

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

---

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

Article 39

---

2021

## Todas nosotras

Sutherland Jaramillo  
*University of New Mexico*, [sutherland.nixon@gmail.com](mailto:sutherland.nixon@gmail.com)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/chamisa>



Part of the [Poetry Commons](#), and the [Spanish Literature Commons](#)

---

### Recommended Citation

Jaramillo, Sutherland. "Todas nosotras." *Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest* 1, 1 (2021). <https://digitalrepository.unm.edu/chamisa/vol1/iss1/39>

This Literary and other Creative Work is brought to you for free and open access by UNM Digital Repository. It has been accepted for inclusion in Chamisa: A Journal of Literary, Performance, and Visual Arts of the Greater Southwest by an authorized editor of UNM Digital Repository. For more information, please contact [disc@unm.edu](mailto:disc@unm.edu).

---

## Todas nosotras

### Cover Page Footnote

I would like to thank Dr. Anna Nogar, Dr. Eleuterio Santiago-Díaz, and Dr. Santiago Vaquera-Vásquez for their mentorship and encouragement, as well as my nuevomexicano family, who invited me to listen to their stories at their kitchen tables and introduced me to the vivacity and complexity of La Llorona.

*Todas Nosotras*

by Sutherland Jaramillo

I.

The stories my *Nana* told me *cuando era niña*

*¿son verdaderas?*

I always wondered  
when I would see her.  
I knew it was forbidden, but  
I looked for her  
in the darkness,  
quietly searching the air  
for her  
cries.

I thought maybe  
I could help her  
find them.

*Todos tienen miedo de ella.*  
My *tía* used to tell me  
to keep watch,

*No salgas de la casa por la noche, hijita.*  
*Pórtate bien, hijita.*  
*Dios ve todo.*  
*También ella:*  
*siempre te ve.*

I think  
if what they say is true,  
maybe she *is* always watching  
*pero como la Virgencita.*

II.

Nana said I might be right  
as we sat and ate at Rutilio's  
*y me dijo que sí*  
*la vio una vez.*

*Debajo del puente*  
*en el norte,*  
*lloraba y*  
*lloraba*  
*haciendo eco*  
*en las aguas.*  
Caminaba a consolarla,  
but as she walked  
to put her hand  
on her shoulder,  
the *mujer* turned  
to look her in the eyes, revealing  
*su cara esquelética*  
enveloped by white lace,  
by white moon  
in the plaza  
and chased Nana away,  
wailing  
in the darkness  
of midnight.

Nana says *esta mujer*  
is not after any children.

*No es una mala mujer*

like everyone thinks.

Nana says she is  
a *mujer*  
*como ella,*

the *pobre,*  
the *mentirosa,*

the *traidora*,  
the *asesina*,  
the *loca*,  
the *bruja*,  
the *fantasma*

who struggled  
to survive  
*y todavía lucha*  
*en las vidas*  
*de todas las mujeres*  
*como ella.*

*Me cuenta que los fantasmas*  
*como esta mujer*  
wander and wail  
because it is  
not over  
yet.

III.

When we were younger  
my *prima* and I snuck out  
to the *acequia*  
behind our trailer,  
hoping to find her.

We told her brother in case  
we never returned.

We ran out into the sand  
in our matching blue pajamas,  
giggling and whispering  
to each other  
to be quiet.

We sat on the giant fragment of driftwood  
beneath the cottonwoods.  
Behind us, the neighbor's lights  
shone dimly through  
the corners of the curtains.

*¿Tienes miedo?*

*Nooo!... tal vez un poco.*

*¿Piensas que las historias son verdaderas, que ella mató a sus hijos?*

*No sé... I don't know why a mom would do that.*

*Maybe cuz she was scared.*

Tal vez.

We woke up

to the sound of voices

getting closer,

bright lights shining

in the distance.

We stood up to run

until

the voices of our *mamis*

cried out to us,

calling our names.

*qué están haciendo a esta hora fuera de la casa*

*sin permiso...*

They grabbed us

to bring us inside.

They made sure

we never went out

again to look

for her.

IV.

I walked by my childhood home.

The dark clouds gathered

in the sky, the sun still

peeking through,

lighting up the windows

to the trailer.

After that night

our *mamis* caught us

outside looking

for her,  
I never did search  
for her again.

That was the night I found out  
she wasn't

the scary *bruja*,  
mistaking living children  
for her own.

She had left us alone  
by the *acequia*.  
She must have found  
her *hijos*.

I wonder  
if I will tell my daughter  
her story, or one  
like all my *tíos* have  
of an almost-encounter.

Even *Tata* told me  
he gave her a ride  
in his truck one night.  
When he looked over  
while driving over the bridge  
she was no longer there.

Everyone has their encounter story.  
*Es casi un* prerequisite for being a *viejito*.

What story will I tell her?

Sutherland Jaramillo is a writer and educator born in the San Joaquín Valley of California and raised in Albuquerque, New Mexico. She holds a B.A. in Spanish and an M.A. in Spanish and Southwest Studies from the University of New Mexico. Her writing explores identity, place, memory, and grief. *Todas nosotras*, a selection of four linked poems from a collection of poetry in Jaramillo's master's thesis, *La Llorona in Nuevomexicana Poetic Narratives: Reflections on Writing and Memory*, explores the familiar folk figure of La Llorona. Inspired by the writing of nuevomexicana poets, these poems ponder identity, place, and memory in relation to New Mexican communities, and offer a reflection on the role of women and elders as storytellers. These poems, together with the poetry collection, engage with regional narratives of lore and reimaginings to tell the story of La Llorona as an empowering narrative of resistance and healing.