



Herrera, Juan Felipe

Downtown Boy

AUTHOR



Growing up as the child of migrant farmworkers--longing for stability and the love of an often-absent father--proved resonant subject matter for Juan Felipe Herrera's *Downtown Boy*.

For his efforts, *Downtown Boy* has been honored with the Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award for books published in 2006. The award, established at Texas State University-San Marcos in 1995, is designed to encourage authors, illustrators and publishers to produce books that authentically reflect the lives of Mexican American children and young adults in the United States.

Herrera's books are often inspired by his past as the only son of a pair of migrant farm workers, along with his belief that language, culture and good-hearted laughter are key ingredients. As a child, Herrera traveled through the many small farming towns of California before his parents finally settled in San Diego. That influence is apparent in *Downtown Boy*, which follows the life of Juanito Paloma, who, along with his mother Lucha and his elderly father Felipe, moves to San Francisco's Latin Mission District to live with relatives after years of working in the fields of California's Central Valley. Juanito longs to live in one place, rather than "going, going, going," and pines for the love of his often-absent father.

The author of 19 books ranging from children's literature to verse, Herrera is best known for *Calling the Doves*, winner of the 1997 Ezra Jack Keats Award; *Crashboomlove*, winner of the 1999 Americas Award; and *Featherless/Desplumado*, winner of the 2005 Independent Publisher Book Award.

Beyond his writing, Herrera has also founded bilingual theater groups, music and poetry troupes. He learned his love of word, language and writing at a young age from his mother. Poetry has been a part of his life ever since, and he now writes poetry for both children and adults.

Herrera currently holds the Tomás Rivera Endowed Chair in Creative Writing at the University of California, Riverside. He lives in Redlands, California. He is also an actor, both on stage and film, and is currently writing young audiences bilingual play for the La Jolla Playhouse POP tour in Southern California schools.

Recipient Web Site: NA

En Español

Creció como hijo de trabajadores agrícolas migrantes - anhelando estabilidad y el amor a menudo de un padre ausente-- resultó un tema resonante para su libro *El Chico del Zócalo*. Por sus esfuerzos, *El Chico del Zócalo*, ha sido galardonado con el premio Tomás Rivera Mexican American Children's Book Award para libros publicados en 2006.

Los libros de Herrera son a menudo inspirado por su pasado como hijo único de una pareja migrantes, trabajadores del campo junto con su convicción de que el idioma, la cultura y las risas son ingredientes clave. De niño, Herrera viajó a través de muchos pequeños pueblos agrícolas de California antes de que sus padres se asentaran en San Diego. El autor de 19 libros que van desde literatura infantil a verso, Herrera es mejor conocido por haber ganado el premio Ezra Jack Keats Award en 1997 por *Calling the Doves*, el premio Américas Award por *Crash Boom Love* 1999, por y *Featherless / Desplumado*, ganador del premio Independent Publisher Book Award en 2005.

Aparte de su escritura, Herrera también ha fundado grupos bilingües de música teatro y poesía. Aprendió de su madre a una edad temprana, amor por la palabra, el lenguaje y la escritura, desde entonces, la poesía ha sido una parte de su vida, y ahora escribe poesía para niños y adultos.

Herrera ocupa actualmente el reconocimiento Tomás Rivera Endowed Chair en Escritura Literaria de la Universidad de California de Riverside. Vive en Redlands California. Él es también un actor, tanto en el escenario como en el cine y en la actualidad está escribiendo obras de teatro para la audiencia joven bilingüe para la Playhouse POP tour de la escuela La Jolla en California