



# Ofrendas

## Jovita and Leonor

NOTE: *Leonor Villegas de Magnón (1876-1955), a close friend of Jovita Ídar, was a teacher, activist, and founder of La Cruz Blanca, which cared for wounded soldiers in the Mexican Revolution.*

As I loiter in the library, Jovita,  
flipping through pages of history books,  
I find portraits of you and friend Leonor,  
the Idár brothers in other snapshots nowhere in sight.  
You born in Laredo, she arriving from Nuevo Laredo,  
you step as young women into the Revolution  
as if it were a looking glass. All is inverted,  
strange. Jovita and Leonor, a double image,  
one reflecting the other: writers  
for *La Crónica* and *El Progreso*;  
nurses, teachers, Carrancistas.  
As she moves south to Mexico City

## JOVITA, MOTHER IN ISRAEL

Sister Jovita, no white cap  
covers the black coils  
loosely pinned on your head.

Still, you bring to mind Susanna Wesley<sup>1</sup>  
or some deaconess or class leader  
of the eighteenth century  
as you stand at the front of the room  
in a long dress and practical shoes.

You speak extempore or read  
words of your own typing  
on women's rights, maternal duties,  
revolution, literacy.

A question comes to me.  
Who in this crowded hall  
of our own time, known  
for its conflict, catastrophes,  
can see, hear the prophecies  
of this ghostly  
Mother in Israel?

Preach that gospel, Jovita.

— Rachel Jennings



Susanna Wesley

<sup>1</sup>Susanna Annesley Wesley (1669-1742) organized and led religious services for neighbors while her husband, an Anglican priest, stayed in London. She was the mother of John Wesley, founder of Methodism, and Charles Wesley, a famous hymn writer.



Photograph, Leonor Villegas de Magnón (back) and Aracelito García with the flag of La Cruz Blanca in 1914. Image courtesy of the University of Houston. Available on the Internet and included in accordance with Title 17 U.S.C. Section 107.

and you north to San Antonio,  
her image becomes a speck in the mirror.  
Stepping back into the drawing room,  
you dream of toppling kings and queens.

— Rachel Jennings

## EL DIA DE LOS MUERTOS - ELLA MURIO -

Simply seeking a better life she  
became caught in the tangled wire  
that crossed the river. Her dress a  
death trap of twisting and turning.

And her unborn baby, sensing the  
adrenaline of fear rushing through  
her mother, decided to make her exit.

Where is the first worry of a mother's hands?  
Is it the child becoming lifeless below her  
that now moves to the rhythm of the river  
or the entanglement of her own body  
dying in the water?



Artwork: Artemio Rodriguez

Who will build ofrendas  
for this nameless  
woman and her dead  
child? Who will sing  
and dance for them in the  
street sprinkling marigolds  
around their memories?

—Jeanie Sanders

# Jesus "Jesse" Treviño, "el artista del pueblo"

Ellen Riojas Clark

San Antonio's heart was broken with the passing of Jesse Treviño, Chicano artist. He lives in all the artistic legacy he has left in the world and in his querido San Anto. I was honored to have conducted many hours of interviews with him for an upcoming documentary on him: A Latino Artist Speaks: Jesse Treviño.

We were both handicapped, me with an artificial eye and he with an artificial hand in the form of a hook. I remember being in his studio, laughing as he tried to use the realistic hand that was developed for his right hand. Both of us discussed how to retrain the brain from left hand to right and what that did to perspective and being. What we would have to relearn to make the dominant change or was it like being bilingual? How would we view the world from a right to left perspective. We concluded with a slogan I coined years ago: Blessed with Bilingual Brains.

He was a C/S (Con Safos) colego desde los 70's. Many dis-



cussions ensued sobre: Is Chicano art a genre, are we artists who happen to be Chicano?; How does our work stand in the broad art scene, etc? Issues of identity as Chicanos and representation were at the forefront of challenging discussions. It was not a time of discovery for we knew who we were but our stronger sense of self was evolving. It was the beginning of articulating visually who we are. My part in the C/S group was to help with equitable representation in our city. What a struggle! We are fortunate to have your art piece, *Mi Vida*, one of your most personal works. We urge everyone to go visit the work at the San Antonio Central Library where it will be exhibited for the next 2 years to pay homage and to learn of this significant time in his and our lives.

Jesse, your art, your work, your love for our community will endure for generations. Your pain and suffering are over. May you relish being with your beloved mother.

— C/S. La Elen, your personal name for me.

## Jesse Treviño's "*Mi Vida*" by Santos G. Martinez, Jr.

I have always been fascinated by "*Mi Vida*," a self portrait that Jesse painted 50 years ago on his bedroom wall. Although intended to be private, "*Mi Vida*" was his first mural. It has been publicly displayed in a handful of venues since 2009, when Treviño's retrospective exhibition formally opened at the Museo Alameda in San Antonio.

"*Mi Vida*'s" grand scale is overwhelming and makes apparent Jesse's immense talent, skill, and execution. At first sight, its arresting beauty against a stark black background shrouds it in mystery and captivates the viewer. It is SURREAL! Jesse takes creative liberties with *Mi Vida* in his visual language and reframes the lens of a standard format. It is a narrative self-portrait that daringly reflects his state of mind: It offers a glimpse into a particularly dark and challenging period during his young life as he faced an uncertain future as a disabled veteran.

With inspiration drawn from "el mero corazón" (straight from the heart), Treviño lends voice to the incredible power of determination, perseverance, and resilience of the human spirit. It exemplifies that uniquely unbreakable bond between an artist and their work. He eloquently paints "*Mi Vida*" with pain, tenderness, optimism, and hope. In the process, it proves to be cathartic. Its deeply personal nature makes this remarkable painting the artist's most forthright and honest work and, a timeless treasure. It is Jesse's magnum opus.

The news of Jesse's passing came as a shock to the entire city

of San Antonio. Best known for his culturally oriented photo realism paintings of the city's West Side and his imposing public murals, many of his works depict the vitality and authentic truth of his Chicano working-class community. He was a quiet but intensely enthusiastic and prolific artist. His determination and unwavering commitment to his art, his community, and his city brought him widespread, critical acclaim. Many know his inspiring story. It begins with a hellish, life-changing Vietnam War experience, and the subsequent anguish of coping with the tragic loss of his painting hand. Yet, he managed to focus on the daunting task of training himself to use his left hand. Ul-



timately, Jesse defied all odds and rose to unexpected new heights as an artist and soared as is exemplified in "*Spirit of Healing*" that covers nine stories of the Christus Santa Rosa Hospital— now, a familiar sight in downtown San Antonio. Completed in 1997, it demonstrates the incredible impact he had on the city and honors his remarkable legacy. Jesse Treviño will be remembered as a towering figure in the San Antonio art scene, and as one of the best local

artists of his generation.

We, his colegas, will always view his work with awe in San Antonio and remember him for paying tribute to our Westside community, people, our values, traditions, beliefs, and our families. Nos veremos pronto, Jesse. Siempre, presente!





# Literary Ofrendas, *continued*



My Tia Sol

## Tomorrow Never Came with You

Thinking of you more  
Cada día de mi vida  
What I would give to  
Hear your voice again  
I know we will reunite But do you know when?  
Pienso en las palabras  
Que me dirías  
I wish I could hold you close  
And keep you safe  
How I would've helped you When you were a wafe  
Can I let go of your memory?  
But continue to reminisce?  
Can you visit me in my dreams?  
Stay a little longer?  
Sorry I persist  
Tomorrow never came with you  
And how I wish I could see your view  
You were so beautiful  
Even in a hospital bed  
Not getting to see you  
In your last days  
Is my biggest regret I'll suffer in silence in my car, In the  
coffee shop, in the bar  
Wondering if they've loved anyone  
The way I loved you



siri g and her grandma

## Elvira Quecano (1928-2010) My grandma, the feminist,

Her fingers were long and thin,  
Como de pianista,  
Her skin was light,  
Campesina de piel clara  
And she couldn't ever keep a secret.  
Some may even call her chismosa.  
She loved chicharrón with papas criollas.  
My sweet grandma,  
Her heart held the entire family  
(She was home for us).  
She used to knit and watch TV  
And cook for many  
(The best food I've ever had).  
Waking up early, and working and working  
For everyone to sit  
At her table.  
You may say  
She was a typical grandma,  
But she wasn't.  
In her 60's,  
She learned how to drive.  
In her 70's,  
She said, "stop"  
And left her abusive  
alcoholic husband  
(My grandpa).  
She moved to live with us.  
And her smell  
Her TV shows  
And her wonderful food  
Landed at my table.  
She was not a typical granny  
She was Elvira  
The first feminist I knew  
(Without knowing).  
My sweet grandma,  
Siempre te amaré.

—Siri G.

The sum total  
of life  
in a  
Cup  
Still wet with Divine dew  
Resting place  
Hollywood Cemetery.  
—A.Nónima



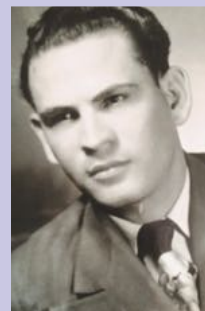
Blanca and her father, Eugenio

## Mi PADRE

RIP, Eugenio García Elizondo  
November 18, 1931-November 18, 2013

Mi padre tan guapo que era,  
siempre con una sonrisa.  
Mi padre tan bueno y con un gran corazón ,  
siempre ayudaba al quien lo necesitaba.  
Mi padre tan fiel,  
en Diosito siempre confió.  
Mi padre se fue al cielo en su cumpleaños  
y ahora es el día en que murió.  
Mi padre lo extraño,  
tan bueno que era.  
Mi padre nunca te olvidaré  
Que siempre, en paz descanse,  
y que un día nos volveremos a ver.  
Este día de los muertos, le mando  
un abrazo fuerte de puro corazón.  
Que descanses en paz.

—Blanca Elizondo



Eugenio García Elizondo

Did you watch me get married To the love of my life?  
I wish you could've been there Dancing with me that night  
When will it be my turn?  
To kiss your cheek again?  
I'm jealous of the angels  
That get to be your best friend  
And how they all dance with you  
And your fun never comes to an end  
Some days I'll catch a red cardinal  
Hiding in plain sight  
I know you see me  
I know you do  
What I would have given  
To have gotten to spend forever with you



My Tia Sol

I can't let go of your memory  
And I will still reminisce  
Tomorrow never came with you Yet I still long to see your  
view  
But better yet hold your manita  
And tell you how much I miss and How much I still love you.

—Kimberly Hernández



## Remembering Melissa Perez

By Meghan J. M. Caughey

On June 23, 2023, in San Antonio, Texas, a 46-year-old woman was having a mental health crisis. She had the psychiatric diagnosis of schizophrenia.

It was the middle of the night, and she was scared that the FBI was spying on her through the apartment fire alarm system. When she cut the wire to the fire alarm, the police were called.

She was outside walking her dog when they arrived, and when they tried to get her into their police car, she got scared and ran and locked herself in her apartment. Three police officers tried to get into her apartment, and one tore the screen off of her window and shouted: "You're gonna get shot!". Melissa held a hammer in her hand, but she was not a threat to anyone since she was behind a locked glass door. Nevertheless, three officers fired their guns at her through the locked door. She was hit with multiple rounds from their guns and killed. The officers there at no time tried to use de-escalation techniques and did not call for trained mental health support.

I am telling you this sad story because I also have the diagnosis of schizophrenia, and I realize that some similar tragedy could happen to me or my peers who also struggle with serious mental illness. I moved to Texas last year from Portland, Oregon. In Portland, I helped with the Crisis Intervention Training for the Portland Police. I am an artist, and I would show the officers slides of my drawings and paintings because seeing them made it easier for the officers to understand what the experience of being in psychosis is like.

([www.meghancaughey.com](http://www.meghancaughey.com)).

I have become very frustrated and discouraged because, despite repeated efforts, I received no response to my offers



Artwork: Meghan J. M. Caughey

to contribute to training the San Antonio Police. I am aware of how hard it must be for a police officer, and I have first-hand experience of times when I have personally witnessed them act with respect and kindness. But there seems to still be a problem in our culture, with prejudice towards mental illness, which held the awful, violent response that led to Melissa's death.

I finally turned to making art to express the tragedy of the death of Melissa Perez. I hope my painting will help honor her life and bring about awareness and reform. My painting shows Melissa walking her dog and her golden spirit rising toward heaven as she left this world. And guns and bullets are filling the air. There is a lot of the color cadmium red in my painting, and yes, it is blood, but also it symbolizes the life force.

I believe that Melissa is in a better place now. She is free. But her four children and family grieve.

May we who are still living honor her memory by making her life count in the practice of kindness, empathy, and love, especially in the face of mental illness.

## Eulogy for Dolores

Aye Que Dolor!

Se murió mi amor.  
Mi prima hermana  
Esta semana

Dolores was the sister I never had.  
So my emotions are beyond sad.  
She was my best friend.  
We were loyal 'til the end.

Juntas, desde cuando nacimos.  
Hasta en la escuela estuvimos.  
Y penas de la vida sufrimos.



We understood each other  
Were so much like one another.  
Even our voices and our choices.  
Como puedo vivir sin ella?

Yo se lo que me espera  
En el cielo, o en una estrella  
It Is God's will, but  
I feel her with me, still.

—Lucille Briseño

Mi prima hermana, Dolores Contreras





# Literary Ofrendas, *continued*

## Recently Departed



### Alicia Segovia

**Fecha de despedida  
May 17 2023**

Beloved mother, sister and family member. Fabric artist, collector and DIY vendor with *AMIGAS*.

*Peace Market* vendor, *Esperanza* supporter. She touched many lives. *Que en paz descanse.*



"Nothing can ever take away a love the heart holds dear."

—daughter, *Lorraine Zepeda*

### Rodolfo López

**April 13, 1940 – September 23, 2023**



*Conjunto Heritage Taller* co-founder, multi-generational educator and musician. Vietnam veteran who served in the U.S. Air Force. Civil servant at Kelly Air Force Base teaching GED classes and ESL. Taught conjunto music at the *Teatro de Artes de Juan Seguin* in Seguin. Elder half of the duo, *Dos*

*Generaciones* with 8 year old Robert Casillas. Believed music bridged generations but also crossed borders being intergenerational and cross-cultural. Loving husband, father, grandfather and friend. Avid traveler, rancher, photographer beekeeper and gardener. Attended Edgewood I.S.D. schools. A gentle soul who lived life to the fullest serving others. *Que en paz descanse.*

"He touched so many different people, unbeknownst to me and unbeknownst to many of us, he never met a stranger,"

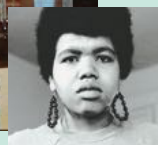
—*Leticia López-Spicer*, daughter

**Celebration of Life: Hosted by *Conjunto Heritage Taller* at Lerma's Cultural Arts Center on November 5th from 2-7pm with donations going to the Taller's scholarship program.**



### Ivy Joan Young

**December 23, 1947 – April 24, 2023**



Native of Washington, D.C. Local and International Voice for Justice, Journalist, Poet, Lesbian and Gay Rights Activist. Worked for *VISTA* in Chicago, the *Venceremos Brigade* in Cuba, *Astraea National*

*Lesbian Action Foundation* and the *NGLTF*. Worked against apartheid and was involved in various national marches including the *National March on Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights* in 1987. Part of *Sophie's Parlor* women's radio collective among others. Organized *SisterFire* concerts and worked with *Sweet Honey in the Rock* among other local and international cultural arts endeavors. An unwavering dedication to justice marked her life. A keynote speaker at the *Texas Lesbian Conference of 1990* San Antonio, TX. Ivy Young will long be remembered in the archives of LGBTQ justice. *Rest in Power!*



### Antoinette V. Franklin

**June 19, 1954 – October 3, 2023**



Prominent African American poet of San Antonio. Author and educator. Mother, sister, kind and loving friend. ESL teacher at Lackland AFB teaching international students. Incarnate Word University scholar and student. In-

involved in San Antonio Cultural Arts community. Supporter and member of the *Carver Cultural Arts Center* and part of *Holy Redeemer Catholic Church* community and the eastside, *Wheatley* community. *May she rest in peace and beauty.*



I just want to let everyone know not only will she be missed. But her reflection in the community is deep. I hope my mother touched your life or your loved one. She will be greatly missed.

—*Alexis Rose (Alexia Lex Frank)*





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