

Maria Mendoza-Cervantes

### **Borders be now Windows to Fiction**

We were at the Borders,  
the one that used to be  
where Old Navy is now.

We sat on the window  
sill, tucked ourselves between two  
tall shelves filled with fiction.

It was like a moment in fiction:

Both of us twittering between borders,  
two  
people willing to be  
precarious, neglectful of our warm backs exposed to seeping windows,  
howling windows, the only sound besides our breathing now.

Then, like I remember now,  
works of fiction  
framed us in the window  
reflection, creating safety borders  
for us to be  
confident in being two.

Two

different people loving each other now:  
as we have always been and continue to be,  
throwing away other people's fiction  
of what being one means, chipping away our borders,  
yet respectful of closed doors and open windows.

Open windows

in the winter for him and her, two  
warm-bodied beings my borders  
in bed now.

The need to push kids to sleep alone in their own beds is fiction.

We let our children be:

Our daughter sleeps with us while our son chose to be  
downstairs with Ma; he did not like his lonely bedroom window.  
He prefers taking in fiction—  
novelas with Ma or listening to spiritual tales shared between the two  
of them, more now  
that his abuelito passed away. My suegro, with his nietxs, soften his borders.

He border-line spoiled them. He'd be  
like, Bueno ¿qué tienes? if one of them were hunched by the window;  
Just the two of them, abuelito y su nietx— exchanging and creating works of fiction.

**It's 5:05 in the dark morning**

Two waving candles on the mahogany dining room table, the only light besides the trailing light upstairs.

The flames rise from the depths of what used to be two narrow transparent glass encasements—  
the fire's have burned the upper halves of their casings.

There are two rotund flower-filled vases on the table whose flowers are dim red, orange, yellow.

Paper has piled onto the table—white enveloped mail for my late father-in-law tucked beneath my mother-in-law's black Lesportsac bag.

More mail tucked beneath kid's reading logs, homework packets for the week, Ada Límon's *The Carrying*—this, a precarious mountain of paper daring to slide down onto the dark walnut floor.

**Pinche Café Tacvba**

*October 1st, 2018 @ The Concord*

I always leave inspired, full of life & energy,  
and then for a few days after I feel this pinhole-

longing between my ribs—a steady stream of air  
breathing out from within my bones;

it reminds me of my parents' faces  
after they've had a few drinks,

when they start remembering  
stories of their youth—

my mother slicing her left wrist	veins never erupting
my father hugging his dorm landlord	asserting his return

my parents giving faces—cringed, sad, happy,  
and then nothing.



María Mendoza Cervantes is a MeXicana born in Los Angeles, California, and brought up in Chicago, Illinois. She is completing her Bachelor of Arts degree in Poetry with a minor in Fiction at Columbia College Chicago. She worked for Columbia College's literary magazine, *Hair Trigger*, as a production editor and as an editor for *Columbia Poetry Review*'s 30th-anniversary issue. She has been published in Chicago's *Line Break* zine and *South Side Weekly*'s 2019 Lit Issue.