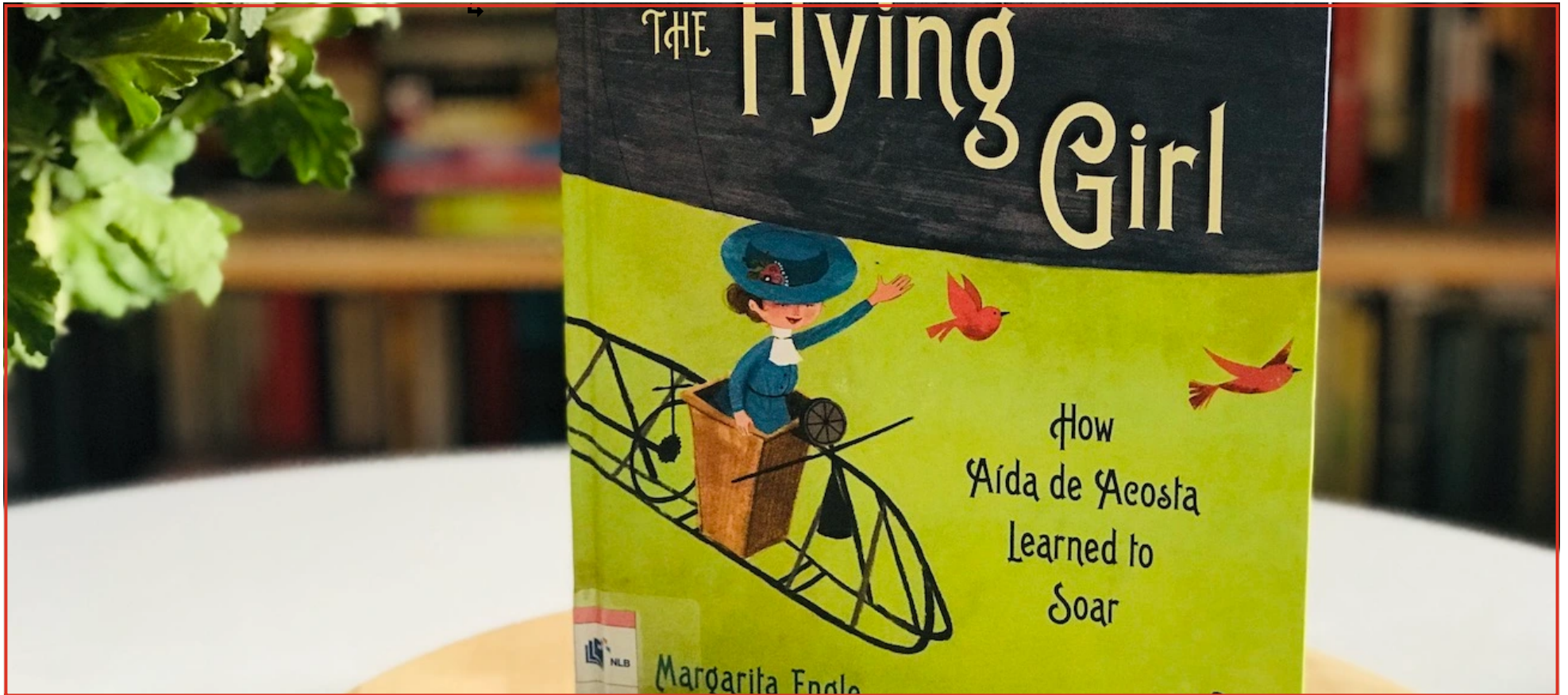


Gathering Books



#WOMENREADWOMEN2019 BOOKS EARLY READERS FEATURES GENRE LIFESPAN OF A READER NON-FICTION
WEDNESDAY NONFICTION PICTURE BOOKS READING THEMES SISTERHOOD AND FEMALE BONDS

[Nonfiction Wednesday] The Flying Girl As An Inspiration To All The Other Girls Who Dream Of Soaring

BY MYRA GARCES-BACSAL April 10, 2019

THE Flying Girl

How
Aída de Acosta
Learned to
Soar

Margarita Engle

Illustrated by Sara Palacios





The Flying Girl: How Aida De Acosta Learned To Soar

Written by Margarita Engle **Illustrated by** Sara Palacios

Published by Atheneum Books For Young Readers (2018)

ISBN: 1481445022 (ISBN13: 9781481445023)

Borrowed from the Jurong West Public Library. Book photos taken by me.

I did not know about Aida de Acosta until I read this picturebook. A day spent in Paris witnessing the flying dirigible of Brazilian inventor Albert Santos-Dumont has set Aida's mind free, daring her to dream of doing something that is not expected of girls at the time: fly.



One day, a girl named Afda was strolling
on a lively street in a lovely city
when she glanced up and was dazzled
by the sight of a huge balloon
that glided as gracefully
as a whale-shaped moon.

Below the balloon, an air boat dangled,
and inside, there was a man.

Despite the fact that both her parents discouraged her from pursuing her dream, she took it upon herself to learn all that she could from the Brazilian inventor regarding gears, levers, ballast, ropes – until she realizes her dream of — not just being a passenger on this dirigible invented by a man — but its pilot.



I love how the story has a lilting, rhythmic quality to it that is the trademark of Margarita Engle. Only a poet would be able to capture an entire life and distill it in just a few words that move a young reader's sensibility such that the story dances of its own free will, just like Aida de Acosta flying this dirigible on her own.

“You did it!” he shouted. “You flew! You’re a hero, such a brave inspiration for all the girls of the world.”



The Author's Note also indicated how Aida de Acosta was compelled by her father to keep this monumental accomplishment to herself, when he discovered all about her historic flight in the papers.

Aida was an obedient daughter, so she kept her promise until the 1930s, when she donated her papers to the Smithsonian, where they were displayed along with the engine of the airship she had flown.

This was a fascinating read about a little-known American woman of Cuban and Spanish parentage, her bold and fearless dream of flight, and her realizing it, regardless of society's expectations of what a woman should or should not do. Definitely a girl-powered title that should be added to anyone's library.

About Myra Garces-Bacsal

Myra is a Teacher Educator and a registered clinical psychologist based in Al Ain, United Arab Emirates. Prior to moving to the Middle East, she lived for eleven years in Singapore serving as a teacher educator. She has edited five books on rediscovering children's literature in Asia (with a focus on the Philippines, Malaysia, India, China, Japan) as part of the proceedings for the Asian Festival of Children's Content where she served as the Chair of the Programme Committee for the Asian Children's Writers and Illustrators Conference from 2011 until 2019. While she is an academic by day, she is a closet poet and a book hunter at heart. When she is not reading or writing about books or planning her next reads, she is hoping desperately to smash that shuttlecock to smithereens because Badminton Is Life (still looking for badminton courts here at UAE - suggestions are most welcome).