

# Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest

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Volume 1  
Issue 1 *Identity, Culture, and Art in New Mexico*

Article 15

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2021

## Consejera

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### Recommended Citation

Garcia, Esther Marie. "Consejera." *Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest* 1, 1 (2021). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/chamisa/vol1/iss1/15>

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Esther Marie García, "Mom's Hands," 2018

*Consejera*  
by Esther Marie García

My mom, the candy maker, I can still smell the cinnamon.  
A woman of strong faith who cautioned us against our daily sin.  
I have been at her hospital bed when I silently thought she wouldn't survive.  
When I am silent, I hear her voice, always alive.

*Aye, madre, lo siento.*

The infamous silent treatment, which she patented, and I now painfully inherit. "Father, forgive me."  
A hand-drawn *placa* from a cactus needle, anything but ordinary.  
I never quite understood my mom and her strange, bilingual Spanglish.  
A language that died in our home, and now I have my kids. It's desperately missed.

She hears music from the heart and feels the message. Maybe!  
But she never saw me and never approved, I am her baby.

*Aye, madre, lo siento.*

Stories of poverty, pain, and loss off Broadway Blvd. and how my dad had it so much better.

When I think of her hands, I see my own. I know that I am forever in her.  
Sawmill gang and stories of the southern track and my poor aunts' fighting fate  
Her hands today, crooked from arthritis, still hold my daughters without complaint.

A mom, who is often afraid. I see a woman who struggles to save her sight from going blind.

*Santo Niño* watches over her, a blessing. I will never mind.

A soul who will share *consejos* with anyone who wants to listen.  
When she hears those mariachi trumpets, she chokes and her eyes glisten.

*Aye, madre, lo siento.*

Her stories always have a twist, or how humankind should be.  
Half in English, half in Spanish, they seem so confusing to me.

I know how much trouble I brought to you in my younger days.  
I hope you saw that it was not the real me, but only a passing phase.

I can't exist in this world without all our memories, our plans.  
To hold those wise, elderly hands.

May you know that I have a daughter's, true love.  
All your words have been placed above.

Sorry mom, I didn't....

Sorry mom, I wasn't....

Sorry for what I did or didn't do....

*Aye, madre, lo siento.*

**Esther Marie García** is an M.A. student at the University of New Mexico in the Chicana/o Studies Department. In her academic work, she emphasizes the value of preserving oral histories and utilizes writing, photography, and short films to document local culture and practices. In her quest to find a way to express herself through language, she implements a photo-poetics method to exhibit her love of poetry and South Valley cultural landscapes. She is currently collecting stories and poetry, and documenting photographs of the rural area. Some of the stories come from people who are underrepresented and in the margins, but are all powerful residents in the community. She feels obligated to tell her personal stories and offer someone else the opportunity to share their own experiences. She feels blessed to belong to a circle that motivates her daily to grow, develop, and capture the group's uniqueness. Her poetry comes from *su corazón*, her life-experiences, her expressions of home, and the community where she feels nurtured and safe. She is the proud daughter of New Mexico, and is strongly anchored in cultural traditions; she values the reflections and the treasures of the Southwest. Writing poetry has reminded her that she is a strong and empowered woman, *una mujer sin vergüenza*.