

Aullo¹

*For the Texas Senate Committee on State Affairs, 85th Legislature*²

I

Yo vi las mejores mentes de mi generación. Destrozadas por remesa madness. Starving. 10 cent.
Maruchán limón y Valentina EXTRA HOT slurpin' paisas,

draggin themselves in Costco Tennis Shoes, paving every street from Santa Cruz lemon tart, to
Valparaiso Cuchifrito.

Angelheaded vatos tattooing the only typeface they'll ever see: La Virgen in clasped hands on his left
pecho and on the other, una golfa in a folclórico ruffle blouse.

Who jog Coyote Hills Park: half-panting comadres walk their way back. The dawn shrivels in to push
them unto the finish line, screaming, "¡Ándale Pati! ¡Otra vuelta!" y "Mmmm Hilda, tenga tres
bebes y luego hábleme."

Quienes andan en putiza, searching por la pomada para las ronchas, patting Julian Jr. in front of a
nurse on her third shift, "Plis. His fever. Is not logüering." The statue rostro of a Greco-Roman
receptionist, likely of the Stoic tradition, taps the clipboard, "Ma'm, I just need his Kaiser Card
Number."

Who twist their cogotes from sleeping on a Mexican mattress. The next morning, Mago llegó a la casa
supuestamente a saludar, but la bolsa dangling from her apron betrays her intent, *vino a picar
limones...la arrimada*, a man mutters to himself. "¿Estás bien compadre?" Seated on a lawn
chair, said hombre flashes las gallinas con his free range chorres, crosses his piernas peludas, "Ay
es que no estoy acostumbrado de dormir en estas camas." She volleys the pueblo's panacea,
"Oooo, hubieras ido que te sobaran."

Who drag their rancho on the suburb's red tiled courtyards, the likes they only see in eight o' clock
telenovelas, "Luisito, traeme el serrucho pa' cortar esta rama y ya acabar de una vez. No esa
herramienta- ¡Qué el e-saw mi'jo!"

Who command God's flood in plastic grocery bags, the Nile turned red as Doña Marta filled the bag of
duros with Tapatío outside el templo, "Nomás dime hasta cuándo chamacos."

Who see Chenchó, el único de Rosa's hijos que salió malito, arrancando el piso at a prima-hermana's
boda while a shirtless M.C. shouts, "Zapateale zapateale," to this whirling dervish in a Sur 13's
uniform.

Who tap a diez pesos moneda against the metal ventanas of an abarroto, yelling to the sliding pantuflas de
la dueña. "¡Oiga! Quiero." Y ahí viene. Her teeth with two bottom pews bend softly to first kiss

¹ noun

- ~~1. a poem written by Allen Ginsberg in 1955, published as part of his 1956 collection of poetry titled *Howl and Other Poems*, and dedicated to Carl Solomon.~~
2. the sound a coyote-poeta makes when he smuggles the songs of his people.

² RE: Senate Bill 4, February 2, 2017

Tutuy, and then the rest of the stumpy grandsons. Our roots planted to la patria, planted to abuela Margarita's Coca-Cola store-front, as she asks, "¿Qué se les ofrece, mis tres mosqueteros?"

Who cada Fiesta del Sagrado Corazón, carry Jesucristo on wooden planks, pallbearers of the two millennia father marching through the pebbled pueblo. La tuba de la banda tear up His porcelain rostro. He waves over the men's unbuttoned vaquero shirts while suegras sweep their porch, pausing only to scoff at the chiquillas que se fueron con el novio.

Who learn diplomacy by watching their fathers take off his cal-chalked gorro, as he walks inside a warehouse, el congreso de México trapped in this brick bodega. Inside his office, the portly grower flares his nostrils with the peón's bill:

"¿Seis mil? ¿Pa la hectárea? Acá no vengas con este engaño."

"Raúl, así lo vendió el año pasado."

"¿Ah sí? ¿Y recuérdeme, quién es el que manda por aquí?"

Who bicker with the Commissioner que la calle federal queda más allá de sus tierras, the official's brown-red bigote more tended than the bushels beneath their boots. He talks to papá in such a way that he faces the sun for the ninth hour of the day, while Esperanza's frijoles softly gurgle back home, while other mamás down the block simmer in jealousy over their new Kenmore stove.

Who smash shoeboxes con el rostro de un tío fallecido. Before Gofund Me's habían cashier donations, the piggybank pencil-scrawled hoyo begging its compatriotas to help with the funeral. The supermarket's conveying belt sputters in sobs—a head of cabbage, queso fresco, y un "K DIOS LES BENDIGA"—in la viuda's mournful letra.

Who sell raspados with a Venmo account taped to his carcacha cart. "Ahí te va mi'jo, págame aquí." He lifts his Durangense tejana to proudly apuntar al 8½ x 11 letrero, a sheet of white printer paper with the bolded words, "@hijinio-camacho."

Who dip spoon-fulls of frijoles down her baby son outside Taco Bell, as he barfs up loose change from torn jeans. The \$3.62 fall on the floor. She picks 'em up to show old lover's names sagged on her breasts. "Ay Fidel," she sighs on a stiff booth, kissing her teeth to pucker up the snake bite under 99 cent lip gloss. "But chea, that's my life Tony. What's been good wit chu?"

Who as morros dribble their Chivas balón down the cancha outside West Side apartments: "Juventino, delantero. Ricardo you lil' chubs rogue. Portero."

Who once crushed paper balls for Mr. Aguilar's 6th grade social studies class—a medieval re-enactment. His trebuchet hands aimed for our bodies hunched underneath engraved desks; so that we learned to duck for middle school lockdowns. Felix stuffed a four five in his mochila, so that he'd never see his mom's selling white people macarons at La Baguette, the one by the Stanford Shopping Center, to cover his bail.

Who callused their fists in bloody knuckles, palm-read their verdicts while the court's in recess. Ricardo and Rogelio seated at this splintered bench behind the playground. They'd spend hours meditating on nuestra piel cruda, bronzing his God-given gavel for his old man. El sueño de su timbre, the napalm of liquored breath, for "teniendo los putos huevotes to come back!"

Who hear the words "probation officer" long before Career Day, before the words, "If you cannot afford a guardian angel, like Cenicienta y sus ratoncitos, you will have one provided for

you.” Either by San Mateo County or el espíritu santo.”

Quienes dan los anuncios después de misa, and that shit lasts longer que el sermón mismo!

Who see José Luis yell “I hope your fucking baby dies,” to our teacher wearing a pink *So You Think You Can Dance* t-shirt. His referral: a five-foot exile from a 32-count class, to the empty file room next door, sentenced to spend the rest of the day staring at the afro-physicist Ronald Edison.

Who are never taught when *The Challenger* blew up, but saw NASA AMES launch test rockets, million-dollar plumes that pollute the sky, until city helicopters chuckled their delicate foam away, and roaches scurried the hot concrete piso to yell, “¡La migra! ¡Ajajaja! I’m just fuckin wit chu blood!”

Who sag size SMALL sweats ‘cuz hand-me-downs ya no quedan.

Who swipe a 2 x 4 to take aim at the navy blue corridors where we marched in single file line. Deandre and a few Bloods g’wan bust the computer lounge monitors, the machinery of day that mocked ‘em with multiple choice chokeholds, so that thirty thousand dollars later, the cops dust Ronald Edison McNair for fingerprints. Our starting five one center short; who’ll spend the next one to three years waking up at 1:30 to watch *Judge Mathis*.

Who the month before, bobbed his head with the other circle of buzzards, in knee-long white t’s, perched atop a broken water fountain. Fina freestyle’ Kanye’s “Can’t Tell Me Nothing,” while pre-ankle bracelet Deandre huffs his A.M.E. organs for the hook, “Ooooo.”

Who learn to end every “¿Sabes por qué lo hiciste?” with the infamous, “I know I know. Por pendejo.”

Who snatch a tennis ball from the one of the white folks’ lawns, learn wall-ball through the ambush of one-meal inmates. They pause when the nylon bullet is stopped by Ate, the biggest Poly we know. Adobe-mud faces hide under the pink vergüenza, “I ain’t punching ese pansón!”

Who took their first and last headshots for acid yellow flyers, stapled on telephone poles that pump the city con chisme, decepción de esta juventud. Today, it’s Moises in his unmistakable copete. An urban myth must always begin with the words, “Black Hair, Brown Eyes, Hispanic, 130 pounds, **IF YOU HAVE ANY INFORMATION, PLEASE CALL.**”

Who played one-on-one for the first and last time with Michael from Costañó, until a murder of Jim Crows hung under a tattered basketball hoop to caw, “Aw yeah, he got shot my nigga.”

Who saw Baldomero hit 17 and still not pass 8th grade.

Who saw little black girls present, for kindergarten Show And Tell, their cupped hands of casings. strewn on a caved-in curb on her way to school. The cold metal against her open palms numb the sound of white plastic barrettes as she skips.

Who press their ear against the empty shells and hear: the screech of sideshows, a whip stopping in middle of street, rolled down tints, the last words of a mistaken Crip, “Wa-Hold up! What the fu-“

Who stuffed the earth with used condoms, learn a woman’s touch under a crossfaded sky. Fingers still crusted from art class acrylic. A dowry of nigga-lipped Zigzags and Four Loko’s. Uriel, whose barba came early, said the liquor store owner didn’t ID em, “‘cuz you know los

hindus can't tell us apart." As she lowers her purple mini-falda, he stares at the patch of carrots behind the hotboxed portables, where they coughed out its stillborn semillas.

Who almost became a Norteño at a Boys and Girls Club summer camp, when a pair of 31 Loose fit Levis jeans tugged at his tighty whities. Face still tingling from record time multiplication quiz, from the raised eyebrows of Stanford volunteers, from making a cell structure but he ate the cytoplasm made of green Jello. He arrives late to the screening of *Daddy Day Care*, hope the dark room cover his tears. Su papá extends his hands, and he doesn't want to confirm his fears of brown kids telling other brown kids to convert. To be an acolyte embalmed in hair gel, worshipping the altars cordoned off in caution tape.

Who first step on Stanford's plaza to take quinceañera photos, so a (J) crew of Vineyard Vine freshmen brush yellow khaki's with our marine-themed slacks, rented from a Little Mexico boutique. The Burghers of Calais under siege by the sons of Zapata, as Nacho yells from a disposable Kodak, "¡Toño! Ponte más en medio."

Who burnt his hands in a curled-up comal, fingers timed the flip of puffed-up tortillas until papá heard the yelps of my Americanized tongue, the "Ow," instead of "Ay" carve continents within the waist-sized kitchen, as he bellowed from behind, "¡A ver! Manos de chicle."

Who in kindergarten, filled on cheeseburgers only 'cuz cashier Mr. Lee saw our open palms with rusted copper and dull dimes, 60 cents short a reduced lunch, and still said "Thank you my friend."

Who shout "¿Qué onda licenciado?!" and inject the vein-thin streets with white flakes of pure uncut ganas unwrapped from our parents' 3 AM Happy Meals and their bags of frozen eyes. Methamphetamine mantras that juice up Lucía who arches her dedos to the incubated patties to shout, "¡Pa'que nos arregles los papeles!"

Who dodge the invisible I.C.E. checkpoints of Frozen Yogurt Chipotle Grill Amazon Prime Pet Spa downtowns. Jenga Gentrification. 1600 dollar lofts piled atop slabs of our huts made of telephone cards disconnected 23 minutes into the conversation.

Who since 1838, were promised ciudadanía. Saw tens of thousands of Anglo ranchers pour into former México, the cattlebrand of racism still sizzling from their Georgia drawls.

Whose husband died in Pacific Theatre, y aun, the funeral home director's pale fingers stuttered at the last name, "Mrs. Longoria, I'm afraid the whites would not like it."

Who would come home to El Paso to order a cup of coffee, but see the Lonestar Restaurant Association weld the words, "No Dogs, No Negros, No Mexicans," atop a "COME RIGHT IN!" sign.

Who first testified to the Supreme Court in 1954. A rascuache lawyer named Pete blares on Houston radios que "Los magistrados del Washington no nos conocen. No saben de los tres millones de mexicanos que existimos en el suroeste." Hernandez v. Texas. 1954. "The first and only Mexican-American civil rights issue que pegó al Supreme Court." "Y'all heard me? The first civil rights Mexican-American case heard and decided during the post-WWII period. We put the Brown in Board of Ed, so when you teach Thurgood Marshall, don't forget Don Pedro."

Who comprised one out of five casualties in Vietnam but comprised only 6% of the country's population.

Who traded straw sombrero for M1 helmets, labores de trigo for muddy rice swamps, a semilla for balas, so his son can ask Jose Campos Torres, “Does it matter whether we die in Houston, or in Saigon?”

Whose sons see, fifty years later, a bill banning sanctuary cities. The descendants of ranchers demanding I show my papers. I’m tired of being invaded, the chain of Conquist-Encomien-Annexati—Gentrificati-Detentio-Gentrifica- SB 1070- Call it what you want, I’m tired of being invaded! The chain of Jane Brew-Joe Arpa-Governor Greg Abb-State Senator Charles Per- Call ‘em who you want, I’m tired of these invaders!

Who see Senator Perry tell CBS, “It’s about protecting our communities.” Protect whose community? “We don’t want those individuals that have committed crimes, illegal or otherwise” (HOW DARE YOU FUCKING SAY ILLEGAL) “That wouldn’t have had the opportunity to be locked up for public safety to be released at the discretion of a law enforcement.” Save the white tape. At least the conquistadores called me savage to my face.

Who scour the gentrified ruins of el barrio for fragments of an Olmec statue dangling on Devonte’s lower lip.

Who scour outdoor clearance racks of used prom dresses outside the Ecumenical Hunger Program, but can’t help to grab expired Safeway loaves that glimmer their plastic sheen of blacked out barcodes.

Who scour the dictionary for an example of “Mexican Standoff” other than a mother staring her breadwinner down, blaring her ex-mariachi lungs to yell, “We don’t need it!”

Who scour 2415 University Ave--where City Hall, Human Services Agency, the County Library, the East Palo Alto Police precinct, are all crammed in three floors, entire departments live like section 80—bust each room for the vendidos that sold mi pueblo to Amazon, so “Urban Development” can come to the hood in 3-5 business days.

Who scour a Jenni Rivera album, so later that night, my mother can sing con su karaoke machine, conveniently shaped like a suitcase, so she can perform as her exit song to their marriage, “Yo Sooooooy Una Mujeeeeer de Carne y Huesooooo.”

Who cannot tell you, “How he was as a husband, because I only know him as papá.”

Who scour their son’s 7th grade STAR test scores, proudly tout the ADVANCED-shaded bar graphs, so as to testify to the Menlo School’s Academic Office, “My hijo is smart enough. Is good enough.”

Who learn from his waiter-father that Mexican origami is the art of napkin folding.

Dear Carl Solomon, “Metrazol is painful, but have you seen what culture shock does to the ethnic body?”

To recreate the syntax del English, cargar the Anglo-Saxon tonic con tequila recuerdos, to rewrite the opening lines of “The Road not Taken,” as “Dos caminos partidos por la madre. E hijo de la chingada, I travelled both!”

The low-writer defies the gravity of assimilation with lyrical hydraulics, with one foot on the rails of a modified syllable, gritando, “I’M YOUR PAAAPI!”

Who bend their backs to el campo, so he can bend his back from a mochila, stuffed with the latest edition of *A World Religions Reader*. So on chapter eight, he learns the Zen Buddhist koan: *Old Juany boy can only read a dry text atop a wet back.*

Who are told to prostrate to the White God that accepted my 500 word personal statement on Maizena, so I can open the pearly gates of white teeth and hear the lamentations of: H&M-clad white boys who reject my SAT II scores because “I already knew Spanish,” white tutors, white textbooks that traced their family’s lineage and not mine, white professors who only mentor white students, white Tarzan, white Miss USA, white house, white Santa Claus, white lie that whitey’s on the moon, white white white wash the Spic’ n Span

Who scoff that I look dark today.
Wash the
Spic’ n Span

Who takes a small corkscrew from a grape wine bottle, and says to me, as we wash dishes for their Passover, “Son, it’s rude to speak Spanish in front of them,” so that before the Kosher drink fills their glass, I’ve learned to balance centuries of racial etiquette between the three dirty plates shaking on my sleeves: *Wrap the bottle in the linen, enter from the right, pour until the sediment reaches the neck.* Until white is right. White is right. White.

II

Wa-Wa-Wa-
Whi-
Why?!
I gotta recite this Lord’s Prayer?

Art Father, who art in Palo Alto,
hallow be thy white,
thy Kingdom white,
thy will be white
in white, as it is in white.
Give us this day our daily white,
and forgive us of our brown trespasses,
into Los Angeles y San Diego y Nogales y Reynosa
y cualquier portillo que nos diste-

Why?!
Do Polynesian sisters sing their elegies
outside a U-Haul unit, so the same freeway
that sliced our city’s torso, and
bled out 50 businesses overnight,

can see their cardboard epitaphs?

Why?!

Are the calles of my home and flesh,
naked supermarket aisles that
sell veladoras, where OG's
will cross themselves to the asphalt ofrendas--
every block a different funeral.

Why?!

Does my mother apologize for her English?
Brown hands cover her
brown mouth, as if her
brown accent were mal aliento to Colgate ears.

Why

I'd grab her recién-pintados fingers
and kiss them, still tasting the Zote suds,
so a decade later, at the Rutgers Writing Center,
I smile at my 4th tutee of the day,
and hear her voice, grasping for my prickly face
across the table and say,
"Professor Lopez, my name is María Velarde."

III

What spics of cement and aluminio jamás estudiaron and ate up their own sueños de ser doctora?

¡Miedo! Fear! De no ser nacido acá. Checkpoints cada cinco de mayo, or cuando Canelo o Chávez
Pelean. A Honduran boy llora as jet fuel boils his lungs, "They'll kill my mom if you send her
back!"

¡Miedo! ¡Miedo! ¡Pesadilla de Miedo! God of (below) minimum wage, of "Jes meister Ronní, the jedges
is almost finished."

Miedo whose insecticide of choice is Raid, war-clad men spray their crotch-stuffed police budgets on a
Nuevo South porch, "Mrs. Gonzalez, we know you're in there."

Miedo whose eyes are blue and white floodlights cruising on the 101-South. Whose hands are the
tightened clench of a tío as his two hundred pound frame nears the San José airport. His six
children miss the sound of low bass specs, of a troca modificada and American brand cereales.
Their hearts grumble Valentín Elizalde's "Las Tecualeñas" to pour onto the driveway, for apá to
come back and fill a bowl with Cinnamon Toast Crunch.

Miedo who entered my soul temprano, whose love are self-hate catechisms, picking up Cheech Marín's
voice from pirated DVD's, and playing it at lunchtime. The barrio buzzards switched for these
vegan vultures. He shows up to biology class blazed, the nerdy girls lift their sight
from a microscope to ask him, "How dare you show up high? "Cuz...if I'm a stereotype, at least
you can see me."

Miedo de cruzar. Una tía's hair is uncombed as she washes the crumbs of arroz from a Princess and the

Frog plastic plate. El agua tibia de la pila wrinkling her hands. Last week, a Christian fundamentalist bickered, “How can you Mexican Catholics worship the Virgin Mary as Christ?” And I accordingly lead them to the rancho’s ruling. If a day is thousand years for God, what are the words “Hace tres días que mi hija ha llamado, desde que se fue a la frontera?” In this deserted state, time is eternity, when holy water runs out, when Padre Cura stops praying for them, cuando para de decir a la congregación, “Ruega por nosotros.” Tal vez por eso tenemos tantos santos.

Miedo de que sus hijos se metan en la droga, el vicio, las pandillas, el chupe, que sus hijas se embaracen.

Miedo que “el patrón no me va dar siempre las horas,” de “respirar los químicos de las computadoras del trabajo,” miedo de “irme a la tienda,” miedo a “llevar los chiquillos a la escuela.”

Miedo de fracasar, miedo de perder este idioma, esta lengua que adorna las paredes de mi niñez, que mi hija can discuss the political exegesis to Arthur Miller’s *The Crucible*, but not be able to tell her abuelita how her weekend was.

Miedo that the first letters every undocumented child learns will hereafter be “SB.”

IV

Pastor Lynn Godsey! President of Hispanic Evangelical Ministerial Alliance, I am with you in Austin, where you testified:

“One sergeant and five officers were sitting outside of [our] churches.

One pastor coming out was arrested... taken down and stripped naked. Grandmothers were mistreated, arrested, and detained.”

Michael Seifert of the Southern Border Communities Coalition, I am with you in Austin, where you testified:

“Even without the application of SB4, we have women who I know personally who have suffered domestic violence, who are terrified about calling the police on their partner.”

I am with you, Jesús, when you said, “I was a stranger, and you welcomed me.”

I am with you, Allah subhanahu wa ta’ala when you revealed to Prophet Muhammad sallallahu alaihi wasallam, “O you who believe! Stand out firmly for justice!”

I am with you, little chavita outside a SB protest, with a baby blue faldita y strap heels, alzando the American flag, la señal de nuestro auxilio y prueba, holding the stars and stripes on her tippy toes so it may be seen from Ellis Island, to your abuelas en México, while the son of angelheaded vatos tattooes a monarca on his picket chest. Before textbooks that carried our names, we must hold picket pages.

I am with you, DREAMers y manifestantes y estudiantes y clergyfolk de Tejas, who nailed a PA system inside the hollow lobby of the State Insurance Building in Austin. Your heads bowed in prayer while portraits of dead white men remained stiff to your call. While the deacon cried, “What we know while our presence is here, our testimonies are here, our bodies and our souls are here, is that truth crushed to the gravel will rise again.”

And Governor Abbot, I am even with you, inside your office while these shouts pour under your mahogany door, so I can smuggle the white/right-wing tweets of this bill,

and howl, from the thirteen Nahuatl heavens,
this primero versículo rayado,
~~“The Texas City ban wins final legislative approval.”~~
“I’m getting my signing pen warmed up.”

Aztlán, 2017