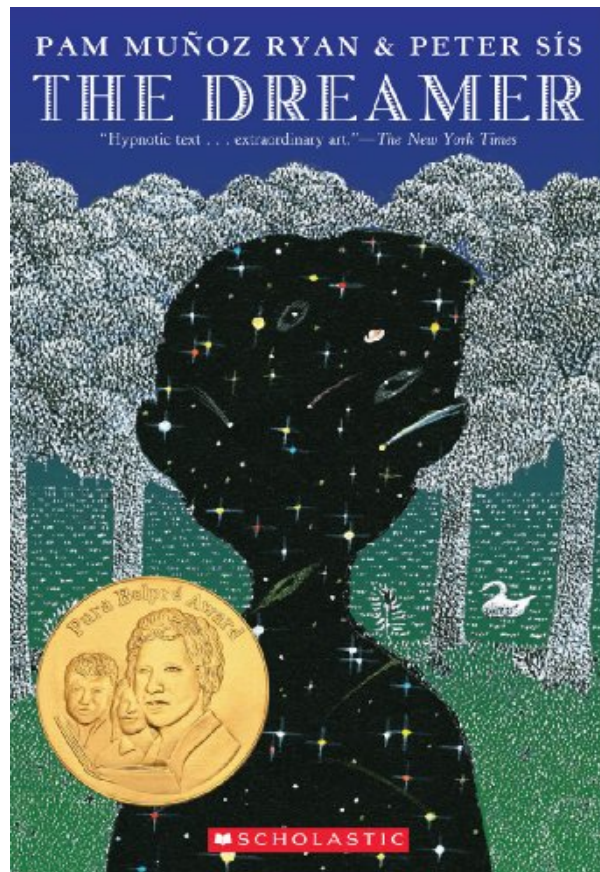
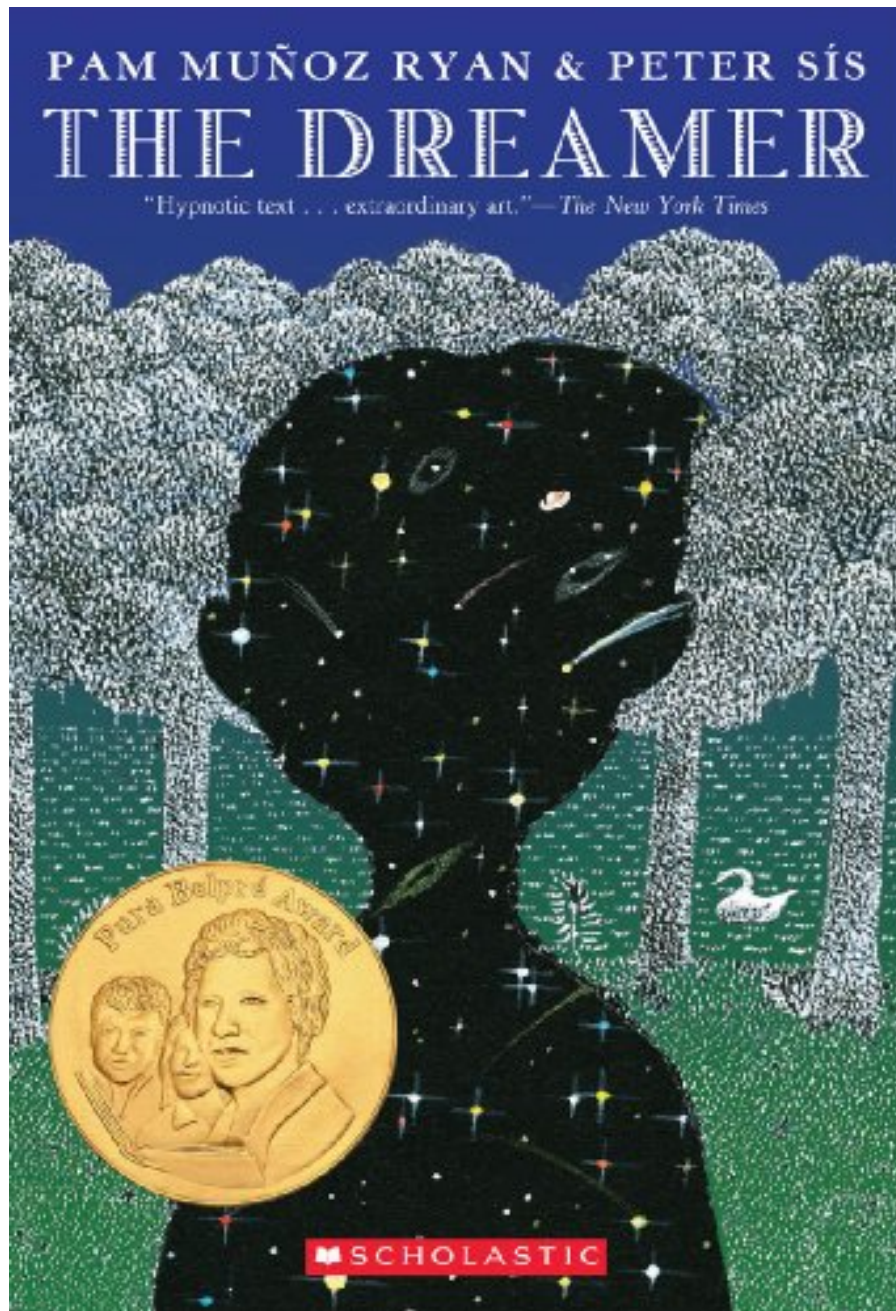


# THE DREAMER BY PAM MUNOZ RYAN



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From the time he is a young boy, Neftali hears the call of a mysterious voice. He knows he must follow it--even when the neighborhood children taunt him, and when his harsh, authoritarian father ridicules him, and when he doubts himself. It leads him under the canopy of the lush rain forest, into the fearsome sea, and through the persistent Chilean rain, until finally, he discovers its source.

Combining elements of magical realism with biography, poetry, literary fiction, and sensorial, transporting illustrations, Pam Muñoz Ryan and Peter Sís take readers on a rare journey of the heart and imagination.

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- Original language: English
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- 400 pages

From School Library Journal

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22 of 24 people found the following review helpful.

Dreamy, Beautiful, Brilliant book

By Nancy Mehegan

ENTER THE DREAM! Were you a dreamy kid? The type of kid that parents & teachers nagged to focus more? Do you have a child like that? If yes, you will love this book. Inspired by the life of a real poet in Chile, Pablo Neruda, the book's prose is dream-like and poetic. It is greatly enhanced by award-winning artist Peter Sís, whose delicate, drawings enhance the magical world. Finally a book that favors the right-brain people (in this left-brain culture).

The main character dreamily ponders the world while cowering from his domineering father. However, Neftali's beholding of nature, his sense of wonder and his limitless imagination cannot be bound. He persists

in his dream-like approach to the world. *INSPIRE YOUR DREAMY CHILD* -- This book will inspire young readers, future poets and all right-brain people. It's courageous, unusual and unique.

29 of 33 people found the following review helpful.

Is there forgiveness for a well-intended but bad acting father?

By Last Mango

The message to follow your dreams is wonderful, making poets "cool", especially those from other countries is a great idea, and Pam Munoz Ryan's questions combined with Peter Sis' drawings are fantastic such as "Which is sharper? The hatchet that cuts down the dream? Or the scythe that clears a path for another?"

My lack of enthusiasm for the book is directly related to my having lived in Chile for six years and being married to a Chilean. Chile is an interesting land of contrasts. The literacy rate is high and the interest in politics and current events is also very high. However many, not all, Chileans consider reading "anti-social", something I was chided for regularly. Unlike in the book, there was no library at a seaside town. I never found a public library in the whole country, although, I heard vaguely that there was one in the capital. A magazine/book store would be more likely. My point is that there were many cultural things that made the father who he was. He was not Dave Pelzer's mother. College entrance exams are very tough in Chile and peasants, at least fifteen years ago when I was there, were very real which tends to make fathers want better for their children. Families regularly took month vacations to the beach and the "sink or swim" swimming method made a champion swimmer out of my own husband. These aren't the best parenting techniques, of course, but I guess I would have been more comfortable if the father hadn't been a complete villain.

Also, although not as important, I wish there had been one last editing by someone from Chile. Parrots and Flamingos that far south? Potato empanadas? Meat and cheese empanadas are as common as hot dogs and hamburgers here, but I've never heard of potato ones.

All that aside though, the book is an enjoyable, magical read that teachers could certainly use as fodder for creative writing papers and/or poetry units.

9 of 9 people found the following review helpful.

Painful beauty

By Suzanne-Marie

Lovely, well-and-artfully-written, if sometimes anguishing to read, memorable tale of young Pablo Neruda -- in the chrysalis stage. So worth a few hours and the layout, spare and wondrous artwork by Peter Sis added to create a thoughtful treasure, spun in a poetic prose form.

Let me say that I am a "biased-by-pleasure-and-admiration" fan of Pam Munoz Ryan and of Pablo Neruda, so that is the basis from which I come; I like/love much that these two people have contributed to the writing/reading world, each in her/his own way.

I find Pam Munoz Ryan to be an author of deep worth, with a special, artfully-delivered and thoughtful voice, so good for our children -- when her writings are chosen with care for age and maturity, as her subjects she tackles are not uniformly "easy".

I can imagine reading *The Dreamer* -- and sharing many reflective moments -- with a child of at least 11 (I would say, no younger). Also, I can conceive of a teacher of deep sensitivity and caring carving out the time to share it with her/his class, thoughtfully, over some days, with plenty of time for discussion, contemplation and, perhaps making it a part of a history-English block, as well.

No easy story, in the painful aspects of much of Neftali's/Pablo's young life, but so worthwhile; should spark



further reading of Neruda (by older young people and adults), some exploration into Chile, human rights considerations...

If offered appropriately, age and maturity-wise, I think this would speak so well to the artistic, tender hearts of young people who love to read, to write and create; who perhaps are trying to find their ways in relating to Life, adults, insecurities, shyness, being understood and in treasuring and protecting -- and, finding "safe" ways to share -- their personal uniqueness and gifts.

I would offer again, however, that I'm not certain that this is a book to be shared with very tender-hearted children until parents/teachers feel they are able to handle the pages and pages of beauty "imprisoned" especially in the hardness, unkindness, fear-driven and apparently unfeeling aspects of the father. There is certainly opportunity to discuss what a "healthy" family environment might look like, how people (such as the loving stepmother, the talented older brother, the younger sister, the uncle) "make do", try to survive, or show courage and resolve in dealing with (or not) fear-inducing dysfunctional family relationships.

In *The Dreamer*, there is redemption; there are many opportunities for personal reflection and for hearing Neftali's/Pablo's singing heart-within-the-pain; I found there to be beauty on every page.

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