

Dear Brown Girl

By: Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodríguez

Adapted by Fishtank Staff



Photo of young Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodríguez is used with permission by the author.

- 1 Dear Brown Girl . . .
- 2 You are eternal. You have a fire burning inside you, and it comes from your mami's side. Protect your fire, protect that flame. You feel everything and feel nothing. You carry your pain, the pain that comes from asking too many questions, because once you've heard your chains rattle, you cannot unhear them. You preserve yourself, but also for your mami and your papi, and for your little hermanita who is only now beginning to understand the limitations that our cultura has placed on her.
- 3 You are neither here nor there, but everywhere. You carry your cultura in your veins and academia in your heart. You have not forgotten where you come from, but you have learned and earned and maybe even forced your way into spaces not meant for you. You are poderosa like that. You defy the expectations of respectability and you do not seem to care—do you, Brown girl.
- 4 Your vocabulary is vast and your wit is sharp. You are unstoppable.

- 5 You are going places that no one in your family has ever been and you are fearful of your fearlessness. You belong to no one but are accountable to many. We depend on you. Do not let anyone else tell you differently.
- 6 You are groundbreaking. Your parents brag about your brilliance all while exhorting you to be more like their friends' daughters, the good obedient daughters who did what they were told. Your parents say this because they do not know what to do with their Brown girl. They have not been able to hold your fire for some time now. But you must hold your parents in your heart as you dismantle the systems that have kept people like them down. They were kept down, but not you, Brown girl. You owe it to them to keep fighting.
- 7 Partners have tried to pin you down, they have tried to claim you, but you have resisted because you are not meant to belong to anyone. You belong entirely to yourself.
- 8 Your laugh carries liberation in it.
- 9 Brown girl, do not let them take away your passion. Because they will try, without any compassion, to keep you down. But remember that without passion you will extinguish, and so to be safe, make sure that you keep others nearby who can pick you up and light you up again.
- 10 Because, Brown girl, we need each other.