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She looks in the mirror and
smoothes her thick arching brows and
flattens her flyaway hairs.
She pushes up her nose and scowls,
washes her face with freckled hands,
green veins peeking through
yellow-tinted skin.
She puts on her mask.

I see myself
In the hairs that stick out from my head, inherited from my Taíno ancestors.
In the sharp arch of my thick brows, inherited from my grandmother, with whom I also share my name.
In my deep brown eyes, inherited from my mother.
In my large nose, inherited from my father, and his father, some leftover trait from Spanish Moors.
In my big mouth, laughing my grandfather's laugh.
In the sunspots on the back of my hands, inherited from my abuela.
In the green veins that run below my yellow-tinted skin,
Swelling with the strength of my ancestors.
I am enough
“My teachers told me I was really smart. You get your brains from me,” my grandmother tells me as she falls silent and wonders what her life could have been.

“I was never expected to go to college,” my mother tells me as her brown hands grip the steering wheel.

“You could be a doctor or a lawyer.” my grandmother says when she learns I am going to college.

“I never had the same opportunities as you” my mother admits.

I am the daughter of Petra Ortega who is the daughter of Romelia Jaramillo Franco Ortega.

I am the embodiment of their hopes, dreams, and regrets.

I carry the weight of their stories, never fully aware of the significance of my success.

Our Success.

The weight of their unfulfilled desires and dreams are attached to my body as I continue down a path that separates from their own.

They are content, but their dreams at the cost of the lives lived.
healing | Sahara-Yvette Zamudio

Qué pasa cuando nos reunimos
When we allow ourselves to feel
When we allow others to feel with us
Feel for us

Qué pasa cuando nos dirigimos al dolor
Pain that we’ve pushed away
Pain that has remained buried
has remained hidden
Qué pasa cuando recordamos
When we re-member
Juntos

Qué pasa cuando dejamos que otros vengan en ese viaje con nosotros
When we don’t cry alone
When we talk through things together
Create together
Heal together

What if we choose love
Choose community
Choose to heal
i left | Andrew Vallejos

i left the den and managed to fend for myself,
i waved goodbye to those before me
desperately exploring what those before never did or even could

i thought i was doing good- by me. by them. by us.
who even is us.

i thought back on what i wanted, what i saw, and what i didn't-- what i felt, and what i didn't
i sent a welcoming wave to those before me-- they were mute
i was alone to fend for myself

look what i’ve accomplished
LAS VOCES
There's no such thing as *pelo malo*.
Your curls and coils
are not running away from you
when they twist and turn towards the sunlight.
They don't hate you
for giving them such a vibrant personality
that allows it to wander in every which way
as your soul so often does.
It wants to touch the sky
and kiss it with the beauty of your ancestors.

There's no such thing as *pelo malo*.
Never frown when they say that
it's the color of the dirt
it is not a color that stains, taints, and contaminates.
It's the color of the earth
it nurtures and feeds the soul of its owner
and creates a bed where all living things die
and are reborn again.

There's no such thing as *pelo malo*.
So let it float in all direction
with no apology.
Your locks thank you
for giving them the freedom to fly
and the ability to hear
the whisper of the wind
through every strand
and the energy to dance
with every step you take.
My mother’s mother prays at least three times a day, every single day—she will undoubtedly survive the rapture and get first dibs on all of heaven’s comforts. Somewhere in those prayers she likely prays for me. The part of me that worries God is real and will shun me for being rude thanks her for that.

Typically, Catholic families have their children baptized, then the child’s first communion follows and the final trial for proving one’s devotion is their confirmation; somewhere in that process there is also time for penance. My knowledge of this comes from being nosy about my cousin’s confirmations and the spectacle I’ve made of mass as a child. I only became seriously interested in having a communion after learning the sip people were taking out of the goblet the priest raised during mass was in fact wine. I couldn’t explain that to my parents though.

At the age of 12 my mother and father told me it was about time I dedicate Sunday afternoons to Catholic school so I could have my first communion. Amanda, my younger sister who was eight at this time, was finally old enough to take first communion classes. Like my parents’ worst nightmare and in an effort to remain committed to my personal mission of outwardly resenting the church I said, “NO WAY, I’ve already given up my week-day afternoons and Saturdays to studying. I don’t have a single day of the week left to me, I’m not giving up my Sundays too!” Huffing and puffing in Spanish, in a way that my parents would take seriously, was hard for me but I had perfected the puckered lip pout that screamed I’m mad, direct all your attention towards me and have pity. To this day, I’m not sure why my parents bought that excuse. While yes my Saturdays were an additional day of doing academic work as an “extracurricular” it wasn’t like I was the only preteen being forced to sit through school during the week.

Notorious in my family for being what I consider bold and outspoken but what my elders prefer to call mala-gradecida, or disrespectful and ungrateful, I am troubled by the ways I’ve hurt my parent’s feelings. But I also roll my eyes thinking about how my parents aren’t poster Catholics themselves. Allow me to outline a few of the many instances in which I aided in my mother’s heartache and father’s disappointment.

After being gifted one of those handheld videogame consoles at age ten, by my lovely and hardworking parents one Christmas, I resorted to bringing it to Sunday masses. Sunday mass wasn’t always scheduled in because it oftentimes varied depending on whether my mom would have the day off from work or if my dad would wake up early enough to make it. Even with those few visits I insisted on dragging my feet there and back. I mean this literally. We walked to our neighborhood church. Quite cunningly the younger, and more inconsiderate me, used jackets, scarves, even the church’s book of prayers, to hide my gaming device during mass. When my dad saw he gave me that single look that assured me if I didn’t immediately put it away the game would likely be given to my younger sister as a lesson in being a brat. Mass was so boring though, I’d explain. I didn’t understand why as a child (I liked to play up my youth for sympathy points) I was being forced to listen to old people speak in Spanish about something I couldn’t wrap my head around.

After telling my parents they would be saving some money on sending me to college cause their bright middle child acquired a scholarship, my parents’ reactions went from congratulating me to reminding me to thank God for his blessing. Here we go. In typical self-centered form I explained to my parents that I was the one who spent all the time studying and working hard to get the scholarship, not God. Cue Mami gasping. How could I say something like that? To my parents I had confirmed their fears again. Raising children in America did not equate to better just complicated.
3 months ago my cousin Elias suffered some kind of heart failure and doctors at the renowned New York Presbyterian assured us his chances of coming back were slim to none. His death followed two others in our family, an uncle’s and another cousin, all three unforeseen and within the span of a few months. Still, my grandmother held onto her faith. In the hospital’s ICU waiting room a family friend led a prayer. As if she saw the doubt written out on my bosom like Hester Prynne’s scarlet letter, this woman pleaded that each young person recite a Hail Mary prayer for Elias. It was hours before doctors would announce if he were fully brain dead or not. I stumbled through the prayer in Spanish. That evening, as over 30 of us anxiously awaited the doctor’s announcement, I worried if God would be silly enough to make his decision on my faith in him.
EL MARIANISMO
Expecting:

The drive up to Colgate took 4 hours at the beginning of every semester. I couldn’t help but feel the nerves as I always did. Nausea and mood swings weren’t just symptoms but rather the very real effects of being at this school again. It was the Sunday before class began that I decided to relax, lay in bed and hold back the gagging in my throat. I recall being nauseous plenty of times before but as I sat in my bed, I felt this was different. As I expressed this thought, mi amiga querida suggested that I take a pregnancy test.

I always imagined my future as a mother, to be the most exciting time of my life because of the maternal instinct I had developed growing up. I loved to care for others and to feel like I was needed, to feel essential and useful. (In retrospect, this probably stems from my “daddy issues” that I tend to joke about but are actually very real.) My family is very large so I never felt completely alone and as the eldest first generation child in the U.S, I watched all of my primxs grow up too. Have you ever had baby fever at the most random times?

Walking to the bathroom with the First Response Early Result Pregnancy Test in my hand was definitely an anticlimactic experience. In the moment, I had convinced myself that I could not be pregnant and I was somehow not able to carry babies because mami had that one miscarriage and therefore, I too was damaged. I never used condoms when having sex with my partner so how could I be pregnant now? And even if I was, it was okay because I loved him right? In the end, I was only taking this test because my friend told me to, or so I convinced myself of this reason. I couldn’t be pregnant and there was no way because I had to graduate and the Universe wouldn’t do that to me.

I peed on the little plastic stick and waited for what felt like the longest 3 minutes of my life. My heart began to pound as soon as I lay the stick on a ledge with the cap over the felt part. For those 3 minutes, my mind went blank and all focus was on my heart and on my breathing. I stood up, right before midnight, and looked at my test. There were two lines: one dark pink and one very faint line that was almost not visible. I took a deep breathe and felt relieved that I was not pregnant before realizing that two lines, no matter how visible, meant that you were. I went numb in the bathroom. I covered my mouth after gasping and wrapped my test in toilet paper. I walked to my room, sat on my bed, and texted my partner right after.

As he walked in, it felt like my soul had returned to my body and as I looked into his eyes to tell him I was pregnant, the tears began to roll down my face like streams. I cried for the little girl inside me that wanted to tell her mami but couldn’t because she would hate me. I envied all the white women that had the unconditional support of their families, money and multiple paths they could take whereas I only had one. I felt stuck, afraid and alone. I was a pregnant brown girl at Colgate, reminiscent of the girls from my old high school I judged for this very reason, and I was completamente solita.

I wanted to tell everyone and I wanted to tell no one. I wanted to knock on everyone’s door and announce the news that I would be having a baby with the person that I love, that it was going to be great, that everything was going to be perfect. That night I told my partner I was terrified, but deep inside me I knew something about it was strangely comforting and I slept with my hands covering my belly.
It's not easy feeling “normal” again after the thought of a fetus growing inside of you finally sets in. Life becomes real-er and the problems you thought you had before become miniscule. You pee three times in one night, your breasts itch like crazy and you have to carry a plastic bag around with you for vomit. Money, which was always tight, becomes even more essential.

I was 8 weeks pregnant in January of this year and I began to take care of myself, to truly self care like never before. I ate anything I could get my hands on, but no coffee or alcohol. There is also no better feeling than experiencing an intense craving for burgers and then tasting it on your tongue. I did everything I could to take care of what was inside of me in fear that at any point, I’d have a miscarriage.

This piece is for us. If you are reading this, I want to warn of the following content that may be difficult to read if you have experienced anything similar. My decision was my own and I do not intend to convince anyone that what I did was “right” or “wrong”.

I had made the official decision to stay pregnant and start a new life after Colgate. This life would ultimately be one that excluded my family because of what they had always feared. “Si algun dia te quedas embarazada, tu ya no seras mi hija. No abras las piernas o si no te va pasar lo que le paso a tu prima.” There exists many tensions within my family unit and one of them is this idea of “moving out”. Not only would I have to explain to mis papas that I was pregnant, but I would also have to explain to them that I was leaving and I was not going to work or go to school right away. Weeks went by and I had not told my partner of my decision because I was afraid of the burden I would cause despite his already unconditional support. I realized that I admitted to no one that I did want to stay pregnant: not the counselor, not my Dean nor my friends. I knew life was not going to be easy but I also knew I could do it. I had the privilege of having a bachelor’s degree from this school and with that I already had more opportunity than when my mother was pregnant with me. I turned out fine I’d like to think and so this was not going to stop me from changing my mind. I think I was waiting for someone to tell me what to do however.

I had something growing inside of my womb that needed me and as much as I wanted to love it, I did not allow myself to become completely attached. I called my fetus a “thing” and an “it” in order to cope with my pregnancy, but knew this was in vain.

Abortion was a taboo word in my family that nobody spoke about. It was an option but one that I kept in the back of my mind, almost as if for a last resort. I don’t think I realized how afraid and uncertain about the future I really was until I changed my mind in an instant. All of a sudden, the choice seemed so simple: get abortion, graduate, and move on. It was after an intense conversation with my partner that this was decided. We cried together and I stayed pregnant until the end of my first trimester.

I wanted it all to be over. I was not emotionally okay knowing that I had to care for something that I knew would soon be gone. And I never had the chance to fully make sense of my experience until now. But I don't think there's anything wrong with being at a loss for words. Sometimes all you want to do is cry and that’s okay too. They tell you that it’s empowering to have a choice in what happens to your body but I have yet to feel that. They try to invalidate your desire to humanize your fetus because “killing a fetus is not ending a life” but they don’t know that you know that too. You ARE allowed to love whatever it is growing inside of you even if you know it will not be with you for long.

To the fetus I expelled, love is shown in multiple ways and I think I let you go because I loved you. I loved you too much to bring you into this world that at this very moment, I felt like I could not protect you from. I loved you more than I loved myself and that was the problem. But did I stay pregnant for that long because I was confident I could do it or because I did not want to have an abortion? It’s been about 2 months and I still think about it every single day.
El aborto:

I don't think anyone ever wants to have an abortion. 1 in 3 women make this decision but nobody ever wants to go through the actual process itself. My original intention was to detail my abortion but doing so is too painful for me at the moment. I do want to take the time to express how vital Planned Parenthood has been in my experience and in the support I received in the surgery room during my abortion. I want to acknowledge the women I saw that day going in for the same reason as I. I want to be angry and call out the white bodies standing in front of the clinic with bloody photos in protest. Most of all, I want to hope and wish for a future in which I could one day tell my family all of this.

Latinidad is not static, it is not Spanish, it is not who you choose to hang out with, not what groups you are in, not how you dance, not what you eat, etc. My Latinx experience may be different than yours and my parents may hold different traditional views but this is MY experience and nobody else's. I was raised Catholic and so I did have a difficult time dealing with the guilt of it all. I feared I would be unable to have children afterwards but I also knew that I would not allow myself to return to a mindset I worked hard to dismantle.

Floating, trauma and the “moving on”:

The most aggravating part of the aftermath is feeling like I have to move on and pretend that as each day goes by, it all gets better. I couldn't blame others around me for not knowing about the abortion. As if it never happened. I felt that my experience wasn't acknowledged because of what our world has taught others to think and I hated it.

A few weeks after my abortion in February, my milk began to leak. Finally, it was a sign that I was in fact pregnant at some point! Here was this small victory in my body that validated my experience. I did not feel crazy anymore. And while I am far from “healed”, it was definitely enough for me to actually start thinking about what that process would look like going forward.

A lot of the thoughts I had during my pregnancy stemmed from things I am still in the process of un-learning now. I know I'm not going to hell and I know that I have a choice and I must own that choice. But I also know it is not easy and it is unfair to ask someone who has gone through this to be perfectly critical of their experience right away. I have been chipping away at different areas of my story, resolving some while coming back to others, and I know I have so much work left to do. For me, healing is very much like being socially conscious-there is no finite embodiment of either, but rather a long arduous and necessary process. Living and breathing have new meanings to me, as does the future. I don't know how I feel about the concept of “moving on” with life but I'll figure it out and despite what happens, I will accept and love myself through it all. There is no real ending, this is not a short story. But to the person reading this that can relate, we can do this and I believe in you.

Muxer, eres tan fuerte. Tu puedes crear jardines de girasoles y tulipanes y a la misma vez, caen y crecen de nuevo. Muxer, eres tan fuerte que aunque tu jardín no pueda florecer, mantienes tu tierra tan rica y maravillosa. Algun día quisiera ser como un cronopio de los que describe Cortazar. De poder ir contra las creencias de mi infancia pero con amor que tengo por mi propia humanidad y la de mi familia. Muxer, tu puedes con todo y contra todo: respira, vive y existe.

“No es fácil ser cronopio. Lo sé por razones profundas, por haber tratado de serlo a lo largo de mi vida; conozco los fracasos, las renuncias y las traiciones. Ser fama o esperanza es simple, basta con dejarse ir y la vida hace el resto. Ser cronopio es contrapelo, contralu, contranovela, contradanza, contratodo, contrabajo, contragote, contra y recontra cada día contra cada cosa que los demás aceptan y tienen fuerza de ley”.

-Julio Cortázár
You speak English so well. I wish I sounded like you. Blink and smile, because you know your comfort with the English language is a privilege.

Ignore the way each word you speak pulls you further away from the distant memory of your first language.

Remember, fluency means access.

Sit and listen to your friends, family, and strangers as they condemn you for not speaking Spanish.

Forget.

When you were unable to speak to your own mother, because your Spanish was too strong.

Forget.

The endearing way your family would mock your Spanish accent.

Forget.

Why you came home and informed your family that you were in America now and would only speak English.

Ignore.

The way your stomach tightens when others compliment your eloquence.

Ignore.

The memory of what it felt like to have your mother tongue ripped from the seems.

Ignore.

The ache in your chest when you try to remember the way your grandfather spoke Spanish.

Ignore.

The pain of knowing you lost the language he gave to you.

Remind.

Yourself being fluent in English is a privilege.
Poderosa | Sahara-Yvette Zamudio
Calladito.
¿Que no te domesticaron en tu lugar?

Tu dices que me quieres
pero tu solo me quieres calladito.
Porque así de calladito
me mantienes sumiso y controlable.
Quieres que mis acciones, mis pensamientos, y mis valores
se arrodillen hacia ti.

Calladito.
¿Que no ves que duerme la ignorancia?

Mi explosión brusca no deriva “de la nada”.
Este fuego ha existido dentro de mí por horas, años y generaciones.
Se enciende con cada palabra de ignorancia
y se difunde con cada silencio de conveniencia.

Calladito.
¿Que no vez que alteras la comodidad?

La solución no es cambiar el tema.
La solución no es terminar la conversación.
Al contrario,
la solución es seguir,
seguir escuchando.

Tal vez si me veo más bonito calladito.
Pero la belleza del mundo va más allá de la superficie.
La belleza del mundo está entre los bosques del malentendido.
está entre las lumbres del enojo,
entre los oceanos de lagrimas,
y entre el aire de diálogo.
the mirror is discombobulated
or maybe i am. i can't remember
what the witty light illuminated
i took, with unsuspecting hunger.
i sought Enlightenment laced slavery,
Enlightenment based on biased accounts
i ate the words, and books they spoon fed me,
never thinking to what it might amount
my past haunts my appropriated self
my benefactors laud me. i do not
loathe or celebrate on my own behalf.
i pain in my identity's onslaught.

who even stares back at me— who judges.
what is Enlightenment, but bleak darkness.
re-member | Sahara-Yvette Zamudio

Cuando te dicen?
When do they tell you- you are not valid?
That who you are is wrong
Que la cultura mas bella that runs through your veins is poisonous
When were you broken?
When were you hurt?

Do you remember?
Remember how to re-member?
iamawhitespaceintruder | Andrew Vallejos

my whole life has been a rude awakening

in 20 years of life, i've never lived
or existed in a space meant for me.
i remember being willing to pretend
Pushing my heritage away, violently
i remember my rude awakenings
reminding me that i am still not white
despite my j. crew pastel christenings,
corrected grammar, and being polite
whiteness is a vile multi-headed beast.
i remember thinking i could tame it,
make it accept me- at the very least
how naive. and so damn, complicit.
my schooling gifted me a White Visa
and a self-hating, trance-like amnesia.
La Linda Manita | Martha Gabriela Montufar

Cuando naciste, era tanto la fascinación con tus manitas
Manitas suaves, manitas lindas, graciosas
Y creciste, y aprendiste que estas manos
Son para todos, menos para ti.
Una revolucion:
Estas manos son de colores
Dolores
Moradas, cansadas, asperas
Estas manos saben dar ternuras
van sanando
Acariciando, exaltando, curando
Fueron creadas para siempre dar
Dar
Darles
Darte
Servir.
Estas manos tienen su propia mente
Haciendo y deshaciendo como placen
Y Placen siempre, amor.
Mientras el yugo de la realidad trata de calmar,
Ponerlas en su sitio-
Manitas pa que te quiero si no pueden rebelarse
Si en vez de cargar dolor y soledad,
Se vean libres-
Para amar de verdad, y no de responsabilidad
Pero para eso, vamos a ver.
Resist | Sahara-Yvette Zamudio

Recuerda
Recuerda tus antepasados
Recuerda tu historia
Recuerda quien eres
No dejes que te borren
“The Roses that Grew from the Concrete” | Bennie Guzman
The Road to Success

My english is not mine.
It is the dreams and aspirations
my parents had for me.
It is the expectations
my professors, teachers, and classmates
created for me.

My english is a discipline
not a discipline of the arts,
but a discipline of control.

“Speak slower,” I am told
as if I could tame
these twists and turns
that wind these words
to crash into a dead end.

A dead end
to a one way assimilation
like when my English teacher claimed,
“The problem with us Hispanics is
...we don’t pronounce
the last syllables
of every word,”
but didn’t realize
America doesn’t listen
to even our first syllable.

The problem is not
proper pronouncement
The problem is
proper nouns like “Hispanic”.
Proper enough
to pay reverence to the Spanish Crown
And improper enough
to exploit, enslave, and exterminate Latin America
much like English itself
has exploited, enslaved, and exterminated my Spanish.

Leche Agridulce

Mi español es agridulce.
Agridulce como cuando me nutria
de la leche del pecho de mi madre
y la mordía con los dientes que me nacían,
igual como cuando la reclamaba en Español
por enseñarme este lenguaje inútil.

Mi español es agridulce
hacia las raíces de mi raza
pero me separa entre
el florecer del género:
“ellos” no crecen como “ellas”;
“nosotros” no somos “nosotras”;
y “los” existen para “las.”

Mi español es agridulce
cuando vino y se deshizo
del Quechua y Mapudungun
y lo remplazo con lo real.
Lo real no siendo lo real
sino solo la Real Academia Española.
Letter from the Editors

Cuerpos en Resistencia is our Women's Studies Capstone. It is meant to be the culmination of all our work as Women's Studies Majors, and reflects both our personal and academic growth. We were lucky enough to have collaborated with each other, as intersectional feminists that value expression through art and as close friends.

This project has transformed over the course of the semester. Despite the constant changes, a few things have stayed constant: the desire to focus on community, the desire to highlight the voices of a marginalized community, and the desire to heal through art.

The magazine is simultaneously personal and separate from us. We ask others to share the most intimate parts of themselves, mindful that we must do the same. We intended to create a space where individuals could reflect on their latinidad through an intersectional lens; but we were not fully aware of the importance of this capstone when we started. Over the course of the semester multiple people have approached us and expressed how important this is to them- how they feel they finally have a platform for their voices and experiences to be heard and acknowledged.

There are many people who helped make this capstone possible. First and foremost, we want to thank all those who contributed to Cuerpos en Resistencia. None of this would be possible without your vulnerability. Thank you to Professor Loe, our Capstone advisor, who offered us constant guidance through this process. We are forever grateful to the powerful women in our Women's Studies seminar for providing constant words of encouragement and feedback. Finally, thank you to the Center for Women's Studies and Allie Fry for offering your support.

Con mucho cariño,
Romelia y Sahara