

Catarina Munguia Hassett, A Tejano Family Story

By Edna Campos Gravenhorst

The time has come to tell Catarina's story that I recall from conversations and research. This family story is only the beginning; there will be more to come about the life and times of Catarina Munguia Hassett.

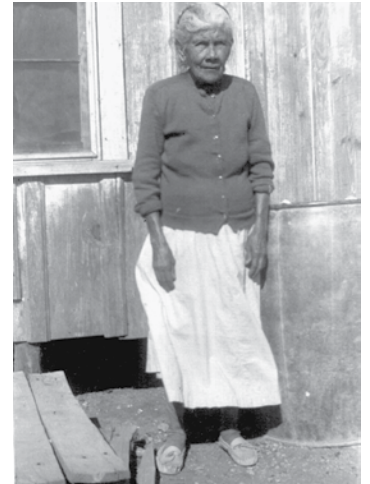
When I was about seven years old, my Mama Grande begun telling me family stories. At the time Catarina Munguia Hassett was about eighty-three. She was very active and her mind was sharp, but her hearing was failing. We had to shout to be heard. She was very soft spoken. I never thought of Mama Grande as being old, she walked miles every day and prepared meals for her adult children at the ranch. Tío Vicente had always lived there, Tío Chuy moved back and forth from Freer. My Buela Isabel, "Chavela", moved back to the ranch to take care of Mama Grande after my Buelo Juan passed away in 1962. Buela lived at the ranch, but maintained a house in Freer until she passed away in 1995.

On weekends when we went to see Mama Grande, I played with my siblings and my mother's cousins. I always ended up sitting on the porch listening to Mama Grande's stories before the end of our visits. I had no idea that my great grandmother could not read or write; and was recounting our family's past, through oral history. It would take me 40 years to start looking for information to confirm that the folk tales passed down through generations were not just stories, but actual family history.

When I was twelve years old and announced I was going to be a writer. My Tío Chuy gave me his old Underwood typewriter that he had held on to it for decades and was still in its original case. When I was in high school, Tío Chuy gave me his father's ranch journal. My Papa Grande Antonio, had started documenting ranch business in 1927. When Antonio Munguia Hassett died in 1937; his son Jesús kept up with ranch income, expenses and managing cattle in the journal. To our family's good fortune; Antonio and Jesus also started recording family accounts in the journal.

My *abuela*, Isabel Hassett Sendejo and *mami*, Consuelo Sendejo Campos inherited Catarina Munguia's love of land and the importance passing on family history. *Abuela* and *Mami* collected and protected photographs and documents for decades, so that one day I could tell Catarina's story. Soon, I will complete the story.

Note: Excerpt from a book in progress.



Mi mama, un ángel de Dios

Sylvia M. Gomez,
January 27, 1957 - February 2, 2021.

Para todos que sufrieron con COVID-19
Y para mi mama que morio de lo mismo
Una profesora de tecnologia y bilingue educacion
And an educator of any child with special needs

Una mujer hermosa
Y un ángel de dios
Cada dia y cada noche
Me dará sus besos del cielo

Mis últimas palabras para ti,
...I love you...
Y tus primeras por mi,
...je 'taime

—Adam Gómez



RADIOACTIVITY (circa 1981)

| | | | |
|--------------|----------------|-------------|------------------|
| lifegiver | deathdealer | cloudburst | fallout |
| timedates | radiates | decays | scatters |
| leveledcity | whatapity | 3MileIsland | nomansland |
| energysource | lightningforce | decompose | disperse |
| warweapon | peaceace | healthaid | industriailpower |
| fearbrought | joysought | futuretell | heavenhell |

—Amelia Cirilo

The re-publication of this poem in Voz de la Esperanza is a homage to my mother who passed in 2019 at age 94. As a Mexican American woman, she was a trailblazer. Once, when she interviewed for a job during the 1950s, she was told that "a Mexican woman would never teach science in high school." She was certified at the Master level in nuclear physics at the time. Her first professional job was teaching first grade in a rural elementary school. Later, she would become head of the science department at La Joya (TX) High School and eventually taught at elementary, junior high, high school, community college and university levels. She wrote this poem around 1980, published then by the School of Humanities at Pan American University (now University of Texas-Pan American). —Dennis Medina



Art by Francisco Zuniga

Las Tres Mujeres: Olga, Carla y Rita

Según Olga Talamante
Carla Lucero es estrella
sus óperas son brillantes
sobre mujeres “de aquellas”

Recordemos que con “Juana”
Lucero se consagró
y a nuestra monja lesbiana
en su ópera exaltó

Alicia Gaspar de Alba
su “Sueño” ya ha realizado
y al colaborar con Carla
gran regalo nos han dado

Con “Juana” la Jotería
en L.A. se congregó
y Olga con sabiduría
un nuevo plan orquestó

“—Una misión importante
es unir a mujeres fuertes
Carla, seguirás triunfante
y tengo algo que ofrecerte”

En San Antonio está Rita
yo te conecto con ella
profe, poeta y artista
es “familia” y de alma bella

L.A. Ópera llamó a Carla
para enorme cometido
ofrecieron invitarla
a producir lo debido

En español, una obra
de su tipo, la primera,
historia esencial recobra
con Jesús, quien pereciera

Se llama “Las tres mujeres”
y son de Jerusalén
centran la historia y a seres
que luchan por el poder

Carla a Rita contrata,
Olga tenía razón,
La conexión fue inmediata,
trabajan con corazón

“—Gracias, Rita” dice Carla
“por trabajar arduamente”
le agradece en cada charla,
su pasión es evidente

“—Soy yo quien te lo
agradece,”
dice Rita, conmovida
“lo mejor tú te mereces,
porque tu arte salva vidas”

Entretenidas estaban
las dos mujeres artistas
pero alguien las acechaba
y era la Muerte maldita

“—Ya déjense de sus tenkius”
dijo Calaca molesta
“ustedes se creen muy genios
pero pa’ mí esto apesta”

La Tilica enfurecida
cortó Zoom echando chispas
quedó bien establecida
su maldad con las artistas

“—Desde Tejas a Califas
voy por cada una de ellas
Olga, Carla, Rita ¿listas?
ahora serán mis centellas”

—Rita E. Urquijo-Ruiz



Art by Carolina Flores

O F R E N D A S

La Ollita

Terminó en ser piñata
—una olla muy gordita
La usaron para ese fin
—por estar estrelladita,
Hábiles manos forjaron
—su útil futuro: ¡Buen saludo!
Era buena para caldos, frijolitos,
—sin olvidar al menudo.
Se esmeraba en los atoles,
—excelente para ponches,
Al mediodía era parte de
—presentar buenos lonches.
Perdió con el tiempo el brillo
—y se vistió de ollín.
Calacas le dió un buen palo
—y se volvió tepalcate, ¡Que fin!
—Enrique Sánchez,
“Don Calaveras”



Art by Guadalupe Posada

A les poetas de San Anto

Desde inframundo buscaba su musa
La Calacaca, poeta y cantante,
Se pasó por la UTSA luego llegó a TAMUSA
Pero, no encontró consonante!
Hasta que llegó a OLLU y ahí sí disfrutó
Al encontrar a Octavio Quintanilla
Sentadito en su lujosa silla.
“Vente Octavio, no te quedes,” así se lo llevó
“Ven hacerles compañía a Carmen Tafolla y a Jenny
también a Laurie Ann y Vocab Andrea.”
A si misma se lamentaba, que hacer con tanto poeta,
“Esta mandada de poetas laureados me tienen atarantada
con sus versos y canciones. Ya no se ni quien soy yo,
que si Flaca, o Calaca, que si Pelona o Huesuda!”

Octavio se resignó, Carmen hacia el río se dirigió,
Vocab cantó, y Laurie Ann se rió...
Con gran carcajada la Catrina concluyó:
“En San Anto abundan les poetas,
eso sí lo sé yo. Pablo Miguel Martínez,
Rosemary Catacalos, Naomi Shihab
Nye, J. Alejandro, Natalia Treviño,
Jesse Cardona, John Espinoza,
Rod Carlos Rodriguez,
Anthony “The Poet,”
Eduardo Garza, Darrell Pittman,
Amalia Ortiz, Enrique Sánchez,
y tantas y tantos y tantas mas!
Por eso me les llevo toditites
a pasar una temporada juntites
a declamar y cantar a sus anchas, allá
por el inframundo!”

—Norma E. Cantú



Art by Lola Cueto

OF SWEEPING

1

A dry cold March wind whistles through
 weather beaten windowsills
 sweeps playgrounds clean where chamacos
 spin trompos
 on rock hard barren ground
 I wrap el zumbel tightly around the belly
 of my beloved trompo
 upon its release my trompo spins into a zumbido
 I grin and my chapped lips crack

2

Amá keeps her frayed broom in a corner
 next to the ice box
 when she sweeps no crumb could be found
 on her kitchen floor
 las hormigas wept

3

When I was inexplicably losing too much weight
 Amá took me
 to la curandera who covers me with a bed sheet
 from head to toe
 sweeping el susto anxiety out of me
 la curandera tells Amá basil leaves are good
 for what grieves

4

Amá believed in a good sweep
 when her last breath swept over me
 I wept

—Jacinto Jesús Cardona



Your love is felt

Your love is felt
 across states
 overseas
 between this life
 and the next

It holds us close
 it spreads out far
 it helps us grow
 despite however many miles
 keep us apart

Our love for you
 is even more
 endless and everlasting
 it lives in us
 every day
 bringing us together
 especially today

First breath
 first steps
 first Christmas, Easter, too
 first time walking the stage
 it's all because of you

You are ours and we are
 yours
 And look how far we've
 come
 how much we've grown and
 done
 always coming back together
 to see and love as one

You're looking down I'm
 sure
 from your home now up
 above
 reunited with those we've
 lost
 happy, peaceful,
 surrounded by our love

Until we meet again
 we'll hold you close in our
 hearts
 knowing that each memory
 is a gift, a piece of you
 that we'll treasure forever
 even though we are apart

—Samantha Flores

Chuy Negrete

Con su guitarra y armónica el corrido cantaba
 Y así, a los trabajadores del campo aligerar su jornada,
 Nació en tierra potosina, pero al año el río Bravo cruzó,
 Su padre en la pizca del betabel también trabajó.

Su canto en favor del campesino siempre floreció
 Gringo abusivo ya no explotes a mi hermano, siempre cantó,
 Al estudiante en el Campus siempre entusiasaban
 Las notas de su armónica y la guitarra mucho los animaba,
 Ay hermano, raza mía nunca dejes de estudiar
 Pa' que el rico europeo ya te deje de explotar.

En las huelgas de maestras y maestros en Chicago
 Su canto, su armónica y guitarra siempre estaban presentes,
 Donde hubiera injusticia contra su gente, Chuy estaba al
 frente

Y con su música y versos la cosa se ponía más candente

Quien pensaría que los planes de Chuy la parca cambiaría

Y a nuestro trovador querido este año lo visitaría
 Porque la flaca entrometida a nadie perdona,
 y sin pedir permiso se lo llevó la cabrona

Ahora todos lo extrañamos en las marchas y en la huelga
 Pues ya no tenemos al que nos alegraba con su canto
 Aunque él allá en el cielo con todos esté de juerga
 Nosotros aquí en la lucha
 extrañamos mucho
 su canto.

—Victor M. Cortés, 2021



Honor the Warrior

Thank you for your service
 and your arm
 your leg
 both legs
 your nightmares
 your marriage
 your life.

— Marilyn Wallner