



OLENTANGY SCHOOLS LITERATURE SELECTION REVIEW FORM

LOCATION

Building(s): OLMS

Classes/Grade Level(s): 6,7,8

ABOUT THE BOOK

Selection Title/Author: Caminar / Skila Brown

Genre: Historical Fiction / Novel in Verse

Lexile Reading Level: 1030L

Total number of pages: 193

Book Summary (abbreviated, bulleted list or link to a book summary)

Carlos knows that when the soldiers arrive with warnings about the Communist rebels, it is time to be a man and defend the village, keep everyone safe. But Mama tells him not yet — he's still her quiet moonfaced boy. The soldiers laugh at the villagers, and before they move on, a neighbor is found dangling from a tree, a sign on his neck: *Communist*. Mama tells Carlos to run and hide, then try to find her. . . Numb and alone, he must join a band of guerillas as they trek to the top of the mountain where Carlos's *abuela* lives. Will he be in time, and brave enough, to warn them about the soldiers? What will he do then? A novel in verse inspired by actual events during Guatemala's civil war, *Caminar* is the moving story of a boy who loses nearly everything before discovering who he really is.

Potentially Objectionable Content (list all categories and at least one example, referenced with a page or chapter number)

Violence:

The protagonist hears screams and gun fire from his village (page 48-49).

After throwing a rock at an armed teenager, a gun is pointed at the protagonist (page 88,89).

The protagonist's mother is described in a pile of the dead from a group of traveling rebels (page 103).

The protagonist and his traveling gang snap the neck of a bunny and cook it for food (136).

A character's father disappears after talking back to a military officer (page 8).

Book Reviews (1-2 link(s)) Note: teacher is not responsible for broken links

The horrors of the Guatemalan civil war are filtered through the eyes of a boy coming of age. Set in Chopán in 1981, this verse novel follows the life of Carlos, old enough to feed the chickens but not old enough to wring their necks as the story opens. Carlos' family and other villagers are introduced in early poems, including Santiago



Luc who remembers "a time when there were no soldiers / driving up in jeeps, holding / meetings, making / laws, scattering / bullets into the trees, / hunting guerillas." On an errand for his mother when soldiers attack, Carlos makes a series of decisions that ultimately save his life but leave him doubting his manliness and bravery. An epilogue of sorts helps tie the main narrative to the present, and the book ends on a hopeful note. In her debut, Brown has chosen an excellent form for exploring the violence and loss of war, but at times, stylistic decisions (most notably attempts at concrete poetry) appear to trump content. While some of the individual poems may be difficult for readers to follow and the frequent references to traditional masculinity may strike some as patriarchal, the use of Spanish is thoughtful, as are references to local flora and fauna. The overall effect is a moving introduction to a subject seldom covered in fiction for youth.

-Kirkus Review

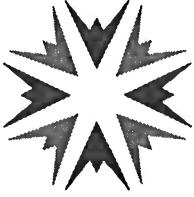
This Weekend, 'Caminar' Navigates Horrors With Poetry

I think that Skila did an amazing job in this novel — largely because it is telling history that we don't normally tell. We're very squeamish about what we put forth for children, right? We have ideas of what's appropriate for children and what is inappropriate, and certainly the massacre of a village we shy away from. So the first thing is I think that it's very brave to offer children world history, not just American history, not just the slice of who we are as a people, but also who our neighbors are.

But the other thing that I think she did so beautifully is that she handled difficult things gently and with compassion to where the children are developmentally — meaning the readers.

So there is a scene in this book where the village is massacred, right, by the military. But she reports it in dream and in magical realism, which for me, seemed completely appropriate culturally to this book and also completely appropriate for the age level of the children reading it because this is a middle-grade novel.

Although I will say that any age can read this in terms of middle grade, young adults, adults and still connect with the level of writing and the ideas about the human spirit that are in the pages.



-Weekend Edition, NPR

ABOUT THE CLASS

Rationale for the Literature Selection (in addition to standards): (To be completed by the teacher or team)

This book serves as an example of a novel in verse—focusing heavily on internal monologue and brief, pithy vignettes. As a part of a large novels in verse unit, this book serves as a high-interest read, exposing students to different conflicts outside of the United States. We'll be using the protagonist's experiences to delve into internal versus external conflicts and the relationships between both.

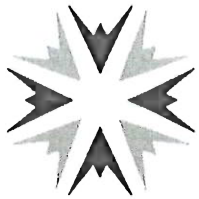
The Ohio Department of Education ELA Standards (list priority standards *only and* abbreviations of the main ideas of the priority standards) [Link to Ohio's ELA Standards](#)

1. RL.7.3 Analyze how particular elements of a story or drama interact (e.g., how setting shapes the characters or plot).
2. RL.7.6 Analyze how an author uses the point of view to develop and contrast the perspectives of different characters or narrators in a text.
3. RL.7.2 Analyze literary text development. a. Determine a theme of a text and analyze its development over the course of the text. b. Incorporate the development of a theme and other story details into an objective summary of the text.

ALTERNATIVE TEXTS

What alternative texts would allow students to meet the same objectives? (1-2 texts, title/author; Note: these texts must also have lit. reviews forms associated with their selection)

1. All The Broken Pieces
2. American Born Chinese



SIGNATURES (embedded jpegs of authentic signatures are fine OR download/print form and obtain traditional signatures)

Teacher: Maddie Shepherd Date: 8/30/24
Department Chair: Nath Bach Date: 8/30/24
Building Principal: [Signature] Date: 8/30/24
District Curriculum Administrator: [Signature] Date: 9/12/24