



## Mali Under the Night Sky: A Lao Story of Home

written and illustrated by Youme

### About the Book

**Genre:** Nonfiction

**Format:** Paperback, pages 40

**ISBN:** 9781643796598

**Reading Level:** Grade 4

**Interest Level:** K-4

**Guided Reading Level:** Q

**Accelerated Reader® Level/Points:**  
3.9/0.5

**Lexile™ Measure:** N/A

\*Reading level based on the ATOS Readability Formula

**Themes:** Asian/Asian American Interest, Childhood Experiences and Memories, Courage, Families, Optimism/Enthusiasm, Overcoming Obstacles, Refugees, War

**Resources on the web:**

[leeandlow.com/books/mali-under-the-night-sky](http://leeandlow.com/books/mali-under-the-night-sky)

All guided reading level placements may vary and are subject to revision. Teachers may adjust the assigned levels in accordance with their own evaluations.

## SYNOPSIS

**A child finds comfort in the memories of the landscapes and traditions of the beautiful homeland she was forced to leave.**

*Mali Under the Night Sky* is the true story of Lao American artist Malichansouk Kouanchao. Due to wars that were not contained by borders, she and her family had to leave their home in Laos. Before the war changed everything, Mali lived in a community where she felt safe and loved. She enjoyed sitting in front of her house and asking everyone who passed by, "Where are you going?" She went everywhere too—climbing up flowering trees, searching for pale bamboo shoots in the dark forest, and catching fish in rice fields. But when she was five years old, her family had to cross the Mekong River into Thailand to be safe. She remembers the journey, as well as the beauty and strength of Lao culture.

Through warm and accessible watercolor illustrations, author-illustrator Youme shows readers the joyful memories of home that carried Mali through the heart-break of leaving it.

## BACKGROUND

### From the “Healing the Wounds of War” by Thavisouk Phrasavath

Laos is a country surrounded by other countries, sharing its borders with Myanmar (Burma) and China to the northwest, Vietnam to the east, Cambodia to the south, and Thailand to the west. I was born in 1964 in Laos during the civil war. There has never been a time without war for me. I first realized I was in the middle of the war in a single moment. It was afternoon. The city was quiet. There was a bomb explosion. I looked up at the sky and I saw a rocket coming. All of a sudden, I saw someone blown away. Like dust, like one breath of life, she just disappeared in a second. I will never forget that moment.

A country much bigger than Laos was conducting a secret war in our country to build a defense against our neighboring country of Vietnam. That big country was America. For nine years, bombs were dropped on my country, one bombing mission every eight minutes. When I was thirteen and a half, the Communists took over and many of us were forced to leave because of the political turmoil. My family and friends told me I had to leave Laos. I didn't know what was going to happen and I decided to escape. Circumstances brought me to America. There I was reunited with some, but not all, of my family.

Mali and I were both the children of war. What we experienced became the energy that drew us together as friends. We are not only bound by the atrocities of our war experience, but also because living in exile inspired us to be the kind of artists we are today. We transform our life experience, our cultural heritage, to create awareness and a tool for better understanding our histories. Stories like *Mali Under the Night Sky* are a balm that will heal the wounds of the war. Our stories can vitally inspire victims of war to face their own history and to be able to let past tragedy and trauma be resolved. I am very sure Mali's story will find its own way to inspire the hearts and souls of victims of war, of refugees, of immigrants and asylum seekers all around the world.

Thavisouk Phrasavath is a writer, artist, and filmmaker. In 2008, he was nominated for both an Academy Award and a Film Independent Spirit Award.

### Baci Ceremony

In Laos, people celebrate special moments in a person's life with a practice known as a Baci ceremony. Mali, her family and friends practice this ceremony for special days, weddings, or for travel. To learn more about this ceremony, considering consulting the following resources <https://www.bbc.com/travel/article/20200819-laos-collective-approach-to-healthcare> and <https://jclao.com/baci-ritual-remains-a-centrepiece-of-lao-culture/>

### Teaching about the Laotian Civil War

Be aware of students who may be refugees or have experienced displacement in your classroom. Below are resources for those who may be affected by war or for those who support students who may be refugees in your school community.

Colorin Colorado, How to Support Refugee Students in Your School Community, [https://www.color-](https://www.colorin.com)

[incolorado.org/article/how-support-refugee-students-ell-classroom](https://incolorado.org/article/how-support-refugee-students-ell-classroom)

International Rescue Committee, Top tips for teachers: How to support refugees in the classroom, <https://www.rescue.org/uk/article/top-tips-teachers-how-support-refugees-classroom>

Californians Together, Support for Immigrant and Refugee Students, <https://californianstogether.org/support-immigrant-refugee-students-2/>

Learning for Justice, Discussing war and conflict: Resources for educators, parents and caregivers, <https://www.learningforjustice.org/discussing-war-and-conflict-resources-for-educators-parents-and-caregivers>

## BEFORE READING

### Prereading Focus Questions

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 5 and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

Before introducing this book to students, you may wish to develop background knowledge and promote anticipation by posing questions such as the following:

**Note:** Please be cognizant of students who may be refugees in your classroom and be aware of speaking about refugee children and their circumstances at all times.

- Take a look at the front and back covers. Take a picture walk. Ask students to make a prediction. Do you think this book will be fiction or nonfiction? What makes you think so? What clues do the author and illustrator give to help you know whether this book will be fiction or nonfiction?
- Ask students to think about their family and what family means to them. How is family important to you? How do you interact with your family members?
- What do you know about Laos? Where is it located? What languages do people in Laos speak? What is the geography like?
- What traditions do you, your friends, and family celebrate? How do these traditions make you feel? What is special about them?
- What activities do you like to do with your friends and family?
- What are some of your favorite things about where you live? If you had to move, what would you bring with you to remember it by?
- Have you and your family ever had to move? What was it like? How did it make you feel? What kinds of emotions did you have to manage as you were in the process of moving?
- Why might someone need to leave their home and country? What are different factors that play into families having to leave their homes unexpectedly?
- What do you know about the experiences of refugee children and families? What does it mean to be a refugee? What have you heard about refugees from books that you've read or what you've heard before? How are refugees different than immigrants?

- What does it mean to be resilient? How do you demonstrate resilience even though something may be challenging? Why is it important to be resilient? Do you think it can be learned? How so?
- You may want to have students journal their responses to these questions or pose the final question as a KWL discussion and chart so that you can refer back to it throughout and after the reading of the book to further their thinking on the topic(s).

### Exploring the Book

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strand 1; Craft & Structure, Strand 5; and Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 7)  
(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

- **Book Title Exploration:** Talk about the title of the book, *Mali Under the Night Sky*. Then ask students what they think this book will most likely be about and whom the book might be about. What do they think might happen? What information do they think they might learn? What makes them think that?
- **Read Author's Biography:** Read about author Youme on the interior side of the front cover of the book. *Mali Under the Night Sky* is her first picture book. Encourage students to think about what the writing process is like and how Youme came up with the idea for her book. What do you think inspired her to write *Mali Under the Night Sky*?
- Encourage students to stop and jot in their reading notebooks during the reading when they: learn new information, have an emotional reaction or an idea, have a question, or see new words.
- Have students write feeling(s) in their notebook during reading. After reading, ask students why they wrote that feeling down and have them write a journal entry about it. Have students complete one journal entry per each reading session.

### Setting a Purpose for Reading

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

Have students read to find out:

- what does Mali love to do
- how cultural traditions are important to Mali, her friends and family
- what changes Mali began to see in her community
- why Mali and her family have to leave their home
- what did Mali and her family experience while fleeing from war
- how Mali finds hope even in difficult times
- how the support from family and friends during difficult times is important
- how the story ends and what message the author imparts on the reader

Encourage students to consider why the author, Youme, would want to share this story with young people.

## VOCABULARY

(Reading Standards, Craft & Structure, Strand 4)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1 and 2)

The book contains several content-specific and academic words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary below.

Encourage a variety of developmentally-appropriate strategies to support students' vocabulary acquisition: Look at a photo or picture that represents the word, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, explain the meaning of a word to a partner, act out the meaning of a word, explain how the meaning of one word is the similar and different to another word.

### Content Specific

Big/yai, where are you going/jao si pai, sai, beautiful/ngam lai, quick/vai, bamboo shoots, where are you/jao yu sai, delicious/saep lai, comfortable/sabai, sabai, banana grove, well being/yu dee me haeng der

### Academic

climbing, napping, gathered, disappearing, neighboring, mysterious, reflecting, arrested

## AFTER READING

### Discussion Questions

After students have read the book, use these or similar questions to generate discussion, enhance comprehension, and develop appreciation for the content. Encourage students to refer to passages and/or illustrations in the book to support their responses. To build skills in close reading of a text, students should cite textual evidence with their answers.

### Literal Comprehension

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1–3)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does Mali love doing?
2. What does Mali do with her family? What does her family do for very special days?
3. What changes did Mali begin to see where she lived?
4. What does Mali overhear her family talking about?
5. When does Mali's family decide to leave their home? What happens when they come across the Mekong River?
6. What does Mali's mother offer the water? What does she ask for?
7. Where does Mali's family sleep the night that they flee their home? Why do they feel safe that night?
8. What was on the other side of the river? What happened to Mali and her family?

9. Where do Mali and her family end up in this new country?
10. What does Mali think of when she looks at her wrists?
11. What does she share with everyone in jail?
12. What does Mali find comfort in at the end of the story?

### Extension/Higher Level Thinking

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 2 and 3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4 and 6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

1. What does the title *Mali Under the Night Sky*, mean to you after reading the book? Why do you think the author chose this particular title?
2. Why are cultural traditions important for Mali and her family?
3. Why is Mali's family important to her? How does she lean on her family during difficult times?
4. Why is hope important for Mali at the end of the story? How does Mali find safety in difficult times?
5. How does the war impact Mali's life? Why is it important to read about stories like Mali's?
6. How do you think that those who were jailed along with Mali feel, once she begins to share her memories?
7. Read "Healing the Wounds of War" by Thavisouk Phrasavath, as told to Jessica Powers after reading the story. What is the purpose in creating this story for young people? What additional information did you learn after reading this?
8. How does Mali show that she is resilient? How does her story inspire you?
9. How does this story connect with other events in history? In what other countries/time periods have people been treated in similar ways? What were the implications and effects?
10. What role do the illustrations play in the story? How does the artwork demonstrate the story's message and themes? How does the illustrator show emotion and feeling through her artwork?
11. Why do you think that the author chose to include words in Lao both in the text and in the illustrations? What are some of the words that you learned?
12. *Mali Under the Night Sky* ends with, "...And though the journey to a new home would be long and hard, their hearts were safe when they remembered where they had come from." Why do you think author Youme chose to end the story with this line? What do you think is in store for Mali's future?

### Reader's Response

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4–6)

Use the following questions and writing activities to help students practice active reading and personalize their responses to the book. Suggest that students respond in independent or collaborative writing, artwork, or oral discussion. You may also want to set aside time for students to share and

discuss their written work.

1. What is one big thought that you have after reading this book? Think about the journey Mali and her family go through as they flee from the war. Why is family important to Mali? How do they support each other through difficult times?
2. What do you think author Youme's message is to the reader? Think about possible motivations behind Youme's intentions in writing this book. What do you think he wanted to tell her readers?
3. Have students make a text-to-self connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to your own life? What do the children's experiences, thoughts, and feelings mean to you?
4. Have students make a text-to-text connection. Did you think of any other books while you read *Mali Under the Night Sky*? Why did you make those connections?
5. Have students make a text-to-world connection. What kind of connections did you make from this book to what you have seen in the world, such as on television or in a newspaper? Why did this book make you think of that?
6. What does the meaning of home and hope mean to you after reading? After reading *Mali Under the Night Sky*, what does home mean to you? What happens when your life is completely uprooted? How is it possible to find hope after being forced to leave your home?

### Multilingual Teaching Activities

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1–3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 4–6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 4–6)

These strategies might be helpful to use with students who are English Learners and multilingual learners. The book language used may differ from children's oral language. Comparing any differences will help children read and understand the story. Words can hold different meanings in other types of Spanish around the world.

1. Assign ML students to partner-read the story with strong English readers/speakers. Students can alternate reading between pages, repeat passages after one another, or listen to the more fluent reader.
2. Have each student write three questions about the story. Then let students pair up and discuss the answers to the questions.
3. Depending on students' level of English proficiency, after the first reading:
  - Review the illustrations in order and have students summarize what is happening on each page, first orally, then in writing.
  - Have students work in pairs to retell either the plot of the story or key details. Then ask students to write a short summary, synopsis, or opinion about what they have read.
4. Have students give a short talk about how they connected with the most from *Mali Under the Night Sky* and why. Did they learn something new about history that they hadn't known before?

5. The book contains several content-specific and academic words that may be unfamiliar to students. Based on students' prior knowledge, review some or all of the vocabulary. Expose Multilingual Learners to multiple vocabulary strategies. Have students make predictions about word meanings, look up and record word definitions from a dictionary, write the meaning of the word or phrase in their own words, draw a picture of the meaning of the word, list synonyms and antonyms, create an action for each word, and write a meaningful sentence that demonstrates the definition of the word.
6. Consider consulting <https://www.multilinguallearningtoolkit.org/> for more ideas on how to support Multilingual Learners.

### Social and Emotional Learning

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas & Details, Strands 1-3 and Craft & Structure, Strands 4-6)

(Speaking & Listening Standards, Comprehension & Collaboration, Strands 1-3 and Presentation of Knowledge & Ideas, Strand 4)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-2 and Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4-6)

(Language Standards, Vocabulary Acquisition & Use, Strands 6)

Social and emotional learning involves being aware of and regulating emotions for healthy development. In addition to understanding one's own feelings, strong socio-emotional development allows individuals to develop empathy for others and to establish and maintain relationships.

Use the following prompts to help students study the socio-emotional aspects of this book.

1. Select an illustration and describe what emotions are being conveyed. How can you tell that particular emotion is being shown in the illustration? Why?
2. How does Mali demonstrate resilience throughout *Mali Under the Night Sky*? Identify a scene from the story that exemplifies how Mali is resilient. What made you choose this particular illustration? How did it affect you and what did you learn from Mali after reading *Mali Under the Night Sky*?
3. How does *Mali Under the Night Sky* show positive family relationships? What are the qualities of a positive family relationship? How does the Mali interact with her family? How can you use family during difficult times to support one another? Students can brainstorm ideas on chart paper that can be presented and accessible for the whole class. Alternatively, students can create a word cloud and see what qualities come up the most and are the largest (<https://www.wordclouds.com/>).
4. What one part of your heritage, culture, or identity are you most proud of? Do you think your school or classroom has been a safe place to share that part of yourself? Why or why not?
5. How does the theme of hope play a role in the story? Although Mali and her family undergo trauma and stress throughout their journey, how do they remain hopeful? What kind of language does the author use to make you think that the Mali and her family remain positive?
6. Choose an emotion that interests you: happiness, sadness, frustration, anger, etc. Discuss or write about what that emotion looks like in *Mali Under the Night Sky*.



## INTERDISCIPLINARY ACTIVITIES

(Introduction to the Standards, page 7: Students who are college and career ready must be able to build strong content knowledge, value evidence, and use technology and digital media strategically and capably)

Use some of the following activities to help students integrate their reading experiences with other curriculum areas. These can also be used for extension activities, for advanced readers, and for building a home-school connection.

### English/Language Arts and Foundational Skills

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1–3; Craft and Structure, Strands 4–6; Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7–9; Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10)

(Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1–3; Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6; Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7–9; Range of Writing, Strand 10)

(Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1–3; Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4–6)

- **Encourage students to write about a childhood memory or something that is meaningful to them about their identities or cultures.** Using inspiration from *Mali Under the Night Sky*, have students think about what they want to communicate about themselves, their families, and/or their favorite childhood experiences. Mali loved to sit in front of her house and ask everyone, “Where are you going?” Do students have something similar that’s comforting to them? What do they want to share and why did they pick that particular thing to write about? Students can share their work with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. Consider creating a class book with illustrations and have the book available to students in the classroom library.
- **In an essay, poem, or other written format, have students share something about their home that’s important to them.** What do they enjoy about their home? Mali loved asking everyone where they were going. Is there something that students enjoy about their home, inside or outside, that makes them feel good? Why does it make them feel that way? How does their home make them feel?
- **Encourage students select a spread from the book and write a reaction to it.** Why did they choose to write about that spread? What are their reactions? How does this spread make them feel? Students can write or illustrate a response.
- **Conduct a research study on the Baci Ceremony that takes place in *Mali Under the Night Sky*.** Refer to the Background section of this guide for additional resources on the Baci Ceremony. Guiding questions to ask include: What is the purpose of this ceremony? Who participates? When does this ceremony take place? Why is this ceremony important to the people of Laos?
- **Have students reflect after reading “Healing the Wounds of War” by Thavisouk Phrasavath, as told to Jessica Powers.** What additional information do you learn about Laos? When did Thavisouk realize that he was in the middle of a war? What country was conducting a secret war in Laos? How many years did the bombings on Laos last? What was the political turmoil in Laos? How are Thavisouk and Mali similar? Why are stories like *Mali Under the Night Sky* important?
- **Come up with questions to interview the author, Youme. What was her process**

**behind creating *Mali Under the Night Sky*?** What was her inspiration for the book? Why did she write this book for young readers? Consider reaching out to Youme for an author visit, either in person or virtually.

- **Encourage students to write a piece about something that is meaningful to them about their identities.** Using inspiration from *Mali Under the Night Sky*, have students think about what they want to communicate about themselves. What do they want to share and why did they pick that thing to write about? What makes them proud to be who they are? Students can share their work with a partner, a small group, or the whole class. Consider creating a class book with illustrations and have the book available to students in the classroom library.
- **Envision a sequel to *Mali Under the Night Sky* and have students title the second book.** What do they think it would be called? What does Mali's new home look like? How is her family doing? Has the war in Laos stopped? Students can also create a cover for the book (for more details see question 1 in the Art section of this guide).

### Social Studies/Geography

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Have students conduct a research study of the civil war in Laos.** Refer to the Background section of this guide for additional resources on teaching about refugees and the civil war in Laos. Guiding questions to ask include: When did this conflict begin? Where does this conflict take place? Why did it start? Who is involved? How does it impact individuals, communities, and the country as a whole, as well as the world?
- **Encourage students to learn about refugees and forced displacement.** It's critical to be cognizant and aware of the students in your classroom when teaching about these topics. See the Background Section of this guide for how to teach students who are refugees. The UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) has teaching materials on refugees, asylum, migration, and statelessness for further information on how to extend your teaching about refugees in your respective setting (<https://www.unhcr.org/en-us/teaching-about-refugees.html>). Why do people become refugees? What are the different factors that come into play in the refugee experience?
- **Have students conduct a geography study on Laos.** What are the major cities? What landmarks do Mali and her family pass on their journey to a new country? What countries border Laos? What is the climate like? Students can share their findings in a presentation format of their choosing with photographs, text boxes, and other visual aids.
- **Encourage students to learn more about refugees' journeys and how they are different around the world.** To provide students more context and information about how refugees' experiences vary, have them read the article, "Refugees around the world: Stories of survival" (<https://www.msf.org/refugees-around-world-stories-survival-world-refugee-day>). As students read the stories, have them refer to the map and point out where these people had to leave and then where they traveled to. Afterward, students can reflect on what it was like to hear about other accounts and how refugees differ all over the world.
- **Have students create a timeline of the civil war in Laos.** As guiding questions: When did

the civil war begin? Who was the civil war between? Who takes over? Where do the people of Laos flee to? What role does the United States have in the war in Laos? Consider consulting this Laos timeline from BBC (<https://www.bbc.com/news/world-asia-pacific-15355605>).

### Art

(Reading Standards, Key Ideas and Details, Strands 1-3, Craft and Structure, Strands 4-6, Integration of Knowledge & Ideas, Strands 7-9, Range of Reading of Text Complexity, Strand 10) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strands 4 and 6, Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, and Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **For the question about the sequel activity in the English/Language Arts section, have students draw a cover image for their follow-up to *Mali Under the Night Sky*.** What kind of materials do they want to use for the cover? Encourage students to think about what they think will happen in the second book, and how that reflects the artwork for the cover. How can they use the current cover to inspire their work?
- **Look at the article, “We never chose this’: Refugees use art to imagine a better world”** (<https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/gallery/2019/dec/25/we-never-chose-this-refugees-use-art-to-imagine-a-better-world-in-pictures>). Have students reflect on this artwork and what they learned from looking at the photographs. How can artwork help you process difficult things in your life? Afterward, students can create a drawing, illustration, or photo collage about what they learned about the refugee experience in *Mali Under the Night Sky* and share with a partner, small group, or whole class.
- **Come up with questions to interview the illustrator, Youme.** What was her process behind creating the illustrations for *Mali Under the Night Sky*? Why did she choose a particular artistic medium to create the illustrations? What was her inspiration to depict the characters and places the way that she did in the book? What were some of the most challenging illustrations to create? How did she want to convey the different emotions from Mali and the people in the story?
- **Encourage students to select an illustration that resonated with them the most from *Mali Under the Night Sky*.** Have students write a reflection about the illustration. What stood out to them? How did it make them feel? What did it make them think about?

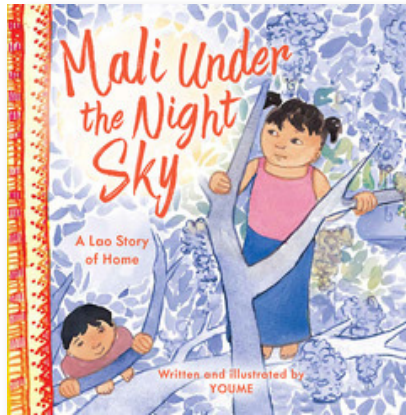
### Home-School Connection

(Reading Standards, Integration of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 7 and 9) (Writing Standards, Text Types & Purposes, Strands 1-3, Production & Distribution of Writing, Strand 4, and Research to Build & Present Knowledge, Strands 7-9, Range of Writing, Strand 10) (Speaking and Listening Standards, Comprehension and Collaboration, Strands 1-3, Presentation of Knowledge and Ideas, Strands 4-6)

- **Interview a family member about the history of their family.** Have students talk about their country of origin. Why is it important to understand your family history? Why is it important to know the different parts of the world where your family is from? If students do not know their family history, have them interview someone about the history of your town or city.
- **Talk with family and record the things that make them feel proud of their ancestry or heritage.** Have students talk with family members and ask them what things they remember about their family heritage. Ask them to think about traditions, values, and accom-

plishments. Ask family members how they feel about themselves when they think about the successes or failures in their family ancestry.

- **Have students interview a parent, guardian, or adult mentor about their family history.** Where did they live? Where did they travel? How did they end up where they are now? Where were their family's "origins"? Be aware of students' families and cognizant of the triggering nature of discussing family history.
- **If applicable, encourage students to share the different refugee experiences with family members.** Have students talk with their families about what they learned from Mali's refugee experience, and share the resources from the Background section of this guide with families for additional research. How can students and families support refugees in their immediate communities? The International Rescue Committee has more information about how to welcome refugees in the United States (<https://www.rescue.org/article/how-helprefugees-united-states-12-ways-stand-welcome>).



## Ordering Information

### General Order Information:

[leeandlow.com/contact/ordering](https://leeandlow.com/contact/ordering)

### Secure Online Ordering:

[leeandlow.com/books/mali-under-the-night-sky](https://leeandlow.com/books/mali-under-the-night-sky)

**By Phone:** 212-779-4400 ext. 25

**By Fax:** 212-683-1894

### By Mail:

Lee & Low Books, 95 Madison Avenue,  
New York, NY 10016

## ABOUT THE AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR

**Youme** grew up loving stories. She has lived and worked as a community artist in New York, New Haven, Miami, Woods Hole, San Francisco, Kenya, Japan, Lao P.D.R., Vietnam, St. John, U.S.V.I., Haiti, and Cuba. Youme's books include *Selavi* (That Is Life)-A Haitian Story of Hope, *Mali Under the Night Sky*-A Lao Story of Home, and *Pitch Black* with Anthony Horton. She is drawn to stories of survival and champions for social justice. Youme lives in an ever changing location with her partner and their two children.

## REVIEWS

"The small child's viewpoint will move young readers, and a final photo shows the real Mali, an artist and activist, today." – *Booklist*

"A Laotian girl's life takes a cruel turn in this haunting yet hopeful tale based on the childhood of Laotian-American artist Malichansouk Kouanchao. Sunny watercolors with patterned borders illuminate the simple joys of Mali's early life, when the world was 'full of wonderful things.' ... Landowne smoothly includes several Laotian words and phrases in this deeply felt and gently told story." – *Publishers Weekly*

## ABOUT LEE & LOW BOOKS

**LEE & LOW BOOKS** is the largest children's book publisher specializing in diversity and multiculturalism. Our motto, "about everyone, for everyone," is as urgent today as it was when we started in 1991. It is the company's goal to meet the need for stories that children of color can identify with and that all children can enjoy. The right book can foster empathy, dispel stereotypes, prompt discussion about race and ethnicity, and inspire children to imagine not only a world that includes them, but also a world where they are the heroes of their own stories. Discover more at [leeandlow.com](https://leeandlow.com).