

The Awakening

by Annecy Baez

El Paso de Mano

Aura arrives with the incense and her mysteries. Her scent of wet earth, and crushed flowers, a touch of Jasmine and Frankincense. Her dark hands passing over my body, her warmth. A whisper. A prayer.

I stir.

The energy of her hands passes over me.

Un paso de mano.

In the distance, my grandmother, la Guela, hums while she boils herbs with Berron, and Vivaporu. The Vicks Vapor Rub and the Bay Rum making a warm substance they rub on my body. Their hands full of love healing my brokenness.

Now, the cool scent of their magic brew awakens me. I stir, open my eyes.

I move, but I can't get up. Aura sprinkles Agua de Florida to bring healing spirits my way. They pray. "Ave Maria, Madre de Dios... ruega por nosotras."

Ruega por nosotras. Their love awakens me.

Forgetting is Easy

Forgetting is easy. I close my eyes and I don't think of the beating, yet I find that my body remembers as if memories can lock up inside of me remind me of the past. I feel fear and pain. I close my eyes to forget and I dream. Sometimes, I dream of Pito. Pito's hands gliding up my thigh, his warm lips upon mine. I dreamed of Eva.

I try to forget them.

Lately, I move and walk and eat again, but I do not feel the same. There is something different inside of me. There is something broken. Sometimes, the elders will ask, "What's wrong, Mia?" Grown ups, they ask stupid questions all the time. They cut your arm and then they ask, does it hurt?

“Habla un chin, un chin chin.” Zuleika says, she wants me to speak a little bit, but I write to her that I can't. That's how it all begins. I write to on my notebook.

I write and writing comforts me.

Invisible Bruises

My room is black. A blue black like a bruise. Black walls and black carpet with psychedelic colors, dark blue bedspread and a lamp that makes color rainbows on the black walls. The ceiling is red like blood and when I lie down on my bed the red like blood reminds me of the past. Mami cried when she saw the room black. Mami who loves everything white, whose bathroom is so white and clean you can eat on the floor. She says black is a beautiful color, but not for a bedroom. I have dark shades that don't let the sun in. Sometimes I wake up sad. I open my eyes and I wonder about living.

Death. It's too final.

Zuki comes to tell me stories. Sometimes I listen, but other times, even stories make me sad. I look away. I sit on the window sill of the fire escape, and I see my reflection staring at me.

It's an ugly reflection.

I am full of bruises. I see bruises all over my body, although it's been a long time since the beating. Some of the bruises are fading now, but some stay to remind me. They are now all sorts of colors blue, purple, pink, and yellow.

A sick looking yellow. My face is the same, but if you look closer you will see that my left side of my face is swollen with sorrow. I write this down for Zuki on my notebook.

Zuki reads this and says, “You don't have any bruises, Mia, Tio only hit you once,”

I realize now how different memory is from one person to another. I feel he hit me a lot, but she says he didn't, so I don't know what the truth is.

Aura walks in with Mimi and Rosa.

Zuki asked them “Do you see bruises on her?”

They come close.

Rosa and Mimi stare at my bruises, but they can't see them.

Aura looks at me and says, "I think she has bruises, it's just that we don't see them."

I sigh deeply and feel relieved.

Aura believes that people could have bruises on their body; it's just that normal eyes can't see them because the bruises are invisible. She says that losses can cause bruises, losing the mother you love, or the father you love, losing something important.

We stay quiet when she speaks.

She says that words can cause invisible bruises.

"Bruises, can be deep, deep inside of your heart," she points to my heart "And there the bruises hides causing a tangle of sadness, if left alone and misunderstood this sadness can be like your shadow you take everywhere. " she says.

We nod.

"It can change the way you see life, love, people," She says.

"How can you see them?" Zuki asked

"Look very slowly and stay still," she says and places her fingers on her lips.

" For bruises to be visible you need silence, stillness, shh...shh... and then they begin to be visible.....you have the magic, all of you do to see invisible bruises...wait...listen...see,"

I stay still watching them all and I begin to see. I see Mimi and Rosa have bruises and Zuki too.

"I can see it," I say. The others remain quiet. Mimi has her eyes close and Rosa is attentive. Waiting. We are quiet and so my mother comes in to the room. My family is full of secrets. They rarely speak about their past or their beginnings. The women in my family do not share anything about their history.

My mother comes in the room and she's followed by her sister, Tia Socorro.

"Que estan haciendo?" she wonders what we are doing.

I can see their bruises too. I guess we all have bruises, bruises that become invisible when we can not name them. Continues.... My Daughter's Eyes and Other Stories.

