

The Tree Is Older Than You Are: A Bilingual Gathering of Poems & Stories from Mexico

by Naomi Shihab Nye

(Published in 1995)

Approved for use in 8th Grade English

Summary of the Work:

From Gale Cengage Learning

This book collects from 64 Mexican artists including Alberto Blanco, Julio Galan, Leticia Tarrago, Rosario Castellanos, and Octavio Paz. The poems contained here are presented in Spanish side by side with their English translation as a tribute to the 17 million Spanish speaking Americans. Each poet and artist challenges the reader to imagine a world where dreams can come true.

Rationale:

This text is to be used in a literature circle setting, where students will choose to read this text among others on and about Latin America. Students will research the history, culture, customs, music, art, architecture, etc. of the setting of this novel. They will discuss the text, its issues, and present on the book and their research to the rest of the class.

Professional Reviews and/or Critical Essays:

From School Library Journal

Grade 4 Up A most enticing bilingual anthology that unfolds like a tapestry of images, languages, rhythms, and musicalities from all regions of Mexico. In the poem "Lemon Tree," from which the title is derived, Jennifer Clement urges readers to, "Remember,/the tree is older than you are/and you might find stories/in its branches." Each page holds the promise of a small jewel, poems that transform ordinary experience into extraordinary insight. There are several pieces written in Tzotzil, and one in Tzeltal, two of the languages of the Maya. Several traditional and modern folktales also appear, adding to the cosmogony and strengthening the roots of the tree. The illustrations, which appear every few pages as illuminations, employ a variety of styles and mediums, all reproduced in full color. Often magical and sometimes playful, the artwork completes the experience of being welcomed into a mysteriously friendly world in which there is much to be discovered and shared.

Thorough endnotes on the contributors, translators, and acknowledgements as well as a list of titles in English and Spanish complete this remarkable volume that holds something for everyone.

* Print resources are available from the library media center and libraries in the district. Contact any library media specialist to view the scholarly sources.

* Scholarly reviews are also available online through Books in Print and Gale. Contact the library media specialist to obtain username and password information to access the subscription database of full-text reviews.

Noted Distinction:

Awards:

1996: [Hungry Mind Review Children's Books of Distinction Awards: Poetry](#)

Expert Picks:

[Outstanding Books for the College Bound and Lifelong Learners](#)
[Reluctant Young Adult Readers Committee Selected Titles for 1996](#)
[Why Not Poetry?](#)

Readability:

- Lexile Score: Not Rated
- Readability Level:

Learning Resources Guidelines:

- The novel meets the Learning Resources Guidelines.

Standard Alignment:

Literature:

Content Standard 1—Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, analyze and respond to literary works.

Content Standard 2—Students recognize and evaluate how language, literary devices, and elements contribute to the meaning and impact of literary works.

Content Standard 3—Students reflect upon their literary experiences and purposefully select from a range of works.

Content Standard 4—Students interact with print and nonprint literary works from various cultures, ethnic groups, traditional and contemporary viewpoints written by both genders.

Content Standard 5—Students use literary works to enrich personal experience and to connect to the broader world of ideas, concepts and issues.

Writing:

Content Standard 1—Students write clearly and effectively.

Content Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies in the writing process.

Content Standard 3—Students evaluate and reflect on their growth as writers.

Content Standard 4—Students write for a variety of purposes and audiences.

Content Standard 5—Students recognize the structures of various forms and apply these characteristics to their own writing.

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	<p>Content Standard 6—Students use the inquiry process, problem-solving strategies, and resources to synthesize and communicate information.</p> <p>Reading:</p> <p>Content Standard 1—Students construct meaning as they comprehend, interpret, and respond to what they read.</p> <p>Content Standard 2—Students apply a range of skills and strategies to read.</p> <p>Content Standard 3—Students set goals, monitor, and evaluate their progress in reading.</p> <p>Content Standard 4—Students select, read, and respond to print and nonprint material for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>Content Standard 5—Students gather, analyze, synthesize, and evaluate information from a variety of sources, and communicate their findings in ways appropriate for their purposes and audiences.</p> <p>Speaking:</p> <p>Standard 1—Students demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the communication process.</p> <p>Content Standard 2—Students distinguish among and use appropriate types of speaking and listening for a variety of purposes.</p> <p>Content Standard 3—Students apply a range of skills and strategies to speaking and listening.</p> <p>Content Standard 4—Students identify, analyze, and evaluate the impacts of effective speaking and evaluative listening.</p> <p>Approval: Submitted to Committee: Approved for Adoption:</p>
<p>Notes on the Text: <i>(The best way to evaluate and understand a novel is to personally read the book in its entirety.)</i></p> <p>This is a great collection of poetry, supplemented with art, from Mexico. Each poem is beautiful on its own merit, and within this collection they form a bond of place. I believe this would be best used as supplementary material. I could present poems to the class, or if a group finishes early, they can then work on poems. This book is very usable, and I did not find a lick of questionable material.</p>	<p>Connection to the Curriculum:</p> <p>Please see rationale.</p>
<p>Additional Connections: <i>(AP, Honors, Essential/Applied, Dramas, Films, etc.)</i></p>	