

**LEE & LOW BOOKS**  
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### Press Release

## **LEE & LOW BOOKS ANNOUNCES 2016 NEW VOICES AWARD WINNERS**

New York, NY—January 23, 2017—LEE & LOW BOOKS is proud to announce that Roberto Peñas of Olathe, Kansas, is the winner of the company’s seventeenth annual New Voices Award. His manuscript, *Pedro Flores: The Toymaker*, is a biography of the inventor of the modern yo-yo. In the early 1900s, Flores emigrated from the Philippines to the United States, where he pursued an education and his entrepreneurial ambitions. After reading about a ball-and-string-like toy in the newspaper, Flores was reminded of a similar toy from his childhood. He redesigned the toy and named it “yo-yo” (Tagalong for “come back”). It wasn’t long before the yo-yo became a popular toy.

Roberto Peñas has a master’s degree in Philippine History and is a member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators (SCBWI). He is a second-generation Filipino-American, and he became interested in Pedro Flores’ story after discovering that the inventor of the modern yo-yo was Filipino. Roberto admired the way Flores valued education and became a successful entrepreneur during a time when many immigrants worked as agricultural laborers. Roberto will receive a prize of \$1,000 and a publication contract.

LEE & LOW BOOKS is also proud to announce that Gloria Amescua of Austin, Texas, has been chosen to receive the New Voices Award Honor for her manuscript *Luz Jiménez, No Ordinary Girl*, a story in verse about a Nahua educator and art muse in Mexico. As a young girl Luz dreamed of becoming a teacher, but the Mexican Revolution left Luz’s family struggling to survive. Luz supported her family by working for various artists, sharing stories about her experiences and inspiring important works of art. She went on to become a teacher and served as a living link to the Aztecs, preserving her Nahua culture and language.

Gloria Amescua is a poet and a member of SCBWI’s Austin chapter. She was inspired to write Luz’s story after reading about Luz and the obstacles she overcame. Gloria admires the message in Luz’s story: dreams may come true in ways that are unexpected. She will receive a prize of \$500.

Established in 2000, the New Voices Award encourages writers of color to submit their work to a publisher that takes pride in nurturing authors who are new to the world of children’s book publishing. For more information, visit <https://www.leeandlow.com/writers-illustrators/new-voices-award>.