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Mami, Dios y Yo

Andrea Gonzalez-Gaona
Cal Poly Humboldt

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Mami, Dios y Yo

By Andrea Gonzalez-Gaona

Mami siempre showed me how to be fuerte
Mami siempre showed me how to be valiente
Mami siempre showed me how to be inteligente
Mami siempre showed me how to have fortaleza

Mami siempre showed me how to be feliz
Mami siempre showed me how to appreciate una flor

Pero sobre todo,
Mami siempre told me to have faith.
"Si tienes fe en dios, el te cuidara."

This phrase is something she's told me since I couldn't even begin to comprehend it. I would hear the words, but they didn't seem applicable to me for some reason like I wasn't special enough or had experienced serious enough trauma like those who came before us. Until more recently I didn't truly understand. Now, not only do I understand it, but I believe it with every ounce and fiber of my being. This is a lesson I've come to learn in more recent years, specifically in the past three that I have spent in Humboldt County. Here, I have almost become homeless twice. I have experienced racism, sexism, homophobia, disparity, hunger, displacement, near death, fright, and much more. But throughout all of this, my mami's words resonated with me even more and allowed me to move forward como una soldadita, as mi hermano Jorge and mami call me. I found myself in my hardest moments of pure and utter despair, clinging to my little statue of la virgencita Tonantzín. Holding her ever so close to mi corazón. When I felt I could not go any longer, feel no longer, I would feel this strong urge to just hold her. With that, I had my mami and faith close to my heart. A particular transformative moment between us all is as follows: I was displaced out of my home recently in March 2022 and forced to hide out in a hotel with my partner & emotional support animal for safety reasons. We were in a hotel for well over a month, paying double rent to the home we couldn't even

reside in and the hotel itself. Spending thousands of dollars, watching my savings account dwindle away as well as my hopes for school following my bachelor's degree. To make matters worse, my partner got in a car accident and we both contracted COVID during spring break. Just when things seemed to settle down, life threw something new and all the more challenging our way. Time after time, defeat after defeat I found myself remembering my mami's words and praying as hard as I could when I did not know what else to do. When I spent hours of the night crying after my partner fell asleep, the only thing that brought me solace was clinging to my virgencita statue. When I had a panic attack, again, I clung to my virgencita. It's as if she had a magnet inside that drew me to her in a truly inexplicable manner. When I called my mom the day everything started on 3/04/22, as soon as she answered the phone I told her "Por favor nomas dime que voy a estar bien y que me amas." Following her doing exactly as I asked, I began to scream at the top of my lungs, "¡Amo a dios tanto, tanto, tanto...y el me ama a mi!" I said this because diosito had sent us so many guardian angels that day. A kind neighbor who helped us tow our crashed vehicle during a storm, my precious partner walking away from a bad car collision during a hailstorm with only a scratch and concussion, the generous friend who let us sleep at her mom's that night, the supportive friend who provided us rides to school, work, & groceries, the understanding boss who allowed me time off from work. Everything that went wrong that day had a guardian angel right alongside us. This is why when I called my mami as I waited for my partner to get checked out at the hospital, I screamed "¡Amo a dios tanto, tanto, tanto...y el me ama a mi!" because I really did and he truly did. I was, still am, and likely will always be learning more and more about what mi mami meant exactly and why it's so important. Gracias a dios, my partner, cat, and I are in a beautiful new home with a great bounty of peace, happiness, and faith. What is truly amazing about the end of my story is that this property already had an approved applicant, but they very randomly decided against it on the day of signing their lease and during our great time of need... So, it went over to us!

Do you see what mi mami, and now myself, mean? "Si tienes fe en dios, el te cuidara."