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* Editor's picks

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All submissions are original unedited works. When provided by the author, a short biography is displayed at the end.

Click here to contact us
Ancestors

My grandmother woke every day,
Put on a clean apron, made a fire,
Cracked an egg,
Put the shells in the pot to keep coffee grounds
From rising to the top, put coffee to boil.
Rolled tortillas, served frijoles and chile,
Kissed her children goodbye,
Went out on the porch, sat in her rocker,
Reached in her apron pocket,
Pulled out tobacco and paper,
Rolled her smokes.

She sat and she rocked,
She smoked and she rocked,
She laughed and she rocked,
She rocked and she cried.

My grandfather full-blooded Navajo,
Found by a Ute who traded him to a
Mexican in Alamosa for food and a horse.
He lived off the land.
Sheepherder, miner, migrant worker.
He dug, tilled, tended.
He was strong, gentle, tan and free.
A hard-worker who loved the land.
Grandfather raised lots of children,
He spread seeds on the field,
He grew children.
He planted truths.
He told stories.

My parents were seeds my grandparents planted,
Nurtured, rocked, held, laughed, cried with
Told stories and songs to every night.
My parents learned to fight, learned to love, learned to pray.
They learned to be hungry, cold, scared.

When mom stole bologna and beans.
The store owner looked the other way,
He smiled and said, ‘hello’ and bagged her groceries,
He loved her for feeding her children instead of herself.
He cried when she died.
My father gave the priest pennies for his tithe,
The priest threw them at my father and said,
‘Stupid Mexican! I don’t have time to count your damn pennies!’
My father hung his head in shame.
Then he held his head high and walked out of the church.

He broke his heart,
He broke his heart,
He broke his heart.

In the Catholic hospital my father refused last rites,
Asked for his children instead.
Surrounded by ten children, ten stalks of golden maiz,
Surrounded by ancestors, los muertos, los espíritus.

He smiled and he died,
He smiled and he died,
He smiled and he died.

My parents beat us for lying, for cheating, for stealing.
For drinking, for cussing, for fighting.
They ate cereal with water and saved the milk for us.
Dad drove an old truck with a lawnmower and rusty rake in the back.
He cut lawns, trimmed trees, raked leaves.
Mom ironed, washed, scrubbed other people’s clothes for us.
My parents ate beans and beans and more beans, so we could buy lunch at school.
They worked years and years and broke their backs in fields for us.

They lived.
They live in me still.

Biography

Juliana Aragón Fatula is a senior at CSU-Pueblo studying creative writing, and majoring in English and Secondary Education. Her favorite writers are Lorna Dee Cervantes, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, and David Keplinger. She has been performing her cuentos and poetry for several years in Denver at El Centro Su Teatro and the Mercury Café. She aspires to write poetry that makes the women weep, the men laugh, and everyone take notice. Her stories are from dreams, heartaches, and triumphant victories over life’s little setbacks. In her free time she enjoys sitting in the back porch with Vince, Danny, Chica, Osa, Cheech and Chong, and Punk, “The bougainvilleas are blooming in the greenhouse and tempting the Huitzilopochtli into blind fascination with the color fuschia.”
De un mar al otro

De un mar al otro
Las culturas se diferencian mucho
De todos los sitios yo he sido
Me gusta la cultura aquí major
Debido a la influencia española.

Disfruto de aquellos medios de familia mucha
Por ejemplo, tengo un buena amiga
Que está siempre con su familia, a ellos no les molesta
Su familia me da la bienvenida a mí como
Unos de sus propios niños

Biography:

My name is Jennifer Barrett. I am a student at CSU-P studying Spanish so I can teach high school students foreign languages. I am originally from Canada and speak French.
Don Ignacio

(Intro’)
With never a fancy title by society, but known and still remembered, by your humble and hard working ways, you were generous, showing mercy to a mother and her child. —An acquaintance told me a story of a man who often took groceries and saw that they always ate. As she recounted the memory, I soon learned, it was my Grandpa!

Leaving all behind, with great faith and a bold plan,
Forward, North, you came, not knowing what lay in wait.
So through the Rio Grange, your future, that
Mighty River gate.
Into desolate miles of unknown
Land, full of promise, and even hate
Some would eagerly employ and offer work, knowing your
“Kind” would labor painstakingly, without a rest.
What could it be like? (I wonder.) In this strange
Land with a different tongue?
What desire to “better” for your family and self
To endure sweat, abuse and shame.
To bequeath such opportunity to us
Who now bear your name!
At night when, alas, your labor did cease,
Did you have to banish fear and doubt, and wonder
If your dream was worth the effort to persist?
What great love, even for us, yet, unknown,
To keep you troding forth!
Your selection, Colorado, in a city near the mountains.
How lovely, Dearest Grandpa!
The place we’d all call home.
So far from where you’d grown up and known.
What you must have encountered
As an immigrant all-alone.
Today, a citizen, of this New Land
I am more than blessed.
But the one thing I can not do, Dear Don Ignacio,
Is thank or repay you
For giving us all your best.

R. J. Soto-Sosa

2003
Biography:

Written by Romana (Soto) Sosa
retired nurse
born in Pueblo, Colorado
Don Ignacio Soto was my paternal grandfather
who was an immigrant from Leon, Guanajuato, Mexico
Dora

Without a mother, before age two,
(Her father worked in coal mines,)
So she was with whom ever could care for her.
As I hold her hands, in her hospital bed, I tell my
Infant grandson of the work they did.
Besides caring for her own five, she adopted one
To raise, and babysat for many others.
Many meals were made, diapers changed,
Bottles fed and washed,
She made jam, great bread and biscuits.
Cousin Joe Martin said no one made gravy
Like hers!
She hung the wash on a line in the yard
Until she was able to have a dryer indoors.

Not only a homemaker, Mom worked in

A cleaners as a silk finisher. (Perspiring even in the Winter!)

(She’d inspect our clothes after we learned

To mend and iron. “No excuse to have

Wrinkles or rips, even if our clothes

Weren’t new!”)

In the 40’s she met Dad, they both worked in

An ammunition depot. (He’d “steal”

Her lunch, so she’d have to speak with him!)

Our youngest sis was called

“Little Onion” by Compadre Albert Aguero.

Because Mom worked the fields

With the rest of us even tho’ she was
Expecting. (Everyone thought she’d Deliver there!)

These hands, at eighty-six, have
Been folded in prayer and signed
Cards for her kids and the other
Generations on.—And she
Knows all their birthdays!

Now in this hospital room
She struggles but tries to
Follow the commands of the therapist
Who labors to return her to her
Stove at home to prepare her favorite
Simple meals.

Surrounded by us, her family and
Our prayers. We wonder how

Much MORE she misses Dad

Than we do! And hope God loans

Her, to bless us more years!

R.J. (Soto) Sosa
10-03-04

(Mom passed on, to be with the Lord Nov. 4, 2004)

Biography:

Romana (Soto) Sosa
retired nurse
Dora Valdez Soto was my mother
My Hispanic Experience
By Charlene Garcia Simms

Since the birth of my daughter in the early 70’s, I have visited my grandparent’s home in Garcia, Colorado, at least once a year. My grandparents were Carlota Cordova and Tranquilino Manchego. Their house was vacated shortly after my grandmother’s death in 1961. Even after all these years I miss both of them terribly and yearn for a time that was simpler and our extended family was close at hand.

So, in my yearly ritual, I look for mementos or artifacts that represent my grandparent’s once vibrant home. The chokecherry tree is still there, but the apple tree has disappeared. There are no signs of geraniums but the varas de San Jose (Hollyhocks) have miraculously survived. Telltale signs of a well, orno, and cellar are still evident. Old bottle caps, pieces of broken glass, pottery, and rusty silverware are scattered all around. I always remove a piece or two of flowered green and yellow wallpaper from my grandmother’s sala (receiving room) where she entertained company and, ironically, the room in which her velorio (wake) was held. The walls are made of adobe bricks made by my grandfather. The adobe allowed the house to be warm in the winter and cool in the summer. The house has a tin roof, typical of the San Luis Valley.

Two weeks ago when I stopped in for my yearly visit, I was no longer able to get wallpaper because part of the house has caved in and it feels that with any movement the rest of the house will topple over at any moment. Instead I picked up an adobe brick made by my grandfather and coated with my grandmother’s process, called enharar, that protected the house from the elements of erosion with a coat of adobe mixture where she and her hermanas (sisters) a vecina (neighbor) and primas (cousins) performed every few years. In her eyes this was a woman’s job, and a ritual I vividly remember. A few years ago I wrote the following about this process:

**Enharando**

*You could hear the hustle and bustle of the women as they prepared to plaster the house with a mixture of what I saw as dirt and straw. One time I saw them add lamb’s wool.*

*The men would help with the mixture but I never saw them do any plastering. It was left to the women and they didn’t waste any time. It was like an art.*

*They would take a scoop of the mixture, place it on the wall and very carefully stroke it down with the upper part of their palms in a rhythmic fashion until the wall was a smooth texture.*

*They would start on the west part of the house to avoid the rays of the sun. My grandmother was in charge and she would knead the mixture to rid it of small stones or other debris. All the while preparations were going on in the kitchen for a feast at the end of a long day’s work. We, children, and the men just milled about, careful not to interfere. This was their job.*
There were no more than six women, my grandmother, and her two sisters, one of her vecinas and maybe a cousin or two. No one else was let into this exclusive club. Meticulously, they worked like birds building a nest for their newborns.

As the work started all was quiet, but as the day progressed the chattering got underway with the joking and gossiping. As people passed by they were asked if they needed help and, in unison, they would say no.

One could tell when the work was almost finished because the laughter increased and when they were done they would stand with one hand on their hips admiring their work, some adobe mixture still hanging from their hands. Amazingly, their flowered dresses were not the worse for wear, although, their aprons could use a good washing.

As the sun set over the horizon, the shadows cast by the bronze walls onto the ground made a connection to the earthen mixture that had been used so the house could be protected from the elements for at least one more season.

As I look and run my fingers through the wallpaper with the green and yellow flowers placed on the wall by my grandmother and feel the adobe brick made by my grandfather, I feel the continuity of their spirit. This spirit is part of my Hispanic experience that I most want to share as I await the birth of my first grandchild and feel a connection to the past, present, and future.

Biography:

Charlene Garcia Simms was born and raised in the San Luis Valley in Southern Colorado. She has a Master’s degree in Business Administration from Colorado State University-Pueblo, and a second Master’s degree in Information Resources and Library Science from the University of Arizona. Presently, she is a teacher-librarian at Bruce Randolph Middle School in Denver. Her residence has been in Pueblo since 1980 where she still considers home. Together with her husband Ed, they own El Escritorio Publishing and Research Company based in Pueblo.
“Güera”

Americana, Mexicana…

La diferencia del lugar,

No me importa donde nací,

De mi vida, yo soy la dueña

   Me dicen “güera”

   Por el color de mi piel,

   Acá con odio, allá con cariño.

Como tienen derecho decirme

   Quien soy…

Cuando no puedo ver donde esta la línea

   - LN
In Pueblo (I Didn’t See Color)

In Pueblo, where I was raised, not born – but an immigrant with a caucasian-gypsy mother – I never saw color. My best friend, Judy, was Spanish – please, understand – not Mexican, because Spanish held possibilities: blonde hair, blue eyes – I wonder if she ever knew how I envied her thick, curly, coppery locks, so different from my stringy, straight Raggedy-Ann red?

She didn’t speak Spanish – we took French with Stephanie, who was not black, but a beautiful, creamy chocolate. Stephanie’s dad told us a tale about forbidden restaurants in Pueblo meant for white people –

We thought he must be pulling our legs, just telling tales, like my grandfather’s fairy stories of poverty during The Depression; this was Colorado, not Mississippi or Arkansas.

The first time I saw Chicano Power scrawled – in angry, screaming charcoal black on the side of our pristine and clean tan-brick school – I thought: Stupid, what are they so mad about?

I didn’t see their colors, in subtle shades of cinnamon and mocha; I looked at them and saw Judy – Judy lived on my street, in a house like mine ... Judy did not seem powerless, and I didn’t know about language then;

didn’t know what it meant when your words lose meaning; I never had to tell anyone else who I was – describe my whole self, my family, my culture, in a single word; I, from my middle-class ivory tower,

had never been invisible. I didn’t know, then, about losing yourself for so long in apple pie when what you craved was cayenne, having your history violently torn, singing, from your own blood.
only to be muted and drowned out by *I pledge allegiance* and the chorus to *God Bless America*. I didn’t understand that sometimes you have to stop singing and just scream: “Give me what is mine!”

At eighteen, in Pueblo, the only color I saw was the yellow brick of the road out of town, any direction leading from the gray Steel City with its undercurrent of buzzing neon rainbows and its brown, gravelly road out to

the Old Dump where we played at being Pueblo adults: drinking piss-colored beer and being felt up in the backseat of metallic blue Cameroses, rolling two-toned beige and puppy-shit orange Oldsmobiles,

taking dirt-road-turns way too fast – with Boston blaring “More Than a Feeling” in the background – only red death was raw enough to be real, to be fun, in a town where you’re not taught to see color. At eighteen, in Pueblo, I didn’t see color, as I left

a white, hot trail up the highway, running so fast, I erased myself from the raw umber mud of the Arkansas, not realizing that, after twenty-three years, the golden road would only loop back on itself, back to the only place

I had ever called home.

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**Name:** Rhonda Turner  
**Pen Name:** RJ Turner  

**Biography:** I was born in Dallas, Texas, but raised (from the time I was four years old) in Pueblo, Colorado. I married way too young and had four children (the children I have never regretted). Now, at the age of 44, I am back in school. I am an English Major with two Minors (Professional Writing and Spanish); I will be graduating in the spring of 2008 and hope to enter the graduate program shortly after that. I have been writing, in one form or another, since I was a child, but began journaling and writing poetry in earnest as a lonely young mother just trying to stay sane.

*Thank you for this opportunity - every chance to be heard is a blessing.*

**Sincerely,**  

Rhonda Turner
La Deborah- The Bee

My bee’s wings
Awakened
By Flor y Canto
By Warriors of Aztlán
By García Lorca’s Deep Song.

Sitting in Moon’s breeze
Endlessly rescuing paper butterflies
Little scraps of my life
Collecting bits of other’s lives
Gilbert Martínez
Searching, searching for
Direction
Holy Direction.

Arise, arise
On bee’s wings
With pollen-laden knees!
And go forth
on the crest of Moon’s mists.

- Deborah Martínez Martínez

Biography:

An enthusiastic researcher since completing her advanced degree from the University of Colorado at Denver, Deborah lives in the deep southwest, ancestral home of her Spanish Mexican forebearers. For the past 30 years, she worked as a college recruiter for a federal opportunity agency and for Colorado State University of Pueblo. She retired in 2003 to pursue her second career in writing and her passion for history. As a historical interpreter at the local museum, she turned her volunteer assignment as a wool dyer into a three-year research project on dyes used on the frontier including cochineal (cactus bugs from Mexico). She gives lectures and dye demonstrations for both adults and children using the resources of the land—pine cones, rabbitbrush, aspen leaves. At the same time, she has completed 10 children’s picture books and two middle grade novels on historic and contemporary Hispanic themes and is seeking a publisher. She is a member of the Society of Children’s Book Writers and Illustrators. She promotes literacy by working with Hispanic Initiative for Literacy Opportunities to produce a children’s play, and with the public library as a storyteller.
Heritage summons feelings of pride, memories of traditions, sentiments of obligation.

It also harbors hidden roots—Mexican, Canadian Indian—while flaunting my pale skin.

Spanish falls from my tongue; beans and rice fill my belly; mambo animates my feet.

Perspective determines perception; external eyes label me “white,”

Although on careful inspection one might descry hints of reddish hue.

Now young, my children proudly proclaim their identity. But what will tomorrow bring?

Oh, were it that simple. I am who am I, proud of my public past, grateful for my veiled origins.
San Antonio
Juliana Aragón Fatula 11 November 2006

The *in xochtl in cuicatl*¹ is at the heart of me. San Antonio is where I left my heart. At the Alamo. Underneath the bougainvillea and the Elephant Ear and Christmas Tree lights that dangle over the river that slowly spins towards the Gulf of Mexico.

Little birds sing at night to lovers and tourists and *caca*² all over their heads. Gondoliers practice their comedy on drunks, and DJs drink espresso they brew On the hot Bodies of the waitresses in school-girl uniforms made of black leather.

The river runs through the *axihuayan*³ and the waterfall spills onto the sidewalk. Women in high heels and designer suits skip on top of cobblestone pretending to be Comfortable in their pointy shoes. Occasionally a beautiful woman *maihua*⁴ on the dew, *Huetzi*,⁵ lands on her *amoxti*,⁶ then *huetzca*⁷ like a hyena, and choca⁸. Uniforms stroll the river-walk, feign discovery of talent, and sit on their money. Mercy sits on top of the Moon. *Mujeres*⁹ laugh rollicking music of unity. No one hears the sound that escapes the Mouths of the shitting birds. They all look the other way and *choloa*¹⁰ under umbrellas. Daybreak brings justice and chai tea but not *mococoa*¹¹ or donuts.

The concierge calls cabs by whistling at cars. Cabbies come running quickly. Some are gentlemen named Bernie. Tour guides take money for selling their souls but wish for 401Ks. The *muertos*¹² line up in windows and wait for someone to buy them. Danger is nowhere, and everyone sips beer and eats crab legs to bagpipes. Now *cochitta*¹³ seems ludicrous. San Antonio prays on our memories and asks for Forgiveness. *Los indios*¹⁴ call to us begging for poems in *Nahautl*¹⁵. *Tejanos*¹⁶ speak *caxtiltecatl*¹⁷ because the priests needed slaves. The missions are beautiful and so are the people. The air smells sweeter in November Because the *xochitl*¹⁸ are ripe and the *xochicualli*¹⁹ has fallen.

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¹ poetry
² shit
³ hotel
⁴ To slip
⁵ To fall down
⁶ book
⁷ To laugh
⁸ To cry
⁹ women
¹⁰ To flee, to run away, run for cover
¹¹ To be sick, hungover
¹² The dead
¹³ To dream, mystic visions
¹⁴ The Indians
¹⁵ Aztec
¹⁶ Texans
¹⁷ Spanish
Biography

Juliana Aragón Fatula is a senior at CSU-Pueblo studying creative writing, and majoring in English and Secondary Education. Her favorite writers are Lorna Dee Cervantes, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, and David Keplinger. She has been performing her cuentos and poetry for several years in Denver at El Centro Su Teatro and the Mercury Café. She aspires to write poetry that makes the women weep, the men laugh, and everyone take notice. Her stories are from dreams, heartaches, and triumphant victories over life’s little setbacks. In her free time she enjoys sitting in the back porch with Vince, Danny, Chica, Osa, Cheech and Chong, and Punk. “The bougainvilleas are blooming in the greenhouse and tempting the Huitzilopochtli into blind fascination with the color fuschia.”
They call themselves Nahuatl. The drum beats and my feet start to dance in my notzontecon (my head) but no one notices. The scent of the copal is mohuelmati (to feel good), like when you smell your father’s aftershave for the first time and last time and savor it. Christians and heathens pray together and that’s never a bad thing. Altars demand noticing because they are altars of loved ones.

Death is life and life is death and that’s a good thing. 
Young people smile at old people and this makes everyone happy.
We eat pan de los muertos and atole and tamales because we’re traditional.
Some sing songs, and some wish they had sang songs.
T-shirts with skeletons sell like hot-cakes and the money sends women to college and that’s a very good thing.

Our ancestors are proud of us because we remember them; and we respect their ways, the culture of celebrating life and dancing with muertos.
Mujeres are wearing shawls and dresses made of white lace or Vera Cruz skirts with red blouses with ruffled sleeves, and their faces are painted like muertos.
Souls are singing.

**Biography**

Juliana Aragón Fatula is a senior at CSU-Pueblo studying creative writing, and majoring in English and Secondary Education. Her favorite writers are Lorna Dee Cervantes, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, and David Keplinger. She has been performing her cuentos and poetry for several years in Denver at El Centro Su Teatro and the Mercury Café. She aspires to write poetry that makes the women weep, the men laugh, and everyone take notice. Her stories are from dreams, heartaches, and triumphant victories over life’s little setbacks. In her free time she enjoys sitting in the back porch with Vince, Danny, Chica, Osa, Cheech and Chong, and Punk. “The bougainvilleas are blooming in the greenhouse and tempting the Huitzilopochtli into blind fascination with the color fuschia.”
The Projects

The “Projects”. Plural. Projects, not project, is where I lived. I guess I was one of the projects from Acero Street, My family – parents, brothers, sisters, abuelitos, tias and tios, We all were projects in the Projects. We lived near one another and los vecinos filled in the spaces between my house and my families’ houses. We all knew each other well; We greeted the new day and each other every morning and We knew who had yet to return to the Projects From the world Every night. Policeman Grey, unused nightstick held firmly in his hand, walked his beat While we walked along side of him, filling him in on the days’ events. He was one of us as he worked the swing shift; One of the projects. Pride resounds again and again as I run into a councilman, an engineer, a business owner, an educator, An editor for The Pueblo Chieftain. A nurse, a Viet Nam vet. All projects of the Projects. We all emerged, some more worn than others, from the Projects And firmly swore not to forget our roots And show pride in our upbringing As projects of The Projects.

Biography:

I was born and raised in Pueblo, Colorado and have lived in the Aurora area for a little over 3 years. I was a 1973 graduate of Central High School (GO WILDCATS!) and a 1996 graduate of the University of Southern Colorado (now CSU/Pueblo). I am proud to have roots in the Projects.

Thank you for letting me share my experience.

Sincerely,

Rosalie S. Martinez, Coordinator
Lowry One-Stop
Student Services
Community College of Aurora
TONANTZIN Aztec Goddess

Oh Beautiful woman, how I adore you, for you are the mother of all – you have blessed me with your touch, your scent, and your soft voice. I see you and I wonder- how is it that you have endured such pain? People come and go but here you are still – with me, part of me, you are me.

Beautiful Tonantzin, symbol of mother earth, please forgive us, for we know not what we do. We have used the earth for our own benefit – killing her – not softly, but with harsh blows to her. I see you, I feel you, I love you mother – mother of my ancestors who were conquered and reformed as a people who have had to push and push to move forward, to keep our dignity and our culture.

Oh Beautiful woman with your dark skin, eyes and hair who looks like me, I adore you – you with grace and honor – show me the way – give me you’re nurturing and wisdom to be a good mother. I could never take your place; for you are a Goddess – mother of all – you are everything beautiful I see. I see your spirit in my son when he laughs, when he sleeps and when he’s sad. All I want to do is protect you and shield you away from this evil man made world – the same as I would for my son.

Thank you for giving me emotion, love and hope that one day we will be reunited and then I could finally show you that my heart is pure. I am a mother, and I know the feelings of fear, hurt and love – traits I have inherited from you – I am you.

By: Angelica Garza
Biography:

My name is Angelica Garza, I am a senior at CSU-Pueblo. I am a history major and Chicano Studies minor. I am a founding member and the current President of Mujeres Unidas de CSU-Pueblo. I have participated in a variety of conferences on behalf of CSU-Pueblo and recently was amongst the four students picked to attend and represent the University at the national H.A.C.U conference in San Antonio, TX in October of 2006, in which President Joe Garcia was present. My life long goal is to earn a Masters degree and Ph.D in History with an emphasis in Southwestern/Chicano History and to obtain a tenure track at a reputable University. Family values are important to me, as I have two children that I am a role model to and I believe that education is the key to a successful future. I believe that having a mentor is important, as I am currently doing with young high school students within our community. My favorite slogan is: I never try anything, I just do it.
Txapilla from Unx
His hands shift
to set the trap.
The key is to leave
none of his scent
Or the rabbit
would be too wily.

Confessing to me,
he really didn’t believe
he’d set ten traps before dawn
only to pick them up
every night after dusk.
He was too young
and he thinks
it stunted his growth.

I look to the landscape
covering the rabbit trap.
The valleys, peaking below the ridges, snuggle
against plateaus plowed out of the
rifting hillsides for vineyards. It is encumbering

And I feel
as though I am him
as a boy carrying a pack of traps
on my back. I can count
the weight of every trap. Lumbering up
sliding slopes
leading to each vineyard, light leaks
into the valley below
and I go further,
taking long swift strides in fear
of the sun’s exposure.

Wardens and hunger
were always chasing him,
but he would never
betray his trappings.

He covers the teeth
with dry dirt from a bucket,
knees creaking loudly
as he gets up. The man before me
stands no taller than
the berth of my shoulders.
The bulk of his legs
seem to bend his feet inward;
in a crooked gesture meant
to cushion his steps but only

pleating his height.

Behind his eyes
cuddled in a wrinkled mantle of skin,
I see the bag
full of rabbits he slung
on the kitchen counter,
the stew his mother made
for breakfast.
Biography:

My name is Joette K. Ucar. I am a creative writing major and aspire to create literary works celebrating my culture as well as the celebration of life. My father grew up in a Basque province of Spain and has shared the rich culture with me. My poem that I have submitted here is only one of many stories within his experience that he has given to me.

Thank you for celebrating the beauty of this life.
UNA COSTUMBRE VENCIDA

ERA UN SUEÑO
EN LA MENTE
Y EL CORAZÓN

UN QUERER
APENAS VISIBLE
LEJOS
ENTRE TINIEBLAS

AMOR IMPROBABLE
LA FRIA TRISTEZA
HIZOSE COSTUMBRE
EN MI

Y EN TI
PERMANECIA PARA MI
LA TIMIDA
ESPERANZA

LEJOS TODAVÍA
INSEGURA
APENAS VISIBLE
RETIRADA
Y
DISTANTE

DE REPENTE
UNA
CERCANÍA INESPERADA

QUE
DISIPANDO LA OBSCURIDAD
VENCIO
LA COSTUMBRE

DEJANDO TU LUZ
Y CALOR
FINALMENTE
TRANQUILIDAD
Y FUERZA

VALOR
SIN MEDIDA

FELICIDAD
ETERNA
Cesar Chavez

By

Alejandro Rodriguez

My story is about Cesar Chavez. Cesar Chavez was a Mexicano and a leader of farmworkers. During the 20th Century, he was a leading voice of migrant farmworkers. People who were at one place moved to another place to find work. Life for migrants was very difficult. Back in the day, they only got a twenty-cents a day for picking food, but Cesar Chavez's workers continued to fight for our farmworker's rights and protested against grape growers who used to get rich, but Chavez made sure that farworkers had rights. Cesar Chavez spent most of his life working on farms.

It felt really good to me for what he did for us. It should make us Mexicanos feel good about what he and his workers did for our families. That's what I have to say about Cesar Chavez.
CHICANO

To attempt to describe or define a generation of youths who grew up amongst “everything broken, beer bottles, windows, homes, families, hearts, and a society in denial, you’ll need more than words in a dictionary, concocted histories of pasts reflected in the broken mirrors of broken minds, one comes to an insane conclusion that we can call this a generation of third world bastards angry and bitter without roots or identity.

Imagine, if you will, or can, being born in the ruins left to us by our forefathers who were victims of invasions and occupation by ruthless “heroes” trained to search, destroy the lives of a once great people who looked down on them as inferior, subhumans for the sake of empires of oil, and the camels across the desserts be dammed.

Iraq is not the rationale; it is only a continuance of invasions and occupations of the Americas, and lands of Aztlan.

The sons and daughters of Cortez, Malinchi, Sitting Bull, Crazy Horse and the likes of Zapata and Pancho Villa who were once proudly called by their native names-Jose, Miguel, Maria and Dolorez bastardized by the Catholic church who gave them names like James and Brian, and no longer allowed to worship the spirits of fire, water, wind, suns and stars, and instead taught to pray to virgin whores and plastic saints.

This, then is only an analysis, an observation of the nightmares of our children of their existence. Invasion? Occupation? A decade or a century that has left its ruins of broken lives, broken homes, broken minds and a broken society in denial, and a chicano struggling to survive.

- Mora
Flores de papel

It was such a beautiful sight cuando mi mamá hacía flores. I remember so vividly, ella sientada en la mesa, surrounded by colofurl flowers, crepe paper cut in about four inch strips, pliers, scissors, wire and jarros donde venía baking powder más antes. Before we moved to Pueblo, era la costumbre, to make your own flowers for Memorial Day. Back in the 40S no había plastic or artificial flowers, como hay hoy en día. My mother would sit and show me how to make the zinnia like flowers. I used to think they were so much fun to make, especially las flores hechas de los jarros. She would cut thin strips around the can, twist and bend them down, y luego les ponía small strips of crepe paper en las orillas which resembled tiny butterflies and small delicate flowers. She would put a rock, candle or dirt inside the can, so the wind wouldn’t blow them away cuando las ponían en el sepulto. They would shine brilliantly and sway back and forth making a beautiful soft chime-sound.

I still remember how to make the paper flowers, pero hoy en día there are so many commercial flowers on market, that flower making is a lost art. Anyway, to make those flores tan lindas y preciosas, you cut your crepe paper into three of four inch wide strips, corta un lado with about one inch deep cuts, making sure you don’t cut all the way down to the bottom, spacing each cut como ¾ pulgadas de ancho. Open up your strip and cut in tres predados, then you stretch each strip to form the petals. Rolling up the strip of paper is a little tricky, pero después le pones a piece of wire and wrap with green crepe paper to make the stem. Mi mama sometimes dipped them in wax and sprinkled them with glitter, para que duraron mas timpo. She also made carnations and roses, but the zinnia-like flores were more popular y estaban a lot easier and faster to make. Ella, también hacía wreaths and crosses con las flores. After she had made muchas flores, my brother, sister and I would go, puerta a puerta in Salt Creek, selling her flowers for twenty five cents a dozen. That was a way for mom to make some extra money. The rest were taken back home for our deceased family members.

Un día, when we were going door to door selling las flores de papel, we came to this house donde vivía una viejita. She was very old and wrinkled and invited us in her house. We just stood inside the door, pero ella nos dijo to follow her down the basement. Pointing a crooked finger down the stairs, she motioned to us to follow her. We had never seen a real basement in a house, y estaban los escalones muy steep and narrow y muy oscuro. Wide-eyed we looked at each other and instantly scrambled out the door, running like scared rabbits, as fast as our small legs would carry us. Con lágrimas en los ojos and out of breath, we told mom that a witch had tried to lure us to her basement and was going to eat us. Pobrecita viejita, we didn’t even sell her any flowers, falta que ella vivía abajo or had her money in the basement, but we were sure convinced she was a bad witch. We didn’t venture out muy lejos anymore y nunca nos cercamos close to that house, ever again.

Alfie Casaus Salazar
November 2002

Bibliography:

Alfie, now 71 years old, began writing children’s plays while working as a nutrition worker with the school district. She writes about her gente and the community that raised her in Salt Creek, a barrio of Pueblo, Colorado. She writes as she speaks, in Spanglish, and in her unique voice, she shares her rich memories of life with her extended family and many siblings. Alfie, married to Alfred Salazar for 50 years, is an active member of the Genealogy Society of Hispanic America and a volunteer for the Pueblo City-County Library District. She is also a member of the Compañeras Poetry Circle.
Hablas español?

For as long as I can remember, there has always been one question I was asked that received the same answer. It was “the question” that was asked too many times to count, but the answer never seemed to change. It was when I entered college, however, that the answer I gave started to embarrass me. What was the question? Hablas español? My answer was always no.

I was born in Greeley, Colorado to a mexicano y tejana. My dad came from Chihuahua, Mexico when he was a teenager looking for a better life. When he came to the U.S. he began to learn English. My mom was born in Texas, as were her parents, but was raised in Colorado. Mi abuela, in spite of being born and raised in Texas, spoke only Spanish because her parents were from Mexico. As a result, my mom and all of my tios spoke Spanish as their first language, learning English when they entered school. My mom and dad met in their mid-twenties when my eldest sister was four. They married, and before long, my second eldest sister, I, and then my brother were born. A short time later, my parents were divorced. I do not remember my parents being married, just going to my dad’s house every other weekend and on the holidays. Now, the situation in which I was raised is compelling. With two bilingual parents, why did neither I nor my siblings speak Spanish? Saying we knew absolutely nothing is unfair. We knew simple phrases like vente, siéntate, cállate, and of course, hablas español?

So why were these the only phrases we knew? Simple. My mom was single, working to support four kids with hardly any time to spend alone. The last thing a single, working mother wants to do after a long days work is teach her kids another language. In my mom’s own words, she was lazy. True, there was always my dad, but spending every other weekend with him was not enough time to teach us anything. At one point, my dad thought it would be good to just talk to us in Spanish and see how long it took for us to catch on, but we were not having it. All he ever got from us was “What did you say”? He eventually gave up.

Not speaking Spanish did not really affect us much. We all went through school not needing to know, so we never wanted to learn. Most of our teachers and peers were hueros, so why did we have to learn? I took a couple of Spanish classes in junior high and in high school but I did not take them seriously. I was one of the few Chicanos taking Spanish, which was quite embarrassing. It would be three years before I started to think about Spanish helping my future.

Coming to CSU-Pueblo was an eye opener for me. I realized that to succeed in any career, being bilingual, especially in Colorado, is a plus. I had to learn Spanish for the sake of a good career, but I mostly wanted to learn for myself. I was tired of being embarrassed for not knowing Spanish, but now had to opportunity to change it. To still be one of the few Chicanos taking Spanish is awkward, but taking the initiative to learn has made it more comfortable for me today.
Biography:

My name is Felipa Romero, I am 20 years old and I am sophomore at Colorado State University – Pueblo. I entered this essay, not only because of a class requirement, but to give people a little insight of my life. Believe it or not, there are many Chicanos who do not know Spanish, and I just happen to be one of them. This short piece will hopefully explain why I never thought about learning Spanish until I came here.
I have faith

Mi experiencia con la lengua de espanol es muy interesante. Growing up, I went to a school where the americans were basically the minority of the population. Therefore most of my friends were of mexican decent y hablan fluente en espanol. Most people who don't know a language but hear somebody speaking it will just tune them out, not trying to understand what they were talking about. Era diferente porque yo deseé saber lo que decian y estaba interesado en la lengua. Yo pensé que porque no puede hacer? While listening to my friends speaking, I was able to distinguish where one word stopped and the other began, so I had faith that I would be able to learn it. At first it was just a joke to my friends because I was trying to learn a few words here and there, but they took me serious when I started understanding some simple phrases that they were saying. Mi amigo Jorge es de Mexico y muchas veses fui a Mexico para visitar con el. Mientras que estaba allí hicieron para ser cosas de la compra a la tienda. Y tuve que hablar con la familia de Jorge en espanol cuando tuve hambre, y muchas mas cosas. After graduating high school, I went to play tennis for a college in Kansas. There I was the only american who was on the team. I was best friends with a brazilian and a peruvian both of which knew spanish. We also had four members of the team from Mexcio. So when I was with them I learned a lot, much of which is inappropriate, but i did not care because was learning from people that did not mind teaching me. After two years of speaking a slang broken up spanglish, I am able to have tarzan like conversations about almost anything I want. Since this semester I am taking my very first spanish classes 101 and 305 and I have the drive and the capability to study more, I have faith que una dia I will be fluente en espanol.

muchas gracias,

Joshito
I struggle with myself about my culture, growing up and being told that I live in America and that I should think like an American, but when I would go home I was told I was Mexican and should think and be Mexican. I just don’t know how I fit in; the Mexican culture is still fighting to be recognized as a part of the American culture. Our people are no longer ashamed of whom we are, but I unfortunately still find myself making sure my windows are rolled up when I listen to my Mexican music in my car. At home I don’t listen to Mexican radio or watch the Mexican shows on television for fear someone will come over and say something. Sometimes I think my boyfriend is more proud of dating me, and being involved with a Mexican Indian family, than I am in being one.

- VAZLAINdia

Biography:

I am a student in Spanish 202, my professor is Dr. Alegría Ribadeneira.
My Prejudices against Mexican-American Males

By: Catherine Diaz-Magel

My dislike of Mexican American boys and men, I believe, began because of a strong dislike of my father. Yes, I realize that fathers are to be honored and revered, and I began my life in that manner; but soon my attitude began to change.

My mother left my father and my siblings and me when I was twelve years old. Naturally, I was extremely hurt and angry. I could not understand how any mother could leave her children, but she did and it appeared to me that she was glad to get away from all of us.

We lived in Trinidad, Colorado. Everyone knew my family, especially my father. My father was into sales. He would sell anything that could be sold. When my mother left us, the time, the time of year was summertime. My father was into sales. He would sell anything that could be sold. When my mother left us, the time of year was summertime. My father had three trucks that he was using for highway construction. While he was away at work, I was in charge of home matters. I had so much responsibility placed upon me; it was really hard to feature that a twelve year old child should be expected to run a household. But I did, and I feel, looking back on the experience, that I did a great job. I did everything. I shopped, I banked, I cooked and cleaned. I took care of the younger children, and had playtime in between the chores.

I did this for my father, but later on in my adult life, things changed regarding how my father felt about me. He did not wish to help me when I asked him for help. He remarried, and the woman he married had children. So my father took responsibility for
these children. This made me and some of my siblings become angry with my father. I had much anger and animosity towards my father. This attitude carried over into my teenage years, and into my early adulthood. I acquired the attitude that Mexican-American males were just not going to be in my life, if I could help it. And so I developed this prejudice against Mexican-American males. It may sound childish, and it was because the attitude was developed when I was a child.

I changed my thoughts later on regarding these prejudices. I finally understood that my prejudices were not really justified. No group of people should be looked down upon for reasons such as I harbored. The realization that people are people no matter what their background, and every group of people have problems. I since have become very open-minded, not only to relating to Mexican-American men, but to people of all races and ethnic backgrounds. My attitude changes have helped me to become a better person as a whole. As for my father, he is still alive, although bedridden. If I were to introduce you to him, he would try to sell actually bought whatever it was he was trying to sell you.
Nopal

Ay si tienes el nopal pintado en la frente…that’s what they say especially the guys
Maybe they’re right, that answers why the viejitos at the Segunda ask me stuff in espanol,
“Me puede decir cuanto cuesta esto?” How do they know que les puedo contestar. Yo
pense que solo era un metaphor pero quien sabe. Maybe es tan real como querer esprimir
palabras de esta pluma. Sepa, all I know is when I go to misa muy y digo muy de vez en
cuando I see my gente and not only the ones from the barrio esa gente con quien comparto
mi ninez-the rides en la bici-down the hill-aprendiendo a fumar in back of the hill. Los
primeros novios siempre con chispas en esos ojos de noche y olor a Malboro igualitos
que mi futuro y difunto esposo. Promesas que entonces eran juramentos ante la
Virgencita con veladora y todo, as strong as rock but paper covers rock and scissors cut
papel till the promises are papel picado just like the one for the Dia de los Muertos, like
the one you see at the keremes, so cut and so imensamente fragil que un soplido del
viento shreds them into confetti y te salpica como limon en las heridas. So profound that
the paloma que aletea en mi pecho feels so tired como un sueno que se muere lentamente.
Porfavor un descansito nada mas. Entro en la iglesia la agua bendita esperando y ese olor
tan familiar just like the smell of tortillas de maiz-taquitos de rana con sal. “Sana, sana
colita de rana”, but anyway la gente, mi gente, mi familia , las viejitas con las cicatrices
de la vida, dry rivers cut into their earth faces pero tienen fe and this makes them
beautiful. Nos persignamos, “Por la senal de la Santa Cruz de nuestros enemigos libranos
Senor Dios nuestro, etc. Las arracadas de las ninas usually half or quarter lunas just like
the ones our Virgencita morena stands on, y esos vestiditos esponjados, los zapatitos de
charol que brillan igual que la esperanza, how I love to watch them, to listen sus palabras
igual que las misas, part English part Spanish part Indio y part quien sabe que. Los
muchachos adolecentes, su Jersey Nike, pantaloon aguado, cellular, cinto de cuero, con
apellido o estado y esas botas iguales, exactly like the ones we would trip on at the bailes,
just like my primos wear. Las muchachas con illusion abierta, ojos pintados, papel
intacto waiting for the guy in the pointy boots to turn around and give her el saludo de
paz. Chale I miss it all pero todavía es mio but not the same cause now I stand atras in
the back and look mas como observadora porque los rios se empiezan a formar. Pero
porque la iglesia? I can’t say I’m a good Catolica…but it feels like home, cuando
estabamos chiquitas me and Diana would look up at the vaulted ceiling and all kinds of
santos and angeles protected us but they painted over them and left us solas. How come?
They were beautiful but people forget the worth of old paintings, of our cuentos, of
nuestros viejitos-nuestros maestros. En esa iglesia veo mis abuelitos, en esas caras nuevas,
mis hijos, mis padres y yo un rompecabezas cantando O Maria, Madre mia, O Consuelo
del Altar….., Los rezos, el sermon, mi mama gritando desde la puerta, “Es hora de rezar
el rosario”, noche tras noche , novena tras novena. Las veladoras use to be a dime now
they cost a quarter. You light one-pray con mucha devocion stare at the Virgen until she
comes alive and you’ll feel better for a week o dos. Back to the Eastside, nosotras las
madres solteras trying to explain to the ninos how come they can’t get the same presents
as the other ninos con plata do. Como hacerlo? Solo con metafora. Llamare una junta;
Ms. Sandra con su casita en la calle Mango, Mi Marcos ojos de sueno palabras
explosivas, querida Frida pincel que llora, rebozo que envuelve, Neruda paginas magicas
que bailen fuera de mi ventana opaca, Mama por las tortillas, Papa por la pluma. Isabel
que puede ver las almas de los nuestros, tía Chabela bendice los cuatro vientos desde ese ranchito de Zacatecas y yo con mi nopal en la frente pidiéndole prestado a Frida un pincel azul, yo con mi gente de barro y un Sol que no viene en 40 solo en 32, y los ríos que se forman.

Gracias Mercedes por dar gracias, Lila y Lourdes por acordarse de nosotros, también a Juanes por su sangre roja y el corazón izquierdo de Arjona, bendición Jose Alfredo.

Pausa y volvemos………….

Biography:

Leticia Thurman

Nací en Pueblo de madre mejicana y padre gringo. Mi primer lengua fue el español, al entrar a la escuela tuve que aprender inglés. Las vacaciones siempre las pasamos en Zacatecas, o en Guanajuato donde vive toda mi familia por parte de mi ma. Estudie arte y filosofía aquí en U.S.C., de donde me gradué hasta el 1998. Doy clases de español en escuela privada a niños de Pre-K hasta el grado 8 y pinto cuando el tiempo me lo permite.
“So, you speak Spanish- what part of Mexico are you from?”

Méjico y su gente adornan al mundo con sus colores brillantes, sonrisas amables y costumbres fascinantes. Su gente, que orgullosos cargan a su patria con cada paso, hace sentir su existir dentro de este planeta. Podemos viajar a cualquier lugar del mundo y encontrar una banderita tricolor (verde, rojo y blanco) con su escudo que cuelga de algún automóvil, podemos encontrar a la Virgen de Guadalupe pintada en el vidrio trasero de “la troca”, escuchamos una voz baja y cordial que murmura “no espeak inglish” al pedir ayuda en el centro comercial. Esa forma de hablar les hace pensar, “from México, must be from México”.

Se me hace increíble que los Estados Unidos estén dentro de los países que mejor educación ofrecen a sus ciudadanos y a pesar de eso aun no entiendan que todo el que habla “Spanish” no es “from México”. Admiro y respeto mucho a mis compatriotas mejicanos- he aprendido mucho de su cultura, valores y creencias. Comparto mucho de sus sentimientos y gozo de sus espíritus alegres; honradamente me hago sentir como parte de su comunidad y camino junto a ellos. Hablo, escribo y pienso en “Spanish”, pero mis raíces son una mezcla de españoles, indios taínos y africanos que al unirse formaron lo que hoy con mucho orgullo grito a los cuatro vientos – ¡Soy Puertorriqueña! – o como es mas conocido- ¡Boricua de Pura Cepa!

Nacida y criada en la isla del encanto, Puerto Rico, llevo en mi sangre los tambores de lo indios taínos que poblaban nuestra isla a la llegada de Cristóbal Colon el 19 de noviembre de 1493. Por mis venas corren los danzares de los africanos que fueron esclavizados (enero 27 de 1513) por los españoles que con sus deseos de conquista hicieron morada en ese tesoro escondido que los indios llamaban Borikén. Tengo espíritu explorador que honra a la madre patria, España, que fue quien nos condujo hasta el 29 de Septiembre de 1897. Mi sabor exótico lo debo a las mezclas de razas que hasta hoy en día forman parte de esa isla que tanto añoro.

No espero que se conozca la historia completa de mi isla, una isla que es tan importante para los Estados Unidos ya que esta estratégicamente localizada para el uso de fuerzas militares estadounidenses. Pero me duele saber que muchos desconocen su existencia, “Puerto Rico? Where is that on the map?”. Es ahí donde explico, “this Spanish speaker” viene de una islita que se encuentra entre el Mar Caribe y la parte norte de el Océano Atlántico, al este de la República Dominicana – o si aun no la pueden ubicar- estamos a unas 1,000 millas al sureste de Miami, Florida. “Oh! Florida, yeah I know where Florida is”. Lo próximo que escuco eriza mi piel, “How long does it take to drive there?” Mi estado de perplejidad es tan severo que muchas veces no puedo dar una contestación. Debido a respuestas como esta me he dado a la tarea de conocer mejor la historia de mi islita del encanto. Deseo poder abrir las puertas a un mundo que para muchos seria muy diferente al suyo.

Como anteriormente había mencionado fuimos descubiertos por Cristóbal Colon en el 1943. Al llegar encontró a mas de 50, 000 indios Taínos que amablemente le ofrecieron su oro en cantidades ilimitadas. Los españoles deseosos de llenarse de riquezas comenzaron su conquista sobre esta pequeña isla, pero no fue hasta el 1508 que comienza la colonización española. Los taínos fueron esclavizados por los españoles bajo la amenaza de castigo corporal o muerte (1509). Esto duro hasta 1511 cuando los taínos ahogaron al español Diego Salcedo porque ellos pensaban que los españoles eran seres inmortales, seres divinos. Al verlo morir, los indios se
revelaron contra los españoles sin éxito alguno. Murieron 6,000 indios guerreros, los sobrevivientes huyeron a las montañas o desalojaron la isla por completo. Fue en el 1513 que llegaron los esclavos africanos a la isla. Cientos de eventos históricos tomaron lugar en Borikén: reestructuración de gobierno, mestizaje de razas, desarrollo de la agricultura, escuelas, hospitales, fuertes de batalla- en fin, la raza puertorriqueña estaba creciendo.

Gracias a la expansión de los Estados Unidos, Puerto Rico pasó a ser un “Commonwealth” o Estado Libre Asociado de los Estados Unidos (1952). Desde entonces hemos sido parte de esta nación. El Congreso nos trata como una de las últimas colonias en el mundo. Con este estatus político tenemos un gobierno propio con 8 distritos senatoriales, 40 distritos representativos y 78 municipios. Personas nacidas en esta islita son considerados ciudadanos americanos con los mismos privilegios que una persona nacida dentro de la unión americana; solo que residentes viviendo dentro de la isla no pueden votar en elecciones gubernamentales estadounidenses. El Ingles y el Español son los idiomas oficiales aunque el Español es el idioma dominante. Hoy día Puerto Rico es el hogar de 3.950 millones de personas convirtiéndole en la isla más pobladas del mundo. Su gente es hospitalaria, a menudo consideradas muy amigables y expresivas con personas extrañas. Los saludos son cordiales y genuinos. Cuando conoces a una persona por primera vez se acostumbra darse la mano, pero con familiares y amigos cercanos siempre se saluda o se despe se beso en la mejilla o una combinación de beso y abrazo. Somos personas muy alegres, apasionadas, astutas y ¡sumamente patriotas! Los Boricuas amamos nuestra isla, aceptando la asociación libre con los Estados Unidos, pero siempre enfatizando nuestra lealtad a nuestra cultura, costumbres, folklore, hospitalidad y forma de vivir.

Este lugar que llamo mi hogar esta lleno de mucha historia, mucho color y ¡mucho sabor! Así como me llena de orgullo hablar del lugar donde nací, se que existen millones de hispanos que llevan a su país muy dentro de sus corazones y también tienen historias fascinantes que contar. Mi propósito con esto es lograr que la próxima vez que alguien escuche a una persona hablando “Spanish” pregúntele de donde proviene y no asuma quién es. Todos somos hispanos, todos hablamos Español, todos estamos orgullosos de nuestras raíces y todos nos merecemos ser reconocidos con nuestros países. El conocer es saber…

Por: Legna Itza Mercado de Figueroa
Biography:

Name: Legna Itza Mercado de Figueroa

Place of Birth: Arecibo, Puerto Rico

Age: 28 years old

Education: Senior at CSU-Pueblo

Major: Sociology / Criminology

I am the first born daughter of Angel Luis Mercado Cruz and Nitza Gonzalez Ayala. I have a beautiful sister who is 25 years old, Jinitza Mercado de Rivera, and a handsome brother, Angel Luis Mercado, Jr. That is 14 years of age. I currently live in Colorado Springs with my husband, Alexander Figueroa Rosado, to whom I have been happily married to for 4.5 years. I work for the Colorado Springs Police Department as an Emergency Response Technician (911 operator) and will be graduating in May 2007.
A Story of an Aztec Artesian

When I was born my father named me Tiegan (little princess in the big valley) because I was the first and only girl. My mother had died during childbirth when she had me and had ascended into the status of a Cihuapipltin. My father was so upset, that he had my uncles guard her body for three days and nights until the cremation could take place. My father thought warrior enemies were going to come and cut off one of her fingers or that a sorcerer might come and try to take her whole left arm for their potions and spells. My father was so afraid of things like that, and he became very overprotective of me.

He told me stories of my mother and how their family members were so proud when she became pregnant; it was a blessing from Teteoinnan (mother of all deities). My parents were both artists, and had painted the most beautiful murals for the Emperor and his court. My father showed me all the paintings they had done all over the plaza, and became my teacher in this craft as I grew up.

In the year eleven flint (1516), I was fourteen years old when my father remarried. My stepmother was a kind woman who was a basket weaver by trade and she bore my father two sons. My brothers and I went to the calmecac for our education and in their eleventh year, they had gone on to study the art of war in the military school for boys. When I turned seventeen, I fell in love with a boy I met in school and we got
married. He was a warrior in the Eagle clan, the elite of all warrior clans, and he was dedicated to our patron God Huitzilopochtli to bring in enemies that opposed our government for ritual sacrifice. Because of his status in the empire, my position as an artist grew in recognition, and I was commissioned to work in the Emperor’s temple which could be for at least five years.

In the year one reed (1519), word had spread to Tenochtitlan that there were Gods who came from across the sea and were on their way here to the capital. People began talking and the excitement grew as we wondered if it was one of our Gods, Quetzalcoatl, coming back to regain his throne. Emperor Moctezuma had called for the military warriors to be on guard and to destroy anything that looked threatening, for he had heard of the beast like panthers that accompanied these Gods that would kill on command. My husband, Nopaltzin was one of them that had to go and guard the Empire. I was at my parent’s home for the duration of this time and would often look out across the lake looking to see if I would see anyone or anything coming across, and then one day I did.

When these Gods stepped out from atop the mountain, they had a lot of hair covering their faces and they wore silver shields of a material I had never seen. Then I saw a beast on four legs that towered over me and the rest of my people for it looked like a monster, but was beautiful at the same time with long hair on its neck and tail. The crowd was in awe, when all of a sudden our warriors came through and pointed their
spears at the Gods. Then one of the Gods pulled out a long, shiny pointed rod and then all the Gods did the same. This action roused the crowd, and I was pushed to the back by my neighbor out of harms way. Then, a few Indian slave girls descended the vessel and explained to the warriors who these people really were. They were men not Gods, for they witnessed some men bleed and die the same that we do while fighting a tribe of warrior Indians of that village, when they first arrived from across the sea.

Then, the Emperor Moctezuma himself came into the crowd and ordered everyone back. The crowd drew back, and the Emperor and his servants held out gifts to these men, gifts of gold, silver, diamonds and sapphires. The look on their faces was unforgettable. They stood in silence for a moment, and then a man came forward and introduced himself as Hernan Cortes, the captain of the vessel and of the men, he had an Indian woman by his side interpreting our language and theirs back and forth from Cortes to Moctezuma. He extended his hand out as if to grab Montezuma and the warriors took their stance, but it was an offering of peace and friendship, this gesture that Captain Cortes had made. Moctezuma let Cortes take his hand and kiss it, something that had never been done before.

As I watched from a distance, the crowd suddenly covered their mouths and noses for a horrible odor had petrified the air. The smell grew worse as these men took their shoes and silver shields off their
bodies. It looked as though these men had not bathed in one reeds time and not only that but the hair was all over their bodies, not just their faces. They smelled and looked awfully unattractive. I really felt sorry for those poor slave girls that had to endure their humility and torture. Even though these men came to our Empire in peace, there was something in the air that wasn’t right.

These men had been in our village for a year already, and it seemed that more were arriving everyday. They seemed to cringe every time we held our sacred rituals and they would try to explain to my people about their God and their ritual beliefs, but we paid no attention to them after we knew they were human like the rest of us. I would try to stay away from them as much as I could and my husband told me to stay away from them, but it was hard to because they had overrun the Emperors temple where I was working.

One day, Captain Cortes left to a nearby village for more supplies and left Captain Alvarado in charge of his men. That night we had a ritual to attend at the sacrificial temple, and in the middle of the ceremony, Alvarado and his men attacked the priests and started to slaughter the crowd. People were running and screaming and I ran out of the temple trying to find my husband. As I came around the plaza, the whole city had gone up in smoke it looked like and there I saw Nopaltzin fighting one of Cortes’ men. The moment our eyes met, he was stabbed in the chest by Cortes’ man, and he fell to the ground. It was only a
dream I kept saying, it wasn’t really happening, but the reality set in as Cortes’ man came toward me and pulled me up onto his horse, running fast as I tried to cling onto the horse for fear of being drug. I was screaming, and he stopped and took me off his horse and began beating me. I woke up hours later with my head throbbing and blood running down my legs. He had raped me over and over again, until I couldn’t scream or cry anymore.

I walked to my parents’ house and found my father, brothers and stepmother covered in blood, all dead on the ground. It looked as if my stepmother was raped as well. My neighbors were all dead and their children dead too. I had walked into a nightmare, and I could see the temples burning all over the place. I fell to the ground and began sobbing uncontrollably, when suddenly I felt a hand on my shoulder, and to my surprise it was Captain Cortes. He had just come back to the city when he saw everything that was going on, and he looked scared. He asked me what had happened, and I tried to tell him, but one of our warriors saw him and attacked, but Cortes was quick with the blade and put him down fast. He was panting hard and started running toward the sacrificial temple.

That was the last time I saw him, after that his men took me and branded my face with their horse iron and used me as a slave to do their bidding. They sent me to a nearby village to wait while they overtook the city of Tenochtitlan in only a matter of months.
As I write this chronicle of my life, I hope that someone will read this years from now and try to understand that I was once happy and my people were a thriving and intelligent people that had dominated this whole region once. I know now that there is no hope for me or what’s left of my people, for Cortes and his men have ruined us.

- Angélica Garza

Biography:

My name is Angelica Garza, I am a senior at CSU-Pueblo. I am a history major and Chicano Studies minor. I am a founding member and the current President of Mujeres Unidas de CSU-Pueblo. I have participated in a variety of conferences on behalf of CSU-Pueblo and recently was amongst the four students picked to attend and represent the University at the national H.A.C.U conference in San Antonio, TX in October of 2006, in which President Joe Garcia was present. My life long goal is to earn a Masters degree and Ph.D in History with an emphasis in Southwestern/Chicano History and to obtain a tenure track at a reputable University. Family values are important to me, as I have two children that I am a role model to and I believe that education is the key to a successful future. I believe that having a mentor is important, as I am currently doing with young high school students within our community. My favorite slogan is: I never try anything, I just do it.
Sueños

By Juliana Aragón Fatula

The old woman leaned back on her pillow of goose down and closed her eyes. She saw a room filled with white, arctic fox furs and skulls of dead animals hanging from the walls. A ladder made of aspen was leaning on the wall; the rungs were hand-cut and bound with leather ties. Beads of terra cotta, sierra, and turquoise hung on tightly to the laces. A Navajo rug, a fur trader’s blanket, and an elk hide with the tail still attached were draped over the rungs of the ladder. Next to the ladder hung a massive mirror framed in old barn wood.

She entered a room filled with aroma de los frijoles, boiling quietly, and chile verde, roasting and crackling in the oven. She opened and closed her nostrils swaying in ecstasy. A smile curled up on her angelic face and gave her mouth the strange sensation of not being a frown. In a corner of the room she glimpsed the figure of a weathered and shrunken man. She stepped delicately in her bare feet over to the shadow that was perched resolutely on an old bench. The bench was as crooked as the old man’s teeth.

He took forever to lift his eyes to meet hers. He smiled little glimpses of charity as he reached out taking her strong hand in his. He kissed it carefully as if it might shatter. She whispered to him, “Abuelo, I’m so afraid of dying. I forgot my own name today. I’m so tired and lonely.” The grandfather simply replied, “Granddaughter, dying is easy. It’s the living that’s hard.” His heavy, ancient, nearly-blind eyes blinked and three precious tears fell. The teardrops slowly dropped onto her hand staining her brown-velvet skin with indigo splashes.

The old woman looked around the room and discovered she was alone. She limped to the window and opened the heavy burlap curtains checking outside for signs of life. She closed the
curtains and willed herself into the next room. “Living room,” she yawned, “not doing much actual living in here.”

The old woman gazed into her reflection in the mirror and saw a wrinkled but handsome face. The old woman’s hazelnut eyes were brimming with tears. She stared intently at her face but did not recognize herself. She used her ivory hanky to dry her face and tucked it back inside the cuff of her sleeve. She glanced into the mirror again and saw a very young, plain-looking woman with a bruised face walking towards her. The young woman’s nose was broken and crooked like a boxer’s; her fists were clenched as tight as her beehive hair-do.

Behind the young woman stood an angry cowboy dressed in dirty work clothes. He sat down with ferociousness. He gave the young woman a swift kick behind her knees splattering mud from his boots all over the kitchen floor. He barked like a coyote hungry for a meal. The young woman opened her fists and inside each hand was a small caterpillar. She squeezed her fists again and they changed into butterflies. She released her grip allowing the magnificent mariposas to join in the circle of life, their wings flapping little tufts of magic dust above the hungry cowboy as a summer zephyr blew him into nothingness. The young woman just walked away, went out the door, and kept walking.

The old woman cleaned the mirror, like erasing memories, with her hanky and shoved the lacey heirloom back into her sleeve. She stumbled back to her bedroom. On each wall was a mask from a different continent; Africa, Asia, the Americas, and Australia. They were made of mahogany and various other dark hardwoods, with beards made of animal hair, painted with eyes of the gods. A looking glass, with gold braided trim, hung over the dresser that kept the old woman’s night things, a peach colored sari made of silk, Egyptian cotton sheets, and lace and satin nightgowns. In those drawers were secrets too.
Under the exotic fabrics were letters from her son, her brothers and sisters, and her lovers. She smelled the letters, enjoying the fragrance of lavender and cinnamon, and turned them over and over in her hands. She read them for hours until falling asleep and called to them in her dreams asking for forgiveness.

Sleeping, waking, tossing, snoring and cussing she became tangled in a mess of sheets and pillows that waxed into chaos. A mysterious young man approached her in a dark alley; he did a lonely dance in the dark. He sang to the needle and the spoon, embraced them, and stared at them with passion. He ignored the old woman. She sat next to him on the curb as he plunged the needle into his veins.

The son lifted his starry upside-down eyes and whispered hoarsely into her ear, “Mom, I have SIDA. I’m dying. Mom, I love you so much. Lo siento.” The old woman cried out, “Te amo mijo,” as she put her arms around him. Then his eyes flipped right-side-up and the stars fell out as they overflowed with raindrops of indigo. They rolled onto the old woman’s sleeve and stained her hanky as she caught them. Her son fell to his knees searching for her hand in his blindness. He kissed her frail hand and smiled. She kissed her son on the forehead, studied the indigo stains on her hanky, and then she noticed her grandfather sitting silently in the edges of the night.

She heard a thumping, a sound like someone trying to tune in a radio station but there’s nothing there and all you hear is zztzztzztz, static. The hair on her arms stood straight up and she all at once felt warm and light. She could hear softness all around her and she sensed a powerful love and the absolute absence of evil. The three of them, son, mother, and grandfather fused into one heartbeat that pulsed slower and slower and slower. The old woman’s breathing stopped and all that could be heard was zztzztzztz.
Biography

Juliana Aragón Fatula is a senior at CSU-Pueblo studying creative writing, and majoring in English and Secondary Education. Her favorite writers are Lorna Dee Cervantes, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, and David Keplinger. She has been performing her cuentos and poetry for several years in Denver at El Centro Su Teatro and the Mercury Café. She aspires to write poetry that makes the women weep, the men laugh, and everyone take notice. Her stories are from dreams, heartaches, and triumphant victories over life’s little setbacks. In her free time she enjoys sitting in the back porch with Vince, Danny, Chica, Osa, Cheech and Chong, and Punk. “The bougainvilleas are blooming in the greenhouse and tempting the Huitzilopochtli into blind fascination with the color fuschia.”
The Hat

By Juliana Aragón Fatula

My Dad died as broke as the day he was born. We had to pass the hat to bury him. He would have been so embarrassed pero, he spent every nickel he made taking care of all of his children. I didn’t get an inheritance from my Dad. He left me his hat. It sits in the back window of my Chevy truck. It hangs there getting sun-bleached and dusty. It’s a cowboy hat, slate grey with a dark-brown, leather band with a dull brass buckle. Its’ remnants are stained with his sweat and blood.

It’s a working hat. It’s dirty; the dust and dirt of the milpa cling to every surface. You could probably plant a few kernels of corn on his hat and they would sprout. It’s a corn hat. I can see him bent over toiling in the garden, soaking up the sun, tanning his back to a golden café con leche, while it burnt the melanoma right into his blood. He worked without a shirt but he always wore that hat. Dad worked in his garden every summer and he never wore sunscreen. I slather it on every single day and I slather it on my husband.

After work Dad would stroll down Fourth Street wearing his hat with his lunchbox swinging by his side. We’d race to meet him pushing and shoving each other down the barrio just to be the first one to get the treat he’d saved for the fastest runner.

He snored like a big old grizzly bear every night then he would get up at three-thirty in the morning while we kids slumbered in our chonies. He’d put on his hat and head out the door to feed the chickens, gather eggs, cook some juevos rancheros con papas y tortillas and then he’d make his lunch, with the dessert he never ate, and catch his ride to work.

He paid cash for everything. He never had anything left over after paying everyone and feeding all of us kids. He fed lots of neighborhood kids who liked being at our house ‘cause Mom was always home cooking chicken mole, a big pot of chili beans or tamales.
Even after my sisters and brothers left home they’d come back to eat or throw back some cervezas or just sit in the back porch and watch the sun go down. Our house was always full to busting with people. Some of Dad’s friends would come by on weekends with their guitars and accordions and they’d drink some of Dad’s home made wine, laugh, and sing in Méxicano. When the old days died there was no one left at home but Mom and Dad. Dad would watch his All-Star-Wrestling and Mom would watch her old-time movies with Doris Day and Rock Hudson in her bedroom.

Every weekend he’d wear that hat, go to the bar downtown, drink, talk to the barflies, or flirt with the barmaid. He was a very handsome man with a full head of wavy salt and pepper hair. His eyes were the color of root beer and his skin was alabaster except where the sun had kissed it and there it was cocoa-brown like the dirt he cultivated, brown like the freckles that covered his rosy cheeks brown like mine.

I use to pretend that my Dad was a doctor or a lawyer instead of a mechanic. We’d eat lobster or rib-eyes instead of menudo, arroz con pollo y las tortillas siempre. I use to cringe and hide when my dad wore his dirty old cowboy hat and beat up boots; my girlfriend would stand proudly next to her daddy in his clean white Stetson and shiny new boots. I never told my Dad I wished we were rich.

Once my Dad asked my Mom, “Why do you need more grocery money?” and Mom leaned into Dad and whispered something in his ear in Spanish. He said, “Pues, ¿qué es el tampon?” She whispered in his ear and stood back with her arms crossed and waited. He gave mom the money and never asked her again what the extra money was for. I was too spoiled, like Mom said, to wear “rags” like she had, like my Abuelita had worn in her days de la luna. I never understood why they called it being on the rag, until then. But on my moon time I had to have
what the rich girls had. At that time Mom was still on her moon time and continued to be on the rag for many more years tearing up old sheets into rags.

Mom gave me Dad’s hats, all of them, and I treasure them but this hat is more special than the rest. It was the last hat he wore and the scent of Old Spice and a life of hard work still lingers. I wore it to his funeral with my funeral/wedding outfit and everyone immediately recognized it as they came up to console me. At his funeral, people stood elbow to elbow. On the drive to the cemetery I turned around and looked back at the procession. The cars lined-up down the hill for miles, car after car, filled with family and friends. Both the men and women cried when the military gave their twenty-one-gun salute and played taps.

Dad loved being outdoors and never rushed, never. I can’t ever remember my Dad doing anything quickly. He’d bite into a raw onion and eat it like it was an apple, he’d tell us, “I’ve never had a cold or been to the doctor.” He died an old man. If he hadn’t gotten the cancer he might have lived to be a very old man, but he had a long, good life. All of us were there at the end, all ten of his children gathered around his hospital bed watching the machines breath for him. He grabbed my arm, pulled me close to his face, locked eyes with me and using telepathy he communicated his wishes with me. It’s our secret.

I still wear his hat now and then and someone always says, “Hey, nice hat!” It has character just like Dad. He drove cattle alongside his father for the rico ranchers when he was only ten years old. He helped his father support his nine brothers and sisters. Then he enlisted and set sail with the Navy. He survived WWII and came home and worked the coal mines. He became a single parent with three children. He was one of the first men in Colorado to get legal custody of his children in a divorce, very new age. He married mom and had me and seven more children and went to work as a mechanic for the Department of Defense. When he retired he returned to tending his garden.
He was a great listener and he taught me that we are all ambidextrous and that there is both feminine and masculine, yen and yang, in all of us, some of us just don’t know it. When kids would yell at me, “Hey, you dirty Mexican,” or call me a lesbo, he’d hug me and laugh and tell me, “As long as you know what you are, to hell with them.” He wore his hat with his head high and his shoulders back like a man who was worth a million bucks even though when he’d pull out his wallet and look inside it was always empty.

My dad died when I was only thirty-three. I wanted him to see what I’ve done with my life, how I’ve matured and become a wise woman. I wanted him to get to know me better as an adult because as a child I was terribly spoiled and selfish. Now I’m more like him stronger, more patient.

In my dreams he’s wearing that hat and he’s smiling and his eyes sparkle like rain on a tin roof. He shared with me stories about when his team of coal miners would go inside the prison walls and play baseball against the inmates of the Colorado State Penitentiary. In 1937 he was a young man with dark curly hair and a strong muscular body. I can picture him in his baseball cap and uniform on the mound behind those prison walls with a big smile on his Mestizo face with his big nose, my nose. Dad would bend his knees, lean forward and look down to home plate at the big, angry, man in prison stripes. Dad would pitch, strike him out, and strike out the next man and the next. Of course, Dad liked to exaggerate and tell big ones, but I didn’t care, I sat listening fascinated by his tales.

I wonder how many years I’ll wear his hat? I’ll be a little old lady sitting on the front porch reading the newspaper wearing that hat. People will say, “Look at that crazy vieja wearing the cowboy hat.” I’m not a cowboy or a cowgirl; no, I’m the exact opposite of a cowboy. I wear that hat proudly because it was my Father’s. I use to wear it to the bars with my favorite t-shirt that says, “Kickin’ Ass” and on the back it says, “And takin’ names.” But I realized my Dad
would have shook his head and made his little sad face, so I put the t-shirt away and started wearing one that says, “Make love not war!” My dad would have approved of that one. He may have been a flirt and had his infidelities but he was not one to carry a weapon or use his fists. He could always talk his way out of a fight.

Dad knew how to solve problems too. Our backyard had a pear tree that had an enormous bee hive and every time one of us kids would exit the back door we would have to run to avoid being stung to death. So Dad got his ax and he chopped that gigantic pear tree into firewood. I miss the delicious golden pears and pear jam, and the fragrant pear blossoms, but the bees are gone.

My brother, Cisco, and I would go out after dinner to throw the slop and one day the garden hose coiled and became a gigantic yellow snake with black stripes and diamonds that slithered and hissed. We ran and told Dad. He got the ax, Cisco got the shovel, and they hacked and chopped that snake into bite size morsels. Dad was fearless. I fear snakes more than any living creature. I am plagued with dreams of serpents, demons, devilish creatures with forked tongues and bodies that move without feet. In my dreams, Dad always saves me.

He loved the feel of the dirt in his hands, the smell of the freshly worked soil, the melody of a bird devouring freshly turned worms in rows of ripe red tomatoes. He loved the elements, the rain, the snow, the wind, sunshine. This is what my father left me. My father left me so much more than just his hat.

**Biography**

Juliana Aragón Fatula is a senior at CSU-Pueblo studying creative writing, and majoring in English and Secondary Education. Her favorite writers are Lorna Dee Cervantes, Jimmy Santiago Baca, Sherman Alexie, Sandra Cisneros, Gloria Anzaldúa, and David Keplinger. She has been performing her cuentos and poetry for several years in Denver at El Centro Su Teatro and the Mercury Café. She aspires to write poetry that makes the women weep, the men laugh, and everyone take notice. Her stories are from dreams, heartaches, and triumphant victories over life’s little setbacks. In her free time she enjoys sitting in the back porch with Vince, Danny, Chica, Osa, Cheech and Chong, and Punk. “The bougainvilleas are blooming in the greenhouse and tempting the Huitzilopochtli into blind fascination with the color fuschia.”
When I was 17

When I was 17, I applied to be a prep cook at a local restaurante in Castle Rock. During my near 5 years employment there, I learned to habla español whilst learned to cook. These two guys over the course of 5 years taught me a little español and I taught them a little ingles. After time, un poco became mucho. By the time the 3 of us parted ways, we were each fluent in the others’ language. This made learning español on a collegiate level tan más divertido.

Craig Cummings
I learned soon enough that there was no silverware. “Here, let me show you”, Gilberto said. “You eat the eggs like this.”

He tore the soft, flour tortilla in large pieces and, making a spoon, scooped up the runny fried eggs and salsa. With a single movement he quickly took another tortilla from the open gas flame and rolled it on the palm of his left hand. Hunger makes one a quick learner and I had soon finished off the blanquillos, washing them down with black coffee. Earlier the two of us had walked a couple of blocks down the dirt street to a small, open tortilla factory where a chain device was producing fresh tortillas. The kitchen in Gilberto’s house was small, the walls made of bare boards. A wooden table was in one corner with a few chairs. The window above the sink looked out on a yard of packed dirt, a few plastic toys scattered about. Outside the back screen door was a shed with a water heater and a shower. I had showered the night before, shivering and peeking out through the cracks in the door, then jumping the soapy puddle with bare feet onto the back steps. I stood dripping in a towel, a middle-class, middle-American bolillo in a strange land.

We had arrived the previous afternoon. The taxi moved cautiously, as if the driver were expecting trouble from this poor neighborhood in Laredo, Texas. Gilberto, one of my classmates from our high school in San Antonio, had invited me to spend the Easter holidays with his family. Gilberto’s mother, Vicky, his aunt Dora, three small children and a teenage daughter, met us with grins and shouts at a shaky front gate. Grandmother, a small woman in a frayed white dress, was in a rocker on the porch. The house, like the others in this barrio, was of unpainted boards. The street in front was narrow, allowing room for one moving car to pass between the parked ones.

The house smelled of Pine-Sol. The poverty undisguised. I immediately felt comfortable, yet somewhat off-balance, as we left our bags onto the warn floor. There was a small living room with a stuffed chair and a small bed, a colored religious calendar on the wall, a picture of Our Lady of Guadalupe, candles on a small altar, faded photographs of uncle Héctor in an army uniform. Another room had two beds, a small one separated by a curtain, and a large one. On the left was another small room with storage. The kitchen was through another door in the back.

That evening we walked the crowded street. “¿Eh, Beto, como ‘stas? Everyone, young and old, knew Beto. I tried to show off some of my Spanish. The old people smiled and nodded. Mariachi music was coming from somewhere, guys working on cars, teens flirting, the smells of dinner cooking.

The next day Gilberto took me al otro lado--to Nuevo Laredo. My first experience of Mexico. I was scared, being questioned by the border guards, but for my friend it was no problem. I slept well that night, waking in the morning to see the four children sleeping crosswise on the large bed. It was not until later that I understood who was using the extra bed.
Saturday arrived, the day before Easter, and Vicky decided it was time to kill the cockroaches. She heated two large pans of water on the stove. Then, using a smaller pan with a handle, she threw the boiling water onto the kitchen walls. Dead cockroaches tumbled from between the boards. She repeated this several times, and then we all helped clean up the mess.

On Easter Sunday we walked to the nearby church. After mass back at the house, we had dulces with coffee, and I was introduced to the ancient and messy tradition of los cascarones. Vicky and Dora had been saving eggshells, and during the night had filled them with confetti, covering the open end with a glued piece of colored tissue paper. We had a pleasurable time chasing around the house, smacking one-another, spreading cheer all over everything. We finished the day with cabrito cooked on an open fire in the back yard, and it was then time to return north.

I was reluctant to leave. Warm remembrances have remained in my heart these many years.

Biography:

Daniel Trainor is a Spanish major at CSU-Pueblo He has three children and lives in Cañon City.
Cultural Experience

The cultural differences in this world are vast and unimaginable. The boundaries set between one country in retrospect to another are either safeguarded or left untamed. They are either greatly respected or allowed to diminish without a passing glance. This is until something of experience comes in, a change or a second glance perhaps. One way to imagine the differences in world of culture is to experience them.

Such a place of experience is possible, and I have had the opportunity to visit a new and exciting cultural realm. Although it may seem as though I have not visited the deepest part of the country, I have gone where many other people have, and that is Mexico. The cultural differences in this area were far greater than I imagined or thought of them to be. Reading what will be found in distant country is far more different then actually going there and breathing in the same air as those who make the culture.

An experience of remembrance is actually the air to begin with. After arriving in a long flight with little change in cabin pressure or smell, and the only memory of air is the last that was taken in. Stepping out into the new, heavy air was a shock alone. The hue of it was unattainable anywhere else, and the deeper that one would go into the city the stronger it would get. The mix few cars and salty ocean mist made for a new experience all in itself.

Another experience besides walking just about everywhere possible was that of how relaxed the culture was. The ability to take time for short walks, afternoon naps, and just about any circumstance where time is suppose to be of the essence, in other cultures, granting an extra five minutes is practically nothing. Along with being such a relaxed
It is also a friendly culture. Smiles and greetings are more accustomed to the country than politics or worry.

One thing that is never a worry while in Mexico, that I found, was good food. I was impressed with new ideas and dishes that I have never related too. New tastes and scents that would please anyone, and all the while watching the craftsmanship that was involved with many different dishes and superb delicacies was an intrigue to anyone. The ability to watch how certain dishes are made, and actually a lot of how vendors worked and showed their product on the spot which is a huge difference compared to many other worldly countries.

Overall, experiencing the senses of taste, smell, and wondrous sight were all part of the cultural experience that was fascinating. In this instance the border or at least boarding was heavily guarded and a second glance over everything was given. Another thing that does deserve an encore would be the lasting memories of new cultural boundaries. As untamed, as something may seem in a first notice, there should always be the knowledge that it is only new, not untamed.

Biography:

Wesley W. Warmack

I am a 21-year-old male from Pueblo, Colorado. I have lived in the United States all of my life and I have loved every minute of it. I am in my junior year of college attending Colorado State University-Pueblo. I am in my 17th year playing soccer and enjoying every minute of it. I have a deep love of hunting, food, and new experiences, including culture.
Experiencia Cultural Español

En el 2004, me fui a Granada, Andalucía, con mi amiga Uli. Uli quería estudiar en Granada por un semestre. Yo me decidí a ir con ella para hacer un curso de idioma para mejorar mi Español. En aquel tiempo, estuve en el tercero semestre de mis estudios y no podía hablar bien la lengua.

Llegué a Granada sola en la noche. ¡Desafortunadamente, mi maleta no llegó! (Era muy difícil para mi explicar al señor en el aeropuerto lo que había pasado. Por eso, la conversación tardó horas y horas.) Finalmente, perdí mi bus. Por consecuencia, me fui en un taxi al centro. Sin embargo, no sabía donde estaba mi piso. Fortunadamente, tenía un plano de la ciudad. Me fui por las calles y esperé que nadie me robara. Llegué al piso a las once. ¡Estaba tan cansada! Todavía hacía mucho calor, ¡pero no pude cambiarme de ropa, porque no tenía mi maleta! A las once y media, me encontré con Uli. Uli también estaba cansada del viaje puesto que llegó solamente media hora después que yo.

El próximo día, Uli empezó a buscar un piso, y yo tuve que ir a mi escuela. Los profesores eran amables y cordiales, pero hablaban rápidamente, de modo que no podía entender todo. Me quedé en Granada solamente por dos semanas, pero no obstante, se hizo más fácil entender después de algunos días.

Recuerdo que la gente de España tenía un ritmo totalmente diferente al ritmo de los Alemanes. Cuando mis clases terminaban (a las dos de la tarde), ninguna persona estaba en las calles. Pero a las cinco la gente volvía. Siempre había mucho ruido hasta las doce de la noche. ¡Pienso que los españoles tienen muchísimo temperamento! ¡Las fiestas siempre eran turbulentas! Además, Granada es una ciudad hermosa- ¡absolutamente quiero volver! El Alhambra, la fortaleza de los Árabes, es muy impresionante y al mismo tiempo parece tan romántico en la noche. Hay un hermosísimo jardín allá llamado “el Generalife”.

También me recuerdo de una fiesta tradicional. Era el día de los muertos. Las calles estaban repletas. La gente traía muchasísimas flores a la iglesia. ¡Parecía una alfombra floral!
En el 2007, querría hacer unas prácticas en España. Además, voy a regalar algo especial a mi novio en Navidades este año- ¡un pequeño viaje de dos o tres días a Granada conmigo!

Biography:
Ramona Hiess
from Germany (Frankfurt)
exchange student
23 years old
major: American Studies
minor: Spanish, economics
México

Este verano pasado, fui a México para un viaje de misioneros. Duró 10 días, pero todos fueron divertidos. El primer día, volamos a México y la primera cosa que note fue la humedad. Las personas con quienes hablé eran simpáticas y pacientes. No pude hablar mucho, pero hablé tanto como pude. Fuimos a las montañas y gastamos siete días con las personas en Guayameo, Guerrero. Estábamos sorprendidos porque las mujeres nos sirvieron la comida y prepararon cuartos para dormirnos. Jugué fútbol con los niños en la cancha y en las calles casi cada día. También fuimos a una plaza de toros para jugar fútbol. Hablé con el militar de México y conocí muchos amigos. En la iglesia, cantamos con los niños muchísimo y jugamos muchos juegos. También hicieron destrezas. Una familia nos invitó a su casa para almorzar. Hicimos tortillas de maíz con las manos. Fue muy divertido para mí porque pude usar el español. También fue un desafío bueno.

Esta experiencia me afectó mucho porque estaba en la cultura para 10 días. Pude ver la gente y hablar con ellos. Pude comer con ellos y jugar como juegan. Las personas son muy contentos. Ahora las veo diferente. Las personas de México son las más amistosas y simpáticas en el mundo.

Biography:

My name is Mike. I am from Pocatello, Idaho. I like to play guitar, play soccer, mountain bike, rock climb, and ski. I am very active at University Bible Church, in Pocatello, Idaho. I enjoy speaking Spanish and learning the language. I plan getting a Spanish minor from a university.
My Hispanic Experience

Hi my name is Kelly Orchard and my Hispanic experience happened in Honduras as I lived in the southern part of Honduras. It was an experience that I will remember for ever and I will tell my kids and grandchildren as long as I live. What made it such a great experience were the Latin people they are so nice and they treated me like one of their own children. I had several Honduras moms that would help me in hard times or help me learn the language of Spanish. Honduras was my Hispanic culture experience. An experience I will never forget.
Una experiencia con la cultura española

La primavera pasada, cuando estuve in Israel, tuve una experiencia que no esperaba con un parte de la cultura española. En los años entre 1950 y 1970, muchas personas de linaje judío iban al nuevo país de Israel. Habían muchas de España y los países cerca del Mediterráneo. Por eso, hay mucha cultura española que ha traslado a las ciudades de Israel. Yo estaba en un parque en Tel Aviv cuando escuché unas palabras de español. Creí que mi cabeza me tomaba el pelo, pero en unos minutos, era seguro que estaban hablando español. Me los acerqué, y empecé a charlar con ellos de clima, el gobierno, y las elecciones, y otras cosas sin mucho importancia. Sin embargo, me gustó mucho comunicarme con ellos, lo cual era una cosa que no pude hacer mucho durante el viaje (porque todos hablaban el Hebreo), y me gustaba aprender más de la cultura española en los ciudades de Israel.

Biography:
Ian Ebersole ha sido estudiante de la cultura y idioma española casi cinco años, y es en el nivel 201 hoy en día.