

The Perez Family



I am Rossana Perez. I am from El Salvador and I am in this country 30 years.

Where do I begin to tell my story? With my body? My body is tattooed with a history unknown for many and painful for the ones who know about it. I carry that story with me.

The body has a memory of its own...it remembers my grandma's hands cooking soups and stews and pupusas to comfort me, and it remembers the hands of those who inflicted pain.

When I was a little girl, I wanted to be a professor. Even though my brothers and sisters were older than me, I would tell them to sit down and listen. My grandma used to say, "You're such a mandona, so bossy, always telling everyone what to do."

And my great-grandmother used to tell me things. She didn't have any formal education but she was a very strong women. She used to say, "Women--what they need is a good pair of hands and a good pair of legs to go and look for a job."

Something affected me very much when I was 9 years old. There was a 100 hours war between El Salvador and Honduras because of a soccer game. How crazy is that? For that, they were killing people and I was very concerned, asking my grandmother, "Grandma, what's going to happen to the kids?" And she will say, "I don't know." And later on when I was in middle school and I used to go to the marches I had the same anxiety. Then when I was a student at the National University and got more involved in the popular movement I knew either we win or we die. One time in San Salvador we were marching carrying the bodies of union workers that had been killed. We were on our way to the university to give tribute to these men, but on the way there the police started to shoot at everybody. People started to run and I was thrown to the street.

Many of my friends are dead, many of them were disappeared. And sometimes I feel that same anxiety here. Immigration policy is never clear, so we are suspects. Forever suspects of everything.

The way I was captured? First the army raided my family's home and took my father and my sister and my brother. They destroyed the house. I took my baby daughter Sara and I went to hide with my friend Margarita. She lived in a military neighborhood so I thought there I would be safe. But no. The men knocked at her door, the death squad, armed to the teeth. I could not put up resistance. Sara was not even two years old. I just gave her to my friend, looking in Margarita's eyes to keep calm. The night was cold, it was raining, and at that moment I wanted to gulp everything through my body, the darkness of the night, the falling rain, the smell of wet soil. My body was tied up; the blows, and punches began and a fall into an endless spiral, but the mind didn't want to let go of the rain, the night, the smell of wet soil. Many times the body loses its identity and does not feel like one's body anymore, numbed, tired, fragmented, in pain. Meanwhile, the mind drifted, looking for help. Then, the body will remember the good moments in life. A baby's smile, a hug from a loved one, singing with friends, the multitude of crickets singing by the creek after a good rain at night, the sound of the water going down the stream and the interrogation begins, but one must remain SILENT.

Then I was in the women's prison 10 months. And Sara, my daughter, will come and visit and she will say to me, "How come you cannot come with us? Can you come with us today?" And I will say, "No. I cannot. I need to stay here." And my Mom make up a story telling her, "Well, your Mom has to stay there because they have to clean that big house and she has to cook and help the other women to cook." So she'll say, "OK, but one day you will leave with us," and I'll say, "Yeah, one day we'll leave together."

When I was released I had a visa for Mexico and then we came here. One day we were playing outside not too long after we had come to Los Angeles and Sara said, "You know, I used to have a Mom that looks just like you." And I said, "What do you mean? I'm your mom!" and she say, "No, something happen to her. These men came one night and took her away." And then she also imagines that she didn't let them, that she hid me so they couldn't take me.

And she asks me about her father. My husband Rodolfo was disappeared in September 1981. I tell her, "See the stars? Your dad is in one of those stars. He's always looking at us, he's always watching us so we are not alone and as long as we talk about him, he's always with us."

Life can be difficult here. People don't pay attention to others, no one makes contact with strangers, and new arrivers like me are swallowed into the guts of the beast. We become invisible like the shadows on the streets. The jobs that we get are the low pay jobs so you might think that I studied at the university for nothing.

There is always something that reminds me that I don't belong here. I don't feel that I belong here or El Salvador now. Because I was there and I feel well this is not my home. It *is* my home but it doesn't feel like home. Of course. It's a different country. The country that I have in my mind is no more. It's just changed. This is what we are, part here and part there, knowing that we have a core, a center that essence of who we are, that we carry with us.

Nowadays the younger generation even in El Salvador--my mom says people doesn't know who Monseñor Romero was and people didn't know there was a war and why there was a war. So I think there is a lot of work to do in terms of educating people and embracing the history that we have gone

through. It's very difficult but I think the more you know, the more open we are to talk about and be honest with ourselves, the better it will get to the future. Because it is not something that is just going to disappear. It's who we are.

After all these things, I'm still a student. Besides being a student of life. Coming here I have to work to support my daughter and to support myself so it wasn't till 2003 that I was able to go back to school. I study literature because it's a way to unravel the human nature. I finish my BA in 2009. And then in 2011 I started my Masters program and I think it is great because it has given me the opportunity to think about my life a little bit. So that's what I'd like to continue doing. Next, I want to study for a Ph.D. And among those things is always working in the community.

Sometimes I write letters to people in my head. Like my grandma, because there were things I couldn't say before, on the way to the airport. For whatever reasons at that moment I could not do it. But here are the words I want to say:

Abuela, I have wanted to thank you for your support in these past months. It has been difficult for all of us, the tension on the streets imploded in our bodies and exploded at everybody's home, and in the whole country. Seeing dead bodies on the streets, and seeing my Rodolfo and friends disappeared or get killed, it has been deeply painful. Speech and words cannot do justice to the feeling that eats my heart at this precise moment. My body still feels numb.

I remember the first night after I was released, awaking to the sounds of the avocado tree branches over the roof, I got scared and then, I realized that I was at your home; it was still dark outside and a sense of confusion and emptiness enfolded me. I stayed there in silence listening to the early sounds of the morning.

Seems like we are suffering a collective shock, confused, lost in our thoughts and worries. Nobody seems to know when things will be "normal" again. Perhaps it is a momentary adios, and we'll see each other soon.

But I didn't say that. I just wanted to grasp the moment, and take with me your teary brown eyes, which are telling me everything at once, I will keep them in the most sacred part of my body, and I will look at them whenever I need comfort...

Then we said goodbye...

Rossana's narrative is drawn from her own writing.



I am Rossana's daughter Sara. I was born in El Salvador.

Someone gave me a journal when I was 12 and it was a diary, right? with a little lock and everything. And I would write the most mundane things of my life, like my favorite movies, and I kept these records of everything. I think just the act of sitting down and putting my own words on paper was a way of establishing my identity.

I was so confused for so long. For a long time I had no idea what happened to my mother, and our history. My mom wasn't able to explain anything. I think it was too painful for her and it was also too much weight for me to bear as a child to have to hear any of that. No one explained anything to me until much later.

I do remember certain times... Little things she would tell me. When I asked her why her eye was red she said, "The police got me and they hit me and they threw me on the floor" and it was devastating. I was like how could anyone do that to another human? I think that there was always a little bit of fear.

I don't remember actually being in El Salvador as a child but I've heard a lot of stories and I do remember what I've been told.

My grandmother said I was really good at keeping it secret that my Mom was in prison. I wouldn't tell anybody at the daycare that Thursdays and Sundays I would go visit my mom. If anyone ever asked, I would not say anything but my grandmother would take me after work and I was so used to the routine that when the guards would stop us to search us I would already be ready to lift my hands up and they would check my diaper to see we're not carrying anything. My grandmother said it was always as if I knew that I couldn't talk about this to certain people. She said once, one of our neighbors said the word "bomb" and I looked at her and I was two years old and I was like "Shhhh!" and "No!" I can only imagine it. And then the

story I heard, I think I was 11, and someone interviewed my mother and she said that we were playing and I told her I used to have a Mom who looked just like her. It was news to me! But she's told me how she was taken from me and I was given to somebody else so I could see how that would make me think that she wasn't my mom. And she told me stories about how I had the idea that I had locked her up in the closet so that they wouldn't get her and I was trying to protect her. But in my mind there were so many different things going on and I had to pretend so much. When we crossed the border I was pretending that I was my Tía's daughter. My dad's sister was already here in the US and I pretended to be her daughter.

I was very confused. Not only that but then once we got here my Mom started using the pseudonym Sara Martínez. For protection. She was getting death threats for a long time from local people and then from El Salvador people who knew that she was trying to get away and escape the situation. And that was like a whole other mind confusion and trip because Sara is *my* name. People would ask me: "Oh, you're Sara, just like your mother!" And I would just nod my head.

I just bottled a lot of stuff in. Even though, thinking about it, I had a very positive childhood in a lot of ways. There were a lot of very caring adults in my life. My stepdad was a very positive figure. It's just there were so many different things that I didn't have any control of. There was nothing that I could do.

I knew that we had come from a country that was in the midst of a really serious war. And I knew that I didn't have a dad. And I was sad about a lot of things. I knew I couldn't be with my grandparents. I knew that I didn't really have family, like other people. And I always knew that there was something different about me. And it's so funny—I always felt like an alien and then I even got that little card that said *Resident Alien* and there were all these weird lines on it. It was so otherworldly. And I was like *Ooooh, I guess it's true.*" I was like nobody that I knew. I could not relate to anybody.

When I was young it was really hard but I did always feel protected and loved. Then my mom and my first stepdad split up when I was 12 so then I got really angry. And I think that probably helped because I hadn't been angry about anything until that point. And so I started getting angry about everything and that actually opened up space for my mom and me to have the beginnings of some conversations. Like "Well you never loved this dad and you probably never loved my dad! And tell me more about him!"

She told me just such romantic beautiful ideals that I still hold onto. They got married under a mango tree. They just really really loved each other, they worked together, they had the same ideas, the same beliefs. He loved to read and he loved different philosophers and her nickname was Zarathustra which is from a Nietzsche book. That's why her nickname was Sara and that's

why they named me Sara. My grandmother would tell me stories of him laying out a petate on the floor and sitting me down and having his stack of books and just reading and me playing. I was always so proud that my dad was a philosophy professor. But those stories make me really sad.

After the peace agreements in '92, I think a year later in '93, we went to El Salvador. It was amazing. My grandmother opened up her magical closets with boxes of pictures and photographs. All these photographs. Baby pictures of me, things I had never seen. And the cool thing is that my stepdad used to record us all the time and used to take pictures of us. He would play slides for us and we would have a slide show in the living room. That was something that let me know that my present was good. That we were okay, we had fun—"Look at these moments!" But the past was always this huge mystery. So when I saw my grandmother and heard all these stories she told me, this was my history. I felt this connection that I had. My bellybutton, this is where I came from.

When I was 13 I started dancing and that was my outlet. The arts were always the big thing that allowed me to be *me* more. At UCLA I was in the World Arts & Cultures program. I was also part of this organization called "Conciencia Libre". We would go to protests and it was about opening up our own minds, sharing stories. Schafik Handal who was part of the FMLN came when he was in LA and he spoke. And that helped me to become a little bit more aware of struggles happening here with immigration movements and the immigration "reform" movement, and in other parts of the world. It's so funny because I wasn't really politicized until that point. Which is so weird, right? It's not that I was a conservative person. I just hadn't learned about my own people's movement, much less other people's. And I grew up in the middle of it.

We were all always at the protests, at the meetings. We were all always there. I knew my Mom was always—oh my goodness!—speaking to large crowds. I knew how she was seen in the community as this small little person. But I knew she had a big voice. Most of the time at those meetings it was all men. But she was always like, A woman's place is not just at home taking care of her children. If you've got things to do, you bring them with you, they've got to be right there with you. She was always very strong, she made up her mind and that was it. It was going to get done.

So I would get dragged to these things and I was like, Politics? If that's politics I don't want to be involved in politics. This is not fun, it's very time-consuming. She's never home with us. And it didn't seem like much of a life for me.

I think that didn't I really start a process of healing till I was in college. I started working at the UCLA Labor Center. My second summer there I ended up being part of their summer internship

program and that was the first time I could really learn about my history and put it into words. I had this great mentor in the program. We talked about my Mom and she encouraged me to ask her. And it's not that it had never crossed my mind. It was just one of those things: We just didn't talk about that stuff. And so I became more and more curious. What was the history of El Salvador? What was her part in it? "Tell me everything!" So the conversation started.

It was really good to finally know from my mom, to have her explain it and every time, it's like a cryfest. We're both in tears because it's really hard to talk about it.

Then I took this other class "Beyond the Mexican Mural" at SPARC with Judy Baca and in that class we had all these amazing great guest speakers. People from the Black Panther Party. Someone from the theatre group from downtown, LAPD, Los Angeles Poverty Department. They work with transients, homeless people. I was exposed to so many people who were doing this kind of work in the community and I was finally recognizing my mom as being one of them. People who are never recognized for their amazing work in the community. They're just people who do what they need to do.

I've started to learn that it starts small. It starts with talking to a small group of people and talking about what you can do in order to meet a need. And how are we going to organize in order to get that message to people who have some kind of say in that. So I understood now what the Solidarity Movement was and what the Sanctuary Movement was. Before I heard those concepts being thrown around all the time and I was like "My mom is a community organizer? I don't know what that is. I'm sorry." All those meetings we used to go to, I was always like "Why are we at all these meetings?" It was so abstract. Now I think, Wow! How did you do that? I'm still amazed. A small group of people affected such a large community. It's amazing. It's still amazing.

Then the cool thing was in my senior year. We were going to continue the Great Wall, the longest mural along the LA River. Our class project was to do the Sixties, the Seventies, the Eighties, the Nineties. The TA, who is actually a good friend of mine now, encouraged me to do the Eighties. In doing that I got to learn all this history about what was going on here, what was going on there. It gave me that push and I again started going back to my Mom and asking her questions and discovering things, so by the end of my career as an undergraduate at UCLA I had I decided that I wanted to make a small short documentary. It's about three generations of Salvadoran women who are poets and who through their art speak about their experiences. So I interviewed my Mom, of course. I interviewed Maria Guardado and I interviewed a woman who's about my age. Jessica. And they all shared their poetry and also shared how poetry is a weapon to tell the truth or to tell things that people won't hear in other ways and how it also helps them heal.

I had finally put myself out there like *This is me* because I could see myself in all three of these women. I finally went out and found people that were like me and I wanted to hear their stories. There was no real community of Salvadorans at UCLA so I had to go out of my way and I thought OK, I need to do this more and I need to share more about myself.

It's like finding your place. It's such a strange thing. It's not denying who you are. It's not that I was denying it, but I was always so secretive.

So I've always been doing video work but I was also teaching elementary school in Pico Union and I loved working there. I fell in love with teaching and feeling like I could change the world.

After my daughter was born I started a documentary about motherhood and women artists, how even after you have your child you have to keep going, you have to have something for yourself. Some people think Oh, you have your kid and now you just focus on your kid and that's what's going to happen. I interviewed four of my friends who also had just recently had children and who are amazing artists in their own way. The process got me doing my art and got me to connect with them and got my daughter exposed to other kids. She's 8 now and she's so funny. She loves her grandmother and she's a lot like her.

The momentum from the project kept me going. Then I started another. It's our story of coming to the United States.

But the documentaries aren't finished. So I transitioned out of teaching from fulltime to subbing and now I've started working for myself doing video work. I'm finishing up projects that have deadlines for other people but I also have deadlines for myself. I've got to tell our story. It's focused mainly on my mother and the work she's done since coming here. It's a very personal story of what happened. All the stories from El Salvador are not the same but still there are a lot of connections—how the war influences and impacts our lives and the lives of the community. And it's about how a community can organize itself in order to make change.

These are my projects that need to come to fruition.



I am Rossana's son Tonatiuh, born in East LA.

I was 10, maybe 13, when my cousin told me my Mom had been tortured. We never talked about it at home. My Mom never told me. My sisters never told me but when I found out, it made sense. I always knew there was *something*. The way my Mom was, well, hypersensitive. About everything. Over the years, I'd get -- I'd call them *dribblets* -- of her story.

And my Mom's amazing. I love her and also, what most people don't know is that she's hilarious. They don't know how funny she can be. Really really funny. And that's what I want: to do comedy. But after I found out what happened to her, I think I brought a lot of stress and burden to her. I became so angry and so sad. I started wondering why she brought me into a world where something like that could happen, where those men could do such things to one of their sisters.

Thoughts about torture kept infiltrating my mind. What was it like? How long did it go on? And I kept thinking about what I wanted to do to the people who did that to her. I kept asking myself, What's the best way to be in this world? An eye for an eye? Or turn the other cheek? I lost faith in the world which was wrong because my Mom, she brings *hope* to the community. That people can stop fighting. While me? I've made as many bad choices as possible. And I've been afraid to get involved in any political activity--even here--because I think about what could happen.

I've heard from my sisters that the reason my mother never told me anything, she was afraid how I'd react. That I'd lose my cool. Unfortunately, she was probably right.

But now it's an honor to be telling you how amazing she is. And I want to participate in the theater project. I've always been interested in theater.

And I've always been kind of dramatic. When I was five years old, when my father wouldn't give me something I wanted, I said *Give it to me or I'll kill myself!* and I went to the knife drawer and took out a butter knife, and he just laughed. See, I was funny, too. And when I tell people about acting, the first thing many people ask is "Would you make out with a guy if it's in the script?" and I wonder why that's even a question. The way my Mom brought us up, she was very futuristic in

her compassion. She didn't see difference in anything but a positive way--race, creed, sexuality, whether gay or transgender.

She cares about people. That's what her life is about at a time when it's scary to care so much because the underlying message is *Every person for himself*.

And this may sound arrogant, but I think my Mom's a genius. I think the torture sent her even further and made her smarter. It gave her more energy. She's like a hummingbird. I'm more like a fox, sitting, watching.

She's the hummingbird, waiting for the rest of us to catch up.



I'm Sage, the youngest of Rossana's children.

My mom's kind of a quiet one. It's weird because I see my Mom and I think that I don't really know her. We just had a fight this morning and she's saying, "Well, if you think *that*, you don't really know me," and I thought, yeah, that's right.

I'm 18. The baby of the family. Born here. My Mom and I are not as close as she and my sister, Sara. They just have a special thing and that definitely has to do with what they went through. I think it's good that they have each other. I think it makes them stronger to have each other because they left everyone, the whole family in El Salvador, behind.

Something I've noticed a lot: my Mom won't ever let herself smile all the way. My sister has the same thing too. They will stop their smile, and they try to crush it.

And my Mom has become so gentle. Have you ever noticed? She gets a paper cut and it's like "Oh no, do you see that?" and I'm like "Mom, there's literally nothing there." Then I think of what happened to her--prison, torture, and I'm like "How did she do that? How did she get through that?" And I think it's probably that now she can show "Ow, I'm in pain." I consider

myself to be strong but I don't think I could go through what she did. What does that take? You can't really imagine that, right?

Since my sister went through part of it with her, they talk about it. Sara can get very emotional. She cries because she's very close to this and she's very supportive of my Mom.

But my Mom doesn't tell me about it. I have to ask. Like I had to do a report in 5th grade and I remember saying "OK, tell me everything right now!" Then I went to a camp one summer, it was a pretty political place, and "OK, I need to know before this camp because it will probably come up so tell me more," and she says OK. It's not like she doesn't want to tell me. It's just more like she didn't really ever feel the need to talk about it. I know there's stuff I don't know.

I do know there was a civil war in El Salvador. She said there were 14 rich families in charge and it was about getting the power back to the people.

What she's told me is she went to a Catholic school and she and her friends would come over and make coffee and they'd just chat. And she started going to marches and stuff when she was like 13, and her Mom was very much against it, but she continued to go. And when she started going to the university she became more involved. That's where she met her first husband. And then there's a lot of stuff I don't know because there's a lot of secrecy there for her too. He was a lot more involved than she was and there was stuff *she* didn't know. He was disappeared. They don't know what happened. They assume he's dead.

If I could ask her something right now? I'd ask if she'd do it again. I guess she would. I *know* she would.

So I don't know a lot of the specifics but I know that her family started being part of it. My grandpa was shot at and I know that when they arrested my mother they arrested my aunt and my grandpa. My Mom pretended my sister was someone else's baby so she didn't get taken. My mother went to jail and then she got moved to a women's prison. My grandma would visit and they'd make her strip down in front of my Mom and search her. Then the Red Cross came and then she went with my sister and came up here.

I grew up with her so I was pretty involved in everything. She'd take me to meetings. She'd take me to rallies.

But I was kind of a bad kid. She didn't like leaving me alone and I remember once she wanted me to take me to a rally with her but I wanted to stay home. We argued and I hid from her. She was so terrified, I felt awful.

There were many battles growing up. Basically, I was always really stubborn. My Mom is someone who was willing to cooperate and I was not.

But some of it is just like, as I said, I don't know everything about her. Sometimes she reacts in a way and it's kind of a surprise because I probably touched on something but I just don't know. And there's this cautious thing. She did not want me going out by myself. I was 12, 13, 14 and I had two friends in walking distance but she did not want me to walk by myself. And I'd be very independent, like "No, you're gonna let me walk." Or my friends and I would hang out at the mall and she would get out of her car and walk me all the way to the store where I was going to meet my friends and I was like "No, you can just drop me out at the corner. I'm fine." I'm assuming it's because she had that whole thing where her husband left one night and he just never came back. So she's worried, if I'm leaving to walk to my friend's house am I coming back?

With my close friends, a lot of them say stuff like "Your mom's so cute with all her embroidered dresses." Yeah, and she's a lot more than that! My close friends have known some of the stories. In World History in 9th grade when they talked about the revolution in El Salvador, I mentioned that my Mom's been part of it. Also, my friends who've been around my house and around my Mom a lot, she'd say something and they're like "What?" and I'd explain. My brother's friends, they were just being boys. They weren't hanging around asking "Hey, what's your Mom done?"

Anyway, she got here and she married my brother's dad so she could stay here and then my brother came along. But they weren't in love. Then my parents met working at CARECEN [Central American Resource Center] So she got divorced and married my Dad. Both my parents are very politically minded and politically active so they would take me to all the meetings and there were always a lot of conversations. My great-grandfather on my father's side wrote a book, "Are We Slaves to the Corporations?" and actually ran for Governor of Massachusetts on the Socialist ticket. So I grew up hearing mostly about American politics and not so much about El Salvador. I'm interested in politics now. I definitely grew to like history and so in high school she'd tell me more stories and wow! it's really so cool, but as a kid I'd tune it out a lot.

When the Occupy Movement was downtown, I went there. I worked on the mayor's campaign. I worked with MALDEF [Mexican American Legal Defense and Education Fund] this summer. And I'm finishing high school now but I was accepted early decision to Tufts University in Boston. The International Relations Program is what they're known for.

My Mom definitely hasn't become Americanized so I definitely feel some connection to El Salvador through her. She's done a good job of staying true to her roots. I am probably the most American of the children though my Mom and sister, they definitely accept fads. They cleanse and they shop at Whole Foods and at farmers markets and I tease them--You guys are more into this than a lot of the people I know.

When I was little, a baby, I went to El Salvador but I got sick and my Dad got worried so I haven't been back. My grandma visits here and we talk on the phone, but I don't speak fluent Spanish and I can't really have conversations with her without my Mom helping. So it's sad that I have my family down there that I don't feel connected to but they're so loving that I definitely feel them.

In the books I read, a lot of immigrants emigrate in order to better themselves and for opportunities but my Mom didn't want to leave. She had to leave and that means a different mindset when she came up here. She's told me that she didn't want to leave and I don't think she would have left if she if this hadn't happened. It was just her birthday and she said "I've spent more time in this country than in my real country." She has an attachment to El Salvador. She nearly died for her country and I think someday she'll go back.

And it's funny when I think about this, it's like wow, terrible things happened to bring my Mom here, but if they hadn't I wouldn't be here. So that's weird.

I never imagined myself in my mother's situation but in my teens I was very into reading about the Holocaust and I thought about that a lot. I would like to think I could cope but thinking about it is one thing. It's another thing to be in a situation like that. So I don't know. There's a lot I know I don't know.

Now my parents just got separated. I mean it's two years ago but it's official this weekend, and I chose to live with my father. I became very distant with my Mom. Our personalities just don't match very well. To get to know my mother as I'd like to know her, I have to grow up a little bit more and be able to accept more. I think we both have to put our guards down. And I definitely want that. But that takes a lot of time. That will take growth and more acceptance.

I spend Fridays with her and we usually have brunch on Sundays with all of us and I occasionally stay the whole weekend. It's not like we're hanging out and going on hikes or whatever. I have homework, she's applying to Ph.D. programs. Then it's like it's 11 PM and she's on Facebook and I'm going to bed. And Saturday I want to be out with my friends anyway, but I think this works for me and for her.

So when you ask what it's like being the child of a survivor, I didn't really do anything. I just kind of saw things. I'm just kind of a byproduct.



I'm Sol and Sara's my Mom and Rossana's my Grandma. I'm 8 years old.

I want to study and I want to go to UCLA. Like my Mom. Now my best thing in school is math. I love puzzles and math is like a puzzle. I also love art.

I like to draw with my Mom and sometimes we like to color dresses for paper dolls. And I like how my Mom makes me laugh.

When I grow up, I want to be designing clothes. Why? Because I go to vintage stores with my Mom and my tía and the clothes are so beautiful.

I want to show you a diorama I made. It shows our whole family of dress designers. And this is the family tree I made. It shows everyone's talent and what their work was.



There's my Papi. Those are his paintings. And this is a picture I did in first grade about Rodolfo. That's my Mom's Dad. He died in a war.

I speak English and Spanish. I went to El Salvador twice. Once when I was a baby and then when I was in first grade and I liked swimming with my tío. We went to a beach house where there was a pool. It was so much fun.

My Grandma is amazing and I love her and I love making lemonade with her and pancakes and going swimming with her. I love when she comes over here and I love when she makes soup with lentils and carrots. Also she's always giving me little things, like a little spoon. It's really cute and it has a design of an owl on a tree. I like everything about Grandma. I look up to her. She has her Masters and stuff. And she is always making poems and we get along so good.

