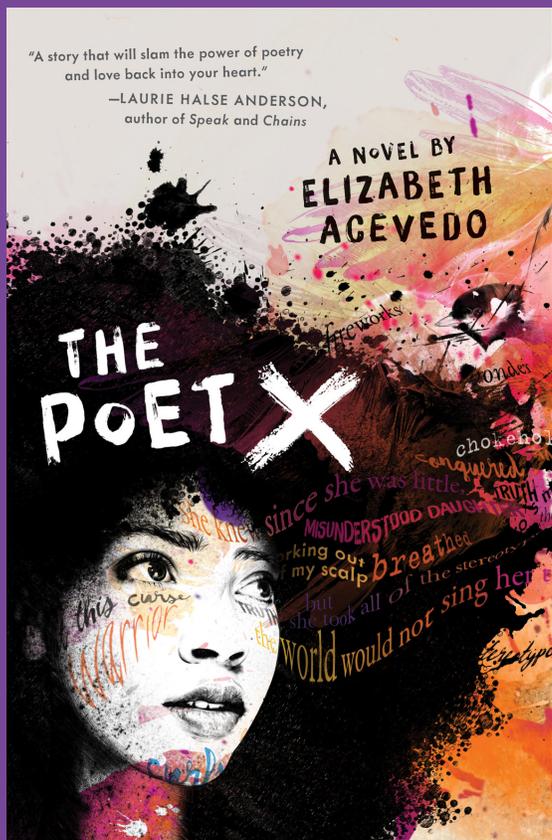


THE POET X

ELIZABETH ACEVEDO, 2018



Jacket art by Gabriel Moreno based on a photograph by Amanda Rivas
Jacket design by Erin Fitzsimmons

MEET ELIZABETH ACEVEDO

Elizabeth Acevedo is a Dominican-American eighth grade teacher, spoken word poet, and author of two best-selling novels.

SELECTED PRESS

National Book Award Winner, 2018
Kirkus Starred Review

ABOUT THE BOOK

This novel in verse is a window into the experience of a Dominican-American teenager navigating a generational, cultural, and religious divide from her immigrant parents. Ultimately, it is about the power of words and communication to heal wounds and bring people together.

SUGGESTED COURSES

American Literature, College Success, Creative Writing, Education, English Composition, Ethnic Studies, Reading, Seasons of Life, Sociology, Spanish

TOPICS TO DISCUSS

- **Coming of age** – Independence, first love, sexuality, body image
- **Education** – Teacher-student relationship, urban schools, extra-curricular activities
- **Ethnicity** – Afro-Latinx, Dominican
- **Gender** – female body, male gaze
- **Identity** – Individual vs. family
- **Immigration** – First-generation Americans, generational/cultural divide
- **Language** – Poetry, voice, power, freedom, communication
- **Religion** – Catholicism

PAIRED TEXTS

- “poem in praise of menstruation” and other poetry from Lucille Clifton
- Poetry from Natalie Diaz
- Other novels in verse like *Brown Girl Dreaming* by Jacqueline Woodson or *Long Way Down* by Jason Reynolds
- *How the Garcia Girls Lost Their Accents* by Julia Alvarez
- **DAMN.** by Kendrick Lamar

CLASS PROJECTS

IN THE BOOK

The Poet X offers in its text two valuable projects that can be brought directly into your classroom: Mrs. Galiano's homework assignments and the poetry slam. Asking students to write their responses to Xiomara's homework assignments gives them a low-stakes chance to practice their writing skills and also offers them a glance at the drafting process and the ways that audience changes our writing, for good or for bad.

A poetry slam gives students the chance to practice public speaking in a far more casual, dramatic way than a traditional speech might. Students do not need to write their own poetry to participate in a slam; instead, ask them to find poems that speak to a significant issue from the novel. *The Poetry Foundation* and *The Academy of American Poets* are excellent resources for this.

CONNECT TO CLASS CONTENT

Connect to class content by assigning a mini-research project about one of the novel's relevant social issues. This book can be used to illustrate and humanize many different course topics. To reinforce the connections between the book and class content, you may want students to choose one or two individual poems as a starting place. Discuss the course-specific issues present in these poems before assigning the research project.

Some example research topics follow.

- **Education:** Ms. Galiano is a pivotal presence in Xiomara's life. Research methods teachers might use to develop strong relationships with their students.
- **Ethnic Studies:** Being from the Dominican Republic informs many of Xiomara's parents expectations of her. Research the Dominican Republic and Dominican immigrants in the United States.
- **Psychology:** Xiomara's relationship with her parents is not repaired overnight; to even begin the process, Xiomara first reaches out to her priest to facilitate an open discussion and eventually therapy for the family. Research the types and benefits of family therapy.
- **Religion:** Catholicism permeates the book, from the three-part structure of the narrative to Xiomara's conflict with her mother. Choose an aspect of the religion that Xiomara feels discomfort with to research.

CULTURAL CRITIC

Take their writing public. Have students create a blog, Twitter thread, YouTube video, or Wiki responding to a social issue from the novel. How does the novel provide context for the issue? This kind of non-traditional, multi-modal writing pushes students to consider their audience and their approach in a more authentic way than a five-paragraph essay might.

