

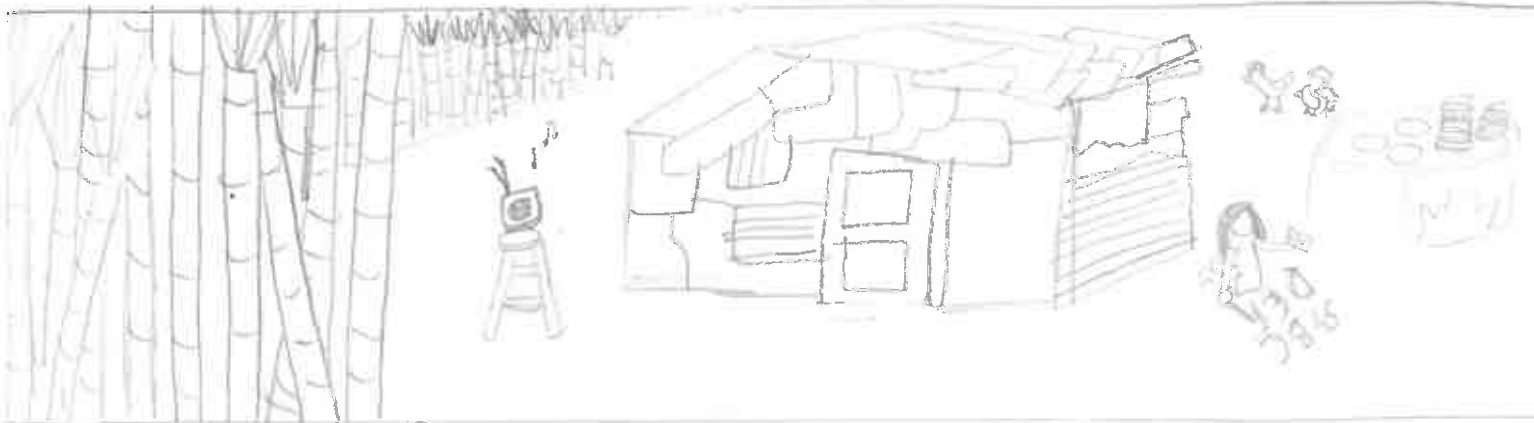
MOTHERLAND

NOHELY
PERAZA

EL SALVADOR

1985

ABC
DE



Gema

Javier Solís

Tú como piedra preciosa,
como divina joya,
valiosa de verdad;
si mis ojos no me mienten,
si mis ojos no me engañan
tu belleza es sin igual.

Tuve una vez la ilusión
de tener un amor
que me hiciera valer
luego que te vi mujer
yo te pude querer
con todita mi alma.
Eres la gema que Dios
convirtiera en mujer
para bien de mi vida,
por eso quise cantar
y gritar que te quiero
mujer consentida
por eso elevo mi voz
bendiciendo tu nombre
y pidiéndote amor.

Que me hiciera valer

Con todita mi alma

Eres la gema que Dios
convirtiera en mujer
para bien de mi vida,
por eso quise cantar y gritar que te quiero
mujer consentida
por eso elevo mi voz
bendiciendo tu nombre
y pidiéndote amor.



esto se usaba para el maiz



aprendí a hacer pupusas
aquí... en un restaurante



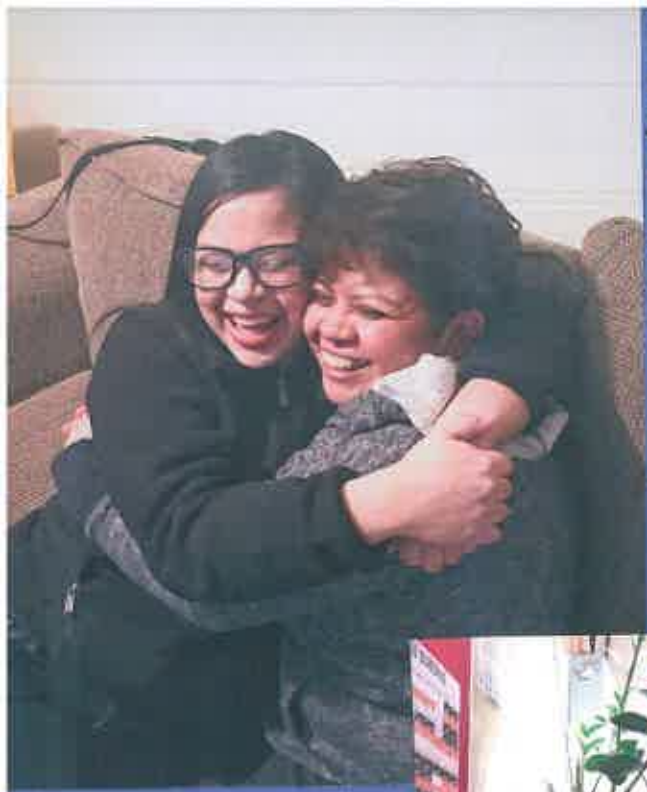
te tuve dos días después
de trabajar... necesitaba dinero
para nosotras







When I was born, the doctors told my mother that one of us would not make it. My mother was never supposed to have children. She found out she was pregnant with me at the hospital after her third suicide attempt. The pain of childbirth was too much. I came out one month before I was expected. The doctors said I had bilirubin. I was in weak condition. My mom was too. She turned to my dad (who happens to not be my biological father but that's a longer story) and tells him that she doesn't think one of us will make it. In physical and emotional pain, she fell into a deep sleep and had a wondrous dream. In her dream, she was climbing a tall, rocky mountain with me, a newborn, in her arms. The climb was difficult, but when she made it to the top, she saw an incredibly bright light shining from the sky on her and me. She knew it was God. She held me up above her and said to God, "You know she is my reason to live, but you gave her to me, so if she belongs with her father in Heaven, take her, I don't want her if she is going to suffer on this Earth. You know what is best for her. If she is meant to stay, I will keep her. If she is Yours, take her, take her. She is in Your Hands". With the blinding light the last thing she saw in her dream, she wakes up, overcome with the most incredible sense of peace. She says that she knew whatever happened to me - whether I was meant to live or not - would be as God willed it. She knew we were both in God's hands. We always have been and we always will be.



siempre estara contigo



mi primer amor fuiste tu, mi vida



¿porqué te fuiste? tan lejos?

ami, te extraño



aveces me siento abandonada

me siento sola

mi razón de vivir



de me hacer largas los días sin ti

¿cuando regresas?

Personal Statement

One of the greatest burdens and yet greatest sources of pride for my mother has been my love of reading.

While I learned my first words as a child watching educational programs such as Sesame Street, my mother, at the age of 27, sat alongside me and learned rudimentary English. We would repeat the word of the day and she would sing along with me. I would learn how to say new words in English as she taught me Spanish herself. I would absorb new information quickly and was able to start school early as a result.

My mom always wished she could go to school. She had no schooling at all until she came to the U.S. because in El Salvador, she was forced to cook for her brothers who worked in the fields all day. When I was five years old, she took an English language class for a few months in the evenings after work to improve her English. She eventually needed to stop in order to devote her evenings to work. Because I was able to learn both languages at the same time, I was able to grow up helping my mother translate documents and my teachers' words.

When I was in preschool, my mom invested in a set of *World of Disney* children's books, written versions of classic Disney films. I would stuff books such as *The Lion King* and *Dumbo* into my small backpack, and take them with me to preschool every single day. My three-year-old life was centered around these books. I reread them repeatedly and I took them with me everywhere I went. While the other kids played with toys, I'd find a quiet corner to read my books.

Growing up, I would constantly annoy my mom by asking her for books. We would often not even be able to buy cheap ones at thrift stores because she had bills to pay. When I discovered the library in elementary school, I felt I had discovered my Garden of Eden. Once a week, classes would visit the library, and students were required to check out at least one book to take home and read. I was exposed to a world of information I didn't know existed.

I remember being at the library when I was in 4th or 5th grade, searching for information on how to write a resume for my mom. As far as I can remember, I have filled out every single one of my mother's job applications. I help pay bills, manage her bank account, and make calls when she has to make appointments. New words and skills I learned in school and at the library were as fascinating as the first words I learned on Sesame Street and in my Disney books, and could also be applied in understanding new things for my mother. In 10th grade, a few years after I first started writing resumes for my mom, my class was taught how to write a resume, and when I got home, I used my notes to complete my own and improve the one I keep updating for my mom.

My mother takes pride in telling others I love to read because it is an unusual hobby to have in my upbringing. My community consists of low-income minorities. Many have had no schooling at all, and it is common that their children don't finish high school, let alone college. My commitment to learning through books is promising in my mother's eyes because it contradicts what she sees around her. This seemingly trivial fact is associated with the higher level of education she never had and desires for me to have despite the circumstances in which I have been raised.

Books have seen my mother and me in the most difficult of circumstances, and they will see us overcome them.



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 Has cathedral, many old churches and monasteri
 parks, and old Sp. residences. Founded 153
 Formerly an important indigo-trading center.
 San Miguel, active volcano (7,064 ft.) in San Mi-
 guel dept., E Salvador, 7 mi. SW of San Miguel.
 Its large fuming crater tops a perfect cone.
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