

The Poet X
Elizabeth Acevedo
HarperTeen, 2018

Reviews

- [**The Children's Writer's Guild**](#) ("**The Poet X**"): "Now Xiomara skips Confirmation class to attend Poetry Club and her life changes. She's found what she needs. And the reader is delighted that this bright talented insightful woman has found her way. The story is inspiring. The writing is insightful. It's no wonder this is the 2018 National Book Award for Young People's Literature winner as well as the Boston Globe Horn Book Fiction winner. It's bound to win more major accolades."
- [**School Library Journal**](#) ("**The Poet X by Elizabeth Acevedo | SLJ Review**", **15 March 2018**): "Forbidden kisses with a crush and an impromptu performance at an open mic prove to be euphoric, affirming moments for Xiomara: "it's beautiful and real and what I wanted." Acevedo's poetry is skillfully and gorgeously crafted, each verse can be savored on its own, but together they create a portrait of a young poet sure to resonate with readers long after the book's end. VERDICT Truly a "lantern glowing in the dark" for aspiring poets everywhere. All YA collections will want to share and treasure this profoundly moving work.—Della Farrell, School Library Journal."
- [**Publishers Weekly**](#) ("**The Poet X**", **22 January 2018**): "Xiomara pours her innermost self into poems and dreams of competing in poetry slams, a passion she's certain her conservative Dominican parents will never accept. Debut novelist Acevedo's free verse gives Xiomara's coming-of-age story an undeniable pull, its emotionally charged bluntness reflecting her determination and strength. At its heart, this is a complex and sometimes painful exploration of love in its many forms, with Xiomara's growing love for herself reigning supreme. Ages 13–up."
- [**Booklist**](#) ("**The Poet X**", **1 March 2019**): "Narrated by the author, this novel in verse is a clear fit for audio, and in under four hours, it packs a memorable and invigorating punch. So intimately does Acevedo inhabit her character that the boundaries between author, character, and narrator become irrelevant, and the listener is easily swept into Xiomara's language and poetic form to tell her story. At the story's end, Acevedo explains the origin and contrapuntal structure of the "choose your own adventure" poem Xiomara takes to the New York Citywide Slam, reading it twice more in different ways, just as readers of the print version could experience the poem differently depending on the path they take in reading it. Young poets—and girls who, like Xiomara, are a little too much—will swoon."
- [**Entertainment Weekly**](#) ("**The Poet X is a stunning amplification of the Latina experience: EW review**", **14 March 2018**): "While struggles with faith, family, and

self-acceptance are not unique teenage experiences, it is their presentation through the lens of Xiomara's Afro-Latina heritage that makes her story a startling standout. The balance of humor and emotion with which her thoughts are expressed is charming and engaging. Acevedo has elevated the adolescent narrative; despite the age of her protagonist, she has successfully addressed themes of sexism, sexuality, and Christianity while providing a point of reference for Latinx readers searching for themselves in literature and life."

Awards

- [CILIP Carnegie Medal, 2019](#)
- [National Book Award - Young People's Literature, 2018](#)
- [Boston Globe Horn Book Award, 2018](#)
- [YALSA Michael L. Printz Award, 2019](#)
- [ALA List of all awards \(Not exhaustive\), 2021](#)

Lists

- [John Hersey High School Summer Reading Book, 2021](#)
- [Esperanza Academy Charter School, 2020-2021](#)
- [The New York Times: November's Book Club Picks, 2018](#)
- [PBS Now Read This Book Club, 2020](#)
- [Kean University Common Read, 2021](#)

Response to challenges

- [The Poet X Goes To Court, 2021](#): "United States District Judge Max O. Cogburn Jr. ultimately reasons that The Poet X does not attempt to force a negative view on Catholicism on the reader; rather, religion plays a more anthropological role, 'prompted by the frustrating confrontation of adolescents with parents, sexual desire, religious doubt, and loneliness.'"
- [Summary of Lake Norman Public Charter School in N.C.:](#) "John and Robin Coble, two parents at the Lake Norman Public Charter School (LNC) in Huntersville, North Carolina, challenged this story of a young woman of color coming of age in Harlem, claiming that the novel is overtly "anti-Christian" and that the school's use of the novel violates constitutional safeguards against government endorsement of religion. Voting to retain the book, school officials stated, "At LNC, no literary selection is mandatory. If a constituent is not comfortable with the subject matter of a material, their perspective is honored and an alternative selection is offered. The Coble family rejected this option." Students also spoke up. One said, "It's just a coming of age book. It's not anything crazy, it's just what teenage girls go through. It's a girl trying to find her voice." The Cobles subsequently filed a federal lawsuit asking the court to remove the book from Lake Norman classrooms. The lawsuit was dismissed by the court. The Cobles are appealing the court's decision."