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sin fronteras

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sin fronteras

*Larissa Grijalva**

I remember sitting in the back of my family's van as a child, waiting to cross the border. The desert heat at full blast, along with the A/C. Our bellies full of Mexican Chinese food. Looking for any way to entertain myself for an hour or so and curious about the commotion outside of our California-licensed car. Asking mom and dad for elote or a coconut from the man with the small cart on the side of the road, fully knowing the answer would be no. My brothers really liked the embroidered Raiders blankets on display, that was their thing. Mine was the elote. Vivi liked the balloons. The thrill that came with not knowing whether or not the young man cleaning our windshield would be done in time for us to pull up to the customs officer was probably the biggest of my anxieties at the time. He was always done in time. On a really good day, we got to see someone running towards the fence at full speed, their loyal friend waiting to give them a boost to push them over the 20-foot fence. Everyone in line silently but fiercely cheering them on from their car. I remember lots of those things.

chiclets, wheelchairs, dogs, mariachi, nopales, awkward car eye contact, guns, feet, tacos, La Casona, McDonald's. *at what exact point are we stepping onto U.S. land? before the box or after? after the speed bumps.* After an eternity of waiting, we'd get to the customs officer. My mom showed her ID and the rest of us were U.S. citizen

U.S. citizen

U.S. citizen

U.S. citizen

U.S. citizen

U.S. citizen

Things felt different later on. less exciting. dirtier and suffocating. windows always up. someone walks by the car. LOCK.

Eventually, I learned to look away. *pobrecita. knock knock no gracias! knock knock a la otra!*

I was not prepared for the feelings of guilt and sadness and anger that consumed me every time I waited to cross the border. patiently AND legally. *and do I really need my license? and freedom and home and dreams and white fences and danger and racists?*

That was when the wall was built.

Now, I force myself to look. Now, I write about it. Now, we fight about houselessness and colorism and the Haitian caravan in the Senti line.

**J.D. Candidate 2023*
