



**Pam Muñoz Ryan**

**TeachingBooks Original Movie Transcript**

**Pam Muñoz Ryan, interviewed in her studio in Leucadia, CA on May 23, 2003.**

**This is a transcript of the movie available on TeachingBooks.net. It is offered here to give you a quick assessment of the program topics, as well as to enable people with auditory disabilities access to the words.**

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I speak Spanish. My background is Mexican and Spanish, Italian, Basque, Oklahoman.... I grew up hearing different languages spoken. Actually, I think that that's one reason that I have a real appreciation for the rhythm of language, because when you speak a different language, you have to learn a different rhythm and a different sort of mindset.

### **On Food**

I grew up in a very diverse family, which culturally meant a lot of different types of food. So you'll find a lot of food in my books. You'll find there's food in *Mice and Beans*. There's food in *Esperanza Rising*. There's the recipe in the back of *Amelia and Eleanor Go For a Ride*. In the new book, *How Do You Raise a Raisin?* that's all about raisins and there's recipes in the back of that book as well.

### **Women in History**

I'm very interested in little-known stories about women who persevered against society's expectations, against odds that were stacked against them. After *Riding Freedom* came out, so many educators would say, "Oh, we're so happy that you did this book about this strong female, and the boys in my class love this book as much as the girls."

My book, *Esperanza Rising*, is based on my grandmother, Esperanza Ortega Muñoz. She lived in the farm labor camp that's depicted in the book. It's about Esperanza's sort of journey to becoming somebody she never knew she could become.

I am fascinated by women in history who have made tremendous contributions and also those little-known stories that sort of reflect those things.

*Amelia and Eleanor Go For a Ride* is based on an evening in 1933 when Amelia Earhart spent the night at the White House. And during the course of the formal dinner party, Eleanor Roosevelt asked her what it's like to fly at night. So, she arranged a flight with Eastern Air Transports and took Eleanor on her first night flight over Washington, D.C.

*When Marian Sang* is a picture book biography of Marian Anderson. I loved writing *When Marian Sang*. She was a kindred spirit to many of the other women that I had already written about. She

began singing at a very young age. She was turned down from music school because of her race. She was someone for whom all Americans should and could be proud.

### **The Value of Play**

*Mud is Cake* was sort of my ode to the value of creative play and how very important I think it is. If you watch children playing, left to their own resources, they will establish a scene. This is prewriting. They establish a scene, they assign characters, they make a problem, they create a resolution. I see tremendous value in the dress-up corner, in the art table, in the block area, in the puppet theater and plays in early childhood classrooms. The other thing that I address is daydreaming and pretending, and those are two things that I often tell children are ways to become a good writer.

### **On Being a Writer**

Many people say, “You write so many different types of books; how is it that you can do that?” And one reason is that I get bored really easily and that I love to do something new. That’s the wonderful thing about writing is you get to try on different lives. You get to try on other people’s weaknesses or their strengths, and you can figure out how those might work for yourself.

### **Books by Pam Muñoz Ryan**

- THERE WAS NO SNOW ON CHRISTMAS EVE (illustrated by Dennis Nolan), Hyperion Books for Children, 2006
- NACHO AND LOLITA (illustrated by Claudia Ruida), Scholastic Press, 2005
- BECOMING NAOMI LEÓN, Scholastic Press, 2004
- BOX OF FRIENDS, A (illustrated by Mary Whyte), School Specialty Children’s Publishing / Gingham Dog Books, 2003
- HOW DO YOU RAISE A RAISIN (illustrated by Craig Brown), Charlesbridge Publishing, 2003
- BANDERA QUE AMAMOS, LA (illustrated by Ralph Masiello), Charlesbridge Publishing, 2002
- HELLO OCEAN (illustrated by Mark Astrella), Charlesbridge Publishing, 2002
- MUD IS CAKE (illustrated by David McPhail), Hyperion Books for Children, 2002
- WHEN MARIAN SANG (illustrated by Brian Selznick), Scholastic Press, 2002
- MICE AND BEANS (illustrated by Joe Cepeda), Scholastic Press, 2001
- ESPERANZA RISING, Scholastic Press, 2000
- AMELIA AND ELEANOR GO FOR A RIDE (illustrated by Brian Selznick), Scholastic Press, 1999
- DOUG’S TREASURE HUNT (illustrated by Jumbo Pictures), Disney Press, 1999
- WHERE’S PORKCHOP (illustrated by Jumbo Pictures), Disney Press, 1999
- DOUG COUNTS DOWN (illustrated by Jumbo Pictures), Disney Press, 1998
- FUNNIE FAMILY VACATION, THE (illustrated by Jumbo Pictures), Disney Press, 1998
- RIDING FREEDOM (illustrated by Brian Selznick), Scholastic Press, 1998
- ARMADILLOS SLEEP IN DUGOUTS, AND OTHER PLACES ANIMALS LIVE (illustrated by Diane deGroat), Hyperion Books for Children, 1997
- CALIFORNIA HERE WE COME! (illustrated by Kay Salem), Charlesbridge Publishing, 1997
- PINKY IS A BABY MOUSE, A, AND OTHER BABY ANIMAL NAMES (illustrated by Diane deGroat), Hyperion Books for Children, 1997
- CRAYON COUNTING BOOK, THE (written with Jerry Pallotta; illustrated by Frank Mazzola, Jr.), Charlesbridge Publishing, 1996

- FLAG WE LOVE, THE (illustrated by Ralph Masiello), Charlesbridge Publishing, 1996
- ONE HUNDRED IS A FAMILY (illustrated by Benrei Huang), Hyperion Books for Children, 1994

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