

CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives

Volume 1

Article 25

2016

Shame

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Recommended Citation

Ramirez, Jacqueline (2016) "Shame," *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*: Vol. 1, Article 25.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos/vol1/iss1/25>



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Shame

Jacqueline Ramírez

Wetback, Scrap, White Wash
the days I was told I wasn't really
Mexican
were the same days I was told I was too
Mexican

What is American?

my dad did not run here to feel the weight of ignorance
his life started at age eight
when he carried the hope
of his baby brother from a corrupt land
to a land of self-hate

“Mija you are American don't let them tell you different!”

silenced by the bloody noses and black eyes
my dad did not want to teach the language of his past
hate bleeds through his eyes for each
race that once pushed him down

Reflection

I took the Chican@/Latin@ Lives course to get in touch with my culture. In Humboldt County there is not a big Latin@ community and I felt I was missing out on something. I grew up in Fresno which has a huge Latin@ community. In this course we wrote freewrites. We were presented with a prompt and given a few minutes to write freely. Most of the time I would think over in my head what being Mexican American really meant to me now and what it has meant to me in the past. Over the years, I have had mixed emotions about being first-generation, about the color of my skin tone, and about the traditions that have been celebrated

in my family. All of my life I have felt too Mexican, or not Mexican enough. These emotions have caused me a lot of turmoil and guilt.

Both pieces that I present here are very dear to me and were written during these freewrite exercises in class that I never really planned on sharing. The more that I think back on my life and about feeling “too Mexican” or “not Mexican enough” I realize that I am not alone. That maybe, even if one person felt the way I did and/or do sometimes, that sharing my writing might bring others comfort.