


Artists' Statement

By Julia Gómez Ixmatá and  Jab'ellalih

Families that take long trips by car often develop their own special activities to pass the time, keep children speaking in turn, maintain order, and maybe even teach something in the process. These pastimes include things such as rhyming games, synonym games, translation games, or game of spotting cars or trucks of different colors or types. Sometimes children may even be expected to sit back and either sleep or listen while their parents entertain themselves with non-distracting games of humor or memory, as in the case of the game that occupied my parents in the winter and spring of 2015: “You know I’m _____ when _____.”

After hours of listening to my parents exchanging sub-clauses poking fun at why they were neither *gringa/o* nor *hispana/o*, I learned that they were composing a poetic account of my mother’s experiences for publication. I set about drafting my own version for this special edition of *Label Me Latino/a* dedicated to the presence of Indigenous people within the Latin American immigrant community.

Based on what I’ve been told, and what I’ve witnessed firsthand, everything in these poems really happened. Indeed, it often happened—or *happens*—more than once. Suspecting that others have had similar experiences to those of my mother and me, we have written our stories down, not only to entertain and educate, but to inspire.