

so go the ghosts of méxico, part one

by Matthew Paul Olmos

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part I
a brave woman in México

the people
a brave woman in México
the police chief
the husband
el morete
güero

a place
méxico, present day

Spanish translation by
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the beginning

an emptying dirt and gravel parking lot:
vacant spaces and cars-recently-left
surrounded by cars-abandoned-who-
the-fuck-knows.

MARI and HUSBAND fuck in an
emptied car.

HUSBAND

Lemme just—

MARI

Yea, I know, it's—

HUSBAND

You're on my—

MARI

I'm trying to—

HUSBAND

Will you get...over—

MARI

I don't want be...over, I wanna be right...on...this...

HUSBAND

Fine then lift your—

MARI

I can't, you go around—

HUSBAND

Mari, I can't keep it in if I can't—

MARI

You're a man, if there's a way to keep it in, you will.

(HUSBAND tries a different approach; they find a rhythm)

HUSBAND

See that. Lookit us—

MARI

Will you/just—

HUSBAND

See how we can be—

MARI

No words.

(Just as HUSBAND feels in synch, MARI pulls off. On their separation, we hear a breaking of static; they both notice, but think nothing of it)

HUSBAND

Okay...

MARI

This isn't—

HUSBAND

Wow. I know that look.

MARI

I'm not looking at you, I'm just—

HUSBAND

What? (pause) Say it.

MARI

Tomorrow.

HUSBAND

Tomorrow what.

MARI

I have to go, I do.

HUSBAND

How is that gonna work?

MARI

I'll show up and they'll have been expecting me to show up.

HUSBAND

I knew it. I knew you didn't tell them.

MARI

I told you I wasn't sure.

HUSBAND

No, you told me you had spoken to the city and they understood.

(Beat)

MARI

I tried to do this, you know. Here, with you. I...I just—

HUSBAND

You just what.

MARI

I just don't...believe in...you and me creating, what, some life—

HUSBAND

Some life???

MARI

That'll just, what, add to the—

HUSBAND

We can live our lives, or we can stop living our lives.

MARI

No, we can do something all this shit, or we can just...

HUSBAND

And how is *not* having a child—

MARI

I'm not saying no. I want what you do, Love, I do. But not like this...this isn't what I want our child to be born into.

HUSBAND

If you do this, there is no our child.

MARI

Thank you, for supporting me—

HUSBAND

Supporting you?

MARI

Yes.

HUSBAND

The moment you walk into that police station tomorrow—
What I support is the mother of my daughter waking up every day. Alive.

(Beat)

MARI

Well. I'm all wet, how're you?

(MARI pulls her clothes back up)

HUSBAND

How does a *mother* actually go through with something like this.

MARI

Easy, she goes through it alone.

(Static enters; both feel the vibration; they look around)

HUSBAND

What is—

MARI

I dunno.

HUSBAND

It's like a—

MARI

Is the car on?

(HUSBAND checks the ignition, no key. He gets out and pops the hood)

Well?

(HUSBAND gets back in the car)

HUSBAND

No engine.

(MARI turns the radio dial)

Mari, don't—

(Music bursts from the static; MARI turns up the volume with wonder; it is unlike anything she has ever heard)

Will you lower it, what if it's some sort of signal, or—

MARI

Es beautiful.

HUSBAND

It's not plugged into anything.

(HUSBAND tries the radio knobs: nothing; he looks to his wife as she feels something from so deep within her that she cannot help but grin in disbelief. HUSBAND looks out the window with concern. The music illuminates a divide between MARI and HUSBAND, it looks as though an wall of music is building between them. MARI begins to hum along; a few moments.

The music jolts into alarming with a scratch which rumbles into the coarse sound of tires crushing onto gravel.
A black SUV rolls up.

MARI and HUSBAND freeze at the sounds of a car door opening.
Exit from the driver door EL MORETE, who looks about, trying to place the music. He pulls an automatic and begins looking throughout the lot)

EL MORETE

(to the lot) So...whoever's like playing the music, can you at least change the station or some shit, cuz this song sounds like my sister's ass; it's loud and kinda repetitive.

(MARI changes the station)

Uh, thank you. I guess. But like why don't you just shut off the music like altogether—

(MARI turns it up, HUSBAND can't believe it)

Oh, okay, so es like that, huh? Es like that? Well you know what, I actually like this song, so you can turn that shit up to the fuckin'stars.

(MARI turns it back to his sister's ass)

Alright, who the fuck! Huh? Who the fuck is...who the fuck is playing that—? C'mon, get your ass out here so I can...

(MARI lowers the song. EL MORETE relaxes)

See, now we can like hear each other an shit. I can actually like think.

(MARI plays sister's ass. EL MORETE shoots several rounds into wherever. EL MORETE's mobile immediately rings, he answers)

(into phone) Nobody! (pause) No, es not like that. Some puto is playing like this really fucking annoying song— (pause) Well, lower your window then, es like a fuckin'outdoor concert out here an shit—

(The back SUV window lowers. A moment. It raises)

(into phone) How the fuck can you *like* this song, this song's— (pause) No, es not just a car radio, this shit is like...all around or something. (pause) Look, I am telling you, there is somebody in this lot playin'music what I don't like, like on fucking purpose. (pause) Sí. Sí. Yo entiendo.

(EL MORETE obediently moves back to the car.

MARI sits staring at the car radio, moving the volume up and down, flicking with the station)

HUSBAND

What are you smiling for???

MARI

I don't know/I—

HUSBAND

No, really. Explain it to me. Your face.

MARI

Stoppit.

HUSBAND

Well, I'm sure your daughter will sleep just absolutely sound tonight, every night, with what you just did to us.

(The car gives way to the bedroom, daylight to darkness. HUSBAND falls to sleep while MARI stays standing as darkness to morning.

MARI gets ready for work; a bulletproof vest to her body. She hums along to the music, which now flavors their home.

HUSBAND tosses and turns as MARI looks down at him.

Finally, she leaves their home; when she opens the front door, she is met with a flurry of beautiful sounds. She walks into it, closing the door behind her.

With this HUSBAND sits up to see his marriage bed empty; he gets up hurriedly to the front door, however when he opens the door, he is met with silence; the music has left with Mari.

Alone, HUSBAND closes the door to the outside and looks at his empty home. He kneels, begins talking to somebody younger)

(to mija) Hey there, mija. No es okay, don't get up. I'm just awake to see you Mamá off to work, huh. (pause) Wha's that? (pause) Oh, don't you worry, mija, she'll be back tonight. (pause) Awh, mija, I know, I know. I wish she didn't have to go too. (pause) No, she'll be gone all— (pause) Uh huh. Yea, mija, me too. But hey, I'll tell you what, when you get up in a few hours, why don't you get yourself ready something pretty, huh? Brush yer teeth real good, put a comb all the way through an then maybe you an me take a ride into town, huh? Hey, who knows, maybe we'll even see—

(HUSBAND hugs invisible daughter tight. He holds her as though he is afraid she is not real)

second scene

MARI stands nervously in an empty police station. She smiles and fidgets as if an entire room is staring at her.

MARI

Buenos dias. Soy Mari.

(Awkward pause. MARI pulls a plastic tub from her desk area)

Pongan sus pistolas en el recipiente, por favor.

(MARI lifts the lid of the tub and deposits a revolver inside. She holds the tub out for others. She waits)

Pongan sus pistolas, por favor.

(She waits)

Porque no vamos a perseguir a ningún cartel en la ciudad.

(She goes to the wall which has a put'together map of photographs of cartel bosses, lieutenants, soldiers, of cartel members, and a map showing cartel territories and pathways. She begins removing all such items, and places them into a file cabinet)

Ninguno.

(MARI lets down the tub. She tries a different approach)

Lo primero que vamos a hacer es ir de puerta en puerta y hablar en persona con todos los papás y mamás que todavía vivan aquí. Para asegurarnos que mantengan a sus hijos cerca, que todos los niños de la ciudad vayan a la escuela. No podemos permitir que el dinero de los carteles atraiga a ningún niño. ¿Entienden? Por favor. ¿Entienden?

(Several notes of music sound give way to the sound of revolvers being placed in the tub. MARI thanks each as they place their weapons inside. She then closes the lid)

Gracias.

(The room empties, MARI pulls the car radio and turns up the sound. She looks up as if everybody looked back at her strangely)

Es sólo música, mientras trabajamos.

(MARI's eyes are lit by the computer screen, she smiles as she types. A few moments, she then begins to fill out reports then hand them to clerks who are not there, assign equipment then hand off to officers who cannot be seen.

Music builds as she does this, she finds her rhythm. A few moments of progress and music. Time moves fast.

Enter HUSBAND, he watches her work a few moments before she notices. He picks up the car radio)

HUSBAND

Just a car radio, huh.

MARI

It's nice to see you too.

HUSBAND

For all you know that could be some—

MARI

It's not a secret. Where I am. What I'm doing.

(HUSBAND puts down radio. Beat)

HUSBAND

So?

MARI

What.

HUSBAND

How was it? Your first day.

MARI

I think they're waiting to see how they feel about me.

HUSBAND

How *they* feel about you.

MARI

Yes. They.

(HUSBAND begins to kneel)

Do Not Do That Here.

HUSBAND

She asked.

MARI

I'm at work.

(HUSBAND begins to speak to somebody younger again)

HUSBAND

"What's that, mija, last night you couldn't sleep?"

MARI

She slept fine, what're you—

HUSBAND

"Awh, mija, do you know what all that was? That was just car backfiring. Do you know what car'backfiring is?"

MARI

Please.

HUSBAND

"Do you?"

MARI

What do you talk to her like that for, she has ears, she has eyes.

HUSBAND

It's just from a car, mija. It's just car noises an that's all. Y'see, mija, sometimes there's this tiny explosion in the engine of a car; you know what an engine is, right? (pause) You're so smart. Kiss?

(He waits for a kiss, but gets none)

So, sometimes, mija, not always, just sometimes there's an explosion in the wrong room of the engine and it goes off like boom."

MARI

(to mija) "You know, mija, boom like when we hear the guns go off. That's the kinda boom your father means."

HUSBAND

"Car backfiring happens cuz a few reasons, mija, but mostly its prolly just that the little doors inside the little car engine weren't shut properly. And so the car jumps like that! In fact, sometimes in a car'backfire you even see a little flame come out the back of the car pushing it forward, more forward than the driver meant the car to go.

MARI

It won't work forever, what you're doing.

HUSBAND

"Your Mamá might not be home tonight after all. But don't worry, mija, if she's not, you can sleep in our—

MARI

You're getting worse. You know that, right?

(HUSBAND stands back up)

HUSBAND

And you, you're not even pregnant yet, but you're already the worst mother I can even imagine.

(Music suffers. MARI and HUSBAND both notice)

MARI

You talk like that. You do. On good days, you speak to me so sweetly that all I want is to make everything you want to come to true. But on your bad days, you take our daughter's tongue, you use it against me, you look at me, you speak at me like that. You do.

HUSBAND

Well, when there's no ways left to reach someone, what else can we do.

MARI

What is it you even want our daughter for, huh? Is she something you believe will make the world better than it is, or do you just want one?

HUSBAND

...is...is that all what you think of her? Just...

(As MARI begins to speak, the music strengthens)

MARI

I believe that what I'm doing is the most mother anybody could be. Because it's not just for the beautiful what would be our child, Love. This is for her children, for theirs after. For the tens of thousands of parents and children buried or waiting to be buried in this what we call country.

HUSBAND

Your speechwriting...its showing signs of improvement.

(Music reaches)

MARI

Los Zetas, Juárez, Sinaloa. Los Narcos will be the only family still living left. And what do you think our daughter-to-be would have to do for money in a family like that? (pause) So you can plan your little family, Love, but today, right now, before our daughter is even conceived, I am creating for her the most choices she will ever have in life. And so we can do like you do, and care only

MARI(cont)

what's in our bedrooms, or we can try harder for another kind of world for her to be born into.

But you'll never—

Y'know what, go. And don't come back. Not here, not again. I don't want you, nor her, through those doors where I'm trying to do something.

HUSBAND

Why don't you tell her yourself. Or can you not even bring yourself to talk to her anymore?

MARI

I believe in our daughter more than you can even understand, Love. Now go, I'll see you at home.

(MARI shows HUSBAND out; he exits; as he does the music swells; she takes it in. Time passes. White out)

third scene

MARI walks from station to home amidst a rolling of music. She amazes in all directions.

She enters her home; HUSBAND sleeps. She looks at him, pets his head. She shares a moment with him before hearing a sound; as though when somebody is on the premises. HUSBAND shoots up.

HUSBAND

What was—

MARI

Shh, I heard it too.

(Another noise. HUSBAND gets out of bed. Both fright as the front door swings open)

MARI

Who's—who's there—what d'you want—

(HUSBAND holds a lamp up in defense. Enter DEAD POLICE CHIEF, a ravaged body more than a person, still wearing a tattered, bloodied uniform)

Stop, Do Not Move.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

...SHHHH...

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF listens for the music. He finds it)

Oh, there she is.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF begins searching the room for a source)

HUSBAND

What're you—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Aht aht aht.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF motions silence)

MARI

(to DPC) Are, are *you*...

HUSBAND
What.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
Where is it?

HUSBAND
(to DPC) Where is what?

MARI
(to DPC) You're the—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
Where is it coming from, Señora Policía?

MARI
How did you—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
(to MARI) Ma'ri...

HUSBAND
How does he know your—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
(to HUSBAND) I ain't goin'tell you again, husband'man.

MARI
...I know you...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
La música, where is it?

MARI
I...I don't know.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
No? Well tha's too bad then.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF walks at HUSBAND, stripping the
lamp from him and putting his hand to HUSBAND's throat)

MARI
stop, stop now...!

DEAD POLICE CHIEF
Now, you point me in the direction of la música, Señora Policía, or...

MARI

Look, I don't know, I don't know where or what it is—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

When did it start?

MARI

Let him up! A couple days ago.

(HUSBAND tries to mumble)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

I ain't goin'tell you again, choking'man, SHHH. This policia talk.

MARI

What do you want, please, he can't—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

WHERE IS IT!?

MARI

I DON'T KNOW, IT JUST PLAYS, NOW LET HIM UP, YOU WEAK FUCKING GHOST!!!!

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF steps back at her weight; releases HUSBAND who falls to the floor, MARI goes to him. DEAD POLICE CHIEF looks down at HUSBAND)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

(to HUSBAND) What kinda man let's his wife do the—

MARI

You grabbed him.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF looks at his hands, his grip)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

These hands, were never any good for me before, but now...

HUSBAND

What kinda police puts his hands on innocent—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

The kind of police that is...your wife's predecessor.

HUSBAND

...but, but you were shot.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Shot?

(to MARI) Is that what you told to him, your husband? That I was “shot”?

MARI

...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

What’s a matter, Mari, you don’t tell to your husband everything?

HUSBAND

Tell to me what everything? (pause) Hey. Tell to me what? (pause) Hey!

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

(to HUSBAND) It’s a shame you don’t read the papers, non’readingman.

HUSBAND

I read the papers, just not the—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Well. Never thought of my life as a detail. But...

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF removes his head)

since you an your wife don’t like to talk...

HUSBAND

...holysht...

(Beat. Darkness flows into the room. DEAD POLICE CHIEF listens to it.)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Do you hear that? *That’s* what it sound like when their breaths on the back of my neck while they yanked my arms behind to put the blindfold. And I could hear while they do the same to my officers.

Under the motor of that, I can hear my throat coughing on the mucus and tears in my mouth mixed with the blood. I try to hear myself talk, but my mouth don’t wanna talk.

Then I hear the tires riding us just off the highway, the click of the car back opening up. And then the sounds of my knee’bones go crack as they empty us out the car and onto the dust. Ain’t that some shit? I think, even if I make it out this somehow, I’ll have fucked up knees. Just like everybody else who live too long.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF(cont)

Then the shots, one by one. Screaming. Body parts going gone. An I don't know what about how your life sound, still breathing man, but I couldn't quite place the sound of my own head banging around the inside of that ice chest. Thumping. Bouncing. Sometimes a soft spot and it go squish.

Then afterwards, I hear only darkness. I guess they quieted the book on me.

(Music reaches, DEAD POLICE CHIEF gains strength)

But then, from all my quiet that was my new home, I hear...la música. Calling me to come close. And before I can even hear the sounds of my thoughts telling me how to make that happen...I hear the walk of my own boot heels, going up your door.

An now, my question to you, Mari, is what did you call to me for?

MARI

...I didn't call you.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Oh, but you did. And now lookit me, with la música pumping through me, I can do whatever it is you wish, I can walk back out there and put these hands on any motherfucker with a gun.

MARI

But you never, you never hurt anyone—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

No. I tried to keep my distance from them, but...

HUSBAND

But what?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

How do you protect anyone, if you're not allowed to protect them?

HUSBAND

You should be now with your family.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

What family. You think I'm standing here meanwhile I got a family??

HUSBAND

Okay, but you must have/there must be some—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Somewhere more impressive to be? Well, me, was never married, no kids. And my guess: when you die, you can be *wherever* you wish to, *whenever*, *however*. But it has to have existed.

HUSBAND

Señor, what about—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Heaven? Hell? In'between?

HUSBAND

Yes, of course.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Listen, cuz this shit is like first'hand. My guess: Heaven is being able to return to whatever happiness you held. As for Hell, my guess: you can't return to shit. But if you never created anything worth returning to...maybe Heaven ain't all that heavenly.

HUSBAND

There has got to be some—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Hey, if you see a fucking pamphlet laying around anywhere, pass it the fuck over, obvious'man. They don't give you a map in life, so don't find it all that surprising they make you find your way in death too.

MARI

You listen to me, okay. I do not want your help. I do not want you putting your hands. I do not want anything to do with any of that. Do you understand.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Well, then you understand that this is funny position you decided to put yourself in, if you didn't want to be close to any of this, what're you doing so close then?

HUSBAND

We've a daughter.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF looks around the house)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

(to HUSBAND) Do you?

HUSBAND

And when she gets here, my wife is right, we can't have anything to do with...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Ah, you don't want any *details* close to home, is that it, delusional'man?

HUSBAND

We just don't want any of this anywhere near her—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Head?

HUSBAND

...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

You are going to be a very caring and careful father, yea.

HUSBAND

Thank you.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Weren't a compliment.

MARI

Señor Policía, please leave.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Being careful, will get you exactly a daughter just like you—

HUSBAND

Which is what?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Blind to how ugly the world really is. And deaf to even listen at how to change things.

MARI

You leave my house, you leave my family be.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

You two are worried about images getting into your daughter's thoughts, but let me ask you something: What does your daughter's head really matter, if there ain't a body?

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF puts his head back on)

MARI

Go, now.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Know this, Señora Policía: I did not get myself put in two parts because I wasn't careful. It was because I didn't matter. To either side. They don't care, me, I got nobody that care. And what does my life really matter, if nobody care. Whatever you do, Mari, just make sure that at all times, that you are not just being only

DEAD POLICE CHIEF(cont)

Careful. That what you do matter more than anything. And that people care that you're doing it. Otherwise, they'll take you.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF opens the door to a stir of music, he walks out into it with wonder, closing the door behind him.

However, the music is in the room, in the oxygen, in the sweat on MARI and HUSBAND.

HUSBAND kneels out of desperation, covering invisible daughter's ears)

HUSBAND

(to mija) "It's okay, huh? They just sounds, mija. There's a girl, yea, just breathe easy. See that, your Papá's here for you just like always. See how we do that, mija; we can always go to quiet you and me.

(Music suffers)

These sounds you hear, these noises in your receptors, mija...that's the sound of your Mamá not coming home no more."

MARI

Please, stop it, Love; please stop.

HUSBAND

(to mija) "It was too much for her, mija. All those sounds out there, your Mamá didn't know. She had no idea how much ugly sounds there would be. And now, now she can't find her way home."

(MARI tries to pull HUSBAND up; he instinctively protects mija; they struggle over their invisible daughter)

(to MARI) You're hurting her.

MARI

What is the matter with you.

HUSBAND

You look at me like that, like how you are, like I can't see straight. But look at what happened to where we live, Mari, look at who you let into where we live. And then you tell me who you're calling sick.

MARI

I call *you* sick.
What kinda father uses his own daughter to—

HUSBAND

(to mija) “No matter what you hear, no matter what you read in the papers, mija, your Mamá was only ever thinking of you.”

MARI

You need help, Love.

(HUSBAND kisses mija goodnight, then gets back up)

HUSBAND

When our daughter comes into this world, I will have already years of love waiting for her. So much of it so that *nothing* will be able to touch her.

MARI

Really? Is that what you think?

HUSBAND

If you didn't believe you or I could protect her then? What did you do all this for?

MARI

What is it that no matter how many times I try an spill everything-I-have-inside to you, it never sinks. It just washes out into the void that we fuck into calling marriage.

HUSBAND

Lookit you. So strong. So loud. So loud that even the dead know who you are and where we sleep. How long do you think it will be before los narcos hear you too?

MARI

We can never get out from under los narcos if quiet is the only word we live by. Can't you understand that?

People will never be able to get away from men with guns.

But if we *live*, if parents keep their children up good, if people do all of this together, los narcos will have only guns, but none the men. They will have no generations. Just only this one. And then, finally, there will be an endpoint.

(pause) Please, tell it to me that you hear me. Please, look at me from out of what's-sick-in-you and remind me why I ever called you Love to begin with. Please.

(They share a moment. Music reaches. MARI's hand out for HUSBAND. Beat. He is distracted by the music)

HUSBAND

I just...

MARI

Tell me. Please. Talk to me. Be here with me.

HUSBAND

...I just don't understand how I'm supposed to think about the future if I have no children in it of my own. (pause) And I don't think it's safe for our daughter to be here.

(MARI disappoints. Music suffers)

MARI

Be where.

HUSBAND

I'm taking her out of this house.

MARI

So this our house is no longer safe an you say to me what? That you'll go? That you'll leave me? That I'm alone.

HUSBAND

They'll come for you, Mari. You know that.

MARI

Go on then, go with your sickness out of this house before it infects me.

HUSBAND

What you call sickness, I call our future family.

MARI

I hear you, you know. Speaking to her at all hours, whispering, meeting her out in the yard, laughing with her when you think I'm not noticing. Trying to raise her on your own before she even exists.

(HUSBAND begins packing)

HUSBAND

So...we'll see you...when? At your funeral, or were you planning on speaking to your family before that? You know, to go over house stuff.

MARI

Look at you. Packing away. So proud to be packing away. So smart. Imagine if every soul in México were as smart as you. Easier to pack their bags, then support by those they say to love. Just the ignorance of so many packed bags across the country, knocking on Los Estados Unidos to let them in. The borders lined up.

HUSBAND

Yea, imagine how stupid...people trying for a better life for their family. When they could do like you and just...not have one.

MARI

What you call family I call my loved ones, but what I call family you see as a country of strangers.

HUSBAND

You, me, and our daughter. This is family.

MARI

Congratulations, if that makes you feel like the best father in this entire country, but know this, Love, it also makes you the reason there is no country; entirely.

HUSBAND

Well.

MARI

Aren't you forgetting something?

(MARI illustrates her midsection)

You forgot to say goodbye. She stays here with me, get it?

(HUSBAND walks to her midsection, bends down; listens)

HUSBAND

Hmm...

MARI

What.

HUSBAND

There is absolutely nothing inside there.

(HUSBAND exits, closing the door behind him. A moment of MARI with her decision. Lights out)

fourth scene

The exterior of the home. MARI exits, looking up at the morning sun, sounds of a city swell in rhythm with the music.

She turns towards the audience nervously and moves towards them; acknowledging them. MARI smiles politely and gestures knocking on a door; music swells as that door opens.

MARI

Buenas tardes, me llamo Mari, soy la nueva jefa de la policía. ¿Tiene un momento para hablar conmigo? (pause) Gracias. Quería hablarle sobre los niños de nuestra ciudad y sobre cómo todavía se les puede dar una buena educación...

(MARI smiles as they respond in kind. Another door, another knock)

Hola, me llamo Mari. Soy la nueva jefa de la policía. Espero que pueda hablar conmigo unos minutos...

(Another smile. Another door, another knock. A child answers, MARI reacts, then squats)

Wow. Hola! ¿Están tus papás? (pause) Oh, no, está bien. Me llamo Mari. Soy policía. ¿Cómo te llamas? (pause) ¿Y en dónde están tus papás? ¿En el trabajo? (pause) ¿Y hay alguien más en casa contigo? (longer pause) ¿Qué? ¿Qué pasa? ¿Cuál es el problema?

(Stands EL MORETE. Music suffers)

Okay, you go back on inside, okay. You go on in the house and shut the door. I'll come again to see you—

EL MORETE

I been *dying* to see you.

MARI

What do you want?

EL MORETE

Lookit you. New Chief of Police an you working all by your own?

MARI

Yes.

EL MORETE

Me, if I had a wife doing what you're doing, I don't think I could like let her go alone.

MARI

My husband—

EL MORETE

What about him?

MARI

Nevermind.

EL MORETE

You two have a fight or something?

MARI

...

EL MORETE

Es okay. Fighting is like sometimes necessary, yea?

MARI

So, what, you came to see me?

EL MORETE

How you know I ain't come to see him?

MARI

Because my husband's not the Chief of Police, I am.

EL MORETE

Yea, but he's always with you though, no? Waiting outside the station an shit. Ah, lookit that, who right there. See.

(EL MORETE points to invisible husband)

I can like view him up close now.

(EL MORETE circles invisible husband)

(to invisible husband) ...shit, I bet I could draw you, you know. Draw you in chalk, motherfucker. White chalk. Just be careful, eh, cuz that dust will get on your clothes an shit. I think I even got a little left on me from the last motherfucker I drew out.

(EL MORETE stares invisible husband down)

EL MORETE(cont)

(to MARI) Hey, Mari, I hate to like get involved between a husband and wife, but your husband...do you see he crying. (pause) Es okay, here, lemme see what I can do. I talk to him, you know like two men talking.

(EL MORETE motions he needs a moment)

(EL MORETE has the murmuring of a chat with invisible husband. He finishes)

Okay. I had a little chat with him, and I'm just gonna tell you where he at with things, okay? So your husband, he believe that you should go. That you should run. Like right now. Like a pussy. Away from me. But what your husband don't know...is that pussy *never* run away from me.

MARI

How can I help you?

EL MORETE

You can help me to see the station.

MARI

Why.

EL MORETE

Are you allowed to ask me that? Isn't the police station like a public institution or whatever? Isn't a station like my rights and privileges? It's right up this way, no?

(EL MORETE leads MARI and invisible husband to the station. Upon entering the station, EL MORETE begins looking about)

You know if you're going to use the word station, there really oughta be a lot more people? I think station, I think like...busy. Like you should see the bus station. It *feels* like a station, you know.

(to invisible husband) You know what I'm talkin'about right, puto?

MARI

So what is it you—?

EL MORETE

So where is everybody? Your fellow officers. The ones that you're the chief of.

MARI

They're out in the community, talking to—

(EL MORETE spots the car radio)

That's a—

(EL MORETE picks up the car radio, he listens. Flicks the dials, which do nothing. He shows to invisible husband)

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) You believe this shit, puto? Like if you had to guess, man to man, why you think this radio, that ain't attached to nothin', is like...sounding?

(He listens as though getting a response)

Yea...mmm hmm...yea tha's a good point, puto.

(to MARI) You know what your husband say? He say that this radio making the sound, is like not good. That you should bust it open, just put a hammer to it till it don't sound no more.

MARI

It's just a found item.

EL MORETE

Found where.

MARI

Was one of my officers recovered it.

EL MORETE

For realz? So you never used this radio yourself, you never like handled it?

MARI

One of my officers recovered it, and placed it on that table there. And now you're handling it. That's its entire history. What is it you want.

EL MORETE

See, I was in a junkyard kinda...parking lot, a couple days ago. And there was a car radio there, an this car radio, well it worked like...wha'cha'ma'callit, "surround sound," yea? This sound was like...surrounding us. You know surround sound?

(to invisible husband) Do she? Do she know surround sound?

MARI

I do.

EL MORETE

Es scary, huh?

MARI

I'm okay with it.

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) Is she? Okay with it?

MARI

Did you really come here to talk about electronics?

EL MORETE

No, I came here to report about wha'happen in that junkyard fucking parking lot. I came here to report about the sound that surrounded that whole entire shit.

MARI

You wish to report a noise violation?

EL MORETE

Yea, I guess you could say I was pretty "violated," like in here.

(He taps his head)

MARI

Okay, just fill this out for me and—

(She hands him a form, he stares at it)

EL MORETE

What do you expect me to do with that?

MARI

You take this pen, you take the cap off, you put the pen downward towards the paper with the little inkball facing out, you—

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) You best tell your woman that I don't know what she expects me to do with some shit ass piece of paper? She gonna take it over to her non'existent clerk and—

MARI

What is it you would want to happen?

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) What I want is for her to take this car radio and switch the switch to on.

(He hands her the radio)

That little dial there. To the right.

MARI

I'm not allowed to get prints on the—

(EL MORETE points a gun at invisible husband)

EL MORETE

How about for your invisible husband tho?

(A moment. She takes the car radio, the lights of the station flicker)

Now, change the station.

MARI

I don't understand what—

(EL MORETE clicks the gun. She switches the station, EL MORETE's sister's ass fills the room. EL MORETE startles, almost dropping the gun. He looks around the room, opens a window: music is heard)

EL MORETE

Outside, go.

(She goes, he follows)

Alright, where the fuck is it playing from?

MARI

I don't know.

EL MORETE

It's not just cars; I can hear it from...

MARI

I'm telling you I have no idea—

EL MORETE

...it's coming from the houses. An from those stores right there. It's coming from every'fucking'where in the city.

MARI

I'm sorry.

EL MORETE

And this song's a piece of shit, whys it gotta be this song?

MARI

Look, I don't know anything.

EL MORETE

Turn it off.

MARI

Okay...

EL MORETE

I said turn the music to fucking off.

(EL MORETE grabs the radio, turns the dial: nothing. He begins shaking the radio like a small boy)

Turn Off, You Fucking Piece Of Shit.

(EL MORETE tires himself out, then humbly hands the radio to MARI; she turns the dial, music softens but remains)

MARI

I'm not an electrician okay, I—

EL MORETE

Alright, firstly:

(He signs of the cross)

thank you I'm not crazy.

Fucking nobody believed me about that lot. They laughed in my face an shit. An now, whenever anybody walks by me, they start humming that fucking song. I'm fucking getting picked on. I fucking have a gun; I shouldn't be getting picked on!

MARI

It's just some glitch or—

EL MORETE

Yea, your face is a glitch.

MARI

...how is my face a—

EL MORETE

Hey, shut up. I'm trying to like process. Es not everyday some magic car radio—

MARI

It's not a magic car radio.

EL MORETE

No? It is a car radio, yea?

MARI

Yea.

EL MORETE

And it works like *magically* different from all other car radios, yea?

MARI

Yes.

EL MORETE

So it's a magic'fucking'car radio then! Now will you just shut up so I can process.

MARI

Is this why you came here, you wanted to investigate the magic car radio?

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) Hey, tell you wife if she don't shut up, I'm gonna investigate that dumpster over there with her body.

MARI

...how would you use my body to investigate a dumpster? You'd have to carry me all the way over there, then lift me up and what? Wave me around...investigating...maybe I could make a little beeping sound like one of those detectors. Beep...beep...beep...

(EL MORETE moves in on her)

Beepbeepbeep, yer getting closer.

(EL MORETE pulls his gun)

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) On your knees, puto.

(EL MORETE points down at invisible husband)

(to MARI) See how easy he do like I say? A man shouldn't be so easy to tell what to do, but I guess, he, your husband, he do whatever, huh?

MARI

I haven't done anything to you. I was just trying to—

EL MORETE

To what.

MARI

I'm sorry; you were processing.

EL MORETE

I'm through.

MARI

Okay.

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) Now, puto, unless you want your wife to see your insides just all over the fucking place: where did she get this radio?

MARI

My officer recovered—

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) An if she think I'm going to like just let all this go, she got like a lifetime of things to rethink, don't she, puto.

MARI

If I could answer your question, don't you think I would?

EL MORETE

(to invisible husband) Me, no. I think that your wife will never answer me my questions, I think she think that if she just play like stupid, that nobody will be looking at her. But re'think about this, puto, if your wife doesn't smash that car radio like right fucking now...

(EL MORETE pulls his mobile phone)

Everybody Will Be Looking At Her.

(A moment of MARI holding the car radio, looking at it; EL MORETE waiting for her)

(to MARI) What're you scared for, Mari? Es just a found item, no?

(EL MORETE's phone rings, it startles him, he drops it then quickly recovers and answers; lights darkens over him.

MARI stands alone, we see fear underneath the surface for the first time. Lights return to EL MORETE)

(to phone) Sí, sí, yo entiendo.

(He hangs up obediently)

(to MARI) Next time I see you, Mari,

MARI

Who was that?

EL MORETE

Nevermind your ass who was that.

MARI

Okay...

EL MORETE

Next time I see you, that car radio better be...

MARI

Gone.

EL MORETE

Dusted. Cuz if it ain't, I'll know about it an guess what.

MARI

How will you know about it?

EL MORETE

Because I have fucking hearing. *An guess what.*

MARI

What?

(EL MORETE pushes invisible husband over to the floor)

EL MORETE

Do you see how easy he push over?

MARI

...

EL MORETE

Do you?

MARI

Yes.

EL MORETE

Yea, so do we.

(EL MORETE exits into darkness.

MARI walks to invisible husband, she kneels, touching where his body would be, then speaks to somebody younger)

MARI

(to mija) "He'll be okay, mija, don't you worry, huh? See that, he's just resting that's all."

(She pets his head and she lies beside him, her head on his chest; she begins to weep with her invisible family. A few moments.

MARI begins to hum, the humming turns to more. Strength finds her. She continues her own sound until the notes of the music resume. She looks up, listening. Humbled.

A few moments. She gets up and dusts herself off before returning to the station.

MARI begins confidently to fill out reports then hand them to clerks who are not there, assign equipment then hand off to officers who cannot be seen.

Music builds as she does this, she finds her rhythm. Her movements find their way to dance, to true beauty. MARI looks like progress.

MARI looks around her as reports begin to file themselves, as equipment hands itself off. The light outside turns to beautiful. The station looks like what the world should be like.

Time stops. The station portraits. MARI looks at the landscape of what she has created in awe. We are in the space of human progress.

Lights reveal DEAD POLICE CHIEF with bloodied hands. He looks like the afterwards of violence. His hands shake. DEAD POLICE CHIEF removes his head embarrassed

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Thank you for calling me back, Señora Policía.

MARI

What is this, I didn't call—

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF shows his shaking bloodied hands)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Cuz do you see, under my nails, tha's what any motherfucker with a gun look like, tha's what kinda red they blood.

MARI

What're you doing here with that, I told you not to bring—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Señora Policía, I put my hands on so many of los narcos...

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF stresses his hands into strangulation, then into tearing and clawing, into absolute madness)

an now lookit me, anything ever good in me...I strangled it out...

MARI

You stupid man, look at me, look at where we're at now. Don't you see, this is not a place of bodies no more.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

I kill so many of these men, these men who answer to their mobiles every day. But they only fight with each other more. They don't know my killing from their killing. It was all just killing.

MARI

There is no more of that. Do you understand me—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

You see, los narcos, they just answer'to. But, Señora Policía, if I can find my way to those *other* men who never just answer'to; if I can follow my way across La Linea an look back at you from Los Estados Unidos. Then I will have my good again.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF points north)

Look up there, Señora Policía, just past our border, can't you see them so close. They have the kinda bodies we need.

MARI

I don't see bodies, past our border. I see only people walking, people smiling at their everyday. I see them laugh while you an I are here not laughing. I want to laugh. But how do we get there, huh? Without using our hands. Without anymore bodies. How can they hear us what we sound like just as easy as we can hear them how they laugh?

(MARI begins to hum, DEAD POLICE CHIEF listens with abandon. Humming turns to song. MARI lets words out. Beauty graces the world around them. What was dead now seems alive. The world comes to color from dust)

fifth scene

Center on GÜERO who stands listening to the music; trying to place it. He texts.

From across the way, EL MORETE walks up, glares at him. A few moments of this.

GÜERO

Alright, what is it? Is it the music, so you're feeling romantic, and that's how come you can't take your eyes off?

EL MORETE

What?

GÜERO

You're staring. Which I'm used to, don't get me wrong. But a little tip from me to you, when you're gonna stare at somebody, you can't like actually stare at them. You have to stand at some sort of angle, or behind a bush, mailbox maybe, a small boy perhaps. And then what you do is:

(GÜERO poses like a bar checking people out)

See now did you see that? I just did a complete once'over and I did it without looking all...y'know, creepy.

EL MORETE

What are you doing here, güero???

GÜERO

Why I'm here for you.

EL MORETE

Hey, güero, if yer meaning my dick, there's two things:
One, don't you ever fucking mean my dick!
Two, you couldn't afford it.

GÜERO

Okay, that's a weird response, but—

EL MORETE

But what.

GÜERO

Well, one, if I *was* meaning your dick wouldn't that mean I'm like a bottom? Isn't that how it works? Anyways, lookit me. I'm such a fucking top it's ridiculous. And two, if there is anywhere I could afford any dick I want, it'd be down here in Mexico, am I right?

EL MORETE

You do realize I'm the one with the gun, right?

GÜERO

You do realize I'm the one with the money, right?

EL MORETE

You stupid or something?

GÜERO

Something.

EL MORETE

I'm the one with the gun, *thus* I'm the one with your money.

GÜERO

You are talking about shooting me for the money in my wallet, yes?

EL MORETE

I don't need the gun for that, güero.

GÜERO

Yea, but then how would you get the money that's *not* in my wallet, wet...back.

EL MORETE

The only reason I'm not like beating the shit outta you right now is cuz—

GÜERO

I'm bigger than you?

EL MORETE

I'm bigger.

GÜERO

Then why do you need a gun.

EL MORETE

I don't need a gun, I just like them.

GÜERO

I like tits, I don't carry them around with me.

EL MORETE

Tha's cuz you can't.

GÜERO

No, really, I wouldn't carry them around with me. That's weird. Besides...

EL MORETE

What.

GÜERO

Is it just in the States, or do tits get boring after awhile? I mean getting to'em is nice, but once you've gotten there...they lack longevity.

EL MORETE

No.

GÜERO

No what?

EL MORETE

Es not just a States thing, they get like that here too.

GÜERO

How did we get to talking about this?

EL MORETE

Eh, I said I like guns and you said you wouldn't carry tits around with you.

GÜERO

What were we talking about before guns an tits then?

EL MORETE

Hey, shit, what else is there, huh?!

(EL MORETE makes for a high five. GÜERO looks at him oddly, EL MORETE retreats his hand)

GÜERO

That was awkward.

EL MORETE

Was just a high five.

GÜERO

You did hear when I said I didn't like dick, right? I mean just because I get bored with tits doesn't mean—

EL MORETE

Hey, it was a high five, so why don't you shut up.

GÜERO

What were we talking about before you wanted to hold hands.

(EL MORETE pulls his gun)

EL MORETE

We were talking about the money that's not in your wallet, güero.

Oh that, yea. GÜERO

That, yea. EL MORETE

Of course, that. GÜERO

Fuckin'that. EL MORETE

Will you stop flirting— GÜERO

You got a lotta balls talkin'to me— EL MORETE

Is it me, or do you keep making veiled homosexual references— GÜERO

I'm'bout to veil you in a fucking coffin, güero. EL MORETE

Veil me in a coffin? GÜERO

What about the money that's not in your wallet; where is it then? EL MORETE

Well, it's in a bank; in the States. You think I'd bring it down to *Mexico*? GÜERO

So wha'd you bring it up for then? EL MORETE

(Beat)

What's with the music anyways? GÜERO

...es like uncomfortable, huh? EL MORETE

Is it always this...obvious? GÜERO

No. Not always. EL MORETE

(GÜERO looks up at the music, EL MORETE joins)

GÜERO

...I bet you do this with all the boys.

(EL MORETE re'points the gun)

EL MORETE

Hey, enough, no more distracting.

GÜERO

I sincerely hope this isn't the same tone of customer service your plaza provides on a daily basis.

(Beat)

EL MORETE

...ahh shit...yo entiendo.

(EL MORETE pulls a small baggie of white)

...why didn't you just say? How much, güero, gimme a number.

GÜERO

You don't know who I am, do you.

EL MORETE

You don't know who *I* am.

GÜERO

No, really, you should get on your little phone there and ask somebody higher up about who I am.

EL MORETE

Look, I ain't doin' no specials, just tell me how much you—

GÜERO

Really, you think I'm like haggling money with you?

EL MORETE

Bitch, I make more money than you ever—

GÜERO

Oh, is that how it works, they let you keep the money?

EL MORETE

Familia.

GÜERO

Excuse me, did you just say familia?

EL MORETE

What I make, we make.

GÜERO

That's... adorable.

EL MORETE

How much?

GÜERO

You're really more of a reactionary guy, aren't you? Here, why don't you react to this:

(EL MORETE confuses. GÜERO pulls his mobile phone, he scrolls through his contacts, then shows one of them to EL MORETE, who reacts fumbling his gun, which GÜERO takes with ease)

Wow. You sweat a lot, huh? It's all...greasy.

EL MORETE

Gimme.

GÜERO

First you say Gimme a Number, then you say Gimme the gun. Do I have to give you everything? Can't you get anything on your own? You know what you are?

(EL MORETE pulls his mobile)

EL MORETE

Gimme the gun back or I'll dial.

GÜERO

You're needy. Hasn't anybody ever told you how unattractive needy is? You're never gonna get that good dick by bein'needy. It's a turn off.

EL MORETE

I'm dialing.

GÜERO

"Hi, boss'man, can you send my lieutenant over, I lost my gun to a gringo and he won't *gimme* it back."

EL MORETE

I won't shoot you if you gimme the gun back.

GÜERO

...alright, alright, you've got me, I'll give you the gun back, but only on the condition that you don't shoot me.

(GÜERO holds his hands up, waiting for the shot)

EL MORETE

They won't let you take the gun past customs.

GÜERO

...

EL MORETE

Shut up, it just came out.

GÜERO

Did you used to work for U.S. Customs or something because let me tell you something, you are right on the money! It's like you read their handbook or maybe you just think alike, but there is something going on with your brain and the Department of Customs and Border Protection, they're like...in synch.

EL MORETE

Sometimes I say shit I don't think about. Are you going to give me my gun back or not?

GÜERO

Is it *your* gun, I mean, did you buy it? With your own money, or is this more like a familia gun.

EL MORETE

Why you wanna embarrass me, huh?.

GÜERO

You pointed a gun at me.

EL MORETE

Yea, but tha's sorta like my job an shit.

GÜERO

Well then maybe its sorta like my job an shit to embarrass you.

EL MORETE

Look, I didn't buy the gun, they gave it to me. An if you don't think I'm embarrassed already enough for my fucking life, then you're not looking at me very closely, güero. An I ain't even talking about today. Me, I'm embarrassed for everything that I do. I don't do anything right. So like you, standing there, making me a fool for the day, is like...not original.

GÜERO

So if I give you the gun, will you dial on your little prepaid phone there and please just tell your lieutenant who you're here with?

EL MORETE

Wait, who *am* I here with?

GÜERO

You get sidetracked a lot, don't you. Not a good characteristic in the field so much, is it.

(GÜERO puts the gun back in EL MORETE's hand. Just as both their hands are on the gun equally, lights reveal MARI)

MARI

...freeze...!

(They do. Lights shift, MARI cautiously walks closer to the two frozen men with a gun connecting them. She looks at them as though she is looking at a human heart out of the body and pumping just in front of her. A few moments, disrupted by DEAD POLICE CHIEF, who enters with a shotgun)

MARI

I didn't think, I just saw them, I—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Lookit that, an Americano right put here for us.

MARI

What do I do?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

What all policia do in this our country: what we have to.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF cracks his knuckles)

So, which one first, light or dark?

MARI

No, neither, I—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

What do you think men like this will react to your—

MARI

I don't know, I—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Señora Policia, this is exactly the bodies our country need.

MARI

No. No killing, absolutely—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

I am sorry, but sometimes there *is absolutely* killing.

MARI

...El Morete, he's just a hawk, and who knows what this other guy, they're probably just lower level—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

You an I both know ain't no more lower nada. What was once underground is on the streets.

MARI

What are they even doing here? They don't even look like, I mean look at them...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Dime. Tell me what you see, Mari, say to me what your sound look like.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF begins to hum, as MARI had. As MARI talks the music overwhelms; her emotion floods)

MARI

Es like they're not just two men no more, d'you know? These are not just two men standing in the street, with a weapon out the open. Look at how the weight of their bodies, pushing against with just force. No letting up, no moving with. See how their eyes don't look straight; no they dart everywhere but actually at each other. Their hearts pumping out of synch. And the way they breathe close up, trying to measure out what the other will do next. And there is no closeness, just only one out'manning the other. One trying to be as strong as the other. And two right like beside each other but behaving as though they are atmospheres apart. When I look at these two men...I see the closing of civilization and the stopping of babies being born. I see people and disappearance. I see nothing left but the vacancy of human connection for the catastrophe of countries.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

And what do you want to do to them?

MARI

...I wish it I could just keep them frozen like this. I wish it I could reach in an just pull the gun from between them. And when they wake...they will have no idea what they were doing so at ends.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF positions the shotgun in MARI's hands, in proper formation)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

And what can you do in the real world, Mari, here, now? My guess: you can do things I cannot even imagine...but in order to do them, Mari, you need to speak their language. C'mon...

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF begins to position MARI down on one knee, with the shotgun pointed)

You know you can't reach your un'armed hand between them and try to fuck with what they have in common. Cuz if you do, they'll only pull you in, they'll incorporate you.

But listen to la música, Mari, la música says it that you have more power in you than these two men can even see; and that if you use it, they will do whatever it is you want...

(MARI takes her position, her aim on EL MORETE and GÜERO)

Yes. Lookit you. *You* are what this country needs. What I never was. Go on. You don't need me for this, this is who you are.

MARI

(to EL MORETE and GÜERO) I SAID FREEZE.

(The weight of MARI wakes the two men. All three look at each other. Lights out. End of Act I)

act two, scene one

Right where we left off. MARI on one knee, shotgun pointed. GÜERO raises his hand.

GÜERO

So, what happens if we don't freeze?

MARI

Mister, shut up and don't talk.

GÜERO

Do I have to do both? How about if I shut up, but I still talk. Would that work?

MARI

I want you both to lower the gun, then step away. Slowly. Do all of this slowly.

GÜERO

What if we do *some* of it slowly?

MARI

I'm not going to arrest anybody; I'm not even going to ask questions. I just—

EL MORETE

You ain't goin'arrest nobody, you ain't goin'ask questions, then what the fuck you even doing here then?

MARI

...

GÜERO

I think what my little friend is trying to ask here is: are you screaming at us to freeze as an officer of the law...or just some broad? Cuz I gotta tell you, a lady officer tellin'me to stay put is a hell of a lot different than a woman who wants me to hold still.

MARI

I am telling you both right now, to lower the gun. That is the only directive you need right now.

(They lower the gun more, but take their time)

EL MORETE

I don't think your husband will be very happy about this; you told him you wouldn't interfere, but here you are—

MARI

We're putting down the gun, that's all we're doing.

EL MORETE

C'mon, you'member. You were laying in bed when you promised it. He was on your right with that little lamp shut, you were on his left with your light still lit.

GÜERO

What're you stalking her? I thought you liked dick.

EL MORETE

I'm'bout to stock you with dick.

(GÜERO stares at EL MORETE)

It just came out! I like women. I like tits.

(The gun is on the ground. MARI strategically picks the gun up. She wipes the handle)

GÜERO

Yea, it's all greasy, right?

EL MORETE

Yo, even with a fuckin'sawed'off shotgun you still gotta make the fun?

GÜERO

It isn't sawed'off.

EL MORETE

It might as fuckin'well be, it's pointed at us.

GÜERO

Do you like think at all, or do you just run on batteries?

EL MORETE

Alright, you've got the gun. Congratulations. How very Chief of you. Now can we go?

MARI

Go where.

EL MORETE

To finish what we got to finish.

MARI

Which is what?

EL MORETE

I thought you didn't wanna know my business, Mari, but here you are all up in it.

MARI

I'm not in it—

EL MORETE

Look at you. Standing there with that shotgun in your hands, stopping what I do, stopping what he do. Shit, you are so in it, Mari, the smell of your pussy is like flavoring this whole entire transaction.

(MARI reactively butts the base of her gun to EL MORETE's head, he drops)

GÜERO

Interesting.

MARI

I can't believe I just—

GÜERO

You know though?

MARI

What.

GÜERO

You can't take that back. That right there is what we call permanence.

MARI

He isn't anybody.

GÜERO

True. But c'mon, we're all somebody. Right? Inside.

MARI

What're you doing out here, Güero.

GÜERO

Hey, what do I know, I just follow him.

MARI

Really? You follow him? This little one?

EL MORETE

Alright, first of all. Fucking OW. Secondly, if you fucking people don't stop calling me little—

(EL MORETE gets up)

And thirdly, Mari, you've no idea what you just—

GÜERO

Are you forgetting something?

EL MORETE

What?

GÜERO

Oh, you know, If She Shoots You, Nobody Will Know, or care, That You Got Hit In The Head.

EL MORETE

Why you gotta reduce everything?

GÜERO

(to MARI) I'm sorry about that. You were...

MARI

(to GÜERO) You know, when he talks, I understand where he lands in things,

EL MORETE

Hey, I don't *land* in things. I *am* things.

(GÜERO gives an 'I don't know what to do with him' look)

MARI

but when *you* talk, Güero, you sound like you come from somewhere...

GÜERO

As opposed to...nowhere?

MARI

Yes.

EL MORETE

Yo, what the fuck are you two even talking about?

MARI

What is it you have to finish? Who are you?

GÜERO

Well, *I*, was trying to convince the little guy here—

EL MORETE

I hate you.

GÜERO

That he should pick up his little flip phone there and make a phone call to his lieutenant letting them know just what sort of gringo he found wandering—

MARI

And just what sort of gringo did he find wandering?

GÜERO

Well, the charming sort mostly. But I'm also tired.

MARI

Tired from what?

GÜERO

Well, traveling. And all the fucking I do. Handsome, white man's burden.

MARI

What business do you have to finish.

GÜERO

You ever heard of a rendezvous point?

MARI

Yes.

GÜERO

Well, that's just movie bullshit, nobody actually has those anymore. I mean we've got cell phones.

MARI

Why are you here, güero?

GÜERO

Because. I heard there was this really very impressive twenty-two year old criminology student who up an volun'fucking'teered to be the new Chief of Police in some little town. Right here in Mexico.

EL MORETE

Wait, what...???

GÜERO

So if I may, Mari, ask what it is that *you* are doing here?

MARI

...

GÜERO

This is an appealing town. Not like, aesthetically maybe, but there is something...

(GÜERO begins to walk in on MARI, who backs away)

Oh, an El Morete, make your fucking call.

(EL MORETE dials, darkness falls over him)

MARI

Stop right there.

GÜERO

It's nice, isn't it. When you go from three to two. Me, I was always better talking with just two. Three...it complicates.

MARI

What about me? So you heard about me and now you're here to what?

GÜERO

What I heard, was that you were a very peaceful volunteer. No firearms. No drug arrests. Just "community building." Is that the term? Community building. (pause) No, really, is it?

MARI

Yes.

GÜERO

And I don't know, I imagine community building, well, I guess I just picture like an actual building within the community. Probably fairs an shit on the weekends. (pause) What? No fairs?

MARI

You come all the way down here to—

GÜERO

To find that you're really not as peaceful as all that really. I mean look at you, you've a bigger gun than even him.

(Lights resume over EL MORETE)

(to EL MORETE) God, I missed you.

EL MORETE

Alright. I tol'em.

GÜERO

You didn't miss me?

EL MORETE

Do you wanna know what they tol'me or no?

GÜERO

Y'know I like that you're asking me permission. Keep that.

EL MORETE

I'll text it.

(EL MORETE begins texting)

EL MORETE(cont)

...wha's yer number.

(GÜERO shows EL MORETE his number, who then sends)

GÜERO

(to MARI) His manners are... This'll just take a...

(GÜERO reads the text. EL MORETE watches him read it intently. GÜERO shrugs)

(to EL MORETE) You know, you spelled "execute" wrong.

(EL MORETE quickly re'looks at his phone)

(to MARI, laughing) I'm just...fucking with him. (pause) He didn't really spell it wrong.

(MARI re'raises the shotgun)

MARI

Enough. Both of you, your phones to the ground, then kick them towards me.

GÜERO

Kick them? Couldn't we just hand them to you. Toss maybe?

MARI

On the ground.

EL MORETE

Shit is done, Mari, even if you like shot us both right now, our location is already noted.

MARI

You drop your fucking phone, or how would you like me to drop you again.

(EL MORETE tosses his phone at MARI's feet, she scoops it up; wipes)

MARI

Now yours.

GÜERO

...it's just, his is like cheap an whatever, mine's is—

MARI

Give it to me.

(GÜERO walks in on MARI, his phone held out)

GÜERO

It's just not the sort of phone one can be careless with.

(MARI tries to maneuver reaching out for the phone. When both their hands are on the phone...)

Do you have kids?

(MARI takes the phone, then re'maneuvers her shotgun)

MARI

Why did you ask me that.

GÜERO

Because you're a woman.

EL MORETE

Okay, you've the gun, you've our phones—

GÜERO

You've got all the information that you need, its right there in your hands. But how are you gonna read what's in those phones, though, Mari? You'd have to let either us or the shotgun go.

EL MORETE

Or you could just shoot us. I bet that would like solve all your problems, huh?

(MARI pumps the shotgun, aims downwards)

GÜERO

Very nicely thought out, Mari. A couple leg'shots would be very fitting here.

EL MORETE

Hey. Mari, so like whoever taught you how to handle that piece must think an awful lot uh you. That's how a *man* handles it. Cuz his shoulders are thick enough to like absorb the kick. But with your frame an shit, if you were to plug one of us in the leg, that weapon would kickback so fucking much that it'd prolly knock you flat. Prolly bust up your shoulder bones an shit. And while you scream, one of us will just pick that piece up. And aim the other plug straight at you.

(EL MORETE places his hand on the barrel)

MARI

...I'll do it...

EL MORETE

This ain't you, Mari. This us.

(MARI aims up and fires a shot, the shotgun kicks back into her shoulder, knocking her to the floor just as EL MORETE described.

EL MORETE and GÜERO look a bit in shock at the turn of events. The color of the world fades, sounds of gunfire in the background, what was alive now feels dead)

EL MORETE(cont)

(to GÜERO) Yo, who the fuck called that shit? I Did.

(GÜERO looks at him; disappoints, then picks up the shotgun with ease. They look down at MARI who embarrasses in pain; trying to hold back tears)

GÜERO

Well. Maybe I didn't really need to come down here after all. Ah, what am I saying, I love it down here. It's so...and you meet the funniest little people.

EL MORETE

Hey, I fucking called it, yo. So why don't you call me with some fucking respect.

GÜERO

Has anyone ever told you how similar you are to a woman?

EL MORETE

Has anyone ever told you how similar *you* are to a...clown?

GÜERO

...is that a reference to my pale complexion or to my sense of humor? Either way, I'm proud of both; equally.

EL MORETE

You're a clown because you treat everybody like children, even people who fucking helped you.

GÜERO

You helped me?

EL MORETE

YES.

GÜERO

Alright, now you're getting emotional.

EL MORETE

I'm through talking to you.

GÜERO

Oh, c'mon, but you're so interesting.

EL MORETE

Do you ever take anything seriously?

GÜERO

Only your eyes, when I feel them on me.

(MARI begins to hum to herself. All stop and look at her)

EL MORETE

Yo, she goin' crazy or what.

GÜERO

(to EL MORETE) Don't you have somewhere you have to be?

EL MORETE

Wha's with the humming anyways, that like a signal or something? (pause) Hey, if you got some like...whatever, you could like let me in on it. (pause) What? Oh I ain't smart enough to—

Oh. OH. Shit, why didn't you just say. No judge from me. Man needs what man needs.

GÜERO

And what is that.

EL MORETE

What.

GÜERO

What man needs.

EL MORETE

Hey, like I said, no judge. You do what you gotta.

GÜERO

And what is it you think I gotta.

EL MORETE

What, you want me to like act it out for you, maricon?

GÜERO

No. I don't want you to act it out for me. Because you haven't the first fucking clue as what to act like. How to behave. So why don't do what you do best and take a fucking order.

EL MORETE

What the shit is up your ass? (pause) Hey, you know what, fuck this shit.

(EL MORETE makes to storm off)

GÜERO

You forgetting something?

EL MORETE

What is there something you wanna hear me say so you can make the fun again, huh? What am I forgetting, am I forgetting your dick in my ass, huh, you tell me what the fuck forgetting, you moody fuck.

(GÜERO reaches into MARI's person and pulls the phones, he tosses EL MORETE's on the floor; who embarrassingly picks it up)

GÜERO

Or did you forget just how meaningless you are without that.

(EL MORETE exits. GÜERO looks down at MARI carefully; listening to her)

That's quite a...hum. (pause) Now is music something you went to school or...no, no music school, okay.

(Enter DEAD POLICE CHIEF with a rush; he grabs GÜERO violently and pulls him off from MARI)

MARI

No, let him up. Hey. Let him up. Señor Policía, listen for me, do you hear? LISTEN.

(MARI puts his attention to the suffering music, they both listen)

Now take your gun, you take these weapons and you go. Do you hear me? Do you hear what my music sound like?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

I only wanted my good again

MARI

Look at me. Look at him. Does this look like good to you?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

I don't know what this look like. You on the floor, this Americano. I don't know what to think, what to do, so I...

MARI

Your hands are shaking, Señor. You're scared. So am I. Did you know that?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

I don't know what I know no more.

MARI

Me either. I don't know what about any of this. But listen to la música, Señor. That is all what I'm doing. Now you go. And take these, there are no more of these we want in our country.

(MARI hums, DEAD POLICE CHIEF listens, then gathers the weapons and exits. GÜERO gets up, dusts himself off)

GÜERO

Well. That was...cultural. So he comes around during all months, not just October?

MARI

Hey, Americano. You follow with me, huh.

GÜERO

Me follow with you??? What am I—

MARI

You followed me from your country to mine, this is what you do, no? So...then do what they pay you to do an shut up about it.

(MARI leads GÜERO to the station.
Upon entering, she pulls the car radio and places it in front of him. GÜERO stares at the radio sounding)

Go on. I know you want to.

(He picks up the radio with care. A moment)

GÜERO

Do you know what I like best about this thing?

MARI

You tell me.

GÜERO

It's the knobs. They're so simple. You got one for the volume, and one for the station. They got a buncha other shit on'em now, but what more do you need, right? Volume and station.

(GÜERO turns the nobs gently: nothing)

MARI

You touch it like you touch a woman: with no response.

GÜERO

Hey, easy there, chica, I'm married.

MARI
You don't look married.

GÜERO
Thank you.

MARI
You look very singular to me.

GÜERO
Well, I'm not. Married, that is.

MARI
So you're a liar.

(GÜERO sets the radio down carefully)

So what do you know about that, huh? The music.

GÜERO
Well it was invented in—

MARI
It's coming from our microwave, from our refrigerator, alarm clock. That radio isn't even connected to anything. What do you know about the music, güero.

GÜERO
That's funny.

MARI
What is?

GÜERO
I followed you all the way south to ask you that very same question, Mari.

MARI
...

GÜERO
C'mon, smart woman like you must have a hunch.

MARI
It's nothing. Some glitch. You?

GÜERO
I'm just a tourist.

MARI
Hunch then.

(He moves in on MARI, speaking with a severity of him that we've not seen before)

GÜERO

...well...if you want my honest...fucking...thoughts on the matter, Mari...on the music...I'd say that something completely...fucking...incredible must be behind it...otherwise what the fuck are we even doing in the same room together.

(Beat)

MARI

Why are we, in the same room together, what did you come down here for, to—

GÜERO

México? Oh, I love it down here. In fact, whenever I don't feel like being up there, this is where I'm at.

MARI

Everything is a joke, yes?

GÜERO

Tell me if you're heard this one—

MARI

You look down here for business like business people, but you don't act like business.

GÜERO

Should I wear a suit, carry a briefcase? I have stripper back at my hotel, I'm sure there's some cocaine...around...here...somewhere.

MARI

Why me?

GÜERO

You don't want to know that.

MARI

I asked, didn't I?

GÜERO

You're the Chief of Police, lady. The last thing you want to know is what's going on.

MARI

You're the American, why don't you tell me what's going on.

GÜERO

I'm not going to hurt you.

MARI

That's because you can't. Or won't.

GÜERO

I like you. I do. In fact, I knew that I would. From when I first heard about you. Even from when you contacted the city about volunteering yourself.

MARI

Yea. So you must've heard about what I told to them that day, no? Go on, why don't you wipe that grin off your face, güero, and tell to me what I said in that room then.

(Music reaches. Both notice)

GÜERO

The police in this town have no business any longer carrying firearms. A reduction in firearms was a step in the right direction, not just in this jurisdiction, but in every jurisdiction. What is the point of arming more people, when no matter what they do, they will always be out'armed.

(MARI is somewhat taken aback by his accuracy)

The only true defense we have is each other. And if we come together as an entity, if all of our families were to become one family, it will be a defense not even the cartels could penetrate. They will kill themselves off with their guns and explosives soon enough, if they didn't have any more of us to draw from. If our children were no longer their one regenerating resource.

(A moment)

Sorry, I couldn't get your voice down, you've a softer tone than I.

MARI

And tell me, what is wrong with families watching out for families?

GÜERO

Nothing. Your family is your business.

MARI

Good. So go home then. Leave my—

GÜERO

But it's not your family we're worried about, Mari. These refrigerators, microwaves, alarm whatever—

MARI

It's just music.

GÜERO

When there's a change in the system, Mari, it's my job to find out how it got there? What it looks like. And what it went home to.

MARI

Why did you say that? Went home to. Where is he?

GÜERO

Who.

MARI

My husband.

GÜERO

I've nothing to do with your husband.

MARI

You don't have to do this. Whatever it is you're doing.

GÜERO

Neither did you.

MARI

I'll go. Away. You'll never have to—

GÜERO

Hear you again?

MARI

Yes.

GÜERO

If only that were true. If only music was something that could just disappear.

Right? That people could forget. But we never do.

Music stays with us, doesn't it.

Even when I think I've forgotten the most awful song, one day, there it is again.

Where did it come from? Why then, why that morning?

We may never know the answer to these questions, Mari, about music. It'll be

like...one of the wonders of the world. The eighth wonder. Or are we on nine?

Anyways. ...music. Little insulting that it's so far down the list maybe, but hey, this is far from a perfect world, isn't it.

MARI

You don't have to behave like one of them. You don't have to—

GÜERO

Well, it's a bit late for that. And whoa, speaking of late, we better go.

MARI

Don't you see, those people, los narcos, they will do whatever it is that you tell them to. If you tell them no more killing, no more children—

GÜERO

I'm sorry, do you actually know them at all? Because what you're describing would be very out of character.

MARI

They'll do anything you say. Anything.

(GÜERO opens the station door. We hear cars, gunshots; the music pales in comparison. He motions her to exit first, she does. As she passes him, he stops her)

GÜERO

Hey. I do. Get it, you know.

MARI

Get what, what is it you get.

GÜERO

Standing here, in this station...I get it why you'd want to, y'know, *do something*. It's like, it almost feels like you could. (pause) Anyways.

(He motions her to exit, he follows. Lights out)

act two, scene two

EL MORETE stands in the MARI's home.
Bound and with a cloth around his head is HUSBAND, his bag strewn to the side. EL MORETE texts.

Hey, you got a charger?

EL MORETE

...

HUSBAND

A charger, do you got one.

EL MORETE

For what kind of—

HUSBAND

The best fuckin' kind.

EL MORETE

There's a pocket, on the inside.

HUSBAND

(EL MORETE goes through HUSBAND's bag, pulling a charger)

This one?

EL MORETE

It's the only one there.

HUSBAND

(EL MORETE plugs his phone, then pulls a pair of pajama bottoms)

Hey, you actually sleep like this?

EL MORETE

Like what?

HUSBAND

In like, this outfit with the little hearts all over.

EL MORETE

They're pajamas.

HUSBAND

(EL MORETE begins searching the house)

EL MORETE

You know, I go to like a lot of houses...unexpectedly late at night. And most couples, they sleep naked.

HUSBAND

I don't like to dirty the sheets.

EL MORETE

Hey, tha's what sheets are there for, no? To get all funky an shit. You don't wanna dirty the sheets, tha's like saying you don't wanna get piss an shit on your chones.

HUSBAND

It's how I was raised, I guess.

EL MORETE

What, to not-get-the-purpose-of-things?

HUSBAND

To keep things clean.

EL MORETE

Eh, clean is overrated. If you think about like the best times in life, you know, are they like all-the-way organized an perfectly placed an shit, or are they the times when you said fuck it an just let whatever-life-looked-like happen.

HUSBAND

I actually enjoy—

EL MORETE

Yo, the fact that you said "actually enjoy" tells me you don't know what the fuck I'm talking about.

HUSBAND

Look, you're going to do what you're going to do to me, can you just take this thing off my head.

EL MORETE

An what makes you think I wanna look at your ugly mug.

HUSBAND

You don't wanna look at me when you do it?

EL MORETE

Dime, like, what about a time when you just said FUCK THIS SHIT. Let's talk about that.

HUSBAND

We don't have to talk. You've got me, you've probably got my wife—

EL MORETE

Yo, what kinda man brings up his wife like out the blue like that? Huh? We weren't even talking about ass and you just bring her ass up?

HUSBAND

We have a daughter.

EL MORETE

A daughter?

HUSBAND

Yes.

EL MORETE

Is she like, the invisible kind?

HUSBAND

She's the kind that will need her parents. Even if just only one.

EL MORETE

So tell me something then, for your daughter's sake. When did you say Fuck This Shit for? (pause) I'm serious, this a serious question.

HUSBAND

Why're you—

EL MORETE

Answer the fucking question.

HUSBAND

...me an Mari used to...

EL MORETE

Yo, there he go with his fucking wife again.

HUSBAND

You asked me about a time, I'm telling it to you. (pause) Me an Mari used to—

EL MORETE

Used to what, puto, be alive?

HUSBAND

We used to have sex in parking lots—

EL MORETE

See, now tha's how a man brings up his wife for. Go on with that shit, I'm like all ears.

HUSBAND

We would go shopping or wherever, then get all...sweaty. So we'd go back to the car and hang towels down in front of the windows, so nobody could see. And just...fuck it.

EL MORETE

Why you stop?

HUSBAND

I dunno. Just...wasn't as...

EL MORETE

How the fuck fucking in a sweaty ass car gets "wasn't as," I don't know, but okay.

HUSBAND

Why did you ask me to talk about that?

(EL MORETE pulls an unplugged alarm clock, a spurt of his sister's ass spills from it. He looks at it closely, messing with the buttons. A steadiness of his sister's ass comes out of it, regardless what he presses)

EL MORETE

So, that parking yard. That junk lot. You two were trying to like...recapture the sweaty magic or what?

HUSBAND

...

(EL MORETE puts the alarm clock to HUSBAND's ear)

...we were in the parking lot and she turned the radio and the music started playing and we haven't been able to stop it since.

EL MORETE

Your wife, she was supposed to not make a lotta noise when she took office, at least that's what she tol'people. But mi familia, they say that she has made, in fact, a ton of noise.

HUSBAND

She's not, she's not even—

EL MORETE

Your wife run a saw'd off shotgun on my fucking head today. And like family, if she run on shotgun on me, she run a shotgun on my entire line.

HUSBAND

She sawed it off?

EL MORETE

Why does everyone pick up on that shit?! Okay, fine, it wasn't sawed off.

HUSBAND

She would *never* do that, there is no way she would *ever*...you must have her confused with, or—

EL MORETE

First she play this music when I especially asked her not to, when I especially told how much I especially hate this fucking song! And *then* she go an get a fucking shotgun. Oh, an calling me little and shit. Both of'em.

HUSBAND

Both of who.

EL MORETE

They don't know tho'. They got no idea what I'm capable of. What kinda patience I got up inside me to make this fucking fucked up alarm clock stop playing this estupid fucking song.

(EL MORETE pulls a machete)

But they'll see. They'll see me what I do.

(EL MORETE begins hacking at HUSBAND's neck, who lets out a screeching yelp before toppling to the side. EL MORETE begins sawing through the bone. Blood. When he is done EL MORETE takes a foto with his phone.

Enter GÜERO and MARI, who looks at the room, then eyes HUSBAND on the floor.

MARI lets a deafening cry, the music deadens. She goes to HUSBAND, covering him with their bedsheet. She hums to him. A few moments. She speaks to somebody younger)

MARI

(to mija) "Es okay you cry, mija. Whatever you wanna do tha's okay. You can even yell as loud as you want, I don't care who hears. You just..."

(MARI cannot continue, she breaks down. Her crying finds rhythm, she hums to her husband.

Enter DEAD POLICE CHIEF, EL MORETE startles, backs up. DEAD POLICE CHIEF looks at the room)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

(to EL MORETE) You have no idea the weight of things. Do you.

EL MORETE

...yo, what the...

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF removes his head. GÜERO flinches, stares. EL MORETE stumbles back, gun pointed)

EL MORETE(cont)

Hey, whoa! ...like put that shit back on...put that...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Do you see, even if all of México were to put down their hands, always there will be little things like you with their little hands up, with their little pistols pointed.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF disarms EL MORETE, grabbing him like a puppet with ease)

But lookit now, El Morete, those days are over.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF takes EL MORETE to GÜERO, who tries to ease the situation, but still listens)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Lookit him, Americano, this is who answers'to on the other side of your mobile. This is who is los narcos with their weapons always drawn, with their voices always so loud. But, do you see what they look like now, do you see how empty?

GÜERO

I do.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

And tell me, Americano, what about me? Do I look like empty to you now? Do I?

(GÜERO shakes his head)

You've no idea, do you, how many of us there are out there? Still walking the Earth? Right outside that door. If you had to guess how many, if you had to take a wild fucking stab at our numbers, Americano, what number would you put this little man's knife to?

GÜERO

...who's numbers exactly are we—

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF drops EL MORETE)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

All who?! ALL WHO!? You Godless motherfucker. ALL OF ME. ALL OF EVERYBODY LAID OUT ON THOSE CHALK STREETS. ALL OF EVERY FUCKING HEAD YOU'VE HAD TAKEN. HOW MANY OF US DO YOU THINK ARE LOOKING BACK AT YOU, HUH!? HOW MANY!?

GÜERO

...

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Well, I'll tell you how many, Americano. TOO MANY. And we are out there. So, just think to yourself, here I am just one. Just one of your conquests, and I've got your complete fucking attention. How do you think the world will look at you when back outside there we all are, in the thousands upon thousands, with our un'dead hands all pointing straight at you.

My guess: you'll shit yourself worse than he just pissed himself, Americano. And maybe one day you'll be an empty too. Just like when bullets cross La Linea. Oh, Los Estados Unidos will de' flate. Do you hear me what I'm tellin'to you, you fuckin'memory.

(MARI's humming turns to song. All turn to her. Music swells. MARI illuminates.
Enter DEAD HUSBAND, who looks beat, cut up. DEAD POLICE CHIEF goes to him.
Both EL MORETE and GÜERO react, cannot take their eyes off)

MARI

Omigod, Love.

DEAD HUSBAND

Always I knew I wouldn't be able to take it if something happened to you.

MARI

...

DEAD HUSBAND

But now look at you. Calling me close. And here I am again. By your side. Just like I should have always been.

MARI

I'm sorry, I am. For...everything.

DEAD HUSBAND

I should've listened. I should have heard you what you—

MARI

No, you were right to try to—

(DEAD HUSBAND kneels, talks to somebody younger)

(to mija) "Hey mija, look at who's here? Both your parents here talking."

MARI

(to mija) "Hi mija, lookit you, lookit that smile."

DEAD HUSBAND

(to mija) “We’re sorry for all the noise, mija, we know it must be hard to sleep with all the—“

MARI

(to mija) “Car backfires.”

(They let mija respond)

DEAD HUSBAND

(to mija) “You’re so smart, mija. And I apology to you. I know you know better than car backfires.”

MARI

(to mija) “He just wanted to protect your little receptors.”

(MARI grabs mija’s ears playfully)

DEAD HUSBAND

(to mija) “Don’t worry though. Look outside the window, mija, do you know what all that is? That’s how bright it’ll be now when you walk yourself so safe to that school of yours. An then pretty soon, mija, you’ll be so smart, that me an your Mamá will hafta ask you what stuff is.”

MARI

(to mija) “You’ll hafta explain, mija, cuz you have it in you to get so smart that we won’t even be able to recognize this town where we live. This country. Tha’s how different you’ll make it with your smart head.”

DEAD HUSBAND

(to mija) “What’s that, mija? Oh, I know, I hear it too. That’s how beautiful what your Mamá sound like, that’s how amazing her voice. And I just cannot wait for you to hear it.”

(DEAD HUSBAND stands up taking in the music, MARI joins him. Music swells)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

If only the world could hear what your family sound like. Me, mine never sound nothing like that. But tha’s maybe why I lost my good though, huh?

(DEAD HUSBAND goes to the door, looks out)

DEAD HUSBAND

This isn’t just us, our family. That out there, that is family.

(MARI and DEAD POLICE CHIEF joins DEAD HUSBAND at the door; they all look out)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

We're out there, Mari. Waiting for you. Listening for you. And we are not invisible no more.

DEAD HUSBAND

Look at all of them. Look at how many. You are not alone, Mari.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

And we will do whatever it is you want, however you tell us to.

MARI

...but, what is it I want?

DEAD HUSBAND

What you always did, to be heard.

(MARI walks to GÜERO and EL MORETE)

MARI

And these two. Will they hear me too?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

They will have to.

DEAD HUSBAND

They already do, Mari. Look at them. If they did not hear all of this that you've created, if hearing you did not—

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Scare the shit out the them.

DEAD HUSBAND

Thank you. Then they would have gotten rid of you already. But see...

MARI

Tell me, love, tell me what you see.

DEAD HUSBAND

They are the most frightened people here.

MARI

Know what I think?

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Dime.

MARI

They are so frightened, they have no idea we are even standing here.

(GÜERO and EL MORETE come to from their staring at
DEAD POLICE CHIEF and DEAD HUSBAND)

GÜERO

Alright, alright.

DEAD HUSBAND

Is it, alright? You don't look alright.

GÜERO

I'll give you that. The fact that you're standing there talking, but at the same time you're sorta laying on the floor over there...bleeding—

DEAD HUSBAND

What about it?

GÜERO

It's...a little...

DEAD HUSBAND

(to GÜERO) Go on, look for yourself.

(GÜERO walks to window)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

You Americanos, you see ghosts on all your days, but you never look at them.

(GÜERO has to hold his hand up as it is so bright)

There is nothing little about it, Americano.

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

On the streets, in your home. But pretty soon, there will be no more homes, there will be just only ghosts. And tell me, Americano, what will you look at then?

(GÜERO moves away from the window)

GÜERO

That's uh...quite a view.

(EL MORETE quietly dials his phone)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

Don't worry, Güero, soon you will be surrounded by so many of us, that my heart cannot even understand it how surrounded. But maybe that's okay, huh. It ain't my heart that needs to understand it.

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF takes the phone)

DEAD POLICE CHIEF

(into phone) You can come pick up the little one at Señora Policia's house.

(Tosses the phone to the floor)

(to EL MORETE) Do you think they'll even come for you.
to GÜERO) Or is he a number already?

(DEAD POLICE CHIEF walks to the door, he steps out into
the music. DEAD HUSBAND walks up close to EL MORETE
and looks at him)

DEAD HUSBAND

So, El Morete, would you like to take a look?

(EL MORETE moves away)

MARI

Love.

DEAD HUSBAND

Don't worry, Mari, there is nothing he can do to you now. He hasn't got the
voice to even speak at you.

EL MORETE

Yea, you can listen to your "husband," Mari, or this fucked up music bullshit.
But right now, there are real people, with real problems coming your way.

DEAD HUSBAND

To do what? Look outside, what is it you think they can do to her now?

MARI

(to GÜERO) Well?

GÜERO

Well, what?

MARI

What can they do to me?

GÜERO

...

EL MORETE

Whatever in fuck they want, Mari. You think they give a fuck about whatever
outside whatever door, huh? Es just noise. An you know what's like louder than
fucking noise? Fucking gunshots, fucking automatics being fucking automatic.

EL MORETE(cont)

So you can stand here with your whatever'the'fuck husband, humming or whatever you do, but in not that long, the only sound that'll be left to heard will be me. My sound. An that shit'll darken even the brightest motherfucking bright.

(EL MORETE kneels)

"Ain't that right, mija?"

GÜERO

The hell are you—

EL MORETE

What I always do Güero, exactly what you tell me.

(Lights darken outside. Music darkens. MARI moves to EL MORETE, looking at him with true empathy)

(to mija) "Hey, es okay, don't be escared.

Tha's a girl.

So like, wow, you're big now, what grade are you in anyways? (pause) Oh, shit, wha's that you got? You smoke? Hey, tha's okay, when I was your age, I smoke too. It's hard to keep that shit from your parents, huh?

So tell me, where somebody your age get money for—Oh, what's this?

(EL MORETE holds out a roll of bills to invisible daughter)

Go on, feel how heavy. (pause) What's that? (pause) Oh, it does smell nice, don't it. Yea. Hey, know what? You smell nice.

(He kisses mija)

Believe in this, mija: you don't need to be escared no more. Cuz you an me, we belong like to each other, an no matter whatever happen, you an me, we're the family now."

(MARI puts a motherly touch on EL MORETE, who moves away disturbed by her demeanor; music strengthens)

DEAD HUSBAND

Our daughter will be okay, our mija will grow up to be—

EL MORETE

The fuck she will.

(EL MORETE takes back his gun and exits)

GÜERO

...I just want you to know, Mari, that this whole...everything, can be cleaner than it is. And whatever I can do to make it a nicer exchange, I will.

MARI

A nicer exchange?

GÜERO

A nicer exchange.

MARI

This is no exchange. This is as one-way as life gets. And there is nothing close to nice even about it.

GÜERO

Nice'er. I did say er. Oh, also, I'm thinking we should go.

MARI

Go where?

GÜERO

Y'see, at the end of the day, you are...

DEAD HUSBAND

Don't listen to him. He has no idea what you are.

GÜERO

Well, she's alive. But in a very short time I'm thinking a whole crew of men with guns are gonna pull up here and shoot her repeatedly.

MARI

So, what, you're helping me now?

DEAD HUSBAND

He can't help you. Outside, Mari, outside is the only help you need

GÜERO

I can take her with me.

MARI

What?

DEAD HUSBAND

Take her where.

(GÜERO points north)

MARI

What do you mean, what are you—

GÜERO

I'm talking about what if you could be on television, Mari?

DEAD HUSBAND

He's desperate, Mari, he has no—

GÜERO

As the bravest woman this side of México. You'll be in the papers; online and off. News anchors will want to interview you about you. About what happened to your husband. How did this twenty-two year old you with a family of her own decide to...well, we know the story.

MARI

And I'll get to go with you, across...

GÜERO

Look, I've got no shot of quieting whatever all this is in this country, but I've got a pretty good shot of making you famous in mine. And well, my country is, if nothing else, somewhat louder than yours.

DEAD HUSBAND

Did you hear him, he can't quiet you, Mari. Nobody can. Not him, not los narcos, not los soldados, not—

MARI

And what do you get?

GÜERO

Mari, your "husband's" right, I can't have all this...noise. In the business sense of it. And while I know business is entirely the opposite of what you care about, if you don't come with me, your entire line of family, will be...just like him. Which, I'm sorry, might sound like music to you now, but we're talking Grotesquely. Fucking Torturously.

DEAD HUSBAND

Los narcos will pull up here to where we live, Mari, to where our daughter will one day wake, and they will not be able to do anything. They will put their hands up to stop the bright, and drop their weapons so they can stop up their ears.

GÜERO

What they can't do today, Mari, they can do on another day. You know this. But if you come with me, if you bring your family along too, nobody will ever be able to reach you, because your story will be...heroic. And shit, do we Americanos love us some heroics.

MARI

And if I go with you, Americano, if my family comes along. What happens to la música?

GÜERO

Look, going with me is the humane thing to do here—

DEAD HUSBAND

For which country? Ours or yours?

GÜERO

You want there to be less dead, less bodies.

MARI

But is that what you want?

GÜERO

Yea, alright, fine. I'm a selfish prick, nine outta ten women will agree. But that one, that one woman out of ten will tell you, Mari, that your parents will want you to come with me, your sister and her family will want you to live, no matter what the cost. They'll say to you that one day you *could* have a daughter—

DEAD HUSBAND

She will have one.

GÜERO

Okay. And that daughter will thank you for all her life, for letting her have a life. And her kids will too. And their's after.

MARI

Es a simple question, Americano, what happens to la música if I go with you?

DEAD HUSBAND

And imagine what can happen to la música, if you doesn't go with him.

(GÜERO pulls his mobile)

GÜERO

Look, I've made my offer. It's your life to take or let go of. Just say the word. And if you don't say the word...well...then good luck to you, you best be on your way. And me on mine.

(They stare. A moment. He dials, lights darken over him. Music bursts through, it crosses countries and expands borders. MARI and HUSBAND look at each other as they listen in awe at the vibrations of the music. White out)

act two, closing

EL MORETE looks up at the sky as it brightens, as the music soars.

Several hundred ghosts appear. He pulls his gun and aims it in all directions. Lights down over him.

Inside the home is messed; drawers are opened, clothes strewn about. It is vacated and looks exactly like the sort of house you would see a decapitated man laying in a pool of blood. From outside, the sounds of tires crushing onto gravel are heard. Headlights flash the window. Several car doors open and shut. The music swells, drowning out the sounds of footsteps on gravel moving closer and the clacking of automatic weapons.

When the stage has hit to black, we hear men's voices entering the home, shouting through it. Fragments of phrases such as: "¿Dónde están?!" "¡No están aquí!" can be heard. The music grows in strength over the voices, silencing them. Deafening in beauty before spilling over into the sort of serenity that just does not exist anymore. Curtain. END OF PLAY.