

# Contemporary Voices

## Poems by Five Mexican Women

Illustrations by Julián Cicero<sup>1</sup>  
Selection by Dolores Silva Aguayo

Laura Velarde\*

**One day, I won't come home,**  
my body mended with rumor  
beside the twisted, fetid face.

I'll hear, within the void,  
a screeching the color of woman:

my motherhood a nest  
for insects whose feces constitute  
the fruit of my womb.

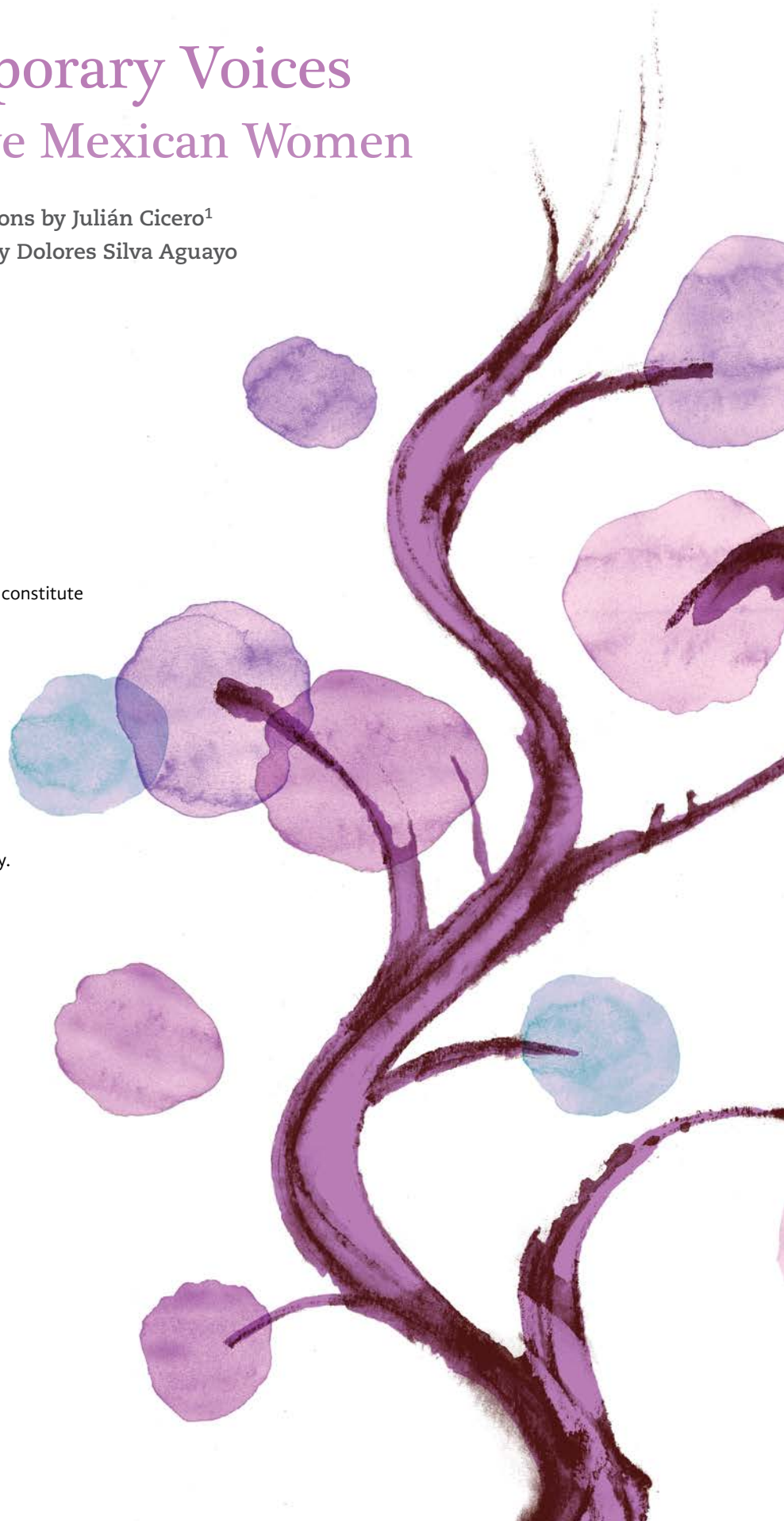
I'll cry dreamlike spirits  
proffering the spring with pale, mortal fruit.

I shall expel the fear  
that upturns my lonesome cadaver.

I'll be the pelt  
that falls apart, dressed in tattered topography.

I cannot recall the weight of living,  
having now this mute eternity  
that takes apart my words  
and binds my memory.

\* Laura is a writer; you can contact her  
at [laura.izamar.velarde@gmail.com](mailto:laura.izamar.velarde@gmail.com).



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<sup>1</sup>Visual artist; @pizzafrianofm.

## The Salem Trials

Dolores Silva Aguayo\*

### I

A tepid body floats among the words  
its soul witnessing the parting  
Grandma said innocence is lost in nine letters  
she only had four

Tears frame her rigid smile  
followed by black hair  
which grew in forty nights  
to cover her breasts and wounded chest.

*[Lower your hem  
close your legs,  
be discreet,  
don't provoke them,  
be careful whom you touch,  
kiss them hello,  
smile,  
be sweet,  
but not that much,  
you wench!  
cover yourself  
you cockteasing whore,  
you wanton old maid]*

A pretty gir  
has no memory  
she lies  
to keep everyone  
comfortable

### II

Silence is a monster under the bed  
singing lullabies to put her to sleep  
kissing lips with secrets  
fingers strangling between her legs.

A pair of ugly dolls in the back  
that Mother mends over and over  
stigmas bleed erase  
blinking no longer.

*[Don't be silent,  
report it,  
make him pay,  
let them beat the shit out of him,  
uncover that son of a bitch,  
let guilt blow up in his face,  
let him burn, make that fucker pay]*

A smart woman knows  
how to navigate the storm  
antidepressants shapewear

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## Menu

Gilda García\*

On today's menu  
we have a carousel of poets  
either in cream of strawberry and tarragon  
or wrapped in puff pastry.

The poets will be masticated by the Earth,  
humanity is dreadfully hungry.  
The world needs the nourishment  
of crunchy contrite words.

I've prepared a banquet  
breaded my tears, mashed up sighs.  
It is all finely cooked.

The poets have been roasted to perfection,  
their blood macerated, their temples sliced  
with the sharp end of a Nakiri knife.

The table has been set,  
Baccarat crystal, polished cutlery.  
Let the crowds make way.  
Ravenous minds  
fed on algorithms alone:  
paper, authors, writing, passion,  
life devoured.

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## Mixquiahuala, My Grandparents' House

Ixchel Rosas\*

You were tired and sad  
since birth. You, such a boy,  
went to the garden's end,  
cried from the pomegranate's  
highest branches.  
You hugged the dog,  
who looked lonely, and you cried.

A night jasmine will not suffice  
for me to play  
or smile.  
I see your tears  
flow infinite  
now you've come upon  
your dead grandfather.

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at [ixcheliix@gmail.com](mailto:ixcheliix@gmail.com).

## Tinder for a Burning City

Astrid Velasco Montante\*

A motor echo  
sprays the pavement's  
yellow lines.

A rumor quiets  
shooting back with a whistle  
that gets caught between the trees.

The wind its rush.

Streets boil what they've seen:  
a nest of lamentations  
housed in the park's  
"missing" posters.

Lovers' hands tangle,  
unaware.

The city a vicious waltz  
and yes,  
a song of thrills, too.

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