

## Letters to Chican@s from Oaxaca

J. César Díaz Calderón

**Biographical note:** J. César Díaz Calderón were born in Oaxaca, Mexico in 1994 as the first child of Francisca Calderón Melo and a late child of Eucario Díaz Reyes. J. have a sister, Karina Alejandra Díaz Calderón. They are working on finishing their first bilingual poetry book. Lately, they go for walks at noon, they sit on a weathered wooden bench three feet from the shore of a lake inhabited by gators, and, staring at life compositions, they spend hours imagining wor(l)ds when just being is enough.

**A note on the poems:** These poetic epistles emerged from the political and academic puzzling of a type of forgetting and of a recurrent practice in certain communities of Chican@s. I noticed the forgetting of transnational ties that bound diasporas with the territories of their ancestors. Also, I witnessed an increasingly recurrent practice of (mis)uses of decolonial vocabularies, such as ancestry, *barrio*, or *gente*, in art/ivism circles and circuits for their commodity value in neoliberal diversity writing (programs). These poems decry the importance of noticing fetishized contacts between cultures, places, and people.

### Oaxaca is not paradise Chicanxs

Oaxaca is not paradise Chicanxs.  
You are so self-centered *gabachx*  
*que crees que te ando viendo*.  
I don't care about you walking in *el andador turístico*.  
Taking my everyday life in.  
To get connected to ancestors that are still moving around.  
They are still murdered, raped, and stepped over.  
Just like the poetry you and I write.

Imagining we could heal wounds  
here in my *tierra* over the Hill  
with the mushrooms that you can get  
three blocks from home in L.A.  
Ay Chicanitxs,  
I packed those *tlayudas pal Norte*  
just two days ago,  
you didn't need to come here,  
this is not your home.  
The *barrio* is earned.  
What have you earned?

Take pictures if you want.  
They are 20 dollars each.  
Take my sex if you want.  
It is a magical trip, and it takes two orgasms  
to make me forget the loneliness tonight.

Take everything you want Chicanx,  
all that is for sale,  
before you leave  
to continue with your spiritual *camino*,  
your *andariegue* soul.  
Is it Chiapa de Corzo  
or Chichén Itzá?

We are also taking everything we can,  
but we can't take the air we breathe  
when we don't get the raise  
and we get asked to leave.

Don't take what is not for sale.  
Parts of us are not for sale.  
But you are so self-centered *gabachx*  
that you do not notice what we hide.  
How we learned to smile without  
the laughter of our eyes.  
*Llévele, llévele güerx,*  
*lléguele, lléguele güerx.*

You've been around long Chicanx,  
it is time to leave,  
or it is time  
to learn to see.

Dear Chican@s,

Children of *paisan@s*.  
Accented Spanish and *perfecto inglés*.  
USA citizens.  
Come here to hear the stories of your *abuelitos*  
from the clamoring soil of her *chicozapote* tree.

I must weigh my words and resist calling  
your parents' sacrifice, betrayal,  
and your hardships, privilege.  
Not to a nation, *a tu gente*.  
But sometimes, children, it gets tough  
to eat my words.  
*Un chile* too spicy even for my trained *bocota*.

We were waiting for you  
to take your turn holding  
in each *hombro*  
your share of the cost of your clothes and your Coke.  
Of your new iPhone  
or your food-stamps.  
The goodwill trashes  
that runs from your sweat to the blood of our lands.

What are you afraid of?  
Becoming us?

We are waiting for you with our stories  
hidden behind *tacos de barbacoa* and *chiles en nogada*.  
*Agua de horchata* and *mole*.  
Colonial histories.  
Imperial rules.  
Transnational movements.  
And all our love.

Cross to the other side  
the colored land.  
Blacks, Browns, and Whites.  
All hoping to see you soon  
with your back  
ready to be scarred.