

April 1, 2020

by Dulce Maria Menendez

So I had a reading for the Library of Congress and I cried during the whole thing because my mother didn't have a funeral or a service since she died on April 1, 2020. Now that day is the day my mother died instead of April fools. In Spanish it is the Day of the Innocents.

My mother was an innocent whose own mother died when she was five leaving behind four children under the age of 8 to an alcoholic father who could not parent my mother and her siblings. She was passed from relatives to relatives until she was 18 and found a job working in a dress shop in Havana.

She met my father at a bus stop. He was bipolar but his parents, my grandparents, oops forgot to tell her until after three months into their marriage when he had his first breakdown. My grandparents thought they found an escape goat when they wed him off to my mother. Lucky for her and us though, his crazy got us out of Cuba quicker than other families because even Fidel didn't want any more lunatics in jail.

So we arrived in Miami, June 15th 1962. My mother and father left us with my grandmother who was already here with our uncles Galo and Pepe. My mother rode a bus through the deep South and when she arrived in New York, they lived in a dingy one room studio apartment where she worked in a factory for three months stuffing cardboard boxes.

My father could not hold a job in New York so my mother left again to Miami and worked sewing in a factory while my father went off to New York where he could be as crazy as he wanted to be because this is the United States of America and you are free to be crazy if that is what you want to be.

