

“Yo te apoyo”

Evening glides into the early hours of the morning
I would stir and guide my feet to the kitchen table
where I left my work,
steps away from where you sleep
wrapped in ancient covers, battling the aches
riddling your bones.

Your voice of oak reverberating
within these walls
talking,
laughing,
teaching.

"Si no quieres ser como yo,
cansado y quebrado
mantenga tus estudios, hijo.
por favor."

Knee cracking from
years of silent toil.
You remain
sitting
in that same silence,
that gloomy corner,
a soft blue glow,
arms crossed over a tired heart.

Cycles

The house was always quiet and loud.
You could hear every footstep as though it were right next to you,
the same way you felt
eyes watching every step even when
you were alone.

Floor panels would creak in symphony with the doors
as the heater sputtered out
ash
in the early hours.

I rose when the coos of my mother reverberated
from the walls of my brother's room into my own,
and landed gently upon my ears.

Those same ears listened and waited for the signal,
to send the message to my fingers that remained
wrapped around my phone ready and waiting,
every night,
to call for help the moment I heard
hand meet flesh.
Eyes shut,
cowardly hoping to fall asleep,
to escape.

Anger born from misunderstanding
shook the foundation
of our home.
Pleas drowned in the narrow passages
where only hate and broken trust and pain
could pass through.

Home

Sun pours through open windows
the smell of fresh chilaquiles roaming through the house,
finding me asleep on the couch
greeting me with the warmth of my Mamá's love

Here is where the pozole pot is never empty
where the depression is beat back by the
sympathy of my home.

My Sister gets home
I wonder when she started to work so much
and when my Brother started getting so busy.
Why Mamá is home alone most days,
t.v. noise replacing our voices
football replacing video games
timecards over time at home.

I haven't been home in a few months.
It feels like four years.

Chilaquiles on the kitchen stove,
growing colder.
I'm still so far away.

Grandpa

I sit with the basketball in my hand.
Grandfather calls me over in his kindest voice,
the same voice he uses
to call me over for dinner,
to get me ready for bed,
the one he blesses me with in the mornings,
and the one that I would come to ignore.

words like daggers fly out of the house
into the backyard,
stabbing me.
Grandfather calls me
away from the roaring within
my home.

the ball rolls away from me slowly.
I pull in my quivering lip,
hide frightened eyes
from Grandfather.
he calls for me again,
I can hear the sadness in his voice too.

the ball stops.
I wonder if his son
ever felt so helpless?

Grandfather and I bond
over broken hearts
and all of the pain
that remains unspoken, unseen,
generations of regret.

Entrenched

I have been here all my life,
standing between this living room and the kitchen.
This is my Mamá's kitchen, this is home.
my Brother laughs, cracking jokes with Mamá
She stands at the countertop, cutting up watermelon and cantaloupe
my Sister sits, eyes glued to her phone
smiling along, she rejoins us when she can no longer
resist happiness.
The table is blessed with a beautiful bounty,
Mamá runs back and forth, swift in her movement,
purpose in each stride.
She has perfected this dance, by herself, since the day I was born.
I am home between these walls that remain,
built on the foundation of
her love.

She never claims to want
anything but our love in return.
Every extra dollar
in my Sister's hand,
in my Brother's pocket,
in my wallet,
on our table,
on our plates,
in our closets,
on our backs.

She glides back and forth, this dance is perfect.
21 years, she has not stopped.
I have seen her
broken
more times than I could ever admit
to my brother and sister.
She has been there all my life,
so why is it so hard
to do the same
for her?