



BEHIND THE ART OF *TURNING PAGES*: LULU DELACRE

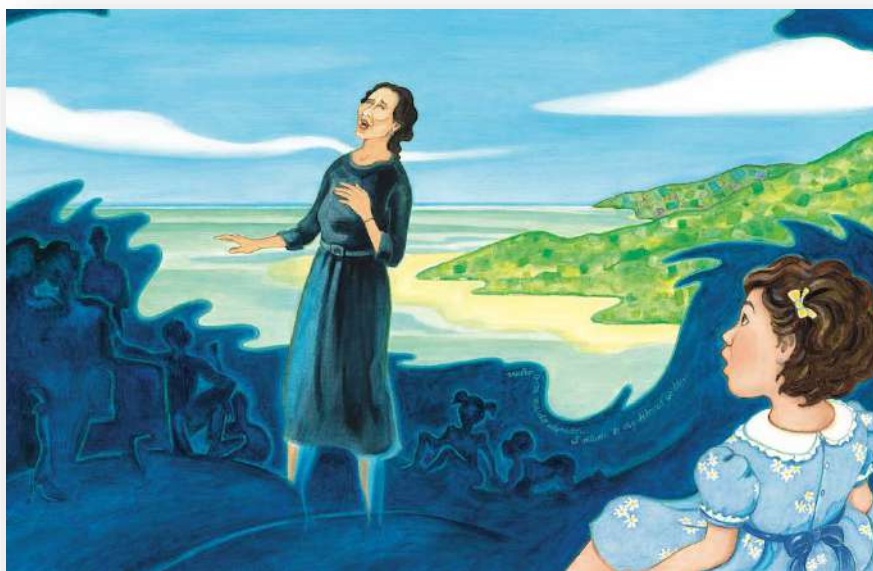
My artwork for this book is deeply grounded in research. I read *My Beloved World*, underlining passages that shed light on the particular scenes I had to illustrate. I had the honor of interviewing Justice Sotomayor so I could ask relevant questions. I had the privilege of visiting the Supreme Court, where I spent hours poring over family photos the Justice generously shared with me.



Abuelita Reciting Poems (pp. 8-9)

This illustration presented a stark choice. The manuscript tells of two equally enticing moments happening at once. One of them is a typical Puerto Rican party, a family gathering full of music and mouth-watering food. The other is the moment when a poem transports all these Puerto Ricans back to their island. Nostalgia is a powerful thing. Showing how words make the island come alive for a young girl who has never stepped on it became my choice. The party recedes in dark silhouettes backlit by a

glow of turquoise and giving way to the brilliant aqua sea and emerald green island conjured by the crowd. Abuelita rises from the crowd almost magically, emphasizing the connection between grandma and grandchild and conveying the feeling of awe young Sonia must have felt at the power of the words.





The Library (pp. 14–15)

To show light, you need to show darkness. I divided the illustration into two sections. The paralyzing nature of grief is shown in the numb stare of Mamá, in the veil of lavender drops reminiscent of tears. It is also shown in the empty spot left by young Sonia who finds an escape in the brightly lit public library. The text, "books were little boats that helped me escape sadness at home" was irresistible. I immediately thought of paper boats made of the pages of the books young Sonia must have read.

To create the collaged boats, I purchased children's books from the '60s and selected specific passages that I cut out and pasted. I also searched for the library cards used at the time in the NY Public Library system. I consulted with the Justice, who confirmed it was indeed like her library card. And yes, I doctored the card, so it would read not only the branch the Justice visited, but also her address at the time and the correct date.





Steps (pp. 32-33)

When I met with the Justice, I already had this illustration in mind. I wanted to show that books brought young Sonia to one of the highest offices where she would write important opinions. I asked the Justice for some of these. My sister-in-law, a lawyer, reviewed the opinions and helped me pick passages related to children. The careful reader will find the Justice's name on the steps.

The manuscript alludes to the Constitution, and I thought of having a diverse group of children appear from the ancient document. For me, children are also part of "we the people." To achieve the effect, I pasted a copy of the document, primed the area, scraped it, and painted in oil washes.

