

Into The Space Between

From the moment I was born they slapped a big label on me in black ink reading Guatemalan. That label told the world who I was. So I learned to love it. Long brown hair, Big brown eyes and tan skin. Once praised now a sin. Being tan looking hispanic, how does being loved turn into hatred being feared?

Watching my father leaves us, leave us for a country I don't speak. He returned to the country that he wasn't considered illegal in. But why? No human should have that label slapped on them. He is not from my country, but I am shouldn't that count for something? Shouldn't that stop them from forcing him away?

My mother tells us as he leaves to that airport "oh your father will be back in a month" But how does 1 month turn into 12? Turning double digits without him, spending a once jolly holiday with cookies set out for the odd man that comes to our home leaving us presents. Now I tell that odd man I all I want is for my father to return? This holiday feels empty, missing a piece. Missing someone. That little girl waiting at the door all day all night just in case he shows so he can tell her all that he has learned. She waited at that green long frame until waiting was pointless, a loss cause.

When he returned he wasn't standing at the door I longed for him to return to, he returned at the same airport that took him away. But that man at the airport wasn't my father, 12 months ago he was a force, not broken. He returned in a bony structure that wasn't his with water

running from the brown eyes I inherited. Seeing him like this gave me the answer I knew was there all along. He was taken for the thing I was told to love about me. How am I supposed to love me when being hispanic is wrong? I don't want to be a burden to this world.



Now understanding what it means what really happened. Nothing can be done now. That pain twists and turns till I form thick string being tugged back and fourth. Am I white? Am I hispanic? What am I? I'm just rope falling *into that space between*. That's where I belong. I fall until I hit that bottom, alone. Telling myself what if im too brown? Too much? Or what if im too white so they decide to take everything I know. How do I tell them im scared when im supposed to be strong? I have to be strong. I squeeze my eyes shut till they bleed like acid rain. I hold my body to me tightly so they can't take the only thing that belongs to me. I hold my breath, I hold it till I drown.

I drown to the lakes of a country I don't speak. They love my food, my culture but why not me? Why do you have to take us away? Take me? To a country I don't speak. To a home

that I don't know. I'm not a threat I'm a 16 year old Guatemalan-American. I have long brown hair, big brown eyes and tan skin. Envied for but still unwanted. Why can't I be enough for you? You love my food, my culture, but you can't love me? I want to scream, shout, shove my flag in front of ICE and tell them I'm Guatemalan and I'm American. I'm both.

I fall into that space between

because that's where I belong. You love my food, my culture so why can't you love me? I want to tell them no one deserves such an inhumane thing. To be taken from their friends and family. To a place they might not know. We are not animals you lock away we aren't monsters that are threats. We are human. Humans who want to share our culture with you. Humans who want to dance the sparkling night away. Humans who want something of our own. You love my food, my culture so why not me too?

One day I will stand up to the court of law, fight for their freedom, for their chance. Help the children who stand alone. Representing themselves in court. Families that are torn apart. One day I will be brave enough to hold my head up high with the label in black ink that they slapped on me telling the world I'm Guatemalan. I'm American. I'm both.



LG.

