

OFRENDAS LITERARIAS

Ofrenda a Felita



Jueves, 28 de marzo
nunca lo voy a olvidar
pues Rafaela Treviño
nos tuvo que abandonar

Pero en vida ella era
simplemente la mejor
con su humor, la mera
mera
disfrutaba, sin pudor

“Woolly Woop y San
Manuela”

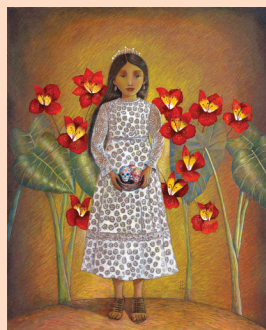
y cuando en Target se cayó
eran chistes para Wela

hasta un poema escribí

Dio a su familia y amigos
lo bueno que ella tenía
de su amor fueron testigos
con muchas ganas vivía

Vuela, vuela ya Felita
y sigue tu vacilada
nos serás siempre infinita
porque eres muy amada

—Rita E. Urquijo-Ruíz



Ofrenda a mi hermana Francisca Urquijo Ruíz

Estaba la Panchi un día
sentada junto a mi nana
cuando de pronto mi tía
le regaló una banana.

El pretexto pa' la muerte
fue comerse esa fruta
ya que de pronto su suerte
la hizo tomar otra ruta.

La Huesuda muy contenta
por el inesperado deceso
la alcanzó, pues iba lenta
en su caminar tan tieso.

Vuela, vuela hermanita
que no te alcance La Muerte
pues es ella muy maldita
y no tendrás tanta suerte.

Aunque fue grande tu esfuerzo
nadie lo pudo evitar
que te agarrara del cuerpo
y en el panteón terminar...

—Descansa en paz, F.U.R.

—Carmen Urquijo Ruíz, Hermosillo,
Sonora



La Calle Calaveras de Violeta Garza para Graciela Garza (1952-2005)

Las dos, ay, cómo sufrimos.
Madre mexicana eras.
Contigo, juntas vivimos
en la calle Calaveras.

Tu me enseñaste a leer
y a los libros devorar.
Que lástima entender—
pobre, no te amaste más.

Te fuiste y me dejaste,
pero fácil pienso en ti
cada vez lavar los trastes
o mi gata consentir.

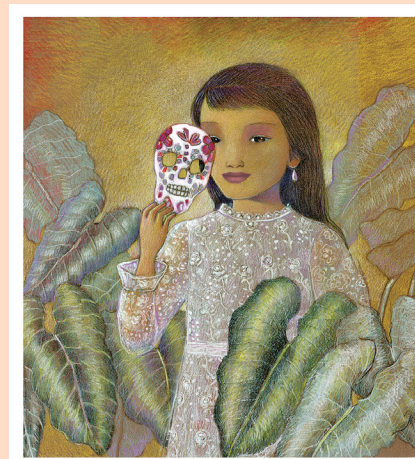
Tu hija he sido, y soy
astuta estudiante.

Si, las gracias yo te doy
ahora que estoy grande.

Yo te extraño cada día.
De tus sacrificios— ¡ni hablar!
Ahora se que en esta vida,
proteges más del más allá.

Aquí me quedo pa' vivir
una tierna alegría.
De noche duermo pa' sentir
cerca tu sabiduría.
Si estarías todavía,
amor propio llegaría.

—Violeta Garza



LITERARY OFRENDAS



Jovita as La Llorona

Note: Jovita Idár (1885-1946) was a journalist, educator, and social activist who advocated for women's suffrage and voting rights for Mexican Americans. In 1911, she became the first president of La Liga Femenil Mexicanista.

Peeking out my window late at night,
I see Jovita. She stumbles down the street
in the rain. Throwing off her boxy shoes,
she pounds the asphalt in soggy stockings
as if block walking in a bad dream.
Her grey hair has fallen from its bun.
Though rumored to wear a white wrap
or some diaphanous nightgown, our beldam
wears a black dress with long sleeves
and high neck. *Sus vecinos* claim *la señora*
has gone mad. "*Su voto es su voz!*"
she wails. "*Su voto es su voz!*"

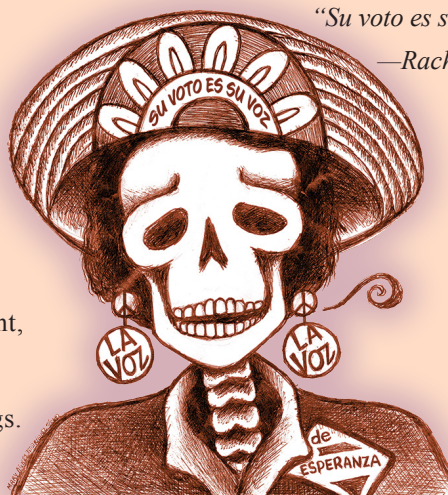
How has Jovita become this howling harridan?
Jovita, nonpareil of reason and sense?
In prior times, Jovita had no vote
but found her voice in the Spanish *lengua*
with pen names like *Ave Negra* and *Astraea*.
She pushed passage of the Nineteenth Amendment,
then admonished mujeres to frequent the polls.
It looked like progress, like democracy,
but burning memories trail her like Hell's darlings.

Men in power knew how to suppress the vote,
while she cannot suppress unruly retrospection.
White Men's Primaries excluding Mexicans
are for her a fresh wound. She recalls, too,
poor people powerless to pay the poll tax.
Imprinted like hot lead on her scalded soul
are the lack of ballots *en español*.



Aquí in our own time, Jovita haunts
our streets, keening lost voters,
knowing *rinches* never ceased
their threats and abuse. Police
raid poll workers' homes, seize
computers, smart phones. Powerful
men, as then, redraw districts
along racial lines. Hidden hands
remove voters from rolls—even
Mexicans' names are not their own.

Jovita cries for her children, their votes
flushed into flooded culverts.
She weeps and refuses to be comforted:



"*Su voto es su voz!*"

—Rachel Jennings

Cornbread and Buttermilk

(Dedicated to Bernadine Mathis, 1925–2010)

My mother used to think she was in heaven
if she had a bowl of cornbread with buttermilk.
Now she is in heaven. But if she was here,
I would make her some for Thanksgiving.
You may feel the same way about buttermilk
as I do. How do you know when it's spoiled?
But go ahead and try some!
You can use the buttermilk to make the cornbread.
Add some corn or jalapenos to the batter
if you're feeling really adventuresome.
Get a bowl and put some fresh cold buttermilk
on your red-hot cornbread and dig in!
I guarantee you'll smile at the first mouthful!
Do this in remembrance of my mom, your mom,
and all grandmothers everywhere. —Don Mathis





My brother Albert, What I remember

He saved me from drowning in Corpus Christi, I owe him my life..
 He let me put curlers in his hair when I was young...
 I got to visit him in Washington D.C. ...while he was living there.
 We told each other our deepest secrets... as older siblings...
 Not enough memories... but those I have are so dear to me.
 My brother paved the path I would follow for my high school education.
 I attended his *50th Golden Class Reunion* in his place.
 He joined the Navy which is one reason why he vanished from my younger memories.
 His *21-gun salute* many years later affirmed he had purpose in being gone.
 After my dad passed away, my brother Albert told me that he dreamt a most beautiful calming dream
 that our parents were sitting together enjoying each other's company and were at peace.
 When both my parents had passed away... all he asked for was the family Bible.
 My dearest brother. Rest In Peace.

—Yvette Presas



Ofrenda for my mother, Angelina Gómez

Mom, I'll never forget the night, seventeen years ago,
 that you told me that 'they' were waiting for you.
 And I will never forget that you told me
 to always remember you as a happy person and to smile in remembrance of you.
 Mom, I'm smiling with tears that I was so very lucky
 to have you as my mother for 53 years.

—Letitia Gómez

Abuelito y Abuelita

In memory of Tiburcia V. Ramirez & Richard C. Ramirez

I lost my last living grandparent, Tiburcia Vásquez Ramirez ("Bucha") in September. I was fortunate to have my grandparents, Riche y Bucha, into my forties. They symbolized security for me. Growing up, anytime our 1968 Camero broke down and left us stranded, I would quickly ask if Grandpa "Riche" could come help us. This was before smart phones—but somehow he always magically found us, he was my hero. As a child, I would be at their home before and after school. My cousin and I would spend our school holidays with our Grandma. She would take us on the bus to Capitol Plaza to shop, the Stations of the Cross on Good Friday and lunch at Long John Silver's. Grandma always had so much energy and got so much done in a day. Then, she would come home and garden after taking us all around town.

One year when CCD was on Sundays with mass included, I would stay with my grandparents on Saturday night while my parents went to mass. That is the year my Spanish improved because I would watch the novelas with Grandma. I have fond memories of so many BBQ parties at their home or at the park. Grandpa always smoked the brisket and sausage and Grandma would make rice and beans. She made the best tacos on Easter for breakfast at the park. I look back and am amazed how much



Lorena's high school graduation from LBJ Science Academy in Austin in 1993 celebrating with Abuelito y Abuelita in their backyard.

work went into those festivities. They took everything but the kitchen sink to the park for an all day celebration. I reflect back and thank them for the security they brought me. I can hear Grandma's voice and see Grandpa's sparkle in his greeting.

Rest in peace, Abuelita and Abuelito. Con cariño y recuerdos, Lorena

—Lorena Franklin