

## Morí viví

When asked  
How are you, my child  
I responded honestly...

Today I am a child born from exile.  
A mere seed of displaced children  
Expelled from the mother's womb  
Aching to return to their island...

Disciplined -  
in their hopes  
Of obtaining generational wealth  
Blessed in kisses  
De Abuelita  
From papito Dios  
Porque el siempre te cuidará

Hmm  
Let's sit for a second  
Enjoy this moment  
And be still in it

....  
Standing on stages  
Hasn't been the easiest lately...  
Yet as I pull these pieces back to me  
Allow me to prove to you  
That although what is given  
Can just as easily be taken  
The strength that lies in forgiveness  
Could never allow división rooted in difference

Because

When I was young My mama told me that language barriers exist  
I must be stupid because you don't understand my native lisp

But I outgrew you  
Didn't I?  
Raised myself from the ashes  
And rooted myself  
Deeper than you ever thought possible

My people,  
Whose will have been proven time and time again to be as strong as hurricanes  
An Ever present light dusting of  
Tierra Sagrada  
You can find us  
Clutching rosary beads  
Quick to talk in tongues during prayers  
Allow me to kiss both cheeks  
Intent to send you home in bendiciones  
Oh...at least my Abuelita... anyways...

In 2017 I spoke to you all about our history  
Painted you pictures of our Puertorican victors  
For some  
I planted seeds of hope  
between  
each  
stanza  
of poetry

Today I speak to you all  
About Resilience  
You now know the  
Tale of the  
Exiled children  
Today  
I urge you  
To taste the sweet flavor of rebirth  
For some, this is a homecoming  
An awakening

Una clase mecla de la vida  
Some days she tastes like sancocho  
Earthy to keep you rooted  
Yet other days she resemble the dull taste of homesickness  
Belly aching  
Palates uninterested  
Due to the smells of mami's kitchen  
Not making it over Caribbean waters  
Indifferent

They tell me I have sharp edges  
But I'd you'd allow yourself to  
Take a walk with me  
I just might tell you my secrets

So the reality is  
There are days I must face my abusers as I enter rooms  
I lock eyes with them  
Unwaveringly  
Because I know in those moments that folks fail to uplift me  
My ancestors urged me to hold me....

And I do so lovingly -  
With locked arms  
And heavy breathing  
I fall to my knees  
And watch the world I love  
Combust into rubble  
And then I watch it  
Come back together again as  
One.  
In the same breath.

Some days I'm the culprit  
Some days it is simply the weight of these burdens

See...

My papa's calloused hands are reminders of his times on the tobacco field

Because he couldn't get a corporate job

To me, he was a hero with his dark complexion

as his skin glistened

Under the burning sun, he wore his straw hat

And sang tunes from the island and still managed to laugh

When he walked by they whispered

"Jibaro"

But to me he was

"Papa"

He often tells me stories of his time on this island

And it saddens him he cannot go back

I spend nights tossing and turning

Yet Aware it is a privilege in itself to have to feel the weight of what returning

back may look like

But even I fight the urge to leave everything behind and return to

My beautiful Borinquen

But home ....

The land of the valiant lord...

my island...

Has become restricted to me

Inaccessible unless for vocations

I dread every time I must leave

And return to life In the states

The land in which

we speak of revolution in whispers

Watch our children succumb to illness

Because language barriers

Are just as potent

Ammunition for those born killers

Poverty to reinforce

Our reality's

A double-edged sword  
When breaking  
Our Rich Ports  
Touristic picture

They call us ungrateful because they feel as tho citizenship will ease their  
blows

When  
The reality is  
We are children born from displacement

Beautiful for our culture  
But  
Undeserving when it comes to receiving aid  
And we are bodies that are  
worth more than  
Tax breaks  
More than your embargo treaties  
So pal carajo con todas las leyes  
Escritas por las manos de los gringos (del gobierno)  
Que no saben de lo que es ser  
Puertorriqueno

Thankful  
The young lords taught me  
“Solo el pueblo  
Salva al pueblo”  
And In these veins  
Runs the blood of generations of survivors  
Medicine women  
Young warriors  
And gifted scholars

Mami says  
Everything is el propósito de dios  
But I reminded her  
My people

Have bones built like sugar cane  
Hearts like the gold pillaged from their island

This poem is for mothers  
Who sent away their sons and daughter to the states to work  
In hopes of then obtaining a better future  
So they sent them off with shaking hands  
And tear-filled prayers  
Packed us bread and galletitas  
In hopes that we will never lose taste of what home is

For the children  
Scattered like sprinkled stardust  
Across the diaspora and archipiélago  
Relocation must be  
Heavy-handed like mami when she's cooking

Los poderosos  
Who never turned their back on home  
Because they know that no amount of light outs  
Could ever put out  
Their hope for a better future for their cuida  
Porque los Puertorriqueños se quedarán  
Siempre.

This is an ode  
For the ones who still feel so far from home  
Comeleones  
Beautiful ever changing beings

Stuck in between  
I don't belong  
And I long to be

Im exist to tell you it is safe here

We are the mezcla

The true definition of what America means  
They called us the melting pot  
But instead we gave them  
una clase de sopen  
A little bit of everything  
We fed them  
as often as they requested  
Until their stomachs hurt  
And then we're blamed for the sickness

They tell us  
The only way we can make it  
is to leave behind our rightful place  
And  
Live amongst those  
Not yet ready to hear our contributions to this nation.

But  
Some days...  
Some days I imagine  
What our ancestors would say to me...  
To us...

Can you hear it?  
Like a  
The fierce yet gentle whisper  
Hidden between the song of the coqui  
Lean in so you Can hear it?

Can you hear me?

I made you stronger than those moments  
I build your spine out of iron  
And lined each vertebrae  
With sapphire and jasper  
To remind you  
Do you hear me?

You come from a lineage of kings and kin of strong elders  
I molded you with brown hands  
From the very earth to remind you that all shades of blackness will always be  
worthy.

And when you fought me  
On the day that you first seen light  
I reminded you  
You were here to serve a purpose.-

So do you hear me warrior child? ...  
Descendent of the wild woman  
First born child  
Of a hungry king  
I wrote your prophecy with you  
And placed it back within you  
Lit candles full of affirmations  
When you aren't watching

So I hope you re read it  
When folks who were sent to cross you  
No longer remain docile  
Cling to it  
When proclaiming your place in this world  
And never remain doubtful.  
Cling to it  
During moments in which you contemplate  
Shattering the veil  
Those are simply  
Moves  
Made  
Backwards  
Life?  
Well my only advice,  
Is to cling to it.

Tap into me  
Do not run from me



Fall into me  
No...Do not jump for me  
Stand tall for me  
And pls  
Do not abandon me.

For a life without our connection  
Is a cycle lost to the matrix  
A body dumped in the river  
Of Colonization

Bori,  
Never forget the smell of tu isla  
Or the weight of our caracoles  
In your necklace  
For to be a child of borinken  
Is to be a child born from exile  
Yet forever protected by Atabeys blessings.

By  
Mishie Serrano  
"The In-Between Poetry"