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Saturday Morning

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Saturday Morning

Cynthia Paredes

Mom is bumping Maná.
My brother and I hide in our rooms pretending to sleep in.
I can smell the Pinsol and posole.
She'll ask me to sweep and vacuum.
"It's your cat so it's your job to get rid of all these pelos!"

She'll make my brother mow the lawn and trim the hedges.
Then she'll make him go back and fix the spots he missed.
Yeah we'll whine about it, but she is a stern woman;
the sala will be cleaned and the yard will be neat again.

The stove will be cluttered with steaming pots and hot pans.
Mom doesn't eat until my brother and I are seated.

She's always the last to eat.

She'll be standing proud by the stove waiting
for us to applaud her culinary expertise.
I get out of bed and greet her with a kiss.

"Do you need help Ma?"

Reflection

I never wrote about my culture before and I never really valued Chicana literature the way I do now. I wasn't even aware of the presence of Chicana literature before this class. Writing about my experience as a Chicana and hearing the narratives of my peers made me feel like I belonged. By the end of almost every freewrite I would remember another story from my childhood and make a quick note to remember it. I felt a lot of nostalgia throughout this project; not all of what I wrote was happy, but I felt like everything I wrote is important. I discovered a lot about myself and realized that other people share my experiences.

For example, I realized that mostly everyone in the class has exceeded their parent's level of education. I'm the first of my family to go to a university, and I feel like that's fairly common among the Latina students in universities. It's kind of revolutionary to think about. Revolutionary in that being in this class and writing our stories strengthens the Latina community. I want other Latinas to have better access to higher education and I feel like we need to be conscious of the importance of building community. In the process of writing I was reminded of how important it is for me to be in school. I don't think that school is for everyone and there's nothing wrong with dropping out, but I feel like me being in college is revolutionary for my family and I. I am incredibly grateful for the opportunity to share my experiences as a Chicana.