

amémonos

// let us love each other

de // by. linda maria girón

contact.

lindamagiron@gmail.com

(626) 258-9565

... dedicado a / dedicated to ...

Abuelita, por compartir sus cuentos, sueños y oraciones.

Mom, for fighting to make our dreams come true.

Mr. Espinoza, for lifting my love for writing.

Lisa Marie, for believing in me.

R&D family, for the home we built.

Town Hall team, for raising this garden.

characters.

karina inés the child / they, she / 25 // an academic. spiritually displaced, guiseless.
 eulalia inés the grandmother / ella / 77 // a guardian. dry wit, stoic, disarming.
 sofia inés the mother / she / 40 // an educator. unavailable, six steps ahead, forceful.
 mae the dancer / she, her / 27 // an embodied love. free, joyous, power.
 voz** the voice / they, them // a prophetic storyteller, poet, “stage directions”

*this cast is bilingual. this cast is Brown. this cast is queer.
 this cast is Everything.*

time.

Breathing between past and present, 1992 - 2020. Transitions are expressed best by temperature/climate. Present is marked by red hot summers, smoke and storms. Past dreams and memories are fresh and lavenderous.

stage.

PALM VILLA APARTMENTS: Kari’s childhood home. A neglected villa held together by memory and a fiery overgrowth of scarlet bugambilias. There are no walls, only barred railings, balcony stairways and six locked doors and windows sharing surveillance over a small courtyard; our stage. It is the only space we are given access to, made inhabitable by a mixture of rejected indoor furniture & outdoor amenities. It should feel liminal, yet contained. A floral enclosure. A sky bracketed by concrete. At the center of it all, is the semi-galiant fountain which, like the bugambilias, is dying of thirst. In its basins where water once flowed, is years worth of fallen petals.

on text.

*EULALIA’s Spanish is written to reflect a Guatemalan or Central American *voseo*’s accent. Accent marks noted in the script will note accent stresses that may change due to common use of *vos* conjugation (i.e. In *vos*, the accent in ‘Déjame’ changes to ‘Dejame’)

*Capitalization variation indicates tone change.

*EULALIA’s English fluency scores the time periods of KARI’s memories.

* ‘. . .’ = a beat. / ‘. . ’ = a short beat / ‘. . -’ = a breath interrupted / ‘small text’ = self-talk

*In this family, behind every chancla pursuit or crude remark is love and levity. Their love is self-neglecting and sacrificial, their love is fluent in violence, their love has survived trauma; even when the levity is lost, there is a love that is learning to heal.

*shout out ThinkBeatRadio for the vibes. **voz reads titles & stage directions of choice

la primera oración // the first prayer

PALM VILLA APARTMENTS. South California.

Dusk. Past, present past, future past. A dream.

Distant church bells ring. A rooster echoes.

In darkness, the windows yawn awake.

Lights behind each pane smolder with silhouettes.

Music... TVs... Radios...

Life sings in the small villa.

A gate clangs. It all stops.

después de las seis // after six

6:29am. June 2020. Yellow sky. AQI 148.

KARI enters. Masked, sweaty and over encumbered with luggage.

The PALM VILLA inhales desolation.

Santa Ana winds exhale, ash and heat.

Bugambilia petals swirl and rattle through the courtyard.

KARI releases their mask, then waddles towards the fountain releasing each burden.

They dig out a lanyard with-

kari.

no keys. no. . . *oh no.* . -
no!no!no!no!no! . . . *shit!!*
ke-e-eyes, c'mon keeeys,
where the fuk-!?

. . .

¿mamá?

. . .

¡mamáaaaaaa!

. . .

Knock. Knock.

Knock. Knock. Knock!

MOM!

. . .

(phone call)

Hi Mom, I'm here. It's Six. . twenty. . ish?
It's After Six. and I don't have the key. . .
so, if you're already at work then maybe-
I can maybe just find some place to wait.
that is indoors. Call me when you- *if* you
can. *please-don't-be-mad-at-me.* ok! bye.

. . .

this.

is.

just.

. . .

perrrfecto.

sooper-doooper-

Knockknockkncknckconcknckknckknock!

eulalia.

¿¡Bueno vos!? / ¿Qué hacés acá?

[Hey you! What are you doing here?]

kari.

oOo *shi-* / gran'ma, what are you-!?

eulalia.

¡Son las seis y media, mija!

[It's six thirty, my girl!]

kari.

what-?

eulalia.

Ey! Wha's wrong witchu?

kari.

sorry! i-don'kno-ididn'tsee-

eulalia.

¿Por qué me mirás así?!

[Why're you staring at me?!]

kari.

se- . . fue una sorpresa.

[it- . . . was a surprise.]

eulalia.

O, ¿Te espanté? I éscare you?

[Oh, did I scare you?]

kari.

I just wasn't expecting you-

eulalia.

¿Cómo qué, 'no expect?

[What do you mean. . .]

kari.

i thought-

eulalia.

¡Es mi propia casa! Ay dios-

[This is my house! My god-]

I should say surprise to *you*.

Hace seis años, you no come

[It's been six years]

karina.

you haven't changed. .

eulalia.

o, *thank you*.

karina.

. . .Where is everybody?

eulalia.

who?

karina.

. . .everyone? the neighbors? *Mom?*

eulalia.

ya son las seis y media, mija. . .

[it's already six thirty, my girl. . .]

kari.

i know it's six-thirty, but-so-
she works saturdays now??

i thought- when is she off?

EU nods.

EU shrugs.

eulalia.

'parece que sale todos los días.

[seems like she's out everyday]

kari.

what? sorry, i don't understand-

eulalia.

i think she don't have any days
that she doesn't go out working.

kari.

of course.

eulalia.

Si, pues, es okay- . . .*Saludos!*

[Yes, well, it's okay- . . .Hello!]

kari.

. . .Hi.

KARI waits.

eulalia.

¿Qué? *[What?]*

kari.

Don't you have some keys?

eulalia.

¿Sonkies?

kari.

No, the *keys*. Do. . you have *llaves*?

eulalia.

Oo las *llaves*! No, sorry. . . ya no.

[Oh more *keys*! No, not anymore.]

kari.

Dammit, cuz I lost mine. So, I guess

We are sort of stranded out here. . -

Estamos. . ¿*estran- estren- ñida*?

[we're stran- uh- constipated?]

eulalia.

No nena, no. Estamos *encerradas*.

[No baby, no. We are *locked out*.]

karina.

Encerrados. . -

eulalia.

Encerradas. Si.

kari.

encerradas. . .

eulalia.

Estreñida is something else: no poop.

kari.

what?

eulalia.

¿Y cuando te cortaste el pelo, mija?

[And when did you cut your hair?]

karina.

. . .my hair? Oh! Yeah, it's so short.

eulalia.

Te pregunté: ¿Cuándo?

[I asked: When?]

karina.

Oh! last weekend, my . . friend, she-
um- did the haircut for me, for free!

eulalia.

A, que bien "for free" . . . it looks. . .

[Ah, that's nice. . .]

EULALIA inspects them.

karina.

thank you!

eulalia.

Diferente. . .

[Different. . .]

kari.

oh-

eulalia.

. . .Y de plano más fácil!

[. . .And probably easier!]

karina.

yea, it is! Super easy to-
to like clean and stuff. . .

eulalia.

Aja, sí, me imagino que sí. . .

[Ah, yes, I imagine that. . it is. . .]

KARI sifts through the petals.

. . .

EULALIA sifts through them too.

. . .

Together they sound like rain. . .

eulalia. cont.

'Iba a limpiar este desperdicio de flor-
[I was gonna clear out these dead petals-]

kari

what?

eulalia.

I was supposed to clean this flowers but. . .

kari.

i think it's nice.

MAE appears over the balcony.

She picks a flower off the railing, sends it to KARI.

They all follow its ghostly descent. . .

KARI holds out their hand. . .

EULALIA steals it.

MAE evaporates.

A rush of warm rain hisses through the yard.

kari.

AAAk!

eulalia.

¡Púchica! ¡Viene la lluvia, apuráte, vos!!
[Shoot!!! The rain is here! Hurry up, you!]
¡Ponte las bolsas acá! ¡Que no se mojan!
[Put the bags here so they don't get wet!]
¡Ayayay! ¿¡Ves cómo llega el agua!?
[Ah! See how the water rises up here?!]

Thunder.

kari.

oh wow!

eulalia.

Es como se dicen- eh. . . Flashing flooded?

[It's like they call it, uh, Flashing flooded?]

karina.

Flash flooding-

eulalia.

¡Aja! Flashe flooding. . .

karina.

okay... wow that is *rain!*

eulalia.

Aja, it rains like that now.

kari.

it's so warm!

eulalia.

¡Sí, pero no lo toques!

[Yes, but don't touch it!]

kari.

what?

eulalia.

Don't touch!!

kari.

it's coming down so fast!

eulalia.

Si, pero tiene bacteria, así que. .

[Yes, but there's bacteria, so. .]

kari.

i think that's normal.

eulalia.

Si?

kari.

I mean as long as it's not acid rain!

eulalia.

¿Lluvia ácida?! . . .a la gran Púchica-
[Acid rain?! . . .son of a great Biatch-]

kari.

no, no, no, this isn't acidic. no acid.

eulalia.

Bueno. . -still, es better to be careful
 Ahora que 'stás pelona, you know?
[Now that you're bald, you know?]

karina.

what? *why?*

eulalia.

because you have this bald, now.
 'more easy for things to absorbed.
 the rain, the smoke, i donno, kari.

karina.

I'm not bald!

eulalia. (*snorts*)

Tampoco sos modelo de pelo.
[You're no hair model either.]

karina.

It's called a **buzz**

eulalia.

¿qué?
[what?]

karina.

Mi pelo es un "buzz," not bald.
[My hair is a "buzz"]

eulalia.

“Bzz-Bzz” como una mosca?

[“Bzz-Bzz” like a fly?]

kari.

sure.

eulalia.

Aaaa, sí! I can see that now.

Like the little hairs on the fly.

EU pets KARINA's hair, it sprinkles.

karina. (*tickled*)

hey! okay!

eulalia.

Fijate, cuando yo tenía veinte años-

[You know, when I was twenty years-]

¿Me entendés, o mejor hablo Inglés?

[‘Understand? Or better, I do English?]

karina.

Spanish is fine! but. . .maybe slower?

eulalia.

Es okay, I say, when I was your age

I cut my hair very short just like eh. .

la señora, that singer! remember?

karina.

oh, I don't. . .-

eulalia.

You do! You do! I played all her songs-

¡Sí, nena! ¡*Me importas tú y tú y tú!*

[Yes, hun! *I care for you and you and you!*]

¡*Y solamente tú y tú y tú!* ¿No sabes?

[*And solely you and you and you! No?*]

¡Una voz clásica! ¡Una *mujer* clásica!

[*A classic voice! A classic woman!*]

I love her so much! So I copy her hair

using my own scissor, like- *fft! fft! fft!*

karina.

No way! Do you have pictures?

eulalia.

No. . . mis papás did no like it.

karina.

oh.

A break of sunlight.

. . .Did you like having it short?

eulalia.

sí.

EULALIA turns her gaze at the sky

. . . How long before you leave again?

KARI looks up.

. . . Kari, ?

The sky flings backwards.

enero // january

8pm. January 1997. AQI 60.

Winter moonlight rolls off the bugambilias

It's a birthday. A dream.

KARI and EU at the fountain, singing:

eulalia + kari.

Sapo Verde To You (me)!

Sapo Verde To You (me)!

Sapo Verde! Sapo Verde!

Sapo Verde to You (me)!

Yaaaaay!!

EULALIA places the little tiara on them.

eulalia.

¡¡Así me gusta ver a mi niña, tan preciosa!!

[That's how I like to see my precious girl!]

¡Que bonita cosa! ¿Te gustas, princesa?

[What a pretty thing. 'You like it princess?]

karina.

It's so sparkly . . . Like a shooting staaaar!!

They fling the tiara into the air!

eulalia.

Ay mi Karinita, nieta tan pícara. ¡Cuidado!

[My little Karina, silly grandbaby. Careful!]

EULALIA fixes it back on KARI.

karina. (a sudden panic.)

Wait! Where's mom? A'ue, where's mom?!

eulalia.

. . . Mami no can be here right now, nena-

karina.

why???

eulalia

No se, nena, but maybe she come late?

karina.

from where?! i want mom now, my birdie-

eulalia.

Yo sé, pero mami bird is no here now y-
[I know, but mami bird is no here now and-]

karina.

Nooooo-

eulalia.

Shh. . . no llores, my tweetie pie, no llores!
[shhh, don't cry, my tweetie pie, don't cry!]
OK, OK nena. Les' play some little music-

karina.

NO!! I HATE music!

eulalia. gasps.

¿No querés música?
[You don't want music?]

karina. growls.

noo.

eulalia.

¿Estás segura, vos?
[Are you sure?]

karina.

si.

eulalia.

¡Ay qué lástima! 'Tenía cintas nuevas.
[What a shame, I have new tapes!]

EU shows off a box of tapes.

karina.

cintas nuevas . . ?
[new tapes. . .?]

eulalia.

¡Sí, new-new! I wanted to let you pick first-
Peero, you don't like music anymore so. . .

KARI rummages through the tapes.

¡Aja! Good girl! an' you know what I think?
if tu Mami hear us having a big loud party,
she will come home *even faster!* ¿Va'a?

kari.

¡Quiero el Bigote!

[I want the Moustache!]

eulalia.

¡Ay dios, Kari ¿Querés un bigote, vos?

[Oh god, Kari, you wanna moustache?!]

You can't have beard Karina, que feo-

KARI hands EULALIA a tape.

¡Ooo, you want to hear Javier Solís!

Si, Javier tiene un big bigote- *beard!*

kari.

No, it's called *moustache* abuelita.

eulalia.

Bueno, "mostache" como mostaza.

[Very well, moustache like mustard.]

Now we Press 'Play'. . . Ok, les see.

. . .

"Cuando Escuches Este Vals" plays.

Aaaaay que lindo . . . a mi me gusta-

[oooooh how sweet. . . i like this one-!]

kari.

No!

eulalia.

O, no Solís?

No problem. . .

KARI waves around another tape.

karina.

ella.

eulalia.

¡Aa, Eydie Gorme!

"Vereda Tropical" by Eydie Gorme plays.

eulalia.

interesante. . .

[interesting. . .]

karina.

nooooooooooo!!

eulalia.

¡Okey. . . pa' fuera, Eydie y los Panchos!

[OK! Eydie y los Panchos are out!]

Bueno, miija, let's try uno más-

karina.

NooOOoOOoOo. No!! I want mooom-!!

eulalia. *overlapping.*

OK! OK, fine! I am picking the next song.

karina.

I don't like it! I hate it! I hate it! I hate it-!!

eulalia.

Chht!! No sea malcriada, *Listen politely.*

[*Shhh!!* Don't be disrespectful. . .]

"Amémonos" by Lucha Villa plays.

KARI pouts.

EULALIA turns around.

KARI eyes her suspiciously.

EU spins, flourishing her machismo:

A huuuge moustache!

KARI delights in the surprise.

EULALIA performs a drag waltz.

eulalia.

You like this dancing, Karinita?
 Un' - dos - tres. Un' - dos - tres.
 Come, come. I teach you how-
 Adelante así con el pie derecho.

[Lead on with your right foot]

Right foot for man. Left for girl.

Un' - dos - tres. Un' - dos - tres.

Si, yo soy el caballero, sígame.

[I'm the gentleman, follow me.]

Así, así, bien finita mi princesita.

[There, very nice my little princess.]

Un' - dos - tres. Un' - dos - tres-?

Ay dios, what happen con la música?

Para, para, para. I go fix this nena.

[Stop, stop, stop.]

A quiet moment of learning.

MAE appears.

The music lurches and new bass line swells

EU and KARI fumble and misstep-

KARI sways alone until. .

MAE offers a KARI new dance.

KARI offers MAE their tiara, a little coronation.

They sway together, soft and slow.

mae. *teasing.*

you said you didn't dance.

kari.

not at all. . .

mae.

then we should do this more often, huh?

kari.

yea. . . like *why* did i even come back?

mae.

well, you can stay here . . .if you want.

karina.

i've been trying to remember why i left-

mae.

where?

kari.

there, i guess- i mean, 'cause after. .
Everything and. . . even just *landing*-
Nothing's really hit me yet, but i feel
it- all of it sitting in my chest, waiting
like- and part of that, i'm sure is just
literally air becoming tar in my lungs-
from the smoke- or ash particles? -it
reminds me of that one night we got
hotboxed and like hella cross-faded-

mae.

oh my god!

kari.

and *I knew*. . .

and I think you knew too.

but we weren't sober so we couldn't
say it so we just danced for like. . .-

Lucha Villa reclaims the airwaves.

mae.

forever. . .

EULALIA returns, her stride redemptive.

eulalia. (*singing*)

Amémonos mi bien, que en este mundo

[let us love each other, my love, for in this world]

MAE and KARI falter and misstep.

kari.

i still see and feel pieces of that night. . .

eulalia. *overlapping.*

"donde lagrimas tantas se derraman. . ."

[where many tears do spill-]

kari.

it's always my missteps that i see over and-

mae.

-over you asked, *how do i dance like you?*

eulalia.

“Las que vierten quizá los que se aman”

[Those who cry ought to be those who love each other]

karina.

from times i would slip over the cement-

eulalia.

“¡Tienen un no se que de bendición!”

[They have an ‘I don’t know what’ for a blessing]

mae.

i said, the world didn’t make words for me so-

kari.

times when I would fall into a red sky of petals-

mae.

i make new ones everyday just so i can breathe.

kari.

when i’ve woken up with colors written on me-

mae.

but you? i think you have way too many words

kari.

red- purple- blue- black- green- yellow- new-

mae.

and you asked if i could *teach you?* But i said-

eulalia.

¡Ay no, no, no, no! Karina, aléjate ya de esa-

[No, no, no, no! Karina, get away from that-]

EULALIA tears KARI away.

kari.

red- purple- blue- black- green- yellow- new-

mae.

It wouldn't make sense to translate my body. . .

eulalia.

¡Escucháme ya, niña! / Karina *¡No me ignores!*

[Listen to me now, girl! *Don't ignore me!*]

mae.

or my pain. . .

karina

red-purple. . .

eulalia.

Uno!

mae.

or my joy. . .

kari.

blue. . .

Kari looks up.

eulalia.

Dos!

mae.

or my love. . .

kari

where is it?

eulalia.

Tres!

The sun sinks.

a las tres // at three

3pm. June 2020. Yellow haze. AQI 150.

A rooster caws.

KARI lays unconscious over the fountain ledge.

From their phone we hear bites of a newscast:

“ . . . NPR News, I’m Laxmi Singh. As Southern California Wildfires rage once again in what is being called another ‘record-breaking statewide spread. . .”

Rooster caws again.

KARI stirs.

CA-CA-CA-CAAAA!!

KARI wakes into a coughing fit.

They snatch their inhaler.

Two deep breaths-

SOFIA busts in.

sofia.

What the hell are you doing??

kari.

jesus- Mom, where were you!?

sofia.

Where the hell’s your mask?

kari.

I didn’t even hear you pull up!

sofia.

Kari, there are smoke advisories
and your asthma-having-ass can't-

kari.

I've been *waiting* since literally 6am. . .
you're lucky you didn't find my corpse.

sofia.

well whose fault is that? because I
Literally, left the house at 6:11-A-M.
I'm *literally* on the clock right now-!!
6:11-A-M, *you were literally* not there.

kari.

yeah, 'cuz my rideshare was delayed-
you didn't even tell me you work today.

sofia.

I work *e v e r y d a y*, Kari.
you should try it some time.

karina.

ja. ja. ja. as if I had any prospects-

sofia.

aw, you'll find something, little bird-

karina.

Not that name, I have a PHD now.

sofia. *(for the whole world to hear)*
oOOoOo!!! Did you hear that folks?!
Dr. Karina's got a *Pretty Hard Dong!*

kari.

EW MOM, NO. I'M TRAUMATIZED.

sofia.

Hey, where's all of your drag junk?

karina.

what?

sofia.

Didn't you have a whole wardrobe?
I thought you did so I cleared out a-

karina.

no, no, no. it's fine, I sold most of it
i didn't wanna be lugging so much-
besides if things get back to normal
i was thinking-planning on getting a-

sofia.

You won't be able to afford your own
place, Kari, seriously! *This economy?*

kari.

No, yeah, no. That's *not* what I was
Saying, I meant, if I sold the old car-

sofia.

the one granpa left you? good luck.

kari.

but i mean even with few thousand,
I can get a newer car, maybe a van
or a hatchback with a twin mattress-

sofia.

You're joking right? Are you seriously-?

kari.

I KNOW what it sounds like, but there's
a lot of people buying campervans and
like tricking out their subarus to like *live-*

sofia.

You have got to be fucking kidding, Kari.

kari.

nooooooo, it's like you know #VanLife-

sofia.

Kari, that's absurd! / You see how that's fucking absurd right? You already have- That's not even a smart investment! K- I *told* you, I'd empty some of gran'ma's- I'm not having this fuckin' conversation right now- *I'm on the clock*. Jesus, you- acting all high an' mighty now, Mx. PHD. *Selfish*. You're so selfish you know that?

kari.

/ You're Not Even Giving Me a Chance to Explain; I have it worked out, If I save up- NO. *No*. I told you I am NOT living in there. I don't give a shit about investing, this isn't- Well, it isn't a *Conversation* if you don't let the other person Finish A Damn Sentence- Mom can you seriously for just one second- Fine! *Fiiiiinnnee!!!* Whatever.

No one is breathing

sofia.

You have a place to stay, Kari, and I *know* this place isn't an LGB Promise Land like-

kari.

LGBTQiA- this is exactly why I'd rather sleep-

sofia.

Oh *wow*, so you'd *rather* sleep in a car? Check your privilege, theydie. Go ahead! Walk over to Valley Boulevard. I dare you. Try knocking on a couple of car windows first and ask some of the folks living there "How are you enjoying your #VanLife?!"

kari.

You seriously think I'm that much of an idiot-

sofia.

No, 'cause I didn't *raise* you to be ignorant-

kari.

I literally can't- it hasn't even been a DAY-

sofia.

Okay, *Literally* you're letting smoke inside-

sofia.

So, instead of *literally* wasting my time-
Since I'm still *literally* clocked in at work
to *literally* put a roof over your bald head-

kari.

OK. SO *LITERALLY* GO. I'M NOT BALD.

sofia.

I'm *Going*. / 'Keys are in the lock. / Do Not Lose
Them Again / or you get to pay / to replace them

kari.

ok. / uh-huh. / yea mom- / I KNOW, just go, bye!

sofia.

Make sure to close the door so that the smoke d-

karina.

OKAY BYEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEEE-

sofia.

Don't think I forgot how you like leaving doors op-

karina.

That was literally one time!!!

KARI shuts the door.

sofia.

Thank You!

SOFIA leaves.

KARI checks their phone. A voice message:

*"Hi Karina, thank you so much for your interest in
our position. While we were thoroughly
impressed by your application. . .
unfortunately—"*

kari.

"Unfortunately, you're still a stupid
dumb-dumb- who's literally about
to call their ex." We. Are. *Winning*.
Mae! Hi. it'sa me, Kariiii. . .na, um-

I was just calling. . . ‘cause i was, uh-
wanting to let you know that i landed-
‘cause i remembered you had asked
me, i think, to call you when i got he-
except, i’m realizing that was *before*
we- and- so- but i’ve been thinking. .
about- you- a lot- and so i hope that
you are well and doing good and. . .
yea- OK. Take care, be well. ok-bye.

. . .

Shit.

EULALIA materializes.

eulalia.

Aaa, I see you found “Sonkies”!
I take them so you don’t lose it-

kari.

ok.

eulalia.

ok.

. . .

KARINA sinks.

ay ay ay, my tweetie pie! ¿qué es?

[what is it?]

kari.

i’m such an idiot-

eulalia.

Karina, you can never say this!

kari.

but what am i even doing here?

eulalia.

. . .¿no estás contenta con algo?

[you’re not happy with something?]

kari.

i don’t know. . .

eulalia.

ok.

EULALIA digs into the fountain petals.

kari.

. . .what are you doing?

eulalia.

you are sad about something. . .

What it is? ¿Algo de la escuela?

[. . .Something about school?]

kari.

I'm not in school anymore, a'ue.

eulalia

o, si, you graduated. . .¿Un novio?

You never talk about the boyfriends.

Peroo, aaa, yes! I think this is, no?

Always the problem is them. I know

I remember too when I was a girl. . .

All the things the mens say to you

de tu cuerpo, de tu mente, de todo

[and of your body, your mind, all of it.]

“your body is wrong”

“your thinking is wrong”

Making us feel like we have these. . .

Pests all over our skin? On my own face,

Kari, I began to seeing them everyday:

las cucarachas y sanguijuelas y worms. . .

[the cockroaches and leeches. . .]

Digging into my eyelids and foreheads-

Karina, I think the imaginación is very. . .

Potente. Se puede manifestar la realidad.

[Potent. It can manifest reality.]

Y la ansiedad- like food for the worms!

[And anxiety]

My worry for about how they look at me

You see? Now I have them everywhere

wrinkly a la cara, que fea y arrugada soy.

[...at my face, how ugly and wrinkled I am.]

Toys and treasures emerge as she digs.

EULALIA pauses.

kari.

tengo. . . ansiedad-

[i have. . . anxiety-]

eulalia.

¿de que hija? dime, por que.

[from what my girl? tell me why.]

kari.

no se. . .

[i don't know. . .]

eulalia.

¿Me puedes decir en inglés?

[Can you tell me in English?]

You have anxiety from. . .?

Never imagine your fears, me entendés.

Mejor, imagina tus sueños y fantasías. . .

[instead imagine your dreams and fantasies. . .]

¡Aja! I find it!!! Come here, look, nena!

EULALIA unearths a little tiara.

como enero // like january

Like before except. . .

KARI is a captive participant.

EULALIA singing:

eulalia.

Sapo Verde To You!

Sapo Verde To You!

Sapo Verde! Sapo Verde!

Sapo Verde to You!

Yaaaaay!!

EULALIA places the little tiara on them.

¡¡Así me gusta ver a mi niña, tan preciosa!!

[That's how I like to see my precious girl!!]

¡Qué bonita cosa! ¿Te gustas, princesa?
 [What a pretty thing. 'You like it princess?]

kari.

no gracias abuelita, i'm actually. . .-

They try handing it back to EU, it drops.

eulalia.

Ay mi Karinita, nieta tan pícara. ¡Cuidado!
 [My little Karina, silly grandbaby. Careful!]

EULALIA fixes it back on KARI.

karina.

no, a'ue- can you just gimme mom's keys?

eulalia.

. . . Mami no can be here right now, nena-

karina.

yea i know she's workin' that's why i wan-

eulalia

No se, nena, but maybe she come late?

karina.

probably but- no, you took the keys, i saw-

eulalia.

Shh. . . no llores, my tweetie pie, no llores!
 [shhh, don't cry, my tweetie pie, don't cry!]
 OK, OK nena. Les' play some little music-

karina.

i really don't want to, a'ue-

eulalia. gasps.

¿No querés música?
 [You don't want music?]

karina.

no, i'm really tired and-

eulalia.

¿Estás segura, vos?

[Are you sure?]

karina.

yes. i've been outside in the smoke all-

eulalia.

¡Ay qué lástima! 'Tenía cintas nuevas.

[What a shame, I have new tapes!]

EU shows off a box of tapes.

karina.

no abuelita, i can't, i. . -wait, are these. . .?

KARI regresses.

eulalia.

¡Sí, new-new! I wanted to let you pick first-

kari.

i remember these. . . el Bigote guy!

eulalia.

¡Ooo, you want to hear Javier Solís!

Si, Javier tiene un big bigote- *beard!*

KARI hands EULALIA a tape.

kari.

No, it's called *moustache* abuelita.

eulalia.

Bueno, "mostache" como mostaza-

[Very well, moustache like mustard.]

kari.

wait no! can we play that other song?

eulalia.

O, no Solís?

No problem. . .

KARI waves around another tape.

karina.

i think it's on this one-

eulalia.

¡Aa, Eydie Gorme!

karina.

No, no, no, it's not her. . .

eulalia.

¡Okey. . . pa' fuera, Eydie y los Panchos!

[OK! Eydie y los Panchos are out!]

karina. annoyed.

ugh! i can't find it. but- oh, here's the key!

eulalia. overlapping.

OK! OK, fine! I am picking the next song.

karina.

no-no-no- not now abuelita, i have to get-

KARI heads for the door.

eulalia.

Chht!! No sea malcriada, *Listen politely.*

[*Shhh!! Don't be disrespectful. . .*]

"Amémonos" by Lucha Villa plays.

KARI freezes.

kari.

that's the one! i- i remember this. . .

EU spins, flourishing her machismo:

A huuuge moustache!

KARI delights in the surprise.

EULALIA performs a drag waltz

From their suitcase, KARI flourishes:

A dazzling caballero jacket!

EU and K perform their waltzes together.

EU offers KARI her hand-

Then, MAE appears.

KARI is taken by her.

MAE offers her hand to dance.

KARI offers their tiara, coronating MAE.

They sway together, soft and slow.

////

mae.

what were we?

eulalia.

Right foot for man. Left for girl.

kari.

Our dances became steps that I kept *etched* over my palm, everyday after that night, so that every. day. i could read lines to another future, one that wasn't so steeped in uncertainty and-

mae.

wait, but, i don't understand. . .

eulalia.

You are the *girl*, Karina! Asi que-

mae.

. . .can i see them?

kari.

what?

mae.

the steps? our steps?

eulalia.

¡Ey! ¡*Karina!* Come back here-!

An urge to choke, KARI fights it.

kari.

um, sure, i guess- sorry, i didn't expect-

mae.

it's okay, it doesn't have to be perfect.

kari.

ok, well. . . we- or, i'll go like *this* and-

KARI tries to lead them into a spin-

eulalia.

¡No hija, no! ¡Karina! Aléjate de esa-
[No, my girl, no! Let go of *that*-]

KARI chokes.

kari.

shit! sorry, i'm scared of- no, i'm not rea-

mae.

no worries, we can try again. . . is it like-

MAE tries to lead them in-

karina.

no-no-no-no-i can't- can't- i don't know-

mae.

ok, so let's count it, one, two, three and-

kari.

one, two, three- uh- sorry- wait- is it-oh-

mae.

let's feel the ground and breathe, slow. . .

Together they sink into the flower petals

eulalia.

No me ignorés, Kari- *Karina*, stop this!!
[Don't ignore me]

EULALIA tries to tear KARI away.

karina.

Ow, *no!* Let go- A'ue, you're hurting me!

eulalia. *defensive, like a child.*

No es mi culpa, I can't control my shaking!

[It's not my fault,]

MAE guides EULALIA's hands.

mae.

just soften your hands a little, like this. . .

EULALIA pulls away.

eulalia.

Sígame, ya, Karina. No more playing!

[Follow me now, Karina.]

kari.

but why?!

mae.

the body remembers more than the mind.

eulalia.

I am teaching you the *right* way Karina.

karina.

You're gonna make me fall on the ground!

eulalia. *the first threat.*

Karina Celia Inés. Mírame directamente.

[Karina Celia Inés. Look straight at me.]

mae.

look at me and let go of everything else.

KARINA looks up.

eulalia. *holds up three fingers.*

Karina escucháme, ya! / Or I count to three.

[Kari, listen to me now!]

mae.

I'll count to three: / just fall and I'll catch you.

kari.

why is there so much smoke?

eulalia.

Uno!

mae.

Do you trust me?

karina.

i-

eulalia.

Dos!

mae.

just *breathe*.

karina. gasping.

i can't-

eulalia.

Tres!

The sun sinks.

tres, otra vez // three, again

June 2020. Again. 3pm. Again. AQI 150. Again.

Over the fountain, KARI wakes into a fit.

kari.
fuck-!

Inhaler, again, two deep breaths.

Another newscast:

“. . .As Southern California Wildfires once again rage across record-breaking lines-”

kari.
shut up, phone.
. . .
not again-

Rooster caws.

SOFIA enters.

CA-CA-CA-CAAAA!!

sofia.
SHUT! UP!

kari.
Shhh!!!

sofia.
you shushing me or the bird?!

kari.
both of you jesus frickin' christ-

sofia.
don't swear.

kari.
like you care-

sofia.
I called the cops on them-

kari. *hella judgey.*
Why would you do that?

sofia.

For having that noisey ass bird-

kari.

mOm-

sofia.

At-at-at! You don't get to do that.

You don't live here anymore, Kari.

You don't wake up to that thing-

CÚ-CURU-CÚCÚ! CÁ-CARA-CÁ-CÁ!

Every damn morning, at 3 in the-

kari.

I know! I heard it! It woke *me* up too.

sofia.

Every. Damn. Day. Karina. *I work!*

3am? *CÚ-CURU!* 3pm? *CÁ-CARA!*

I've freakin' had it with this goddam-

...

OH don't you dare- CÁ-CÁ-CÁ-CÁ!

CÁ-CARA-CÁ-!

kari.

Mom shush!! *this so is embarrassing.*

sofia.

You know what's embarrassing?

ROOSTERS WHO CAN'T TELL

DAY FROM NIGHT, *DUMBASS!*

Sofia starts stomping around the petals.

kari.

now *they're* gonna call the cops on you-

Oh my god, Mom! What are you doing?

crUnch. cruNCh. CRRONch.

sofia.

Will you get grandma's little shovel?

kari.

Uh. Sure. . . what are you gonna-?

sofia.

Oh and bring her gardening gloves.

kari.

Why?

sofia.

what d'you mean *why*? Just get it.

kari.

for what?

sofia.

it doesn't matter what.

kari.

. . .

why?

sofia.

because!

kari.

because *why?*

sofia.

Just Because.

can you just go!?

kari.

. . .not until you tell me why.

sofia.

Fine!

SOFIA exits, fuming.

SOFIA returns, m a d.

sofia.

Can you just get it, Kari?

I don't know where it is!!
And if you say 'why' one more time I am going to murder you-

kari.

how are you gonna bury me if you don't know where the shovels are?

sofia. *(raising chancla)*

KARINA INÉS,

kari.

ha-ha-ha-ok-jk-i'm-going!

KARI runs away.

SOFIA's chancla pursues.

sofia.

Who raised that kid..

Then, SOFIA steps into the fountain.

On an exhale she sinks to the bottom.

Armfuls of petals get strewn across the floor.

kari.

Woah.

Re-enter KARI.

sofia.

Yea.

kari.

..whatcha doin'?

sofia.

'You remember that garden gran'ma wanted?
Desert flowers and cactus inside the fountain.
'member when the super said we couldn't run
water in it anymore? Mom was like *¡Nopales!*

kari.

Nopales!!! yes!

sofia.

And look, there's a ton of dirt in here already.

kari.

Oh wow. . .

sofia.

Mhm.

They look over the basin.

kari.

i found them.

KARI sets Eulalia's gloves over the fountain.

SOFIA is fifteen again.

sofia.

thank you. . . -

A stoic grief seizes her.

SOFIA disappears into the house.

A long pause.

KARI tiptoes toward the door:

kari.

mom?

No answer.

uh. . .

i'll be right outside. . .

KARI nudges the door shut.

eulalia.

Está asustada, tu mamá no?

[Your mom, she's scared, huh?]

kari.

. . .

eulalia.

. . . ¿y vos?

[. . . and you?]

kari.

why would i be scared?

eulalia.

if i . . .go?

kari.

but you won't.

eulalia.

pero están pensando. . . preparando.

[but you're both thinking. . . preparing.]

EU picks up her little shovel, waving it around-

kari.

abuelita that's not funny!

eulalia.

if i do. . .

kari.

you won't.

eulalia.

. . .do you think you will miss me?

kari.

of *course*, i'll miss you-!

eulalia. *melodramatic.*

¡Ay dios! but it take so long for you to-
to come back from school. "Six años?"
I think, "ooo she don't miss me anym-"

kari.

grandma-!

eulalia.

¡Estoy engañando! i'm kiddings Kari!
Estoy pulling tu-tus brazos- no! *Legs-*
I am just pulling on your legs, mija. . .

kari.

what are we doing?

eulalia.

el jardin!

kari.

ok.

. . .

It's so cold under the dirt.

. . .

that's the concrete isn't it?

They settle into the dirt.

They dig. They sow.

A clang.

eulalia.

si.

kari.

oh no! What about the roots?

eulalia.

¿o no, que?

[oh no, what?]

kari.

won't it keep the plants from growing?

eulalia.

nooo, just look at esas bugambilias. . .

see where they come from? esa raja-

how you say it? en el cemento, hija.

kari.

um. . .

eulalia.

miral! the roots of the flores, pick up

the whole floor, ah? maybe later on

in something like ten, twenty years-

it breaks the whole building in half.

kari.

and then we can get a new house!

eulalia.

ojalá. . . recta, kari.

[let's hope. . .straight, kari]

kari.
what?

eulalia.
sentáte bien recta con tu espalda.
[sit well, with your back straight.]
remember i always teach you to
how to sit correct- como señorita.

kari.
oh gross, i'm getting dirt in my nails. . .

eulalia.
Hay mas guantes dentro de la casa-
[There are more gloves in the house-]
Don't bring dirt inside the house, mija!

KARI gets up.

KARI stops at the door.

kari.
o- I don't have the keys, can you give-

eulalia.
Better if I go inside, you stay here, Kari.
Saca las malas hierbas for me please-
[Pull out the weeds. . .]

EU tosses KARI her own gloves.

kari.
Take out the what?

eulalia.
Malas. Hierbas.
[Bad. Herbs.]

MAE appears.

kari.
huh?!

eulalia.
Pull the bad plants- like this: Useless.

kari.

ooo, the weeds-

eulalia

OK. I come back-

EULALIA leaves.

mae.

. . .want some weeeeeeeed bro??

KARI giggles.

kari.

shut up!

They start pulling weeds, while MAE teases. . .

mae.

i got that gush-kush, that stanky-dank-

kari.

oh my gooooodddd-

MAE pulls out thee BIGGEST blunt.

mae.

that lil devil's letty, aka mary-jaaaaay-

kari. cackling.

"devil's letty"?!"

mae.

-juana?-u wanna?-u wanna?-u wanna?

K keeps pulling weeds:

kari.

i'm working-

rrrrriiiiiipppp-

mae.

you're pulling your hairs out, is what.

RRRRIIIIIIIPPPP-

kari.

yea. . . can. you. tell-

mae.

that you're stressed as hell? YUP.

Hence: thee Blunt. or also, a bong-

RRRRIIIIIIIPPPPP-

kari.

. . . mmm. . . fine, gimme the bong.

mae.

pre-packed bb, whatcha working on?

KARI rrrrrriiiiiipps the bong.

kari.

. . .my thesis.

mae.

yikes.

Riiiiiiipp...

kari.

yoikes.

mae.

yócky.

kari.

suuuuuper yocky.

interludio // interlude

RRRRRIIIP!

MAE and KARI stare at each other. . .

The most quietest-intensest staring. . .

Then, it Hits.

MAE and KARI cackle and howl until they hurt

They're Literally: Rolling On Floor Laughing high.

kari.

ohmygodican'tbreeeeeeeethe!!!

mae.

suuuuuuuuper yooockyyyyy. . .

kari. *exhaling tears and joy.*

holy shit, i needed that, aaaah!!

mae.

See? How about some music?

"telepatia" by Kali Uchis hits the airwaves.

MAE stands, she begins with a sway. . .

kari.

what are you doing-?

mae.

shh. . .

A dance on love. . .

A dance on fear. . .

A dance on body. . .

KARI is falling, hard.

kari.

mae, i . . .

mae. teasing.

what?

kari. little gritos.

aaaay! ay! ay! aaaayyyy!

mae.

gawd, you're such a clown! stand up-

kari. totally fine with it.

o nooo. . . don't make me daaaance-

mae.

yes. you. are. gonna. dance. with. me.

KARI rises.

kari.

if you say soooo, but i'm really baaad. . .

They try following along.

mae.

ok, ok, ok, ok, hold up, let me lead then.

kari.

okaaaaay. . .

MAE teaches them.

mae.

Then, teases them.

Toe to toe they mirror each other.

MAE leans in to kiss them.

KARI leans back.

MAE leans in.

KARI leans back.

MAE further.

KARI drops.

A pause.

mae.

K. . .

K?

No, *They Breathe.*

mae.

When K Breathes-

They Breathe Everywhere.

kari.

what am i even doing here?

mae.

it's okay.

kari.

i shouldn't have come back.

mae.

if you have to go, K, then go.

kari.

why is this still happening?

KARI panics.

KARI chokes.

They cry-

mae.

we are okay.

i am okay.

are you?

kari.

it's this thing in my chest that

wrests me away from this. . .

mae.

i know.

kari.

i never wanted to leave but-

mae.

. . . K?

MAE rises.

kari.

where am i supposed to be?

mae.

call me when you get there?

el incendio // the fire

11:57pm. January 1997. AQI 310.

A memory. A silent terror.

The court is pitch black with the exception. . .

Of a soft red glow in one of the windows. . .

An ember suspended in darkness.

Midnight bells chime quietly, peacefully.

Then a rooster starts shrieking.

It shrieks louder,

and louder,

EULALIA bursts out the door.

Smoke billows throughout.

eulalia.

¡Ayuda! ¡Ayuda! ¡Alguien!

[Help! Help! Anyone!]

no no no no.. ¿Qué hice?

[no no no no.. What did I do-?]

Karinita? Ay Kari despiertate!

[Karinita? Oh Kari wake up!]

Respira, hija, por favor-

[Breathe my girl, please-]

. . .

Seño, please help mi niña-

[Sir, please help my girl-]

Está bien Kari, you can go.

My name es, Eulalia Inés,

Eulalia Inés, y Karina Sa-

Eulalia. E-U-L- en Inglés?

N-no, I don't know, señor.

Light glares over EU's face. It's the police.

I am grandma to Karina.
 No, she- I take care her-
 Her mami is no here yet-
 I don' know how to say-
 Español? Hay alguien que?
 [Spanish? Does someone?]
 You no have- nobody speak?
 I don' know why happen!
 I don' know.
 I don' know!
 We was, just. . .
 We was sleeping, but I waked up
 fast- maybe 11? from this smells,
 . . .Humo- How to say? No se-
 [. . .Smoke- How to say? I don't kn-]
 Humo, smell, we was just sleep
 for maybe 20-30 mines- La parilla!!
 Santo Dios, the parilla, I leave on-
 la parrilla es- because es so cold!
 usamos la parrilla para- No, No. .
 [we just use the grill- the grill?]
 es for cooking, es muy little, like-
 [it's for cooking, it's really small.]
 We no have gas righ' now so I
 plug it en to heated the- casa. .
 No. . .- ¡Aa! Tu hablas Español!
 Gracias, muchisimas gracias-
 Si, usamos un parilla chiquita
 [Yes, we used a mini grill to heat]
 para calentar- sí un grill, little grill-
 ¡Ay, no, dios mío! ¡No señora!
 [Oh, no, my god! No ma'am!]
 Toda la casa? No? Solo donde la cama-
 [The whole house? No? Only where the bed-]
 No puede ser. Yo no sabía que la parrilla-
 [That can't be. I didn't know that the grill-]
 OK, gracias, gracias, muy amable señora.
 [Ok, thank you, thank you, so kind of you.]

...

The bugambilias glow pink over the yard.

KARI returns, wrapped in a safety blanket.

eulalia.

Kari? Karina, perdoname mija-
[Kari? Karina, forgive me child-]

karina.

are we dead?

eulalia.

no, mija-

karina.

am i dying?

eulalia.

no. .

karina.

is mom dead?

eulalia.

no, mija, tu mama-

karina.

where is she?

eulalia.

no se, mija.

karina.

did she leave again?

eulalia.

si, mija.

karina.

why?

eulalia

. . .

kari.

she doesn't want me-

eulalia.

no, no, no, no, mija!

karina.

she's coming back?

eulalia.

pronto, mija.

[soon, honey.]

karina.

tomorrow?

. . .

why did the police come?

eulalia.

tuvimos un incendio. .

[we had a fire. .]

karina.

incendio?

eulalia.

un fuego.

karina.

fire.

eulalia.

a la casa, si.

karina.

. . was it the mini grill?

eulalia.

si. .

karina.

can we go back inside yet?

eulalia. *checking the door.*

un momentito más . . .

[just a moment. . .]

hasta que el humo se ventile.

[once the smoke clears.]

Karina, nena, i am so sorry.

karina.

it's okay.

eulalia.

y perdoname Kari.

[and forgive me Kari.]

karina.

ok.

eulalia.

'estuve harta con tu mama

[i was angry with your mom]

and that's why she leave.

karina.

. . .

KARI closes their eyes.

eulalia.

¿tenés sueño, mija?

[are you sleepy?]

karina.

mhm.

eulalia.

'venga.

[come.]

te quiero, mija.

[i love you, my girl.]

KARI lays their head on EULALIA's lap.

EU kisses KARI.

kari.

i love you too . .

They lay across the fountain.

eulalia.

nena, recuerdas tu bautismo?

[child, do you remember your baptism?]

kari.

my baptism?

eulalia.

i just remembering it now. . .

kari.

i don't know, i was a baby

MAE enters with oil and cross.

eulalia.

me valió mucho

[it meant a lot for me]

kari.

but i always wondered

eulalia.

yo creí

[i thought]

kari.

if it stuck to me

EULALIA anoints KARI.

eulalia.

que algo malo

[something bad]

kari.

or not

eulalia.

algo incorrecto se tocó
dress.

[something incorrect touched you]

EULALIA wipes the remaining oil on MAE's dress.

kari.

it's supposed to

eulalia.

cuando el agua le pasó
[when the water passed you]

EULALIA pour petals over herself and KARI.

kari.

because the water

eulalia.

algo en el agua
[something in the water]

kari.

something inside it

eulalia.

del bautismo
[of baptism]

kari.

changes you

eulalia.

no te cambiaba
[never changed you]

kari.

it does, doesn't it?

eulalia.

porque yo nunca me cambié
[because i never changed]

kari.

and i want that again

eulalia.

if something changed

kari.

for that thing inside me

eulalia.

it wasn't me

kari.

to feel changed. . .

eulalia.

vamos a ver. . .

[let's see. . .]

kari.

que?

eulalia.

let's see the air

if is good now, o. . .-

mejor te quedas aquí.

[better if you stay here.]

kari.

mae, hey, it's me again. i'm gonna

ramble right now, i hope that's ok.

since i landed and after everything

it's all just sitting here, this *thing* in

my chest and part of that, i'm sure

is just the air- ash particles or, yea

-the smoke is soo bad down here!

like *why* did i even come back. . .it

reminds me of that one night we got

hotboxed and like hella cross-faded

and um. . .

this fucking rooster. . .

i don't, uh, remember where i was

going with that- about that night. . .

i guess, i just wish i hadn't choked-

'cause, yea. . .

EULALIA raises KARI from her lap.

EU heads toward the door.

EU leaves.

K alone.

The rooster caws.

The rooster cackles.

i don't know how bad the smoke-
is up there but- anyway that's uh-
besides the point, what i wanted
to say, is I realized you didn't ask
me to call when i landed did you?
so, if it's not too late, then, this is
me, calling you, because. . .
i'm here.

K lays across the fountain.

Turning on the newscast:

“. . .So far this year, more than 5,700 wildfires in the state have burned at least 204,000 acres. Compare that to all of 2019, when nearly 260,000 acres of land were destroyed and three people were killed, according to Cal Fire. In 2018 — the state's worst year on record — 1.9 million acres burned, and 100 people died.

California has put more than \$1 billion in spending to prevent wildfires on hold as a result of the coronavirus crisis.

Elsewhere in the country-”

They toss the phone into the fountain.

The air hums, petals sizzle across the ground.

It's a deadly, thick heat.

EULALIA enters with gloves, a spray bottle and a handheld fan.

eulalia.

¿Qué hora es?

[What time is it?]

kari. half-asleep.

uh'uhno. . .

[i don't know.]

eulalia.

Ay, you dying? Levantate-

EULALIA sprays KARI

kari.

abue!

eulalia

I ask you: What time it is??

kari.

I don't know-!

tres, ¿tal vez? // three, maybe?

August 2020. 3pm, maybe? AQL. . . b a d.

kari.

what are you doing?

eulalia.

el jardín.

kari.

it's too hot.

eulalia.

si los campesinos pueden, so can we.

[if the farmers can]

kari.

jesus. . .

KARI and EULALIA dig quietly.

SOFIA enters.

It's quiet. . . tooooo quiet.

sofia. testing.
CÚ-CURU-CÚCÚ!

eulalia. / kari.
Ay Dios Santos, hija-! / Holy shit- mom!

sofia.
CÁ-CARA-CÁ-CÁ!!!

eulalia.
Sofia, que'estas haciendo!?
[Sofia, what're you doing!?!]

sofia. jubilant.
Creo que se murió ese pollo bruto!!
[I think that stupid bird died!!!]

eulalia.
Va pues. [Well then.]

kari.
what??

sofia. dancing.
The chicken's dead! The chicken's dead!!

eulalia.
Congratulations.

sofia.
Peace at laaa-!!
GODDAMMIT, I KNEW IT-!!!
Stupid. . .
Ass. . .
Bruto, *malvado*. . .
[Evil, brute. . .]

CÚ-CURU-CÚCÚUUU!!!

SOFIA excites her asthma-

KARI hands SOFIA their inhaler.

kari.
jesus mom, you're gonna kill yourself.

Between two deep breaths:

sofia.

i'm. . . fine. . .

Fuckin-dry-Pollo-Loco-ass-chicken-

eulalia.

pero por qué no llamaste a la policía?

[but why don't you call the police?]

sofia.

I called the police! y como me *regaño* Kari. . .

[and the way Kari *scolded* me. . .]

kari.

i'm right here.

eulalia.

Mm! la persona nueva que se compró el. . .

[the new person who bought the. . .]

como se llama el. . . el propiedad, "Tom"

[what do you call it. . . the property]

he say, mira se me hablo asi: "Tom" say

[. . . look she talked to me like this:]

"ma'am, you live here?" -gringo viejo-

He say "ma'am, i am the new propredie

owner, you need to make whoever own

this chicken, 'need to get call by police."

I say, "Sorry sir, but I don't know many

of this people around de neighborhood

many of them new people, not friendly

to us. I think maybe is no my business"

kari.

And you shouldn't be calling the police!

They literally abuse what are suppose

to be *emergency* provisions, to uphold

white supremacy over marginalized p-

sofia.

What about our sanity?? We live here too!

We all live in this shithole country together-

kari.
Mom!

sofia

I mean it, Kari! I am exhausted. I'm *over* it. I haven't slept for *weeks*. It's inhumane! But I'm still expected to walk into my classroom everyday and act like I don't work two jobs on top of trying to teach these poor little kids- given- of course- we don't get another kid walking onto campus with a gun 'cause of poverty-slash-pandemic-slash-everyone's on-their-last-fucking-wits-end-trauma and-

kari.

Well that should be even *more* reason to-!

sofia.

I'm way past this "let's all love each other" mentality "oh community this, abolish that-" But no, you won't forgive me for trying to abolish this hood-ass-chicken instead of-

kari.

"hood-ass-chicken" Do you hear yourself? Like, you are *literally* part of the problem-

sofia.

Oh, so *I'm* part of the problem? But you're not? Oh! Cause you got a PHD now, right? You know what the problem is? I'll tell you: the *Problem* is, you haven't bothered to look for work since the week you moved back in- So the *Problem* is, you are still Unemployed and *I'm* paying for *two* rents and now *three* mouths to feed By. My. Self. So the Problem-

kari.

Are you fucking kidding me right now?
You're-
The Problem is Me! It's always me! I *geet* it!
Why do you think-? I *HAVE BEEN* LOOKING-
No. Body. Wants. to. Hire. Me. Nobody wants-
'cause I "followed my fucking Dreams" which
New Flash are Fucking Useless in this econo-

you know what, fuck this-

sofia.

You better leave the keys!

Hey-!

Christ, where did they go?

shit. . .

eulalia.

this why she never came to visited us. . .

sofia. hostile.

Que, mami?

[What, mom?]

eulalia.

nada. . . ¿Te ayudo?

[nothing. . . can I help?]

sofia.

no. gracias.

EU looks up.

eulalia.

. . .they going to tear down this.

sofia.

que, mamá?

eulalia.

las bugambilias.

EU tiptoes into the fountain.

sofia.

qué lástima.

[how sad.]

eulalia.

si, qué vergüenza. . .

[yes what a shame. . .]

Kari loves the pinky.

sofia. incredulous.

No she doesn't.

eulalia.

Yes, she does, she tell me.

sofia.

Karina *hates* the color pink.

Siempre se odiaba-

[She's always hated it-]

eulalia. *coyish.*

No, I don't think so. . .

sofia.

¿Cuándo se ha dicho eso?

[when has she said that?]

eulalia.

hay, algún tiempo pasado.

[oh, a long while back-]

sofia.

. . .

eulalia.

What is your problem?

sofia.

¡Tan abusiva eres tú! Con mi, con Kari-

[You're so abusive! With me, with Kari-]

eulalia.

I. WAS. NEVER. ABUSIVE. TO. HER.

sofia.

you'd leave bruises all over her and lie-

eulalia.

Y la manera en que le gritaste ahorita?

[And the way you just yelled at her?]

sofia.

Era mi derecho a cuidarle como yo quería-
 [It was my right to raise her how I wanted-]

eulalia.

¿Cuándo? ¿Cuando no estabas en casa?
 [When? Tell me. When you weren't home?]

sofia.

you nearly killed her, setting fire to the home!

eulalia.

¡Fue un accidente! Uno! You never forgive.
 [It was one accident! One!]
 How many time she cry to me because you?
 "Mami no home! Where mami? I want mama!"
 Karina was like my baby- where you was?
 "I working today, I work tomorrow, yesterday"
 This why I tell you to take un vacation-!

SOFIA throws a handful of dirt at EU.

sofia.

¡Callate ya, mama!
 [Shut up, mom!]
 Y deja de hablar Inglés.
 [Stop speaking English.]
 Que bruta suenes.
 [You sound like a brute.]

SOFIA finds the keys, she stands.

eulalia.

¿A dónde vas, Sofia?
 [Where are you going?]

SOFIA leaves.

eulalia.

Now I have to cleaned up all this mess.
 I don't see my gloves. Where they are?
 Sofía! ¿por dónde están mis guantes?
 [Sofia, where are my gloves?]

EU elects to dig with her bare hands.

. . .

siempre tengo mis manos en pudre. . .
 [i always have my hands in rot. . .]
 una putrefacción que va hasta la raíz.
 [a rot that seeps far into the root.]

MAE materializes over the balcony.

She drops one petal. . .

Then two petals. . .

Then. . . the bugambilias weep.

A red sky.

EULALIA prays.

for family

for health

for home

and for rain

over and over she prays

until the sun falls down

and the last church bell quiets

and the court is pitch black

and all we see is the hot scarlet glow

from the bugambilias and sky above.

la oración final // the final prayer*A cathedral.**Sometime between a dream and a future.**Two stained glass windows loom behind.**The fountain water runs.**EULALIA and KARI kneel.**KARI coughs.***eulalia.***Shht!***karina.***sorry. .**A phone goes off.***eulalia.***Karina.***karina.***sorry, sorry!**KARI fidgets, EULALIA sends an evil eye.**. . .**Finally, quiet-**a'bue?***eulalia.***¿Qué?***kari.***. .do you have a favorite prayer?***eulalia.***. . un oración favorita? eh. . .**[. . a favorite prayer? uh. . .]**¿Porque?**[why?]***karina.**

i've been feeling guilty.

eulalia.

. . .yo también.

karina.

does it help?

praying?

eulalia.

a veces sí.

[sometimes.]

not always.

karina.

i see.

. . .

eulalia.

do you love her?

karina.

what-?!

eulalia.

. . .your friend

on the phone.

kari.

my friend?

eulalia.

and sleeping, too

you talk, i hear it-

kari.

i do?

eulalia.

mae?

kari.

yes.

KARI reaches for their inhaler.

eulalia.

why?

karina.

she protects me.

she holds my soul.

y en los momentos

[and in the moments]

cuando tengo miedo, ella-

[i feel most afraid, she-]

eulalia.

se levanta tu alma al cielo. . .

[raises your soul to the sky. . .]

karina.

she's like . . .my cathedral.

eulalia.

catedral?

An attack, their inhaler is empty.

kari.

a'ue. . .

KARI chokes.

eulalia.

ay dios-

na, nena, relájate, recta, y respira. . . *EULALIA holds KARI up.*

[hun, hun, relax, sit straight, breathe. . .]

uno. . . dos. . . tres. . . exhale lentamente

[one. . .two. . .three . . . exhale slowly]

uno. . .dos. . . tres. . . otra vez. . .

[one. . . two. . .three. . .again. . .]

Esto empieza con el trauma, yo creo.

[this, i believe, begins with trauma.]

se corroe la mente. . .

[it corrodes the mind. . .]

se hace pudre a los sentidos-

[it rots away at your sense-]

O como a ti, come todo su aliento.

[Or like you, it eats all of your breath.]

otra vez. . . uno. . . dos. . . tres. . .

[again. . . one. . . two. . . three. . .]

KARI stabilizes.

kari.

abuelita, i have always been so afraid-

eulalia.

shh. . .mi'amor, no. no right now. pray.

karina.

. . .then, when?

eulalia.

pray.

karina.

okay.

eulalia.

y póngase recta.

[and sit up straight.]

kari.

what?

eulalia.

recta, kari.

[straight, kari.]

kari.

okay.

eulalia.

repeat with me:

gracias Dios por mis hijas y nietas. . .

[thank you God for all my children]

kari.

Gracias Dios por mis...

eulalia.

you can say mama o familia.

kari.

por mi mama, abuelita. . .
y mi familia.

MAE appears.

eulalia.

por sus preciosas vidas hoy te pido.
[for their precious lives today i ask]
que los protejas de todas maldiciones
[that you may protect them from all evils]
que seas un escudo alrededor de ellos,
[that your spirits may shield them all around]
que sean librados de peligros,
[that they may be free from harm]
de personas con malas intenciones,
[from those people with malintent]
malas palabras y mala reputación.
[from cursings and bad reputation.]
Con todo mi corazón te alabo
[with all of my heart, I praise you]
y te bendigo porque eres mi Dios
[and bless you, for you are my Lord
y mi salvador. Amen.
and my savior. Amen]

KARI may repeat each line quietly.

kari.

what did that mean?

eulalia.

do you feel better?

kari.

i think so.

eulalia.

then that's all it has to mean.

Church bells ring. 3pm.

kari.

mom should be home now. . .

eulalia.

you go ahead, i come soon. . .

necesito un minutito más aquí.

[i need one more little minute here.]

don't forget your keys, Kari. . .

KARI goes inside.

EU says a final prayer, a cross, and a kiss.

orto interludio // another interlude**mae.***or something in between. . .**MAE appears.**A past dream or memory. . .**A dance on love. . .**A dance on fear. . .**A dance on body. . .**EULALIA appears.**They try following along.**MAE teaches them.***mae.***Then, teases them.**Toe to toe they mirror each other.**MAE leans in to embrace them.**EULALIA leans back.**MAE leans in.**EULALIA leans back.**MAE further.**EULALIA falls.**A pause.**MAE offers a hand up-**EU accepts.*

nuestras catedrales // our cathedrals

Together they rise.

Moving day. 6:00 am. Yellow sky. AQI 139.

KARI enters. Masked, sweaty and over encumbered with luggage.

The PALM VILLA inhales desperation.

Santa Ana winds exhale grief.

Bugambilia petals swirl and rattle through the courtyard.

They dig out a lanyard with keys.

Sofia enters, masked, sweaty, over encumbered-

sofia.

you got everything?

kari.

yea.

tank.

sofia.

K, will you grab the rest of her bags?

kari.

sure.

eulalia.

creo que ya se acabo.

[i think it finished.]

sofia.

Ay dios- Kari, can you get a tank too?

Mami dónde está -este. . . ¿el manual?

[Mom, where is that- the. . . manual?]

EULALIA enters, encumbered by an oxygen

KARI leaves.

SOFIA fiddles her oxygen tank.

EU hands a little pamphlet taped on the tank.

eulalia.

. . .Este?

[. . .This?]

sofia.

Perfecto. Si. . . Bueno mami. Listen carefully:

For your safety. . . tank on/valve off . . . Uh. . .

Esperáme. . . Ok, here: it says, Keep your tank cylinders away from any and all heat sources. . .

Oh that's an important one. ¿Entiende, mami-?

[You understand-?]

eulalia.

si, si, *I Speak English.*

sofia.

All heat sources, including *radiadores*, heating-donde viene el aire caliente, estufas, matches,

[where the hot air comes out, stoves, matches]

lighters- cualquier cosa que tenga fuego, O.K.?

[lighter- whatever thing has a flame]

KARI returns with more bags.

sofia.

Kari can you bring the new tank out here?

eulalia. overlapping.

No voy a explotar la casa nueva, Sofia.

[I'm not going to blow up the house, Sofia.]

KARI leaves.

sofia.

mhm. . . While using oxygen, do NOT use:

-- Aerosols, such as hair sprays or pintura

-- Oil-based face creams or lotions on your nose or face

-- Petroleum-based products, como la Vaselina-

Are you listening? You use a lot of this, so-

eulalia.

Ay! Sofia- apurate or I'm going to run out on

aire in this one! Just lemm- give me this papel-

sofia. swatting.

Chht! Mama, por favor-

eulalia.

I Can *Read*-

sofia.

Mamá, stop-

eulalia.

¡NO ME TRATÉS COMO UNA NIÑA!

[DON'T TREAT ME LIKE A CHILD!]

sofia.

You figure it out then!
storms off.

SOFIA throws the manual at EU and

EULALIA smooths out the pages.

eulalia. shyly.

For. . . you. . . your. . . s-s-a-feh-Safety.

She flips some pages, fumbles with the valves.

She gives up, hands shaky.

EULALIA cries quietly.

. . .

KARI returns, new tank in hand.

kari.

Abue', are you okay?

eulalia. startled.

¡Kari! Ya regresaste con el oxígeno-!

[Kari! You're back with the oxygen-!]

EULALIA's breath labors.

kari.

Sí. . .Where'd mom go-?

eulalia. shaking.

mi cosa, se está acabando-

[my thing, is running out-]

kari.

Shit, lemme get mom. . .-

eulalia.

no-no-no-no-Kari por favor, don't. .
she got mad at me, so i don't want-

kari.

but-

eulalia.

¿Kari. . .? ¿Por favor me ayudes?
[Kari. . . please can you help me?]

kari. quietly.

ok. . .

eulalia.

Aquí está el papel que dice como . . .
[Here is the paper that tells you how. .]

kari.

okay. . . uh. . . that seems not. . .oh! here.
Changing the cylinder. . . Remove the. . .
regulator by loosening the. . . T-handle. . .

eulalia.

¿el que?
[the what?]

kari.

T-handle?

eulalia.

T-handle. . . maybe this one. . .?

kari.

yea, okay, Slide the pegs out. . . And
looks like these come off. . . See that?

eulalia. leans in closer

aja, sí. . .

A quiet moment of learning.

kari.

Make sure there is a washer, uh, here. . . *MAE appears.*

eulalia.

kari?

kari.

Remove the regulator. . . Remove tab
from the valve on . . . New Cylinder-?

eulalia.

karina?

kari.

what?

eulalia.

aquí 'sta. . .

[*here. . .*]

EULALIA hands K the new cylinder.

. . .

i'm sorry, kari.

kari.

. . . for what?

eulalia.

Karina, you are, my. . . Cathedral
I have seven. . . siete hijas, but
you and tu mama, after gran'pa,
was the only ones who keep me-

kari.

abue. . .

eulalia.

who love me, even when i don't
know, *i don't know, how, why I-*

SOFIA returns, a quiet witness.

kari.

shh-shh. . . abuelita, you need air.
can you hold this up for me? asi. .

. . .

perfecto. . . now we just- Attach it.
hm that's not right. . -oh! okay, we
gotta make sure the pegs line up. . .
. . .slide it so they go into the holes-
now the T-handle, we just tighten. . .

Together they replace the oxygen tank.

eulalia.

casi nunca merecemos nuestras catedrales. . .

[we rarely deserve our cathedrals. . .]

kari.

¿qué?

[what?]

eulalia. *smiling.*

She look very nice for you, Karina. . .

A, Sofia! ¡Ya componemos el tanque!

[Oh, Sofia! We put together the tank!]

sofia.

me di cuenta. . .

[i saw. . .]

kari.

. . . listo?

[. . . ready?]

eulalia.

ready. i turn this?

kari.

first, we'll twist- uno, dos, tres. . . así.

eulalia.

Así! Now, we turn this open. . . ¿sí?

kari/eulalia.

uno. . . dos. . . tres. . . y . . .

Together they breathe.

una nueva respiración // a new breath

A foreshadowed future. Or imminent memory.

Spring, summer, fall. Blue sky. AQI 45.

LA PALMA NUEVA. South California.

A villa in renovation. A gentrifying town.

No church bells. No roosters. No bugambilias.

Only the old fountain remains.

Water cascades needlessly from it.

SOFIA, EULALIA, KARI and MAE, witness. . .

Then depart.

End of play.