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## ¿Cómo Te Llamas Tú?

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# ¿Cómo Te Llamas Tú?

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## Monserrat Ortiz

“Moncerrat?” “Mandserratt?” “Wow, I’ve never heard that name before.” I never really thought my name had such importance. Just like Esperanza, from *House on Mango Street*, my name is just too long, too complicated for others to pronounce. It becomes tiresome to have to explain and take the time to say my name. Every first day of school was the same routine. The teachers began to take attendance, and I knew they had arrived to my name by their puzzled facial expressions. Then the attempt to pronounce my name commenced, “Ma-ant-se-rat?” I laugh now at how red it made my face turn, knowing that everyone was staring at me as I tried to correct them. It made me uncomfortable, actually. Disregarding all of that, I’m not ashamed of my name. In fact, I had the opportunity to change my full name. I went through the whole legal process of changing my last name to Garcia and when it came to the final moment to sign all the documents, the judge looked at me and said, “This will be your name from now on, you now have the chance to change your first name to anything you’d like.” I looked at him with such thrill, shocked that I had this chance.

A chance to have an “easier” name and not have a reason to be embarrassed because someone else can’t say my name right. But then I wouldn’t be Monchi or Mona or all the other funky nicknames my family has given me. I could have been Paola, Nancy, or María, any other name that is not mine. I then looked at my mother and she just smiled at me. She named me Monserrat for a reason. It would be the weirdest thing if people called me Araceli or Sonia. It would be a whole new identity and it would have probably changed my relationship with my friends and family. I now take pride in my name. It’s beautiful. It’s unique, although in Mexico, there’s un chingo de Mondses. Moreover, I know who I am and who I will be with this name. Not everyone will pronounce it right, but everyone will damn remember it right.

## Reflection

Reading short poems in class and reflecting back on them has made me realize how many similarities there are between these authors and myself. Latino poetry can be so powerful. They speak of struggle, family, religion, childhood, everything. One of my favorite poems was “I am Joaquin: An Epic Poem” by Rodolfo “Corky” Gonzales because it felt passionate. He analyzed each conquest of our Mexican roots, the battles of success and defeat. How being an American but also being Mexican can be so contradicting. And it is for myself. When it comes down to the real deal, who do I serve?

Do I stand for the land who has promised me freedom but doesn't really follow through or do I serve my other country that I only know through a few visits but is a part of who I am. But I feel Rodolfo's words in my heart. How he will fight and continue to fight until our land, our rights, our names are ours once again. “Barrios of the World” by Ricardo Sanchez was a similar read. He elaborated on how we created barriers amongst ourselves. And it's true wherever we go. Rich are with the rich and poor with the poor. Working as a community is the only way to go. Knowing that one person can bring so much change to our world is where we should start. Mending our relationships within our Raza, encouraging and appreciating each other for all we do.

Finally, “Leavings” by Sandra Castillo also touched me on a personal level. Living in poverty is a common challenge with all races. Having mouths to feed just makes it that more challenging—constantly thinking and hearing the children's stomachs cry for just a bite. The transition to America in search of the American Dream is something everyone chases. Is the American Dream really a myth? It goes both ways. It's the myth of meritocracy, if you work hard you'll succeed, and if you fail it's because you didn't work hard enough. As people of color we'll continue to face injustice. With the determination of Rodolfo, the sense of brotherhood like Ricardo mentioned and using Sandra's and our struggles as motivations will only be the start of a new movement, of a new world.