

Natalia Sylvester

Award-winning author of books for young adults and children

Creative writing educator & speaker

## Author Presentations & Creative Writing Workshops

One of my greatest joys is connecting with students and readers through story—and in turn, empowering them to tell their own. From general assemblies to smaller groups like English and Creative Writing classes and book clubs, my presentations aim to demystify the writing process in hopes of making storytelling more accessible.

I share my own personal path to book publishing as someone who moved to the US at a young age, learned English as a second language, and navigated health issues and multiple surgeries. Through slides, photos, and interactive prompts, my presentations show the behind-the-scenes realities of being an author while openly and honestly discussing topics like self-acceptance, overcoming obstacles, and finding our voices.

### Sample presentations:

My presentations can be adapted for audiences of different grades and sizes. Below is just a small sampling of topics. I'm also happy to tailor a talk for your school's specific theme or needs.

## What's in Your Maleta?

**For: Grades K - 2 | Preparation: A Maleta Full of Treasures**

Curricular Connections: Social Studies or General Assembly

Part storytime, part journey through the treasures of the Andes. In this fun and engaging presentation, Natalia shares the story of Dulce, a Peruvian American immigrant who anticipates visits from family members, giddily wondering what they'll bring in their maletas, or suitcases. Peruvian sights, flavors, and textures, as well as mini Spanish lessons and geographical tidbits, prompt students to look to their own communities and loved ones to ask: what treasures would you pack in *your* maleta?

## The Journey of a Book

**For: Grades 3 - 6 | Preparation: A Maleta Full of Treasures**

Curricular Connections: Language Arts or General Assembly

Journey through the making of *A Maleta Full of Treasures*, from its messy, handwritten first draft and early sketches by the artist to a finished book students can hold in their hands. This interactive presentation gives students a behind-the-scenes look at the processes of brainstorming, researching, drafting, and revising, encouraging them to apply these skills not only to writing, but to design processes all around them.

## You Don't Have to Change the World to Change the World

**For: Grades 7 - 12 | Preparation: Running**

Curricular Connections: Social Studies, Language Arts or General Assembly

Making a difference in the world and writing a novel are a lot alike: they can both feel incredibly daunting and overwhelming. Natalia Sylvester shares behind-the-scenes looks at the obstacles she faced while writing *Running*—from handwritten first drafts to completion—to create parallels between the process of imagining a new world on the page and reimagining a better world in real life.

Writing prompts and interactive exercises lead students through small steps that add up to meaningful change. **This presentation can be tailored for general assemblies or a smaller group with writing exercises.**

## Mermaids Made Me Do It

For: Grades 9 - 12 | Preparation: Breathe and Count Back from Ten

Curricular Connections: Language Arts, Social Studies and General Assembly

From growing up in and out of surgeries to dreaming of being a mermaid, Natalia shares the real-life experiences that inspired *Breathe and Count Back from Ten*—as well as the doubts and insecurities that almost kept her from writing the book in the first place. Students get behind-the-scenes looks at her writing notebooks, messy first drafts, revision choices, research, and more. Together we dive into topics like writer's block, the importance of telling our stories, and how to fully embrace all the parts of us that make us whole.

## Bodies Of Water

For: Grades 9 - 12 | Preparation: Breathe and Count Back from Ten

Curricular Connections: Language Arts or General Assembly

It can be difficult to write about our bodies, but the safety of the water and its mythical sea creatures can provide a beautiful outlet. In this presentation, Natalia Sylvester shares her personal experiences as a disabled Latina immigrant who experienced bullying, and how writing *Breathe and Count Back from Ten* was a form of expression and healing. She then guides students through writing exercises that empower them to write their own stories. **This presentation can be tailored for general assemblies or a smaller group with writing exercises.**

## Testimonials

“Natalia's visit to our class was illuminating, insightful, and most of all generous. Her fiction is already so alive on the page, and she brought it even further to life for us while helping us think through the depths of our own writing. Natalia is a luminous presence and a masterful practitioner. Her visit made me believe in everything writing can do.”

— Dennis Sweeney, lecturer, Amherst College

“I want to let you know how many students included quotes from Natalia in their research papers about the writing process. Her experiences and reading resonated deeply with them.”

— Laura Cottam Sajbel, St. Edward's University

“Natalia Sylvester is an engaging workshop leader who makes students feel understood and respected. She provides space for discussion to explore and develop youth stories.”

— Leticia Urieta, Regional Program Director at Austin Bat Cave

## Awards and Accolades

### ***Breathe and Count Back From Ten (grades 9 - 12)***

A 2024-2025 Florida Teens Read title

A 2023 Pura Belpré Award Honor Book

A 2023 Schneider Family Award Honor Book

Starred Reviews from Kirkus Reviews and Publisher's Weekly

### ***Running (grades 7 - 12)***

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

Rise Book List: A Feminist Book Project by the American Library Association

A Cooperative Children's Book Center list selection

### ***A Maleta Full of Treasures (grades 3 - 5)***

A Junior Library Guild Gold Standard Selection

Available in both English and Spanish

"A must-have for any picture book collection." —School Library Journal (starred review)

## About

Natalia Sylvester is the Pura Belpré- and Schneider Family-honor winning author of books for teens, children, and adults. Born in Lima, Peru, Natalia came to the US at age four and grew up in Florida and the Rio Grande Valley in Texas. She received a BA in Creative Writing from the University of Miami, was a 2021 Visiting Associate Professor at the University of Texas at Austin, and was formerly a faculty member at the Mile-High MFA program at Regis University. She now lives in South Florida with her family.

## Request a Visit

To book an event related to Natalia's books for teens or children, please fill out [this form](#) or contact [How Now Booking here.](#)

For speaking engagements related to Natalia's books for adults, contact Christie Hinrichs at [christie@authorsunbound.com](mailto:christie@authorsunbound.com) or (541) 797-2217