On the path between life and death
We collect the bones of our ancestors
And suck their huesos clean to feed our hunger.[1]

# RECOVERING THE RAIN

Andrea Hernandez Holm

*This paper explores how elements of Indigenous Knowledge have been maintained and have informed identity in my family across generations despite loss of original language and place. Although my maternal grandmother's family is Indigenous (Rarámuri), from Northern Chihuahua, Mexico, and the region along the Texas-Mexico border, a number of generations have passed since we have lived in a recognized tribal community. However, Indigenous Knowledge is lived and persists. This paper explores knowledge specific to rain and rainy weather (i.e. windstorms, thunderstorms, rain) as part of my process to identify and understand our Indigenous identity. Rain (water) is a basic, necessary element and a part of daily life; knowledge about it remains relevant despite location and is reflected in oral traditions. Elements of thought surrounding rain and rainy weather evidence components of an oral tradition that has served to preserve cultural identity and, specifically, Indigenous Knowledge, for my family.*

Key Words: Indigenous Knowledge, identity, oral tradition, displacement, Rarámuri, Nahua

*Necesito una* map
to get me to the homelands *de mis mexicanos*.
*Necesito un* interpreter
*por que hablo solamente un poquito español*
*y mas malo tambien*.
I don't speak Rarámuri or Nahuatl at all.
*Necesito* a quick lesson in the rosary
so that I may pray to *la Virgen de Guadalupe*
to protect me on my way.

*Necesito* the permission of two governments
to cross the border
even though *mis antepasados*
were here, and there,
before there was a border.

*Necesito estar donde mis parientes estaban,*
*a mirar el cielo como lo hicieron*
to understand their love for their Mexico
and let it become my own.
*Pero lo unico que tengo son*
*mis palabras rotas*
*calabacitas*
*nopalitos*
*frijoles*
*tortillas de maiz,*
*momentos de intenso dolor,*
*lagrimas de agradecimiento,*

*y una fotografia*
*de la princesa de la independencia,*
*la hija del pueblo.*

I have never been there, that place in Chihuahua, Mexico, where my abuela drew her first breath from the adobe walls, those mud walls constructed by the hands of her father and uncles. I have never been there, on that land where her feet padded along paths well worn by generations of her family, there where she promised her heart to my grandfather and conceived their first child. I have not seen the hills rise or the river course or the plants sway as she did, nor have I heard the birds sing or the clouds thunder or the rain pound on the earth. Yet, I have been there. I have been transported to these places through the words of my familia, the stories told and sung and whispered again and again at kitchen tables and under summer shade trees. For all my life, I have heard about the frogs living in the creek, the tia blessing the corn fields, the abuela who could call snakes from their hiding places, the mamá who cured with herbs, the papá struck by lightning. Although some details have diluted over time and distance, these cuentos, and many others, have survived.

This information belongs to the entire family, not just me, my mom, or even my grandmother. It has been a part of our knowledge, shared from generation to generation for countless number of years. I identify this process and these kernels of thought as components of an oral tradition that has served to preserve cultural identity and, specifically, Indigenous Knowledge, for my family. These stories, sayings, words, and concepts contain more than just memories of places and times past. They embody living knowledge about relationships between our people and the world in which they lived in Chihuahua. And although we may no longer live in those physical spaces, because this knowledge remains with us, it allows us to position ourselves in the world we live in now.

Mexican anthropologist Guillermo Bonfil Batalla argues for the persistence of Indigenous Knowledge (1996). He maintains that traditions and customs that helped to maintain identity in the past now serve to generate new forms of identity based on past and perhaps unrecognized tenets of cultural practices. Indigenous Knowledge is the knowledge system(s) of peoples who are native (Indigenous) to an area and implies a world perspective that is counter to the traditional Western European system maintained by colonial institutions (Rÿser 2011). Unfortunately, across most of the Americas, state and federal governments have assumed the authority to assign markers that determine who may and may not be identified as Indigenous and, furthermore, to what rights an Indigenous identity entitles an individual or community. This disempowers Indigenous people. On many levels, it is an affront to national and personal sovereignty that limits people's access to many things, including sacred lands, which in turn affects ability to practice language and ceremony and maintain Indigenous Knowledge. This process of measuring Indigenous identity is a tangent of colonialism and serves to reduce identity to a category in the lowest rungs of the Western hierarchy. The struggle to maintain identity, then, is transgressive because it is an act of self-determination as well as resistance against colonization.

Bonfil Batalla further explains that knowledge of traditions and customs is transmitted primarily by women in the domestic realm. This persistence of Indigenous Knowledge is most visible and viable when connected to all elements of daily life: cooking, gardening, healing, and dreaming. The oral traditions of my family confirm the vitality of these practices and they have informed our identity as individuals and as a family and community. Furthermore, my own writing tradition (poetry, nonfiction, fiction) is informed by this oral tradition and, consequently, serves to restore Indigenous Knowledge. Writer and activist Demetria Martinez says of Chicana writers that when they write from the heart, they are writing from more than an individual experience, they are writing for the

community and are surrounded by "ancestral voices" (Ikas 2000). My ancestral voices speak from my family's oral history. But the delivery of knowledge also takes place through dreams, and even from the pages of academic research.

Generally, we are taught that writing is a personal and private experience. Along this vein, we learn that the process is an individual experience. I acknowledge that writing is often cathartic or expressive and through writing, one may discover self, but I also offer the possibility that writing is a tool for healing. Cherríe Moraga (2011) points to an understanding of writing that makes room for more than the individual. The act of writing, for Moraga, is bound to memory. Particularly for Chicana writers and writers of color, writing can be an extension of the act of remembering and the two inform and are formed by one another. It is an act of re-centering ancestral memory in our conscious knowledge. This notion of writing allows us to understand it as not confined to the experience of the individual writer, but as inclusive of those energies that affect her, especially ancestral energies. This unearthing of self is also the process of unveiling others. The visibility of others is also the creation or re-creation of self. In this way, writing is part of the community, because it entails reuniting or re-membering a collective ancestral knowledge and individual knowledge. According to Moraga, to remember is a rite, to remember is to story; to write is to remember beyond oneself (2011). To equate writing to ritual reinforces the notion of writing as an act of re-membering, putting things back together again. It is a ritual of healing, through which the writer's relationship to her or his ancestral knowledge can be reconciled.

Healing as ritual is a concept that is itself rooted in Indigenous Knowledge. It recognizes that to be unhealthy is to be un-whole or unbalanced and the means to return to balance is through ritual that involves body and spirit of the individual, the community, and the land. Writing is an extension of this process and through it, we can continue to heal, to remember, and be re-

membered. Gloria E. Anzaldúa (1987) also pointed to writing as ritual. She argued that through writing, the writer wields a shamanistic power, a ritual power to both heal and destroy. With our writing, we can create and re-create. It can restore us and carry us forward into the future. Through our writing, we become storied—part of the ancestral story that informs our collective knowledge. Anzaldúa asserts that we originate in our ancestral Indigenous Knowledge (1987). It is this knowledge that clarifies our connection to the land, and to the energies—earthly and spiritual realms—that help us to rediscover who we are. This re-pairing of ourselves with our ancestral Indigenous Knowledge enables us to restore our relationship to values and ideals that can strengthen us and, as Moraga (2011) argues, provides us with a means to survive. My writing is this process of reparation and healing. Through it, I remember and reaffirm the values and traditions of my ancestors not only for my own survival, but for future generations of my family as well.

***Abuelita***

Abuelita,
Abuelita,
I cry for you,
watching the sun rise
in the eastern skies
that you often stretched towards.

I remember that you held English words
on your tongue as if they were fragile,
offering them to me cautiously
as I stood barefoot on the cool tile floor
of your kitchen.

I remember the many
Spanish cuentas you drew
from deep within the petaquilla
in your bedroom.
Giving me the language of our ancestry,
you filled me with the stories
of who I am.

Years have softened the touch
of your rough brown palms
on my cheeks,
but your voice has grown stronger.

I remember you in my dreams.
"Mija," you say.
"Do not forget."
Abuelita,
I promise,
I won't.

**Language and Oral Tradition**

Language is a key to the transmission of knowledge because it embodies, reflects, and expresses worldview and orientation. Lexicon, syntax, and morphology, for example, represent not only linguistic components but also the intricacies in which a language is connected to its speakers and the way that the speakers perceive themselves in this world (Cajete 2000). It is also a means to maintain relationships to specific knowledge and can ensure the transmission of that knowledge from one generation to another (Momaday 1979). Loss of original language, its replacement by another language, means not only a change in

the mode of verbal communication, but a disruption to the relationship that a people has to their worldview. This worldview, or cosmology, encompasses the relationships to the natural, human, and spiritual energies, and includes everything from annual ceremonies to everyday practices. Rarámuri scholar Enrique Salmon (2000) explains that among the Rarámuri, this way of thought is reflected in the kincentric relationship between the people and all things in the natural environment and beyond. Salmon asserts that this cultural understanding emerges from language and thought. Likewise, the components of Indigenous identity—language, land, ceremony, and ritual—are intricately intertwined and interdependent (Holm, Pearson, and Chavez 2003). Consequently, what happens to one, impacts the others. Removal from a land base or interruption of ceremonial practice affects, or is affected, by loss of language or ritual.

But change to language does not necessarily mean total loss of cultural tradition and thought. Holm, Pearson, and Chavez (2003) point out that among several North American Indigenous groups, the English language was adapted for community needs. Linguists also point out that among speakers of the Yaqui language, both Spanish and English have been assimilated into the lexicon (Dozier 1956). In these incidences, elements of non-Indigenous languages have been adopted by Indigenous language speakers and modified to accommodate Indigenous language and culture. In this way, these adaptations have allowed Indigenous languages to persist even when knowledge of original language has been interrupted by displacement from ancestral lands or interference in traditional customs and practices.

In my family, language loss has been a part of the process of colonization and assimilation experienced by many peoples in the Americas. My maternal grandmother's paternal family, the Tarangos, originate in northern Chihuahua, Mexico. Our oral history tells us that our grandfathers were

Tarahumara (Rarámuri) who came from the mountains of Chihuahua. Documented baptismal records in the early 1800s verify that Juan Tarango, my great-great-great grandfather was "un indio" from the areas around Satévo and Babonoyaba in the mountains of the Sierra Madres, spaces that have been home to the Rarámuri people.

Our history of contact, servitude, intercultural relationships, and migration has resulted in a mestizo heritage of mixed languages, traditions, and beliefs that have been maintained and transmitted through our oral tradition. Among the Rarámuri, the term mestizo is applied to Rarámuri people who live primarily within the Mexican population and who participate in the contemporary Mexican culture, including through marriage. They may maintain Rarámuri language, traditions, and customs, but not at the same level of proficiency as in traditional communities (Kennedy 1978).

The Rarámuri language belongs to the southern Uto-Azteca language group, which also includes Nahua, Yaqui, Hopi, Cahita, and several other language groups. Although they are not necessarily mutually-intelligible now, many do share a common linguistic ancestor and, therefore, a common cultural ancestor as well (Schmal 2003). However, it is important to recognize that each of these groups has its own origin stories, social values, world perspectives and bodies of knowledge. And while the Rarámuri heritage of the Tarango family is my focus here, my oral tradition acknowledges Spanish and Nahua ancestry and documented records also point to Apache and mulatta ancestors as well.

Given our legacy, what has developed is an identity informed by many experiences but has persisted in words, concepts, and terms that we hold and even cling to in order to retain Indigenous Knowledge and identity. Every story, memory, and bit of information speaks to the experiences of our community, our

family. For example, my mom tells me, "Cuando llueve con el sol alumbrado le estan pagando a los tracaleros." As I reflect on the notion that when it rains while the sun is shining they are paying the tracaleros, I ask mom who the tracaleros are. She tells me that she does not know, exactly, but thinks that these are rain gods. I ask her where she learned this and she tells me from her mom.

The oral tradition establishes a framework for maintaining history as living knowledge—a knowledge that is transmitted through performance of songs, stories, poems, etc. Participants in the oral tradition are perceived as facilitators of knowledge—they are performers and receptors because, in both roles, they actively construct or re-construct information shared. Moreover, each performance ensures the transmission of knowledge in effective and appropriate ways for the particular context. In this framework, history is an element of living knowledge. It is preserved not as a static representation of past events but as relived individual accounts of those events. The framework of the oral tradition places responsibility for maintenance of knowledge with all participants, granting them authority over information shared and autonomy in the process of its transmission.

The oral tradition affords participants a greater and different type of authority than the written tradition. The written tradition, when upheld as official record of history, seems to freeze people and events in specific contexts, and limits the understanding of that context to the perspective through which it is recorded. The official record, then, is often one-dimensional. In their studies of historical records, historian Antonia Castañeda (1992) and Chicana scholar Emma Perez (1999) point to the use of historical record by Euro-Americans to maintain colonial dogma in the Americas. The historical records held as authoritative accounts treat colonial experiences from the perspective of the colonizer. Other voices are effectively silenced by disregard or total omission. This type of historical record ultimately serves to delegitimize non-Western

stories. Stories that do not fit within the recognized perspective live outside the margins of this record as mythologies and just stories of peoples and worldviews that are subordinate in the hierarchy of Western societies. Perez, in *The Decolonial Imaginary* (1999), makes the point that those marginalized stories can be recovered from written records when we change the lens through which we look for them. If we can imagine that they even exist, we can begin to identify those stories as subtexts within the records and bring them to the center of understanding and knowledge about history. But my oral tradition does not require this decolonial imaginary as it already, innately, allows for multiple perspectives to contribute to the maintenance of knowledge about any particular thing. And through my writing, I am able to engage in the process of making whole what was once fragmented.

**Rain and Rainy Weather**

The importance of rain for sustenance is the foundation for a relationship between community members and the elements of rain (rain, wind, thunder, lightning). Rain/fresh water is necessary nourishment for the human body and the natural environment. In contemporary Rarámuri communities, rain remains the primary source of water for humans, crops, and livestock (Kennedy 1978). In the most remote areas, there is no plumbing or irrigation and in the mountainous areas, wells for ground water are difficult to develop. Currently, like many areas of northern Mexico and the southwestern United States, Chihuahua is suffering an extended drought. It weighs particularly heavy on Rarámuri communities that rely on natural water resources. But the connection between rain and humans is more complex than a dependency on the natural world and is only one component of an entire system of relationships. The significance of rain for communities with strong relationships to the natural world is represented in many aspects of culture, from ceremonial life to daily life. For Indigenous communities, this significance is part of Indigenous Knowledge and apparent in ceremony, custom, language, beliefs, etc.

Wind is also an important component of rainy weather, but is equally significant in Indigenous communities for its association with the human soul. Among many Indigenous peoples, the life of the soul (or souls) is understood, in its simplest definition, as an animated and animating energy that exists within a complex system of relationships between the body, the environment, and the cosmos. Cultural arts scholar Jill Furst describes how the soul manifests in Nahua thought, examining the natures of the yolia, tonali, aires, and ihiyotl (1995). Furst identifies the yolia as the animating force of flesh, associated with movement and sometimes referred to as the "heart soul." The tonali is explained as "[a] life force felt and transmitted as heat." Aires are spirits embodied in the wind and the ihiyotl as spirits/vapors of the human body. According to Furst, the soul is intricately connected to the element of air—that in the human body as well as the physical environment. The soul may be in breath, gas, fog, wind, etc. This knowledge I know, too, from my oral tradition. I learned of aires del corazon and of the energies that are carried by the winds.

The Rarámuri have a complex system of beliefs regarding the human soul(s). The Rarámuri of Rejogochi, for example, know the human soul(s) as ariwá and iwigá, both terms for souls and breadth. They believe that all living entities have souls and the human body actually has several souls interrelated and related to one another. The behavior, condition and state of these souls determine a person's mental, physical, and spiritual well-being (Merrill 1988). These souls may enter or exit entities as breath, airs, and wind. The restless, lost or troubled Rarámuri souls, in particular, may travel in whirlwinds and dust devils (Ratt and Janečeck 1996). They must be avoided and, in some cases, dealt with by a holy person (Merrill 1988). I, too, was taught that dust devils and wind gusts contained something perhaps not evil, but certainly unsettled and somewhat negative. They needed to be diverted so as not to cross our paths, and my abuelita and my mom instructed us to say prayers to send them away. There was not a specific prayer,

but an understanding that a prayer needed to be sent. This instance exemplifies the displacement of my family from Indigenous language and place, but also confirms the retention of a fundamentally Indigenous orientation to the world.

Another element of Indigenous Knowledge that is apparent in my family's understanding of rain and rainy weather is the relationship to lightning. The primary areas where my Tarangos have lived (Northern Chihuahua, West Texas, and Central Arizona) all experience dramatic monsoon seasons that include intense electrical storms and lightning. The lightning contact ratio in northern Chihuahua is one of the highest in North American (Guido 2008). This region is rich with mineral resources, particularly silver and copper. There has been speculation that the minerals serve as conduits for electricity, beaconing lightning to Earth's surface. But perhaps the lightning comes because the people have neglected to pay rightful homage to the spiritual energies (deities) and, consequently, those spirits have unleashed the wrath of storms upon the Earth.

My mom and tia tell the story of the wedding of a Tarango cousin. Held in San Antonio del Bravo, in Ojinaga, Chihuahua, the wedding day was a happy occasion, celebrated with family members who came from far and wide. At the end of the day, the family held a traditional game, a sort of hide-and-seek. Every family member hid from the groom, including the new bride. The point was for the groom to find her and they would begin their life as a married couple. As the sun began to set, he had found everyone except his bride. The search turned frantic as night settled but she was nowhere to be found. The search continued into the night, everyone calling for her, looking all over the rancho and into the surrounding desert. The morning came, and they finally had to call off the search. The bride was never found and never seen again. Family members speculated about her disappearance, questioning whether she had been stolen by a wayward band of Federales, or rebels, or if she had simply run off. My abuelita always wondered if the spirits had taken her as their own.

**Making It Rain**

The idea of the spirits claiming their own is prevalent in my oral history. Papá Jose was struck by lightning (the number of times ranges from one to three times, depending on who is telling the story). According to my abuelita, his color changed—not the color of this skin or hair, but the color of his energy, or his aura. In addition, as he grew older, he became determined to dig holes in the earth. At one point, Papá Jose began to dig a very large and deep hole. He dug a hole deep enough to lower a ladder, and then a chair, into it. He spent his days sitting in that chair, watching the ant colony his digging had exposed. I ask my mom why he did this and she says that it was to be close to the ants and when I ask if he was ever bit, she explains that of course not: that he belonged with the ants, that he was theirs. I recognize the association of this thought with the Indigenous Knowledge of ants as our ancestors, similar to Nahua and Rarámuri beliefs that non-human spirits are intimately connected to our human spirits (Gonzales 2011). Papá Jose had been claimed by both the energies of the lightning and the ancestors.

***Pobrecita***

*La tierra*
remembers the monsoon
lightning that calls creatures
from the depths of her embrace
and she sighs with great relief
and sorrow as they depart.
*La tierra*
listens as,
awakened from sweltering dreams,
toads call to one another
desperate for summer love

and passion in the puddles.
Their songs are almost comical,
except for the longing in their voices.
*La tierra*
knows tarantulas step cautiously
fearfully out of their holes
shy of the thunder
searching for safety.
*Pobrecita uvar,*
my grandmother would say,
so timid

she doesn't realize her strength.
Doesn't she know who she is?

Among cultures of the Uto-Azteca language group, the relationships between humans and the natural elements are apparent in ceremonies and many of those share common elements. Lightning is a vital, moving life force connected to land and body. The souls of people connected to lightning (struck) are thought to be changed, to become holy in the sense that a power or energy has been transmitted to them. A person may abuse this relationship to cause harm to others or choose to honor this power by engaging it in a respected and respectful relationship called upon to benefit the community, such as in promoting rain and health for the crops (Rivera 1966).

In Mexico and the United States, the Tarangos have been ranchers or farmers and depended greatly on rain to sustain their crops and livestock. Unfortunately, in all of these areas, and particularly Texas and Arizona, drought is common. The ability to bring rain, therefore, is honored. My oral tradition identifies at

least one practice to bring rain. According to my mom, when rain was needed, my grandparents would send the children outside to "cut the clouds." They would raise sharp sticks (or knives, if they were old enough to be trusted with knives) to the sky, offer prayers, and make cutting motions in order to invoke rain. Indigenous Knowledge about making rain abounds in the Uto-Aztecan group. Among the Nahua and Hopi, practices lead by ceremonial leaders guided community members in elaborate rituals that included festivities, sacrifice (of items such as paper, flowers, food, bloodletting, and crying), and dance. In both cultures, children played a key role in these ceremonies (James 2002).

***Drought***
A single drop rains down
Lands upon my arm
And I am rendered speechless
Motionless
For a moment before running to the house
Fumbling for children and copal
Fumbling with English words
Of Spanish memories
For Rarámuri prayers
To welcome rain
Bless rain
Be thankful for rain.

Another component connected to rain in the Nahua and Hopi cultures are serpents. In Nahua iconography, Tlaloc and Chalchiutlicue (two deities connected to rain and rainy weather) hold a serpent in one hand and a staff in the other. The Rarámuri also relate serpents to rain—spiritual leaders can invoke the rain by shooting an arrow into a sacred body of water where serpents

dwell (Levi 1998). Once disturbed, the serpents will begin to move, swirl, and stir the water. Their motions stimulate movement in the clouds in the sky and rain will come. This relationship between rain and serpents is further evident in my oral tradition. Throughout her life, my abuelita had a recurring dream that involved snakes flooding into a house. This dream was significant to her and became a part of our oral history and of my writing tradition:

***Margarita's Visions***

She dreamt that they came
coiled around one another
like the night black strands
of the wrist-thick snakes
that slithered
over the delicate
curve of Carmen Calderon's back.[2]
They came in waves,
swimming on the currents
of her dreams.
The soft color of their underbellies
stained the adobe floors
long after the floods
washed them away.

I used to understand this dream of my abuelita's as a fear of snakes and I strongly associated with it because I feared snakes. I dreamt of them often from a very young age and was terrified of them. When I was pregnant with my elder son, I had a dream that I shared with my Cherokee father-in-law. He explained to me that the snakes I dreamt were connected to Cherokee

knowledge about thunder and lightning. More recently, I saw a ceremony in my dreams that involved sea serpents and threads connecting them to the sky. Rather than fearing these dreams, I am now beginning to understand them as elements of Indigenous Knowledge.

***Medicine Way***

1. 1980-something.
I place the pad on my tongue

Suck the slimy innards out
From the succulent on *Abuelita's* shelf.
    The women tell me,
    *Don't touch the cactus on the bottom row.*

2. 1996.
Earnie says,
    *Follow the rhythm of your heart,*
    *girl.*
So I do
Up the mountains, beyond today
Into the garden
Where I stand side by side with my *abuela*.

3. 2000.
They drum and he dances
Deep inside my womb
So intense
I have to lay down.
    It takes my breath away.

4. 2011.
From somewhere far away
*Abuelita* calls
*tewe*
and stands,
above me
behind me
beside me.

**Conclusion**

Exploring and identifying elements of Indigenous Knowledge in the oral history, practices, and beliefs of my family is relevant to me for various reasons. My Tarango family, while aware of our Indigenous "roots," has endured many of the cultural changes experienced by most Indigenous peoples of the Americas. At the hands of Spanish, Mexican, and American societies, our identity as Indigenous has, historically, been attacked, undermined, and challenged even to the point of being denied in order to further the success of colonial practices. In Chihuahua, the Rarámuri continue to suffer the attempts of government and society to usurp ancestral lands and replace Indigenous identity with the Spanish language and Catholic faith. My family experienced loss of land and indoctrination in Mexican society and customs early on. In the United States, my family was not recognized as Indigenous but as members of a homogenous Mexican population. Again, their claims to land were ignored or denied, and their language and customs were undermined through the American educational system and by social policies founded on the concept that the Euro-American ways are the right ones. Despite the centuries of attacks on Indigenous identity, elements of Indigenous Knowledge have not just remained but persisted, and continue to be central to our lives. We hold this knowledge

important to our way of relating to the world and to ourselves. It is ours, it belongs to us, and we are reclaiming it.

***In the high deserts of Chihuahua, Mexico***
In the melancholy of my sleep
I have breathed the thin air
High above the ground.

In memories disguised as dreams
I have run
along canyons and ravines.
As I let the universe carry me forward
I see in the corner of my eye
bright yellow discs,
The center of the sun
And the suggestion of flowers
I don't mean to crush with the arch of my foot.
I follow you along narrow trails
That course like veins
And carry us like blood
To the heart of the earth.
As if by magic
I am tied to you.
Every footfall of yours
Is one of mine
And as my flesh touches the dirt and rocks
Where your flesh once stepped,
I am made whole again
Healed by your being

Of the lies and hypocrisies
Of my waking world.
In the winter of my life
I will close my eyes
and remember the air
above the mountains of our homelands,
a sweet desert taste, and
the sound of our feet pounding
as we run together

## Notes

[1] All poems are my original work and I retain all publication rights.

[2] Carmen Calderon Prieto was my abuelita's sister-in-law. The length, color, and thickness of Tia Carmen's hair greatly impressed her. When she grew older, Carmen no longer wore her hair exposed to other's eyes, but coiled on the top of her head and hidden beneath a scarf worn turban-style.

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