

## **“A Wound, a Placeholder, a Future: Intersectional Critique of the X in Latinx”**

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The following “I am” poems are from a co-authored forthcoming publication (titled *X as Hieroglyph: A Duoethnographic Linguistic Intervention Exploring Identity Displacement*) in the Displacement Studies Reader that theorizes the X in Latinx serves as a hieroglyph (Spillers, 1987) marking displacement at many intersections of identity, mirroring physical displacement experienced at these lived intersections. As a collective of six minoritized and marginalized scholars who each uniquely experience displacement, we engaged in collaborative duoethnography through conversations and creative writings to examine the ways in which linguistic, identitarian hieroglyphs take on meaning overtime. This methodology serves as a mechanism for making and holding space for theory embedded in a sense of each-otherness. This collection of poems archives the embodiment of our experienced displacement, and allegiance to resistive acts of palace-making with one another.

### **Cydney Y. Caradonna**

I'm from hillsides that cast shadows on skylines  
Where your favorite rappers be getting their lingo from  
Where we dance a little different  
Where the first prisons on this land were built.

Where somehow going dumb means coming alive.  
I am from empty orange capsules filled with weed,  
The faded ink of my name, and the word depakote makes me feel free.  
Somehow.

But its contents remind me I might never actually be.  
I am from constant fear of the fact that I live every day with who tried to kill me.

I am from converged divergence.  
The intersection of 2 gashed woods.  
You see an X. I see a portal.

I am from shame,  
Shame I'm still trying to unlearn as mine  
while still learning the ability to claim space as mine.  
I am from Giovanni's Sister's Room,  
A vessel for your shame

And your mom's on most days.  
I am from the shame of 2 mothers that brought me a dad

### **Justin A Gutzwa**

So I am from dust devils and neon lights from a city of sin, but not the kinds that people tell me  
They pray for me for  
I am from a space of in-betweens.  
I am from not being Jewish enough to light the Menorah  
from Sissy and Ferry and fag, for not being manly enough  
from not being thin enough, not strong enough  
from not being safe enough to be by yourself tonight.  
I am from looking back fondly on black and white cookies the size of my face and lips stained  
purple by great ices on the boardwalk, while I eat Tacos alone in my parked car in the wheat  
fields of a rural town with a red sky  
I am from you can be whatever you want to be, as much as I am from.  
They make medicine for boys like you. And you will never be successful in college.  
I am from a space of inbetweens, which is where I want to be.

### **Montelleo Hobley**

I am from sweat rags,  
from box fans and window units

I am from the Sunshine State  
Tourism, Homophobia and masked by the smell of salt water  
While not showing skin, because the skin I live in, is seen as nothing more than a sin

I am from boiled peanuts,  
simmering for hours with ham hocks, red pepper flakes, and in pot liquor

I am from cookouts and card games,  
From he got a lil sugar in his tank and “oh, that’s your uncle and his roommate... or should I say  
your auntie”

I’m from early afternoons on the porch, telling Ma Dear about my school day and correcting her  
every time she would say “R”

I’m from humidity,  
From being hated when its sunny outside and wanted when the temperature is below 60 degrees

I am from and will continue to live in, what Elsa calls... “Into The Unknown”

### **Nkenna Onwuzuruoha**

I am from a deep place where people, bring outside smells into cooled homes  
I am from a deep place where dark skin means floating between dancin’ and dire times  
I am from wherever you want me to be when I don’t feel like explaining where I’m from  
I am from a place that is not here

I am from a different mindset. I tell you, “Yes. I will explain what I mean.”  
I am from the same mindset. You understand. Your murmur and nod are enough for me.  
I am from wherever you came from: God, a bird, a family  
I am from just right over there. Didn’t you see me?

I am from the bush. Bush mentality  
I am from here. X  
I am from here. X. But, I was born here. X  
I am from a place that is no longer here. X is where it was.

### **Andrea**

I am from a place where the ocean breeze sweeps across flat lands.  
A place where you can smell and taste salt,  
Salt is our inheritance, salt is our DNA, salt is our livelihood.  
A place of salt and salty, a place where the thirst for life is unquenchable.

I am from the working poor, the fisherman and the maid,  
Poor flattens but does not define nor contain.  
The poor notices the vibrant colors, feel deep want, breathe as if it is the last breath.  
Maybe we should all be poor, then maybe we will all be rich.

I am from not here and now.  
I am from yesterday and tomorrow.  
My ancestors, I know, conjured me in their dreams.  
As magic summoned to charm our lineage who patiently await a future.

I am from abundance, and I am from want.

I am from love, and I am from misery.  
I am from joy and despair.  
I am from Blackness and the Universe.

### **Jocelyn Navarro**

I am from a land where colonizers stole our resources and traditions  
And gave us false beliefs  
And unrealistic standards of beauty  
But unique reasons to celebrate

I am from a country that does not see me as human,  
The ex-president hates my people  
And claimed men from my community were criminals, drug dealers, and rapists  
And his followers have reduced me to a taco.

I am from a sunny land with shady people  
Where the ocean waves hello  
And the palm trees and mountains meet  
And the earth shakes when you least expect it, reminding you that she's alive  
I am from a home where tortillas are our utensils,  
The food is never spicy enough,  
The family gathers every Sunday for a carne asada,  
As music blasts from the speakers past sunset  
And that's where I truly feel the warmth of the CA sun