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## Songbird

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# Songbird

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Marlene Medina

He is the son of my grandfather  
the one who was left behind

Left in his homeland  
with his mother who loves him  
more than anyone in this world

She has always told him how proud she is  
of the man  
he has become.

He grew up valuing family, strength, and hard work.

He whistled with the songbirds on his way to work.  
On his spare time he enjoyed laughing and singing  
with his friends in the mariachi band.

During rough times he listened to words of wisdom  
and welcomed the comfort of his mother.  
He admired her devotion as a single mother.

He thinks about how the years are passing by so quickly,  
afraid of the day that he has to choose the piece of tierra  
where he will place the tombstone for his mother.

A lump forms in his throat.  
Tombstones always cause his eyes to tear up,  
but he never lets a tear fall, instead he swallows his sadness.  
His amá taught him never to cry  
over things that have not yet passed.

On the days the sun was high,  
and the breeze was warm,

he wondered what kind of man his father was.

At times he thought his father is a coward  
not a real man,  
but other times he thought  
about all the things they could have in common

He wonders if his father is dead or alive...  
Little did Xavier know that his father, José,  
wondered about his son in Mexico, too

José wonders what type of man his son grew up to be  
All the while listening to the songbirds perched above his head.

## REFLECTION

I haven't written like this for the longest time. The last time I wrote for a class about real life situations or feelings was in high school. Writing for this class took me back to my ninth grade English class with Ms. Villavazo. In her class I felt like I had the freedom to speak my mind and freewrite about how I felt about any subject. I felt the same freedom in this class even though the writing exercise and prompts were different. I really felt like my voice mattered, whether I decided to speak or not speak in class. There was this safe space created to share our lives, knowledge, and opinions with one another. This space was beautiful and really built community in our classroom.

The process of writing was difficult at times and other times writing was really easy too. I had difficulty writing about some prompts because I couldn't relate to that prompt. I realized that the reason I couldn't relate to some prompts was because I had some privileges that my fellow classmates didn't have. I never had experiences with U.S immigration policies or faced big injustices. I never had moments when I was criticized for the color of my skin. I always blended into the background and was never really discriminated against on account of my race.

Although it was difficult to relate to certain prompts, these prompts gave me an opportunity to think about the people who do relate to these prompts and how it affects their lives. It gave me an insight to a different view of life that I didn't have. The ones that were easy to write about were ones about my change of consciousness, my otherness, my culture, and how I felt about diversity.

These prompts also brought to light my own intersectionality and strengthened my love for my culture. Honestly, coming into this class I felt like I wasn't Chicana enough to even be in this class or be able to speak-up during class! Through the process of writing and talking with my classmates about our prompts and about the books we read I have really grown to see the breath of my culture. I now feel stronger about my identity as a Chicana.