

# POETRY ON BORDERS: POEMS INSPIRED BY LATINX POETS

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# WHERE IS ALL BEGAN?

- Two years ago, I found myself visiting the Detention Nation Exhibit in the Art building on the Texas Tech Campus. The exhibit was a model of the detention centers that immigrants are being placed into even today. It was devastating, but the worst part was my inability to read the letters on the wall that were written in Spanish.
- I grew up around Mexican culture but the emphasis on learning to speak Spanish was absent, and my hunger to learn Spanish and more about the culture was propelled after what I had seen.
- Later that week I attended a poetry reading hosted by the English Department, which was a counterpart to the art exhibit. I found myself surrounded by supportive writers, but one caught my attention. A Latinx poet by the name of Rossy Evelin Lima Padilla read her poems in Spanish, and I knew then that I wanted to write my poems in Spanish or translate at the very least.



# Muses

- Being a Spanish Minor was a huge component of this project, I was constantly practicing my Spanish in & out of the classroom. I had already been reading the Chilean poets Pablo Neruda & Nicanor Parra who wrote in Spanish, but I wanted to shift gears towards contemporary poets.
- The first was Rosy Evelin Lima Padilla and her collection, *Migrare Mutare*.
- The second being David Tomas Martinez and his collection, *Hustle*.
- Lastly, Erika L. Sánchez and her collection, *Lessons on Expulsion: Poems*.



# Reasoning Behind My Muses

- Rossy Evelin Lima Padilla is an active advocate for translators and matters relating to immigration. Her story is one that deserves to be told over & over again. Her collection tackled the physical concept of borders, and that's where I needed to start.
- Both David Tomas Martinez & Erika L. Sanchez wrote collections that I could relate more to considering our upbringing in the United States. Both collections offered inspiration into the borders placed between the familial realm and the urban environment we grew in.



## Dreamers

What will happen to a dreamer deferred?  
Let's assume constant fear of being sent back home.  
*Home?* A place that you can make anywhere?  
Unless you're a dreamer of course.  
Let's assume a dreamer deferred is stuck  
A permanent case of vertigo.  
Pushed and pulled, hands tied  
praying for an end or a new beginning.  
I met a dreamer recently, beautiful brown eyed  
brunette who carries this burden.  
She's everything POTUS has said: a murder,  
rapist, drug dealer, but he forgot one thing.  
She's an intellectual, she reeks of promise,  
mental fortitude. She's good with numbers,  
a universal language welcomed  
unlike her native tongue.  
I've dreamt of the day where our homes

are no longer the same place,  
I know she has dreamt of much worse.  
Solitude for her brother. Screams from her mother.  
Our skin is the same, but where I feel safe  
Anxiety spews from her pores  
Our hands— the same pigment but feel differently.  
Our eyes— see this world through different lenses.  
Her defining truth is also her darkest secret.  
So, what will happen to a dreamer deferred?  
She will shed stigmas and use her native tongue  
Like a solvent silencing ignorance.  
Her home—  
Is where she's always been, And will be  
wherever she pleases.



## Spare Change

The deafening whispers  
& piercing stares  
Are gifted  
through generations alike.  
Like spare bullets,  
bodies and tongues  
Drop like spare change  
We want change  
We refuse to change  
My bisabuela whispers,  
“I’m here waiting to die”  
We are both waiting for a cure.



## LAS MANOS

I've measured your hands plenty of times  
Simply placing them on my palms  
our fractured hands slide into each other  
creating faults like resentful tectonic  
plates. Those hands of yours are dangerous  
Rough, yet no callouses. Dry, yet no cracks.  
Your hands are never still. Drifting like continents.  
They itch to let it slip & are always warm—  
Our hearts speak through our nail beds  
We wish upon dandelions & pick the petals of daisies  
*She loves me, he loves me not—*  
You scanned my hand and whispered,  
*“Las marcas simbolizan amantes.”*  
My heart has always shown the bruises.



## Through the Wall

Now that freedom has entered,  
I can feed you the sweetest lies  
pulling them from their vines.  
How juicy and cold it must feel  
to believe there's a home *en el otro lado*  
— attention ruffles the palate  
in ways sustenance cannot.  
Attention suffocates tongues.  
Attention fills mouths *con mentiras*  
Attention is what you craved.  
*Igual, hermosa.* Twisted without reason,  
I'm guilty of treason,  
hands held high,  
you had your reasons  
as did I—  
This country of my body is broken  
into provinces, Walled off like my people

waiting for change.  
You'll never change. I'll never change. We'll never change



## El Cornejo

Miseria ama a compañía  
Pero te amo más  
Y por eso me alejo de ti.  
Te amo sin saber como.  
Te amo como el árbol  
Que tiene el pelo de mi bisabuela.  
Lo Paso cada día.  
Paso despacio pero nunca para.

## The Dogwood

Misery loves company  
But I love you more,  
And for this I stay far  
away. I love you without knowing how.  
I love you like the tree  
that has my great grandmother's hair.  
I pass it every day.  
I pass slowly but never stop.