

The Stem (Original)

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Reflections from the author

This piece, “The Stem,” covers the idea of being Latina, but mainly identifying Mexican-American. The main idea is not being able to fit in with Americans and Mexicans because of the distinction from being part of both identities. I write about the idea of these two places being so unfamiliar because of wanting to fit in where I was born, and still trying to catch up with my roots. The part that talks about, “Who do you stand with?” is the point in which I feel people will make you choose one identity over another. In this piece, I use the petals to demonstrate my American identity and the roots to identify my Mexican identity.

I use the element of Spanglish, which is a mix of both English and Spanish, to demonstrate the confusion of having to choose who to identify more with, and to show how I normally would speak and jump from one language to another. Having blood from another country through my parents still makes me unable to be fully American. I also try to reach my Mexican roots, again unable to, because of the life style I currently live. There is a division between both my identities, like in the video I saw in Social Work 300, “The Hyphen.” Being inspired by the video, I decided to choose to use the stem of a flower that holds both the petals and grows from the roots to show my intersecting identity of Mexican-American and still identifying as Latina. The video explains being part of two different identities and refusing to choose one over the other. This idea of being the thing that is in between the two, demonstrates understanding belonging to both identities.

The Stem (Original Version)

Not Black, not white. I'm in between, I am brown.

But many say, “But de verdad eres?”

See yo vengo de two different sides,

Dos diferente lados that seem unfamiliar.

While I grow my raizes to catch up to my parents,

Yo assimilo and try to grow my petals en la manera

In which my country,

My home will not accept me.

Not a struggle people say and that's fine.

Many of my people are struggling to remain in the home they currently live in.

"Your people," ellos dicen!

And I recognize that, I have privilege.

"You finally said it!" ellos dicen!

The privilege of being asked, "Weren't you born in the U.S?" and "Aren't you a U.S citizen?"

"You got that right," ellos dicen!

Si, soy Latina. Si, soy Mexicana. Yes, I am American.

It's who I am.

"But who do you stand with?"

And although I don't personally suffer with being granted opportunities to grow and succeed.

Yo vivo la historia of not being wanted and accepted into these identities.

"But who do you stand with?"

You don't belong here!

You're American for us, says my Mexican roots

You're Mexican for us, says my American petals.

My mind starts to conceptualize,

"But where do I stand?"

Constantly the place I have called home for so long has rejected the idea of me.

I do not have the requirements,

The standards to fulfill the role.

Esta Latina no es la "vision de la prosperidad."

*Y ahora un dictador demands for me to leave this country. NO!
Y ahora me dice que no valgo nothing por tener sangre de mi tierra.*

Oh, I'm sorry, de la tierra de mis padres.

Thoughts like this restricts my petals from continuing to grow.

Porque I live in a place full of luxuries and have the latest iPhone 8 Plus

And live amongst Gucci, Chanel, and Prada.

Entonces "ya me creo la muy muy" ... Whatever I guess,

Thoughts like this restricts my roots from continuing to grow.

I stand between the two,

Panicking fear of not being good enough or enough.

I had enough of standing in the middle of all these expectations surrounding me.

I am not just the roots and not just the petals,

"Then Who are you?!?!"

I am the stem!

The stem that allows for the petals and roots to intersect into one.

I am the stem!

The one that branches out, it starts from the ground and reached out to the sky.

I am the stem!

The one in between you and you.

I am a part of you.

I am the stem.

The Stem (English Translated Version)

Not Black, not white. I'm in between, I am brown.

But many say, but are you really?

I come from two different sides,

Two different sides that seem unfamiliar.

*While I grow my roots to catch up to my parents,
I assimilate and try to grow my petals in the matter*

In which my country,

My home will not accept me.

Not a struggle people say and that's fine.

Many of my people are struggling to remain in the home they currently live in.

"Your people," they say!

And I recognize that, I have privilege.

"You finally said it!" they say!

The privilege of being asked, "Weren't you born in the U.S?" and "Aren't you a U.S citizen?"

"You got that right," they say!

Yes, I am Latina. Yes, I am Mexican. Yes, I am American.

It's who I am.

"But who do you stand with?"

And although I don't personally suffer with being granted opportunities to grow and succeed.

I live the story of not being wanted and accepted into these identities.

"But who do you stand with?"

You don't belong here!

You're American for us, says my Mexican roots

You're Mexican for us, says my American petals.

My mind starts to conceptualize,

"But where do I stand?"

Constantly the place I have called home for so long has rejected the idea of me.

I do not have the requirements,

The standards to fulfill the role.

This Latina is not the "vision of prosperity"

Now a dictator demands for me to leave this country. NO!

Now they tell me I am nothing for having blood of my land

Oh, I'm sorry, from the lands of my parents

Thoughts like this restricts my petals from continuing to grow.

Because I live in a place full of luxuries and have the latest iPhone 8 Plus

And live amongst Gucci, Chanel, and Prada.

Then, "I believe I'm all that..." Whatever I guess,

Thoughts like this restricts my roots from continuing to grow.

I stand between the two,

Panicking fear of not being good enough or enough.

I had enough of standing in the middle of all these expectations surrounding me.

I am not just the roots and not just the petals,

"Then Who are you?!?!"

I am the stem!

The stem that allows for the petals and roots to intersect into one.

I am the stem!

The one that branches out, it starts from the ground and reached out to the sky.

I am the stem!

The one in between you and you.

I am a part of you.

I am the stem.

The Stem (Spanish Translated Version)

No soy negra, ni blanca, Soy entre los dos, Soy marron.

Pero muchos me dicen, pero de verdad eres?

Mira vengo de dos diferentes lados,

Dos lados diferentes que se sienten desconocidas.

Mientras que yo crezco mis raizes para alcanzar a mis padres,

Yo asimilo y trato de crecer mis pétalos por el cual

En que mi país,

Mi hogar no me acepta.

No es mucho esfuerzo, dice la gente, y sabe que está bien

Mucha de mi gente está luchando para permanecer en el hogar en donde viven.

“Tu gente,” ellos dicen!

Yo reconozco que yo tengo privilegio.

“Al fin lo dijiste!” ellos dicen!

El privilegio de que pregunten, “Que no eres nacida de los E.E.U.U?” y “Que no eres ciudadana?”

“Y tienes razón,” ellos dicen!

Si, soy Latina. Si, soy Mexicana. Si, soy Americana.

Es quien soy.

“Pero de lado que lado estas?”

Y aunque yo personalmente no sufro de ser concedida con oportunidades de crecer y tener éxito.

Yo vivo la historia de no ser querida y aceptada en esta identidades.

“Pero con quien te paras tu?”

No perteneces aqui!

*Tu eres Americana dice mis raizes Mexicanas
Tu eres Mexicana para nosotros dice mis pétalos Americanos
Mi mente empieza conceptualizar
“Pero de que lado estas tu?”*

*Constantemente el lugar donde yo ha llamado hogar por tanto tiempo me ha rechazado la idea
de
mi.*

*No, yo no tengo los requisitos,
El estandar para cumplir el papel.
Esta Latina no es la “visión de la prosperidad.”*

*Y ahora un dictador demanda que me vaya de mi país. NO!
Y ahora me dice que no valgo nada por tener sangre de mi tierra.
O, perdon, de la tierra de mis padres.
Pensamientos como estos restringe mis pétalos de seguir creciendo.*

*Porque yo vivo en un lugar lleno de lujos y tengo el iPhone 8 Plus
Y vivo entre el Gucci, Chanel, y Prada.
Entonces “ya me creo la muy muy” ... Pero lo que sea... supongo,
Ideas como esto restringe mis raizes de seguir creciendo.*

*Yo me paro entre las dos,
Con miedo en pánico de no ser suficientemente buena o suficiente.
Yo me e cansado de estar parada en el medio de la expectativas de todo que me rodean.
Yo no soy no más la raizes y no más los pétalos,
“Entonces Quien eres tu?!?!”*

Yo soy la rama!

La rama que permite que los pétalos y las raíces cruzarse para ser uno.

Yo soy la rama!

La que se extiende por fuera, empieza de la tierra hasta llegar al cielo.

Yo soy la rama!

La que está entre tu y tu.

Yo soy una parte de ti.

Yo soy la rama!

References

Chicas, H. [Harrison Chicas]. (2017, Sep 15). *The hphen* [Video file]. Retrieved from <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sx0vS13UDnQ>