
Senior Projects Spring 2022

Bard Undergraduate Senior Projects

Spring 2022

Que Dios Los Bendiga

Dahlia Celis
Bard College

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I write to you today, encountered by your absence -- no longer anxious or scared. I finished reading xxxx xxxxxxx and I loved the ending. I read it while the sun hit my back. I want to tell you everything and I am hopeful we can talk soon. I want this pain to be made worth something. This is for us, you are helping me grow, and every inch of my being will always love you -- I only hope that you will love me too. How do I age or learn to stop checking my phone? How do I move onwards without you with me? I am healing constantly and I am going to be better. But I have grieved and continue to grieve -- for you. I find you all around me and place you everywhere you are not. I find you and I cry, but I am happy too.

*I did it all for you. I give you everything as I gave you everything -- give it all to you. You were my devotion -- and this is my dedication to you.
Que dios te bendiga, con mucho amor.*

Dahlia

My "*Abuelita Mariquita*" is a generous woman, the oldest of 15 siblings born to my *bisabuelos*. I have lived with her my entire life in *la casita azul*, our home humble with its mismatched furnishings. Since I can remember, I have witnessed her house several of her younger siblings from Mexico who desired temporary work in the states. No matter the outcome of their stay, she would welcome them back, her home warm and open to those who may or may not have reciprocated my *abuelita's* generosity. It is from my *abuelita* that I learned to care for my family.

I was born from a family of lower class immigrants who settled in East Los Angeles, California. My project is first and foremost an homage to them, acting as a tribute to the struggles and hardships which have uplifted and strengthened our complicated family unit. But my family is made up of both blood and water and my photographs reflect all relationships within my life. The photos themselves are like flashes of memories of my time with my loved ones. I use objects to point and give reference to specific memories yet these are not still life images. They are faint representations of something far away, lacking specificity, but packed with emotional charge. They trigger happy and sad feelings because they are honest contemplations of what consists of a broken but resilient family.

I have known from a young age how easily a family can fluctuate, as I have gained and lost many of those I have loved. For this reason, my project extends to those who are no longer in my life. As I grow older, I find it easier to find solace in loss. While these images express gratitude, they simultaneously help me reconcile my feelings for those who are now absent.

I am grateful for my *abuelita* and am most thankful for her continuous love and generosity. Whenever she and I part ways, she calls me over to give me a blessing: "*Que dios te bendiga.*" I wish to do the same.



Que Dios Los Bendiga

senior exhibition by Dahlia Celis



May 7 - 10

Woods Gallery, Bard College

Opening Reception May 7th, 6pm