

MEMORY IS IN THE HEART AND SER: L.A. VS. B.A.: An Introduction

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The relationship between the literary and the performative elements of a script is complex. While a script might originally function as a document that guides its performance and craft on stage or on film, it is transformed once it is translated into a literary text where it exists primarily on the page. The written experience is worlds away from the performative. The action has to take place primarily in the reader's imagination. The potentially utopian community that emerges from the script shifts from the physical space in which performers and audiences convene and commune, to the pages you now hold in your hands. This creation of a community of writers and readers is the most radically hopeful function that a journal like *Chicana/Latina Studies* can serve.

This issue of the journal features two scripts that speak to each other and to us from different generic forms. While Monica Palacios is well known as a performance artist and producer/performer of one-woman shows, we present an excerpt from her screenplay, *Memory Is in the Heart*. This shift in presentation is an important one, as Chicana lesbians grappling with middle age are all but non-existent in film. Similarly, the question of medium is central to understanding the excerpt from Karen Anzoategui's *Ser: L.A. vs. B.A.* Like Palacios in her previous work, Anzoategui explores the possibilities of the one-woman show. Rather than presenting a play with a distinct roster of characters, Anzoategui embodies the *dramatis personae*—theatricalizing how her identity is shaped by all those with whom she comes into contact.

Both Palacios and Anzoategui articulate characters at turning points in their lives; they are different versions of coming-of-age narratives. The latter ends as she

arrives at the start of adulthood, while the former gives us a snapshot of mid-life. Questions of desire, belonging, and love drive both of these pieces that place queer Latina protagonists at their centers. In pairing these two performance artist/writers, we can see how identities are imagined and performed at different life stages, and the ways in which limits and losses are confronted and negotiated.

Ser: L.A. vs. B.A. follows Anzoategui as she moves between Los Angeles (L.A.) and Buenos Aires (B.A.) in her childhood and into young adulthood. It traces the faultlines of belonging and alienation, of home and exile. Because Anzoategui's movements aren't linear, the question of where home is located isn't a simple one; *es ni de aquí, ni de allá*. It is not with her mother and her Tia in Argentina—a motherland in upheaval and in crisis. Nor is it easily found in Los Angeles, where ethnic tensions between Latinas/os alongside larger questions of what to do and where to go with her life disorient and alienate her. She finds a place, however, generated from within—her heart and her queer desire.

Memory Is in the Heart also centers on questions of home, and follows MonaLisa, who is approaching her fiftieth birthday, as she takes care of her aging and mentally fragile mother. Palacios puts the aging Chicana body at the center of her piece: Our middle-aged protagonist plays basketball in the opening moments of the script, and her elderly mother is returning from the doctor's office. Palacios asks, what happens to us as we age? We forget, we remember, we come together, and we break up and apart, none of it in a straight line. What we have lost—our memories, our dreams—comes back to us in love, in moments as simple as sitting at the kitchen table, and in typical Palacios fashion, touched with absurdity and love.

Where is home? How do we find it? How do we make it? Is it with our mothers? Our lovers? Our partners? Familia? In the end, these mujeres come back to the heart of what drives us as we move through the world, loving and losing others, and sometimes, finding them anew.