



A Note from Author Laureenne Sala

I wrote *Mi Casa Is My Home* as a way to honor all the wonderful things about a place that felt most cozy to me: my childhood home. From the brown shag carpeting that I trimmed with scissors when nobody was looking to the smell of holiday meals roasting in the oven, I have such vivid and warm memories of the house where I grew up.

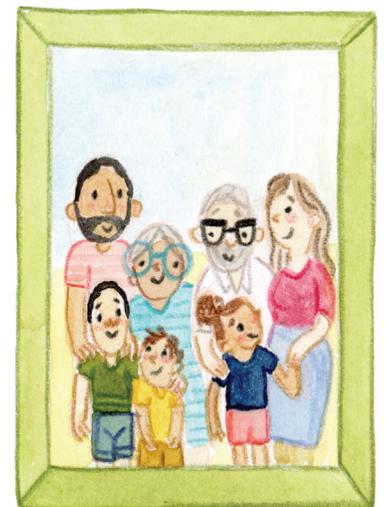
I tried to fit all my cozy memories inside this book, along with a beautiful snapshot of the very best part of home: family. The family in *Mi Casa Is My Home* is based on my grandparents and the time I spent at my aunt's house growing up. That house was always bustling with so many primos and primos of my primos! My daughter inspired the main character as well, and Zara González Hoang drew her just right! In fact, she captured our house and mixed family so very well—all before she and I had even met each other!



I wrote this book in English and in Spanish, just the way I speak and think, switching back and forth depending on whatever shows up first in my brain. My father, born of a Spanish dad and a Puerto Rican mom, grew up speaking Spanish and living in both Chicago and Madrid, but he didn't teach me to speak Spanish! I only began learning his native language at fourteen, and although now I've reached the point where I am fluent and can read novels in both languages, I spent a long time feeling not good enough or not Hispanic enough when it came to language.

It took me a long time, but I finally decided to feel proud of my languages, no matter what they sound like or how they come out of my mouth! I hope this book inspires readers to love whatever language they speak and have the confidence to go forth and speak it.

Laurrene



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