



LAS PALABRAS ESCONDIDAS

The rule states Silence is Golden,

But what did they know?

Cuando las escuelas quitaron las palabras
en Español so many years ago.

Como un cucuy, los educadores asustaron a los niños, gritando,

“Aquí, Español no pueden hablar.”

“Vete para la oficina porque tenemos un problema,
—te vas para la casa o te voy a pegar.”

Los principales fueron como un Grim Reaper,

organizando la muerte de las palabras en español.

In hopes that in time, our Mexican heritage would die,
—by collecting las palabras and devouring los niños souls.

Las brujas maestras hovering in the hallways

—focusing on the whispers of niños’ voices.

Rulers laid on their desks like first place trophies

—for swatting the hands and given no choices.

Playgrounds were silenced by las palabras forbidden.

Joyful faces scared stiff with horror.

Crying, “No me siento bien y no puedo hablar!”

A blanket of shame covered this country with sorrow.

Father time has cleared the air en la muerte de la voz,

—las palabras now open and free.

Gracias to our civil rights leaders fighting hard to be heard.

La puerta está abierta para ti y para mí.

Las historias de antes no eran fábulas.

Pon atención, a tu abuelo y abuela, a sus palabras

Truth be told and truth of our old.

Manden las calaveras para tras, ya son las horas.

So, next time, cuando juegues la lotería,

O miras a los niños jugando en paz.

Recuerda que la guerra está finalizando.

Ganamos la libertad, ya las calaveras no pueden más.

—Mary Younger



Artwork: José Pulido

Ghosted

I grew up in north Texas, area code 817

My parents bought a house, our piece of heaven,

But next door to us lived a Mr. and Mrs. Weir

Sadly, they were racist—yeah, that was quite clear

Even as me and my sister were sweet and polite,

We were never ever gonna be white

We were not welcomed in their part of town,

With our long hair so black, and bodies soft brown

When we had holy days off from Catholic school

They threatened to call the chota,

—as if we had broken truancy rules.

They called me the N word when I biked

—on the sidewalk in front of their home,

And though my parents shouted back at the Weirs,

—I learned not to roam.

So me and my sister avoided their yard

—and their unfriendly gaze,

And those neighbors just spit out bigotry

—‘til the end of their days.

Yes, they died in that house and dwindled

—to spirit as ghosts

Never knowing that visitors would move in,

—they’d be forced to be hosts.

When their house got categorized as new Section 8

That really gave the Weirs something

—of substance to hate,

Because subsidized houses are rented to

—the poorest of renters

Who are often black or brown, to the chagrin

—of racist dissenters.

Fijate, when you’re a bigoted ghost, your voice

—no longer matters.

Your racist fences and borders and kingdoms

—have fallen in tatters,

So, Weirs, you are trapped Caspers in the house

—you used to live in alone,

But now you share it with Mexicans—so joyous,

—so loud, they can’t hear you moan.

And though you try to haunt them,

—you don’t scare them anymore,

As they dance to cumbias and Bad Bunny,

—they cannot hear your steps on the floor.

Mean ol’ Weirs, you’re doomed now as ghosts

—in a biracial casa,

Though you tried, when alive, to scapegoat

—and get rid of Raza.

Get over it, wake up and smell

—the homemade empanada,

Because in the afterlife, racist ghostly opinions

—no valen nada.

*TL/DR: Racist ghosts live next door to my mom.

—Tammy Melody Gomez