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Publisher and Author Mario Picayo will attend Nature Island Literary Festival and Book Fair

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Roseau, Dominica – Caribbean publisher and children’s book author Mario Picayo has been added to the roster of participants in Dominica’s Nature Island Literary Festival and Book Fair to be held from the 10th to the 12th of August.

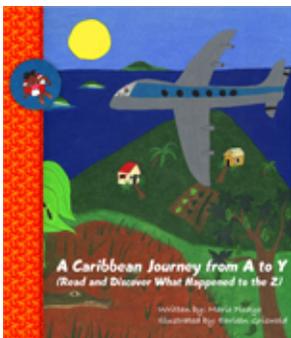


Mario Picayo Reading at the Roseau Public Library

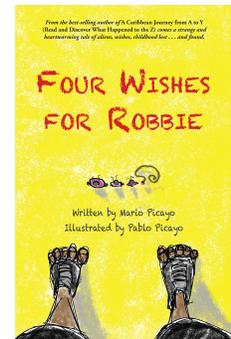
This will be the Cuban national and New York resident’s second visit to Dominica in eight months. Last December Picayo spoke to authors and aspiring writers during a workshop at the National Library and read from his best-selling title *A Caribbean Journey from A to Y (Read and Discover What Happened to the Z)* to the children and librarians in attendance. He also presented a set of books as a gift to the library. Many were signed by the authors and dedicated “to the children of Dominica”.

Picayo, who lived in the U.S. Virgin Islands for over twenty years, and likes to call St. Thomas “home”, will present his latest title *Four Wishes for Robbie* together with the aforementioned *A Caribbean Journey from A to Y (Read and Discover What Happened to the Z)*.

Set in the U.S. Virgin Islands, *Four Wishes for Robbie* is a heartwarming tale that follows the adventures of a young hero as his life goes from normal to very strange all because of a comic book, a mango, and four aliens from outer space.



The second title, *A Caribbean Journey from A to Y (Read and Discover What Happened to the Z)* has been among the top-selling books on Amazon.com’s *Caribbean Children’s Books* category for the last four years. It was selected as “Commended Title” by the prestigious Americas Award and a copy, dedicated to Sasha and Malia Obama, was presented to Michelle Obama by the First Lady of the U.S. Virgin Islands in 2009. Silvio Torres-Saillant, author of *An Intellectual History of the Caribbean* wrote in his review of the book: “I can think of no better book for children to begin the lifelong adventure of knowing the Caribbean.”



Picayo's role as publisher takes center stage when he speaks about an ongoing project started five years ago with great success in the U.S. Virgin Islands. It involves the creation of high quality, fully illustrated children's books by local authors, which are given once a year to every school-age child on the islands at no charge to them. The initiative addresses, and tries to remedy, the lack of access to children's literature written by Caribbean authors and the little opportunities available for local writers to publish their work. His goal is to assist all other Caribbean islands create similar initiatives with their own authors and illustrators.

In a recent interview with Anansem.com, (<http://www.anansem.com/2012/06/many-grains-make-beach-interview-with.html>) Trinidadian writer and Caribbean children's literature specialist, Summer Edward, had this to say about Mario:

“Just as Caribbean literature for adults had André Deutsch in the 1950s, Caribbean literature for children has its present-day idiosyncratic publishing pioneer in the person of Mario Picayo. Only unlike Deutsch, Picayo was born here.

“Picayo is publishing's equivalent of the traveling salesman. And yes, Picayo is selling books . . . but it's really culture that Picayo is selling more than anything, or perhaps more correctly, a way of seeing ourselves. His company's children's books are thoughtfully packaged conduits of culture, given in absolutely good faith to the children he meets in his extensive travels throughout the region.”

“ . . . I've known him long enough to know that the idea of self-sufficiency — cultural self-sufficiency that is— strongly colors his motives as a publisher. Indeed, from our conversations, I can tell you that Picayo seems bent on using an indigenous mode of literary production— and literary celebration —to promote cultural ownership wholesale. For Picayo, it's really about abolishing the old gatekeepers and building a new publishing model that privileges our worlds and our stories.

And just as John Calder once called Deutsch an "entrepreneur of the imagination," the same can be said of Picayo. A tireless innovator and canvasser, he is one of the most familiar faces in Caribbean children's publishing. Beyond pushing the mathematical envelope, he may actually be re-plotting the entire curve.”

The interview ended with comments from Picayo regarding his experiences at the 2012 Havana International Book Fair.

“The Havana International Book Fair and my contact with local children's books creators taught me that much can be done with little resources. What is mostly needed is the elementary understanding that a country's best investment is in the education of its children. Ignore that simple corollary, and the price that is paid is high, and the consequences irreversible for another generation, or two.”

Come hear Mario Picayo Saturday August 11th at the Nature Island Literary Festival and Book Fair.

**For information about the festival visit: <http://www.dominicalitfest.com/>
or contact the festival organizers at: NILitFest@gmail.com**