

Title: *Letters from Heaven / Cartas del cielo*

Author: Lydia Gil

ISBN-13: 978-1-55885-798-8 **Publication Date:** October 31, 2014

Pages: 116 **Price:** \$9.95 **Trim:** 5 ½ x 8 ½ **Format:** Trade Paperback

Imprint: Piñata Books **Ages:** 8-12

Celeste is heartbroken when her grandmother dies. But everything changes when a letter mysteriously comes in the mail—from Grandma! “I know you miss me as much as I miss you. Don’t be sad. Where there is love, there is no sadness.” As letters continue to arrive from the beyond, each with a recipe of a favorite food her grandmother used to prepare, Celeste consoles herself by learning how to cook the dishes.

Meanwhile, without Grandma’s social security check, Celeste’s mom needs to get a second job to make ends meet. Celeste has to quit dance lessons, and a bully at school gloats that she will replace Celeste as the star in the upcoming recital. To top things off, her friends think that she’s gone crazy; dead people can’t send letters!

When a final letter arrives, Celeste realizes that all the recipes combined make an entire meal: *café con leche*, guava and cheese croissants, *congrí*, plantain chips, *ropa vieja* and flan. Can she really make a Cuban feast to celebrate her cherished grandmother’s life?

A tender story of family and friendship, *Letters from Heaven / Cartas del cielo* celebrates Latino traditions, especially those of the Spanish Caribbean. This entertaining novel is written in ten brief chapters for children ages 8-12 and includes six traditional Cuban recipes with easy-to-follow instructions.

GENRE: Multicultural children’s literature, bilingual kids’ books

SELLING HANDLES:

- A short, bilingual novel for intermediate readers ages 8-12
- Deals with contemporary issues like trouble with friends and death of a grandparent.
- Pays tribute to family and Latino culinary traditions, particularly of the Spanish Caribbean.

AUTHOR CREDENTIALS:

LYDIA GIL was born in Mayagüez, Puerto Rico, of Cuban parents. She is the author of the bilingual children’s picture book, *Mimi’s Parranda / La parranda de Mimi* (Piñata Books, 2007). She teaches at the University of Denver and was a long-time writer for EFE, the leading Spanish-language news agency. She holds a PhD in Spanish from the University of Texas at Austin and a Master of Arts in Comparative Literature from the State University of New York at Buffalo.

PRAISE FOR *LETTERS FROM HEAVEN / CARTAS DEL CIELO*:

- **Named to Dallas ISD's 2016-2017 Luminaries Upper Elementary Reading List**
- **Winner, International Latino Book Award for Best Latino Focused Chapter Book**
- **2015 Américas Award Commended Title**
- **Named to the 2015-2016 Tejas Star Reading List**
- **Winner, 2015 Colorado Authors' League Awards, children's book category**
- **Finalist, 2015 Colorado Book Awards, children's book category**
- **Recipient, 2015 Skipping Stones Honor Award**
- **Finalist, 2015 International Latino Book Awards**

"This bilingual book...is a quick read that balances the pain of loss with mystery and humor. A tender depiction of a child's acceptance of the death of a beloved grandmother and the cultural importance of traditional foods." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"The protagonist, Celeste, moves through a grieving process following the death of her beloved grandmother...Healing begins when the girl receives posthumous letters from Grandma filled with love, advice, and special memories. In spite of quarrels with school friends and a bully who makes her life difficult, Celeste finds solace with the family's network of adult female friends who help her with recipes."

—*School Library Journal*

"This book is emotional, engaging and mysterious. Celeste is an endearing heroine that will win the hearts of readers of all ages." —*The Latina Book Club*

"Add one girl who misses her Abuelita to a handful of coveted Cuban recipes, stir in a pinch of magic, and you get a heartening tale of love, loss, and the healing power of family and friendship."

—Laura Lacámara, author of *Dalia's Wondrous Hair / El cabello maravilloso de Dalia*

"This delightful novel is a *Like Water for Chocolate* for young readers. Celeste rises out of her grief by replacing her sadness with *el sabor* of life, by living as her grandmother did, 'with love and flavor,' even as we are tempted to try the recipes that healed her heart." —Judith Ortiz Cofer, author of *Call Me María*

"A poignant and uplifting story about the special bond only a grandmother and a granddaughter can share. Delicious and magical!" —Reyna Grande, author of *The Distance Between Us*