

HOME INVASION:

by J. Williams

FORCIBLE BY GUNPOINT

we

were told to be wary of the enemy. Remain mindful of noises, environmental changes and unusual odors.

We were tired from walking all night, caring for our sick and elderly. The young ones were hungry and exhausted. Our Matriarch suffered as well. Aging and poor health had taken their toll on her. Although she moved slowly, her mind and instincts remained sharp.

We had to continue to push forward until we could find a place to rest ourselves. Over time, our journey had dwindled down our population. Food and water had become scarce. Illnesses and disease had taken the lives of many, too. It is up to us to make the right decisions for our very own survival.

After a long trek under the watchful eye of the moon, we came upon a deeply wooded area. We entered and decided to make camp there.

The Matriarch urged the young ones to gather around to hear her tell a story. She looked at us and whispered, "The stories will help the little ones forget about our dire situation." We were grateful, for without her wisdom, we would have been closer to extinction by vast numbers a long time ago.

The little ones wanted to hear her story about the old days when food and water was plentiful! It was a story they had heard many times before but they loved it! The story described the harmony and balance that existed in the wilderness amongst the flora and fauna.

The young ones began to fall asleep as did many others. The Matriarch smiled as she, too, began to fall asleep. Mother Moon was setting, giving rise to the morning sun. We were soundly asleep as the sun crept above the horizon. Some of us stirred but something was strange...the birds were eerily quiet and so were the insects. Without warning, the sounds of something big and ominous sliced through the air overhead! It was getting louder as it drew closer!

Birds fled from their perches in the trees and took flight. Our young ones screamed with fear as our sick and elderly were bewildered and stunned to know that this was starting again.

I looked at my childhood friend and before we were able to speak to each other, his face was sheared from his head! Blood spewed everything as he grunted and fell where he stood!

"This" was another attack on our population! "Run, run for your lives!" I shouted. "Get into the deeper woods!" The bullets rained down on us as the trees swayed as if to shield us from the threat above! A giant bird came into view as its huge blades

Editor's Note: In preparation for the Esperanza's upcoming exhibit, *Frack-aso! Portraits of Extraction in Eagle Ford and Beyond*, we offer some glimpses here and on page 12 of some of the literary entries and photography in the exhibit that opens on April 18th. The front page artwork, *For the Love of Money*, by Liliانا Wilson is also an entry.

continued to slice the air! Other bullets ricocheted breaking our bodies into pieces of flesh. A young mother had fallen with her little ones who begged her and nudged her to wake up! Several of us screamed in shock and pain as the bullets pierced our skins.

I ran back to search for our Matriarch. I knew she needed help. I found her lying down and barely alive. Blood poured from her mouth as her eyes locked with mine. She was trying to tell me something. I leaned forward to hear her and she said, "Remember, there are good and bad beings throughout the world. Find the good ones and tell them of our plight." Then, she took a deep breath and was gone.

I had to leave her and get deeper into the woods myself! I had no time to grieve for her nor wipe away my tears!

Some of us made it to the edge of the woods only to be gunned down by the enemy who were lying in wait on the ground. We were slaughtered down to a fragment of our already decreased population. Many of us cried quietly so as to not reveal our location.

When the attacks stopped, our small band of survivors came out of hiding. We gathered to pay homage to those we lost that day. Tired and traumatized, we left in search for another place to hide. As many times before, we were hopeful that we could find water and food along the way.

We relocated only to be attacked again by the giant bird in the sky. As I fled, I heard the screams of the young ones and the remaining members of our group as they were being mowed down! The screaming and the sounds of the giant bird faded as I distanced myself. Eventually, I could only hear my breathing. I reached a fence and slipped through an opening. I continued to run, too afraid to look back!

Hours later, Mother Moon rose providing enough light to find a safe place to rest.

As I rested my bloody and badly injured body, I began to think about how things had abruptly changed for me and my kind.

After years of living freely, we have become targeted as nuisances. Our lands were taken, our homes invaded, our water contaminated and our food sources reduced. We're being removed and forced at gunpoint, so that others can profit. Those

others are human beings...the most feared and selfish predator of them all!

Daylight came and suddenly, I heard my enemy approaching on foot. There were several of them! They were communicating with each other in a language I didn't understand!

Closer and closer they came but I was too weak to stand and defend myself! They stared down at me... I could only grunt. My pain was beyond unbearable and it was getting cold!! Their leader knelt down, gently stroked my face while examining my injuries. There was something warm and compassionate about this enemy. They weren't like the others!! They knew that I was caught in a rain of bullets!!

My breathing became more labored but I was still able to send a prayer to our fallen Matriarch... "Mother, the good beings you urged me to find are now aware of our plight." I dreamed of seeing her. She said to me, "It is time for you to join us. With us, you will be free of hurt and pain." I followed the Matriarch, thus ending my lifetime.

This event took place in recent times. We are not Native Americans, nor African-American slaves, nor the victims of WWII, Korea or Vietnam. We are not from Iraq, Afghanistan or from the former Yugoslavia. We are merely feral hogs being killed simply because we are in the way of profit for the Eagle Ford Shale project. ♦

Bio: After spending many years in NY and the Mid-Atlantic region, Junko Williams relocated to South Central TX. The vastness, beauty and solitude deserves to have us become more connected to our environment.

Photos by Junko Williams for FRACK-ASO exhibit.



Amalia De Hoyos de Méndez

June 2, 1926 - Feb 19, 2014

by Susana Méndez Segura

My 87-year-old güelita passed away peacefully at 11:35pm in her Igle Pas' home. Era la last one de sus hermanos. Las tres sisters de ella, como si fuera adrede, se murieron, todas, las year y la dejaron con nosotros, sola; her

brothers long gone. Her husband, Raúl Méndez Álvarez, died in December, 2007. Yo y todos ellos, sus parents, y mis bisabuelos nacieron en Piedras Negras, Coahuila en la colonia, Mundo Nuevo — delivered by the same family of doctors, los de los Santos. Amalia is survived by her daughters Guadalupe Segura, Rosa Barrientos and Amalia "Maya" Méndez and her sons, Raul and Miguel. All her kids were there. Nomas faltó un nieto de California who flew in at 11:30 pm. I'm sure she felt he was nearby in her, now, home, Texas. Her children circled her in her final moments and sang "Entre tus Manos"; con la última palabra, she took her last breath.

No la pasamos contando stories about her knock-off mañas all weekend. I could never figure out if she or her sister, Chita, cussed more. Muy Catolica, but her favorite sayings were "come santos y caga diablos" y "mas frío que mis nalgas" (usually referring to coffee). She claimed that she breast-fed casi everybody in the barrio, usually when my mom's cousins were in the room, as if to say "you know me."

When I was little and she'd cuss, I'd cover my mouth and try to hold in a laugh. That always prompted her to say "¿Y tu? ¿De qué chinga'os te 'stas riendo?" I would say "es que usted es una viejita y 'sta hechando maldiciones." She would respond "¿Vieja? ¡Tu ABUELA!" my answer was always "¡TU eres mi abuela!" She would reply, "NO, TU eres!" as she tried to attack me with her tickle finger. That usually caused me to apologize, laugh more, then run out of range to avoid peeing on myself.

When my güelito would return from his long taxi trips to Monterrey, he would bring back a cabrito. Everyone still remembers her fritadas. Her flour tortillas were the best and she'd always let me make my own little masa ball and roll it into a baby tortilla that she let me cook on the comal. Era seamstress when people could still make clothes without patterns. She made all of mom's Danza Folklorico vestidos and even her own wedding dress.

She always egged me on, including but not limited to: not being married, working gay bars, drinking beer, living with very little money as an organizer and sometimes housekeeper/restaurant worker, living in a casita... the big fight about getting more, finishing, — and dropping in and out of college. She taught me how to tell people off and be funny about it,



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