

For
you

上善若水

el Mom zine -

Cover & Backcover: Keith Oshiro
(originally for Ziran mother's day 2019)

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Los Angeles, California
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Everyday is
Mother's Day
Issue n.1

el Mom zine

is a contemporary space for reflecting on the roles of every birthing person, parent, and caregiver in different parts of the world. We aspire to spark conversations through various artistic mediums in which we can call into question all of the different ways that a person can be a “mother,” and what those complex relationships sometimes look like. Stories which show love and care to our motherly support systems, and to those that may need healing.

We believe now is a fertile moment to unite our voices by bonding with the idea that everyone was born from a womb. In exchanging stories about the person who gave us life, we hope to voice and diversify the personal, the intimate and the private. Such an act, whether we realize it or not, is political.



Keith Oshiro
Los Angeles, CA
For Ziran

Editor's Note

This first publication of “el Mom zine” is dedicated to Mother’s Day.

As you will see, this zine is a roller coaster of emotions, but sometimes, is this not how we relate to our mothers?

The intention is to create an inclusive space for those who cannot celebrate, without undermining the celebration. It is a space to love, and a space to lift the weight off of those who carry pain.

Mourning the death of my mother has been the biggest weight, which is why I feel the constant need to release, be it through art, writing, dancing or crying. We all carry many forms of weight. The one pertaining motherhood is difficult to unpack because in doing so, you will feel a lot of love, pain, maybe both, or maybe neither! Just remember that feeling is hard, but feeling is healing.

I hope that you can share the mom zine with your mother, someone who may feel the absence of their mother, or whoever is that support system is for you. It is for them. It is for you. It is for everyone.

Let us strive to be the mothers we have, had or wished we had. Let us be mothers to each other and cultivate more spaces of emotional support. Let us try to come into peace with the complexity of maternal relationships.

If there is one thing my mother taught me it’s,
“Treat EVERYBODY with love, support, care and respect.”

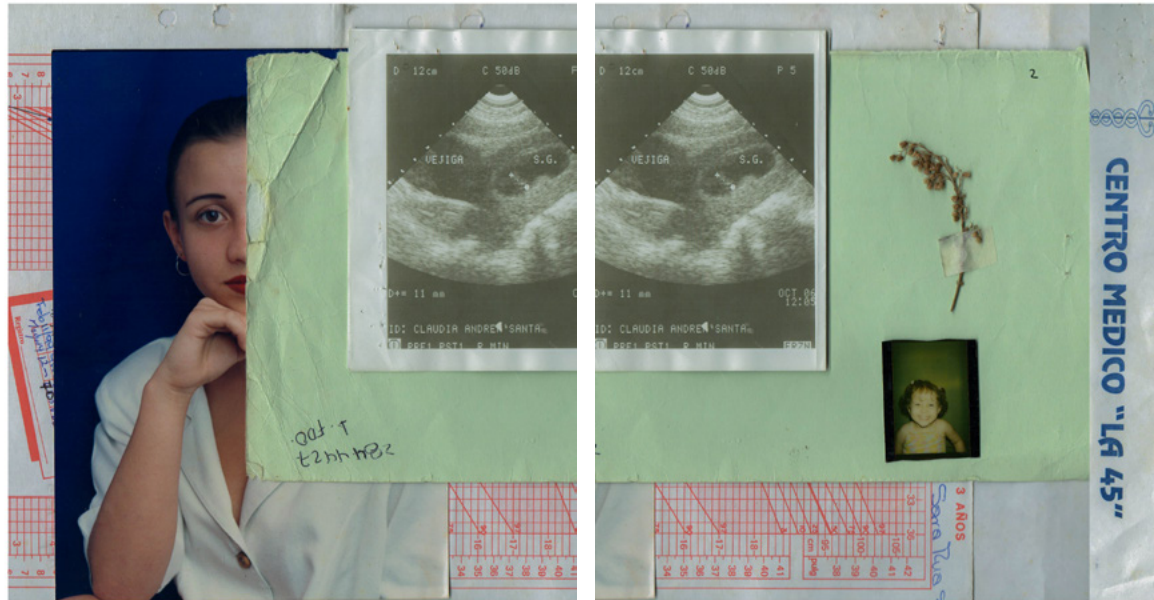
With love and care,
Luisa

Everyday is Mother's Day

For my mother, her mother, for all mothers and all
who are motherly support systems. For those who
hurt for theirs, or those who wish to heal their
relationship to motherhood.

"Today May 7, 2020 I am 22 years old,
 22 years ago today my mother would've had my body,
 my lips, would've been my hands, would've been
 my strong legs ...

Today time
 meets a beginning
 and an end
 05/07/1998.



Hoy el tiempo
 se detiene, y se
 devuelve al comienzo.

Hoy el tiempo se
 encuentra con un
 principio y un final.
 0210511998.

Today time stops
 and goes back
 to the beginning.

22 years ago today she would be 22
 and at this age she would leave all her dreams
 to fulfilling mine. "

Sara Rúa Santa

Poem to my mother.
Barcelona, Spain.
05/08/20



Ruido
Copacabana, Colombia
Portrait of his mother in the hospital

Mother,
When little I gave depth to my doubts by asking you, do you love me?, your answer was always a yes. To give shape to my doubts I would ask, how much? You would answer that to the moon and back. In my daring curiosity I would ask, is that a lot? You would say yes, it was.
Now we are distanced by time, the sea, life and a pandemic. We are at 15.000 kilometros and I suppose it's still a lot... however, today my doubts are others.

Mother,
Who were you before me? Where was I before you? How big was your heart? Where did you find my heart beat? Why did I inhabit your stomach? Why did you host me? Why did you and I choose to teach ourselves to live?

Why did you accept to lose your body to give me mine? Are the scars of your soul bigger than those of your belly and caesarean section? How many of your laughs were sincere? How many of your torments were mine? How many nights of silent sadness were longer than the 4 buses that you took every day to go to work?

And where does all that love come from? Where does all that light come from? Where does all that strength come from? Where do you come from? How do you manage to have such a warm heart in such a cold world? And why does it seem that no wave disturbs your being?

My answers are also others.

Mother,

I want to see you age well, I want you always with your wise character and your imperturbable being, I want to see you tell in your old age the lessons that you lived in the days of your youth, I want to see you writing letters, doing paintings, taking photos, I want to know what you saw, what you thought, what you felt, I want you to tell me all that and to store it in my soul, and that the day you leave I can see it again and feel it because I know you are there.

Mother, we are a leaf, a leaf of a tree, that one day blooms green and bright, and the next day it wilts, then it falls with the cold and after a while the wind takes it, there we turn into seeds and plant another tree from which more leaves come out, leaves that one day bloom green and bright, leaves that the next day wilt, leaves that later fall with the cold and after a while are blown away by the leaves, leaves that turn into seeds and plant others trees from which more leaves come out, we are leaves, we are trees, you were my tree and I was your leaf, I will be your tree, and you, will be my leaf.

I love you, Mother.
With my soul,
Jorge.

-Jorge Moreno Blanco



Valentina Hernandez Velez
Georgia, USA
Portrait of her mother



Maribel Barcena Lopez
California, USA
Portrait of her mentor

RUTA SOAP



I've always known that through her maternity, my mom has been able to develop powers, powers that only mothers can comprehend. I wasn't having bad days, but I was feeling lost. I wasn't getting any job offers, and she could tell I was searching for something. During those weeks, she traveled to Brazil to see my sister defend her doctorate.

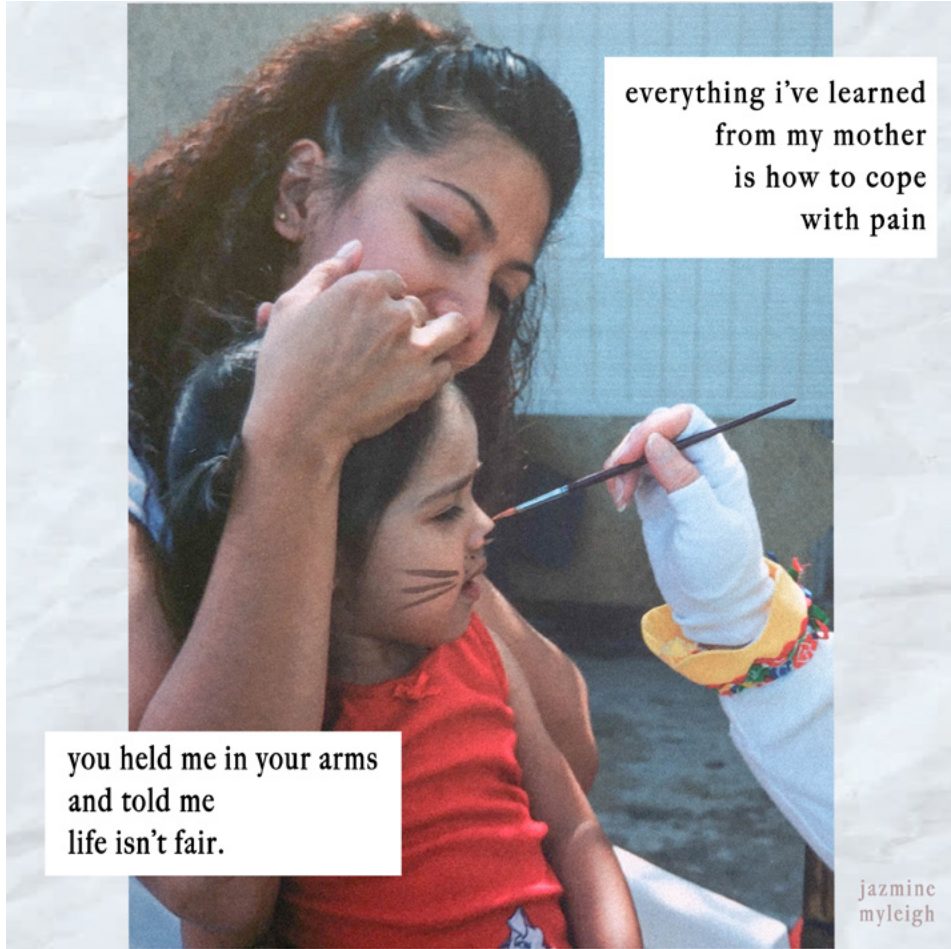
She brought me a Ruta soap, she told me she got it specially for me, she wanted me to bathe with it, that I should liberate myself from what was holding me back. Weirdly enough, things started changing, I started an incredibly fruitful relationship, I traveled from here to there, I decided to pack all my things and cross the world to follow my dreams.

Now I look back and I know that the soap wasn't magic, but what it was, is the power my mom has to give me energy and peace with every action she does for me. I am one of three daughters, so the interior strength my mom has is so much that it goes beyond the three of us and towards anyone who is around her. I know that she made my life change simply with a gesture of love. Gestures that she does on a daily basis. Now I have her miles and miles away, and yet, I feel her love everyday. More than ever, I feel her support, I feel her magic.



**WE ARE CREATED
BY BEING DESTROYED**

- Franz Wright



Jazmine Myleigh



Isabel Cardona



Maribel Barcena Lopez
Tijuana, Mexico
Portrait of her grandmother

The almost poem that almost arrived on time and that you will not read.

May chance take me to your shore
May my tenderness reach you and embrace you until it defeats you
that instinct finds us because it is he who knows how to
that your hours crack with my voice every morning
and in broad daylight
and they appear in your being as a
possibility

May it blossom in you like a healing love
that in remedy doesn't exist
that you invoke me on a vague altar of your memory
where not even she has been able to bring us together
may the moon rush to your mouth words of the indecipherable
unlucky love
to let you see the world by the fantasy back side
always imagined

and if someday I write you a poem
may it not mention the moon, the night,
words:
 love
 wish
 nostalgia
or any other soft phoneme
 a poem that does not reveal dreams
or other's melancholy
 that it doesn't present me vulnerable, reluctant,
 fierce ...
and incapable of carrying your distant skin
 to cross this space that separates us
 that does not belong to anyone
to embrace the being that you are that will never be mine

 May my bad memory keep you as
the warmest presence
and stop repeating to me that there is a garden in me
 already blossomed from living absences
and memories with your voice

 because I can't bring you from afar.

For you, second mother, who's no longer here.
From: Camila Caballero Guzman
Thanks Mari Mar



Luisa Betancur Ossa
Medellin, Colombia
Portrait of her grandmother



Jorge Moreno Blanco
New York, USA
Portrait of his mother



On January 10, 2020, my second mother died of breast cancer which she had to fight for approximately 5 years. From her I learned by force to eat all the soup and to thank. This is your altar and my memory of how we couldn't catch a plane to visit you before all this started.

I love you.

In the TV the mother of my mother.

Highway Ten

I sit, six, and humbly sick
in the back of our black Four Runner.
My hair curls in the wind—Má's mouth
is full of cigarette smoke that fills the car.

Má says, *Oh please, do speak my tongue!*
You forget. Our throats shake, cheeks click.
But Má finds it easy to blow a smoke stick;
she must not have know I have a weak lung.

At gas stops, Má says, *Oh please, fill me up!*
You forget, okay? Our tongues need lots of care.
But Má keeps sipping from her cup—
she must not know I need air.

-Amanda Vong



Janice Chang

In November

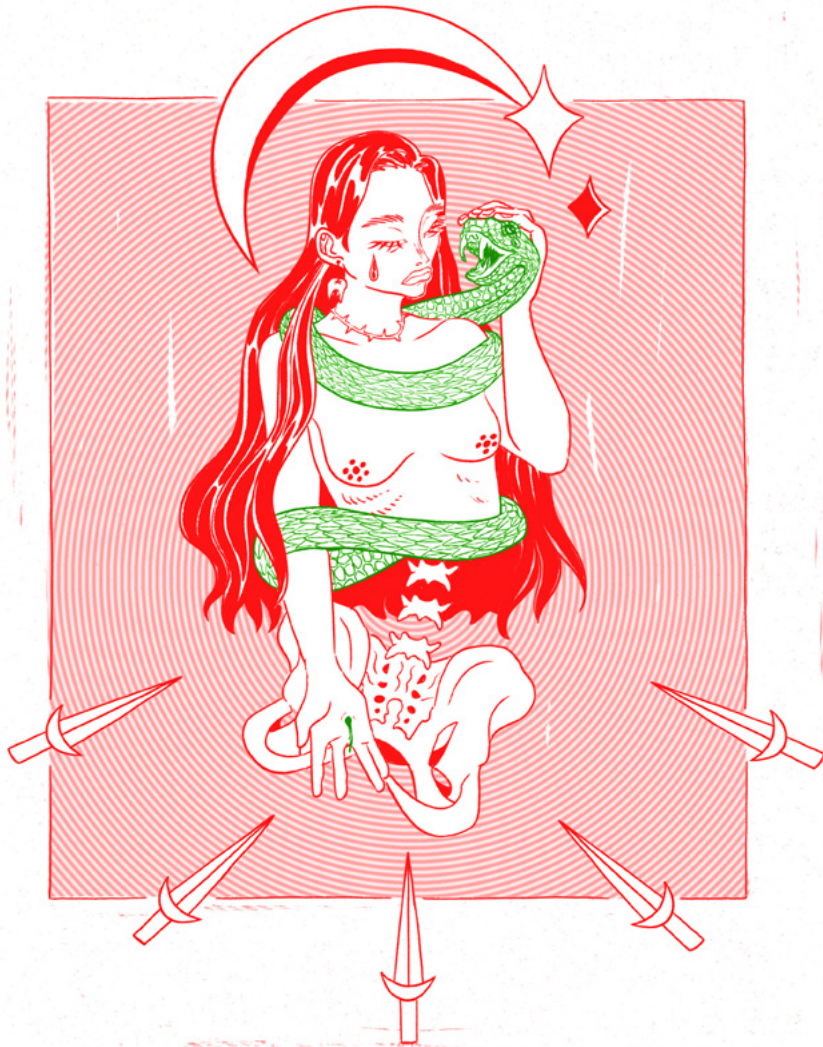
I.
Water has weight.
It takes time for the sun to dry things.
I find a dead gopher curled up in a pile of leaves.

II.
My mother grabs my wrists, and says,
Your body is my body!
I want to be a fish sliding out of her hands.

III.
The woman behind the counter tells her coworker,
*My mom doesn't trust me
because my sister's a whore!*

IV.
The ivy crawls up the side of our brick house.
I imagine it reaching for a cloud, a body,
something soft to burrow into.

-Amanda Vong



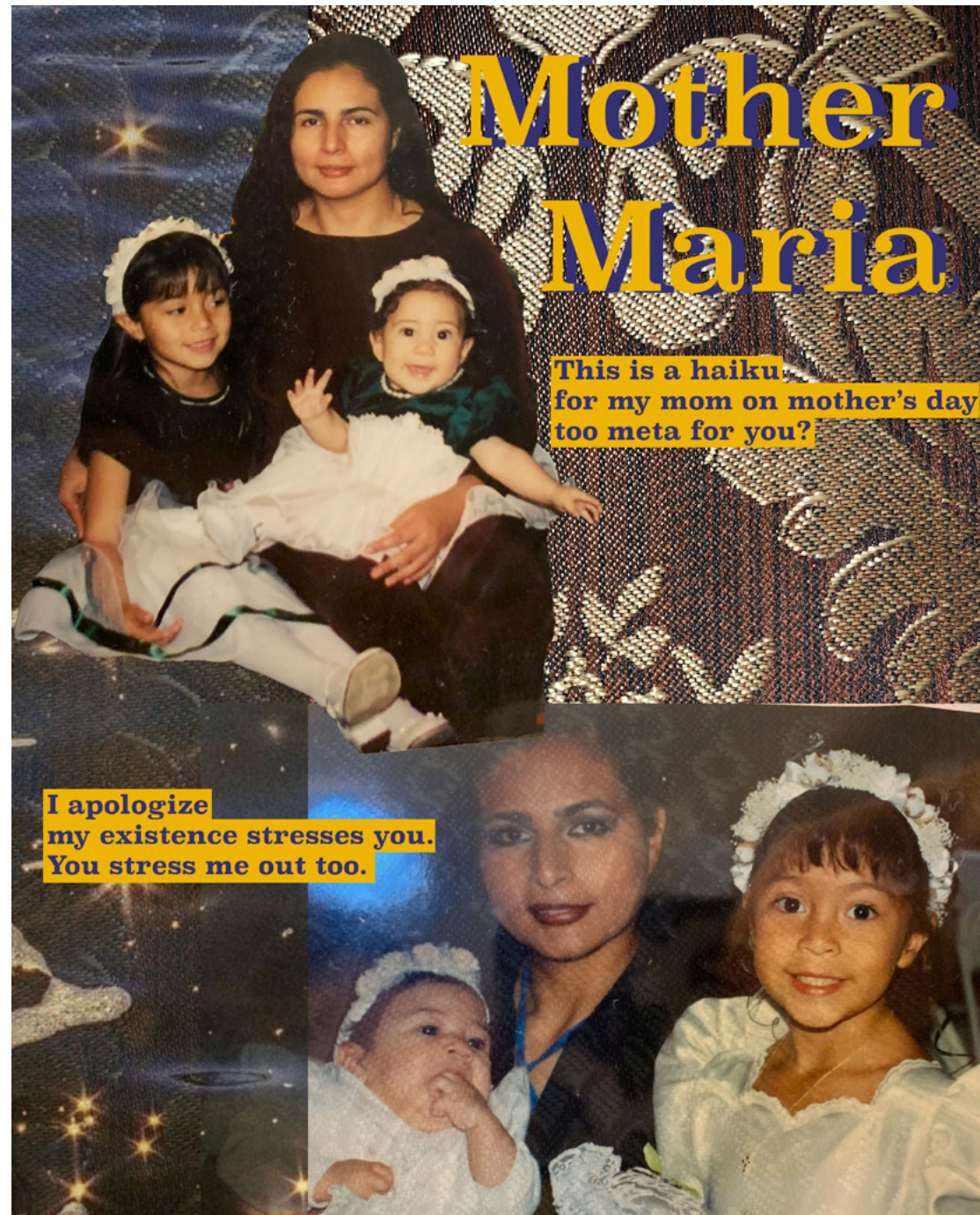
i know you are suffering —
still, i cannot forgive you.

Amanda Oesef

I know you love me.
You tell me every day.
I gotta hang up...

I love you too, mom.
I,...I-Okay, I just did!
I love you, okay?!

Collaboration between the Bonilla sisters.
Haikus by Giselle Bonilla
Collage by Jackie Bonilla



Mother Maria

**This is a haiku
for my mom on mother's day
too meta for you?**

**I apologize
my existence stresses you.
You stress me out too.**



Jamie Polancic

My Little Garden

It's nap time at the babysitter's.
While she is in the other room,
I roll off the couch, steal a pair
of scissors; and hiding behind
a Bird of Paradise, I grab my hair,
and start to cut it until my ears show.

When we move in, my mother
makes me call my stepfather— *Dad*.
The next day, I walk into class with
a bald spot on the top of my head.
The boys call it, *my little garden*.
Sitting at my desk, I graze my fingers
across the spot, feeling the bristles.

For homecoming, I ask her to cut my hair—
Only two inches off, and curl it a bit.
Fifteen minutes later,
I look in the mirror and start to cry.

-Amanda Vong

More than 20 years ago my mom doesn't speak to the one she says, would be the love of her life forever. I gave her his words, those words that beyond death, they will never expire in memory.

These fragments of '89 are from a letter that my dad wrote to my mom, the photo is from '82, he took it when she was first meeting the ocean.

A part of the letter that I wrote along with the collage:

"I decided to gift you fragments of memories. To remember is to go back to the heart, they say. I looked for familiar landscapes, I went back to him, and you, happy in the sea.

Cherish his longing and yours, you will meet again.

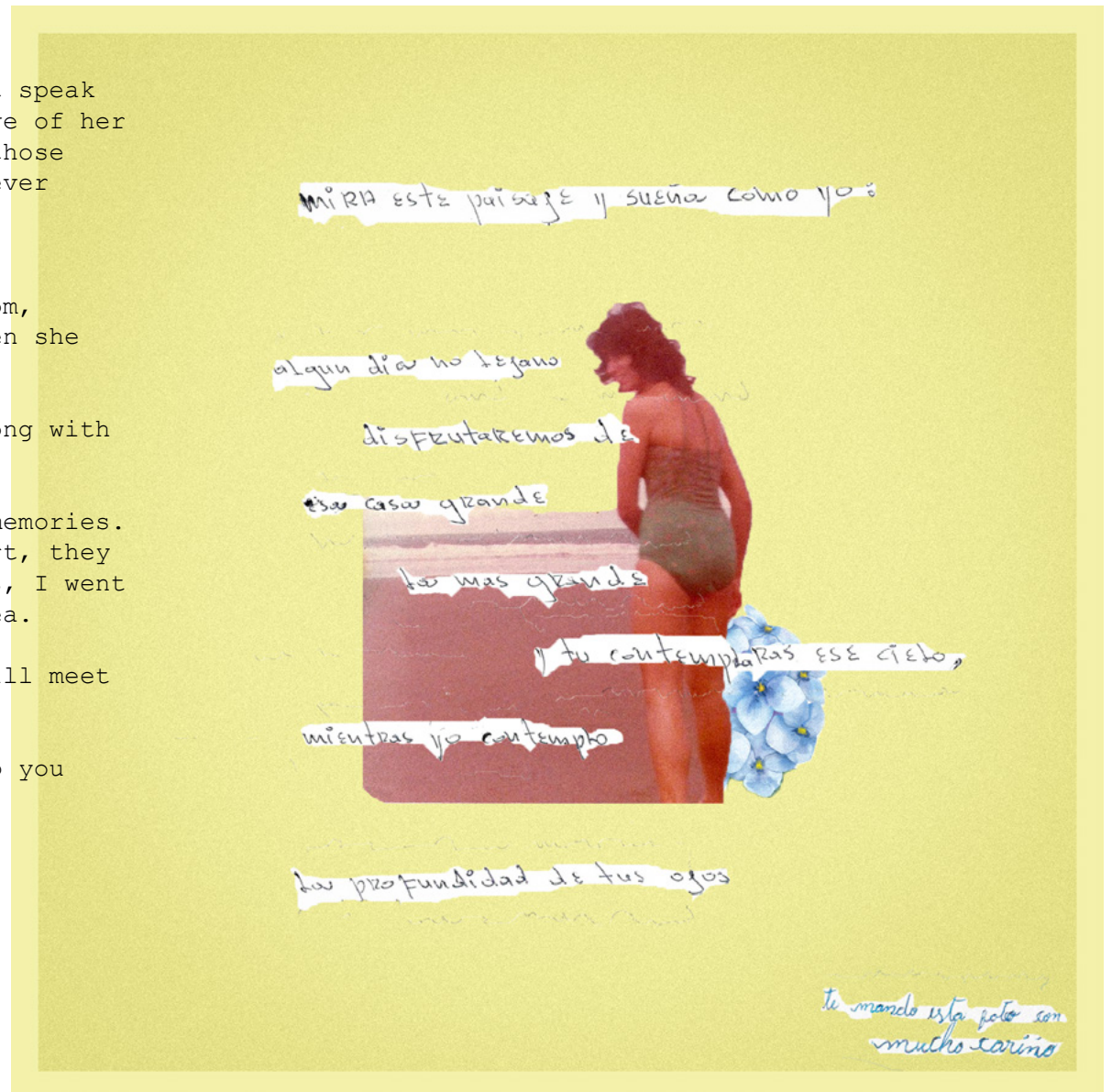
That these words whisper to you, keep you company, never leave you."

-Melissa

Translation:

"sight this landscape and dream like me:

some not so distant day
we will enjoy
that big house
the biggest
and you will contemplate the sky
while I contemplate
the depth of your eyes."



Melissa Salazar Calle

10-year-old promise

When my mom died,
a part of me became

an underground program.
I believed

I didn't deserve to be alive.
I wished I was the one that died.

A week after burying her, I am studying
and I let my head sink into my forearms.

In my vision of the next world, my mama
was playing poker with some spirits.

She said, "this is Tomás, my son,
who did nothing after I died."

I raised my head,
and went back to study.

-Tomás Tedesco



Calvin Khurniawan
Yogyakarta, Indonesia
Portrait of his mother



Photo on the left
submitted by Gus Gavino.

“It was taken in Peru not sure by whom.
My mother (Rosa 4yrs old) walking with her
mother (Shizue, her Japanese name, but every-
one knew her as Carmen in Peru). My grandma
passed over a month ago (at 90), not by covid,
but because of covid my mother could not fly
back to Peru to say goodbye to her mother.”

Rest In Peace

It's hard to care,

it's hard to take care, it's hard to focus,
it's hard to listen, it's hard to eat, it's hard to cook,
it's hard to fall asleep, it's hard to wake up.
In summary, it's hard to do anything that reminds me of you.

It's getting easier, but on some days, I recoil to being
the 21 year old girl that cried 8 hours straight on
a last minute airplane to Colombia.
The one who didn't sleep and didn't let others sleep.

Now I feel asleep and distracted all the time.
Maybe I'm afraid to wake up and go back to being that girl
who cried 3 hours straight, full blast, in the waiting room
of an airport, and whom no one dare give a glance.

Crying is exhausting, sometimes, I can't stand myself.
It's been 5 years since I've disconnected from everyone,
from everything and from myself. Maybe I've distanced myself
because society has proven to me how much it rejects those who
cry in public, and I, have gotten used to crying in public,
and anywhere.

Crying no longer causes shame to me. Sometimes I like it,
because it opens my heart up and reminds me that feeling,
is more powerful than anything, and that no matter how sad I am,
the happiest moments I have lived are thanks to you.

Beyond anything, I like to cry because it reminds me of
how much I love you and how much I miss you.

-Luisa Betancur Ossa

Eucharist

My mother is the saltine cracker
stuck in my throat during communion.
God watches me choke
trying to swallow her remains.
I cannot accept the loss of the woman
who would read Tolkien to me,
before I could grasp a single word.

-Cody Rukasin



Luisa Betancur Ossa
a.k.a Luisa Buñuela
Pasadena, USA

5 Mother's Day

Today May 10, 2020,
I break a cycle of pain.

Today I let go, today I find peace
in your physical absence,
and instead,

I choose to feel the infinite love,
support, and care
which you always embraced me with.

I choose to feel that embrace and,
through our mutual love,

which is stronger than time,
space, and matter,

I let you go,
to allow us both peace.

I love you always and know that you love me.

To: Gloria Maria Ossa de Guerrero
From: Luisa Betancur Ossa

What did your mother/caregiver teach you?


What do you see of her/they in you?

What do you thank her/they for?

What place, song, smell or food makes you think of her/they?

What do you miss most about her/they?

What do you dream of doing for her/they in the future?

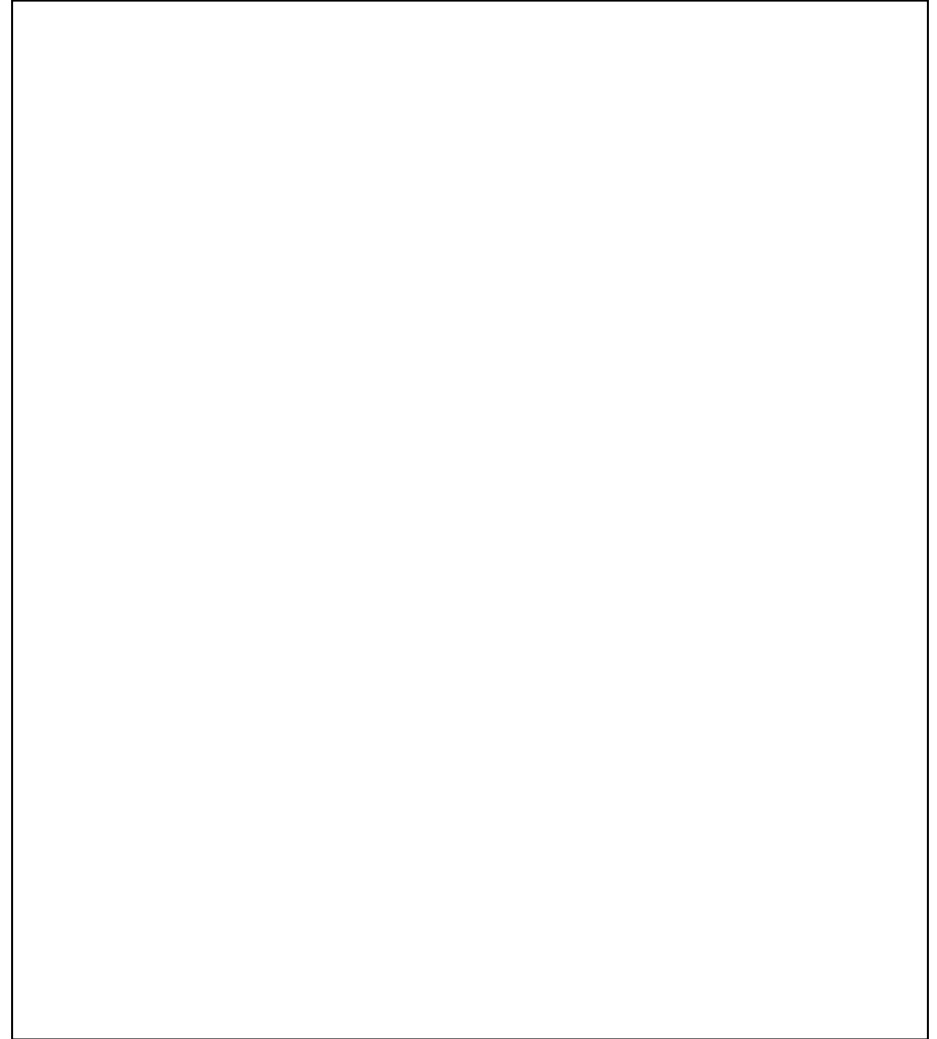


Use these two pages to write or draw something for her/they.

What your heart and soul feels they need to communicate.

Be honest with yourself and with her/they.

Anything is valid.



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Tate Roda-Munar, yes.

KODAK FORTIA 400

to
our
relationship.
Cheers Mom.

