
Title: *My Shoes and I / Mis zapatos y yo*

Subtitle: *Crossing Three Borders / Cruzando tres fronteras*

Author: René Colato Laínez **Illustrator:** Fabricio Vanden Broeck

Publication Date: May 31, 2019 **Pages:** 32 **Price:** \$18.95 **ISBN-13:** 978-1-55885-884-8

Trim: 8.5" x 11" **Format:** Hardcover **Ages:** 5-9 **Imprint:** Piñata Books

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.

GENRE: Multicultural children's literature, Hispanic/Latino kids' books, Spanish/bilingual kids' books

SELLING HANDLES:

- The experiences of young migrant children traveling to the United States are poignantly portrayed in this bilingual picture book.
- Depicts a warm and loving father/son relationship.
- René Colato Laínez is an award-winning Salvadoran children's book author.

AUTHOR & ILLUSTRATOR CREDENTIALS:

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.

FABRICIO VANDEN BROECK is a designer, illustrator, painter and professor of design at the Universidad Autónoma Metropolitana-Azcapotzalco in Mexico City.

PRAISE FOR *MY SHOES AND I / MIS ZAPATOS Y YO*:

- Selected for inclusion in the In The Margins Fiction Recommendation List for 2020
- Included in the Wisconsin State Reading Association's 2020 Picture This Recommendation List
- Named to *Kirkus Reviews* Best Books of 2019
- Northern Lights Book Award Winner, non-fiction category

"A pair of shoes serves as the constant in a grueling trek across three borders. Young René and Papá together begin a northbound journey, by foot and bus, away from their native El Salvador. As they cross into Guatemala, then Mexico, and finally the United States, the story repeats a chorus of "Uno, dos, tres," representing the number of borders they must cross. It is uncertain whether the father-son team is crossing these borders with required documentation until they are waist-deep in a rushing river before joining Mamá on the other side. If there's a moment when readers realize the perils of their journey, it's here. Nevertheless, Colato Laínez handles the narration gently. Framing the narrative deliberately and at the center of Vanden Broeck's illustrations are René's shoes, often depicted from low angles or bird's-eye views. Brush-stroked spreads depicting various landscapes—lush, green scenes, muddy trails, mountains, cities, the river—are reminiscent of Central American artwork often depicted on murals, souvenir trinkets, or postcards. Not until the last spread does Vanden Broeck finally unveil René's smiling face in its entirety. The bilingual narrative is told in short sentences and enlivened with repetition, running metaphors, and sound effects, easily engaging readers. Inspired by the author's own story, this tale of a young boy's arduous escape serves as a crucial, insightful, and timely light shone on a sensitive, highly relevant subject." —*Kirkus Reviews*

"This inspiring tale soars with real emotions. . . . Will be embraced by a wide audience of readers, young and old."

—*School Library Journal* on *My Shoes and I*

"Offers a timely topic portrayed in an interesting, child-centered way."

—*Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books* on *My Shoes and I*

PRAISE FOR THE WORK OF RENÉ COLATO LAÍNEZ:

"A delightful, original, clever, purposeful, multicultural alien tale."

—*Kirkus Reviews* on *Mamá the Alien/Mamá la extraterrestre*

"[...] sympathy for René's name troubles will be pretty universal."

—*School Library Journal* on *I am René, the Boy/Soy René, el niño*

"The significance of this Hispanic tradition respecting both sides of a child's parentage is well explained in this easily understood example of cultural differences."

—*Kirkus Reviews* on *René Has Two Last Names/René tiene dos apellidos*