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Finding and Making Home: Poems and Reflections of Undergraduate Children of Immigrants

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University of San Francisco

**Finding and Making Home:
Poems and Reflections of
Undergraduate Children of Immigrants**

A Thesis Presented to
The Faculty of the School of Education
International and Multicultural Education Department

In Partial Fulfillment
Of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts in International & Multicultural Education

By
Gladys Adriana Perez
December 2018

**Finding and Making Home:
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MASTER OF ARTS

in

INTERNATIONAL AND MULTICULTURAL EDUCATION

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Gladys Adriana Perez
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UNIVERSITY OF SAN FRANCISCO

Under the guidance and approval of the committee, and approval by all the members, this thesis has been accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree.

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Date

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgement	iv
Abstract	v
Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem	1
Purpose of the Study.....	3
Research Question.....	4
Conceptual Framework	4
Methodology	6
Description of Participants	10
Limitation of the Study.....	12
Significance of the Study.....	12
Definition of Terms.....	13
Chapter II: Review of the Literature.....	14
Immigration and Education	14
Cultural Citizenship.....	16
Creative Writing as Resistance and Healing Work.....	18
Conclusion	20
Chapter III: ‘I am an Homage to Home’	21
Participants.....	21
Findings	22
Navigating Inherited Trauma	22
Connecting through Cultural Practices	25
Building our own Motherland.....	28
Conclusion	31
Chapter IV: Discussion, Conclusion, and Recommendations.....	33
References	35
Appendices	39
Appendix A: Prompt Poems	39
Appendix B: Additional Poems	48
Appendix C: Researcher’s Prompt Poem.....	52

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For all that my people have given me something without even knowing, gracias.

And while these words are old, they still ring true:

I wish
I could
stretch and scramble
the letters
on my diploma
so it would read
the names
of my
parents and sister
like they have always
stretched and scrambled
for me.

It will always be
para mi familia.

ABSTRACT

The number of children of immigrants within the United States has grown over the past few decades and more so we are seeing a greater number of these children pursuing a higher education. With a growing number of undergraduate children of immigrants growing, there is a need to understand how they see themselves as a part of the United States. Previous studies take into consideration how these students navigate higher education, however, there is a lack of research on these students' larger understanding of belonging within the overall nation. Poetry as data and a process was the grounding methodology that led this study to collect participant poems and interviews that accompanied the researcher's autoethnographical poem and reflection. With counter storytelling as the conceptual framework, collected data were examined to provide insight as to why undergraduate children of immigrants have found themselves bringing their parents' cultural traditions to them and making them their own in the United States.

Keywords: immigrant youth, higher education, poetry, writing

CHAPTER I: INTRODUCTION

Statement of the Problem

*If my parents are the original dreamers
whose dream it was to make a warm home,
who am I to dream of having a place to call my own?
-Gladys Perez*

As the daughter of immigrants, I embody the cultural, ethnic, and linguistic identities of my parents but constantly face a narrative of the United States that has rejected all that my parents are and all I have become. From a young age, I felt an “otherness,” an “immigrant-ness” that informs how I am seen, how I am valued, how I am taught, and how I am accepted into society. Despite the othering I have experienced, I call the United States my home. In a society that constantly rejects me, what does it mean to make a home where I am unwanted? This is a question I constantly reflect on and as a daughter of immigrant parents, I will use my own experiences to inform a study for those of us who struggle to call our home, our home.

As of 2013, 20 million adult children of immigrant parents (CIP) resided within the United States and of these adult CIPs, 36% have obtained at least a bachelor’s degree (Pew Research Center). This rate of degree attainment is higher than all adults in the United States over the age of 18 who have native-born or immigrant parents. This is important to note considering that there is a growing number of children of immigrant who have yet to reach the age of 18 and who will likely pursue a degree of higher education. As of 2014, 17.5 million children under the age of 18, live with at least one immigrant parent (Migration Policy Center). Total, these children account for 25% of all children under the age of 18 in the United States. With data indicating the success of the adult children of immigrants in achieving a higher education and a growing number of children of immigrants residing in the United States who have yet to reach adulthood, institutions of higher education can continue to expect these

children to apply and enroll to their institutions. Furthermore, institutions of higher education are being called to support these emerging adults but are also called to shape and educate all students, regardless of their immigrant heritage, to become global citizens.

It is important that institutions begin to critically attune themselves to the experiences of undergraduate CIPs. Currently, the existing literature focusing on CIPs in the United States is focused on the K-12 experiences of these children and their parents in relation to the children's academic success (Crosnoe & Turley, 2011). Within in the field of education, studies focused on children of immigrant parents are limited to the challenges and academic successes of these students or is focused specifically around undocumented students. Studies focused on undocumented students help inform on their experiences and what institutions can best to do to service them, however, undocumented students aren't the only population of students who have identities rooted in immigration. Identities rooted in immigration exist both within and outside the constraints of citizenship status and for this reason, must be examined.

This study, unlike previous studies, focuses on how cultural identity is shaped by immigrant upbringing among undergraduate students in relation to how they see themselves within the context of the United States. While the participants in this study are all undergraduate students, this study will not exclusively inquire about their experiences in higher education. Instead, this study will in-take their experiences up until this point in their lives, which may include their experiences at their university. This study will use poetry as a means to collect data and help participants process their experiences that does not limit their expression to the rules and bounds of academia. Other studies have focused on how immigrant backgrounds have influenced the student experience; this study does not formally address the students experience in

higher education; however, those experiences will inform the student's understanding of their cultural citizenship.

Purpose of the Study

*“So where are you from?”
I take a deep breath and hold on to it tightly
because the moment I let it go,
I will be torn into two.
“Mis papás son de México pero yo nací aquí.”
-Gladys Perez*

The purpose of this study is to explore the creative reflections undergraduate children of immigrant parents are able to communicate through poetry what their ideas of what they consider to be home. Through using a creative approach, the participants will be invited to engage in an open medium that will draw out physical, emotional, metaphorical, and creative understandings of home. This study will engage with existing literature that addresses the cultural identities immigrants and children of immigrants have in the United States and add to this body of literature by engaging in these identities by drawing similar themes and experience of children of immigrant parents beyond their racial and ethnic background. In other words, these poems will be able to further create a common understanding as to why these experiences are shared, where their roots lay, and provide a means to create solitary among these communities. Additionally, this study will engage and emphasize that despite having a critical legal weight, citizenship and documentation status are social constructs that have historically existed in the United States to exploit communities of color.

The following project will solicit participants to respond to a creative writing prompt in that was developed explicitly for this project. After participants have addressed the prompt, they will each partake in a one-on-one interview that inquires more deeply about the poem itself, its significance to the writer, the writing and development process

Research Question

The principal question for this study is: how do undergraduate children of immigrant parents, understand their belonging within the United States and reflect that understanding through the use of poetry? Subsequently, how does practicing creative writing inform and assist in their understanding?

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is storytelling and counter storytelling. What grounds (counter) storytelling as concepts, is Critical Race Theory. Critical Race Theory has emerged as a movement from legal scholars who have drawn from an interdisciplinary approach to work that names and eliminates racism in the US legal system (Solórzano & Yosso, 2002). Solórzano & Yosso (2002) expand on this definition to also include the educational system to work toward the overall goal of CRT of eliminating all forms of oppression beyond racism. Within CRT, some tenants inform CRT work: the centering of race and racism with other forms of oppression; challenging the dominant ideology; centralizing experiential knowledge; focus on an interdisciplinary perspective; and commitment to social justice (Solórzano & Delgado Bernal, 2001). It is from CRT's experiential knowledge tenant that counter storytelling acts is conceptually conceived for this study.

Counter storytelling and more broadly CRT, are moving against ideologies that create, maintain, and justify the oppression of different people and the privileging of others, such as the privileging of white people/whiteness and the oppression of people of color (Solórzano & Yosso, 2001). There are many names that scholars use to name privilege in the context of counter storytelling: ingroup, dominate, master, majoritarian, whitestream, etc. but all speak to a common understanding of ideologies that explicitly and implicitly practice the oppression of

people of color. (Delgado 1989; Delgado 1993; Desai & Marsh 2005; Solórzano & Yosso 2002) In other words, the power of the dominant ideology and narrative lies both in what stories, ideas, social values, histories are shared and not shared. It is also important to point out that, "The stories or narratives told by the ingroup remind it of its identity in relation to outgroups, and provide it with a form of shared reality in which its own superior position is seen as natural" (Delgado 1989, p. 2412). Because of the relationship between the privileged and the oppressed, the dominant narrative can sustain itself and recycle itself.

It is because of how the dominant narrative is able to recycle itself that makes counter storytelling essential. Solórzano & Yosso (2002) have defined counter storytelling as, "a method of telling the stories of those people whose experiences are not often told... [it] is also a tool for exposing, analyzing, and challenging the majoritarian stories of racial privilege" (p. 32). By centering the voices of people of color, including their other intersecting identities, counter storytelling challenges the dominant ideology by drawing from the experiences of people of color through drawing from CRT. For other people of color or others who identify with the identities being shared, the storytelling serves as a means of creating community among marginalized peoples (Solórzano & Yosso 2001). In other words, counter storytelling functions both as a means of countering the dominant narrative and sharing experiences that are not unique to one individual.

Although storytelling can take up different forms, there are three general forms they can take: personal stories/narratives, other people's stories/narrative, and composite stories/narratives (Solórzano & Yosso 2002). The personal stories come from the author's experience and will be shared from a first-person experience. Other people's stories are shared in the third person and are often the narratives scholars use in their research. Finally, composite stories bring together

the personal experiences of the author, the experiences of other people of color, and other forms of collectible data in order to bring one story together. It is important to note that composite stories are not just made up stories but rather a culmination of lived experiences placed in a social, historical, and political context (Solórzano & Yosso 2002). These general forms of counter storytelling do not explicitly name how these stories are shared. Again, storytelling draws from its communities' practices whether they be oral, written, visual, or expressed by the physical body to tell stories. It is in these ways that counter storytelling challenges the dominant narrative and simultaneously creates a variety of narratives that complicate common racial perceptions and stereotypes that come from the dominant narrative.

Methodology

The use of poetry in relationship to research has evolved into three primary categories: cultural poetry research, poetic allusion, and participant poetry as data (Lahman, Geist, Rodriguez, et. al. 2010). Participant poetry as data will serve as the primary method of inquiry for this qualitative study because poems have been solicited by each participant and will be the primary means of data. This means of data collection has been used by other researchers and is particularly popular when inquiring poetry from youth (Joscon 2008; Bishop & Willis 2014; Furman, Langer, Davis, et. al. 2007). In addition to collecting poems from each participant, an in-depth interview with each participant was conducted for further understanding of the poem and the writing process.

As mentioned previously, I too am the daughter of immigrants. My parents are from El Cuyolito and Santa María Zacatepec, two small towns in Oaxaca, Mexico. Much of my life has been shaped by the culture, language, traditions, and values I have inherited from my parents. For this reason, I have pursued to include an autoethnography to this study in order to

accompany the participants' poems and interviews. Similar to the participants, my autoethnography has acted as a process and product (Ellis, Adams & Bochner 2011). I have written a prompt poem and in lieu of an interview, I have written a reflection using the interview questions as a guide for this reflection.

This study began by conducting initial outreach via email to twenty-two undergraduate clubs, sororities, and fraternities who are classified by the University of San Francisco as "culturally focused" or who focus on a specific racial or cultural identity. I also leveraged my own institutional weight by reaching out to faculty, staff, and student leaders I personally knew to further share information regarding my study. All outreach emails included a brief description of the study, a brief description of my personal relationship connection to this study, three means of express interest to participate, and a flyer with the requirements for the study. Total, there were nine individuals interested in participating in this study and of those nine, seven participated and have been included in this study.

All participants in this study met the following criteria: (1) participants were enrolled undergraduate students at the University of San Francisco at the time of outreach (Fall 2018 semester); (2) participants were the child of at least one immigrant parent; (3) participants were at least 18 years old; and (4) participants were willing to engage in a creative writing exercise with no previous writing experience required.

I met with each participant for an initial 20-30 minute meeting in order to familiarize participants with me as a researcher, poet, and daughter of immigrants; go over the creative writing prompt for the study; set a date for a one-on-one interview; answer any questions they had about their participation in this study. In this meeting, participants were reminded of their

anonymity in the study and of their ability to withdraw from the study. To provided participants with a structure for their writing, each participant was given the following prompt:

In the following exercise, you will write a poem that describes how you envision home. While writing this poem, you are invited to write in as many languages, or a combination thereof, as you would like, and to listen to music as you write. Below is a small prompt with guiding questions to help you write your poem; you are invited to respond to either all, one, or some parts of the prompt. There are no format, length, or other requirements.

If you were to close your eyes and think of home, what does it look like?

What does it smell like?

Is there is anyone home with you? If so, who?

Does your home have a name?

Are you a certain age when you think of your home?

From this prompt, participants developed their poems and can all be found in Appendix A:

Prompt Poems. Some participants also wrote more than one poem; those additional poems have also been included in this study and can be found in Appendix B: Additional Poems. Due to the personal nature of this study, some of the participants' poems included personal information such as their names, names of family members, addresses, and hometown names. When this information was included in poems, I worked with each participant to adjust their poem to maintain a high level of comfort in sharing their work. In a few cases, participants chose to not adjust their poems and keep it as it was originally written; for those who did decide to adjust their poems, the adjustments are indicated with brackets in this study and are close alternatives to what they originally wrote.

Finally, each participant partook in a 30-45 minute audio recorded in-person interviews to further inquire about their writing, the significance of their writing, the writing process, and general takeaways. Through the entire process, I collected five types of data sources: prompt poems, interviews, additional poems, my own prompt poem, and my own written reflection.

More specific details regarding the data sources can be seen below in Table 1: Breakdown of

data sources. There is a total of twenty-one pieces of data that were collected, coded for themes, and analyzed for this study and are further discussed in Chapter III.

Table 1: Breakdown of Data Sources

Data Source	Description	Purpose	Number Collected
Prompt poems	These poems were developed by each participant based on the prompt that was provided to them.	These poems serve as the primary source of data as they give direct access to how they communicate their home.	7
Interviews	One-on-one interviews were conducted with each participant for 30-45 minutes. These interviews were audio recorded and transcribed for analysis.	These interviews served to gain a better understanding as to writing process, significance behind their poems, and takeaway from the writing process.	7
Additional poems	These additional poems are poems some participants wrote through participating in this study but was not their primary poem. Not all participants provided additional poems to share as it was not required.	The additional poems serve as means to understanding other lingering thoughts and ideas participants had as they wrote.	5
Researcher's prompt poem	In being the daughter of immigrant parents and to share this experience, the researcher has also written a poem based on the prompt share with participants.	To further ground this research, this poem will also help in understanding how home is understood.	1
Researcher's written reflection	In being the daughter of immigrant parents and to share this experience, the researcher has written a response in lieu of an interview.	This written reflection will serve to better understand how and why the researcher prompt poem came to be, similarly to the participant interviews.	1

This study assumed that not only would participants be willing to participate in a creative means of inquiry but they would have the capabilities to do so. Because the outreach for this study included a mention of a creative writing exercise, possible participants may self-select out of the study because of previous experiences with creative writing or confidence in their writing abilities. However, though using creative writing as the medium of engagement, participants are given full ownership, authority, and choice of how and what is emphasized in their poem. Since participants' poems have been collected as data, they have not been examined for creativity, word choice, artistry, or other typical markers of "quality" poetry. Rather they were examined for their themes and content in relationship to the prompt presented to them.

Description of Participants

In total, there were seven participants in this study and each met the requirements listed in the first chapter. The participants are all students at the University of San Francisco (USF), a school located in California's northern bay area. USF is a school that centers and highly values social justice and diversity. Since all the participants are undergraduate students at USF, it is important to understand the pool of student of which this study was open to. During the Fall 2017 semester, USF reported having an undergraduate student population that was 25.6% white, 22.4% Asian, 21.6% Latino, 16.9% international, 6.7% multi-racial, 3.8% African American, 0.7% Native Hawai'ian/Pacific Islander, 0.3% Native American, and 2% unknown (Ziajka, 2018). The gender breakdown for the overall student body population the university reports for the same semester is 36% male-identified and 64% female-identified (Ziajka, 2018). While identities cannot be sorted into predetermined categories and boxes especially outside of the standard understanding of citizenship, this data is helpful in gauging from where participants are coming from.

Participants ranged from first-years to seniors with a majority of participants being seniors and from a range of areas of study. Aside from having at least one immigrant parent, all the participants also identify as female. Aside from this mentioned similarity, each participant is a unique individual. To further humanize each participant and contextualize their poems, below is a short description of each participant.

- **Danica** (she/her/hers) is a 3rd year business administration major. As the daughter of Mexican immigrant, she was interested in participating in this study because she had felt that having an immigrant parent made her different from everyone else and it is important to her to voice this experience. Prior to this study, Danica had been comfortable with practicing creative writing and her prompt poem focuses on her mother being the marker of her home.
- **Enya** (she/her/hers) is a 4th year politics major. For Enya, creative writing is something she enjoys doing regularly and is comfortable engaging in it to process her experiences, specifically as a woman of color. Her prompt poem primarily focuses on the recent passing of her Ghanaian grandmother that she never had the chance to meet in person and how that shifted her own understanding of being Ghanaian-American.
- **Ezmeralda** (she/her/hers) is 2nd year sociology major with a passion for social justice. She is extremely proud of being the daughter of Honduran immigrants and uses her first visit to Honduras 3 years ago as her primary source of inspiration for her prompt poem. Ezmeralda is comfortable expressing and processing her experiences through creative writing.
- **Harmony** (she/her/hers) is a 4th year hospitality management major. She avidly writes in a journal to document her own reflections. Although her journaling is not creatively written, writing is something she enjoys. Being raised primarily by her Salvadoran mother, she grounds her prompt poem in these ideas of home.
- **Janell** (she/her/hers) is a 4th year accounting major. Janell is unfamiliar with creative writing but she enjoyed challenging herself with new things. Janell was born in the Philippines and at the age of 9, moved to the United States. Her poem focuses on the different Filipino communities she has been a part of throughout her life.
- **Paz** (she/her/hers) is a first-year sociology major. As a first-generation college student in her first semester at USF, she was very excited to participate in this study and reconnect with creative writing. Proud to be from the city of San Francisco, her experiences as the daughter of immigrants are ground in her San Francisco roots.
- **Raquel** (she/her/hers) is a 4th year accounting major. She had had minimal experience with creative writing given the nature of her studies. Despite this, she was very excited to

try something in new, especially in relationship to being the daughter of immigrant parents from Oaxaca, Mexico.

Limitations of the Study

One of the limitation to keep in mind in regarding this study is its pool of participants. The small number of participants are unable to reflect general or all key aspects of either their individual immigrant community's experiences; nor is the design aimed to do so. The experience that are shared by participants serve as a beginning form of intake but this work can be expanded on. More so, these participants are only able to speak on their generational experiences of immigration. It is important to acknowledge that these experiences will have taken time to formulate thus they cannot speak to what current children of immigrant parents under the age of 18 are currently experiencing. In this matter, this is an area of where this study's work can be expanded on further.

Significance of the Study

The greatest take away from this study is how young adult children of immigrant parents are understood now. At the time of this study, the Trump administration has announced its attempt to do away with birthright citizenship provided and protected by the 14th Amendment of the United States Constitution. This along with his administration's constant attack of immigrants in the United States, instatement of a travel ban, and disregard to the caravan of Central American refugees, it is critical to center the voices of immigrants. While the participants in this study are not the current Central American refugees or undocumented workers caught in an ICE raid as seen on the media, they will continually be seen as a person from somewhere other than the United States. This is a social factor that institutions of higher education must take into consideration while serving these students. These experiences and identities may not be physically seen, but they are constantly felt. In giving time and attention, faculty and staff

administrators can create more inclusive university environments that encourage thinking and community building beyond mainstream racial and ethnic narratives.

It is important to document the narratives of any marginalized people. As of date, there has been little attempt to capture the narratives of young adults who have immigrant parents. Legislation and cultural norms impacting immigrant communities can change but each of these aspects informs the other. Through this study, the voices of these young adult children are further amplified for greater change and call for further unity among all peoples, not just in higher education, but throughout the country overall.

Definition of Terms

Adult children of immigrant parents: Individuals who have at least one parent that has immigrated to the United States who are over the age of 18. Also, referred to as adult CIPs.

Children of immigrant parents (CIP): Children who have at least one parent that has immigrated to the United States who are under the age of 18.

Undergraduate children of immigrant parents: Individuals who have at least one parent that has immigrated to the United States and who are currently enrolled in their undergraduate studies. Also, referred to as undergraduate CIPs.

CHAPTER II: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

With 20 million adult children of immigrant parents residing in the United States (Pew Research Center) and additional 17.5 million children under the age of 18, living with at least one immigrant parent (Migration Policy Center) growing up in the United States, there is a need to better understand their lived experiences. In order to come to an understanding of what these experiences may entail, there are three areas of literature that contextualize the significance of this research and ground it in the existing literature: immigration and education; cultural citizenship; and creative writing as resistance and healing work. These three areas of literature will indicate how researchers have, or have not, researched children of immigrants and the use of poetry as a form of inquiry.

Immigration and Education

To gain a better understanding of the social role immigration has on current undergraduate students, it is important to review the relationship between the systems of immigration and education these participants have inherited. International immigration has been a foundational characteristic of the United States throughout history but over the 20th century much of the federal immigration acts, such as the Immigration and Nationality Act of 1965, the 1986 Immigration Reform and Control Act, and the 1990 Immigration Act, focused on family reunification. These acts brought immigrants from all over the world and protected mixed-status families. However, as the turn into the 21st century neared, federal immigration laws began to become stricter making it more difficult for legal immigration to remain accessible to immigrants.

The turn of the century also lead states to have greater flexibility in how they spend federal funds for education (Contreras, 2002). This meant that states were able to determine

where to focus their efforts and resources during a time that had an influx of diverse students. It is here that many state-specific laws, initiatives, and policies were developed in regard to children of immigrant parents. An early indication as to how the public was thinking prior to the turn of the century was the Supreme Court's decision on *Plyer vs. Doe* in 1982 that ruled that undocumented children had the right to a public K-12 education. In California specifically, different state propositions were either presented or passed as legislation that impacted the level of quality, access, and rights of children of immigrant parents received in their schools. While many of these propositions are no longer in place, the residual anti-immigrant sentiments are carried through social means that still impact children regardless of their immigrant background.

Regardless of the federal and state legislation and social meanings around immigration, children of immigrant parents have persisted forward with their education. Over the past few years, more literature has emerged in how teachers and staff can support and better include their students from immigrant families (Rubinstein-Avila, 2017). The literature indicates a shift in pedagogy, practice, and knowledge teachers and staff are developing. While this shift moves towards a more positive direction, it remains at the K-12 level.

In examining the literature specifically addressing higher education, undocumented students are at the heart of the conversation (Chen & Rhoads, 2016). The literature on undocumented students in higher education is necessary to bring awareness and action for a population of students that has continually been marginalized. However, the literature that does exist focuses primarily on the narratives of resistance undocumented students and the support that have been created to make institutions of higher education more accessible (Barnhardt, Ramos, & Reyes, 2013; Chen & Rhoads, 2016; Cisneros & Cadenas, 2017; Gámez, Lopez, & Overton, 2017; Gildersleeve & Vigil, 2015; Nguyen & Hoy, 2015; Southern, 2016; Suárez-

Orozco et al., 2015). What is important to note about these efforts in these articles is the importance of voice. Through institution-based research, Negrón-Gonzales names the culture regarding undocumented students as silence (2015). In other words, no mention of undocumented students in every conversation is an erasure of their needs and existences. Without a greater intentional cultural shift in higher education to be more inclusive, voices of undocumented students, immigrant students, and close relatives of immigrants will remain where they have intentionally been placed, the margins.

Cultural Citizenship

At its core, citizenship describes the rights of belonging within a specific group. Historically, citizenship has only been understood and studied under a legal framework where rights were the principal form of belonging. Over the past three centuries, citizenship has been expanded to have a civil, political, and cultural significance that ultimately enforces or denies the full belonging of an individual (Negrón-Gonzales, 2015). While citizenship, as a form legal belong, has been studied and argued, cultural citizenship within the United States has emerged to address the cultural implications of citizenship.

Within in education, cultural citizenship has been studied in different avenues. In María E. Fránquiz and Carol Brochin-Ceballos's study, they use cultural citizenship as a means to include the experiences of Mexican-American students in the classroom (2006). By understanding that the cultural norm in U.S. classrooms is Eurocentric, Fránquiz and Brochin-Ceballos affirm the experiences of their students by centering their cultural identities within the class activities. Though doing this, the classroom cultural norm was shifted away from being completely Eurocentric. The shift that Fránquiz and Brochin-Ceballos created in their work was

ideological and was limited to the scope of the classroom since the classroom was the group in which all the students pertained citizenship to in this study.

Where in as Fránquiz and Brochin-Ceballos's study incorporated the cultural identities of the students had to redefine cultural citizenship in the classroom, Rina Benmayor uses cultural citizenship as a means to give her participants agency within a larger institution. In Benmayor's article, first-generation Mexican students shared their oral histories of attending California State University, Monterey Bay (CSUMB) (2002). From these oral histories, participating students revealed how CSUMB lacked the institutional support they need which meant the students did not receive full citizenship rights within the CSUMB community. Within a larger structure like a university, cultural citizenship can serve as a means to create new cultural meaning and give agency to those are marginalized. In this way, cultural citizenship creates a new way of practicing citizenship outside the bound of its traditional notions and begins to redefine what a student CSUMB student looks like.

Under the political climate that the Trump administration has lead, immigration and the rights to legal citizenship are highly contested. Prior to and throughout the Trump administration, undocumented youth have been at the forth front of taking their cultural citizenship agency and turning into political action. Susana M. Muñoz's recent study on the critical and legal consciousness of undocumented youth activist exhibits how cultural citizenship can lead to collective organized efforts (2018). "Enactment of cultural citizenship is a mechanism of resistance of which a community can reimagine and renegotiate the notion of citizenship beyond hegemonic notions of belongingness" (Muñoz, 2018, p. 80). Through developing their own cultural citizenship, finding community through agency, undocumented youth in Muñoz's study have politically mobilized. In this study, cultural citizenship was used to challenge other facets of

citizenship and this is where much of the literature within the United States regarding cultural citizenship lies. Nonetheless, cultural citizenship remains a key element of understanding how a person or peoples can navigate their belonging, or lack thereof, within a larger population. The duality of cultural citizenship and the ways in which it has been built upon have expanded a larger understanding of citizenship, particularly within youth. What lacks in the literature is research that doesn't center legal citizenship as a means to cultural citizenship with young adults.

Creative Writing as Resistance and Healing Work

Creative writing has served as a pillar of the art and expression for many cultures throughout time, more so for marginalized peoples. To fully grasp why creative writing is an essential tool and process in this study, it is important to note the foundational works of Audre Lorde and Gloria Anzaldúa whose approaches and practices of creative writing have lent it to become a tool for resistance and healing.

Audre Lorde's essay, "Poetry is Not a Luxury," speaks on turning silence to words of resistance and this is especially important for women. Throughout her work, Lorde used creative writing to bring life to a critical intention of her work. Lorde writes, "...it is through poetry that we give name to those ideas which are, until the poem, nameless and formless-about to be birthed, but already felt" (Lorde 1984, p. 36). In this particular essay, Lorde names the essential work poetry has in naming the nameless through the process of turning it into an idea and turning the idea into action. These actions can challenge and change our ways of thinking or impact how we live our daily lives; nonetheless, these actions are rooted in new and creative ways of thinking sprung from the fruits of poetry.

In more recent scholarly articles, Lorde's essay continues to be used as a foundational understanding of why writing is important and what it can lead to. For example, in Stephanie

Evans' article, writing is a central healing tradition for black women, particularly for their mental health. Evans examines the memoirs, poetry, and song lyrics of black woman writers in order to highlight how they can be used for mental health practices (2015). While mental health was an exclusive aim of Lorde's essay, it does need fit into her understanding of what it means to give something a name for the purposes of an action through the action of writing. Likewise, writing as Lorde as presented it, can serve a medium in which students and teachers can meet and come to understand each other outside the bounds of grammar and academic standards (Warwick 2012).

Another prolific and noteworthy writer and poet is Gloria Anzaldúa. In Anzaldúa most notable work, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza*, she uses her writing to convey powerful messages of tension, pain, and duality in being a spiritual queer Chicana. Much of her work in *Borderlands* is written in a combination of poems, stories, memories, myths both in English and Spanish, in what she calls, "a new poetics" (Anzaldúa 1989, p. 49). Anzaldúa theorizes in her writing as much as she theorizes through her writing. Poetry, and more broadly creative writing, is critical and necessary for Anzaldúa to fully bring to life her work because of interregal storytelling is to her indigenous and Chicana roots. What is significant about Anzaldúa's work for many scholars is her challenging and changing how rhetorical devices are used in writing. Different scholars over time have come to understand how Anzaldúa writing introduces and emphasized different ways of knowing that are rooted in indigenous knowledge (Baca 2008; Asher 2009; Hua 2014). Though theorizing and practice, Anzaldúa demonstrated a means of resisting Eurocentric knowledge. It is this resistance that has made Anzaldúa's writing profoundly significant.

Both Lorde and Anzaldúa have used poetry, and more broadly creative writing, to empower and uplift. Creative writing provides a critical role in creating, amplifying, and understanding people from marginalized communities. It is important to acknowledge how written resistance work has come to be. While Lorde and Anzaldúa are not the first writers to write about the resistance and healing contain, they are critical women of color writer-scholars who continue to impact students of color. For this reason, they serve as the baseline of how creative writing is being understood for this study.

Conclusion

By examining literature in immigration and education, cultural citizenship, and creative writing as resistance and healing work, we gain a better understanding as to how this study is being grounded. Within the literature of immigration and education, children of immigrant parents have only been studied at the K-12 levels with little examination beyond the K-12 levels. In addition to this, literature concerning higher education and immigration is limited to legal citizenship and cultural citizenship to specific institutions. Finally, creative writing as resistance and healing work is foundational in how communities can engage in naming, challenging, and responding to their experiences of oppression. These areas bring to light where undergraduate children of immigrant parents can be placed into the literature where they have not been accounted for yet.

CHAPTER III: 'I AM AN HOMAGE TO HOME'

The purpose of this study is to explore how undergraduate children of immigrant parents have come to understand their belong in the United States through the idea of home. Each of the seven participants in this study shared their unique and evolving understandings of home that has been shaped by their cultures, lived experiences, physical geography, interpersonal relationships, and much more. Every poem and stories shared through this process are unique to the individual. However different they all were, there were common themes that will be explored in this chapter.

Overview of Participants

As a reminder, Table 2: Summary of Participants, provides a brief overview of all the participants in this study. The information provided in the table is how each participant decided to self-identity in order to let them each have autonomy of how much or how little they wanted to disclose and step away from standard identity categories.

Table 2: Summary of Participants

Name	Area of Study	Year	Age	Gender	Racial/Ethnic Background
Danica	Business Administration	Junior	21	Female	Hispanic/Latina
Enya	Politics	Senior	21	Female	African American
Ezmeralda	Sociology & Critical Diversity Studies	Sophomore	19	Female	Latinx/Honduran
Harmony	Hospitality Management	Senior	21	Female	Black/Salvadoran
Janell	Accounting	Senior	21	Female	Asian
Paz	Sociology	First-year	19	Female	Mexican
Raquel	Accounting	Senior	21	Female	Latina/Hispanic

Findings

Three key themes that have emerged in relationship has to how participants have come to conceptualize their belong in the United States: (1) navigating inherited trauma, (2) connecting through cultural practices, and (3) building our own motherland. Different data sets have supported these emerging themes that are complicated with the personal, social, and physical relationships the participants maintain with their own homes.

Navigating Inherited Trauma

When participants discussed their home, they were not afraid to touch on the conflicts that come with having a home. These conflicts surfaced as interpersonal issues but were uncovered to be rooted in larger traumas caused by larger systems of power and oppression that their parents were still working through or ignored completely. Although their parents and themselves are now physically in the United States, they carried these traumas with them.

In addition to writing her prompt poem, Ezmeralda wrote three additional poems (see Appendix B). In her “I Am” poem, Ezmeralda writes:

I am first generation
a proud hija de dos Hondureños
from poverty and violence to crossing
the border
the seed of opportunity, grew into the American Dream

I am the ‘American Dream’
the meritocracy that my people were fed
the hunger that took over them
faith over body

In this piece, Ezmeralda writes about her relationship with her parents’ reason for migration to the United States. As the ‘seed’ of her Honduran parents, she must confront being proud of her heritage while being raised in the United States, a country who has had an active role as to why her parent had to flee their home country. In other words, she must make sense of her parents

migrating to the cause of their country's poverty and violence, much like the Central American migrant caravan she sees on the news today. While this is not an active conversation she has with her parents, it is one she must sit with and reconcile within herself.

Ezmeralda was not the only participant who has had to learn to navigate the traumas of her parents. Enya's prompt poem focused on the passing of her Ghanaian grandmother in relationship to other difficulties she was experiencing at the time of her grandmother's passing. Part of processing the untimely passing of her grandmother for Enya, was also confronting her familial distance to Ghana.

Enya: My dad, after he immigrated [to the United States], he never went back. When he left Ghana, it was in what we called the "lost decades," which is a period of time in Africa post colonialism; where the governmental, educational, and social structures in these countries was just non-existent. There was no opportunity... Something called the "brain drain" was happening where it was more desirable to go to schools and stuff like that in the UK, start your families in the U.S. That was what the new come up was to where you didn't want to be in your country anymore.

Enya attributes her father's intentional distance between her and their Ghanaian culture to his experience during the "lost decades." The distance he wanted to create for Enya was so great, it was important to him for Enya's first language to be English. Despite these efforts, Enya feels strongly connected to her Ghanaian roots. If her father was unwilling to provide the cultural connections to Ghana for her, Enya dreamt that her grandmother would be able to provide those connections for her before her passing.

These traumas can serve as points of strain in relationships with our parents, however, this is not always the case. In Danica's prompt poem, she focused on her mother and their family's experience here in the United States. When asked about there wasn't much content about their Mexican heritage, she provided an in-depth understanding as to why:

Danica: There's a lot of things that my mom doesn't like to share with me about her past, especially when she was in Mexico. I feel like it just brings up so much for her that she probably hasn't really dealt with. Her way of dealing with this is just ignoring it and pretending it didn't happen, which I feel like is unhealthy...

Aside from Danica's mother's unknown difficulties, she did share that her mother experienced domestic violence from Danica's father early in their family's life. Domestic violence is something neither currently with now, it has had a lasting impact on their lives. Danica has learned to recognize these traumas her mother has endured and not strain them more than they already. However, these traumas have created a disconnect for Danica. Out of empathy and respect, she does not push these issues onto her mother and like other participants, she is learning to connect with cultural roots through other means.

In addition to navigating what the systemic reason our parents left their native countries, there is also a need to acknowledge systemic issues within those countries. In Janell's prompt poem, she writes about the "dark side" of her native Philippines.

There are also the dark sides of home
 You can feel the right view of politics everywhere you go
 The killings of alleged drug lords without the...
 The strict no on contraceptives when the population is disturbingly out of control
 Where's the middle ground one would ask
 No one knows

It was important for her to write about the complexities of her homeland and to not present just present a positive view of the Philippines. She acknowledges points of tension she has with the Philippines, specifically the conservative politics. She attributes these tension to her upbringing in the United States where she was able to experience different views and understanding that she may have not been exposed if she remained in the Philippines. Though she wrote about these tensions occurring in the Philippines, she also notes in her interview they emerge within her family and community here in the United States. Although she connects strongly with her

Philippines heritage, it is these points of tension that make it uncomfortable to fully connect the Philippines.

It is the responsibility of these children of immigrant parents to reconcile the dark and difficult circumstances that pushed and pulled their parents to the United States. As individuals who were raised and now live in the United States, they must learn to find the joy in their cultures while learning to respect the boundaries of trauma their parents have. For traumas that come from complex systems of oppression, we sometimes cannot fault our parents for acting as gatekeepers. We must make amends with these traumas and begin the healing with ourselves in the hopes that we can share this with our parents over time.

Connecting through Cultural Practices

Whether some participants have had the opportunity to visit their parent's country of origin or not, staying connected to their culture is the only means of connection they have to those parental roots. For the participants, cultural practices have come up in the forms of food, dance, music, and language to name a few. They learn these practices from family and community members alike in order to gain as an authentic experience to their particular culture as possible. While these practices are a great source of pride, they cannot act as substitutes for experiences of having grown up in their parent's country of origin.

To contextualize the importance of these cultural practices, I begin by sharing an excerpt from my written reflection:

Up until that point in my life, it had never occurred to me that my family members would migrate back to their home. Because of this, my ideas of home have changed and continue to with time. All because of my access to my people. I think this is why I have place a heavy significance on culture and the forms in which is shows itself like food, music, dance, language, and art. At some point, either by choice or by death, I won't have these people in my life like I do now. So right now, I feel obligated to learn from my family as much as I can.

Connecting and staying connected to the community my family comes is important. However, my family as pillars and sources of culture for me will not be accessible. For this reason, there is an active and intentional effort to connect and take-in all the bits and pieces of their homes I can learn from my family. The active learning and engagement stem from feelings of wanting to belong, but also from not wanting certain traditions and practices to end with my parents. The death of their culture will not be the price we pay for their migration. Therefore I and other young adult children of immigrants are doing whatever we can to connect and continue our cultural practices.

An important aspect of these connections is the joy and comfort they bring the participants and the communities they come from. Ezmeralda's instance source of pride and joy is Punta, a native dance from Honduras. For this reason, she chooses Punta to be the focus of her prompt poem:

Watanegui consup
 lupippah lupipati

a la punta de tus dediots
 se contrae la pountorilla

wuli nani wanaga

hay que mover la cadera
 manos a la cintura
 para adelante y pa atras

Ezmeralda has used a prolific Punta song for her poem, *Sopa de Caracol*. This song is one she has grown up listening to and has learned to dance Punta to. It carries such an importance to her that she has included the native dialect portions of the song to her poem. Despite not knowing what native dialect *Sopa de Caracol* uses nor what those lines translate to, she found it important to include them as she remembers how her mother and aunt taught her to dance Punta in Spanish.

In the Spanish lines, she describes how her mother and aunt would instruct her to dance Punta and step out of her comfort zone.

Ezmeralda explains that while not too many people know what Punta is, she is extremely proud to share with others a part of her Honduran culture. Punta has served as a way for her to stay connect Honduras while having grown up in the United States. Through her connection with Punta, it is important to note she is still unpacking what it means for her and her family to find joy in a song where they do not fully understand the lyrics. She intends to explore what the song means and how that fits into her family's larger narrative; but for now, she continues to find joy in *Sopa de Caracol*.

For Paz, cultural connections are heavily rooted in the Latinx community she has grown up in the Mission District of San Francisco. In her untitled prompt poem, Paz writes:

It sounds like Los Bukis playing on a Saturday morning
 Like lowriders cruising along The Mission
 laughter occupying the room
 the power of the musician

It feels like resistance
 Intertwined roads leading to endless seas
 brown skin glowing by the touch of the sun
 415 will always be with me

Los Bukis are a Mexican music band that Paz grew up listening to because of father. For her, this band brings her nostalgic memories she remembers dearly. This music is only one of the ways she has learned to stay connected that she has learned from her father. Her community has taught her to stay connected with the local culture. From lowriders cruising down the streets to local resistance work, Paz is deeply connected to the culture of San Francisco, particularly that of the Mission District. The deep and rich history of the district she grew up is a legacy and by engaging with them, she continues to build upon that legacy of resistance and cultural work.

The cultural practices that have been shared have been focused on practices that engage with family and community members. However, these practices can also take place away from family and while being alone. During our interview, Harmony shares why she decided to include food in prompt poem:

Harmony: Me cooking food, it's flautas, arroz negrito, that's what feels comfortable to me and that's what I'm comfortable in making and or trying and or eating or whatever. That's because my mom was there.

Food, across cultures, serves as a means of creating comfort. Some of Harmony's comfort foods are the Salvadoran foods her mother prepares. As an out of state student, Harmony will cook these foods to comfort herself. Although it was during her time aboard when she was furthest away from her family and home that she found herself making these foods the most. In learning to make this overtime, she would call and ask for advice from her mother and aunts to make it the way she reminds it. Food and their recipes serve as a means to connecting with our parents' native countries and lessening the physical distance we face daily bases.

Cultural practices, whether they be communal or individual practices, can act as a means of bringing our parents' homes to us and experience what they know. Although these practices bring us joy, they are not replacements to being from our parents' country of origin. We experience adjusted versions of what our parents can remember and share with us. Therefore, these cultural practices are sources of pride and joy for us.

Building our own Motherland

Though it all the great and difficult circumstances that our parents and we have experienced, we still seek to belong. To further situate why building a space of own is important, Enya shares what it has meant for her to be a Ghanaian who has never been in Ghana. As we

discussed her poem and writing process, Enya summarizes one of the difficulties she finds herself facing. She shares:

Enya: Since I didn't get to grow up in Ghana and learn all these things and all this stuff, and I don't fit the mold—what does that mean for me still wanting to identify and be a Ghanaian woman? Now I have to teach myself, I have to discover that for myself and it's so different, just so intense.

Being Ghanaian is necessary for her and as she said, she must teach herself what it means to be Ghanaian. While this is a critical question for her that implies a lot of work on her end, it is also an opportunity. Not just for her, but for other children of immigrants. As we take on this big question, we begin building our own motherland. A land with our community, where we bring together two cultures, lands, and practices into one space to honor one within the context of the other.

Prior to coming to USF, Raquel had only known one home. Her for entire life, her family had only lived in one apartment which was the primary subject of her prompt poem, "My Heart's Home/ Las Casa de mi Corazón." In a portion of her prompt poem, she shares:

I don't live by the beach
 I live by El Pollo Loco, La Zandunga, Monte Albán, the liquor store, and the tacos place
 that burnt down years ago
 I live in the buildings that look like a forest
 Because of the amount of plants, trees and flowers we have
 Where there are whiffs of delicious, smelling food
 Coming usually from my apt
 Banda, corridos, música de la iglesia a todo volumen
 My building is full of life

We call it *Tijuanita*

Tijuanita has become a place her family and other community members have built together and have adorned with plants, foods, music, and celebrations. While her family and community are not from the United States, they have built something in honor of their Mexican roots. Raquel explains that while she is unaware of how her community has earned the name of Tijuanita, it

may have to do with the fact that they are a small community in an area that had not historically Latinx. She shares more details in her poem of that her community's relationship with the greater communities around them are but focuses on her joys of having grown up in Tijuana.

Building our own motherland can also mean reconnecting with the lands we originate from. Janell is one of the few participants who wrote about the physical aspects of her native Philippine islands. In a portion of her untitled prompt poem, she writes:

I want to explore more travel different parts of the country
 Where I am from
 I want to see the other 7,000 islands and be greeted, 'Mabuhay'
 I want to see the majestic caves and beaches along the coast
 As much as I like staying in the city where everyone hustles in order to survive
 The experience on living in the province and smelling the fresh air is unbeatable

Since she spent some of her childhood in the Philippines, reconnecting to the lands that she is from is significant for Janell. Having grown up in one location within the Philippines, she is acutely aware of how much she doesn't know about her country. Building her motherland means exploring and fully understanding the different places she is from. Being in fully immersed in the life and culture the Philippines provides a special understanding of home that sometimes cannot be achieved in the United States. Like our parents, we want to bring as much of countries back with us to make our home, more of that home we hope to build.

Building our own motherland is also building an essence in honor of our native countries. We can manifest it physically or spiritually so we can carry it with us as we move throughout this country. In her untitled prompt poem, Harmony describes this honoring as:

Home is an homage to San Miguel,
 El Salvador and I am an homage
 to home.

Home is collecting, remembering, and putting together the pieces of home that came with our parents. In her prompt poem, Harmony has engaged in writing about how she has created her

homage to El Salvador through staying connected in with her Salvadoran culture. All the things she has learned about being Salvadoran, she carries with her. While there may be barriers from visiting for some of us, we can still honor those small pieces that survived the miles our parents traveled to be here in the United States. What we do with those pieces is up to us. Like Harmony, I hope we create homages of our roots within ourselves.

Conclusion

The emergence of these themes provides great insight as to how these undergraduate CIPs have come to understand themselves. The original research question for this study centered around their understanding of themselves within the context of the United States yet, very few explicitly touched or focused on the United States. While this lacked, it is still telling. The United States isn't a concern. This could be because they already have feelings of belonging to the United States or there is no importance placed on belonging to the United States. These are questions that need to be investigated further.

The presentation of these findings may read as a linear process in which participants process their inherited traumas, connect through cultural practices, to then create their own motherland. This is far from true. These themes are intertwined and concurrently ongoing processes that all participants are engaged with at often the same time. They can be joyous and struggle to connect with their family on certain topics; they can practice cultural traditions while unpacking its implications on other communities; they can define them themselves to their parent's country of origin while also trying to be kept from it. Our relationship to our parents' lands are not always clear or direct but they are undeniable.

Ultimately creative writing provided a process on to which these participants and myself could detangle our experiences. Individually, writing has served as a reflective process;

collectively, writing has served to find unity among our experiences that are not every day topics of conversation. While collectively we have not shared our writing, nor have we come together, we are connected through our experiences as the children of immigrant parents. While we conceive of home in different ways, we still want to belong to something. It may not always be clear to us who or what that may be, but we do know how we envision it to be and that is what we continually be practicing, the building of our home.

CHAPTER IV: DISCUSSION, CONCLUSION, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study centralized the experiences of belonging undergraduate children of immigrant parents through the use of poetry. Existing literature in the areas of immigration and education, cultural citizenship, and creative writing as resistance and healing work, revealed that there are gaps in exploring the experiences of undergraduate children of immigration in relationship to their belonging to the United States; more so, through the medium of creative writing. For these reasons, poetry was used as both a product as well as a process to engage participants in their own understanding. In addition to this, I as the researcher, also included my own experiences as an adult child of immigrants to further support the common themes that emerged from this study: navigating inherited traumas, connecting through cultural practices, and building our own motherland.

As young adults, these undergraduate children of immigrant parents are having to create their cultural identities that are influenced by the United States. For decades, the United States has had an influx of immigrants from around the world and it is those from communities of color that are unable to become a part of this country's blanket without protest. This lack of belonging over time is not a coincidence and more evident after analyzing the data collected in this study. As mentioned in Chapter I of this study, the result of these participants cannot speak on behalf of the entire population of undergraduate students of immigrants nor children of immigrant parents who are under the age of 18. However, this study still provides us with an understanding that there has been little effort on the United States' end to embrace immigrants. The examination of cultural barriers within this study parallels what is currently happening politically and legally through the United States regarding immigration.

Through this study, there was an additional hope for it. I had hoped to bring together my participants to come together to share the work they had created. Unfortunately, due to time constraints, this was not possible. Thankfully to their grand interest, participants have expressed coming together in the next coming semester when everyone has more time. We are all hungry to find others like us for a few different reasons. I argue that one of these reasons is to not feel alone. Overcoming the difficulties presented in the findings is not easy but if we can collectively see ourselves in others, we can much better proceed through these difficulties. Further, by understanding that although we come from different communities from across the world, we can find community within each other. We as the children of immigrants can find unity in these struggles and stand with each other in the issues that impact us all and in the issues that others may face that we may not.

This work will continue for me as the researcher, as I am dedicated to creating this space for my participants. While I may not be able to share what the outcome of this space and time together may be, it will bring this study to a full and complete end.

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APPENDIX A: PROMPT POEMS**Untitled by Danica**

Home.
Not a place
But a person.
Who's that person?
That face.
Pale skin
shy smile reduced by size
because of abuse & lack of self confidence.
Hazel eyes,
more green when you cry.
Eyebrows thin because of years
of being shaven
and drawn on
after mistaken
for a chola.
That natural face.
A true beauty
you don't see.
You pick and pick,
and even pick at me.
That beautiful, pale face
is home
as soon as it is seen.
When I wake up,
and you're in the kitchen
making our favorite breakfast
I'm glad to be home.
I'm sorry I'm always gone.
I'm always away
looking for home
in other faces.
I think I found a face,
but it will never replace
yours.
Be it homes or apartments,
no matter how skeptical,
no matter how cheap,
we followed you,
because no matter where
you were,
we knew we were going to be
okay.

You make it okay.
The pain.
The fears.
With you near,
All of that stuff disappears.
You have a way of making problems
seem so insignificant.
Nothing else matters,
if I don't know
that my home
is always there for me.
Open with a welcome mat
and the cheapest but
prettiest decorations you can find
to bring us joy.
To make it home.
That white-reused x-mas tree
is home to me.
The bare memory
is enough to bring me back
to every Christmas
it has seen.
The full ones
And the bare
the sad ones
and the ones that fill you
with joy.
Despite the weight,
I love baking our cookies
In our stove oven
making the house fill up-
My home.
No matter where it has been,
it has always been you.

Burial by Enya

Burying you feels so familiar
 As the bury you I bury my hopes of the love
 we could have shared.
 Shoulda. Coulda. Woulda. Didnt.
 I should have been graced with your wisdom,
 warmed by your presence
 He could have shown me, he could have shared
 you with me
 I would have cried tears of joy and sat
 At your feet to hear your stories
 I would have told you all of mine
 But I didnt.
 My father didnt share you with me and
 now we'll bury those stories I had longed
 to hear so much
 Burial has begun to feel too familiar
 That is why you hurt me
 I must bury, once again, the fire in my
 chest, the ice on my temples and the
 rage that boils in my stomach
 I must push down the anger, the disappointment
 and the loss
 I must forget the unattainable dreams,
 the broken promises and the irreconcilable truths
 of my life.
 I can no longer tell if I bury for myself
 or if I bury myself altogether
 I bury because my essence in its full and
 unhindered form is an offense
 It lacks professionalism
 It lacks the rapport of quiet femininity
 It lacks apologetic timidity
 It is the embodiment of pan-africanism
 It is the feelings of a protest that cant be ignored
 My essence is one of expression through creation
 It is a questioning, and skeptically hopeful
 It does not trust easily but it loves intensely
 My essence is of the sun
 It is warm and bubbling with life and vigor
 It is beautifully perfect with blemishes that you
 can only see if you look for them

Untitled by Ezmeralda

Watanegui consup
lupippah lupipati

 a la punta de tus dediots
se contrae la pountorilla

 wuli nani wanaga

 hay que mover la cadera
manos a la cintura
 para adelante y pa atras

Untitled by Harmony

Home is tough yet tender
Home is María Luisa Guzmán
Home is bachata & the swinging of hips
Home is “hay comida en la casa”
Home is the smell of cebolla, tomate, y ajo sautéina on the pan
Home is bake, worn, sacrificing, canna hands tending to food
Home is iglesia y pupusas en los domingos
Home is “miamor”
Home is Houston, Texas
Home is “¿ya saludaste?”
Home is loud and expressive
Home is clean
Home is arroz negrito y flautas

When I’m home, I’m 16.
Who is home? My brothers, mom &
abuelita with my dad & nana
always in mind.

Home is an homage to San Miguel,
El Salvador and I am an homage
to home.

Home by Janell

Have not been there in a while
I miss everything about it
The smell of diesel and pollution in the air
The loud screaming of both children and adults
The beeping sounds of 'Jeepneys'

Nanay would say 'mangantayon' when the food is ready on the table
The bickering of my cousins on who will sit where
The baby crying because she did not get what she wants
The smell of the home-cooked meals prepared by my tita
In the morning, you can smell the freshly made pan de sal from the bakery nearby

I want to explore more travel different parts of the country
Where I am from
I want to see the other 7,000 islands and be greeted, 'Mabuhay'
I want to see the majestic caves and beaches along the coast
As much as I like staying in the city where everyone hustles in order to survive
The experience on living in the province and smelling the fresh air is unbeatable

There are also the dark sides of home
You can feel the right view of politics everywhere you go
The killings of alleged drug lords without the...
The strict no on contraceptives when the population is disturbingly out of control
Where's the middle ground one would ask
No one knows

Untitled by Paz

It sounds like Los Bukis playing on a Saturday morning
Like lowriders cruising along The Mission
laughter occupying the room
the power of the musician

It feels like resistance
Intertwined roads leading to endless seas
brown skin glowing by the touch of the sun
415 will always be with me

It tastes like you
It looks like you

home is you, you are your own

My Heart's Home/ La Casa de mi Corazón by Raquel

[5555 Crimf Avenue, Apt. 5]
 They ask me where I live
 I say, "West LA..."
 West LA?
 I add, "near Santa Monica"
 OH YEAHH!

All of a sudden everyone knows
 Sometimes I emphasize:
 "I don't live in the city of Santa Monica"
 Other times, I don't give further explanations
 Sure, I'm on 3rd street...
 2 minutes away from the beach
 I'll let you believe that

I don't live by the beach
 I live by El Pollo Loco, La Zandunga, Monte Albán, the liquor store, and the tacos place that
 burnt down years ago
 I live in the buildings that look like a forest
 Because of the amount of plants, trees and flowers we have
 Where there are whiffs of delicious, smelling food
 Coming usually from my apt
 Banda, corridos, música de la iglesia a todo volumen
 My building is full of life

We call it *Tijuanita*

Hola comadre, hola compadre, como están? Vengan a tomar un café
 Don Alfredo, me podría prestar su sopladora?
 Señora Rosy, podría recoger a [Raquel] y a Cristina de la escuela, salen a las 2 hoy

Carne asada, cumpleaños, posadas, quince años, bautizos
 The list continues on forever
 We're known as the party building
 Our neighbors who celebrate baseball and football games don't understand "our partying"
 So the manager requires us to ask for permission every time
 They don't like live music, or loud anything
 They complain.
 Police.
 But that doesn't stop us,
 We keep on asking for permission

Tijuanita is the only physical home I know, but
 Home is where my family is at

Home is in the garden
Various gardens...with different shapes, sizes, acres of land, on hills, flat land, facing the ocean...
Gardens with nopales, succulents, with beautiful flowers, plants, fertilizers, bugs
In Beverly Hills, Malibu, Venice Beach, Santa Monica
Million, billion dollar homes
Home is inside other homes, in strangers' homes
Definitely not my own
Home is luxury, embedded in sweat, hard labor, hot and cold temperatures
That produce cleanliness and aesthetic

Home is in a little dorm
In Providence, Rhode Island
But it's also on indigenous land,
In a small village in Oaxaca

Ask me about my home
I'll show you an excel file, with ever-changing cells,
Home is where pieces of my heart are at and
My heart is in the places of the people I love
Ma, pa, Cris

APPENDIX B: ADDITIONAL POEMS

Untitled by Danica

I want to go home.
 Home.
 Far but near
 a place where I can be me
 a place where I have been sad.
 mad
 happy
 at ease
 worried
 but with no real worries.
 Where I smell Pillsbury cookies
 Baking in the oven
 Where any middle school self
 did not appreciate
 my blessing.
 My home.
 With my siblings.
 All 4.
 A time where we all talked
 & we all were friends.
 Where we all lived at home
 and were still kids.
 Where is home now?
 A nostalgic void
 bringing me back
 to a past that can never
 be repeated.
 Home
 “Your mom’s”
 the home of everyone.
 A place
 often left empty
 and forgotten by many
 until they need it again.

My mother laying on the couch
 discouraged
 from years of heart ache
 and problem after problem
 trying to find her happy place

how are you mine

through you neglected me
for so long
Perhaps that is why I neglect home,
too.

I am by Ezmeralda

I am the combination of my mom's two names
Ebelit / Yolisma to Enyolli

I am first generation
a proud hija de dos Hondureños
from poverty and violence to crossing
the border
the seed of opportunity, grew into the American Dream

I am the 'American Dream'
the meritocracy that my people were
the hunger that took over them
faith over body

Morro by Ezmeralda

Mo-RRo

my tongue flips back to the roof of my mouth
of gritty seeds and rice

the gulps of Honduras that goes down
my throat with refreshness

the guacal's roundness in my hands
with the grip at the tip of my fingers

"YOU'RE FROM THE UNITED STATES?"

Untitled by Ezmeralda

Gringa
Spicy Latina
Fake Latina
Not enough Latina

La hija de inmigrantes centro americanos

Hablas el Español muy bien
Your English is really good
You have a slight accent

Untitled by Harmony

Where I want to be from isn't a place it's an idea
an idea where both cultures
come together, where both
ancestors co-exist, where I don't
have to choose.

APPENDIX C: RESEARCHER'S PROMPT POEM**Untitled by Gladys**

Home is autocorrect and spell check

Home is the flat, fat, brown feet

that take me *mi gente* were never suppose to be

Home is the smell of *arroz rojo* cooking and splashes of burning oil on my skin

When I close my eyes

I dream of the day I make my mother's recipes

as flawlessly as she has done across borders

Home is remembering to be gentle on *Má*

18 years young with two babies

unfamiliar with the English language

con razón decías inglés en la escuela

y español en la casa

You too want a home on a foreign land