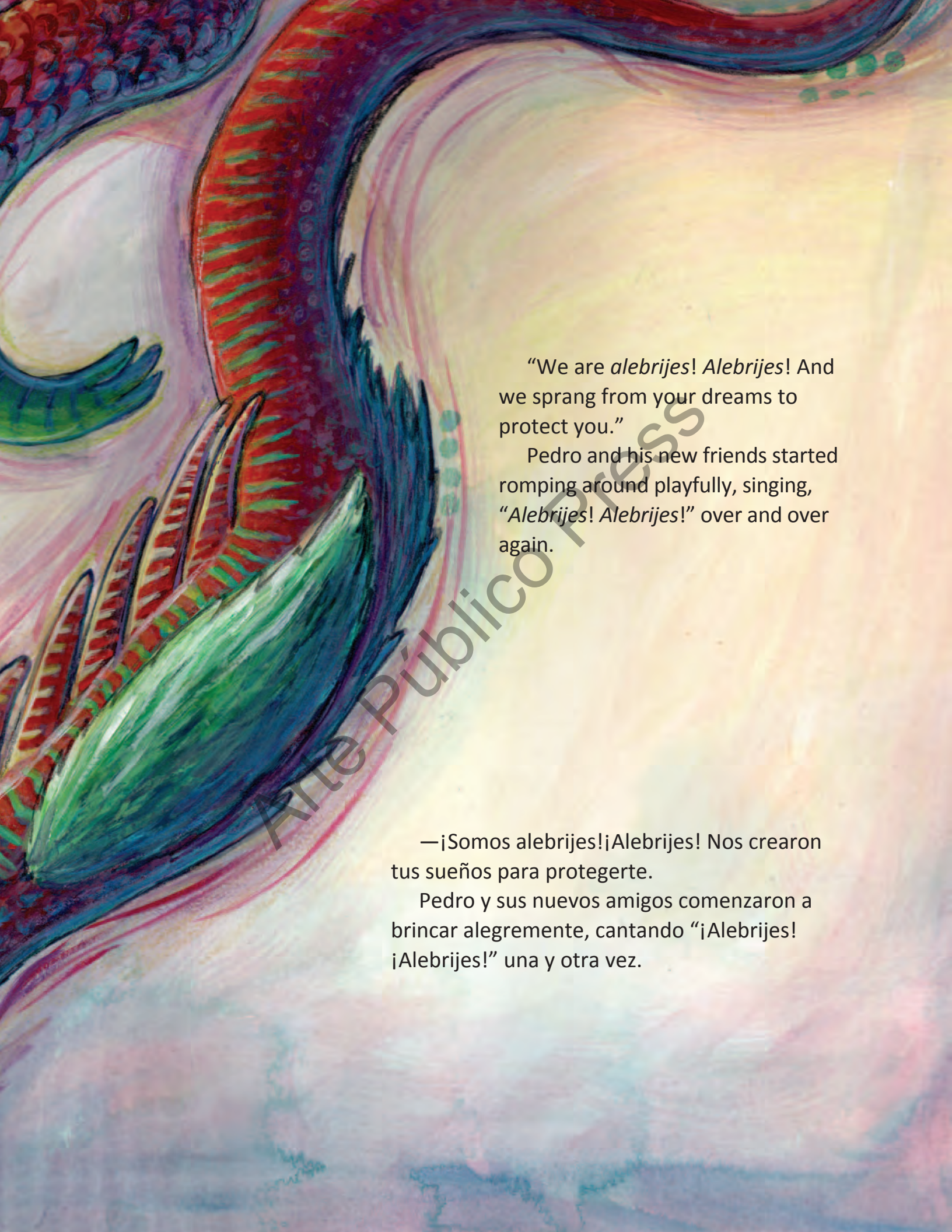
Una vez que los monstruos desaparecieron, los animales extraños se reunieron alrededor de Pedro. A pesar de su espantosa apariencia, eran amables.

—Ya estás a salvo. Esos monstruos aterradores ya no te atormentarán ni te darán pesadillas —le dijeron.

—Gracias —contestó Pedro, mirándolos con asombro—. ¿Pero, qué son ustedes?







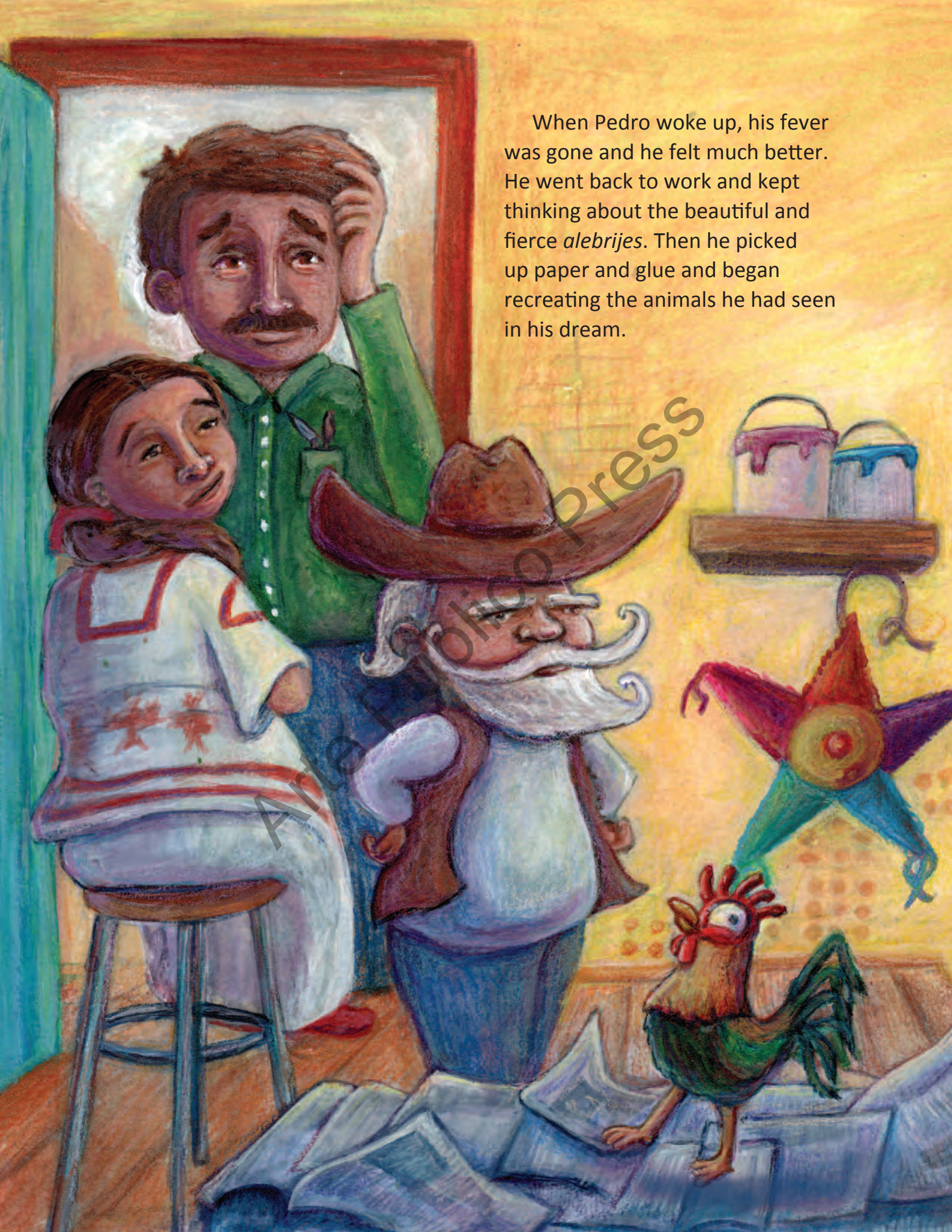
“We are *alebrijes*! *Alebrijes*! And we sprang from your dreams to protect you.”

Pedro and his new friends started romping around playfully, singing, “*Alebrijes*! *Alebrijes*!” over and over again.

—¡Somos *alebrijes*! ¡*Alebrijes*! Nos crearon tus sueños para protegerte.

Pedro y sus nuevos amigos comenzaron a brincar alegremente, cantando “¡*Alebrijes*! ¡*Alebrijes*!” una y otra vez.

When Pedro woke up, his fever was gone and he felt much better. He went back to work and kept thinking about the beautiful and fierce *alebrijes*. Then he picked up paper and glue and began recreating the animals he had seen in his dream.



Cuando Pedro se despertó, su fiebre había desaparecido y se sentía mucho mejor. Volvió al trabajo, pero seguía pensando en los alebrijes, esas hermosas y feroces criaturas. Entonces Pedro tomó papel y pegamento y comenzó a recrear los animales que había visto en su sueño.



He created fantastical figures. Each *alebrije* had parts of different animals. They had big eyes and large mouths with many sharp teeth with which to eat nightmares. Pedro painted his creations with bright colors and intricate patterns.



Creó figuras fantásticas. Cada alebrije tenía partes de animales diferentes. Tenían ojos y bocas grandes con muchos dientes afilados para comer las pesadillas. Pedro pintó sus creaciones con colores vivos y patrones elaborados.



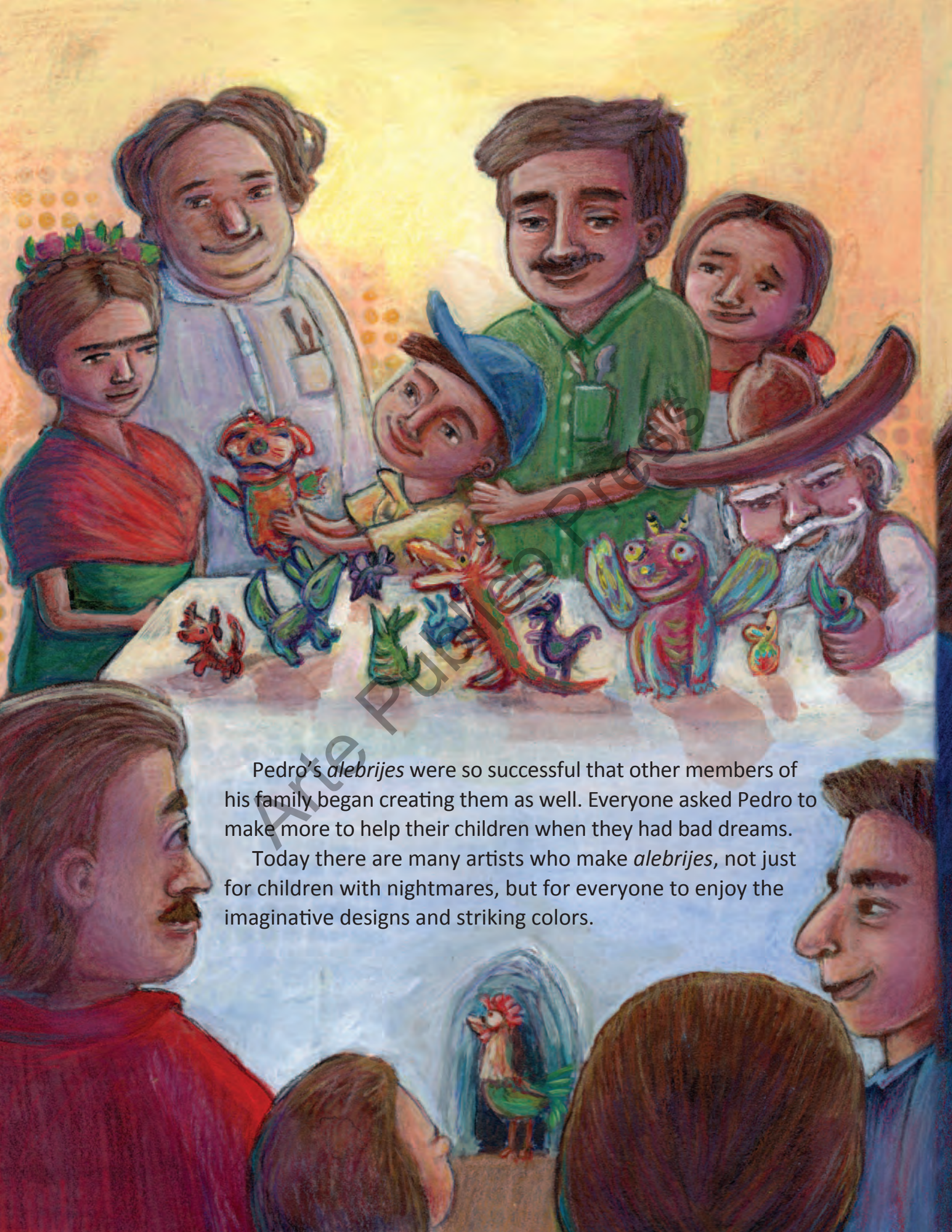




Even though his family liked the *alebrijes*, they asked Pedro to stop making those “monsters” and get back to work. Pedro decided to keep making them after work and soon he had lots to show. People came from all around to see his creatures. They loved the *alebrijes* and bought every single one.

Aunque a su familia le gustaban los alebrijes, le pidieron a Pedro que dejara de hacer esos “monstruos” y volviera al trabajo. Pedro decidió seguir creándolos y muy pronto tuvo muchos para mostrar. Vino mucha gente de todas partes para ver sus creaciones. Les encantaron los alebrijes y los compraron todos.





Pedro's *alebrijes* were so successful that other members of his family began creating them as well. Everyone asked Pedro to make more to help their children when they had bad dreams.

Today there are many artists who make *alebrijes*, not just for children with nightmares, but for everyone to enjoy the imaginative designs and striking colors.

Los alebrijes de Pedro tuvieron tanto éxito que otros miembros de su familia comenzaron a fabricarlos también. Todo el mundo le pedía a Pedro que hiciera alebrijes para proteger a sus hijos de las pesadillas.

Hoy en día, hay muchos artistas que fabrican alebrijes, no sólo para los niños con pesadillas, sino también para encantar a todo el mundo con sus diseños imaginativos y colores brillantes.





Xequina María Berbér has been writing and telling stories since the third grade. She has Master's degrees in Library and Information Science, and a *Maestría* in Women's Spirituality. She wrote a column on Mexican spirituality for *La Post-Modern Curandera* and for the San Francisco *New Mission News*. Her published works include *Santora, the Good Daughter* (2001), *The Mermaid Girl* (2013) and a collection of short stories, *The Only Female Cross-Dresser in Memphis* (2021). She was a co-editor for *Dispatches from Lesbian America* (2017). A traditional Mexican healer, she lives in Oakland with her partner and three ungrateful cats.

Xequina María Berbér ha estado escribiendo y contando historias desde el tercer grado. Tiene dos maestrías, una en Bibliotecología y la otra en Ciencia de la Informática, y una maestría en Espiritualidad de la Mujer. Escribió para una columna *La Post-Modern Curandera* sobre la espiritualidad mexicana y para *New Mission News* de San Francisco. Sus obras incluyen *Santora, the Good Daughter* (2001), *The Mermaid Girl* (2013) y una colección de cuentos, *The Only Female Cross-Dresser in Memphis* (2021). Es co-editora de *Dispatches from Lesbian America* (2017). Ella es una curandera tradicional mexicana y vive en Oakland con su pareja y tres gatos malagradecidos.



Christina Rodriguez-Unalt, or "C. Rod. Unalt," earned her MFA in Illustration at the University of Hartford. She is an assistant professor and program director of a BFA Illustration program in New Jersey. She has published illustrations in numerous children's books, including *¡A bailar! / Let's Dance!* (Piñata Books, 2017), educational textbooks and magazines such as *Spider Magazine*. Her work is predominantly painted in acrylic with colored pencil and has been exhibited around the world, including the Chen Bochui International Children's Literature Award exhibition, where her series, "Worth the Wait" is a part of the permanent museum collection in Shanghai, China. You can view more of her illustrations at www.crodillustration.com.

Christina Rodriguez-Unalt, o "C. Rod. Unalt," se recibió con un MFA en Ilustración de University of Harford. Es profesora asistente y directora del BFA Illustration Program en Nueva Jersey. Ha publicado ilustraciones en varios libros infantiles, entre ellos *¡A bailar! / Let's Dance!* (Piñata Books, 2017), libros de texto y revistas como *Spider Magazine*. Su obra, predominantemente hecha en acrílicos y lápices de colores, se ha exhibido por todo el mundo, incluyendo la exhibición Chen Bochui International Children's Literature Award, en donde su serie "Worth the Wait" forma parte la colección permanente del museo de Shangai, China. Para ver más de sus ilustraciones, visita www.crodillustration.com

Author's Note

This book is loosely based on the life of Pedro Linares (1906-1992), a Mexican artist known for his colorful papier-mâché sculptures of animals. He learned his craft, known as *cartonería*, while working with his family as they made piñatas and other figures for religious celebrations. A serious illness left him bedridden with terrible headaches, fevers and nightmares. One night as he dreamed monsters were chasing him, a group of fantastical creatures—a rooster with horns, a donkey with butterfly wings and an eagle-headed lion—saved him. They called themselves *alebrijes*. After Pedro recovered, he began to recreate the figures in his dream in papier-mâché. His work attracted the interest of other artisans and artists, including Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. Due to his contributions to art and culture, the filmmaker Judith Bronowski made a documentary about him, *Pedro Linares, Artesano Cartonero*, in 1975. In 1990 he won the Mexican National Prize in Arts and Science.

Nota de autora

Este libro está basado libremente en la vida de Pedro Linares (1906-1992), un artista mexicano conocido por sus coloridas esculturas de animales en papel maché. Pedro aprendió su oficio, conocido como cartonería, mientras trabajaba con su familia haciendo piñatas y otras figuras para celebraciones religiosas, pero una grave enfermedad lo dejó en cama con terribles dolores de cabeza, fiebre y pesadillas. Una noche mientras soñaba que lo perseguían monstruos, pero un grupo de criaturas fantásticas (un gallo con cuernos, un burro con alas de mariposa y un león con cabeza de águila) lo salvaron. Se llamaban a sí mismos "alebrijes" y Pedro comenzó a recrearlos en papel maché después de recuperarse. Su trabajo le interesó a otros artesanos y artistas, entre ellos Frida Kahlo y Diego Rivera. Debido a su contribución a la cultura de su país, la cineasta Judith Bronowski realizó el documental *Pedro Linares, Artesano Cartonero*, en 1975, y sus esculturas lo hicieron merecedor del Premio Nacional de Artes y Ciencias de México en 1990.

