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FOREWORD REVIEW ♥♥♥♥♥ PICTURE BOOKS

Hello Night (Hola Noche)

Amy Costales
Mercedes McDonald, illustrator
Luna Rising (Sep 17, 2007)
Unknown $14.95 (24pp)
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Most lullaby themes are of putting away and saying goodbye. In this rhyming tale, a mother and her son get ready for bed by taking a stroll and saying hello in English and Spanish to the night.

"Hello night. Hello cricket. Hello mouse under the thicket. /Hola noche. Hola grillo. Hola arbusto y ratoncillo." The translation is close, but word choice alters as necessary to keep the rhyme. The pair is visited by nocturnal creatures as they greet the star-studded night. At the end, the boy, cuddled in his ducky PJs, cues little listeners: "Goodnight night. It's time to sleep. I close my eyes without a peep."

Costales taught primary and secondary school in California, India, and Thailand. Her other children's titles are *Abuelita Full of Life* and *Lupe Vargas and Her Super Best Friend*.

McDonald's creamy jewel-toned illustrations evoke the hazy fantasy of bedtime. Hills, the path, trees, and even the text undulate gently in a visual rocking motion. The nighttime landscape is luminous; the scenes feel intimate and comforting. The images encompass both cultures. In one illustration, the child and mother look over a lagoon glowing with the light of a huge apricot moon in which nestles a giant dreamy rabbit. In Aztec mythology, the moon god's face was darkened by a rabbit so it could not shine as brightly as the sun. McDonald has illustrated other children's books such as *Morning in the Jungle* and *Fairy Trails*.

The text's simple song makes this a lovely bedtime story in both languages and helps children say goodbye to false monsters, hello to the rich nocturnal world.

NAOMI MILLÁN (December 12, 2007)

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