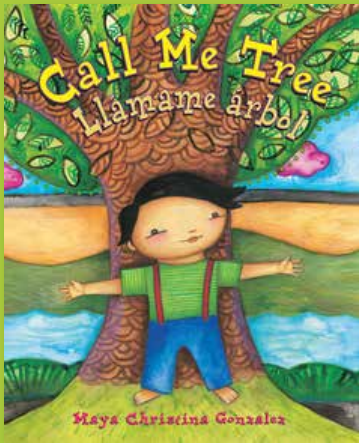


## TEACHER'S GUIDE



LEE & LOW BOOKS

## Call Me Tree/Llámame árbol

Written and illustrated by Maya Christina Gonzalez

### About the Book

**Reading Level:** Grades 2–3

**Interest Level:** Grades K–4

**Guided Reading Level:** F

*\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula*

**Themes:** Nature, Self-Esteem/Self-Discovery, Empowerment, Relationships with Others, Yoga, Bilingual Stories, Childhood Experiences, Imagination, Poetry, Latino Interest

### SYNOPSIS

In this spare, lyrically written story, we join a child on a journey of self-discovery. What does it mean to be like a tree? For one young child, it all begins as a tiny seed that is free to grow and reach out to others while standing strong and tall—just like a tree in the natural world.

Finding a way to grow from the inside out, just like a tree, the child develops as an individual comfortable in the natural world and in relationships with others. The child begins “Within/ The deep dark earth,” like a seed, ready to grow and then dream and reach out to the world. Soon the child discovers birds and the sky and other children: “Trees and trees/ Just like me!” Each is different too. The child embraces them all because “All trees have roots/ All trees belong.”

Maya Christina Gonzalez once again combines her talents as an artist and a storyteller to craft a gentle, empowering story about belonging, connecting with nature, and becoming your fullest self. Young readers will be inspired to dream and reach, reach and dream . . . and to be as free and unique as trees.



## BACKGROUND

*From the Author's Bio:* The inspiration for *Call Me Tree/Llámame árbol* dates back to when Gonzalez was thirteen and her family moved from the desert to the Oregon woods, which are filled with trees. This book, the third Gonzalez has both written and illustrated, is a companion to her other nature-themed works, *My Colors, My World/Mis colores, mi mundo* and *I Know the River Loves Me/Yo sé que el río me ama*.

*From the Author's Note:* My family moved to the Oregon woods when I was thirteen. After living in the desert, the trees amazed me. I lived in the deep woods again as a young adult. Surrounded by huge, majestic trees, I got to know their unique characteristics and how they changed throughout the year. Each had a presence and spirit. I considered the trees friends and part of my world. And at times I thought of myself as a tree! I still do. Trees teach me so much about being free, being exactly who I am, everyone belonging, and much more. I like to see kids as trees. In the illustrations, I included some kids in the yoga tree pose. I loved doing the tree pose when I was young: balancing, being strong and stable. I'll call you tree if you call me tree!

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Before introducing the book to students, you may wish to develop background and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following for each book:

1. Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction

or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues does the author/illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?

2. What do you know about texts that are fiction? What are the typical features of fiction texts? Why do authors write fiction texts? How do you think their reasons differ from authors who write nonfiction?
3. What do you know about trees? What kinds of trees are found in your community? Describe a type of tree that grows near your home or school. What are the characteristics of the tree? What does this type of tree need to grow and thrive? What kinds of animals live in and among trees of this type?
4. How do different types of trees look different from one another? What might cause trees to look different from one another? What makes trees unique from other plants?
5. What does the word *unique* mean? What does it mean for a person to be unique? What makes you unique compared to your friends, classmates, or siblings? Describe what makes you proud of you being you.
6. Why do you think I chose this book for us to read today?

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1, Craft & Structure, Strand 5, and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

Read and talk about the title of the book. Ask students what they think the title means. Then ask them what they think this book will most likely be about and who the book might be about. What places might be talked about in the text? What do you think might happen? What information do you think you might learn? What makes you think that?



Take students on a book walk and draw attention to the following parts of the book: front and back covers, title page, illustrations, English and Spanish text, dedication, author/illustrator bio, and author/illustrator's note.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out how people and trees are similar, what makes people both unique and similar to one another, and to what the title, *Call Me Tree*, refers.

Encourage students to consider why the author/illustrator, Maya Christina Gonzalez, would want to share this story with young people.

Have students also read to determine why the text is written in both English and Spanish.

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and illustrations in the book to support their responses. **To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite evidence with their answers.**

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

1. Who is the narrator/speaker in the story?
2. Where does the story take place?
3. What part of the human body is like a tree's branches? A tree's leaves? A tree's trunk? A tree's roots?
4. Why does the main character want to be called "tree?"

## VOCABULARY

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

The story contains some content-specific words that may be unfamiliar to some students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review the vocabulary below. Encourage a variety of strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, create a specific action for each word, list synonyms and antonyms, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

### CONTENT SPECIFIC:

seed, earth, sidewalk, mountain, roots

If your class has Spanish-speaking students, encourage them to volunteer to translate the words for their classmates. In doing so, these students can feel proud of sharing the role of teacher to their peers.



5. What is the first thing the character sees after waking up?
6. What does the main character see after saying, “And what do I see/ With my eyes/ As I rise?”

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

*(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4–6)*

*(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4 and 5)*

1. What does the line “free to be free” mean?
2. How are trees free? How are people free, like trees?
3. How does author/illustrator Maya Christina Gonzalez show trees can be different? How does she show people can be different?
4. The main character dreams of reaching. What do you think the character is reaching for and why?
5. According to this story, how are people and trees similar?
6. How do trees “sing songs?” How do people sing songs?
7. Think about the life cycle of people and trees/plants. How are the human life cycle and growth cycle similar to those of trees? How are they different?
8. Why do you think author/illustrator Maya Christina Gonzalez compares people to trees?
9. How does the main character feel about the other people in the book?
10. What does this story teach readers about growing up?
11. Maya Christina Gonzalez writes, “all trees have roots/ all trees belong.” What are people’s roots, and how do we make sure we belong?
12. The story talks about being free. What do you think the main character is free from or free to do? Do you think it is important to feel and be free? Why do you think Maya Christina Gonzalez wants to show young readers that they should know they are free?
13. The last illustration in the book is in a different direction than the other illustrations. Why do you think Maya Christina Gonzalez chooses to use two whole pages and change the direction for the final illustration?
14. Do you think the main character is a girl or a boy? Why do you think so? Could the narrator be a boy or a girl? What makes you think so?
15. Why do you think Maya Christina Gonzalez might want to leave the main character’s gender up to the readers to determine? How might this affect how young readers relate to the story and its message? How does this tie in with the idea of being free?
16. Maya Christina Gonzalez is comparing people’s uniqueness to trees’ uniqueness. What does she want to show readers about being yourself and strong?
17. What is the message of this story? What does this story teach about why young people should feel proud of who they are?
18. Maya Christina Gonzalez writes the story in both English and Spanish. Why do you think she chooses to share the story in two languages?

### Reader’s Response

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)*

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in reader’s response



journals, essays, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and discuss their written work.

1. Do you agree with author/illustrator Maya Christina Gonzalez that people and trees have a lot in common? Describe why you agree or disagree.
2. This story celebrates how each person is special. Explain a couple of things that make you special, or unique, among your friends, classmates, or family.
3. The main character says to “call me tree/ because/ I am tall/ I am strong/ And like a tree/ I am free.” What reasons would you add to this list of things that you, or people in general, have in common with a tree?
4. Imagine you see someone tease or make fun of your friend and your friend feels upset. Write a letter to your friend about why *Call Me Tree* will make him or her feel better.
5. Share a memory of a time you saw a tree up close. Where were you—in a park, on a neighborhood street, on a trip? Describe what the tree’s bark and leaves/needles looked like, felt like, smelled like. Why is this memory special to you?

### ELL/ESL Teaching Strategies

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Language Learners.

1. Assign ELL students to partner-read the book with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader. Students who speak

Spanish can help with the pronunciations of the Spanish words in the book.

2. Have each student write three questions about the text. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students’ level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the book or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about what they admire about the central figure or author’s message in the book.
5. The story contains some content-specific words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students’ prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose English Language Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.

## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Student who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with



other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

## Science

*(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)*

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 2 and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9)*

*(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)*

1. Have students research trees as a type of plant. What purpose do trees serve in the environment? What characteristics do all trees have? How many different types of trees exist in the world?
2. Ask students to work alone or in small groups to investigate one type of tree. Describe its physical features, including trunk, leaves/needles, and roots. Where is this tree found? What types of animals live near, in, or among it? How do people use this tree? What survival challenges does this tree face today?
3. Encourage students to research all the ways people use trees and parts of trees. How long have people been using trees? What parts of a tree are valuable to people? Which tree woods are used to make houses, paper, guitars, and so on? Which tree fruits, leaves, or flowers serve as food for people and/or animals? List everything in the classroom that came from a tree.
4. Have students research the risks trees face. Students may look at forests in general or one specific tree species. What is deforestation? Encourage students to look at what role wildfire, drought, invasive species, and loss of open space/habitat plays. How have humans affected the health and survival of trees? What are examples of ways humans help protect trees?

5. Show students how to find a state or national park near them. Visit the National Park Service's Find A Park (<http://www.nps.gov/findapark/index.htm>) web page. Encourage families to visit, or plan to go to the park for a class field trip.

## Writing

*(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1 and 2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)*

1. Encourage students to think about the themes in the book and the relationships between the children and trees. In a letter, students should try to persuade you to use the book to celebrate or commemorate a specific holiday that they think best fits with one or more themes in the book. For example, why would this book be great for Arbor Day? Earth Day? Poetry Appreciation Month?
2. Reread the last page of the book and write your own version. Have students complete the phrase "Call me tree because . . ."
3. If each student could give this book to one person as a present, to whom would they each give it and why? Have students write a gift note to go along with the present.
4. Author/illustrator Maya Christina Gonzalez has written and illustrated three books with nature themes that explore the relationships between children and their environment. In a letter to the editor, describe ways people can and should take care of trees and the environments in which trees grow. What do trees need to live and thrive? What can children do to protect trees and their environments?

## English Language Arts/Language

*(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 2 and Craft & Structure, Strand 9)*

*(Reading Foundational Skills Standards, Phonological Awareness, Strand 2 and Phonics & Word Recognition, Strand 3)*



(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 6)

1. Read or have students read the two others book Maya Christina Gonzalez wrote and illustrated: *I Know the River Loves Me/Yo sé que el río me ama* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2802>) and *My Colors, My World/Mis colores, mi mundo* (<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2780>). Ask students to compare one or both of these books to *Call Me Tree/Llámame árbol*. What does each book teach about the environment? What does Maya Christina Gonzalez believe about the relationship between children and nature/their environment? How can we draw inspiration from the world around us? Why might Maya Christina Gonzalez want to encourage young readers to think about nature today?
2. Ask students to make a list of all the nouns in *Call Me Tree*. Students can make a Tchart with plural nouns on one side and singular nouns on the other.
3. Ask students to identify the words in the book that rhyme with tree. That rhyme with sky? That rhyme with song?
4. This book contains many high-frequency words/sight words. Encourage students to identify all the sight words they have studied so far. Common sight words lists include Dolch Words (<http://www.mrsperkins.com/dolch.htm>) and Fry Words (<http://www.k12reader.com/subject/vocabulary/fry-words/>), or your school may have its own list. Similarly, have students identify the long and short sounds for the five major vowels based on what they are currently studying.
5. Encourage students to think about the sound of the vowels *ea* together in the word *dream*. What other words in the story have the same vowel sound? Note: other vowel combinations

also stand for that sound, but students may try to hunt for *ea* words only.

### Physical Education

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 6)

Some children in the illustrations are in the yoga tree pose. Have students try to do the tree pose. What parts of their bodies do they use to make this pose? What is challenging about it? How do they feel when they try this pose? Ask students to think about why this pose is named after trees. Read about how to do the pose properly and its benefits from PBS Parents: Food & Fitness “Practice Yoga with Your Child” (<http://www.pbs.org/parents/food-and-fitness/sport-and-fitness/practice-yoga-with-your-child/>) web page.

### Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7 and 9)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strand 1 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 6)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strand 3)

1. Have students identify the trees in their neighborhood. Check out the Arbor Day Foundation’s step-by-step Tree Identification guide. (<http://www.arborday.org/trees/index-identification.cfm>)
2. There are many picture books with trees as central figures in the story. After reading *Call Me Tree* and another picture book with/about a tree, try writing your own story or poem featuring a tree.



## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

**Maya Christina Gonzalez** is a fine artist, an educator, and the illustrator of more than twenty children's books. Her numerous books featuring Latino characters have received recognition from the Pura Belpré Award, Américas Award, Notable Books for a Global Society, International Latino Books Awards, and more. *Call Me Tree/Llámame árbol* is the third book Gonzalez has both written and illustrated. The other two books are *I Know the River Loves Me/Yo sé que el río me ama* and *My Colors, My World/Mis colores, mi mundo*. She lives in San Francisco, California, with her two children and her husband. Her website is [mayagonzalez.com](http://mayagonzalez.com).

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](http://leeandlow.com).

## ORDERING INFORMATION

On the Web:

<https://www.leeandlow.com/contact/ordering> (general order information)

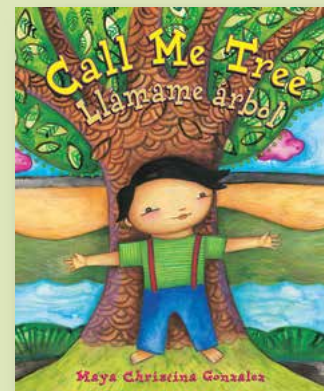
<https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2866> (secure online ordering)

By Phone: 212-779-4400 ext. 25

By Fax: 212-683-1894

By Mail: Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue, NY, NY 10016

## Book Information



\$17.95, HARDCOVER

978-0-89239-294-0

24 pages, 8 x 10

\*Reading Level: Grades 2–3

*\*Reading level based on the Spache Readability Formula*

Interest Level: Grades K–4

Guided Reading Level: F

**Themes:** Nature, Self-Esteem/ Self-Discovery, Empowerment, Relationships with Others, Yoga, Bilingual Stories, Childhood Experiences, Imagination, Poetry, Latino Interest

### RESOURCES ON THE WEB:

Learn more about *Call Me Tree* at: <https://www.leeandlow.com/books/2866>

*All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.*