

esto no tiene nombre



revista de lesbianas latinas

volumen 2, número 3

\$4

Michigan
Womyn's
Music
Festival

AUGUST
10, 11, 12, 13, 14 & 15, 1993

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& MORE INFORMATION



con **te** nido

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ESTAMOS EN TODAS PARTES

en la portada

"MIS KA'AN Ú"
("Claridad en el horizonte cuando
empieza a salir la luna")

Gouache de Yan María Castro
1991

esto no tiene nombre
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publicada trimestralmente de
acuerdo a las estaciones del año

las publicadoras que hacemos
todo en *esto*

Margarita Castilla
Vanessa Cruz
tatiana de la tierra
Patricia Pereira-Pujol
Lori Cardona

esto publica material de
lesbianas latinas que refleja
nuestra diversidad y rompe con los
estereotipos que nos han clavado.
Nuestro objetivo es crear un foro
para palabras e imágenes que
contribuyan a la fortaleza y orgullo
de nuestra comunidad.

La decisión de publicar cualquier
artículo se hace por consenso. No
publicamos materiales que
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que no podamos llegar a un
acuerdo. En ese caso, publicamos
el material con el interés de
generar discusión en la
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artículos y reviews.

Suscripciones a *esto no tiene
nombre* cuestan \$15 a personas
en los Estados Unidos, \$20 a
instituciones y personas en otros
países. *esto* es gratis para lesbianas
latinas encarceladas y ofrecemos
suscripciones a precio reducido
para personas de bajos recursos.

Tatiana says she left for Colombia because she could not handle working with Patri and Vanessa anymore without endangering the friendship. (We are happy to report she is back.) Working with little resources, with time and energy scrounged up from other obligations, does take its toll. Nosotras las que hacemos todo en *esto* have had to make the choice to let some things go in order to continue working together. We have our differences. Believe it! Our political beliefs range from ultra-conservative to progressive. We disagree on race issues, sex issues, language issues. Basically, the only things we agree on are that we want to remain friends and that we have a deep respect for what Latina lesbians write.

Publishing *esto* is a labor of love and commitment to Latina lesbians. We see it as an integral part of fostering a sense of community across many lines that divide us. Therefore, we have made the choice to publish anything a Latina lesbian sends us, regardless of whether we like it or not, unless all five of us find it oppressive to other women. For example, one of us felt that the poem "Sisterhood seen through the eye of the needle" is oppressive to Puerto Ricans. Three of us disagreed. What do you think?

In the past, we have been accused of playing into society's stereotypes of lesbians because we do not present a sanitized version of Latina lesbians. We have been criticized for publishing writing that is sexually explicit rather than elegant, in Spanglish rather than "proper" Spanish or English, that speaks frankly about SM and Butch & Femme rather than more socially acceptable ways of relating. To that our response has been: if you don't like it, write to us and tell us why. Make an effort to reach out to other Latinas and explain to them why you feel the way you do. We at *esto* are not in the business of deciding who is the "right" Latina and silencing everyone else.

In the last issue we made the difficult choice of publishing an unfavorable review of *Margins*. On the one hand, we wanted to support the efforts of an emerging Latina writer, one of the few that are getting published. On the other hand, we felt that the review was not a malicious attack but a Chicana's effort to put in writing some of her thoughts about an important work. Therefore, in accordance with our editorial policy, we went ahead and published it. We got some flack for it, but we are very happy that some very articulate women, including Terri de la Peña, took the time to respond to it.

This is what we want *esto* to be: an open forum, a place where we air things out, where we get down to business and speak to each other, with respect, the truths about our own lives. It is difficult, but maybe we will have to let some things go in order to make it happen.

contribuidoras

Vanessa Cruz — Miami Beach
puertorriqueña, her passion for shoes usually
wins out over her better judgement

Ellie Hernández — Laredo, Texas
essayist, poet, intellectual activist and currently
a graduate student at Berkeley

Lori Cardona — Ft. Lauderdale
puertorriqueña-mexican-american trying
to learn el español

Amy Concepción — Miami
a pesar de la lentitud de un verano carente de
actividades ha podido mantenerse escribiendo

María Cristina — Roslindale, Mass
lesbiana chilena-griega a la que le gusta hacer
el amor con las erres y las eñes

Terri de la Peña — Santa Cruz
author of *Margins*, is writing another
Chicana lesbian novel

tatiana de la tierra — mayami
pandebonos pueblós purezabuscóyo

Yan María Castro
porque nos dirigimos hacia la unión
de lo espiritual y lo político

Margarita Castilla — Miami
cubana, anti-comunista, cristiana y no
feminista, amante de las mujeres, la
sexualidad y la comunicación

Mercedes — Medellín, Colombia
con la esperanza de que las diosas me den la
fuerza necesaria para ser una persona mejor

Patricia Pereira-Pujol — South Beach
puertorriqueña whose favorite hobby
is to read trashy mysteries

Cecilia Martínez Parente — Ft. Lauderdale
mejicana enamorada — amo la vida
y el momento

Homosexuales en escena

Ms. Cosme:

I am writing in response to your review of Terri de la Peña's *Margins* in the Winter 1993 issue. I am disturbed at your hostile treatment of a long awaited, finely crafted novel of a Chicana lesbian coming out to family and friends. While I don't condone or encourage a rubber stamp approach to reviews written by anyone, as a reader I do expect a thorough and balanced review of an author's work.

Sara and the rest of her family. History has shown that actions speak louder and more profound than words. Roni understood that Sara wasn't going to change overnight and sought out help from both René and René's mamá in expanding Sara's world.

I applaud Terri de la Peña for portraying Roni as a young Chicana who is real and tangible to many of us.

Magnolias de acero se ha estado exhibiendo por varias semanas en un teatro de la calle 8, con una nutrida asistencia del público, el cual gustosamente ha disfrutado de una excelente actuación. La versión en español de *Steel Magnolias*, conocida obra llevada a la pantalla grande, ha sido interpretada magistralmente y mejor dirigida. El tiempo fue justo; el intermedio, exacto; las decoraciones y vestuarios, acordes con la trama; y la risa, el llanto y el suspense aparecieron por

turno muy llevaderamente. Para que nada faltara y de todo hubiera, se hizo alusión a un tema tan de moda en los 90s: la homosexualidad. Un sólo comentario, como de pasada, pero presente.

No así fue tratado este tema en *Mi amiga la gorda*, donde uno de los personajes es homosexual. No recuerdo, sobretodo en los últimos tiempos, el haber visto representado a un homosexual en el teatro y menos dando una imagen positiva, acorde con la realidad de que un homosexual es un ser humano con ilusiones, esperanzas, sentimientos y que siente el rechazo de la sociedad basado en su orientación sexual. En *Mi amiga la gorda*, que pudo ser un éxito por la talla de sus intérpretes, dirección y por lo humano de sus personajes y temas tratados, nos damos cuenta de que cada cosa va tomando su lugar a su tiempo y aparentemente éste es el tiempo para los homosexuales, los 90s.

En nuestras mentes

The richness and complexity of *Margins* was due to Terri de la Peña's honesty in bringing out the negative as well as positive attributes found in our cultura. While I agree that cultural racism is rampant in all cultures and should be addressed within our own families, it is unfair for you to define Roni Melendez as passive and weak because she doesn't confront her family on its racism the way you would deem correct or appropriate.

Margins raises and explores many lesbian and Chicana issues without being condescending or hitting us over the head with a soap box approach. Roni did in fact come out to her entire family and took the unconventional, dark skinned René Talamantes home to meet

Gracias a las diosas that Terri left Roni, her family and friends with work to be done and didn't insult us by tying a shiny ribbon to the end of the story.

In your review you state, "The real story or hidden text in *Margins* is acceptance of Roni Melendez's own mother's racism." In my opinion, the only hidden element was your own agenda that allowed for a distorted review and provided a grave disservice to both Chicana writers and readers. Unfortunately your review may discourage Chicana lesbians to submit their work and lessen the voices that desperately need to be heard.

Liz Raptis Picco
Santa Cruz, CA

Para que esto pueda crecer y mejorar necesitamos oír tus puntos de vista, comentarios, críticas constructivas y halagos. Toda correspondencia debe incluir nombre, dirección y teléfono. Todas las cartas se publicarán con el nombre si no está de otra manera indicado. Envía tu correspondencia a esto no tiene nombre, 4700 NW 7 Street #463, Miami, FL 33126.

MIC

Still on the

Margins Terri de la Peña

It seems some lesbians, including some Latina lesbians, wish I had written another book. Others welcome *Margins* as the novel they had been awaiting. Everyone has a different opinion, and I think one of the book's strengths is its propensity to invite comment and discussion. When *Margins* was published last year, I hoped it would not be considered simply a lesbian romance, but rather a compelling, and often humorous, look into the lives of young Chicana lesbians and one Chicano family in particular. And to quote myself in the *esto* article: "I'm trying to present positive images, but I don't want to go overboard. I want to be realistic."

I chose to make the characters young, first of all, because I was writing a coming out novel. I came out at 36, but I did not want to write an autobiography. Instead, I imagined what it would have been like for a young Chicana lesbian to come out in the early 1980s. This was challenging because by the time I began working on *Margins* again in 1987, I was 40, trying to remember what it had been like to be 22. I had been quite unsure of myself at that age — shy, introverted, unassertive. Recalling that, I decided to give Veronica Melendez some of those personality traits. Though her experiences were different from mine, I thought her behavior characteristic of someone her age who is coming to terms not only with emotional trauma, but also with her creativity, ethnicity and sexuality. For a young lesbian — for anyone — that was a lot to deal with! No wonder I didn't come out at 22!

Also I felt it important to present Veronica as a student, dealing with personal struggle and self-doubt about her creativity. Some of the warmest compliments I have received about the book have been from Chicana and Latina college students, lesbians or not. They see Veronica as someone like themselves. Hearing comments like these from the younger generation touch my heart and encourage me to continue creating identifiable Chicana characters. With all the above in mind, Veronica copes with her family the best she can. She has a "Chuppie" brother (Chicano upwardly mobile professional), a sister who is a nun, a very religious mother, a noncommittal father and a nephew who adores her. These types of family dynamics

I think are familiar to all of us. Again to quote myself: "I want people to get to know us better without stereotyping. It's important [to] portray [ourselves]... since society holds so many misconceptions of who we are."

Toting all her other emotional baggage, Veronica does not confront her mother's racism. To Veronica, coming out is the main focus; everything else becomes secondary. While she recognizes her mother's racism more than once, as Rose Cosme points out in the *esto* review, Veronica chooses not to voice an opinion. She has seen, time and again, that her mother Sara leads an "unexamined life." She is a woman who is not self-aware, not self-reflective. Despite all her claims to care about her children, Sara remains more concerned about outward appearances, about how she is affected by her children's behavior. She does not like her son's gringa wife nor the dark-skinned René Talamantes (Veronica's lover). Half the time Sara does not even realize the unspoken anguish her daughter has been experiencing since Joanna's death.

With Sara Melendez's lack of perception, Veronica realizes it is futile to confront her about racism. She knows she cannot change her mother's mind about racism, anymore that she can change it about lesbianism, religion or anything else. This is illustrated on page 293, when René says, "Listen, Sara'll come around — in time. Veronica gave her a skeptical look. "The fact that I'm living outside the Church will be a continuing problem. I can guarantee that." Veronica, like many of us, recognizes there are certain aspects of her mother's demeanor she cannot change.

Often, I remind people that *Margins*, after all, is a fictional work. Yet people read into it what they want; the book touches nerves, it arouses feelings. To some, it is not Chicana enough or too Chicana; to others, there is too much bilingual dialog or not enough. Sometimes people criticize it for not being about Chicanas in the barrio; other times they praise it for being about Chicanas emerging from the working class. Whatever the opinions, I find myself — and my characters — still on the margins, neither this, neither that. As far as I know, Rose Cosme is the only

reviewer who has written about the racial elements of the novel. Like homophobia, internalized racism is endemic not only among Chicanas and Chicanos, but also among other Latinos. Within *Margins*, I believed it necessary to at least insinuate the questions of skin color in the Chicano community, while not making it the main focus of the book. Growing up in a beach town, I saw many Chicana and Chicano kids — relatives and friends — wishing they were lighter skinned, blonde and blue-eyed, while all the white kids were going to the beach to surf and get a tan! These unquestioned inconsistencies abound, and in the future, I plan to write in more detail about racism. I am convinced, especially considering the current situation in

Los Angeles, that this whole country is in denial about racism as well as about all realities of people of color.

In *Margins*, I raised many issues; coming out, creativity, Chicana/Chicano pride, Catholicism, intermarriage, class consciousness and literacy, to name some. I presented these in a fictional context, partly to educate, partly to entertain. I am the first to admit that my characters are flawed human beings — like all of us. And while I welcome criticism of my work, I also challenge other Chicanas and Latinas to channel their energies into producing their own much-needed contributions to Chicana and Latina lesbian literature.

A Blind Sided View of Margins Ellie Hernández

Very simply the issue of racism raised in Rose Cosme's review, "One Chicana Lesbiana's View of *Margins*" has struck blind our critical eyes. If I believed for a moment that all the self-loathing and cultural denigration that occurs within Communities of Color were just an added feature of racist America, then perhaps I should somehow forget the historical, political and economic events that have led us to this disheartening reality. When a Chicana lesbiana took to the pages of a publication such as *esto* to challenge and transform the literary view of Latina lesbians, the result may leave us all with a less desirable connotation of what it is like to be queer and of color in the US. Yet, a distorted perception of racism persists in the US despite the effort to create and evaluate our own work.

In this sense, literature, through its own initiative and innocence, forwards an explanation of who we are despite the overt or even covert repression that drags a given time. For this reason, I believe that a writer, such as Terri de la Peña, deserves ample praise for having the courage to publish a novel about the life and expectations of a Chicana lesbian and her community, which will more than likely draw parallels with other forms of marginalization. But to hold Terri de la Peña and the "fictitious" characters in *Margins*

responsible for a racism that is "real," and more closely related to a phase in the colonization process of the Americas, surely begs for a hot critical debate. However difficult it may have been for Rose Cosme to analyze de la Peña's "hidden agenda," it is perhaps just as difficult for me to say that twentieth century racism works in mysterious ways, where the weakest are held accountable for their own sufferable condition and those responsible relax. I believe this situation to be just one of the fundamental liabilities of mass culture.

As for me, I can only offer one brief solution, to put it simply, it is a matter of faith, for without having faith in the craft of the artist and writer or the autonomous imagination, the circumstances evinced in Cosme's review might secure an old and blind way of looking at the problems of our time. Cosme's review does not surprise me in the least, but serves as the basis for my contention that we are colonized in the deepest sense: racially, sexually, psychologically and, yes, intellectually. *Margins* draws attention to the self-loathing so characteristic of a conquered people, or culture of poverty, with the simplicity and integrity of a first novel — No splashes of intentional racial conflict, just people in a particular time and place with limitations of their own.

Sisterhood seen through the eye of a needle... *María Cristina*

I am a yellow skinned lesbian
born across the street from
the Acropolis,
raised in
Copiapó,
Santiago de Chile,
Jersey City,
San Antonio
and the Bronx...
half breed,
half baked
by South American sun...
la Cordillera de los Andes
is my backbone...

You tug at my skin
and pull out my tongue...
You
demand
assimilation...
English only in the classroom,
the lunchroom at the office,
and even in my own kitchen...

You
demand
"castellano puro"
not Spanish
and don't even mention
Spanglish,
¡Ay Dios mío, no!
because
"Mijita, we're better than that..."
better than those Portorros
que se comen las eses
y pronuncian las erres como eles
y dicen "vel-lá?" y

"cajjo" en vez de auto
y "jufo" en vez de techo...
¡qué no nos confundan!
¡No señor!
"we have to set ourselves apart..!"

You
demand
to know
just how much Greek
do I speak?
You ask me in English
whether I am Greek...
I say I am from Puerto Rico
just to see your sales pitch
drop to your shoes
and to see your eyes
now become
two balls of fire,
piercing my pockets and my
backpack,

making me actually feel that
they're stuffed
with cheap rayon blouses,
when just two weeks before,
when you asked
and I answered
"né,
yenithika stin eláda,
alá megálosa stó jilí,
né, miláo eleniká...
ligo...óji polí..."
Yes-I-was-born-in-Greece,
but-I-grew-up-in-Chile,
Yes-I-speak-Greek,
a-little-not-much...
your smile turned into a giggle
as you reassured me,
holding my elbow,
that you'd give me
the best deal in town
just for me!
because
"you're family my little daughter..."

But you were the first to
open my eyes to myself,
when you
demanded:
"just what are you
and what do you call yourself
and why..?"

You tug at my skin
and pull out my tongue...
You beg me to
be grateful for what I have...

I embarrass you in
the law school lecture room
when I confront the white man,
you spin around in your chair
and angrily reproach:
"but YOU can pass..!"

You take me around
a small town in New England
and from your vehicle
point to churches and schools,
and the violet patch
in your mother's back yard...
I smile a sad smile
and keep the tears inside...

I...
have...
nothing...
to point to...

My point of reference is a green card,
which shows my face at 16,
plucked eyebrows,
polyester striped shirt...
I look at you
from behind green wavy lines,
marginalized by immigration codes...

I let you see my ID,
the liquid green reflection
of my alien aura
filling your pupils
drop by drop...
I-am-the-illegal-alien-
turned-permanent-resident-
by-the-grace-of-god...
more commonly known as
..."la migra..."

This ID
is the receipt
my mother got
when she
bartered her
freedom
in exchange for
the privilege of
flying back to
her own country
to reclaim her daughter,
and re-entering
the US
through the
front door...
her back now
drier than the
Atacama desert
she left behind...

This ID
now
allows me
the privilege
to reside in a
permanent
state of alienation...
the nostalgia so raw,
at times I cannot even bear
to look at the ocean...

So instead,
I look at you...
and see
waves
of
anger,
desire,
self-hatred,
curiosity,

ignorance,
indifference...
rising
in the presence
of
my "not-dark-enough-skin,"
my "too-good-read-straight-black-hair,"
my "too-round-brown-eyes,"
my "too-un-Third-World-birth-place,"
my "too-loud-too-public-lesbianism,"
my "too-male-child,"
and in the
absence of
my mestiza abuelita,
who died in
an institution
somewhere in New Jersey.

In the telegram,
which I interpreted for my mother,
they said it was
heart failure...
I say she died of alienation
in an alien nation,
where
living on the third floor
was as
unnatural to her
as going through
the day without
a sip of tea
to warm her bones...
her roots up in the air,
her adobe walls gone,
her geranium garden forever lost...
I see

her brown face,
her soft, warm wrinkles
painting maps
on the window panes,
her eyes
fixed on the
asphalt road
asking
over and
over
again
"¿a quiora nos vamos mijita..?"
I see
her purple/green veins,
puffing up
as her bony knuckles
rise and fall
furiously
making the crochet needle
dive
in and out
of a yellow web...

I see her
knitting
the same doily
over and
over
again...
piercing through
time
and
space...
her toothless mouth
humming
"Aranjuez Mon Amour"
in a trance...

I...
wish...
I...
had...
that doily now...
I would
press it to
my face
and breathe
the smell of
my abuelita's hands
I would press it hard
onto my cheeks
and blend
her yellow web
with mine...

Still,
you demand
assimilation
as you click your tongue,
roll your eyes
and exhale your "get over it"
at my "too pale to be oppressed" skin...

And every time
you deny yourself
the liberty to look
for more than a reflection
and to search deeper than skin,
you deny yourself the same...
because once your eye,
eyes,
ears,
heart,
soul,
take me in,

I
am
yours
and
you

are
mine...

and when
you reject my tongue,
you condemn yourself
to silence...
and when
you dismiss my skin,
you walk around
salty beaches,
naked and raw...
prey of the sharp beaks
who in disguise of
separatists,
nationalists,
and oh very p.c.,
will feast on your heart...
and once satiated,
will look on
as the rest fight over the scraps...
while your soul leaves you,
as if under an
order of deportation...

But
I
Want
You...

perched on my shoulders,
as we fly across oceans and cordilleras...
or wading,
side by side,
brushing hips,
allowing the breeze
to build tunnels
between our thighs,
our proud and shiny foreheads
reflecting the rainbow colored fish
that now swim freely
and tickle our toes...
or swallowing
each other's tears,
licking each other's scars,
blessing each other
with sage, copal
and agua de Yemayá...

In my eyes
I carry visions
of my mother
bent over an industrial
sewing machine
in a sweatshop
somewhere in Manhattan...
the only shiny diamonds
that she found in

the streets
of New York
were pieces of her own fingernails
that the sewing machine broke off
the only ocean she swims in
is the one she made with tears
for her dead mother
and the daughter
she lost
for four years...

I, like my mother,
now bend my back,
so that I may shorten
the distance between us,
I,
like my grandmother,
now refuse to forget,
so that you too may remember...

I
want
us
to
stitch
our
lives
together...
with threads
finer than
a spider's silk
yet stronger
than mecate
from Masaya,
a familiar sky,
a common language,
a space to share
our "bochinches de comadres"
that will be like our barrio,

I
want
our
roots
to
touch
so that
you may feel
the heart of the cordillera,
the roar of the Mediterranean,
the rumble of the #4 train to the Bronx...
so you can hear
quenas,
zampoñas,
charangos,
buzukis,
blues,
and all the top ten hits

on the Soul Train chart
for the years 70 & 71...

I
want
you
with the dignity
born of the understanding
that the uniqueness of
our colors and textures
will render our quilt
more than a cushion
for our weary bones...
our corners made stronger
by the threads we share in
common...
but we must be willing
to allow the needle
to make us
a circle of light...

My community
is on pins and needles...
a quilt we have only
dreamed of...
a pattern unknown...
the design a mystery
as deep as cobalt blue,
as fiery as burning red,
as promising as fresh lavender,
as ancient as our
grandmother's cuentos,
as new as our children's
dreams...

We can
no longer
afford
to walk
only under
the eye
of the
storm...
We must
now find
the path
to our own shores...
where among the seashells,
we will find
our swords and shields,
and
our
own
shells...
still
echoing
our
names...

New Women — New Earth
A residential learning center for women who want to celebrate the earth while examining environmental issues, eco-feminism, spirituality and art. Next semester starts on January 15, 1994. For more information, call (513)683-2340

Women Weaving the World
A women's college project focusing on energy, intellect, creativity and the earth. For more information, write to The Grail, Box 475, Cornwall-on-Hudson, NY 12520.

Of a Like Mind
Networking newspaper for women interested in goddess rituals. For more information, write to OALM, Box 6021, Madison, WI 53716.

CASA
The National Coalition Against Sexual Assault is holding its 15th annual conference in Chicago, August 3-8. For more information, call Jane Fee at (217)753-4117.

Your Call Counts
In Washington, DC, civil rights for gays and lesbians are being discussed via Senate Bill #574 and companion HR #1430. If passed, these bills will grant us legal protection of our civil rights. Your call lets them know that you support the passage of these bills. Government offices keep a running tally of all calls that come in for pro and con opinions. Your call counts!!! Senate: (202)224-3121, House: (202)225-3121.

Boycott in Progress
Companies owned by Grand Metropolitan, which include Pillsbury, Green Giant,

Burger King and Haagen-Dazs, fired 300 women from their food plant in California. The company will be pursuing cheap labor (\$4.00 a day per person) in Irapuato, Mexico. To voice your support of the boycott, call Grand Metropolitan at 1-800-767-4466.

The Advocate in Trouble
Achy Obejas, former news bureau staff member for *The Advocate* was fired after she complained about problems with management's attitude and lack of concern toward minority lesbian issues. Four out of five lesbians on the gay magazine's editorial staff have either resigned or have been fired since last year's hiring of Senior Editor, Jeff Yarbrough. Discrimination lawsuits are pending.

Women Resourcing Women
A Chicago-based women's group focused on the physical and emotional needs of women with HIV or AIDS. Special attention given to minority women's needs. For more information, call (312)292-1140.

Anti-Racism Media Project
The Media Education Project is an in-depth study program reviewing the portrayal of minorities in the media. This Boston-based committee suggests that, in order to reduce negative stereotypic portrayals of minorities, various factions of the media need to employ more people from diverse backgrounds in order to better reflect and represent the diversity of the viewing audience.

DENEUVE
This slick and glossy lesbian magazine has crossed over in many cities and can be found in some neighborhood bookstores and newsstands.

Its *People*-magazine format allows for entertaining interviews, stories, dyke drama and lesbian gossip.

Hate Crimes on the Rise
The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force reports an all-time high in numbers of reported crimes against gays and lesbians. Numbers were gathered from five US metropolitan cities (Chicago, New York, Minneapolis/St. Paul, San Francisco and Boston). The 1,898 incidents in 1992 reflect a 172% increase from the previous statistics gathered in 1988.

Attorney General Meets with NGLTF

Two officials from the National Gay Lesbian Task Force met with Janet Reno in Washington to discuss the issue of violence against gays and lesbians. Reports from that meeting state that Reno listened with "great attention" and promised to look into the issue of anti-gay violence.

NAHJ and Univision

When the Board of Directors at the National Association of Hispanic Journalists voted to support the boycott against Colorado and pulled out of their scheduled conference in that state, they accumulated debts of up to \$70,000 as a result of their decision. (The Radisson Hotel pressed charges and demanded compensation for the broken contracts.) Hispanic Television Network, Univision, has assisted in the payment of the debt by contributing an undisclosed amount.

Lesbian Teacher Network
Support network for lesbians working in homophobic school systems. For more information write to: LTN, PO

Box 638, Solon, IA 52333. Include a SASE.

Call for Video/Film Submissions

The 7th annual New York Lesbian and Gay Experimental Film Series (Sept. 9-19) is now reviewing videos and films for possible show. For more information, call (212)925-5883.

GLEM

The Gay and Lesbian Emergency Media Campaign is producing a series of video documentaries on anti-gay propaganda. For more information, write to GLEMC, 39W 14 St. #402, NY, NY 10011.

Creating Change

The annual conference for gay and lesbian activists will be held November 10-14 in Durham, NC. For more information, write to NGLTF, 1734 14th St. NW, Washington, DC 20009.

Southern Women's Music and Comedy Festival

The annual festival has been canceled for 1993, due to the coordinator's involvement with the March on Washington. Next festival will be held May, 1994.

Michigan Womyn's Music Festival

To be held August 10-15. For more information, write to WWTMC, PO Box 22, Walhala, MI 49458.

Message to the President

If you would like to send a note or a fax to President Clinton to express your concerns on issues that are important to you, you can write to him at: The White House, 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue, Washington, DC 20500, fax (202)456-2461, phone (202)456-1111.

NAT Foundation

Seeking poetry, letters, etc. written to or for a loved one who died of AIDS for a book in progress to be titled *I Never Said Good-Bye to Nat*. Send submissions to Mary R. Sanders, NAT foundation, PO Box 308, Briarcliff, NY 10510.

National Lesbian Health Survey

Volunteers needed to distribute surveys. If interested, call (213)650-1508.

Sinister Wisdom

Call for submissions on the following topics:
Oppression/Allies: How we react, support, reject each other based on our differences. Deadline: Oct. 1, 1993.
Aging/On being old dykes Deadline: Feb. 1, 1994.
Lesbians and religion Deadline: June 1, 1994.
Mail one flat copy along with SASE to PO Box 3252, Berkeley, CA 94703.

First Openly Lesbian Government Official

Roberta Achtenberg, the former Director of the National Center for Lesbian Rights has been appointed to a key position at the Department of Housing and Urban Development. Achtenberg lives with her lover, Mary Morgan, who is a judge with the Municipal Courts of San Francisco, and they have a seven year old son. Right-wing Republicans are not pleased.

Married Women Wanted

If you are married to a man, but love women, you can be part of a sociological study now in progress. For a confidential interview, or for more information, write or call: Carreen, 1412 Ave. M Suite 2293, Brooklyn, NY 11230, (718)375-8519.

Anti-Gay Petition in Florida

Anthony Martin of Palm Beach county is attempting to gather 429,428 signatures on a petition that would allow for the consideration of an anti-gay proposal. If the signatures are obtained by August 9, 1993, the state will put to vote a law, similar to the one in Colorado, barring gay rights and protection under the law.

International Penpals

A Dutch national gay rights group called COC has a network of more than 25 countries with access to gay and lesbian penpals. This project, which is associated with the International Lesbian and Gay Correspondence Network has a small cost involved, so you may want to write for more detailed information: ILGCN/COC, Postbus 768, NL-3000, Rotterdam, The Netherlands.

Lesbian Orientation Research Study

Although most studies on the formulation of a homosexual orientation have been primarily focused on gay males, Dr. J. Michael Bailey of Northwestern University and Richard C. Pillard of Boston University, are conducting a study on the biology of lesbianism. The preliminary findings of this study note that genes may play a dominant role in shaping female sexual orientation. Further conclusive evidence is hoped for in order to dispute long-standing assumptions that lesbianism is a social or political choice.

Womontown

A lesbian community is growing in a 10-block area

near midtown Kansas City, MO. Women who are interested in moving to this area or who would like more information on homes, jobs, real estate, ethnic diversity and cultural events in this area. can write or call: Womontown, PO Box 090811, Kansas City, MO 64109, (913)791-8058.

Lambda Literary Awards

The Fifth Annual Lambda Literary Awards, saluting lesbian and gay literary excellence, was held on Friday, May 28 at the Hotel Intercontinental in Miami. The awards went to the following authors in their respective categories: Penny Raife Durant for *When Heroes Die* in Children and Young Adult Books; Alison Bechdel for *Dykes to Watch Out For (The Sequel)* in Gay and Lesbian Humor; Joan Nestle for *The Persistent Desire* in Lesbian Anthologies; Judith Katz for *Running Fiercely Toward a High Thin*

Sound in Lesbian Fiction; Jaye Maiman for *Crazy for Loving* and Elizabeth Pincus for *Two-Bit Tango* in Lesbian Mystery; Blanche Weisen Cook for *Eleanor Roosevelt* in Lesbian Non-fiction; Audre Lorde (posthumously) for *Undersong* in Lesbian Poetry; Nicola Griffith for *Ammonite* in Lesbian Science Fiction; Randall Kenan for *Let the Dead Bury the Dead* in Gay Men's Fiction; John Preston for *A Member of the Family* in Gay Men's Anthologies; Michael Nava for *The Hidden Law* in Gay Men's Mystery; Paul Monette for *Becoming a Man* in Gay Men's Nonfiction; Essex Hemphill for *Ceremonies* and Edward Field for *Counting Myself Lucky* in Gay Men's Poetry; Maureen McHugh for *China Mountain Zhang* in Gay Men's Science Fiction; and David Wojnarowicz for *Memories That Smell Like Gasoline* in Lesbian/Gay Small Press Books.

Sinister Wisdom

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Latina Lesbian Archives

Yolanda Leyva is the founder and operator of an information network that has researched and uncovered significant pieces of Latina lesbian herstory. For information, call or write: Yolanda Leyva, Lesbiana Latina Archives, 250 N. Shannon #5, Tucson, AZ 85745, (602)792-4621.

International Lesbian Archives

Collection of information on lesbian herstory from all around the world. For more information, write or call: Lesbian Herstory Archives, PO Box 1258, NY, NY 10116, (718)768-3953.

Gay Murders in Mexico

Major cities throughout the world, including New York, Madrid, Paris and Mexico City, demonstrated on March 19 to draw attention to the killing of 31 gay men in Mexico over the past two years. Enoe Urganda of the Mexican Lesbian Human Rights Organization says that the Mexican government and the Roman Catholic Church are responsible for perpetuating homophobia.

Peru

The Peruvian Constitutional Congress is considering a proposal to recognize same-sex marriages. No more details, dates or deadlines are available at this time.

Colombia

The Washington Office of Latin America (WOLA) has released a report on human rights abuses in Colombia. The report notes that in areas such as Bogotá and Medellín

there has been widespread persecution of gays by the police, which includes systematic murdering of gays, under the guise of "social cleansing." Other groups being targeted by the paramilitary death squads are prostitutes and the homeless. The WOLA has requested US intervention by way of withholding of security assistance and military aid.

Dominican Republic

The gay and lesbian Christian community in Santo Domingo now has an MCC church, thanks to eighteen American volunteers from an MCC affiliate church in Atlanta, Georgia. The World Community Builders erected the church, in just ten days, in the village of El Tamarindo.

Spain

To protest negative political practices by the Catholic church, a group called the Gay Liberation Movement of the Basque Nation in Bilbao has initiated a "Campaign of Apostasy." The group will address the Vatican with their concerns about human rights violations and crimes against individual rights to freedom of affection and/or sexual relations.

Mexico

Violence against gays is on the rise in Mexico, especially in the states of Mexico City, Oaxaca, Jalisco and Chiapas. In February of this year, Neftalí Ruiz, a gay spokesperson was killed by a gunman in a passing car. Ruiz was known for putting demands on Mexican police to investigate the high incidence of murders of gays in the past year. The killing of Ruiz is being called by gay community leaders a deliberate assassination.

Writers Wanted

Latina homoerotic and lesbian writing in the form of poetry and short prose wanted for an anthology in progress. Specifically, Spanish poetry with English translations or English prose. For more information, write to: Dr. Elena Martínez, 373 Bleeker St. #5C, NY, NY 10014 or Dr. Francisco Soto, 1198 Paddock Pl. #102, Ann Arbor, MI 48108

Brazil

Rio de Janeiro held its first gay pride parade on January 24. Although gay activists there are lobbying for government protection for gays, 3000 masks were handed out to the marchers to protect their identities.

ENLACE Forum

The Washington, DC Gay Latino Coalition sponsored a discussion on Asians and Latinos for public awareness. Discussions included growing up gay in Latin or Asian families, the problems of integrating our ethnic identities into the gay community and issues of interracial dating in the gay community.

Sex Dinner Party

On May 1, in Brooklyn, NY, a lesbian liberation group called "titi liberation" hosted a dinner and sex party, which according to their spokeswoman was the first of its kind. Dinner guests enjoyed participating in free expression of sexual activities throughout the evening. Safe sex was encouraged. For more information, call Rosita Libre de Marulanda at (718)851-4238.

Latina Lesbians Do The Lammys

Vanessa Cruz

On Friday May 28, three of us who do everything in *esto*, got all decked out and attended the Fifth Annual Lambda Literary Awards at the Hotel Intercontinental in Miami. This event is sponsored by the *Lambda Book Report* and is THE literary event of the gay and lesbian community. The Lammys, as the awards are known, are given to gay and lesbian books in fifteen categories ranging from children's books to science fiction.

We arrived in full Latina color: Margarita wore a plaid pantsuit with a pink shirt; Patri wore her streetdyke attire (black pants, white shirt and colorful vest, although she would have been much happier in jeans); I wore modified writer-femme (black palazzo pants and suede platforms); and Margarita's date, a poet who has contributed several times to *esto*, wore full Latina femme regalia (peach pleated dress with organza flower appliqué's). We were psyched; we were ready to meet exciting literary lesbians from all over the US. We wondered if any of the Latinas whose work we know would be there, placed some quarters in the meter outside and trekked upstairs.

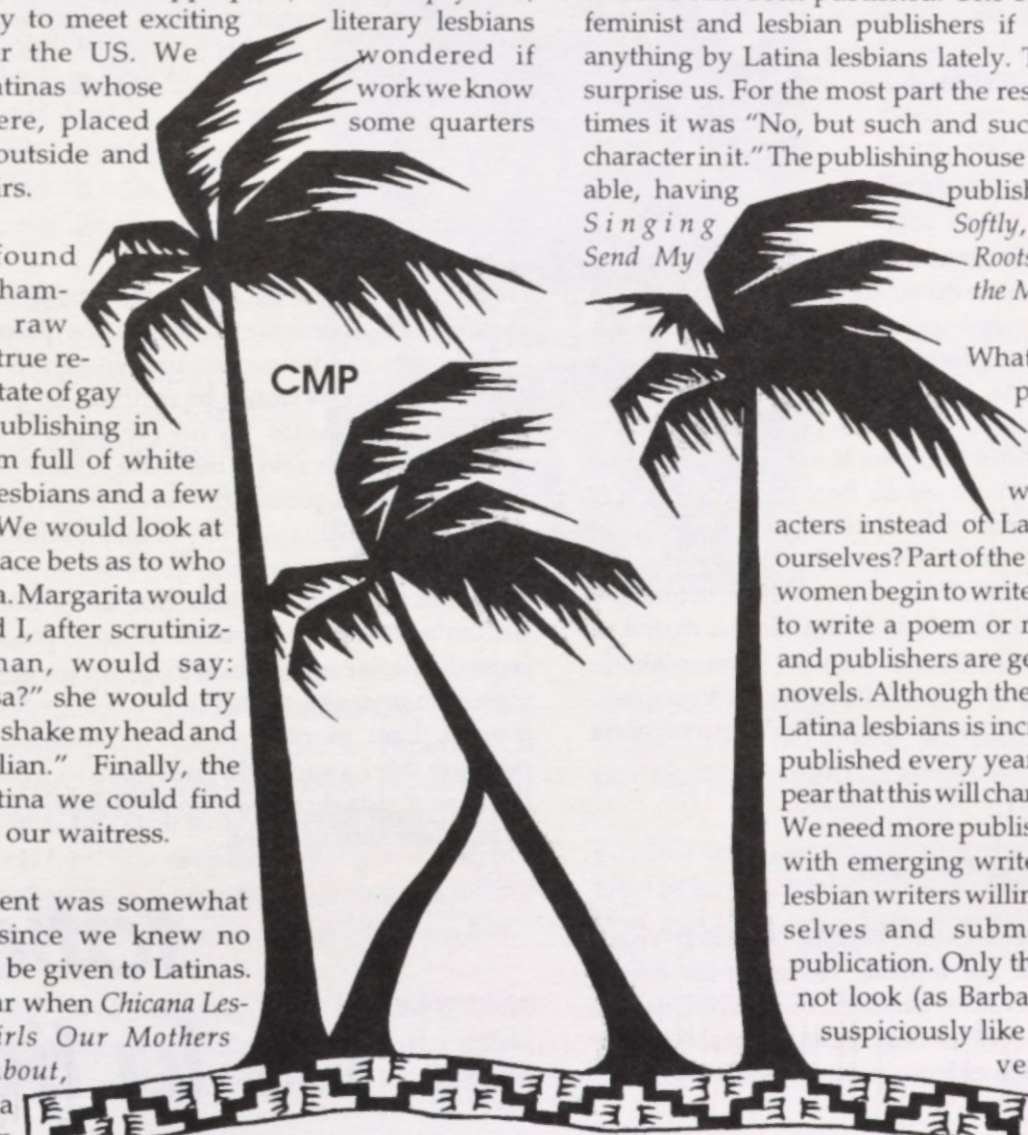
What we found among the champagne and raw oysters was a true reflection of the state of gay and lesbian publishing in the US: a room full of white gay men and lesbians and a few Black people. We would look at women and place bets as to who might be Latina. Margarita would say: "Esa" and I, after scrutinizing the woman, would say: "Jewish." "Esa?" she would try again. I would shake my head and say: "No, Italian." Finally, the only other Latina we could find there was Elsa our waitress.

For us the event was somewhat anticlimactic since we knew no awards would be given to Latinas. Unlike last year when *Chicana Lesbians: The Girls Our Mothers Warned Us About*, edited by Carla Trujillo, won

the Lammy for Best Lesbian Anthology, there were no Latinas nominated this year. Patri and I enjoyed Kate Clinton's emceeing, while Margarita and her date, after giving up on her jokes, proceeded to chat all night in Spanish, much to the chagrin of the other people at our table.

The following day, courtesy of Nancy Bereano of Firebrand Press, we attended the American Booksellers Association Convention and Trade Show in Miami Beach and had a chance to meet a number of editors of feminist and lesbian presses. At this event, held every year at different sites in the US, people who publish books set up booths displaying what they have to offer, and people who sell books go and check out what is new. We felt this would be a great opportunity to see if anything new by Latina lesbians had been published. One by one, we asked the feminist and lesbian publishers if they had published anything by Latina lesbians lately. The answers did not surprise us. For the most part the response was no; a few times it was "No, but such and such book has a Latina character in it." The publishing house Aunt Lute is remarkable, having published *Cantando Bajito/Singing Softly*, *The Two Mujeres*, *Roots Rain* and *Daughter of the Mountain*.

What is wrong with this picture? Where are our books? Why are we letting Anglo writers use us as characters instead of Latinas writing about ourselves? Part of the problem is that when women begin to write, they are more likely to write a poem or maybe a short story, and publishers are generally interested in novels. Although the number of books by Latina lesbians is increasing, very few are published every year, and it does not appear that this will change in the near future. We need more publishers willing to work with emerging writers and more Latina lesbian writers willing to believe in themselves and submit their work for publication. Only then will the Lammys not look (as Barbara Smith remarked) suspiciously like the Republican convention, but like a fabulously queer, multicultural feast.



Cuéntame una charla anónima

¿Cómo es que te dejaste seducir por una mujer?

A mí me gusta manejar carros. Tengo un carro correlón, un Suzuki de dieciséis válvulas. Esta niña manejaba moto y me seguía; me buscaba. Alguna vez me atravezó, que habláramos... Nos fuimos a un estadero en las afueras del pueblo. Yo tomé agua; ella vodka. Ella decía que yo la atraía, le gustaba. Yo no la distinguía entre toda la gente, no le daba validez a eso que ella me quería... Entonces hicimos un plan de un paseo a una piscina en el campo, delicioso. Yo nunca tomo. Ese día tomé dos cervezas, contenta, casi prendida. Llegamos a la casa. Ella iba a dormir en mi cama; yo en el suelo. Estábamos acostadas y ella dizque tenía mucho frío. La acompañé y ella me empezó a acariciar; me sedujo. Yo le seguía el juego. Yo no estaba muy quieta, pero me gustaba, me encantaba... Esa vez yo no la toqué a ella; no estaba cómoda... Yo era abismada; me dejé hacer lo que fuera. El día siguiente lo pasamos en la cama. Para mí era un juego.

¿Qué tipo de persona es ella?

Es lesbiana; tiene veintitrés años y yo treintaicinco. Es rebuscadora. Le ha tocado duro, mantener a su mamá. No tiene papá; ella es el papá de la casa y trabaja desde los nueve años. Es dulce, tierna. Tiene ojos lindos. Es malgeniada. Era gordita. A mí me gusta que tenga buenas curvitas. Vamos al gimnasio y alzamos pesas. Ha cambiado su manera de vestir. Ahora le gusta la ropa más femenina, no como tacones, sino camisas de florecitas. Me gusta el cambio. Se está queriendo más y lo hace por ella misma... Tiene resentimiento. Antes le gustaba tomar, fumaba cigarrillos, era promiscua. Ya no. Ella vive con la mamá y una hermana. Trabaja para toda la familia. La mamá es muy enferma y le echa la culpa de todo. Para poder salir de la casa tiene que decir mentiras. A la mamá le han contado que es lesbiana y no ha querido aceptarlo. Vive incómoda por las mentiras.

¿Las mentiras las unen más?

Creo que sí, claro. A veces es tan horrible, tan difícil. Yo me mudé pa' la casa de mi familia. No tenemos donde encontrarnos. A veces vamos a hoteles, cada ocho o quince días. Llevamos siete meses relacionándonos... Es muy triste. La única solución es irnos para otra parte, primero

una, luego la otra... nos encontramos en el gimnasio todos los días, es la única oportunidad de vernos. Y yo la llamo en el lugar donde ella juega billar, no hay donde más.

¿Eres lesbiana?

En el momento estoy esperando a ver. No sé cómo saber... Estoy pensando que de pronto soy; no sé si quiero serlo... Me da temor ser parte de esa subcultura. No la conozco bien... Nunca se me ocurrió esto con una mujer... Yo nunca había ido a sitios de baile de lesbianas. Ella me llevó. La primera vez yo no fui capaz ni siquiera de bailar y es que me encanta bailar. El sitio era feito; me impactó. No había concordancia... Otra vez fuimos a otro lugar. Se me olvidó que estaba con otra gente y me desinhibí completamente. De regreso, en el carro, mientras manejábamos hicimos el amor. Yo soy experta en eso, parar a ratos, acelerar... Pienso en esa canción que dice: "que la noche sea testigo de tanta locura."

¿Están enamoradas?

No sé. Ella creo que sí... Me llama tres veces al día. Yo en asamblea de reuniones le recibo las llamadas. Es muy detallita; me escribe cartas, papelitos; me da carajaditas, confites, cosas que nunca he recibido en esa forma. No sé que hay ahí... Antes yo no participaba mucho en las caricias... Ella me retó y me puse a ganarla; me puse las pilas a darle... Es que me gustan los retos. Esa niña está loca conmigo ahora, dice que soy la mejor amante de su vida... Pero ahora ella no me da lo que yo quiero. Antes yo tenía orgasmos deliciosos. Ahora son muy normales; no me llaman la atención. No encuentro tanto placer... Me gustan cosas de ella; le cogí mucho cariño. Si me estoy enamorando, el estar enamorada me da mucho trabajo. Eso es entregarse mucho. Uno pierde mucha identidad; me da temor perderla. Me ha sucedido en el pasado. Si nos mudamos a llevar una vida de pareja; no sé si quiero eso... No sé qué pasa; el encanto se acabó.

**tatiana
de la tierra**

Cuento Amy Concepción

"I have never been more afraid," Maritza told me, "than the time I was accused of being a lesbian and was brought to 'trial' in front of several leaders of the church including the pastor."

Mercedita was a young woman who had been married for about two years. She and her husband were members of the church I attended. They were having marital difficulties at the time, and she was under a doctor's care for a "nervous condition." The doctor told her that she needed a vacation away from her husband, preferably with a friend or a close relative. Apparently, her family was also part of her problem, so she asked me if I would be willing to go with her. She knew I was single and had no major responsibilities. Her husband even agreed that it was a good idea to invite me along.

We spent about a month in Tampa at this old couple's house. They were also Baptist and knew Mercedita's family from Cuba. The first night she told me she suffered from nightmares and could not sleep alone. I was very tired from the long train ride and fell asleep right away, lying there next to her. Mercedita was taller than I and very thin. I have never been attracted to women like that. I had never noticed that she had green eyes and a dark complexion; a combination others found very attractive. The next day she told me she felt nervous all the time, that her husband did not understand her. She wanted to get a divorce, but her family and people from the church kept telling her that he was a good man and that he loved her.

Mercedita must have suspected that I loved women when she asked me the following night if I could brush her hair because she wasn't feeling well. I also

massaged her neck, her shoulders, and ended up caressing her whole body. She kept her eyes closed, and we didn't say a single word. I felt her body relax, and I thought she had fallen asleep. I waited, playing a motionless game of synchronicity between my hips and her respiration. But I knew that, at some point, I had to relieve myself of the tension. That night, and every night until we left, we gave each other lust and affection, in that order and with no questions asked.

On the way back we encountered a group of missionaries on the train. They were returning from a convention, and the leader of the group was Jennifer Miles. She was already into her sixties, and some years back we had been "sexual companions." She was delighted to see me. Mercedita also knew a young man from that same group. I easily picked up the vibrations between them, and I didn't like it one bit. When Mercedita told Jennifer she could sit next to me, I immediately knew what she was up to. I admit I overreacted. I told her, categorically, that she was a married woman, and that she had been entrusted to me. She couldn't sit next to a

man, even if he was a member of the church! She obliged, but didn't talk to me the rest of the trip. When I took her home, she told me, "I'll make you pay for this!" Then she slammed the door in my face.

I didn't deny her accusations that I had taken advantage of her mental confusion and her need for affection and understanding. She never revealed the details of what actually happened, of course. Instead, she said I had fallen in love with her and had embarrassed her in front of others by "behaving as if I were a man."

Re
mini
scenes
III

Durante mucho tiempo, el tema recurrente en las conversaciones con amigas era la falta de un sitio propio para mujeres. Queríamos un bar con todas las características de un lugar de esta naturaleza, donde se pudiera beber, conversar y básicamente, pasar un buen rato. Una noche surgió nuevamente la queja y entre ron y ron, casi jugando, llegó la idea, "Bueno, no nos quejemos más y abramos el bar." La universidad estaba en paro y no estábamos haciendo nada; el chiste se volvió en serio porque teníamos las ganas, el tiempo y la necesidad.

En menos de un mes, la idea era realidad. Entre nosotras pudimos recoger la plata, que era una inversión escandalosamente baja. Conseguimos un local, prestado por una amiga, en un barrio por un centro comercial en Medellín. Le dimos el nombre de una diosa de la luna negra. La decoración fue marcada por preferencia, no por modas. Lilas, morados, violetas y rosados eran los colores de las paredes y las sillas. Manteníamos la luz amarilla en penumbra.

Se corrió el rumor que había un bar para mujeres y las mujeres de la ciudad nos visitaban mientras hacíamos los trabajos de adecuación. Todas querían ir a la apertura del nuevo bar, para ellas. Lo inauguramos con una fiesta de disfraz donde asistieron más de setenta mujeres, todas por invitación. Fue un enamoramiento que duró nueve meses. A los seis meses ya pudimos pagar la deuda.

El sitio tenía unas características muy definidas: calidez, buena atención, música deliciosa y precios muy razonables. Y lo mejor de todo: era de las mujeres y para las mujeres. Hacíamos exposiciones de arte y empezamos un ciclo de conferencias. Los círculos comenzaron a ampliarse, siempre llegaba gente nueva y se contagiaba del buen ambiente que se respiraba. No faltaban las sorpresas: llegaba la vieja compañera del colegio, la profesora, la vecina, total, se consolidó un gran núcleo de amigas. Éramos una familia.

Corría el año 1987. En esa época, Colombia, y especialmente Medellín, estaba cruzada por corrientes muy violentas. Los grupos de asesinatos amparados bajo todo tipo de banderas pululaban. Era muy común saber de conocidos que se veían obligados a exiliarse a raíz de las amenazas que recibían por sus creencias políticas, aún por sus estilos

de vida o por sus preferencias sexuales. Era la época del miedo que se conocía como la "guerra sucia."

Esta situación fue aprovechada por muchas personas para conseguir sus diversos intereses, lo que comúnmente se llama "pescar en río revuelto" y a nosotras también nos tocó. Empezaron a llegarnos amenazas, donde nos escribían todo tipo de insultos y nos acusaban de ser lesbianas, prostitutas, corruptoras. Además nos daban plazos para abandonar el lugar o, de lo contrario, nos matarían.

Al principio nos asustamos, pero pensamos que la situación no pasaría de las amenazas. Sabíamos que asusta mucho pensar en dos mujeres juntas. Habíamos tenido la idea de poner en las paredes fotos de amigas vivas, de las que amamos hoy. Eso nunca se pudo hacer porque nadie se atrevía a exponerse así. Eso sí duele. Entonces cuando nos llegaron sufragios a las propias casas de nosotras, empezamos a tomar las cosas en serio. Un sufragio es un contrato de misa en el cual los curas dan una misa por el descanso del alma de una persona en particular. En este caso era para nuestras almas pecadoras. En esa época era una manera común de hacer amenazas.

Nos reunimos, las dueñas y las más cercanas amigas, y analizamos las amenazas anónimas. Dadas las circunstancias, era temerario apostar a que fuera o no fuera. Yo al abrir el bar tenía la responsabilidad de toda la gente. No podía esperar que llegaran disparando a matar a todo el mundo. Decidimos cerrar. Nos reunimos en una última fiesta con mucha tristeza y lágrimas y mucho ron. Y así fue.

Resucitar ese lugar mágico es algo que espero. No lo veo porque las cosas se van empeorando. Aquí hay mucha violencia. No hay respeto por lo diferente; todo tiene que ser uniformado. Lo diferente tiene que desaparecer porque incomoda y el medio para que desaparezca es la violencia. Entonces espero una mañana mejor, cuando la tolerancia y el respeto por la diferencia sean palabras plenas de significado. No publico el nombre del bar porque no lo quiero contaminar. Cuando surja, quiero que sea con todo su derecho, sin la sombra de la muerte, con el mismo nombre.

9 meses mágicos entre mujeres en Medellín — 1987 Mercedes

Llegué como un imán a la media noche a Trova's Cafe Bar, atraída por Mildred, la cantante afro-colombiana que fabrica el son en Antioquia. En la frescura de esa noche en Medellín escuché la alegría a Changó desde la calle. Rico. Acercándome me empujé de la ricura mayor, que Trova's era un bar de mujeres. En ese ambiente alegre me la pasé de mesa en mesa con lesbianas alborotadas. Era contagioso.

Lo charro del caso es que las dueñas, Gloria Inés Echeverry y Victoria Isabel Mesa, no lanzaron el negocio con la intención de que fuera para mujeres. Ya tenían la clientela heterosexual establecida cuando les propusieron el cambio. "La idea que fuera gay nos sonaba mucho porque, primero, éramos gay, y segundo, se podía hacer mucho a nivel cultural," dice Gloria, amantes con Vicky desde hace tres años, agregando que en la ciudad "estamos muy frios en ese aspecto."

En Medellín habían bastantes sitios gays predominadas por hombres. Existían, por ejemplo, Straezz gay, una discoteca con cinco pistas de baile; El Cerrajón, un pasillo largo y oscuro decorado con santos y los nightclubs Aquelarre y Lucho's. También existe un lugar que me intrigó mucho aunque no lo conocí, El Machete, donde van mujeres dizque peligrosas. Pero un sitio para las mujeres ir tranquilamente a charlar, no. Hace años hubo uno por el mismo vecindario en el cual Trova's ahora "llena el vacío que ese sitio dejó," dice Vicky.

Las dos novatas a la subcultura gay de Medellín comenzaron lo que se convirtió en un enclave especial. Se conocieron en un curso hace años en otro pueblo, cada una con su novio. Cuando se enamoraron fue el primer conocimiento lesbiano para cada una. Vicky, de Barranquilla, y Gloria, de Caldas, se mudaron a la ciudad juntas. Para atraer mujeres hicieron publicidad cerrada. "A todas partes donde íbamos repartíamos tarjetas del negocio a personas que pensábamos que eran gay." Aprendieron a detectar a gente de ambiente. "Eso era esencial, hay una energía. Hay unas características superficiales que hacen que uno tenga la intuición, la forma de vestir, de mirar... De cien personas que le dimos tarjeta, solamente nos equivocamos una vez."

Más de un año después de haber cultivado la comunidad de mujeres siguen la publicidad cerrada y personal. Tienen los teléfonos de la mayoría de las clientas y las llaman cuando

tienen presentaciones especiales. La confianza es mucha. "Tratamos de que la gente hable, se siente, diga las cosas. Aquí celebran sus cumpleaños, los grados." Gloria dice de la tertulia que han creado entre las ciento y pico clientas fijas que pasan por Trova's cada semana. "Nos dan 50 picos en una noche... Nos invitan a bailar, a fincas, a paseos."

"A nivel de negocio no es tan lucrativo," cuenta Gloria del enfoque familiar y cultural de Trova's. "Es más el amor a la cuestión." Además de presentar actos musicales que varían entre jazz y cumbia, exponen arte, muestran películas y abren su espacio para participación de las mujeres. Hasta ahora no se han presentado artistas públicamente declaradas como lesbianas. "Respetamos la decisión de la persona... pero tienen que estar bien con la gente gay," explica Gloria. "La gente gay merece que los espectáculos sean los más dignos... No nos interesan los shows de travestís, por ejemplo, porque eso es una transgresión... Tenemos un directorio de los mejores artistas de Medellín y de ahí es que sacamos la gente." La clientela, que tiene entre quince y cuarenta años, "es de un nivel medio alto culturalmente. Casi todas son profesionales, han hecho carreras." Y ellas son las que se encargan de hacer la publicidad.

Rodeado por bares y bailaderos heterosexuales, no es ningún secreto que lo que se encuentra ahí son mujeres. Las dueñas le dicen a la gente, "De puertas para adentro, todo lo que quieras. Pero por favor de puertas para afuera cuidémonos... Estamos en un medio demasiado inculto. Aquí tú ves la gente más violenta." Por

eso, aunque no rechazan a nadie en la entrada, "tratamos de colar, de seleccionar... En la constitución de Colombia no dice en ningún lugar que no puede existir un sitio para homosexuales. La gente tiene que ir aceptando que la elección de los otros sea diferente a la que ellos hicieron."

Mujeres se sentaron afuera en las mesas sobre el andén, alejándose a momentos del calor de adentro. La frescura de la noche se convertía en sudor que fluía mientras Mildred bailaba cumbia sobre una mesa cuadrada. Las paredes adornadas con retratos de Charlie Chaplin se alumbraban con velas encendidas en la candelabria chorreada. Las mujeres se sentaban una encima de la otra. Rico.

Trova's un lugar de mujeres en Medallo — 1993 Tatiana de la tierra

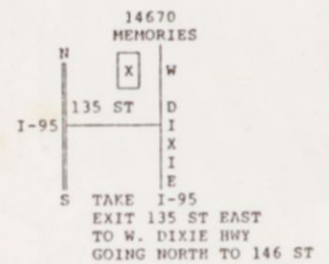
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