

Bouncing from the Bronx Boricua and Chilling with La Latina Chilena

By Margarita Pignataro

It's happening. *Was sappening?* It's happening. Out of the circus circle. Enjoying life *S O L A*. No more cycling viciously always and forever in *una locura de amor en las vidas preciosas de las latinas*.

The transplant was risky yet there was confidence that it was the right decision. The hope for a change propelled her to travel from the Southwest to Northeast. The Arizona hype about the Senate Bill 1070 and House Bill 2281 were hot topics, however, her relationship with the patience- quiet- respectful- settle for the nice- mmm-hmmph- too- nice – pretty blue-eyed-shaven- head- 5'11- slender- male was definitely not a sizzling romance. The day came when she accepted an invitation to Syracuse, and analyzed that no one had to leave AZ, except for her. La Latina reasoned with *el gringuito* —*gringui* as she called him— before she departed, “*Mi gringui*, you have your mission here and I have one there.” So, she packed her sweet *coche*, Cappuccino, Honda Accord 1990 with 297,000 miles accumulated, and made the voyage to the other side of the country. It was that Halle Berry/ JLo strong diva sense that urged her to move forward.

Phone conversations connected her to many as she created her new life.

La Latina: I admit it's a change, transporting myself from the West to the East coast, and I'm surprised that I confirmed the job in this region, with all the reactions that I got from Arizonians. When I said that I was migrating, some would give me a nod of the head, a quick glance to the left and right, and only uttered one word “cold,” as though they were shivering. Or

sometimes the reaction would be a silent nod of the head, a quick glance to the upper left shifting to the right and the word, “snow.” I won’t mind the winters at all. I’ll go to Chile for the summer during winter break. New Year’s celebration in Valparaíso, Chile, *ya poh*, you can’t beat that! I must confess though, some of my friends from the hood in Arizona had interesting reactions. I would say, “Hey, *ese*, I’m moving?” My friend Manuel would say, “*Chavalita, adónde?*” “I have a one year gig in *Siracusa, huey*,” I’d say. Manuel would say, “Where’s dat?” And I would say, “New York.” At least I got a different response, “*Nueva York? Hijole.*” I’d say, “*Simón.*” He would say, “9/11, *la ground cero.*”

An encounter with a brutal Bronx behavior in Syracuse would prove to be a few frizzled, but well managed, threads in her life tapestry. She felt a vibe, a sensation, when she walked into the Middle Eastern Market on the corner of State and Colvin in the South Side. La Latina didn’t see his face, eyes, or hear his voice. The bling-bling crucifix and the black pant and red shirt attire coaxed her into the arms of the, what she thought, Christian via Santeria man. Religious hybridity was to be experimented live.

The conqueror usually approaches with his speech rehearsed and this one confessed within minutes that he spoke “*un español mata’o.*” The language that unites Latinos has many variations of the original. Different dialects and colors found in North, Central and South America; Spain, Europe, and Equatorial Guinea, Africa. However, in the U.S. especially we find a true Babylon: straight Spanish, English or Spanish broken with English, or English embellished with Spanish.

This Latino was Nuyorican, a *boricua* from the Bronx. La Latina was *chilena* from Arizona. Ten minutes and he magnetized her senses. He looked as though his jaw and nose had been broken several times and his eyes scanned the room as if he were a wolf in search for a *caperucita roja* and the basket of goodies for grandma. He claimed many break ups with women. She claimed success at the university. On the eve of hooking up with the Bronx Boricua she dumped *el gringuito*. No surprise to her ex *gringui*. There was no romance, no ring on the finger, and all enthusiasm for the Hollywood you may kiss the bride scene had evaporated. She took the leap from Mexican *tamales* to Puerto Rican *pastelitos*.

In her new environment La Latina connected with her friends via many hours on Skype. It was a self realization process for all *mujeres*.

La Latina: I must say that this state surprised me when I saw many people. Russians.

La amiga chilena: You mean it's true that northeastern people are rushing all the time?

La Latina: I don't mean like rushing, like hurry up.

La amiga chilena: I know, I know. It's a family joke. You haven't heard it?

La Latina: No.

La amiga chilena: When we're late, or not, we say things like, "Why you rushin'?" And the response would be, "I'm not rushin' 'toy chilin'. I'm a Chilean chilin'. We Chileans, chill. We never rushin' just chillin'." You never heard that one?

La Latina: No. However, I must say that I do hear jokes from other people, like, "Oh, you from Chili? Is it cold there? Is it chilly in Chile?" with the added, "LOL smiley face." Or a come on sentence like, "You a hot chili pepper?"

La amiga chilena: You know what? I thought Chile did look like a string bean until someone did a presentation in class on Chile and had a chili pepper shaped Chile.

La Latina: I just wish they would pronounce it correctly. *Chile, chilenos*, not Chili, Chilay, Chillians, Chilayans.

La amiga chilena: At least with the *noticias de los mineros* we strike a conversation easily now.

La Latina: Yea, we are all sharing the miner celebrities' popularity: From Miner to Hollywood Screen.

La amiga chilena: Unless you are a wine connoisseur, then you would know about *el vino chileno que es número uno*.

La Latina: Word.

La amiga chilena: So I wonder who will strike gold first. Andrés Wood or Brad Pitt?

La Latina: Or strike copper and gold. *Jijijijijiji, gua, gua, gua, gua, gua, ja, ja, ja, ja, ja.*

La amiga chilena: What's rocking is the movie 3:34 set for release on February 27th.

La Latina: Whoa. *Tres, treinta y cuatro*. Exactly one year after *el terremoto*. You were in Chile. How was it?

La amiga chilena: Bien movido. They should have named the *película ocho punto ocho*.

They both laugh half heartedly.

Although *el gringo* was La Latina's angel, and she dismissed him for the Boricua, her *satanás*, she never mentioned Bad Boricua Bronx Boy to *la amiga chilena* during conversations. Intellectually one would know to stay away, although the spicy spic who she thought was

spectacular or as he joked, *spic-tacular*, was a *chilena's* curious find. The beginning of any worth investigating relationship is fresh and unpredictable, it always is, when the fisherman throws the bait and needs a catch. However, when the bait is thrown simultaneously to different women and the fisherman never stops searching for the better catch unpredictability becomes a part of everyday life. A habitual suspicion is created in the female and a compulsive need to lie in the male.

Boricua Bronx Boy was an all around social engineer, take the-shirt-off-my- back kind of guy, his back and whatever woman's torso, mind you. He had no GED; La Latina had a Ph.D. He ate drive thru Taco Bell; La Latina, organic. They clicked in the new hood because they were Latinos. Magically magnifying positive qualities and repelling on the negative urges that exploded now and then. However, the now and then became always and would have converted to forever if there were not a change of direction.

He wined her and dined her and gave her rides everywhere, however, La Latina couldn't do right in his eyes. She would extract the inside of a whole loaf of Italian bread and he would yell. She would explain, "The inside is taken out because in Chile we eat so much bread that my sister and I started to take out the *miga*." The retaliation began. "*Qué carajo* you talking about *la migra*?" Laughing, she explained further, "*Miga*. Not *migra*. *Miga*, what my *abuelita* calls the inside doughy part of the bread." Shouting furiously the Boricua flung his arms, "Talk to me in English! You are in America. The land everyone wants to come to. So why should I leave to go to your country when you don't even know how to eat bread. *¡Puñeta!*" She thought, "America? Chile is in America —the continent. Why do you have to claim it? You should have said United

States.” She was too frazzled to comment and she didn’t want to argue. He yelled regularly and justified it by saying he would do anything for her, well, almost anything.

She once saw a silver necklace at the Latino Fest and he saw her admiring it. He quickly commented that he didn’t buy silver, “I’m not cheap. I only buy gold.” The day came when he bought her a cross and necklace from the city. Both pieces were solid 18 karats of gold that hung low on her cleavage and that gift initiated the trinket trials. How well can a person behave for a necklace to stay laced and not be torn off by her/his angry partner? A couple times a week when he was really intoxicated and he had said that she really pushed his buttons, he would rip the chain from her neck and keys would be twisted off the key ring. Even though it was a gift from him to her, it wasn’t hers if she wasn’t his in the way he wanted her to be. He always grabbed the necklace that he insisted she wear all the time. The necklace came off and game was over until the “play again button was pressed” and the next round began. It was a stupid show, a no win game show, and to all the tenants in the compound both of them were Complex Compound Clowns. Some tenants were even clowning around with Boricua Bozo. The result is that too much clowning results in someone getting hurt and no more participation in the Bozo boy hood party. When it was bad, it was both physically ugly and emotionally exhausting. The vicious cycle had to be tossed to someone outside the ring. However, her prayers to the *Virgen de Guadalupe* gave her strength to stay inside the ring for more than 12 rounds. She stayed in her studio, the one right beneath her Boricua and she stayed there to be strong *contra su brutalidad*.

La Latina: I told him “no”. He gets upset because I ask him to get my Poland Springs water. I had said, “don’t! Forget it!” When he goes to get his beer, he throws me out, and

he tells me to leave before he gets back. Logically I would leave, but I stay. He comes back. We go to bed and he keeps on saying, how he went to get water and that I have no consideration because he's been drinking, and has to drive, and it's a Saturday night, and the cops are out, and all this for water. Over and over again yelling and not breathing until he punches the closet door.

La amiga ecuatoriana: So why don't you call the cops?

La Latina: I would never call the cops, and rat out our people?

La amiga ecuatoriana: If he kills you, I'll kill you. So, call the cops next time.

La Latina: In the morning he takes a shower and enters the bedroom. *Me dice,* "I'm sorry. I apologize. *Todo ese foquin mess por agua. ¡Santo señor!*" *Yo le digo,* "Tal vez le hizo algo ducharse. *A lo mejor era agua bendita que salió de la llave."* *Me dice,* "Ay, I don't know what powers that *guatah* had that came out. *Allí estaba en la ducha y mientras se me caía el agua me decía,* stress over *foquin guatah.*" *¡Ay santo la vecina va pensar que somos unos locos!*

La amiga ecuatoriana: Then you had make up sex?

La Latina: Yea.

La amiga ecuatoriana: Just leave next time.

Boricua era un metido peor que una mujer. He had to always be part of the female action or conversation.

La Latina: Once at Inner Harbor, I was dancing with a short purple haired one, both of us, together dancing side by side. He slide his way between us and started dancing with us.

He took her hand and then mine and then began to swirl us around in a semi salsa step as though dancing salsa with two women while rock and roll/ heavy metal at its all time high energy song of the night made it all right for him to interrupt the ladies' energy.

La amiga chicana: How can you dance salsa to rock and roll?

La Latina: I know, right? *(Pause)* So, another time, I offered a ride to another compound lady. She needed lottery tickets and then we were going to the basketball courts to shoot hoops. During his work hours, he offered to take her to the store. OH! To tag along, I was not! He went with her and I just worked out in my studio.

La amiga chicana: Yea, ¿pa' qué?

La Latina: I was greeting another woman and he sparks a conversation about hair —the compound person and I had gotten hair cuts. So we ladies continue our conversation about hair, and he stands on top of the stairs supervising our conversation.

La amiga chicana: Weirido.

La Latina: One night at 8:30pm a couple of Peruvian college girls were walking by my studio window. I called to them and we started conversing. All of a sudden, as we are in the intellectual conversation, the slide door above my studio opens and Boricua walks on his balcony yelling out to them about maintenance problems. At the end he states he is sorry to have interrupted the conversation. I felt as though saying, “*oye, yo 'toy hablando huevon meti'o. Oye vecino que no veí que la conversación es nuestra.*” I didn't though. Why enter the vicious cycle and participate in the ignorance of the male needing attention and who always gets into women's business.

The day came when a neighbor called the Latino “Paco”. La Latina thought, “Hmmm, Paco? That’s pretty good. *Paco el Payaso. Payaso Paco.*” Paco, the clown.

The situation was not a relationship, it was survival. The shouting explosions were unpredictable in the challenging storm of blame. Confusion of why the misdirected anger was flared towards the, as he stated, “number one person in his life,” and “the woman treated better than any woman in the compound” was inexplicable. Was a woman to accept such behavior? When is it enough? One year was enough. One year was too much. The threats he made of bashing in her teeth, pulling out her hair and bringing up females from the Bronx to bust her up was sort of like a nah-nah-nah-nah-nah- playground game through high school, in the streets and into adulthood. A half a century comedy starring *Paco el payaso*.

There was a woman who one day, out of the blue, called and needed a place to stay. He was quick to say, “Yea, come over, I will take care of you.” Woman X thought she would get all the attention and was surprised that there was a Latina girlfriend in the same compound. Paco and X needed each other more than La Latina needed the bother of being in that arena. Paco and X feasted on their past. To the point that pronouns such as “we” was used to refer to Paco and X and “you” was used to refer to La Latina. Then came the text to Paco from La Latina: “Im at da point dat I undastan da connect U both have n dat da ‘WE’ don’t wan anytin 2 do wit ‘YOU’ mean da ‘WE’ n ‘YOU’ made me only par of me, myself n I dot dot dot *S O L A*. U can B wit her n da ‘WE’ n leave da ‘YOU’ ‘ME’ alone!”

Then came the day when La Latina saw him and *la otra*. Seated in her vehicle ready to go to the university she observed how he exited the building walking fiercely across the parking lot. A woman, taller by several inches, followed behind him. La Latina didn’t want to be in the

drama, and she realized she wasn't. In that moment she was out of the position, someone else was in it and La Latina —irreplaceable of course— was free to soar. She realized that it was better to be alone than *mal acompañada*. The woman must determine her own value, what gem relates to her highest good. Then, she must courageously empty the compartment that houses feelings, thoughts, ideas, dreams and actions that included the fury, in this case, the Boricua Bronx Bozo. Why does a woman stay in the dramatic unhealthy entertainment arena? What places her in a position that has a dead end? How did she arrive to the point? How does she exit the compounded complex circus? Does it take two other women to be in the same position for her to realize that THEY can have the position? Why and at what point does she decide *basta*?

When she heard his voice, her heart would skip a beat, she became nervous, even though she had already heard the bed squeaking and the arguments the night prior that reminded her of the same tone and talk he expressed with her. The living situation was too close to be healthy.

La Latina: I can't be regretful for the state I am in or say I didn't know, because I did. All the signs were there, as well as the advice from experienced women, women who knew him. *Me decían que "él eh alcohólico, bebe a cada jato, etah enfelmo, no come."* From the studio below his apartment I can hear everything. He brought his ex and he was banging her.

La amiga cubana: Banging her?!

La Latina: Oh, sorry. He was being intimate, but he was banging her. I could hear the bed. That's why they call it banging.

La amiga cubana: *Ya entiendo.*

La Latina: Oh, he banged her. In the morning I heard, “Do you want a poke? Do you want some breakfast? *Huevos y salchicha*, Eggs and sausage.” I mean I can hear everything that goes on in the bedroom. I need to get out. They stay awake ‘til late, I hear their stomping on my ceiling, drinking and bottles rattling. It’s annoying. *A veces les tiro unas indirectas por la ventana, “¡Ya poh, convídale a la vecina un vasito de vino! ¡Ya, a dormir! ¡Acuéstense! Dale huevo, dale huevo.”* *Estoy en los Estados Unidos y parece Chile en Los Placeres, Valparaíso donde se puede escuchar todo del vecino.*

La amiga cubana: ¡Ay no, deja d’eso, Mima! ¡Él no te respeta! Trajo a otra mujer a la casa. ¡Vete ya! ¿Pa’ qué te quedas? Sé fuerte y vete ya.

La Latina decides to pack her bags, again. To move to another apartment further from him. She found one, across the parking lot, in the same circus circle compound.

Bozo, still fishes, waiting to have a little tap and taste, finds her in the parking lot and makes his move by conversing. It went something like this:

Boricua: Can I talk to you?

She thinks, “In what language?” And feels like saying, “*sí no eh en español vete al punta del cejo!*” Instead, she says,

Latina: We have nothing to talk about.

Boricua: Can I just talk to you?

Latina: What is there to talk about?

Boricua: I know I hurt you.

Latina: You hurt me? How did you hurt me? Cuz my inquiring mind wants to know,

you know?

Boricua: The night that you went outside in your panties. When I was violent with you.

He said it somewhat apologetic.

Boricua: I screamed at you. I shouldn't have done that.

And he looks on the ground and sees her shoes.

Boricua: I see you're wearing your Tims that I bought you.

Latina: It was raining. I needed waterproof shoes and I didn't have any others.

She excused. She wore them even though she knew walking in them was a bit difficult, they just didn't fit right for some reason.

Boricua: Do you still wear the Chile shirt I gave you?

Latina: For the 2010 September 18th Independence Day celebration. It was Chile's bicentennial.

Boricua: Umph.

It starts pouring rain.

Boricua: Come inside.

Latina: I'm not going inside.

Boricua: You know I still love you. I really really love you.

Latina: Where's *la otra*?

Boricua: I brought her home.

Latina: Did you have sex with her?

Boricua: I only brought her up here for drinks.

Latina: Great. Did you have sex?

Boricua: NO!

Latina: ¡Embustero! You're lying. I heard EVERYTHING!

Silence.

Boricua: I wish this would have never happened.

Latina: What?

Boricua: That night you ran out in your panties. All of it. I still love you.

He makes the statement as though he really feels sorry for what he did.

Boricua: I'll do whatever it takes.

Latina: Why do you give me a birthday gift, a saint day gift and then just say it's your property? It's not your property. It's a gift to me and you take it back. Why?

Boricua: I wear it in your memory.

Latina: Well, you know what? You can keep it. I gift it to you. I didn't get anything for you for your b day. You can have it.

Boricua: NO! You take it. Take it off of me.

Latina: I'm not taking it off of you. You might say that I stole it if I have it.

Boricua: "Noooo." He pauses and then unsure, "Okay, I'll give it to you."

Takes off the chain and cross from his neck and places it on her, in the middle of the parking lot, while pouring rain. She leaves him, gets in her car and drives off. He calls her cell and leaves a message: "I'll do whatever it takes to get my *chilena* back." She doesn't call back. That night he is out at the bars, off to the races to see what he can get, again.

Curious enough when La Latina and Boricua were intimate, he always wanted to be behind her, never looking at her face or staring into her eyes, like love making requires. Sweet comments —“I see you. How wonderful life is because of you.”— were never heard. Instead he yelled, “Let me pump you. Give me that *culito* motion.” It didn’t feel sensual as a “I see you Avatar,” man to woman or a woman to woman situation. It felt more like a man to man, man to *puta*, and a “stay right there, don’t move until I am finished” force of entry.

The time came when she realized that he was *una mariposa*. Yes. That’s right. A Butterfly wanna be, however, still in the cocoon. And she thought. “It’s okay to be Puerto Rican and *pato*. The all natural crazy Rican king of beers is gay. Rather he be *pato* then disrespectful.” He was nice to the guys. Their buddy until they died. Fought, hung out, lied, hugged and cried with the guys. With the woman, *culito* or a fast fix on the corner of State Street or Willow. So it was. The Bozo Boricua Bronx Boy was not Bi but a Bad Boy Butterfly wanting to fly the other way, *porque era d’el otro la’o*. Oh, how wonderful it would be if the Bad Boy Butterfly could spread his wings and leave the fairyless fantasy land he dramatically created and enter the real magical kingdom of condoms and safe same sex situations. He confessed all the time that women were always around him, his best friends and his sisters. He had male friends also and expressed the same sentiments to them also. “I’m always around woman and I don’t know why they think I’m gay.” When he was with men, he would brag about getting any available women.

The day came when she had made beet and apple juice and with the pulp in a bag she exited the building towards the big commercial dumpsters. There she saw them both: a young man and the Butterfly. He would leave with the young man —whom she later found out was the

son of one of his exes— to hunt, fish, eat and drink at a bar somewhere, and the woman would be left in the apartment. The son and Butterfly: neither one was married. Not caring about the women because he really didn't want a woman. He needed a man, discard the w o. So why did he whoa the woman? He knew how to touch them. He touched the breasts ever so slightly with a brush of his hand or index finger. He practiced on them.

She saw him trying on her panties once. He gave her his tight briefs to see how she looked. He praised the outcome, "I never thought I would fall in love with me, someone who dressed in my clothes." He would insist for her clothes to be left in his drawers, her panties next to his. He would claim that men had lingerie also. He would enter the living room at odd moments to model the lingerie, both his and hers.

So the day came when she saw Paco and son by the bicycles and ready to ride. The elder leaning with his *culito* in the air over the bike and the younger peering over the other side of the bike in front of him facing him, looking at his back, hair, gluteus maximus, hands, and when he lifted his head their eyes met and there, at that moment, was the first real kiss that Bronx Butterfly ever had had in his life. He didn't care about the mother in the apartment, he didn't care about *lo que dirán*. He was with the 60 year old woman's 30 year old son. He felt free to be for once in his life. Trying to please everyone sexually and not himself was exhausting him. Giving to women and not being satisfied. People thinking he is gay, he acting as though he wasn't, and he feeling as though he were a woman trapped in a man's body. He got angry, and boiled up and frustrated and turned to extracurricular buds of all kinds. Why couldn't Boricua Bozo Bronx Bad Boy Butterfly declare to the world his own worthy love of his sexuality? Everyone can choose their own story to create their drama. La Latina did not want to participate in a role of his drama.

And after that incident she didn't even want to give him the pleasure of looking at her or hearing her voice. She left the compound. Her show was over, no more reruns. When she saw him bending over she felt like just giving him a swift solid kick in the *ano*. Now she could leave in peace knowing he still had to find himself and it was not going to be with her.

It was the night before Valentine's when she in her house was making some carrot juice and looked really pretty. He knocked. She opened. He was intoxicated. He shoved her around. She screamed. He shoved again and broke a glass. Threw her down. Raped her from behind. Threw \$30 on the floor, called her whore, and left.

I survived the joke, the punked, the had, the *cuernos*, the wolf, the fisherman, the predator, the 9 year old that lost his father and disrespected his elder sisters that raised him. "I was raised by six women and" *bli bli bli*. When I would speak to one of them elders, he had me over the counter, just poking me, rocking me, as I spoke to his sister, and then lost concentration on what I was saying. We both created the funk'in' film.

Son: You love me?

Paco: Yes.

Son: Well, when you tell B, S, M and all their children that you care and love me, and you tell them in front of me, and let me speak to them over the phone, without holding back that you love me and that I am the only one in your life and you

truly have the integrity to proclaim it and live up to it, then will I respond to all your requests. Until then, have a nice day.

Women and friends who know the behavior at times enable the mannerism and encourage him. After La Latina escaped she was asked, “You still must love him deep down in your heart.” And then La Latina’s pondering stare and response, “What do you mean?” In a little louder statement he said, “That deep down in your heart you still must love him.” To love a man, is to love a man. To be in love with a man is to be in love. To have a loving relationship with both partners understanding love with the same definition is the challenge. To overcome the challenge, one must love his/her self first in order to love others and the ways a person loves oneself is not to hit themselves over the head repeatedly to figure out how much it hurts, unless you need to find out how much hurt you can receive before bleeding internally.

La amiga dominicana: I don’t have time to think about a playa, a hustler, a *picaflor*. I have other things to think about, like...EVERYTHING else. After so many years I realize the ladies with the powerful, serious, stance and look, have gone through a lot. They are still deep inside feeling something grave. Mistreatment that clouds happiness, great health, and love should be avoided. I realize that the ones that are happy —innocently aware of the unpredictable behavior that a person can express— rely on inner beauty, love, power, strength, themselves, family and friends. Men find a replacement, or replacements, right away. My ex, who abused me, has a woman camping out at his house who was abused by her ex.

La Latina: ¿Qué?

La dominicana: Así es.

La Latina: ¡Cómo es la vida!

La dominicana: Así es la vida.

La amiga tejana: I wish he didn't drink, but he does, that is who he is. I accepted that. I wish he didn't flirt with everyone, but he does, and I accepted that. I wish he would have never threatened to hurt me, but he did, three times and the third time, I realized, that was not my man. He had someone else, he had other dreams, he had another agenda, and I had given myself to him. And when he said it was a mistake, the first month together, and he said we were too different, and I didn't believe him, I should have.

La Latina: Now you do. So no could haves, would haves or should haves, ¿ya?

La tejana: I left after he turned violent. No more, "please call me. Even though I know you are wasted, and with *otra mujer*." He did say he would always be faithful.

La Latina: Faithful? At 55?

La tejana: Yea, maybe not.

La Latina: *Mi prima chilena me decía,* "If you want to keep your man be his *puta* in your bed."

La tejana: Doesn't work with the playa. Once a playa always a playa, and that's no fun on the sunny beach. *Pero como dicen, no hay mal que por bien no venga, y veo lo bueno.*

La amiga chilena: Why should I be with a person who has women? *Como la chilena esposa del minero,* who wasn't around after he was rescued by the Phoenix. Found out

her husband had a mistress and didn't want anything to do with him. When he came out of the cave, mine, *su cueva*, whatever, only the mistress was there to greet him. ¿*La esposa*? Probably pissed, frustrated, *con otro* or just happy to not have to deal with his *mierda y sin vergüenza*. It was a sign, the liberating women who don't take shit from no one. I wonder if they are going to make a museum on the San José Mine site.

La amiga gringa: I told him, "I don't have security or the comfortability"— a word he probably made up— "with you because you play me, I don't trust you. It's not going to change with you."

La Latina: That's the way you talk to him?

La amiga gringa: One time he started trouble with me and he dragged me out of the car. How do you jump from one woman to another and tell them that you love them? It's just awful! He scopes them out. He would stand outside the apartment. Oh, he did nothing for me. Just tortured me and drove me nuts. Abusive and mean. What a loser!

La Latina: And you stayed with him for how long?

La amiga gringa: Seven years off and on. More off, than on. I have to say, "It's over! I do not trust you. Go to your other women. Your trinkets are superficial and shallow. Have a nice life." He wants people to think he has money. I'm an intelligent person. "Clean up your act!" I tell him. He's a child and woman beater and very particular with his clothes, he is too clean for a man. He is hiding something. He wants to live with a person, a woman, but, he doesn't know how to treat them. He has too many issues and problems, you just can't fix them. He can't stop. It's a control issue. He is out of control.

You have to go by his rules. Don't try to argue with him. He has to be in control with his life, he has to be in control of everything. He really does not care where I am. He just wants to know where I am to have time for his extracurricular activities. To be with his women. He's thinking heavy thoughts. He is nervous. He wasn't a counselor for battered women or abused women. He is a compulsive liar. He was a van driver that drove around the women that went to the Battered Women Center.

La Latina: Do you still love him? It's just that I don't think you can be with him because he cannot be with you. An Anthropologist friend once told me that a woman's every need is fulfilled by one man, and a man's one need is fulfilled by every woman.

La amiga gringa: He paid for everything for anyone, however, everything he does and gets he keeps a record and expects to get something from every woman.

La Latina: It feels good to move onto the next stage of your life, so when he calls, don't answer, unless you still want the draining drama.

La amiga puertorriqueña: I have to say, Spirit, the Great Spirit of faith empowers. God, *Jesús*, Mohammad, Virgen Mary, *Santa Barbara* they keep me going. My husband would disappear for three days, come back to me and beg, "please *mamá*, stop the nonsense. It was nothing!" He would be down on the knees, hands folded, and hugging my knees, face on my thighs, and that was it, passionate proximity and I was back in the ring. In the beginning I would be on the floor sleeping next to him while he was sleeping on the couch. Now I know that while I am gone, and he is at the house, he makes his moves with others. He traps women friends with alcohol to make them vulnerable and his

entertainment. I confess. I went back to him. I accepted my vow as a wife, he is my husband. I'll just take him back. But you know what I realized after the seventh time?

La Latina: ¿Qué?

La amiga puertorriqueña: I know that he has to have his women, so I be a Frida Kahlo, and let him go. It feels free, good, like orange colored leaves on the tree, leaving and flying in the air to a new destiny. If I stay with him, I would fall to the ground to be called garbage, a leaf stepped on, and stepped on, and slipped on. It's a cycle that I want to exit. Leave me out of the circle of non respect and non love.

La Latina: ¡Muy bien! ¡Adelante! ¡Pa'lante, pa'lante, siempre pa'lante!

La amiga puertorriqueña: He is stuck in the lifestyle of bars, dance, drugs, alcohol and women. He still listens to the 70's love song music. At least I gave him *El Cantante* to add to his collection.

La Latina: You did?

La amiga puertorriqueña: I had fun, it was nice, but after the beautiful beginning moments, I have to move on and he has to move on to the next one thousand flirtatious moves. That is when he is his happiest when he is around women. At the bar scooping up the victims. "I give you permission to be with other women," I told him. So he stopped calling me. It's been a few days. I feel relieved, safe and secure.

La Latina: Good.

La amiga puertorriqueña: I still wonder if ...if he moved in with *la otra* already. Wondering if he really loved me in his own warped twisted way.

The last time I saw him I was escaping.

La amiga chilena: He came to my bedroom door. It was locked and I had the chain on. He opened the door with the key. I went to the door to hear what he had to say. Same thing, “*Cosita rica, lo siento.* Can we just talk? I’ll take you out to dinner. You pick any restaurant.” And I just gave him permission to leave.

La Latina: How did you do that?

La amiga chilena: I said, “It’s over!” I emphatically exclaimed, “I do not trust you!” And then whispered to him loudly, “I give you permission to be with other women. I GIVE you permission.” He claimed he had been nothing but good to me. I lied, “yes, thank you.” I could have said more, *pero ¿pa’ qué?* By that time he had busted in the door trim and chain and came in.

La Latina: ¿Y?

La amiga chilena: I wasn’t staying in that vicious cycle anymore. I may have participated. Maybe was addicted to his dick, or our sexual compatibility, but he is a *mujeriego*. Flirting with every woman. He can’t give me what I want. I grabbed my bag and ran the other way, down the stairs to the car and left. My *maleta* had been packed for a few days stashed in the trunk of the car.

La Latina: You must feel fabulous. No more worries about infidelity.

La amiga chilena: *No vale la pena. Chauuuuuuu pesca’oooo y calabaza.*

La Latina: The diversity was definitely welcoming and surprising. I thought I was only gonna see white snow and be cold. I came from Arizona, from the red and brown landscapes,

cacti and transplanted *palmeras*. Once upon a time it was deserted desert, not anymore. Phoenix popularity, downtown in 2010 was hot hot hot since the main topic was immigration — which it has been for many generations here in the nation. So many reactions and the Latinos across the country have had their eye on Senate Bill 1070. Me? I'm legally Latina and I'm riding *sola*.

S-O-L-A

So, I'm writing a book. I am turning poison into medicine. I don't know whether to title this *Legally Latina* or *The Diary of Latinas Processing Very Quickly*. I redirect my energy. I snap out of unhealthiness and into mutual relationships with loved ones and friends. No more letting others take my energy from me. Reclaiming Latina Love and Latina Power. I am awake listening to Alicia Keys, *Elements of Freedom*, and last night I saw *The Diary of a Mad Black Woman*, and I think I have had enough emotional elevator coasting. So, with distance and time, I will be excellent. I am distancing myself from him right now. So, I know it's only across the parking lot, but still, it's not under him.