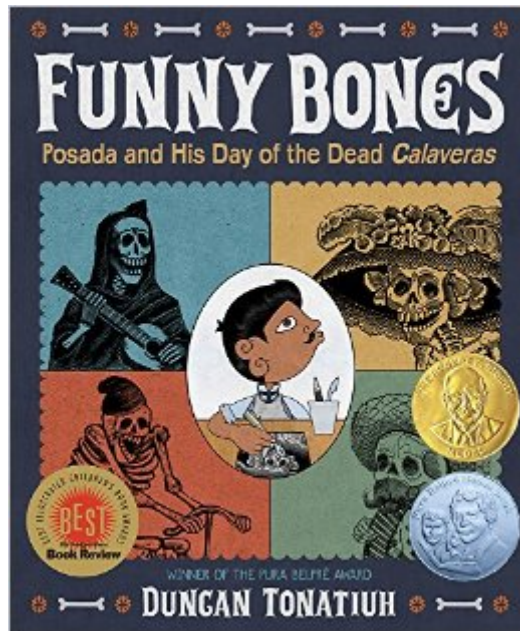


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# Funny Bones: Posada And His Day Of The Dead Calaveras (Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal (Awards))



## Synopsis

A Sibert Award Winner, Pura Belpré (Illustrator) Honor Book, New York Times Best Illustrated Children's Books of 2015 and International Latino Book Award Finalist! *Funny Bones* tells the story of how the amusing calaveras "skeletons performing various everyday or festive activities" came to be. They are the creation of Mexican artist José Guadalupe (Lupe) Posada (1852–1913). In a country that was not known for freedom of speech, he first drew political cartoons, much to the amusement of the local population but not the politicians. He continued to draw cartoons throughout much of his life, but he is best known today for his calavera drawings. They have become synonymous with Mexico's Día de los Muertos (Day of the Dead) festival. Juxtaposing his own art with that of Lupe's, author Duncan Tonatiuh brings to light the remarkable life and work of a man whose art is beloved by many but whose name has remained in obscurity. The book includes an author's note, bibliography, glossary, and index.

## Book Information

Series: Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Medal (Awards)

Hardcover: 40 pages

Publisher: Harry N. Abrams (August 25, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1419716476

ISBN-13: 978-1419716478

Product Dimensions: 9.4 x 0.5 x 11.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.2 pounds (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars See all reviews (14 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #15,234 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #2 in Books > Children's Books >

Geography & Cultures > Explore the World > Mexico #8 in Books > Children's Books >

Biographies > Art #14 in Books > Children's Books > Holidays & Celebrations > Non-religious

Age Range: 6 - 10 years

Grade Level: 1 - 5

## Customer Reviews

The illustrations in *Funny Bones* are so whimsical, and macabre- I love it. I purchased this for my mother, a fourth grade teacher, and she is so excited to share this with her class for Cinco de Mayo. Because of the bold illustrations and cultural story line, I believe this book is versatile for many age groups. I bought this book because it was on the New York Times Best list for Illustrations in 2015.

For the first several pages, I was sure I had read this book before, due to the art style. Tonatiuh uses the same exact style in his book on Diego Rivera, and once I realized that, I was able to snap myself out and enjoy the book properly. I heartily approve of Tonatiuh's return to this style, as it seems to fit in so well with his books about Latino culture. This particular book is about one of the earliest, and certainly most famous, calaveras artists, José Guadalupe (Lupe) Posada. It's a little biography, mixed with some philosophy, as Tonatiuh reminds his readers that we all die. Which is kind of heavy for a kid's book, but it's more a message of equality, not mortality. I think the only thing I'd have liked to be included in this book is a little link to an art project for creating your own calaveras prints. Otherwise, I'm satisfied with the book, and can certainly support its 2016 Sibert Medal win.

**Summary:** In late nineteenth century Mexico, Jose Guadalupe Posada (Lupe) was a prolific artist who owned his own print shop. He became well-known, first for his satirical political illustrations, and later for his prints of Calaveras, or skeletons, that were extremely popular around the Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations. This book tells the story of Posada's life, but also details the steps of his various printmaking techniques and looks at possible meanings behind some of his more enigmatic works. Back matter includes a lengthy author's note about Posada and the history of the Dia de Muertos celebrations; a glossary and bibliography; and a list of U.S. locations where Posada's works can be viewed. Grades 1-5. **Pros:** This book could be used for many educational purposes, including history, art, and Mexican culture. The illustrations are done in a Mexican folk art style and include several of Posada's works. **Cons:** Some may find the Calaveras a bit creepy.

I can't say enough good things about this book! Tonatiuh tells Posada's life story simply, while still giving background information on events such as the Mexican Revolution for context. The pages showing a breakdown of the three distinct artistic processes that Posada used (lithography, engraving and etching) are especially helpful in visualizing exactly how he created his drawings. Tonatiuh's signature profile figures, inspired by Mixtec codex imagery, fit nicely alongside Posada's black and white skeletons. The full page reproductions of famous skeleton art alongside a question about what message Posada was communicating with his art push readers to consider the goals of the artist. A detailed author's note, glossary, and bibliography are essential for those looking for further information. This is a great read aloud for younger kids that still has

enough detail and big ideas for older readers.

Well written narrative with embedded primary sources about the creator of the most famous Calaveras - in Mexico in the late 19th, early 20th century. I'd recommend this as a read aloud or for partner reading and discussion in the intermediate and even early middle grades. Perfect for an integrated unit of study on historical figures who strongly influenced their communities, artists, Mexico, 19th century of the Americas, or a holiday unit. The art work is stunning and the writing is clear and cohesive. For another beautiful book by Tonatiuh on a strong historical figure, see *Separate is Never Equal: Sylvia Mendez and Her Family's Fight for Desegregation*. Tonatiuh's work would be perfect for an author/illustrator unit of study as well.

Like other customers have stated, it is impossible to read the kindle version. The leading of the text is too small and this makes the book completely unreadable. There seems to be no quality control conducted on this book nor any concern with correct the issue despite numerous customer complaints.

I am a huge fan of Tonatiuh's *THE PRINCESS AND THE WARRIOR* and know I've been remiss in not having read his backlist. This book is gorgeous, as well as informative. Something readers will come back to again and again.

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