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In Between

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In Between

Diana Zamudio-Garcia

Yo soy Diana Zamudio-Garcia. Yes, hyphenated; that is the formal genealogy. It is also a costumbre Mexicana to have really long names. Por suerte, mine is not as long, but oh that hyphen. It was given to me at al nacer by mis padres. It was as if they knew that my life as a ciudadana Americana, con padres de raíces Mexicanas would mean being hyphenated, (having a combined meaning) at all times.

I am born.

I am Mexican made

Pero soy Americana by Jus Soli

Or by the Fourteenth.

I am born and I am

the “anchor baby”.

Tengo cuatro años y solo soy Mexicana.

Morena y mi única lengua es Español.

Me baño en el río que fluye con inmensa calma.

Mis mejores amigos son un perro cafe y negro, se llama Coronel

y mi caballo amarillo, alto, y fuerte, Vallo.

Mi unica preocupacion academica es

Colorear dentro de las líneas de los dibujos

Con crayones rojos, blancos, verdes, y melanin.

I am six and I am una Americana entitled to an education.

I am scared. I feel lonely and rejected.

I cannot understand this lengua called English.

My ability to be able is

questioned and challenged

both, intellectually and physically

Because I am a Spanish speaker and disabled.

I am a Quinceñera. I am indifferent about this culturally relevant event.

I am 17. I think white and assimilating to “succeed”.

Ya casi no hablo Español y se supone que tengo que hablar Español en casa.

Instead, dejo a mi Mami wondering about El chisme (in English)

Without realizing that now, I'm making her feel como “the other” en su propio hogar.

I am 20. I am a brown skin mujer with white “male” privilege.

Primera generacion. First-generation university-skilled “Morena”.

I am prieta, prietita, but so culturally white.

I use the labels of “disadvantage” for my advantage.

I have learned to play the system. I am an expert in practicing the Socratic method.

Soy una Mexicana en la universidad with no clue of Michoacan’s location.

I am an entitled Americana with a crushed Mexican soul.

A los 20, sin darme cuenta, me enamore de mi opresor.

“Por amarte a tu manera me olvide hasta de ser YO.”

I am infatuated with the promesa of higher education

Mi boletin para abrir mi puerta a la clase media.

I follow the system; I am doing school on school's terms.
I didn't see its power, nor my allegiance
"I was being colonized and, even worse, I had become the colonizer."
I am conquered. I am a participant in my own marginalization.

I am 20. I undergo Nepantla. Internally, I feel horrible and ashamed.
Conflicted by my sentimientos & emociones,
I do what I can to numb the pain.
I am in an ongoing battle with myself
And it seems to have no end.
Reshaping my thinking. Analyzing myself from the outside.
I stepped into new dimensions that allowed me to see from a point beyond.
Is this the quantum physics scientists speak about?
Or the spiritual awakening that my mami describes?

I am 20 and I question if I was ever lost.
Has this process called vida helped me return to myself.
Have I been buried under cultural and societal conditioning?
Will I dare leave this comfortable confine?
I fear breaking away from my "colonized gringa" self.

I am 20 y estoy presente.
I analyze the myth of white supremacy.
Veo los límites de las tradiciones Mexicanas.
Empiezo a crear my own space.
Mi propio mundo.
A world where my wants and desires
Match my valores y morales.

I am 21. I am Aztlan's Warrior.
A divine Aztec princess. A Chicana. A border crosser.
I have adventured through fifteen countries,
five states, four continents, lost count of cities,
And through multiple dimensions of consciousness.
I have surpassed multiple physical and spiritual borders.
I am the la mestiza writer who dances, travels, and creates arte.
The interpreter of my raza. A Nahuatl native
y la hablante de Español because of conquest.
An English speaker by form of survival.
La Malintzin, glorified as the rebel
Who defied the norm to help her gente. Herself.
And yet, the ultimate traidora. The accused of betrayal.
Loca by design and by environment for not conforming,
Because I am "too hood for the nerds, and too weird for the thugs"
Even so, "you can't spell scholar without chola."
Yo Soy de aquí y de allá. Yo soy de todas partes.
Yo soy Diana Zamudio-Garcia.
Yes, hyphenated.