

**For Immediate Release**  
*Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*

**Contact: Samantha Dell'Olio**  
**Senior Publicist, Penguin Young Readers**  
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PRAISE FOR  
*Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*  
by Samantha R. Vamos, illustrated by Santiago Cohen  
Viking Children's Books/A Division of Penguin Young Readers Group  
978-0-670-06301-7/ \$15.99/ Ages 3 and up

**2010 Washington State Book Award Winner – The Scandiuzzi Children's Book Award**  
(September 2010)

*"Best for Babies"* – *Parents Magazine* (May 2009)

"The 2010 Washington State Book Awards have been announced, awarded to seven outstanding books published by Washington authors in the year 2009.... The Scandiuzzi Children's Book Award for a picture book: "Before You Were Here, Mi Amor" by *Samantha Vamos*, illustrated by *Santiago Cohen* (Viking Children's Books)."

Mary Ann Gwinn, Seattle Times Book Editor (September 10, 2010)

[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/books/2012855103\\_litlife13.html?cmpid=2628](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/books/2012855103_litlife13.html?cmpid=2628)

"New Kids' Books by Seattle Authors"

*Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* by Samantha Vamos

Anyone who has had a second child will love Vamos's bilingual picture book, which shows what a family does to welcome a new babe into the flock. Spanish phrases are woven through the text and it's especially heart-warming to read about all the members of the large Latina familia, from parents and siblings to aunties, uncles and grandparents. (Note: Look for Vamos' second children's book *The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred* coming out this fall.)

**Red Tricycle** (September 7, 2010)

<http://www.redtri.com/new-kids-books-by-seattle-authors/>

"Books to Share with Baby"

**Baton Rouge Parents Magazine** (June 2010)

[http://www.brparents.com/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=910](http://www.brparents.com/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=910)

"...the book brings a fresh take to the mommy-love category of picture books...Oh, and before we drift too far from illustrations - or fresh takes for that matter - the artwork with its bright colors and bold lines is a nice change from the usual pastels that tend to dominate these books about a mother's love. Definitely a keeper, and if you don't believe me, you can check out the universal five-star ratings at Amazon's reviews." **BOOKLIGHTS, PBS Parents** (May 6, 2010)

<http://www.pbs.org/parents/booklights/archives/2010/05/thursday-three-mothers.html>

"...All cooperate to greet the infant, each with an offering that confers a blessing, choosing gifts from their hearts to extend their love. The warmth of the bright colors and the content of Cohen's joyful paintings supply clues for the Spanish words Samantha Vamos effortlessly weaves through

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her story, ... the fluid narrative blends English with Spanish, furnishing a superb picture book for bilingual families, and particularly for children who are interested in what happened before they were born."

"Magnificent, Mysterious Moms" by Meribeth C. Shank

**Miami Family Magazine** (May 2010) <http://familymagazine.biz/PDFs/IssuePDFs/05.10MIA.pdf>

"Becoming a big brother or sister is usually not the first change in a child's life. Depending on the age, these hapless youngsters may have already weathered potty training and entry into daycare or kindergarten. Some may have even endured the agonies that adolescence can bring. Often, though, these supposed veterans experience real upheaval when a new sibling is introduced, bringing seismic changes—both happy and stressful—to bear where the child once felt most stable. The books below, fiction and nonfiction on birth and adoption for all age groups, embody the humor, insight, love, and openness needed for youngsters facing this life event. *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*...When Mom is expecting, siblings have questions about the time before their own arrival, and this book, liberally sprinkled with Spanish words and phrases, helps with answers. Children will be reassured by the love evident in the jewel-toned illustrations and the message that they were anticipated with the same joy as the baby to come."

"Sibling Arrival" by Henrietta Thornton-Verma

**School Library Journal** (2/1/2010)

<http://www.schoollibraryjournal.com/article/CA6716596.html>

"Notably, grandparents play a central role in *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* as both the grandmother (*abuela*) and grandfather (*abuelo*) are featured in more than one scene, preparing for their future grandchild's birth. *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* would be wonderful to share with a child about to have a new sibling."

**Grand Magazine** (November 9, 2009)

**The Online Magazine for Grandparents & The Grandkids Who Love Them**

<http://www.grandmagazine.com/article.asp?id=229>

Recommended by **Mothering Magazine**

"Cool Stuff Links"(September/October 2009)

<http://www.mothering.com/cool-stuff-issue-156>

Samantha Vamos' lovely "**Before You Were Here, Mi Amor**" (Viking, \$15.99, 32 pp.) seamlessly weaves Spanish words into the anticipation of a new baby, illustrated with Santiago Cohen's joyful paintings.

**The Star-Ledger** (October 6, 2009)

"Beautiful- a category for illustrations AND language: .... bowled me over with lovely illustrations and poem-like language I almost wished I could set to music: *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*, by Samantha Vamos. The illustrations by Santiago Cohen are all joyful in warm oranges and reds and magenta."

**Kids' Book Round-Up for 2009** (September 26, 2009)

<http://elizabethwillse.wordpress.com/>

"The real gems of *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* are the cultural elements tenderly shared with the reader, including references to the baby dancing the flamenco and Papi playing guitar

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and reciting poesia cantada. *BEFORE YOU WERE HERE, MI AMOR* is a colorful celebration of family.”

**Families Online Magazine** (September 2009)

“The charming picture book mixes in Spanish words as it explains how the extended family, including grandparents, aunts and uncles, helps get ready for the new baby.”

“Summer reads for kids” by Stephanie Dunnewind

**The Seattle Times** (June 21, 2009)

**“Best for Babies” – Parents (May 2009)**

**“Around the World One Story at a Time”** - We all want to raise kids who respect people of different races, cultures, and religions. But what if your child doesn't live or go to school in an environment where she can learn firsthand about other ethnicities? That's where stories that celebrate the world's diversity come in. “Sharing common experiences through reading is one of the most effective ways to build understanding and respect,” says Kathleen T. Horning, director of the Cooperative Children's Book Center of the School of Education at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. A great story will let your child step into someone else's shoes. “Kids need to get caught up in a tale that involves characters that they can relate to – regardless of differences in race or economic class,” says Vivian Gussin Paley, author of 12 books about life in the classroom. “That way, cultural learning happens intuitively and intimately.” There are so many wonderful children's books that open a window into diverse experiences. We've picked out a few of our favorites.

Barrie Gillies, **Parents Magazine** (May 2009)

*Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* selected as one of six books named **“Best for Babies”**)

“The newest ‘new baby’ book out right now is an exceptional bilingual picture book .... Vamos effortlessly blends basic Spanish words into English sentences. Colors, shapes, numbers, and all sorts of useful “beginner” Spanish terms are brought to life in Santiago Cohen's colorful, expressive illustrations that perfectly complement and add clarity to the text... an ideal resource for families interested in teaching Spanish as a second language to their children....”

**Brimful Curiosities** (May 21, 2009)

<http://www.brimfulcuriosities.com/2009/05/before-you-were-here-mi-amor-book.html>

“A mother soon to give birth is the narrator, using English and Spanish words to tell the baby how many family members have made preparations...to show their love....The focus is on making, not buying, for the new baby...most of the Spanish words can be figured out by looking at the picture. The bright polychrome palette shows a world where not only is the mother's ‘barriguita,’ or tummy, expanding, but so also is the extended family's space of love.”

Mary Harris Russell, **The Chicago Tribune** (May 9, 2009)

“Here is a lovely story for all the new moms and expectant mothers-to-be out there.”

Hear the podcast: <http://www.codyscuentos.com/2009/05/before-you-were-here-mi-amor/>

**Cody's Cuentos** (May 9, 2009)

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“In my never-ending quest to find books you can give at a baby shower that are NOT *Goodnight Moon*, I can now add *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*....This lovely, colorful book would also be perfect for a new mother....I've yet to meet a kid who gets tired of hearing about their own entrance into the world....”

Sue Corbett, **The Miami Herald** (May 8, 2009)

“*Entrevista con la autora Samantha Vamos: Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*”

<http://www.todobebe.com/criando/lo-mas-visto/entrevista-con-la-autora-samantha-vamos>

“**A Leer con Todobebé**” (May 8, 2009)

“This book is fabulous on so many levels. First, the tender story is something that many families can relate to, and it could inspire parents to tell their children their own personal stories. Next, it's a perfect book for English- and Spanish-speaking bilingual families....But even if you don't know Spanish, don't let it deter you....Finally, the story's message is beautiful: an entire family is excited about the arrival of a new child and welcomes the child into the world with anticipation, love, and open arms.”

**The Well-Read Child** (May 6, 2009)

<http://wellreadchild.blogspot.com/>

“A beautifully illustrated book that tells of a family's preparations....The book offers a modest introduction to a different language as well as an opportunity for those who are learning Spanish in preschool or kindergarten to practice.”

**The Oregonian** (April 3, 2009)

***Latin Baby Book Club selects “Before You Were Here, Mi Amor”  
as Book of the Month/Libro del Mes***

“Before You Were Here is my favorite type of bilingual and bicultural book....An excellent book for English dominant families that are trying to introduce Spanish to their children and probably an easier way to learn the language than through the memorization technique necessary with most First Spanish Dictionaries. Santiago Cohen's illustrations are warm and colorful. More importantly, they help to define the story making it easy for children (and adults) to understand new words or phrases....”

**Latin Baby USA** (April 2009)

<http://latinbabybookclub.blogspot.com/>

***¡Me encantó!***

“El libro infantil **Before You Were Here, Mi Amor** (Viking) me gustó tanto que fue el primer regalo que le hice a la bebida recién nacida de una buena amiga.”

**Siempre Mujer** (Charla Blog, April 1, 2009)

<http://www.charlablog.typepad.com/charlablog/page/5/>

“Generously speckled with Spanish phrases and illustrated in homey hot oranges, pinks and golds, this intimate account of a family's industrious wait for a new baby radiates pure joy.”

**Just One More Book!!** (March 25, 2009)

<http://www.justonemorebook.com/2009/03/25/tending-and-tenderness-before-you-were-here-mi-amor/>

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**The Seattle Times** (March 24, 2009)

[http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/books/2008911016\\_zboo24local.html](http://seattletimes.nwsourc.com/html/books/2008911016_zboo24local.html)

“A tender love story about an extended family's preparation for a new baby....Descriptions of the loving family and their various tasks are given mostly in English, with some Spanish words seamlessly woven in...This lovely story may encourage discussions of individual birth preparations in readers' own families.”

**School Library Journal** (March 1, 2009)

“Outlined with a bold black line, the illustrations bathe the family preparations in bright warm colors and provide plenty of clues to the Spanish vocabulary....”

**Booklist** (February 15, 2009)

“Everyone has a part to play in the preparations in this lyrical text liberally sprinkled with Spanish words and phrases. Artwork by Santiago Cohen is vibrant and stylized and perfect for this lovely story of great expectations.”

**The Goddess of YA Literature** (February 9, 2009)

“A gentle and lovingly blended text provides a fluid telling with important and basic Spanish vocabulary woven into the English .... its universal message of love for new babies and siblings, will become a favorite....”

**Kirkus Reviews** (January 15, 2009)

## ACTIVITIES FOR TEACHERS AND CHILDREN

Please see <http://www.samanthavamos.com/> for a bilingual word search, word match, colors and shapes coloring page, and sample questions children may pose to write their own story about before they were here.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Samantha R. Vamos**

Samantha Vamos attended Georgetown University Law Center and practiced law in Washington, D.C. and Chicago, Illinois. Samantha and her family live near Seattle, Washington. *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor* is her first book. Her second children's book, *The Cazuela That the Farm Maiden Stirred* (Charlesbridge Publishing) will be published in February 2011 and has been illustrated by Rafael López, the 2010 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award winner. Visit Samantha online at <http://www.samanthavamos.com/>

### **Santiago Cohen** (*Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*)

Born in Mexico City, Mr. Cohen and his family reside in Hoboken, New Jersey. Mr. Cohen is a children's book illustrator, animator, cartoonist, graphic artist, and painter. Learn more at <http://www.santiagocohen.com/>

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**Rafael López** (*The Cazuela That The Farm Maiden Stirred* due February 1, 2011)

“The work of Rafael López is a fusion of strong graphic style and magical symbolism. His illustrations for *Book Fiesta!* written by Pat Mora were the recipient of the 2010 Pura Belpré Illustrator Award given by the American Library Association to honor work that best portrays, affirms and celebrates the Latino cultural experience in children's books. His books for children have also won 2 Americas Awards and a Pura Belpré Honor. His 2008 poster *Voz Unida* was selected by the Obama/Biden campaign as an official poster at Artists for Obama. The Latino dance stamp he created for the United States Postal Services was featured on the cover of the commemorative stamp yearbook in 2006 and at a special exhibition at the Smithsonian called *Trendsetters*. His 2007 U.S.P.S. stamp celebrated an important legal case in equality of education called *Mendez vs. Westminster*. His international clients includes Amnesty International, Apple, Chicago Tribune, Harper Collins, IBM, Intel, Los Angeles Times, the Grammy Awards, and the World Wildlife Fund and his work has been selected into multiple juried shows. In 2009 he was invited to create 3 paintings for Oprah Winfrey's school in South Africa. Rafael divides his time between his studios in the colonial town of San Miguel de Allende, Mexico and a loft in downtown San Diego where he works and lives with his wife and son.” Learn more at <http://www.rafaellopez.com>.

A new baby is welcomed by the entire family as Mami recounts everything that happened in preparation for and anticipation of the little one's arrival. Hermano wished for a beñsbol partner while hermana drew a picture of la familia. Abuelo planted a new tree; Abuela painted a tropical jungle in the baby's bedroom with jirafas, elefantes and tigres. Similar to Eve Bunting's *You Were Loved before You Were Born* (2008), and Anne Bowen's *I Loved You before You Were Born* (2001), this adds a distinctly Latino flavor to the familiar theme. *Preschool-Grade 1*. --Linda Perkins. Review. "Best for Babies" - *Parents magazine* (May 2009). --*Parents magazine*. "In my never-ending quest to find books you can give at a baby shower that are NOT *Goodnight Moon*, I can now add *Before You Were Here, Mi Amor*. perfect for a new mother...." Sue Corbett, *The Miami Herald* (May 2009) --*The Miami Herald*. "English and Spanish words to teach This is her first picture book. Born in Mexico, Santiago Cohen now lives with his family in Hoboken, New Jersey. He has illustrated numerous books for young readers. My daughter loves reading bilingual books, where I can show her new words here and there. This story line is especially meaningful for her. She loves reading about how the family prepares for the arrival of 'her coming home'.