

# CouRaGeouS Cuentos: A Journal of Counternarratives

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## Introduction

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# Introduction: CouRaGeouS Cuentos as a Site of Spirit Protection and Restoration

Nancy Pérez and Marisol Ruiz

We wanted this volume to focus on healing texts because we were inspired by the work of Anita Tijerina Revilla, who wrote “Attempted Spirit Murder: Who Are Your Spirit Protectors and Your Spirit Restorers?” Her work reminded us that education *spirit murders* us. She defines *spirit murder* as racist, classist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-immigrant, ableist, and/or ageist traumas experienced in educational settings that have the power to spiritually and emotionally destroy our dreams and our desires to exist. It silences our voices, it erases our stories and our bodies from the literature, histories and herstories. She reminds us of how we can protect our community by being spirit restorers and protectors. According to Tijerina, spirit restorers and protectors are “people, places, organizations, beliefs, and/or practices (they can also be art, poetry, books, music, and dance) that give marginalized people the strength to reject and survive attempted spirit murder and/or restore our wounded spirits, especially in the face of repeated attacks and woundings both inside and outside of institutions of education” (2021, 39). We want Courageous Cuentos to be that site of spirit protection and restoration for all of those who have been silenced and erased by their discipline/s. Courageous Cuentos is that space where we share our stories that help uplift us. The stories in this volume remind us that the healing process is complex and looks differently for each one of us. Some of us are beginning the healing journey by acknowledging our pain and scars, some are in the process of healing, and others have accepted where they are in their healing journey.

When we worked with the high schools, we made sure to use plantitas as medicine so they can use the spirit of the plants to protect them and remind them how the land loved them and continues to be there to protect and fortify our spirits. Lavender can heal our anxiety as we walk into a toxic environment. Even in these environments these stories help to serve as a means /space where we can restore ourselves. Healing is also acknowledging that we are not alone; these stories we share help to tell one another that these similar experiences are not about us; it is larger than us because they are the systems of oppression which try to destroy our spirits but together, we can heal, protect and restore our communities. We are a beautiful community. Our stories are vibrating together as one. This volume is an energy that wants to shield, protect and restore one another through our beautiful loving experiences. So, let's connect with one another as we read each other's writing. Let's read with the intention of healing. We would like to dedicate this poem to all the readers and writers of this edition of Courageous Cuentos.

Tú y yo  
Sanemos  
Juntos  
Vamos a combinar nuestras energías  
Y volvámonos uno  
Sanemos, unamos nuestras almas,  
Al compartir nuestras historias  
Nuestras historias de amor, fuerza, y sanación  
Sanemos y compartamos nuestras historias de dolor, tormento, estrés  
y angustia.  
Sanemos y compartamos nuestras historias de placer, risas y alegría  
Compartamos nuestros consejitos  
Que hemos aprendido a lo largo del camino  
Si, sanemos  
Y compartamos un pedacito de nuestro corazón.  
Un pedacito de quiénes somos  
Que nuestras historias ayuden a iluminar cada rincón de este mundo  
Sanemos mientras tu historia  
ayuda a sanar mis cicatrices  
ayuda a proteger mi alma y mi espíritu  
Sanemos mientras nos alimentamos con los néctares de nuestras his-  
torias

Sanemos mientras leemos nuestras historias convirtiéndonos en gotas  
de agua alimentando nuestras raíces,  
fortaleciendo nuestra comunidad  
Sanemos para que las semillas de las escrituras florezcan en nuestras  
almas  
Sanemos mientras guardamos cada historia sagradamente en nuestro  
corazón.