

# CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives

---

Volume 5 *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*

Article 32

---

2022

## A New Upbringing in a New Community

Gregorio Yarasca Caso  
*Cal Poly Humboldt*

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos>



Part of the [Bilingual, Multilingual, and Multicultural Education Commons](#), [Chicana/o Studies Commons](#), [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [Community-Based Learning Commons](#), [Creative Writing Commons](#), [Curriculum and Instruction Commons](#), [Domestic and Intimate Partner Violence Commons](#), [Educational Sociology Commons](#), [Ethnic Studies Commons](#), [Feminist, Gender, and Sexuality Studies Commons](#), [Gender and Sexuality Commons](#), [History Commons](#), [Inequality and Stratification Commons](#), [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#), [Latina/o Studies Commons](#), [Modern Literature Commons](#), [Politics and Social Change Commons](#), [Race and Ethnicity Commons](#), [Reading and Language Commons](#), and the [Theory, Knowledge and Science Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Yarasca Caso, Gregorio (2022) "A New Upbringing in a New Community," *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives*: Vol. 5, Article 32.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.humboldt.edu/courageouscuentos/vol5/iss1/32>



This work is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 License](#)

© 2016 Department of Critical Race, Gender & Sexuality Studies (CRGS) at Humboldt State University.

This Counternarratives and Reflections is brought to you for free and open access by the Journals at Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. It has been accepted for inclusion in *CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives* by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons @ Cal Poly Humboldt. For more information, please contact [kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu](mailto:kyle.morgan@humboldt.edu).

## A New Upbringing in a New Community

By Gregorio Yarasca Caso

San Luis Obispo, or commonly known as SLO, is a city in California's Central Coast region. It is known for many things such as its lively communities, museums, art galleries, amazing eateries including the Madonna Plaza Hotel restaurant, and the elephant seals on the beach that come during the summers. It also has the historic Spanish mission San Luis Obispo de Tolosa. I lived in SLO for about twenty-five years. I remember when it lacked diversity and representation for the Hispanic community since the majority of people who live there were white. The few Hispanic people I did notice happened to work in the restaurants and hotels that helped keep tourism alive in SLO at the time.

California became my new home when I immigrated from Peru to the United States in 1993. In my first five years of living here, I lived in Morro Bay, twenty miles to the north of San Luis Obispo. In my first year, it was very difficult to find a job because I could not speak English. It was like growing up like a child all over again because I had to learn a new language, culture, tradition, laws, and even food. However, I was in fact not a child because I had the responsibility of paying my rent and bills. To add to this, my communication was very limited since I was still learning how to speak English. I only talked with my two friends who lived in the same apartment. We were applying for jobs in different places, but we would never get calls back. Finally, our neighbor who lived in the same apartment recommended a job at his restaurant called Margi's Diner in Morro Bay.

I remember on my first day, one guy taught me how to wash the dishes using the dish machine. They asked me, "what part of Mexico are you from?" I told them I am from Peru. In the restaurant, there were about four people from different states in Mexico: two cooks in the morning and one prep, and one cook at night. After a few days, they would help with translating my Spanish to English. Every day, like a child who grew up in America, I began learning new words in English.

At the same time, my friends taught me “albur” or slang, and it took little time to learn. My friends from Mexico use it when making jokes or when they are mad at people. Though I was learning, English was still difficult for me, so I went to the church on Thursdays to learn English with some nice older volunteers. I also learned English very slowly at my two jobs. Most of the time I worked with people from Mexico, so I learned more slang than I did proper English.

When I was trying to connect with the English-speaking community from here, people would try to speak Spanish to me when I tried to speak English. When some tried to speak in Spanish, they would say things like, “hola como estas!” or they would even say “quiero una cerveza!” When I would respond back in Spanish, they would usually reply with how they did not really know the language. I felt very frustrated when this happened because I wanted to learn English and very few people would help me out, especially while I was working or even around the community. There was a constant language barrier that affected the adults as well as the children. Luckily, there was one bilingual school and another school that was transitioning to being a bilingual elementary school. This was beneficial to our community because it was able to address the present language barrier. This also showed people how we all needed each other for help. Classes were not only bilingual but even the books they used were too.

I learned a little more English and more about the culture and traditions from the USA and Mexico, as well as the food and laws from my new community. One challenge my community confronted throughout time was white people’s understanding or lack thereof of the importance of Latinx in our community in SLO. Our families work in many occupations like house cleaning, restaurants, construction, landscape, and many other jobs for less money. Also, in those jobs, most of the time, we did not take breaks other than our lunch. This was an issue because many owners of these jobs realized that Latinx were able to work as long as they could without a break, so they took advantage of us. The white community may or may not understand this because they face less discrimination than Latinx in general. However, over the

years, I have seen an increase in the Latinx population, and have even noticed a few Mexican eateries that have opened in the last few years! Hopefully, we can see less discrimination within the Latinx population now that time is changing.

Even though I felt a little out of place when I first got there, I found many ways to stay connected with my culture. For example, I celebrated Cinco de Mayo with my Hispanic friends. The best time of year was December because of the celebrations that took place! Every year the San Luis Obispo de Tolosa Mission celebrates Las Posadas, which is basically Mexico's Christmas. My favorite part of the event was the Mariachi band. Another big event was the Christmas mass at the church I went to. These events are what made me feel a sense of belonging in my community.

