

First, I'd like to thank Julie Enszer and Nívea Castro for this experience. As an emerging writer, it's an honor to be a part of the legacy that is *Sinister Wisdom*. Mil gracias.

A good friend once told me "The most important person you must come out to is yourself."

Like many Latinas, I was taught that being a pata was a serious transgression. Being a lesbian in our world was more than just stereotypes of short hair and sensible shoes. It was rebellion against every notion of what a woman "should" be. Coming out and being out is the continuous scouring of homophobic, racist, sexist stories, and the healing infusion of new affirming ones.

What I see in this issue is a restorative salve of poetry and prose, across age, language, and nationality.

In "Disfellowshipped," Andreína Garcia reconciles her identity against the pressure of religion.

In "A Political Statement," Karen Jaime asserts her mere existence as a political act.

In "Gender Fluid on the Rocks," Monica Palacios challenges definitions all together.

This issue is the issue I wish I'd read when I was thirteen. This is what we look like. All shades of brown. Fierce. Introspective. Academic. Irreverent. Sisters, we have painted a beautiful mosaic of faces, of womyn who define ourselves.

Geny Cabral, Co-Editor
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PARA LA KATHY DE COLUSA

Cherríe L. Moraga

April 27, 1949 – March 14, 2012

The every
Chicana
every
Mexican
Indian born again
wakes up
one morning
and says
I think
so
I think
I remember
algo así . . .

She, 'the man'
the 'everyman'
no man
but everyone
to us
to nobody
us Mexican
Indian
Califas
tribe of 'Nobodies'
big bodies
growin' bigger
in nation(ality)

She . . .

I say
 what I saw
 in that rough shot
 memory lane
 picture show
 running clip after clip
 on the cafeteria
 wall was a sister
 a prima
 a tía
 my baby
 We got pictures sure we got pictures of her
 momma
 holding babies
 on hip
 bouncing on thigh
 straddled on back
 another round
 pour me
 they keep coming round

Still she be
 the most beautiful woman on the planet
 always thought this my tribe
 of women, the most beautiful
 on the planet
 Kathy
 whom I never met alive and kicking
 a look-alike to my tía
 Rosie
 but hotter in Sacramento summer cutoffs
 and tank top
 arms the red bark of madrone

My woman she say she see her beauty, too
 but different cuz I got the eyes of a man
 in a woman's body
 I am the mama holding the baby
 I am the lover holding the mama
 I am she who shall not be mentioned nor named

Kathy

With her goes my generation
 cuz we going out like everybody goes
 hers, an ordinary small death
 in the grand sweep of pendejadas
 drunk and lazy drivers, veering over
 to where they don't belong

it could've been me you us

I am us
 those cedar bark arms
 the furniture
 post-colonial baroque
 super wide-screen tv and louie el catorce drapes
 the high drama action of the Mexican American
 soap y sala

I don't know if we remember shit about who we are
 dissed-located in suburbia.

I don't know why it's never cool to be just plain Mexican

I don't know

why Kathy breaks my heart

when I never knew the girl?

why we watch the weight gain and lost
slide across the screen
like a infomercial – ‘fore ‘n’ afta
‘fore ‘n’ afta
afta ‘n’ befoe
same mama inside
same high-stepping chola-style
partee gal
teenage con su girl gang
en su valle romp

why she go and break my heart like that?

I miss the tequila.
Not the fistfights, but the dancing it brought to your feet.
And the damn good cry.

But this ain’t no party at all
just a silent recall and
the clacker beat of an o-o-ld acorned Califas
these youths
can’t
quite
shake
a stick at

Where are the women’s voices?
Why so serious?
She, ya la fading generation,
de una indígena
bailando en la ronda.

There is no home to go back to now.
They mostly dead, those that remember.

La Kathy, también.

I look at youth, their faces free of lines
recorded in the heart
and I worry we are no more
than nostalgia
the romance of memory

when our lives required so much
change.