

Ñaña



VOL. 1.



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## Acknowledgements

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To my family, for loving me as their Ñaña always. For Sherman Chasqui, the world's most charismatic dogtor, and for his morning kisses.

This zine is dedicated to all the Ñañas. To those who feel in between nationalities and have felt the pain of assimilation.

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### **Cuy Crossroads**

Your cultural existential ongoing crises start here in 1999,  
All with your cuy,  
Your guinea pig unironically named Cookie,  
As a member of generation 1.5, the immigrant child who is  
too gringa, but also too Peruvian,  
You cry when you learn via your family that your mascota is  
tasty if fried,  
Cry when family visits from Peru, and marvel at her  
plumpness,  
Patting her tummy, and exclaim how we shouldn't have  
gone through so much trouble for dinner,  
Cookie represents the first time you'll have to work through  
your identity politics  
She purrs when you bring her lettuce, and she belongs in the  
drawings that you make,  
Cookie dies, or rather is accidentally murdered,  
Cookie, choked by one of the children Mama babysits for,  
Mama has to make a living in America, so there's an  
unofficial nursery in the living room,

## **Cuy Crossroads cont'd**

You bury her in a Payless shoebox, and your family helps you  
carry out funerary services, with solemnity,

Papa digs a cuy sized hole, and you pat the dirt above her,

Straining to hear if Cookie will give a final goodbye purr,

You learn that while your family may not always understand  
you,

They're trying.

You write a story about guinea pig heaven, because even then,  
writing is the only thing that helps understand loss,

Years pass.

Later your tias in Perú raise cuyes and season them in honor of  
your visit,

You gaze at the fried cuy, spread across a bed of potatoes,  
smelling of garlic and salt,

Your family expectantly looks at you, and you take a bite,

You are a reflection of your family that loves you,

You are shame, in hearing the crispiness of the meat crackle  
against your teeth,

You see the ghost of Cookie turning away from you in  
disappointment

You might not always understand your family but you're trying.



The author, clutching her cuy, Cookie. Seated to her right is her Abuelito Braulio.

## **Boom Baby!**

To be 7 in year 2000,

Not the millennium, but the year that Emperor's New Groove premiered,

My favorite princess, Emperor Kuzco.

It must be the Peruvian American Diaspora experience!

Our Incans are now voiced David Spade and John Goodman  
(redeemable by the Flintstones, unforgivable from fictitious  
marriage to bigot Roseanne)

Hyperspecificity mi amor,

That's the brand,

SUR Peru on tv looping,

Cine de Terror con Cuarto Poder aka what my mama calls "no  
ves, por eso tuvimos que irnos"-

Gulp down some chicha morada for every  
word in Quechua you spoke without realizing,

Cancha,

chompa,

cuy,

chullo,

Rocoto,

## **Boom Baby! Cont'd**

y mi palabra favorita

POTO.

Lo digo y hay risas que no acabarán en llanto

The cutest & most archaeological of ways to say butt.



## **I love us in closed captions**

on Sheldon Road, nuestro departamento is furnished by gar-ah-je sales,

originally basurero bound,

We found:

The cherry oak nightstand,

Our tv's, a bag of new plushies,

Our first Christmas tree, begotten from the Bank of America which Papa brought home while making his deliveries,

Llego Navidad!

An arbolito with ornaments, string pearls, hasta el angel in a shimmering gold robe, hands folded in prayer,

Papá fixed the broken tree base, by placing it inside a maceta,

This is why my first instinct in this life is to repair what appears to broken,

When he hugs me, the perfume of Advance Auto parts seals itself on me,

## **I love us in closed captions cont'd**

Mama babysits the newest toddlers and niños of the diaspora,  
who are responsible for me getting kicked out ESL early,

On weekends, we lie side by side in front of the screen to our  
balcón,

We watch hours of lightning splatter-zagging across the sky,

I'm not afraid of storms.

I learned to focus on hearing heartbeats, resting my head, on  
los pechos de mis papis instead of las tormentas.

## **Tienes la Naríz de tu Abuelito**

Tenía 12 años, a bump appeared on my nasal bridge,

My ancestors grabbed my heels to say we *will* be seen in you,

Mi mamá - preocupada- no te habrás caído?

my ancestors occupy my nasal bridge

réclamation- no te vayas a olvidarte de quien somos y de quien  
eres

I know now- my efforts to

*contour*

*Shape*

*Minimize*

Mi naríz

acts of contrition for colonization

I smile now

When I see my profile-

I caress my naríz- shaped like las montañas, which fail  
to contain the apus

I can't deny the Andina in me

## **Inti Raymi 2023**

Es cuando el sol besa la tierra,

Allinllachu masiykuna, sutiynmi Marisol, entonces mi  
celebración del sol es un poco egoísta.

Si ya se que somos Católicos, apostólicos y romanos,

Pero Yo creo que Dios vive en todos los seres,

Aun en las personas que no aguanto- no es mi culpa,

nací enojona y con cara de buena gente-

un combo fatal, ptm.

Hice una causa con tanto aji amarillo que causare un déficit en  
la exportación,

Llámallo una ofrenda para marcar el verano

llámalo mis caprichos

no me importa,

## **Inti Raymi 2023 cont'd**

mi familia piensa que estoy un poco loca por aprender quechua y no francés.

Pero no es mi culpa que cada palabra que aprendo son caramelos de sabor a memoria perdida.

## Covergirl

I think it's really beautiful,

How everyone can know that we drank chicha morada hoy

Consider it your ash wednesday cross on your forehead

Except on the corner of your lips

Purple Rain Prince Purple Corn, maize marking memory

Faint joker smile tips purple

No es chicha de sobre

Es de verdad.

There!

Now everyone knows que somos andinas

## **Magdalena**

I'm grateful your birth control slipped up in July 1992.

Easy for me to say, right mama?

I wasn't the one whose water broke on Viernes Santo, Good Friday, a national holiday since Peru's been atoning for its pagan past and present for the last 500 years.

I know Jesus was suffering on the cross that day, I wonder if that gave you any comfort as your body was at war with itself? Or anger?

Is giving birth a women's crucifixion?

You almost named me Magdalena because of my birth on Good Friday, for the original Magdalena crying at the foot of the cross.

But you thought this would predispose me to suffering...

and as I was going to be a woman someday, you said women suffered enough already.

## Magdalena cont'd

I just learned recently that Abuelita died of a broken heart,

hush-hush don't speak ill of your Abuelo you think, he'll come  
and do fantasma-induced insomnia, we've got enough spirits in  
this family, without you summoning your Abuelo this way,

I've been wondering if all my obsession with healing, with self-  
love, therapy, affirmations, is to heal us, to revive the  
matriarchal lineage not marked with pain- but to transform into  
new ancestral memories of joy?

I'm trying to find poetry in English, but the expressions aren't  
the same.

How do I translate mama, que me diste a luz? That you gave me  
light in every possible way?





The author's mama, on her college graduation day from la PUCP (Pontificia Universidad Católica del Perú).

## SATURDAYS AT ROSS DRESS FOR LESS

That's what I want poems about.

About our mamas and their hijas browsing the dresses at Ross.

Is Ross the American dream?

I think it is the closest we'll ever get,

My complaints about fashion and lack of sustainability. "No te preocupes mamá. Ya tengo, no necesito mas."

She rolls her eyes. "Tienes todo."

Her lips' are incredulity shaped,

I cede, as I always do.

Me, the hippie daughter. Me- the consentida, the spoiled one.

## **SATURDAYS AT ROSS DRESS FOR LESS cont'd**

Me, who doesn't know scarcity like she has. The one who didn't live with the water shortages, the power outages, the polvo- the level of dust that we will never be able to wash off.

Me, who has the luxury, the GALL to wax poetic about the evils of capitalism when my needs are met.

I let the fluorescent lights of Ross, the steady beeping of items being checked out, the sound of my mama's exasperated voice envelop me- and head to the fitting room, arms full,

We're trying to dress our way out of the thuds our hearts feel.

## **My Rocoto Heart**

I've done an unofficial blood analysis, I have aji panca running

through mis venas,

These veins carry,

Ajo,

Pimienta,

Comino

Sal!

Me persigno with this version of el padre, el hijo, el espíritu  
santo,

Amen!

I came out of my mama's womb, clasping a red onion and  
potato as offerings.

There's huacatay growing on Governor's Island,

## **My Rocoto Heart cont'd**

It was the first time I saw huacatay rooted and alive,

I inhaled its scent, I felt my roots intertwine with it together,

Both of us, no longer frozen or filled with preservatives  
squeezed in jar, lonely in the designated

aisle en el mercado,

Displayed and displaced, just another producto Andino

The aisle held together by the sheer will of the diaspora Andina  
whispering in unison, “si me

llevas, te sentirás menos sola, como en casa.”

I too, have been frozen

And filled with preservatives

Too ethnic, and too gringa at the same time

## **My Rocoto Heart cont'd**

My taste and sense of place + belonging

Jarred in preservatives to hold onto identity,

Sshhh ñaña,

Quédate conmigo, will you?

Burrow with me,

Stay en mi corazón de rocoto.

### About the Author:



Marisol Silva Pilares is a Peruvian-American poet & writer. Her poetry is on Instagram on @Mami\_soy\_emo about growing up in the liminal of two Americas, therapy, pollo a la brasa & ancestral memory. She's embracing her Andina roots by learning Quechua and folkloric Peruvian dances. She believes there's magic in the mouth numbness caused by spicy aji amarillos. She was a Roots, Wounds, Words poetry fellow. Her writing has been featured in "Chifladazine", "Wisdom Body Collective", "Rimay y Raiz" zine, & [mamisoyemo.substack.com](http://mamisoyemo.substack.com). She is proud to be making zine debut, "Baptized by Aji."

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