The Stories I Read to the Children documents, for the very first time, Pura Belpre’s contributions to North American, Caribbean, and Latin American literary and library history. Pura Belpre (1899–1982) is one of the most important public intellectuals in the history of the Puerto Rican diaspora. A children’s librarian, author, folklorist, translator, storyteller, and puppeteer who began her career during the Harlem Renaissance and the formative decades of the New York Public Library, Belpre is also the earliest known Afro-Caribeña contributor to American literature.

In The Stories I Read to the Children, Lisa Sánchez González has collected, edited, and annotated over 40 of Belpre’s stories and essays, most of which have never been published. Her introduction to the volume is the most extensive study to date of Belpre’s life and writing.

Lisa Sánchez González is Associate Professor of English at the University of Connecticut. She recently finished writing a collection of short stories entitled Puerto Rican Folktales/Cuentos folclóricos puertorriqueños. She is also the author of Boricua Literature: A Literary History of the Puerto Rican Diaspora (NYU Press, 2001) and a myriad of essays on American and Caribbean literary history.

“For too long, Belpre has been regarded as a “quiet pioneer” and I cannot think of a better way of bringing to light and celebrating her life and achievements than publishing, for the first time, a comprehensive volume that includes an insightful introduction and a selection of her essays and published and unpublished stories.”

—EDNA ACOSTA-BELÉN, UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY, SUNY

“The Stories I Read to the Children provides a new way of reading children’s literature through a gendered and cultural lens... Sánchez González provides the keys for reading and understanding the significance of Pura Belpre’s contributions to American literature and librarianship. She brings to life the passion that Belpre had for inspiring a love of reading in children.”

—RICHARD CHABRAN, UNIVERSITY OF ARIZONA

“The Stories I Read to Children is the most comprehensive work on the life and legacy of Pura Belpre... Belpre’s creative magic shines through the published and unpublished folktales included in this volume. These transport the reader into a child’s world of wonder where anything can, and usually does, happen.”

—VIRGINIA SÁNCHEZ KORROL, BROOKLYN COLLEGE, CUNY