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## **Intensa: Writings in English and Spanish from a Feminist Immigrant**

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INTENSA: WRITINGS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH  
FROM A FEMINIST IMMIGRANT

A Thesis  
by  
NUBIA SARAHI REYNA MELENDEZ

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the Degree of  
MASTER OF FINE ARTS

Major Subject: Creative Writing

The University of Texas Rio Grande Valley

December 2022



INTENSA: WRITINGS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH  
FROM A FEMINIST IMMIGRANT

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December 2022



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## ABSTRACT

Reyna Melendez, Nubia Sarahi. Intensa: Writings in English and Spanish from a Mexican Feminist. Master of Fine Arts (MFA), December, 2022, 76pp., references, 10 titles.

INTENSA: WRITINGS IN ENGLISH AND SPANISH FROM A MEXICAN FEMINIST is a bilingual work written in hybrid literature. The writings, in both English and Spanish, are free prose poetry and tell the story of its narrator through a feminist and immigrant point of view coming from a overwhelmingly majority catholic country, religion that does not view men and women as equals. The thesis details the narrator's life through a feminist point of view as well as her relationship with her mother, her personal relationships, what it means to be an immigrant and what it is like for her, and many women, to live in a patriarchal society. The poems are originally written in Spanish and translated to English by the author in an attempt to embrace the bilingualism and fusion of cultures she experiences in her daily life.





## DEDICATION

Para mi mamá, que se olvidó de sus sueños para que yo cumpliera los míos. Hoy cumplo los sueños de las dos.

To my mom, who forgot about her own dreams so that I could achieve mine. Today, I am making both of our dreams come true.



## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This thesis could not exist without the support of Dr. Elvia Ardalani not only in these past two semesters, but throughout my graduate career. Dr. Ardalani pushed me to share my writings, to love poetry and to always stay true to myself and my writings.

I would also like to thank Dr. Gabriel Gonzalez Nunez who has been part of my career since my early undergraduate years. Without him, the translations on this thesis would have been disastrous. His expertise and love for literature in both English and Spanish are what motivates students like me to be in this field.

Dr. Cathryn Merla-Watson also played an important role in this thesis because she was my professor in my very first semester as a graduate student. She taught me the importance of embracing our Latinx side and the importance of sharing our stories. Most importantly, her passion for teaching the stories of Latinx communities, and exposing the true history, is something that every professor in underserved communities like the Rio Grande Valley should aspire to.

Last but not least, I would like to thank Michell Escajeda who has been my mentor since my early undergraduate years when my only focus was to get out of poverty and become a journalist. Michell played an instrumental role in all the years I spent as a journalist and opened the doors for me so that I could continue my studies and start graduate school.



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## CRITICAL INTRODUCTION

As an only child with a curious mind growing up in Mexico, my writing days started when I was about five years old roaming around my dad's big collection of books every night after everyone in the house went to sleep. My dad taught me to read when I was just three years old and would never stop me from reading whatever book I could reach from his shelf. Books from several authors such as J.J. Benítez, Isabel Allende and Brian Weiss were all part of my book collection, stolen from my dad of course, before I even turned ten years old. My dad would gift me cute little diaries with a glittery lock that sparked my interest in writing. At first, I would only write the simple things in life; What I had for lunch at school, what games I played with my friends at school and silly things like that. It wasn't until I became a teenager that I started to think of writing as something serious, something that I could really do for a living. As a teenager, I would write about what was important in my life, about the moments that marked a before and an after. When I was about nine years old, I started a little "fashion" magazine with my girlfriends at elementary school in Mexico where we would write articles about what to wear, what cartoons to watch, and what music to listen. It was not until I became a teenager that I started to write about more important and personal things in life: my parents divorcing, my first love, my first heartbreak, imagining the life I one day wanted to have, were all part of my first writings back when I was still at high school in Mexico. My literature professors would make me participate in every writing contest telling me "tienes madera de escritora" (you have what it

takes to be a writer), where I would bring first place prizes home for all of my writings when I was fifteen years old. At that age, I decided writing was it. Writing was what I had to follow. Until I had to migrate to the United States and had to switch from writing in Spanish to writing in English.

Being an immigrant has not been easy. I always hear the success stories of first-generation Americans whose parents migrated to this country wanting to give a better life to their children. But where are all the success stories from the people who actually migrate, from the people who actually leave their home countries? Those were nowhere to be heard, but I knew exactly where I could find them: books.

When I was 17 years old, I did not find Latinx inspirational books about immigrants right away. But I did find what opened my eyes to the life I could one day have, what showed me that contrary to what was expected of me in Mexico, here in the United States the possibilities were endless, or so I thought: Candace Bushnell's books *Sex and the City*. Bushnell's books, and later the television show, showed me what no *novela* in Mexico ever showed me: that I could grow up, leave my dad's house, and live the life that I wanted in my very own apartment, without having to rely on a man to pay for the bills, that I could describe myself as the f word: a feminist.

Bushnell's books were my first opportunity to read about feminism, not only for women in their thirties, but also for young girls in high school who were barely finding out who they were and who they wanted to be. Her books *Summer in the City* told the story of a high school student who spends the summer doing a writing internship in NYC and deciding that writing was what she wanted to do with her life. That character, Carrie Bradshaw, is based on the author's real-life story. Making it even more inspiring, even for an immigrant like myself who shared no

similar background with her. After dipping my toes in feminist stories with Bushnell's books, I started to do more research and read from authors that had similar backgrounds like me.

The name of Isabel Allende was very familiar to me since my early days, but because as a little girl my focus was not feminism but just learning to read and write, it was not until I was in high school in the United States that I started reading her books again and realizing she is a Latinx feminist author. Allende, opened the doors for me to many other female Latinx authors whose stories empowered women such as Angeles Mastretta, Rosario Castellanos and Sandra Cisneros. What all these female writers have in common is that at one point of their career, they were all journalists. They found a way of writing for a living while also doing something that matters, which is writing about important issues such as politics and representing Latinx women by using their platforms as journalists and writers.

I became a full-time journalist my last semester as an undergraduate student about to receive a Bachelor's in Journalism. Before I graduated, I was already working with *The New York Times*, *The Brownsville Herald*, *The Valley Morning Star* and *The Monitor*. I always knew I wanted to be a writer, I wanted to write for a living, but I also knew that my life was not one of privilege and I needed to find a profession that would give me a job and pay for my bills, so I decided to study journalism. My first entry to the world of journalism was when I was only 9 years old. I was still in elementary school back in Mexico when I told my girlfriends that we should start a magazine for school. And so we did. We would write articles about what games to play online, what cartoons to watch, and of course typical school gossip when you are a little girl such as teasing friends that they like somebody. We also did sections about who was the best dressed, who was the best student, the best teacher and so on. We would do all this with Crayola markers and some cutouts from magazines I would steal from my aunt's house. When I started

high school still in Mexico, I continued participating in journalism clubs and being part of literature clubs. But it wasn't until I came to the United States that I took the profession seriously.

When I came to the United States, I was part of the journalism group at high school and it was the first time I saw my name as a byline on a real newspaper. The feeling of seeing what you wrote printed, for everyone to read, is something that can't be topped off, and in that moment I knew this was it. During my senior year I applied to the University of Texas Rio Grande Valley to study Journalism and got accepted. All of my undergraduate years I was part of *The Rider* student newspaper, where I learned how to be a real journalist, how to write stories, how to interview people, and most importantly I learned that my accent was not something to make me feel less, but my accent was something to feel proud of because it told the story of my life.

My accent shared that I had left home for a better opportunity at life, which I had to work twice as hard to speak and write in English when all my life everything has been taught in Spanish. The older I grew, the more I learned to embrace my accent. To embrace what made me different from every other journalist in town, and how now in my current position in Planned Parenthood, being bilingual and having an accent has become one of my greatest assets. Not only does my accent make people pay more attention to me when I speak, but also my accent has made me connect and have stronger relationships with women who share similar stories to the one I have. Now that I am a full-time activist who fights for reproductive justice, it is my accent that makes people want to get to know me. It is not rare for me to attend a work event in a big city where I am the only immigrant, the only person with the accent. My voice makes people curious to know where I am from and how I have managed to be part of Planned Parenthood. My accent makes people get interested in my life, in my own personal story. It also makes me feel

that by being in rooms where I am the only immigrant woman with an accent, it is my duty to make sure that I am not the last.

My accent is in part why I decided to create a bilingual thesis where I showcase my poems in both Spanish and English. The poems were originally written in Spanish and from there I personally translated them to English. The reason why I wanted to do this is because this thesis represents my life and how bilingual my interactions are living here in the Rio Grande Valley. During my work hours, I spend my time writing and speaking in English but once I go out with my family and friends, everything is in Spanish. I wanted to embrace this fusion of cultures and the bilingualism I experience in my everyday life, hence I decided to put this on paper and allow the reader to have a bilingual experience. I personally believe it is important to value our roots, our first language and continue to write and speak in Spanish because it means we are accepting who we are. However, translating poems might be one of the hardest tasks for translators. Not everything can be accurately translated and there will always be something lost in translation, no matter how hard we try. Fortunately, I learned years ago in my translation classes as an undergraduate student, that the best person to translate a piece of work, especially a poem, is the poet herself. This poetry collection is my attempt to recreate as much as possible the creative devices and craft of my work in both languages.

Throughout the years, I read and reread Isabel Allende's work. Her books make me feel seen because they tell the story of many women like me, many women like Isabel Allende and especially women like my own mother. In her book *Mujeres del alma mía* she tells her personal story of how she has been a feminist since she was in kindergarten. She goes on to tell how her anger against *machismo* started in her early childhood years when she started to realize that "her mother, and the cleaning ladies at home, were like victims: subordinates, without resources and

without a voice” (Allende 5). Like me, Allende started her career as a journalist and eventually became a full-time writer who advocates for Women’s Rights. Her story influenced me because it made me feel related to the life I can have one day and also allowed me to explore the relationship I have with my mom. Allende says that a lot of her characters are influenced by her mother and by the life she would have wanted her to live. To be independent, have her own money and live life on her terms. Similar to Allende’s inspiration, I explore my relationship with my mother and the life that I would have wanted her to have. While my mom has been financially independent most of her life, she did not reach her full potential because she got married and became a mother right after finishing her bachelor’s degree, leaving her career aspirations on the back burner, not being able to focus on them again. Throughout my writings, I explore the life my mother could have had if she did not make becoming a mother a priority and the dreams I am achieving now for the both of us. In her latest book, *Violeta*, Isabel Allende writes the story of the life she would have liked her mother to have: someone strong, with children but financially independent and able to leave abusive relationships. While the story of physical abuse is not similar to what my mother has experienced, I always dreamed of my mom living the life I live now.

I also find it inspiring that like me, Isabel Allende is an immigrant from Latin America who has now become an American citizen by naturalization. The process of becoming a United States citizen is not an easy one and it makes me wonder sometimes if I deserve to have this opportunity, the opportunity to be here. On one hand, I know there are many people who die crossing the river that divides Mexico with the United States, just to be able to have a better opportunity at life here in the United States. But on the other hand, I often wonder if my life would be better if I would have stayed in Mexico. I feel guilty for leaving the country where I

grew up in, guilty that my mother never had the option to come to the United States, and guilty to be the only one in my entire family to have an American education. I often wonder if everything that I have achieved is the result of hard work, or if it is just the result of luck, of being born at the right time, with the right parents. While I recognize my privilege when I compare myself to my cousins who are still in Mexico married, or divorced, and with kids, because their parents did not push them to be better at school, to be ambitious, to never depend on a man, I also recognize the great disadvantage I have when trying to have a successful career in the United States. Oftentimes I see women my age who are set by their parents to be successful. They had their rent paid for throughout their undergraduate and graduate years, their automobiles to go to school were also gifted by their parents and they never had to work full-time while also going to school full-time. These are experiences that I was never able to have. I had to work full-time to be able to pay for my rent and car payment while I was an undergraduate, same situation as a graduate student. I'll never know what it is like to get out of school and just focus on your homework, not worrying about paying bills. But it is the life I've had and the situations that I've been into that have made me the woman that I am today, the writer that I am today. If it weren't for all the adversities, would I still be as resilient? Would I still be passionate about feminism and achieving gender equality? Maybe not because I never would have been in a situation where I had to work to support myself, just like my cousins back in Mexico.

While I recognize my privilege, getting an education without financial support is a hard quest, but it is not a rare one for many Latinx women. Such is the case of author Sandra Cisneros. In her book *Una casa propia: historias de mi vida* Cisneros shares the struggles she went through to be able to get an education and become a Latina writer. Like myself, Cisneros

supported herself economically throughout her undergraduate and graduate studies. In her book she says:

A veces vivía gracias a una beca. A veces vivía en una casa o cuarto prestados. A veces me convenía a mi misma de que estaba enamorada, pero la mayor parte del tiempo vivía sola en un espacio que no era mío, con cuentas que se encendían como pequeños fuegos. Eso significó que pasé por muchas casas, amores y máquinas de escribir, sin nunca encontrar del todo al acertado (Cisneros 3).

This part of her book makes me connect with the author because just like Cisneros, I've also paid my bills because of a scholarship and I've stayed for free at people's houses while apartment hunting. While Cisneros wrote that piece in her 60s, at 27 I've also found myself living in many houses and writing on a lot of different laptops. Cisneros' story is inspiring to me because she has spent her life writing in many places. In her book she mentions how she has spent time living in Mexico City and San Cristobal de las Casas in Mexico and writing her books and essays. I also travel often in Mexico where I find myself sitting at a cafe writing for work or school, embracing my roots and dreaming of living there once again. I can only dream that once I am 60 years old, like Cisneros at the time she wrote this piece, I will also find myself owning two homes: One in Mexico and one in the United States. It seems that that's the only way that my two halves would be happy because it is hard to be content when you know that the only way for you to be complete is when you go back home. But at the same time, you know that the life you once had while growing up there, does not exist anymore. And it doesn't matter how many times we go visit, or how much time we spend visiting our old house, it will never feel the same because you are not the same person anymore. The person you were before you became an



immigrant has ceased to exist so there's no other option than to embrace both of your halves: the American and the Mexican, even when you feel that you don't belong anywhere now.

Cisneros also touches feminist ideas and the feeling of not belonging anywhere, something that Cisneros has experienced through her career. In her book she writes:

Una casa. Una máquina de escribir. Para mí estas dos cosas van de la mano. Una casa hace que tenga ganas de escribir. Y me dan ganas de escribir cuando estoy en casa. Hoy en día agregaría que necesito otra cosa más para escribir: mis animales. Cuando están conmigo, me siento en casa (Cisneros 7).

This idea of having to have a home of one's own for women to be able to write is not strange to feminist theory. Feminist author Virginia Woolf wrote in her famous essay "A Room of One's Own" that "A woman must have money and a room of her own if she is to write fiction" (Woolf 1). This feminist idea established in 1929 by Virginia Woolf is something that many female authors continue to embrace today such as Sandra Cisneros. Their ideas are what have allowed women like me to know that it is possible to live alone and write for a living. I think this idea that a woman needs a place of one's own applies not only to writing but also to every career in life. It is important for a woman to be able to live alone and care for herself so that she does not depend on a man, something that I explore in my writings.

In my writings, I also explore the role the Catholic Church plays in women being seen as second-class citizens who are not equal to men. Contrary to what Cisneros and Woolf write, the catholic church states that a woman must not leave her parent's house until she gets married as a virgin so that now the husband can take care of her and be a provider, while the woman is expected to take care of both the children and husband. Many women are now challenging this idea and are leaving their parents house to become independent. In Mexico, the second most

catholic country in the world, we are seeing more and more women challenge the church's ideas and leave their parents home to focus on their career. We are also seeing more and more women, and men, caring for reproductive rights. Last year, at the same time Texas implemented Senate Bill 8, which bans abortion as soon as a heartbeat is detected, Mexico decriminalized abortion thanks to the millions of feminists who took on the streets for years demanding access to safe and legal abortion. Every day in Mexico, more and more women are becoming the main characters of their own story, learning that a husband and having kids is only an option, not a necessity.

Continuing with the progress in Mexico, Mexican author Angeles Mastretta has also challenged the patriarchal expectations set for women and has written stories with multidimensional female characters that are strong and live the life they want to, not the one society expects them to live. Her work has inspired me not only to write my texts about feminism, being Mexican and challenging what society expects of us as women, but also about the lives that Mexican women can live, regardless of their background and economic status. Mastretta has told the stories of women in Mexico who are from all social classes and experience machismo in different aspects of their lives. Machismo affects women from all social classes, but it is important for us to read and write stories about women who are breaking free from what is expected of them so that more and more women learn that there are many possibilities out there for them, that marriage and children are not the only way a woman can be fulfilled nowadays.

But feminist women also get their heart broken, even when we know exactly what all the red flags are, the patriarchy has gotten us so bad that many of us still dream of this romantic fairytale where one man, if you're straight like I am, will come and change your life forever. In my thesis, I also explore this part of me. The heartbroken part and sometimes the "in love" part

of me. While I work every day to deconstruct myself of the idea of romantic love that has been portrayed to us by Disney, I am still part of the vast majority of women who *want* a partner in their life, such as Rosario Castellanos explored in her poems. I relate to Castellanos poems because she was a smart writer, a respected professor, a career woman, but still she wanted so badly to become a mother and a wife that she endured tremendous abuse and public humiliation from her husband. Her work, and her life shed even more light to the ideas that I touch on my thesis that women, especially Latinx women, are indoctrinated to feel that the ultimate path to fulfillment is being a mother and a wife, regardless of how successful your career is. Society tells us that we will never be complete, no matter how successful and busy we are, until we get married and have kids.

I think I am drawn to poetry more than any other genre because I like to love intensely and many times I've been told I'm too intense by some of the men I dated. Poetry opens your soul for the world to see, makes you feel exposed about who you are and your feelings, especially free verse poetry because it does not limit you. With free verse poetry, you can write about what you feel without having to worry if it rhymes. This freedom is what draws me the most to poetry: the freedom to create. But this intensity is not only part of my love life, it also takes over every single aspect of my life: my career, my female friendships and even my apartment. I like to give it all to my job and I do not see it as a tedious task as many other people do. I am really passionate about the work that I do at Planned Parenthood that this intensity also serves me well there. You cannot be an activist who is not intense.

Writing hybrid poems also allowed me to conserve the writing style I've had for years as a journalist, allowing me to write short and straight to the point poems that raised a question or just shared a thought I had. But at the same time, it has allowed me to explore more my writing

style and being able to write longer and more detailed poems where I showcase the soft side of me with my love life and the relationship I have with my mom. The freedom given by hybrid poetry makes it easier for people to write, to create, and to stop being afraid of poetry.

Overall, it may be said that I was born to be a feminist, to be a writer, to be an activist. My parents' experiences and the opportunities that I've had, from growing up in two countries, to being a full-time journalist and activist, are what have inspired me to write. If I weren't an immigrant maybe I would not be as drawn to bilingualism, to that feeling of not belonging anywhere. I would also not be able to write about growing up in Mexico, my accent and the guilt of having the opportunity to leave my country, something that many people die trying to achieve. Since I am still able to live in two countries due to my dual citizenship, I wanted to create pieces of work that would embrace these two sides of me: the Spanish Mexican one and the American one in English. This also allows my work to reach more people, people who are not bilingual. In my life, there is bilingualism on every aspect of it. In my family, I am always the translator to go when my dad needs something to be checked for his work, or when I travel with my mom since she does not speak or understand English.

While since a little girl I was exposed to literature with my dad's book collection, it was not until I immersed myself into journalism that I really took this path of being a writer seriously. Of course, shows and books that romanticize writing and being in the United States, without kids and a husband, played a huge role on who I am today: Such as *Sex and the City*. Without the access to *Sex and the City*, Sandra Cisneros' writings as well as those by Isabel Allende, Angeles Mastretta, Rosario Castellanos and even Virginia Woolf, the idea of being a feminist Latinx woman who dedicates her life to her career would not be as easy. Without them, I would have no one to relate to, making the road to what I define as my personal and professional success a very

lonely road because I would not know of anyone living this life, the life that I want. My hope for everyone reading this is that they get to know what is going on inside my head and why it is important for every family and every group of friends to have someone who is black sheep, because that black sheep might just one day be the one breaking the cycle of poverty and opening doors for many women after her, just like I am.

## **Perdón**

Mis piernas anchas me permiten caminar y así recorrer calles inciertas.

Mis dedos largos me permiten escribir para contar historias que no se han contado.

Mi nariz me permite respirar para seguir viva, para poder oler la comida hecha por mamá desde metros de distancia.

Perdóname, *cuerpa*, por las veces que te he maltratado.

Por no valorarte.

Por querer siempre hacerte más pequeño y cambiar tanto de ti, tanto de mí.

Por sentirme feliz y femenina cuando me veo más delgada aunque lo haya logrado juzgándome cada que me daba hambre.

Perdóname, *cuerpa*, por compararte siempre con las demás y haberte sometido a dolorosos tratamientos para complacer a la sociedad, cuando yo creía me complacía a mí misma.

Perdóname, *cuerpa*, porque hoy, por fin, lo entendí todo.

Nos cuidaré.

## **Sorry**

My wide legs allow me to walk and thus tour uncertain streets.

My long fingers allow me to write and tell the stories that have not been told yet.

My nose allows me to breathe and stay alive, to smell the food my mom made from meters away.

Forgive me body for the times I have mistreated you.

For taking you for granted.

For always wanting to make you smaller and for changing so much of you, so much of me.

For feeling happy and feminine when I looked thinner  
even though I achieved it by judging myself every time I got hungry.

Forgive me she-body for always comparing you to others  
and having subjected you to painful treatments to please society,  
when I thought I was pleasing myself.

Forgive me she-body, because today, I finally understand it all.

I'll take care of us.

## **El machismo está en el aire**

Entre risas y cervezas, cigarros y botanas encuentro el machismo  
en todos los lugares que respiro.

En la fiesta familiar escucho el “qué bonitos ojos”, “qué bonito pelo” y “qué bien te ves ahora  
que bajaste esos cinco kilos”.

¿Qué? ¿Qué dice el novio? ¿Qué, para cuando la boda? ¿Cuándo el primer hijo? ¿Cuándo la  
parejita?

Pero nunca el qué feliz te ves ahora que estás soltera, o el  
¿Qué tal tu proyecto laboral? ¿Para cuándo terminas tu tesis?  
¿Para cuándo tu segunda maestría o tal vez el doctorado?

A las mujeres se nos celebra cuando nuestra vida sirve para acompañar a un hombre, cuando  
nuestros deseos quedan en segundo plano.

Cuando adelgazamos para vernos más guapas  
y ellos nos puedan dar piropos por la calle.

Cuando nos casamos y dedicamos la vida al hogar, dejando en el *back burner*  
aquel libro por escribir o trabajo que aceptar.

Cuando tenemos hijos porque es lo que se espera de nosotras sin saber siquiera  
si es eso lo que en realidad queremos.

Entre risas y cervezas, cigarros y botanas, esta vez con mi manada nos reímos  
porque sabemos que no, que nosotras no.

## **Machismo is in the air**

Between laughter and beers, cigarettes and snacks I find machismo  
in all the places I breathe.

At the family party I hear “you have beautiful eyes”, “what a beautiful hair” and “how good you  
look now that you've lost those five kilos.”

“What does the boyfriend say?” “When are you getting married?” “When are you having kids?”  
“When are you having your second child so you can have both a girl and a boy?”



But never happy you look now that you're single, or  
“how about your work project?” “When do you finish your thesis?”  
“When will you start your second master's or maybe a doctorate?”

As women we are celebrated when our life serves to accompany a man,  
when our desires fade into the background.

When we lose weight to look prettier  
and men can give us compliments on the street.

When we get married and dedicate our lives to the home, leaving in the back burner that book we  
meant to write or job to we hoped to take.

When we have children because it is what is expected of us without even knowing if that is what  
we really want.

Between laughter and beers, cigarettes and snacks, this time with my pack we laugh because we  
know that no, we don't do that.

## **No es el día más feliz**

No me imagino de blanco porque de pura no tengo nada.

No me imagino caminando hacia el altar con mi padre a mi lado porque no soy su propiedad.

Tampoco me imagino diciendo que sí para siempre porque sé que al primer abuso yo me iré.

O porque, tal vez, cuando la luz se apague y las risas falten día tras día también me marcharé.

Porque no, yo no.

Porque no me quedaré en un lugar donde me tenga que hacer pequeña.

En un lugar donde me falten la respiración y las ganas de crear.

Porque no quiero a alguien a mi lado porque un papel le dice que tiene que estar ahí.

Porque quiero que me elijan día tras día, porque quieren y no porque tienen que.

## **Not the happiest day**

I can't imagine myself wearing white because I am anything but pure.

I can't imagine myself walking down the aisle with my father by my side because I'm not his property.

I also can't imagine myself saying yes to forever because I know that at the first abuse I will leave.

Or because, maybe, when the light goes out and the laughter is gone day after day, I will leave too.

Because I can't. Not me.

Because I will not stay in a place where I have to make myself small.

In a place where I lack air to breathe and the desire to create.

Because I don't want someone by my side just because a piece of paper tells them that they have to be.

Because I want them to choose me day after day, because they want to and not because they have to.

## **Mala mujer**

Cuando me gana la curiosidad y el tiempo lo permite,  
hay días que digo que sí a todo.

Sí a las reuniones familiares de mujeres de familias pudientes  
donde el catolicismo rige.

Sí a sonreír y no opinar para escuchar lo que en realidad hay en su mente,  
con bodas en camino pero divorcios un poco más.

Mi parte favorita, he de admitir que no siempre es el *cheese and wine*,  
a veces, y solo a veces, mi parte favorita es cuando hablan de nosotras, las mujeres.

Cuando describen a la futura nuera como “es muy buena niña”  
porque va a la iglesia, vive con sus papás, se queda callada, evita problemas  
y perdona las infidelidades de su pareja.

Aparentemente, en estos casos, una “muy buena niña” significa lo opuesto  
a independencia y amor propio.

Porque cuando una mujer vive sola y tiene una carrera demandante,  
se le considera “muy ambiciosa”.

¿Por qué las que se consideran cualidades en los hombres son defectos en nosotras?

Si ser una mala mujer significa poner mi salud mental,  
mis metas personales y profesionales antes que las de los demás, entonces sí,  
soy una mala mujer.

## **A bad woman**

When curiosity takes over me and the time allows it,  
there are days that I say yes to everything.

Yes to family gatherings of wealthy family women  
where Catholicism rules.

Yes to smiling and not opining so as to be able listen to what is really on their minds,  
with weddings on the way but divorces even more so.

I have to admit that my favorite part is not always the cheese and wine and sometimes, and only sometimes, my favorite part is when they talk about us women.

When they describe the future daughter-in-law as "a very good girl" because she goes to church, lives with her parents, stays quiet, avoids problems and forgives her partner's infidelities.

Apparently in these cases a "very good girl" means the opposite of independence and self-esteem.

Because when a woman lives alone and has a demanding career she is considered "too ambitious."

Why is it that the things that are considered good qualities in men become flaws in us?

If being a bad woman means putting my mental health, personal and professional goals before anyone else's, then yes, I'm a bad woman.

## **Mi acento**

Mi acento deja al descubierto el viaje de dejar casa por una vida nueva, oportunidades, capitalismo y el sueño americano.

Mi acento relata la historia de la incomodidad, el racismo y el empezar de cero.

La lucha de mis papás al dejarme ir de casa y el miedo a no poder protegerme.

Conforme pasa el tiempo, mi historia relatada en los sonidos que salen de mi boca, empieza a ser cada vez menos evidente.

Por fuera tal vez todo sea muy diferente, pero aquí adentro todo sigue igual.

## **My accent**

My accent reveals the journey of leaving home for a new life, opportunities, capitalism, and the American Dream.

My accent tells the story of discomfort, racism and starting all over again.

My parents' struggle to allow me to leave home and their fear of not being able to protect me.

As time passes by, my story, told in the sounds that come out of my mouth, is starting to become less and less evident.

On the outside, everything might look very different, but here, inside me, everything stays the same.

## **Suerte**

Quisiera que la suerte fuera conseguir el trabajo de mis sueños  
o comprarle a mi mamá la casa que siempre le prometí.

Quisiera que la suerte fuera ganar la lotería o encontrarme algún billete tirado.

O tal vez que fuera comprar boletos de avión en descuento,  
o que me cambiaran a primera clase sin pagar de más.

Pero la verdad es que el ser mujer, y tener suerte, significa regresar a casa  
después de unas noches de copas con amigas.

Tener suerte significa regresar viva después de una primera cita con un desconocido.

Tener suerte significa simplemente salir de casa a estudiar, a trabajar o a divertirse  
y poder regresar.

Regresar, yo espero que todas regresen y que no nos falte ninguna más.

## **Lucky**

I wish being lucky meant getting the job of my dreams  
or buying my mom the house I've always promised her.

I wish being lucky meant winning the lottery or finding money on the street.

Or maybe buying discount airline tickets  
or getting promoted to first class without having to pay extra.

But the truth is that for a woman being lucky means coming home  
after a night out with friends.

Being lucky means coming back alive after a first date with a stranger.

Being lucky means simply leaving home for study, work or fun  
and then coming back home.

Coming back, I hope that all women can come back and that not one ever goes missing again.

## **Debanhi**

Yo también fui Debanhi.

Yo también me emborraché, salí de madrugada  
e incluso me separé de mis amigas  
para ir a ver a algún novio o conquista temporal.

Yo también me divertí, reí, me tomé videos con mis amigas  
mientras tomábamos alguna bebida y hacíamos una que otra tontería  
normal a los dieciocho.

También discutí con mis amigas cuando se nos pasaban las copas  
pero aun así encontré el camino a casa,  
y ellas lo hicieron también.

El salir a divertirnos no debería ser una sentencia de muerte.

No estamos todas, nos falta Debanhi

## **Debanhi**

I too was Debanhi.

I too got drunk, went out at in the middle of the night,  
and even left my friends behind  
to go see a boyfriend or fling.

I too had fun, laughed, made videos with my friends  
while we had a drink and did dumb things  
that are normal at eighteen.

I too argued with my friends when we got more tipsy than usual  
but I still found my way back home,  
and they did too.

Going out for fun shouldn't be a death sentence.

Not all of us are here, we are missing Debanhi.



## París

Estar en París más que enseñarme a diferenciar el sabor de los vinos,  
cómo ordenar quesos y pedir la cuenta en francés,  
me enseña lo difícil que me resulta amar,  
amar de verdad.

Enfrente, al lado, al otro lado e incluso en la lejanía,  
veo parejas listas,  
listas para pasar la vida juntos,  
o al menos prometérselo.

Se comprometen, se toman fotos, son felices  
y planean el futuro juntos.  
¿Cómo lo hacen?  
¿Por qué a mí me resulta todo tan difícil?

¿Cómo se puede prometer la longevidad eterna de un sentimiento  
cuando nadie sabe  
lo que va a pasar mañana?

¿Por qué me resulta difícil amar? ¿Por qué no puedo ser feliz  
sin cuestionamientos y prometer  
y que me prometan  
lo que tanto se espera de mí?

Pero también me pregunto siempre,  
¿de verdad están enamorados o se obligan ellos mismos a sentir algo  
que en realidad no sienten naturalmente  
solamente por el miedo a estar solos?

Porque nos han vendido que estar soltera después de cierta edad  
es lo peor que le puede pasar a una mujer,  
pero no a un hombre.

¿Por qué preferimos divorciarnos que no habernos casado?  
¿Por qué una noche con vestido blanco y flores caras en cada mesa  
aumentan el valor que tenemos como mujeres?

No tengo las respuestas, y quizá nunca las tendré.  
Pero tal vez, y solo tal vez, el casarse para no terminar solo  
no es amor.

Y yo prefiero el amor, en especial el propio.

## **Paris**

Being in Paris more than teaching me how to differentiate the taste of wines,  
how to order cheeses and ask for the bill in French,  
teaches me how difficult it is for me to love,  
to truly love.

In front of me, to the one side, to the other side and even way out there,  
I see couples ready,  
ready to spend their lives together,  
or at least to promise it.

They get engaged, take photos, are happy  
and plan the future together.  
How do they do that?  
Why is everything so difficult for me?

How can you promise the eternal longevity of a feeling  
when no one knows  
what will happen tomorrow?

Why is it hard for me to love? Why can't I be happy  
without questioning and promise  
and be promised  
what is so expected of me?

But I also always ask myself,  
are they really in love or are they forcing themselves to feel something  
that they don't really feel naturally  
just because of the fear of being alone?

Because they have convinced us that being single after a certain age  
is the worst thing that can happen to a woman,

but not to a man.

Why do we prefer getting divorced over never having married?

Why does a night with a white dress and expensive flowers on each table increase the value we have as women?

I don't have the answers, and maybe I never will.

But maybe, and just maybe, getting married so as not to end up alone is not love.

And I prefer love, especially self-love.

## **Nos tenemos**

Te veo y sonrío porque estamos juntos porque queremos,  
no porque tenemos que.

Sin prometer un por siempre, quiero que la vida nos regale  
muchos años juntos y poder sonreír por el tiempo vivido.

Que nuestra individualidad y metas, separados, sean siempre  
un tema de conversación  
y el reencuentro sea siempre con paz y felicidad.

Que aprendamos a aceptarnos sin querer cambiarnos  
y que sigamos queriendo estar al lado del otro, no enfrente y no detrás.

Que me digas que me amas para yo amarte igual pero no para siempre,  
si no hasta cuando los dos queramos.

## **We have each other**

I see you and I smile because we are together because we want to,  
not because we have to.

Without promising forever, I want life to give us  
many years together and many smiles over the time lived.

I want our individuality and personal goals to always remain  
a topic of conversation  
and that every time we see each other again we feel peace and happiness.

I want us to learn to accept ourselves without wanting to change each other  
and for us to continue to want to be side by side, not in front and not behind.

I want you tell me that you love me so that I can love you the same, not forever,  
but as long as we both want to.

## **Planes ningunos**

Se me pasa la vida haciendo planes,  
planes y más planes  
como si el tiempo lo tuviera comprado  
y no existiera espacio para lo inesperado.

Noches eternas planeando un futuro que tal vez nunca llegue,  
imaginando la visita a lugares en días que tal vez nunca lleguen.

Enfermedades, accidentes, muertes, la vida nos cambia en un segundo  
y siempre inesperadamente.

Esperando,  
tal vez aquí me quede esperando que las noches sin dormir  
valgan la pena.

O tal vez hoy haga que valgan la pena.

## **No plans**

I spend my life making plans,  
plans and more plans  
as if I had bought time  
and there was no room for the unexpected.

Eternal nights planning a future that may never come,  
imagining travels to places on days that may never come.

Illnesses, accidents, deaths, life changes in a second  
and always unexpectedly.

Waiting,  
maybe I will stay here waiting in hope that all these sleepless nights  
are worth it.

Or maybe today I will make them worth it.

## **Inmigrante**

El ser inmigrante es partirte en dos.

Partirte en dos y dejar una mitad de ti en casa para abrazar la otra  
y correr, correr, correr  
hasta llegar al lugar prometido y empezar de nuevo.

En casa, la otra mitad espera ansiosa,  
enojada y decepcionada por la otra mitad  
Malinche.

No importa cuánto tiempo pase, cuántos títulos extranjeros tengas  
y cuánto dinero haya  
en tu cuenta de banco.

Sabes que solo estarás completa al volver a casa.

## **Immigrant**

Being an immigrant is splitting yourself in two.

Splitting yourself in two and leaving one half of you at home to hug the other  
and running, running, running  
until you reach the promised place to start all over again.

At home, the other half waits anxiously,  
angry and disappointed in the other  
Malinche half.

It doesn't matter how much time passes by, how many foreign degrees you have  
and how much money is  
in your bank account.

You know you'll only be whole when you come back home.

## **Mi más grande amor soy yo**

¿Cuántos grandes amores voy a perder  
por no querer parir los hijos que no quiero tener?

¿Cuántas veces tendré que escoger entre amarme a mí,  
o amar a alguien más?

Es difícil. Rechazar lo que te han enseñado que debes querer  
no es fácil, y menos cuando es todo lo que las demás quieren.

¿Pero qué gano con que me amen si, al hacerlo, no lo haré yo?  
No hay amor sin sacrificios, y yo decido amarme a mí.

## **I am my biggest love**

How many great loves am I going to lose  
over not wanting to give birth to the children I don't want to have?

How many times will I have to choose between loving myself  
or loving someone else?

It's hard. Rejecting what you have been taught to want  
is not easy, especially when it is all that other women want.

But what do I gain if by being loved I cease to love myself?  
There is no love without sacrifice, and I decide to love me.

## **Futuro**

Quiero vivir en un futuro en el que en las reuniones familiares a las mujeres se les pregunte cómo van con sus proyectos en vez del novio, el esposo o el próximo bebé.

## **Future**

I want to live in a future where women are asked at family gatherings how their projects are going instead of about their boyfriend, their husband or their next baby.



## **Generaciones**

Al platicar con mi mamá de cómo era la vida cuando ella tenía mi edad,  
me doy cuenta que aunque las mujeres hemos logrado mucho,  
nos falta aún mucho más.

Vamos a pasos de cangrejo, dos para adelante y uno para atrás,  
en esta lucha interminable de poder decidir sobre nuestras vidas,  
futuros y *cuerpas*.

En un abrir y cerrar de ojos, los derechos que nuestras mamás y abuelas  
lucharon por adquirir, nos pueden ser arrebatados sin piedad.

No lo podemos permitir.

## **Generations**

Talking with my mom about what life was like when she was my age,  
I realize that although women have achieved a lot,  
we still have a long way to go.

We are walking like crabs, two steps forward and one step back,  
in this endless struggle to be able to decide about our lives,  
futures and she-bodies.

In the blink of an eye, the rights that our mothers and grandmothers  
fought and gained can be mercilessly taken from us.

We can't allow it.

## **La soledad y yo**

Muchos me preguntan si no me da miedo el terminar sola.  
El despertar un día con el cabello blanco, la vista nublada,  
y darme cuenta que malgasté mis días siendo egoísta.

Queriéndome a mí y siempre a mí.  
Dejando de lado la tan famosa dicha de ser mamá.

Pero la respuesta siempre es no.

Prefiero noches en silencio y mañanas tranquilas con olor a café.

Escuchar las patitas de mis perros que me siguen a todos lados  
sin preocuparme por alistar a mis hijos para ir al colegio.

Me gusta llegar cuando quiero e irme cuando se me antoja.  
Sin preocuparme por quién me va cuidar a mis hijos  
o si me esperan con hambre en casa.

Pizza y vino noches seguidas con maratones de televisión.  
O, a veces, cuando la cabeza y el cuerpo me dan para más,  
leer un libro de principio a fin en una sola sentada.

¿Por qué me obligan a amar la idea de ser madre para estar completa,  
cuando todo lo que me llena se ha encontrado siempre aquí, dentro de mí?

¿Por qué desde niñas nos enseñan que ser mujer equivale a tener hijos?  
Ser mujer no me obliga a ser madre.

## **Solitude and I**

Many people ask me if I'm not afraid of ending up alone.  
Waking up one day with silver hairs, blurry eyesight,  
only to realize I wasted my days being selfish.

Loving me and always me.  
Casting aside the famous joy of being a mom.

But the answer is always no.

I prefer quiet nights and peaceful coffee-scented mornings.

Listening to the paws of my dogs that follow me everywhere  
without worrying about having to get my children ready for school.

I like arriving when I want and leaving when I feel like it.  
Without worrying about who will take care of my children  
or if they wait for me hungry at home.

Back-to-back pizza-and-wine nights of TV marathons,  
or, sometimes, when my head and body will permit,  
reading a book from cover to cover in one sitting.

Why do they force me to love the idea of being a mother to be whole,  
when everything that fills me has always been found here, inside me?

Why are we taught from childhood that being a woman is equivalent to having children?  
Being a woman does not force me to be a mother.

### **En otra vida**

Cierro los ojos y sueño con mi mamá.

Sueño con la vida que habría tenido sin mí.

Cabello rebelde y largo, cuerpo estilizado

y traje sastre a la medida.

Un trabajo apasionante y estampas en el pasaporte.

Títulos por doquier y libros unos pocos más.

Vino caro y ensalada de su propio jardín.

Disfrutando la tranquilidad y el sonido de los pájaros

a través de la ventana.

No somos tan diferentes.

Despierto, y sonrío.

### **In another life**

I close my eyes and dream of my mom.

I dream of the life she would have had without me.

Rebellious and long-haired, stylized body and tailored suit.

An exciting job and a many-times stamped passport.

Degrees everywhere and books and more books.

Expensive wine and salad from her own garden.

Enjoying the tranquility and the sound of the birds

through the window.

We are not so different.

I wake up, and I smile

## Una buena mujer

Pídele a un hombre religioso que describa lo que es ser una buena mujer y fíjate cómo describe a una mujer sumisa que lo pone a él y sus hijos antes que a ella misma.

Fíjate cómo describe a una mujer sin ambiciones ni sueños o dinero propio.

Fíjate cómo describe a una mujer que no es dueña de su propia sexualidad, cuyo cuerpo solo existe al servicio de él, y solo de él.  
Sin amantes anteriores, ni vibradores de colores escondidos en algún lugar cerca de la cama.

Fíjate cómo sonrío cuando inconscientemente describe cualidades basadas en la Virgen de Guadalupe, cualidades que a las mujeres desde niñas nos han enseñado hay que seguir y admirar.

Tierna, pura, abnegada, con idealización del matrimonio y de los hijos un poco más.  
Domingos de iglesia y visitas con los suegros.

Sonreír y quedarse callada cuando los hombres de la casa están hablando, o mejor aún caminar sigilosamente a la cocina y preguntarle a la suegra si necesita ayuda.

Pero jamás podría ser yo.

Porque mi cuerpo tiene las huellas de los hombres que he amado, mi útero jamás conquistado cuenta la historia de un futuro que me pertenece a mí

Mis cientos de libros sin leer adelantan el silencio del departamento mientras los devoro de pasta a pasta, mi dinero en el banco sabe a independencia y países sin conocer.

*Because I was born with fire in my eyes and fire in my legs.  
I was born with fire in my brain and fire in my soul.*

*And because of that, that could never, ever, be me.*

### **A good woman**

Ask a religious man to describe what it is to be a good woman  
and see how he describes a submissive woman  
who puts him and her children before herself.

Notice how he describes a woman with no ambitions  
or dreams or money of her own.

Notice how he describes a woman who is not the owner of her own sexuality,  
whose body only exists in the service of him,  
and only him.

No previous lovers, no colored vibrators hidden  
somewhere near the bed.

Notice how he smiles when he unconsciously describes qualities  
based on the Virgin of Guadalupe,  
qualities that as women we have been taught since childhood  
to cultivate and admire.

Tender, pure, selfless, with idealization of marriage  
and especially of children.  
Church Sundays and visits to the in-laws.

Smiling and keeping quiet when the men of the house are talking,  
or better yet heading quietly into the kitchen to ask her mother-in-law  
if she needs any help.

But that could never be me.

Because my body bears the marks of the men I have loved,  
My unconquered womb tells the story of a future  
that belongs only to me.

My hundreds of unread books foretell the silence of the apartment  
when I devour them from cover to cover,  
my money in the bank tastes of independence and unknown countries.

Because I was born with fire in my eyes and fire in my legs.  
I was born with fire in my brain and fire in my soul.

And because of that, that could never, ever, be me.



## **Dios no es religión**

Si Dios es amor, ¿por qué las religiones no aceptan matrimonios LGBTQ+?

Si Dios es amor, ¿por qué las religiones se empeñan en satanizar a las mujeres que son dueñas de su propio cuerpo y disfrutan de su sexualidad?

Si Dios es amor, ¿por qué las religiones prefieren que las mujeres mueran en abortos clandestinos, en lugar de que tengan autonomía sobre su cuerpo?

Si Dios es amor, ¿por qué la culpable de todo siempre es Eva y nunca Adán?

*Religion wasn't made for women.*

*Religion was made for men to control women.*

## **God is not a religion**

If God is love, why do religions not accept LGBTQ+ marriages?

If God is love, why do religions insist on demonizing women who are masters of their own bodies and who enjoy their sexuality?

If God is love, why do religions prefer that women die in clandestine abortions instead of having autonomy over their bodies?

If God is love, why is Eve always to blame for everything and never Adam?

Religion wasn't made for women.

Religion was made for men to control women.

## **Sí, las mujeres podemos**

En una sociedad donde se nos inculcó desde niñas  
que no nos podíamos ir de nuestra casa  
hasta que nos casáramos,  
aquí vengo yo a decirte que sí se puede.

Sí se puede vivir sola, viajar sola, ir a comer sola.

Aprender a administrar tu dinero  
para poder pagar todos tus servicios básicos  
y darte tus gustitos, también se puede.

Tener un novio nuevo cada semana,  
o enamorarte y estar con uno solo por años,  
si así lo deseas, también se puede.

Dejemos de creer que como mujeres necesitamos siempre  
la protección de un hombre para estar bien.  
Primero de nuestros padres para enseguida  
pasar a ser propiedad de nuestro esposo.

Aprendamos a ser dueñas de nuestra vida y a estar solas.

Porque sí, sí se puede.

## **Yes, we women can**

In a society where it was ingrained in us from childhood  
that we couldn't leave our home  
until we got married,  
here I come to tell you that yes, we can.

Yes, we can live alone, travel alone, go out to eat alone.

Learn to manage your money  
so you can pay for all your basic services  
and treat yourself, yes, that too.

Have a new boyfriend every week,

or fall in love and be with only one for years,  
if you wish, yes, that too.

Let's stop believing that as women we always need  
the protection of a man to be well.  
First from our parents, followed  
by turning into the property of our husband.

Let's learn to own our life and be alone.

Because yes, we women can.

## **Tormentas y el sol**

Y después de tanta tormenta  
no hay nada mejor que reírse con una amiga  
de sí misma  
para reparar los daños.

## **Storms and the sun**

And after so many storms  
there is nothing better than laughing with a friend  
at yourself  
to repair the damages.

## **Nunca existió**

Mis ojeras cuentan en silencio  
la historia de este amor que nunca fue.

Mis ojeras cuentan en silencio  
todas las noches que esperé que la pantalla de mi celular  
prendiera alertándome de un WhatsApp tuyo.

Mis ojeras cuentan en silencio  
que fuiste tan mío  
como también de ella.

Mis ojeras cuentan también,  
qué tal vez lo que me faltó  
no fue que tú me quisieras,  
si no quererme yo.

## **It never existed**

The dark circles under my eyes silently  
tell the story of this love that never was.

The dark circles under my eyes silently  
count every night that I waited for the screen of my cell phone  
to light up alerting me that you had WhatsApped me.

The dark circles under my eyes silently  
tell that you were mine  
as well as hers.

The dark circles under my eyes also  
tell that perhaps what I lacked  
was not your love for me,  
but my love for myself.

## **Amar en libertad, siempre**

Nadie habla de la paz que se siente  
cuando encuentras a la persona indicada.

Nadie habla del sentir calma  
cuando sus manos rozan tus piernas  
o cuando tus dedos juegan con su cabello.

Todos hablan de cómo el amor  
es como un tornado  
que se lleva todo a su paso.

Un tornado que te cambia,  
te cambia la vida, el futuro y tu manera de pensar.

Pero es aquí, con él, que descubrí que el amor  
no es adrenalina ni rasguños internos.

Es aquí, con él, que descubrí que el amor  
más que paz, es tranquilidad.

Porque no hay mayor prueba de amor,  
que amar en libertad.

## **To love in freedom, always**

No one talks about the peace you feel  
when you find the right person.

Nobody talks about the calm you feel  
when his hands brush your legs  
or when your fingers play with his hair.

Everyone talks about how love  
is like a tornado  
that ravages everything in its path.

A tornado that changes you,  
changes your life, your future and your way of thinking.

But it is here, with him, that I discovered that love  
is not adrenaline or internal tears.

It is here, with him, that I discovered that love,  
more than peace, is tranquility.

Because there is no greater proof of love,  
than to love in freedom.

### **Muchas preguntas sin respuesta**

¿Por qué a las mujeres desde chiquitas nos enseñan  
que el hombre tiene que andar detrás de nosotras  
como prueba de que sí nos quiere?

¿Y si él es igual que yo?

¿Y si él también piensa que si en verdad lo quisiera  
lo buscaría?

¿Piensas en mí como yo en ti?

### **Many questions without an answer**

Why are women taught from a young age  
that men have to chase us as proof of their love for us?

What if he is just like me?

What if he also thinks that if he really wanted it,  
he would go after it?

Do you think of me as I think of you?



### **Tú, mi favorito**

Lo malo de haberte regalado mi libro favorito  
es que ahora siempre me hará pensar en ti.  
Cada que lo lea pensaré si alguna vez lo leíste,  
si tan siquiera lo empezaste  
o si piensas en mí cada que lo ves junto a tus cosas.  
Me pregunto si aún tienes la notita que te escribí también  
¿o se te perdió cuando me dejaste ir?  
Me pregunto si me extrañas aunque sea un poquito.  
¿Algún día lo sabré?

### **You, my favorite**

The bad thing about giving you my favorite book  
is that now it will always make me think of you.  
Every time I read it I will wonder if you ever read it,  
if you even started it  
or if you think of me every time you see it next to your things.  
I wonder also if you still have the little note I wrote to you  
or if it got lost when you let me go?  
I wonder if you miss me even a little bit.  
Will I ever know?

## **Amor no eres tú**

No creo que el amor sea  
esperar a que alguien se dé cuenta  
de lo maravillosa que eres  
después de meses de sentirte miserable  
por no ser correspondida.

No creo que el amor sea  
sentir angustia por que te regresen  
los mensajes  
cuando en verdad  
lo que deberías sentir es paz.

No creo que el amor sea  
tener que hacer uso de juegos mentales  
donde el que muestra menos interés  
sale ganando.

No creo que el amor sea  
querer llevar las cosas lento  
y no hablar por días  
para no apresurar nada.

No creo que el amor sea  
sentir un huequito hondo en el pecho  
que me quema  
cada que me acuerdo de ti.

No creo que el amor sea  
esperar que sientas lo que yo  
mientras te extraño  
como si los días no pasaran.

Yo creía que el amor eras tú,  
pero tampoco lo eres.

## **Love is not you**

I don't think love is

waiting for someone to realize  
how wonderful you are  
after months of feeling miserable  
for not being reciprocated.

I don't think that love is  
feeling anguished while waiting for someone to reply to your messages  
when in truth  
what you should feel is peace.

I don't think love is  
having to play mind games  
where whoever shows less interest  
wins.

I don't think love is  
wanting to take things slow  
and not talking for days  
so as not to rush anything.

I don't think love is  
feeling a deep hole in my chest  
that burns me  
every time I remember you.

I don't think love is  
waiting for you to feel what I do  
while I miss you  
as if the days did not pass.

I thought that love was you,  
but it's not you either.

## **Conversación de un amor que no existió**

“Perdón, perdón por no haberte querido, por no poder quererte”.

Pero, ¿cómo se aceptan ese tipo de disculpas del las que te destrazan internamente?

Porque solo confirma tu tan grande sospecha de que la persona que algún día tanto quisiste, en verdad nunca te quiso.

Pero es que sí, qué tonta.  
Si esas palabras estaban en clave en cada una de sus acciones.

No, no estabas loca ni tampoco exagerabas.  
Tu intuición te lo decía y ahora sus palabras lo confirman.

¿Pero si ya lo sabía por qué sigue doliendo al escucharlo?  
¿Por qué aún importa lo que él sintió por ti si tú lo dejaste?

Pero es que no lo dejé por no quererlo,  
lo dejé porque parecía que él no me quería.

Pero sí, no te quería.  
Ya lo sabes, ya te lo dijo y ahora sí a cerrar.

A cerrar el capítulo alargado de este amor que no existió con el hombre que nunca me quiso.

Pero es que él fingió que sí.

Adiós.

## **Conversation from a love that didn't exist**

“Sorry, sorry for not having loved you, for not being able to love you.”

But how do you accept that kind of apology, the ones that destroy you internally?

Because it only confirms your great suspicion  
that the person you once loved so much  
never really loved you.

But yes, how silly.  
He spoke in code  
through each one of his actions.

No, you weren't crazy, and you weren't exaggerating.  
Your intuition told you, and now his words confirm it.

But if you already knew, why does it still hurt to hear it?  
Why does it still matter how he felt about you if you left him?

But it's not that you did not leave him because you did not love him,  
you left him because it seemed that he didn't love you.

So no, he didn't love you.  
Now you know, he already told you so, and it's time to close.

To close the long chapter of this love  
that did not exist with a man who never loved you.

But he pretended that he did.

Farewell.

## Diferencias

¿Por qué las mujeres siempre estamos esperando ese mensaje  
de aquel amor no correspondido para que nos de *closure*  
mientras que ellos van por la vida fingiendo que lo nuestro  
nunca existió?

¿Qué ganamos con esperar?

Muchas dicen que es porque lo quieren perdonar  
para poder seguir adelante.

Y yo me pregunto, ¿a quién quieres perdonar?

¿A él por ser un cabrón?

¿O más bien a ti, por olvidarte de tu amor propio  
y darle más de tres oportunidades?

Y es que si nosotras no nos sabemos querer, nadie más podrá hacerlo.

O al menos no de una buena manera.

## Differences

Why are we women always waiting for that message  
from that unrequited love that will give us closure

While he goes through life pretending that what we had  
never existed?

What do we women gain by waiting?

Many women say that it is because they want to forgive him  
in order to move on.

And I wonder, who do you want to forgive?

Him for being a bastard?

Or rather you, for forgetting about your self-love  
and giving him more than three chances?

The thing is if we do not know how to love ourselves, no one else can.

Or at least not in a good way.

## **Amor de WhatsApp**

Son las tres de la mañana y estás en línea en WhatsApp.

Es que así son las cosas cuando el amor no es correspondido.

El que menos quiere sigue como si nada hubiese pasado.

Hablando.

Saliendo.

Conociendo gente nueva.

Mientras que el que quiere tanto se pasa las madrugadas

escribiendo en el block de notas del celular

tantas cosas que quedaron sin decir.

¿Quién se roba tus noches ahora que ya no estoy?

## **WhatsApp love**

It's three in the morning and you're online on WhatsApp.

It's just that's how things are when love is not reciprocated.

The one who loves the least goes on as if nothing had happened.

Talking.

Going out.

Meeting new people.

While the one who loves the most spends the early mornings

writing in their cell phone's notepad



all the many things that were left unsaid.

Who takes your nights away now that I'm gone?

## **Soledad**

Y cuando menos lo piensas te das cuenta

que estás acostumbrada a estar sola.

Que más que estar acostumbrada estás feliz,

estás cómoda, y que para salir de ahí,

habrá que dudarle mucho, mucho.

Y es que decirle adiós al silencio de mi departamento

y la tranquilidad de las mañanas a cambio de un esposo

que no recoge sus calcetas sucias e hijos ruidosos

es algo con lo que nunca he podido hacer las paces.

Algunas veces me despierto llorando a las cuatro de la madrugada

porque he tenido la peor de mis pesadillas.

Me despierto temblorosa y agitada porque en mi pesadilla,

que es el sueño de muchas, tengo hijos pequeños

y al verles me pongo a llorar porque dentro de mí sé

que nunca les quise tener.

Que nunca quise convertirme en mamá.

¿Y si me pasa así en la vida real?

Prefiero no arriesgarme, al menos por lo pronto.

## **Solitude**

And when you least think about it, you realize  
that you are used to being alone.

That more than being used to it, you are happy,  
you are comfortable, and that to give that up,  
you will hesitate a lot, a lot.

And the fact is that saying goodbye to the silence of my apartment  
and the tranquility of the mornings in exchange for a husband  
who does not pick up his dirty socks and noisy children  
is something I have never been able to make peace with.

Sometimes I wake up crying at 4 a.m.  
because I've had my worst nightmare.

I wake up trembling and agitated because in my nightmare,  
which is the dream of many, I have small children  
and when I see them I start to cry because inside I know  
that I never wanted them.

That I never wanted to become a mom.

What if this happens to me in real life?

I'd rather not risk it, at least for now.

## **Mujer latina**

A la mayoría de las mujeres latinas,  
nos educan con la idea de que lo natural en la vida  
es casarse antes de los treinta, tener hijos,  
comprar una casa y buscar un trabajo que te permita  
tener el suficiente tiempo libre para cumplir  
exitosamente tu labor número uno en la vida:  
el ser esposa y madre.

Pero ¿qué pasa cuando una como mujer decide  
no seguir ese rumbo y elegirse todos los días a sí misma?  
¿En cuántas reuniones familiares se nos va a juzgar de egoístas?  
¿Cuántas suegras nos van a tachar de malas personas  
por no desvivirnos por su hijo?

## **Latina woman**

Most Latina women  
are brought up with the idea that it is natural  
to marry before 30, have children,  
buy a house and look for a job that allows you  
to have enough free time to successfully carry out  
your number one job in life:

being a wife and mother.

But what happens when a woman decides

not to follow that course and chooses herself every day?

At how many family gatherings are we going to be judged as selfish?

How many mothers-in-law are going to brand us as bad people

for not going out of our way for their son?

## **Periodo de prueba**

En esta vida tan ajetreada  
donde las opciones sobre la vida que queremos tener  
son infinitas,  
debería haber un periodo de prueba con un bebé  
a ver si sí es cierto que queremos ser mamás  
o solo estamos sucumbiendo a la presión social  
y a la idealización del patriarcado.

Algo así como los treinta días de prueba de Amazon Prime;

*buy now, pay later. No commitments.*

Para poder decir con gusto,  
casi casi como los hombres han hecho a lo largo de la historia:  
¿sabes qué? ahorita vengo, voy por unos cigarros  
y nunca volverles a ver.

*If only.*

## **Trial period**

In this oh so busy life  
where the options about the life we want to have  
are infinite,  
there should be a trial period with a baby

to see whether we actually want to be mothers  
or if we are just succumbing to social pressure  
and the romanticization of the patriarchy.

Something like the 30-day trial of Amazon Prime;  
buy now, pay later. No commitments.

To be able to gleefully say,

just like men have done throughout history:

you know what? I'll be right back, I'm going for some cigarettes,  
only to never be seen again.

If only.

## **Mamá**

Entre más crezco,  
más quiero cumplir todos los sueños  
que mi mamá no pudo cumplir,  
ni siquiera soñar,  
por crecer en un mundo y país  
destinado para los hombres.  
Y es que entre más crezco,  
más oportunidades se me presentan,  
oportunidades que mi mamá  
nunca llegó a tener,  
o como ella dice “yo nunca pensé  
en lograr eso, a mí irme del país,  
o siquiera de la ciudad para estudiar,  
nunca me pasó por la mente”.  
Hoy sueño por las dos.

## **Mom**

The older I get,  
the more I want to fulfill all the dreams  
that my mother could not fulfill,



dreams she could not even dream,  
because she grew up in a world and country  
destined for men.

And the older I get,  
the more opportunities are presented to me,  
opportunities that my mother  
never had,  
or as she says "I never thought  
of achieving that, leaving the country,  
or even the city, to get an education,  
it never crossed my mind."

Today I dream for both of us.

## **Independiente**

Cuántas horas más tienes que trabajar  
para pagar tu renta, tu carro, tu comida,  
y todos tus otros gastos  
sólo para satisfacer la gran necesidad  
de ser independiente.

Qué tan fácil sería la vida viviendo  
en casa de tus papás  
hasta el día que decidas casarte,  
para pasar de ser hija a esposa,  
y siempre tener a alguien que te pague tus gastos.

Y sí, reconozco que es un privilegio  
para muchas mexicanas  
el poder ser independientes,  
el poder salirse de casa,  
pero las que sí tienen las posibilidades  
y aun así no lo hacen,

¿cuánta vida se están perdiendo por seguir ahí?

El ser independiente te hace crecer, valerte por ti misma,  
el poder salirte de relaciones amorosas violentas,

porque sabes que puedes estar sola.

Pero a las mujeres esta sociedad

no nos enseña la importancia de la independencia,

eso lo dejan para los hombres,

mientras que a nosotras se nos enseña el gran sueño

que es salir de casa con vestido blanco

para empezar a vivir el gran propósito de vida de toda mujer:

ser mamá y esposa.

Pasar de ser hija dependiente de los papás

a esposa dependiente del esposo

que vive por él y por sus hijos.

¿Cuántos años nos faltan para que a las mujeres nos enseñen

a ser mujeres solamente?

Sin que nuestra vida gire en torno a las personas

con las que vivimos.

Yo espero que muy pocos.

## **Independent**

How many more hours do you have to work

to pay your rent, your car, your food,

and all your other expenses

just to satisfy the great need

to be independent.

How easy life would be

living in your parents' house

until the day you decided to get married

and to go from daughter to wife,

always having someone to pay your expenses for you.

And yes, I recognize that it is a privilege

for many Mexican women to be able to be independent,

to be able to leave home,

but those who do have the possibilities and still don't,

how much of life are they losing by staying?

Being independent makes you grow, fend for yourself,

able to get out of violent romantic relationships,

because you know you can be alone.

But this society does not teach us women

the importance of independence,

they leave that for the men,

while we are taught the great dream

of leaving home in a white dress

to begin living out the great life purpose of every woman:

to be a mother and a wife.

To go from being a daughter dependent on her parents

to a wife dependent on her husband,

one who lives for him and their children.

How many years will it take for us women to be taught

to be women only?

Without our life revolving

around the people we live with.

I hope it's just very few.

## **Mente de inmigrante**

El ir creciendo y cumpliendo todos mis sueños

más que felicidad me trae miedo.

Miedo de que de repente algo muy malo me va a pasar

o ese sentimiento de que no merezco todo lo bueno que me pasa.

Es que a pesar de que he estado aquí por años,

no puedo dejar atrás la mentalidad de inmigrante.

Esa creencia de estar siempre preparado para lo peor,

de tener que trabajar muy duro siempre.

Es que el tener el trabajo de tus sueños

y un buen equilibrio entre lo laboral y lo personal,

es algo que mis papás nunca pudieron tener.

Mi mamá trabajaba de sol a sol para poder mantenerme.

Hoy gano en un día lo que ella ganaba por quincena.

¿Cómo puedo merecer algo así?

¿De verdad me merezco viajes por Europa y ropa de marca

cuando mi mamá tuvo que trabajar mucho más

para tener mucho menos?

Yo sé que sí, pero a veces pienso que no.

Y sé que no soy la única.

## **Immigrant mind**

Growing up and fulfilling all my dreams

more than happiness brings me fear.

Fear that suddenly something very bad is going to happen to me

or that feeling that I don't deserve all the good things that happen to me.

It's just that even though I've been here for years,

I can't shake the immigrant mentality.

That belief of needing to always be prepared for the worst,

of always having to work very hard.

It's just that having the job of your dreams

and a good work-life balance

is something that my parents could never achieve.

My mom worked from sun to sun to support me.

Today I earn in one day what she earned in two weeks.

How can I deserve something like that?

Do I really deserve trips to Europe and designer clothes

when my mom had to work a lot more

to have a lot less?

I know I do deserve it, but sometimes I think I don't.

And I know I'm not the only one.

## **Desaprender**

No hay nada que me guste más  
que ver a un hombre que toda su vida fue educado  
por una familia patriarcal y machista,  
que crezca,  
que se informe  
y que decida  
que todo lo que le enseñaron está mal.  
Que entienda que los hombres no deberían estar  
en contra del aborto  
porque ellos nunca pasarán por una situación tan compleja  
como un embarazo no deseado.  
Que ahora las mujeres pueden, y deben,  
tomar sus propias decisiones,  
como el irse de casa de los papás antes de casarse,  
sin que se le juzgue de pecadora o *facilota*.  
Que no hay nada más importante que la autonomía y la individualidad,  
aunque eso signifique desprendernos de las creencias de la iglesia  
y a veces de nuestros papás.  
Bien lo dijo la gran Ruth Bader Ginsburg:



“I ask no favor for my sex.

All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks.”

### **Unlearning**

There is nothing I like more

than seeing a man who was educated all his life

by a patriarchal and sexist family,

only to then grow up,

take it upon himself to learn

and decide

that everything he was taught is wrong.

Seeing him understand men should not oppose abortion

because they will never go through a situation as complex

as an unwanted pregnancy.

Seeing him understand that now women can, and should, make their own decisions,

such as leaving their parents' house before getting married,

without being judged as a sinners or *sluts*.

Seeing him understand that there is nothing more important than autonomy and individuality,

even if that means letting go of the beliefs of the church

and sometimes of our parents.

And as the great Ruth Bader Ginsburg said:

“I ask no favor for my sex.

All I ask of our brethren is that they take their feet off our necks.

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