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## “To whom do I owe the symbols of my survival?” To Childhood, I Thank You

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## **“To whom do I owe the symbols of my survival?” To Childhood, I Thank You**

*Inspired by Audre Lorde’s question in her biomythography, *Zami: A New Spelling of my Name**

By Audriana Peñaloza

The small town of Arvin, so small, people would not know where or what it is if they were told. From the busy Sunday mornings, with church goers running around the town to get their errands done before they got home. To the quiet Saturday nights, as most knew what was going on in the dark, only being illuminated by a flickering street lamp.

Grandma’s home. The only pink home on the block that is surrounded by palm trees. What a sight it is. As my sister and I run around her front lawn barefoot, my mother and grandmother are talking on the steps of her house. About what? We never really knew, but the company was always nice. Especially when it comes with a side of raspados and elotes, though my sister and I could never finish ours with our tiny stomachs. No matter if we finished or not, we were still brought into an embrace by our tiny stomachs and given kisses. A reminder that we were loved even then.

The baseball fields that held little league practices and games. Where in the dugout, my teammate told me that they would make a homerun for me if I made it to first base. Love as a child is the most innocent thing in the world. Along with the first heartbreak. I did not make it to first base at all that game. I do not fully remember what happened, but I remember crying after he yelled at me. I remember parents laughing because of how adorable everything was. But I did not find it adorable. Luckily, the season ended with him making a home run for me, or so he said. I never saw him after that.

Driving seven hours straight through city and desert to see my grandma. I love visiting her. Something exciting always happened whenever we crossed the border. When the Mexico air entered

our nostrils, that is when we knew we finally made it. Being greeted with kisses all over my face and a plate with food I have missed. We were only allowed out during the day, but that was okay. It did not stop us from running to the corner store to bother the store owner until they let us take something without pay. Running home after to show our families the treasures we received. Days ended with small talks and our mothers putting us to bed. The bed that our uncles gave up so that the children would sleep well. Even then, we were loved.