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Latinx Education Policy and Resistance in the Trump Era

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Canyon City
By Irene Sanchez

For the students of Azusa, CA

Driving through the canyon city
Find Botanicas and Barber shops
Mercados and mother's pushing strollers

Mothers pushing strollers down streets
Named for a citrus past
Schools in a city named for a rancho

A rancho owned by Dalton a man who sided
With the Mexicans during the Mexican American War

Mexican American War
What remains today is a romanticized history
But what was erased is the fact that the
San Gabriel Valley is indigenous land

Indigenous land
There are spirits that still echo through these canyons

These canyons
These mountains
I breath the crisp morning air
A tardy bell rings
As I watch students make their way
Finding a way
Wondering why they are here after traveling

Many roads

Many roads lead to a classroom
They enter holding back a rumble in their bellies
Too many painful nights

Painful nights
They don't want to remember
Nights full of stars they can't even see the magic
They are made of
Because in the morning
They sit where it has been erased, degraded, left out of
The curriculum

The curriculum the other teachers say it's too advanced
Too much
Too real
Too challenging
Because it sounds too much like the truth
They call it un-American
But this was Mexico once

This was Mexico once I tell them
And they don't believe me
You only believe what you see
And so they tell me how the cops stopped them
The other night,
How another has slept in a car
How another has been locked up
Beat up
Told they are good for nothing
No good
Mexicans
Latinos
Chicanos
Brown

Brown
They tell me

You get stopped around here for looking suspicious
For looking like you don't belong

Belong where? Read for yourself in these books

These books were banned in Arizona
Books are still banned in this country
Because they don't want you to know
The truth about yourself and where you come from

If you tell a people they are inferior long enough they
Begin to believe it

Listen close as darkness falls
The spirits begin to rattle their bones
Hear them echo through the canyon
As helicopters loom overhead
Shining light you run to darkness as the palm trees sway
Listen to the song they are teaching you

A song that says no more running away from the truth
No more lies
No more foreign miners tax
No more celebrating lynchings of Mexicans
Or hangman trees
No more Mexican schools
No more Bracero Program
No more Mexicans can only swim on Mondays
Because they empty the dirty water
So the White people can swim on Tuesday
No more unequal schools
No more draft to Vietnam
No more racial profiling, school to prison pipeline,
or police brutality
No more deportations
No more ICE
No more calling us names
No more calling us animals
No more putting our children in cages
But mostly
No more racist counselors or teachers telling you
No
No you can't go to college or take this class
About yourself

No more go back to Mexico

No more go back to where you came from
No more go back to where you came from
No more stay where you are supposed to be
Here
Right here where we tell you
you're supposed to be

Tell them where you're from
Tell them you are brown
Tell them you are beautiful
Tell them you are a smoking mirror revealing truth
Tell them you are flint and that means your words will cut anyone
Who tries to tell you are anything but brilliant
Tell them you are the dreams of your ancestors and how their spirits
Became butterflies who
Flew to the night sky and became the stars
They watch over you
Tell them who you are
And let the canyons echo your name