



## Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras

*Duncan Tonatiuh*

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A picture book biography of 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.

## **Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras Details**

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Author : Duncan Tonatiuh

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## **From Reader Review Funny Bones: Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras for online ebook**

### **David says**

3.75

I love learning about culture and so I am definitely glad I read this one. The artwork was really interesting and it helped me learn more about a holiday I had only some familiarity with. Posada's original artwork is very interesting and I just wish there was more to this book.

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### **Danielle says**

Fascinating. Duncan Tonatiuh expands the boundaries of picture books in wonderful ways using techniques that enlighten and ask questions of readers.

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### **Daisy says**

This award winning picture book tells us about the life of Mexican artist Jose Guadalupe Posada (1852-1913) and his work. The reader learns about the relationship between calaveras and Dia de Los Muertos, but also learns about Mexico's history and political climate that gave rise to Posada's artwork. This book contains some of Posada's work and reflective questions. The terra cotta colored illustrations alongside Posada's detailed etches work give the book a rustic charm.

The book is rich in information, but it won't overwhelm young readers. The story flows nicely and the reflection question guides the reader into a mediation of Posada's work.

2016 Robert F. Sibert Medal award winner for the most distinguished informational book and  
2016 Pura Belpre Honor book for illustration.

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### **Adrienne Pettinelli says**

And then I had to spend some time looking at Posada's calaveras on the Internet. I think Tonatiuh accomplished his mission.

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### **Samantha says**

A picture book biography of Jose Guadalupe Posada who is well known for his calavera (skull/skeleton) artwork. His artwork is very much tied to the el Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations every year on November 1-2 and this book provides biographical info about the artist, info on the holiday, as well as

encourages the reader to think critically about what Posada was trying to say with his artwork.

The hand-drawn and digitally collaged artwork is very well done here and my favorite by this author/illustrator to date. I really enjoyed the sections that read like instruction manuals for different techniques artists use (i.e. lithography, engraving, etching), and I LOVED the brightly colored pages with Posada's artwork and the author's interpretations; they were very thought-provoking.

Highly recommend this book for grades 3-5+.

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### **Meira (readingbooksinisrael) says**

I really enjoyed it. It taught me more about something I don't know a lot about and the art style was inspired by Mixtec cultures and I always love art styles that are inspired by the past of the thing that they're talking about or referencing. It reminded me a lot about a series of pictures books about famous Black people I had when I was little because it was so easily accessible and interesting. Plus with the information 'pamphlets' about how engraving, lithography and etching are done. Little me would have loved this.

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### **Jennifer says**

Funny Bones tells the story of the artist, Posada, and the Calaveras that he popularized in Mexico in the early 1900's. This book would be excellent to use in the classroom. BTW, the story starts in Aguascalientes, the same town that Esperanza Rising begins in. The time frame is close to concurrent.

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### **Sara Grochowski says**

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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### **Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says**

I'd never heard of the Mexican artist Posada before until I read this book, but I think I've seen his illustrations. He specialized in calaveras (skeletons), which were particularly popular during the annual el Dia de Muertos (Day of the Dead) festivals. Whenever he had to depict people, whether in political cartoons or in humorous Day of the Dead pictures, he always showed them as skeletons. Sometimes you could recognize them as political figures by their facial hair or the way they were dressed. His artwork was certainly unique. Posada wasn't known outside of Mexico until some years after his death, when American painter Jean Charlot wrote an essay about him and edited a catalog of his work, thus bringing Posada to the attention of the world. Thank goodness it was in time to preserve the many posters, flyers, broadsides, and other examples of his work for us to enjoy today.

I particularly like how Tonatiuh presents examples of Posada's cartoons and invites the reader to figure out

what Posada was trying to say. However, there are several instances where the pictures show people holding broadsides with Posada's illustrations and a poem in Spanish, and nowhere in the book are there translations of the poems. I can read Spanish, but many young readers cannot, so I wish the translations had been provided. However, Tonatiuh does provide a lengthy author's note at the back of the book explaining in more detail about Day of the Dead customs and Posada's life, as well as a glossary of terms, a list of books for more information, and a list of places in the US where you can see Posada's work. The closest to me? The New York Public Library, the Museum of Modern Art, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, all in New York City. Field trip??

I should think this book would most appeal to readers of Hispanic origin and more in the Southwest, but I would encourage all readers everywhere to delve into it. Posada was so unique, and it may inspire some young imitators, given the popularity of skeletons nowdays. Recommended!

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### **Jon(athan) Nakapalu says**

Excellent book on the work of Mexican artist José Guadalupe (Lupe) Posada (1852–1913).

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### **Dodie says**

What a nice book for kids. Funny Bones tells the story of the Mexican artist José Guadalupe Posada, who popularized calaveras both as a form of political protest and a popular entertainment.

He excelled at drawing and at 18 began to work in a print shop. The book goes into the process of how a newspaper is printed.

Posada's literary calaveras in the book are for the Day of the Dead celebrations. These are printed black-and-white images of skeletons, poking fun at the living. The illustration are nice to look at.

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### **Alexa Marshall says**

-Possible Area Content Crossover: Art

-Bloom's Taxonomy:

-Remembering:

--Recall what Posada's most famous images were called, and what they looked like.

-Understanding

--Summarize the events of Posada's life that were mentioned in the story.

-Applying

--Analyze a picture of one of Posada's calaveras that is in the book. Examine it and share what you think he was trying to say in the image.

I think that Posada was making fun of the politicians by drawing them climbing all over each other to get to the top. I think that Posada thought that the men would have climbed over anyone and stepped on anyone's toes as long as that meant that they could get the fortune and power that comes with being a famous politician.

-Evaluating

--Think of the three different ways that Posada did his drawings/printmaking. Choose one type of printmaking mentioned that you would choose to use, and why.

I would choose to do the wood engraving technique. I chose this because I think that it would be fun to be able to use tools for carving to make my art and I think that they would last longer/be able to be used more times than the other methods' stencils.

-Creating

--Design your own calavera. Then, write a paragraph about what your calavera represents or stands for and how your image relates to what you learned about in the book. It can be a calavera of you or someone you know, or someone famous, or someone totally random--as long as you write about the meaning of your artwork and connect it to the text.

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### **Mary says**

Tonatiuh combines his Mixtec inspired illustrations with Jose Guadalupe Posada's artwork to introduce Posada as an influential Mexican artist. Aesthetically beautiful, the narrative is accessible and insightful, giving the reader the context for Posada's work in relation to the politics of Mexico and the Day of the Dead traditions. Tonatiuh does an impressive job including much information about the Mexican Revolution, lithography, engraving, and etching while telling a straightforward story about an artist using art for social commentary. A fascinating biography that will be a must-read picture book for Day of the Dead units and readers of all ages interested in biographies of highly creative and resourceful individuals.

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### **Edward Sullivan says**

A great introduction to Posada (Don Lupe Posada), who created calaveras, the skeletons prominent in Día de Muertos (Day of the Dead) celebrations. Engaging and informative.

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### **Dani Kraft says**

Funny Bones Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras

Funny Bones is a non-fiction book by Duncan Tonatiuh. This story is about a boy named Jose Guadalupe Pasada. People called him Lupe. Lupe was a talented artist. At the age of eighteen, Lupe began to work at Don Trinidad Pedroza's print shop. There he did lots of work with printing of documents, diplomas, flyers, labels, and much more. One day he was told to make a political cartoon that got him in a lot of trouble. This resulted in him moving to the city Leon. Here he opened his very own print shop. Lupe eventually started working with a man named don Antonio. They worked together for twenty years. For dia de los muertos, Don Antonio and Lupe printed literary Calaveras. This had poems and Calaveras on the picture. These Calaveras although, they were not the majority of his work they were his most famous work. These skeleton drawings reflected things that were going on in Lupe's life. Whether it be people he judged or how he used to only walk places and now they have cars. The end of the book talks about Lupe's death and gives him a new name of Posada. Throughout the book you can see examples of the beautiful Calaveras Posada drew for his town. I paired this book with Clatter Bash 'A Day of the Dead Celebration' by Richard Keep. I did this because it was a cute book about the day of the dead. Dias de los muertos is what Jose Guadalupe Posada was famous for drawing. He was very famous for drawing Calaveras. Calaveras are featured throughout this entire picture book. It is a cute short story that I could open with in a class. I would read Clatter Bash first so I could give a proper introduction for the next book. I would say that Jose Guadalupe Posada was famous for drawing skeletons just like the one in the book we read before. I would have the children do a K-W-L chart for the book Funny bones. Since we got a bit of an insight as to what Calaveras were, I would want to see what they really know, what they want to know, and what they learned from Posada's story. I would teach these books in a social studies class near cinco de mayo. This is also a good chance to get a multicultural book in the mix. I would want all my students to see themselves in a story. So, for the children of Hispanic decent they would be able to see themselves in the book Funny Bones Posada and His Day of the Dead Calaveras. They could do so because there are little pictures of Posada throughout the picture book.

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