

La cafetera
By Eddy Francisco Alvarez, Jr.

La cafetera was always on the stove when I visited grandma –a welcome offering for visitors frequently at her house.

El café cubano, or espresso with lots of sugar, was a staple.

La cafetera, always ready to be filled with La Llave, or Gaviña or Bustelo

La cafetera—a reminder of my childhood.

When after visiting abuelita, I didn't want to go home, my mom would anger,

Se ponía celosa, thinking I'd wanna stay with abuelito and abuelita forever

'Cuz they spoiled me with dulce de guayaba, con galletas cubanas,

and let me play Dominó with adult guests

But I always went home

'Cuz, momma's boys can't live without their moms either.

La cafetera reminds me of my grandfather's early mornings when he'd rise to go for a walk, take out the trash, or fill the hummingbird feeder.

He'd make café for abuelita whom he adored

She was never up before ten,

Had to have her beauty sleep.

La cafetera brews memories, long gone times—of loud Cubano get-togethers when my family would speak blasphemies about Fidel Castro

Grandma cooking savory dishes: croquetas, arroz con pollo, ropa vieja,

Friends traveling distances to sit at her dinner table.

I often thought they came more to satisfy their palates than for her company.

La cafetera now sits rusty on my kitchen stove in upstate New York,

Closer to Cuba but farther from family,

It holds the memories I cherish.

The cafetera whispers when it hisses,

Letting me know the coffee is ready.

I usually stare at it when I brew café now, watching to make sure it doesn't spill.

I wait to see if in the hissing sounds, I hear my father's voice, or abuelito's or abuelita's, talking to me from the other side,

I wait to see if I hear the sound of the radio with news of Cuba, Miami stations,

to hear the songs of nostalgia that remind me of home.

Of the many LA apartments they lived in

on Fulton Street, Coldwater Canyon, Fair Avenue.

Distracted, I daydream,

I remember,

While the coffee spills.