Second-Hand Smoke:
Chilean Postmemory in Exile

by

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Author's Note

My father was one of the thousands of children displaced by Chile's 1973 coup d'etat and subsequent military dictatorship. While there exists a great body of literature on those individuals who experienced this violence and displacement as adults, little attention has been given to how their children, the Chilean diaspora's "hinge" generation, remembers and constructs their own experiences of dislocation. This thesis attends to the task of complicating existing narratives of loss and displacement in the Chilean diaspora. Through theory and through fiction, it centers the "hinge" generation to encourage a multivalent and multi-voiced approach to remembering. Three original short stories form the focal point of this thesis. Joined together by the recurrent motif of second-hand smoke, these works explore memory and trauma within the family, and the way the past intrigues, haunts, and interrupts. All three stories were informed by 16 personal interviews I conducted with members of her family and other displaced Chileans, as well as audiovisual testimonies of displaced Chileans from the archives at el Museo de la Memoria y Derechos Humanos in Santiago, Chile. As a member of the third generation, knowing that my own understanding of the past has become dissociated from earlier memories, this project also features a small collection of family photos, inviting readers to speculate on how these images can communicate on their own.
Chapter I: History

My Nana, Patricia, in front of a GoodYear Blimp.

Miami, USA. 1962.
I

From Then to Now, From There to Here: A History of Chilean Exile

The story of Chile in the late twentieth-century, and of those Chileans that fled their homeland in search of security, is not easily collapsed into an introductory chapter. For non-area specialists, in this section, I have endeavored to paint with a broad-brush in order to give readers a foundational understanding of the political and social situation that led up to and followed the military coup in 1973, specifically as it affected those who were forced to flee Chile as a result of the Pinochet regime. This chapter traces the history and material conditions of the Chilean diaspora rather than detailing the goings-on on the ground in Chile during the late 1970s and 1980s. A thorough historical analysis of the changing social, economic, and political conditions of the early 20th-Century are indeed relevant to understanding how both the Chilean Armed Forces and the Unidad Popular came into their power. However, based on the constraints of the project, this thesis chooses the rise of Salvador Allende as its historical beginning. It accepts and encourages the notion that this story has yet to end.

In 1833, the Chilean government initially enfranchised 10% of the population, producing the framework for a highly limited, but functioning democratic system. In 1925, with the introduction of the a formal constitution, the country began to blossom into a more inclusive democratic society. Chilean multiparty democracy boasted a strong and varied left throughout the interwar period and beyond, but found itself enmeshed in Cold War pressures, resulting in the repression of Chilean communists throughout the 1950s. The following decade gave way to an urbanized, educated, and
organized workforce, with a domestic economy tied tightly to the global market price of copper, however industrialization and modernization were intricately bound up in state intervention and foreign capital; as such, Chile contended with debt and inflation during much of the 1960s. Chile's "revolutionary" generation came of age in the 1960s, in a world that was grappling with the contradictions of modern capitalism. This peer group underwent intense political socialization at an early age, both in secondary schools and in universities, which served as incubators for both right and left-wing thinkers. For the left, the global resonance of the Cuban Revolution in 1953 inspired intense solidarity and popular insurrection across the Latin American continent. Much of the activism of this era came out of the university, where middle class students rallied against the societal hierarchies that failed to represent their outlooks or meet their needs. These groups also worked alongside indigenous groups and other disenfranchised communities in ocupaciones (occupations), in which groups would forcefully reclaimed Mapuche lands. The period was also punctuated by high levels of civic engagement on the Right, particularly those nationalist groups who had grown impatient with the ineffectiveness of the electoral system.

In the late 1960s, the Chilean left, though strong, became stratified and disjointed. The Unidad Popular, for example, was a leftist political coalition headed by Salvador Allende, that brought together a range of disparate leftist thinkers. The alliance was comprised of members of Allende's own Socialist Party (democratic socialist group at centre left), the Communist Party (Marxist-Leninist), the Social Democrats, the Radical Party (centre, anti-communists who supported gradual reforms), the Independent Popular Action Party (left-wing nationalists), and the
Popular Unitary Action Movement or the MAPU (a revolutionary group with more radical Marxist-Leninists and anti-imperialist leanings). The coalition later expanded to include the more radical MAPU Campesino, Izquierda Cristiana, and Altamirano Socialists, who comprised the revolutionary wing of the party, and clashed significantly with the UP's other members on issues like the gradualism of socialist transition and the role of the worker.\(^1\) Despite their differences, these groups embarked on a common project, envisioning the possibility of building a socialist future through the ballot box, rather than through violent means. Outside of this coalition, guerilla groups like the MIR (Movimiento de Izquierda Revolucionaria or Revolutionary Left Movement) also attracted broad-based support, but elected to bring about revolution through militant action.

In 1970, Chile elected socialist Allende of the Unidad Popular as president. Allende became the first ever Marxist to be democratically elected as a head of state. In his youth, he was involved in the world of student activism, specifically concerning the movements targeted at improving the health of lower-class communities. It was through this work that he prescribed revolutionary democratic socialism as a realistic and practical solution to Chile's plight, that fit within the nation's constitutional framework. For Allende, revolutionary democratic socialism centred the voices of the people in the socialist struggle. In his line of thinking, revolutionary economic justice strengthened democracy and thus, Allende's socialism required elected officials to regulate key sectors of the economy. This radical doctor and parliamentarian was distinguished from his peers in his nationalism, commitment

to bettering the lives of the poor, and dedication to Chile's republican constitutional
system. Against the backdrop of Social Democratic Party's economic failures, the
Unidad Popular secured a winning position in the 1970 election by a narrow margin.
Allende, whose supporters considered principled, sincere, and a champion of
democracy won only 36.61% of the 1970 vote. In this regard, the 1970 election was a
crystallization of what was, and remains to be, a highly polarized society, and many
considered Allende's election to be a tyranny of the minority. Importantly, Allende's
election, while celebrated by many on the left, upset rightists and centrists within
Chile, as well as members of the international community, most notably the
McCarthyist United States who had opposed Allende's rise since 1964.

Allende was confirmed as president only with the conditional support of
Chile's Christian Democrats, inciting another peaceful, yet precarious transfer of
power. This democratic power transfer, uncommon at the time in the Latin American
continent, is one of the cornerstones of the democracy Chile had long prided itself on.
Following a successful first year in office, during which the government nationalized
(or Chileanized) the copper industry, Allende faced hostility from the conservative
congressional majority domestically, as well as sanctions from the Nixon
administration in the U.S. By 1971, supply shortages and hyperinflation, which
reached a record 200% rocked Chilean society, slowing the Unidad Popular's
momentum. The country had amassed a deficit of close to 13% of its GDP, while real
wages dropped significantly. For the people, this meant lining up in the streets for
basic commodities like oil, sugar, gasoline, and laundry detergent. Given that many
leftists considered homosexuality to be a bourgeois construction, this period was also
characterized by an onslaught of homophobic media content from the left. By 1973, the country became intensely polarized; Allende's policies and their pushback had engendered an economic crisis so severe that many thought it merited foreign or military intervention. Others considered Chile to be on the brink of civil war. These years have been described by Allende supporters and critics alike as heady and intense.

Allende's Unidad Popular was in power in Chile for almost three years; from November of 1970 until the coup d'etat in September of 1973. But throughout his time in office, the precarity and vulnerability of the UP's power was manifest. Given Chile's political polarization paired with the social unrest unleashed by the supply shortages, rumours of a coup hung over the heads of the nation, such that the cataclysmic events of September 11th, 1973, were not altogether unforeseen. Three months prior, Lieutenant Colonel Roberto Souper attempted to overthrow the Unidad Popular through a failed military coup known as el tanquetazo or the Tank Putsch. On June 29th, Souper led a fleet of tanks to Chile's colonial-era presidential palace, la Plaza de la Moneda, and the Ministry of Defense, opening fire on the two buildings just as employees arrived at work. The coup was successfully quashed by other army members who remained committed to constitutionalism. Critically, however, el tanquetazo, more so than a true attempt at dethroning the Allende government, functioned as a dress rehearsal: a means to test the loyalties of the army, and decipher appropriate military strategy to penetrate La Moneda.

Under the leadership of commander in-chief Augusto Pinochet, the Chilean Air Force bombed el Palacio de la Moneda in a second coup to remove Allende's
government on September 11th, 1973. Unlike el tanquetazo, this overthrow proved successful, aided by the full support of the Nixon administration. In his final speech, broadcasted to the country on public radio, Allende refused safe passage into exile, vowing to remain in the palace and fight to the end. Direct witnesses attest that Allende later ended his own life. For years after, the details of Allende's death, specifically whether he committed suicide or was killed, was the subject of public debate, but by 2011 it was confirmed Allende took his own life. With the support of the state police, the Pinochet junta declared a state of siege and occupied all the country's major cities. A strict curfew enforcement, the shutdown of the legislature and the judiciary, the suspension of civil liberties, and the purging of Unidad Popular representatives were announced via *bandos*, or official radio declarations. The borders were sealed.

For some, the coup d'etat marked a break with Chile's storied and proud democratic history, and the beginning of a 17 year long military dictatorship. For others, September 11th, 1973 was the day that Chile's armed forces ended saved the country from civil war and continued collapse at the hands of communism; a cause for celebration. Against the backdrop of continued polarization, Augusto Pinochet and his junta assumed power and established a military dictatorship, presiding over Chile from 1973-1990. Their main goal was to overhaul Chile's existing economic system, and replace it with a market capitalist system, but they needed to eradicate Chile's powerful left to do so. The dictatorship took control over national mass media, and used it to discredit leftist organizations, and thereby legitimize state violence. In a campaign of state terrorism, the DINA (*Dirección de Inteligencia Nacional* or secret
police, established in 1974) incarcerated, tortured, murdered, and disappeared upwards of 80,000 political prisoners in the 6 months that followed the coup. Years later, The Rettig and Valech Reports would find at least 2,279 instances of murder, and at least 30,000 instances of torture for political reasons committed by the regime as a part of Operation Condor, the US-backed state repression campaign implemented by Pinochet and other Southern Cone dictators, officially beginning in 1975. The junta invoked a rhetoric of purification to justify the torture of academics and burning books in a campaign of thought suppression. Moreover, despite the anti-gay sentiments that punctuated the Allende years, an emphasis on a return to the "family values" that had been "corrupted" during the Unidad Popular period was used to justify violence against Chile's LGBTQ community. In the face of this repression, the LGBTQ community, along with the church, became leaders in resisting the dictatorship in Chile. The junta also changed the national anthem, requiring that the second verse, which glorified Chile's military might, be publicly sung.

While the stories of those who endured the dictatorship in Chile have been central in the existing scholarship, this thesis aims to centre those who experienced a distinct, yet related form of violence from outside Chile's borders: exile. The term exile is defined as a person who live away from their native country, either by choice or by compulsion. For the purpose of this thesis, the term will be used to designate those individuals who left Chile between 1973 and 1990, for political or punitive reasons. Exile was employed by the junta as a means of eradicating those associated with the Unidad Popular and its associated leftist subsidiaries, as a means of

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removing the "cancerous tumor" of its membership, and in an effort to eradicate any political opponents.\(^3\) While many individuals fled voluntarily before the government could identify and persecute them, many were exiled only after serving time in an internment camp, or being tortured for information. Decree Law 81 in November of 1973, and Supreme Decree 604 in June of 1974, stripped many leftist-aligned Chileans of their citizenship. These decrees functioned in conjunction with *La Lista Nacional*, a registry which initially deemed close to five thousand citizens dangerous by marking their passports with a letter "L." The regime also employed internal exile, or *relegación* as a means of incapacitating and punishing state enemies who did not pose a big enough threat to warrant expatriation. These *relegados* were heavily monitored by police, and sequestered to remote and uninhabited regions where they were effectively "left on their own to survive."\(^4\) To break down the demographics of exile, the total number of asylum seekers is around 10,000, totaling in about 30,000 individuals when family members are included. This number rises to 200,000 when combined with the number of those who were exiled by direct decree, or fled out of fear due to their political affiliations.\(^5\) Consequently, a transnational diaspora of making up about 2% of the country's then 10 million citizens, fled the country out of fear for their lives. This data is somewhat disputed owing to the array of official reasons that were used to justify immigration out of Chile, as well as the fact that capturing numbers of migrant families is more difficult than capturing individual

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exiled adults. These numbers are further obfuscated given that exiles became intermeshed with a group of Chileans who fled Chile some time earlier because they opposed the Allende government, or because Allende's economic policies were not amenable to their lines of work.

Exiles fled to at least 110 of the world's then 188 countries. Anticipating the collapse of the Pinochet government under the gravity of the Chilean democratic tradition, these Chileans expected their exile to be temporary. Many describe their exile as a period of living with packed suitcases. As such, the proclivity for return distinguishes the Chilean diaspora. Some scholars attribute the notion of inevitable return to Allende's final radio broadcast, where the president instructed his supporters to "keep the faith" for "neither criminality nor repression can hold back history." Much like the image of Che Guevara, a canonized Allende remained a crucial and highly emotional rallying point for exiled organizers. Foreign embassies on the ground in Chile, especially France, Argentina, Mexico, and Sweden's, served a leading role in helping targeted people evade capture on the streets of Santiago. Exiles fled the dictatorship predominantly by air and through legal channels; the lawful manner in which they fled gave the Pinochet regime a register through which to denounce exiles, painting their departure as voluntary and their exile as luxurious. Many fled to neighbouring Argentina and Peru, expecting a quick return back to Chile; however, due to their own economic and political challenges, neither country provided the most amenable environment for Chilean exiles. Thus, many exiles fled by plane to countries outside of the Southern Cone including Venezuela (with 44% of

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7 Simalchik, The Material Culture of Chilean Exile, p. 96
exiles settled there in 1984), Mexico, and Cuba. Many Western European countries were supportive of the defeated left, and welcomed Chileans into Italy, France, Sweden, and The Netherlands. The Eastern Bloc also welcomed passage to a number of Chileans, especially those associated with the far and Leninist left. Owing to the linguistic overlap, Spain was an attractive and relatively welcoming society for exiles, yet still under Francoism, many Chileans did not find Spanish society particularly amenable. Mozambique and Nicaragua sought the help of educated Chilean professionals, while Canada and Australia endeavoured to expand their labour forces through immigration during the 1970s; both groups welcomed Chilean refugees with open arms. Back in Chile, the Pinochet regime spread anti-exile rhetoric which framed exile as luxurious or "golden." This rhetoric was aided by the fact that most exiles came from upper middle-class backgrounds. Exiles were largely urban professionals who had the means and connections to resettle abroad, while those leftists and dissidents who did not have the means to flee often experienced the repression more directly. Though many exiles did not have a choice in the location of their resettlement, once the exile proved more permanent, some sought safe havens in hubs that aligned with their political values: staunch Communists resettled in Moscow, Rome became a hub for those aligned with the Socialist Party, and those who esteemed Latin American solidarity gathered in Mexico City. Foreign capitals in the Western world were quick to legitimize Pinochet's junta, inhibiting the exiled

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8 Wright and Oñate, *Chilean Political Exile*, p. 37
Unidad Popular members from forming a de facto governing body outside the borders of Chile.

Vis-a-vis their brothers and sisters who did not flee the country, exiles had the privilege of speaking out against the government, of using their voice to both maintain and refashion their chilenidad\(^{10}\) and raise awareness in the international community about the human rights abuses going on under the dictatorship. Just as the intensity of socialist reform enveloped organizers in the 1960s, the revolutionary generation, now exiled, found themselves swept up in a massive solidarity movement, raising awareness around human rights abuses and Chile's democratic plights.

\(^{10}\) Chilean-ness, or conception of the nation
Protests, gatherings, and concerts functioned in a dual process of raising awareness of the human rights abuses in Chile, while concurrently serving as a means of maintaining a Chilean leftist culture through music, poetry, and folk dancing. _Tareas_ (solidarity tasks), _peñas_ (musical events), and _homenajes_ (homages to the dead and disappeared) were critical and public acculturation events, that explicitly sought to engage non-Chilean populations in the country of resettlement.¹¹ _Nueva canción_, a social justice-oriented music genre associated with the 1960s, spiked in popularity. Musical groups like Inti-Illimani and Quilapayun re-energized exiles by touring from community to community to human rights abuses in Chile on the agenda for decades. As a result, the soundtrack of the socialist organizing of the 1960s reemerged with new meaning, scoring the exiled years with calls for solidarity and justice.

In 1982, an economic crisis befell neoliberal Chile. The overvaluation of the peso, paired with high interest rates and over $17 million in external debt inspired starving Chileans to take to the street in organized acts of resistances like riots and barricades, marking an important milestone for domestic resistance. Students and the families of the killed and disappeared were key actors in the upheaval. This spark of resistance was dovetailed by increased independence of the mass media, and thus organized agitations and their suppression were often televised. Simultaneously, due largely to the successful efforts of exiles, Chile's reputation in the international community was at an all time low. This made attracting international investors more difficult, and threw a wrench in the prosperity of the junta's neoliberal reforms.

¹¹ Simalchik, _The Material Culture of Chilean Exile_, p. 4
By the mid-1980s, many Chileans abroad elected to go back to Chile, regardless of whether or not it was entirely safe to do so. The first wave of *retornados* (returners) constituted the beginning of a post-exile, or counter-diaspora.\(^\text{12}\) Of those *retornados* that registered with the Office of Return, close to 70% were professionals or technicians, and nearly all returning Chileans settled in Santiago or Valparaiso.\(^\text{13}\) These *retornados* were decisive participants in the 1988 Plebiscite that removed Pinochet from the presidential office, allowing new constitutional laws to be approved in pursuit of democratic revitalization. The dictatorship's bad reputation amongst international investors, along with the decline of the Soviet Union in the late 1980's, and pressure from the Vatican\(^\text{14}\) resulted in a fair and democratic plebiscite in which the Chilean people had the power to ratify the presidential candidate selected by the armed forces.\(^\text{15}\) If the public voted "YES" to this plebiscite, Pinochet would have remained in power for an additional 8 years, though a Congress would have been elected and installed in 1990. However, 55% of Chileans voted "NO" to Pinochet, inciting a transition back to democracy, albeit on Pinochet's terms. Democratic transition allowed for the re-emergence of oppositional political parties, and legally allowed exiles to re-enter the country and reclaim their citizenship rights. For many, who had lived with suitcases packed, return to the promised land seemed both necessary and straightforward.\(^\text{16}\) But for other exiles, return to a forever-change

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\(^{12}\) This term describes the reversal of transnationalism coined by sociologists Anastasia Christou and Russell King in 2014.

\(^{13}\) Llambias-Wolff, Jaime, *The Voluntary Repatriation Process of Chilean Exiles*, p. 585

\(^{14}\) Pope John Paul II used "unusually strong language" to condemn Pinochet after his April 1987 visit to Chile.


\(^{16}\) Hite, *When the Romance Ended*, p. 47
country, stripped of the revolutionary culture that had made it theirs, proved challenging. The returned exiles were not the only people struggling with the fall of the dictatorship, for indeed, the shift from authoritarianism to democracy affected Chileans of all political leanings,

Though amnesty laws, military pushback, and norms of impunity obstructed the path to justice for many exiles and victims of state violence, the newly elected government, headed by Patricio Aylwin, made a point of offering reparations to victims of the dictatorship. The new government set out to uncover the details of the crimes committed under the Pinochet regime through the 1991 National Commission for Truth and Reconciliation Report, or Rettig Report. The report sought to sketch a picture of the human rights abuses committed under the dictatorship, create a list of victims, set forward recommendations for reparations, and adjust legal and administrative initiatives to prevent future violations.\textsuperscript{17} However, human rights association and the families of victims were displeased by the fact the report did not name perpetrators or mandate trials.\textsuperscript{18} In 2004, the Chilean government conducted a second investigation, culminating in the Valech Report, which will keep the testimonies of the victims classified until 2055. Despite the relative success of the Rettig and Valech initiatives, the families of those who were tortured, incapacitated, and disappeared continue to demand further transparency and accountability from former members of the Pinochet government. In recent years, the Concertacion, the centre-left coalition established after the dictatorship that held power from 1988 until

\textsuperscript{17}Ensalaco, Mark, \textit{Truth Commissions for Chile and El Salvador: A Report and Assessment"}. \textit{Human Rights Quarterly}, 16 (4): 656–675. 1994

\textsuperscript{18}Ros, Ana, \textit{The post-dictatorship generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay: Collective memory and cultural production}. 2012, p. 111
2010, has expressed that the past serves "only as cautionary relevance for the present." Perhaps controversially, there emerges a great haste on behalf of the government to turn the page of history, and rely on memory only as a means to prevent the past from repeating itself. Other voices see the efforts of the Concertación as excessive, thinking it best to keep Pinochet in the past.

The unfurling of the dictatorship that ensued from the 1988 Plebiscite engendered a controlled transition back to democracy, with popularly elected Aylwin of the Christian Democrats as the new head of state. Removed from his role as dictator, Pinochet retained his powers as head of the military, and later, much to the public's dismay, became a senator for life. In October of 1998, while in Britain for medical treatment, Augusto Pinochet was arrested under an international warrant to be extradited in Spain for crimes against humanity including torture, terrorism, and genocide. At this point, Pinochet he remained a highly influential and popular political figure in the Chilean state as a senator for life, especially granted the new government's challenges with setting the conditions of democratic transition. The detention was seen as a historic milestone for international human rights. Minister Eduardo Frei Ruiz-Tagle, Chile's president at the time, opposed the arrest, trial, and extradition to Spain, while exiles around the world took to the streets to demonstrate

21 It should be noted that during the time of his arrest, despite the charges set against him, Pinochet had the full support of Margaret Thatcher as a result of their previous alliance during the Falkland Island dispute, whereby Pinochet allowed Thatcher's troops a base for passage to the islands.
and protest against impunity. In March of 2000, Pinochet was deemed medically unfit to see trial, and released back to Chile after a year and a half of house arrest in Britain. His arrest and detention marked an important moment of reignited solidarity in Chilean exile communities, as well as a decline in his domestic support back in Chile. Upon his return, congress passed a law granting the ex-president immunity from prosecution in exchange for his resignation from his "senator for life position." Due to his deteriorating health (specifically, his alleged dementia), Pinochet was protected from prosecution due to mental incapacitation. In 2004, the ex-dictator was placed under house arrest, whereby prosecutorial forces brought forth charges against him of murder, disappearing, torture, embezzlement, money laundering, drug trafficking, illegal arms trade, and the production of chemical and biological weapons. Pinochet died in La Reina, Chile on December 10th, 2006, without being prosecuted for any of the crimes committed during his regime.

Though much has changed in the years since the beginning of the democratic transition many relics of the dictatorship remain intact. The neoliberal economic model imposed by the dictatorship, for example, is alive and well in contemporary Chile. As a result, many criticize the Concertación for maintaining Pinochet's legacy. A range of contemporary political scientists have argued that rather than witnessing a distinct transition from the dictatorship, democratic transition marshalled a period of continuismo, whereby the Concertación government has extended Pinochet era market ideology more so than renouncing its constitutional and political measures.\textsuperscript{23} The Concertación government has attempted to remedy these conceptions and

\textsuperscript{23}Serpente, Alejandra, Diasporic Chilean and Argentinian narratives in the UK: The traces of second generation postmemory. University College London Press, 2013, p. 37
acknowledge the past, most notably through the establishment of commemorative sites. The Chilean school system, on the other hand, has made limited attempts to address the coup and the dictatorship; a 2006 study revealed that 49% of schools did not include it in their curriculum whatsoever. While the "never again" mantra has come to dominate those in-school conversations that do take place, over 60% of Chilean schools are private, and given how controversial the topic continues to be, teachers tend to stray away from discussing such polemic issues. Thus, social groups have erected a handful of commemorative sites to educate the public on the crimes committed by the dictatorship, including the Peace Park on the grounds of notorious torture center Villa Grimaldi, and the opening up of Londres 38, another torture center, for public visitation. The key site educational and commemorative site in Chile came about in 2010 with the inauguration of el Museo de la Memoria y Derecho Humanos. The museum seeks to arm the public with knowledge of the human rights abuses committed during the dictatorship, while also situating the Chilean case study within a grander, international struggle for human rights. The museum, which is free of charge for the general public and offers tours for both locals and tourists, has also began to support other nations in creation and inauguration of their own museums of memory and human rights. While the museum houses exhibits on immigration issues as well as indigenous history and resistance, its main focus is Pinochet's repression. Many have criticized this form of remembrance in that it addresses only the "political projects [the dictatorship] sought to eliminate and the social conflicts it sought to silence," where historical investigations into the Allende

24 Smink, Veronica, Cómo se enseña el golpe de Pinochet en las escuelas de Chile, BBC Mundo, 2013.
government are sidelined in an effort to present a nation "unified in the defence of human rights."²⁵

As a neoliberal institution, existing very much within the tradition established by the dictatorship itself, many see the museum, in tandem with both the Rettig Commission and the Valech Report, as an incomplete response to what happened in 1973 and onwards. Calls for justice, specifically by trial, continue to permeate public discourse. Others call for forms of expression, for remembrance beyond what is exhibited on the walls of a museum, and for narratives beyond the singular truths dictated by the truth commissions, as well as an expansion of these commemorative practices to incorporate other violent histories in Chile like the displacement, genocide, and marginalization of indigenous people, as well as xenophobic and anti-black sentiments.

The question of what is remembered and forgotten casts a shadow over today's commemorative sites and practices. In the name of self-reflexivity, this chapter itself esteems certain modes of memory, and does the active work of reifying an ever changing story by re-remembering it. Given that Chile's present will continue to be informed by memories of its violent and contested past, so too will the children and grandchildren of victims, perpetrators, and bystanders be affected. Chileans and those with Chilean heritage inherit this history; they form it just as it informs them, and thus, this story does not end in 2010 with the inauguration of el Museo de la Memoria y Derechos Humanos, nor does it end with the completion of this project. As always, historical fiction is a blend of the real and the imagined. In the context of

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²⁵ Ros, The post-dictatorship generation in Argentina, Chile, and Uruguay, p. 117
this thesis, this clouding of the two serves the content well. In this chapter, and in the chapter that follows, I strive to separate fact from fantasy to offer a frame of reference for the memory struggles of the protagonists in this thesis's fictional chapters. Bear with me as we take these initial steps of the journey, together.
Chapter II: Memory

My father, uncle, aunt, and grandfather with a fellow fisherman after a successful day on the water.
Valparaiso Chile, 1971.
II

Books are the Only Homeland: Memory, Fiction, and Theory

These are the facts I have been able to parse out of the fables: My father was born in Santiago, Chile in 1965. His father, my abuelo, made a living managing my great-grandfather's suit atelier. He was not affiliated with any political party, but through his work, became enmeshed in Santiago's leftist landscape. In July of 1973, an associate of my grandfather's with connections in the army warned him that a coup was brewing, and that he would not survive it. My grandparents and their three young children fled, first to Madrid, Spain, and then to Vancouver, Canada, where they still live today.

But my family, like all families, has its own folklore; stories mediated from parent to child or cousin to cousin in a never-ending game of telephone. There's the story of my grandmother, having recently immigrated to Canada, mistaking our local I.G.A for the "Iga." Though my grandmother does not remember it, my uncle is sure that after learning of her faux-pas, she assumed the proper pronunciation of the grocery store Safeway was S-A-F-E-W-A-Y. I learned a more fringe family legend while conducting an interview for this project: in mid-1973, a group of Communist Party bodyguards were assigned to follow my father and uncle on their way to school every morning to protect them against anti-communist insurgents. My abuelo swears it happened. My dad is unconvinced.

However unconventional and unreal, these intergenerational disagreements spark an idea for an undergraduate thesis. An extraordinary amount of literature, traditionally academic and fictional, has been written about Chile's exiled
"revolutionary" generation, my grandparents' generation. As previously mentioned, throughout the late 20th Century, Chileans in exile forged a narrative of their plight through human rights organizing and creative expressions like literature and film. However, little attention has been given to how their children remember, experience, and construct their own narratives of loss and dislocation. Thus, this chapter sets forth an argument about the need for the stories of Chile's second, or "hinge" generation be voiced. Given the shortcomings of existing post-conflict responses in Chile, this chapter also argues that the fictional medium becomes a legitimate and needed vehicle for articulating the narratives of a diasporic hinge generation. Three key guiding questions offer an analytical framework for this chapter.

1. How are dominant Chilean conflictual memory narratives produced, and what memory struggles do they engender?
2. What are the possibilities of fiction in responding to mass violence and displacement as it affects Chile's "hinge" generation?
3. What roles can the third generation play in mediating and articulating these memory struggles?
How are dominant Chilean conflictual narratives produced, and what memory struggles do they engender?

“Once sufficient time has elapsed to make possible the establishment of a minimum degree of distance between past and present, alternative (even rival) interpretations of the recent past and its memory occupy a central place in cultural and political debates…. An inescapable subject… in the difficult road towards forging democratic societies […] these memories and interpretations are also key elements in the processes of (re)construction of individual and collective identities in societies emerging from periods of violence."

- Elizabeth Jelin, State Repression and the Labors of Memory.26

This section seeks to dissect the emergence of dominant memory narratives in the case of the Chilean dictatorship, on both the domestic and the exile narratives. Within Chile, the dominant memory narrative that emerges is pedantic and moralistic, insistent on the language of human rights and of never repeating the past. On the other hand, the "exile" narrative cemented by dissidents and creatives in the 1970s and 1980s, is one of stasis, one characterized by loss and disillusionment. A memory narratives come to be solidified when state violence begins to be phased out; during periods of democratic transition. These periods are also punctuated by a tendency towards reconciliation, or a means to make peace with the past in order to push forward. Societies attempt to reach reconciliation through a variety of national responses, including trials, fact inquiry commissions, as with the Rettig Report, opening up secret military and police files, public apologies and reparations, the

removal of offenders from high ranking civic positions, providing therapeutic services for victims, creating museums, memorials, and public art installations to commemorate atrocities, educational programs, and "never again" campaigns.27 Increasingly, state-sanctioned, legal responses have become the norm. For Chile, this has meant establishing an account of what happened through the language of human rights, and proceeding in the name of ensuring these things never happen again. Surely, these measures are necessary in securing justice for those affected, and yet these institutionalized responses do little to mitigate the fact that any single response alone is insufficient. The failures of a single responses to attend to the range of individual and societal experiences of violence necessitates alternative and multifarious responses, through both legal and cultural avenues. In this regard, remembering the past becomes conflictual, and as such, Argentine sociologist Elizabeth Jelin's frames memory as a struggle. This tension can manifest in the "struggle for history against high tech amnesia," or perhaps, as holocaust historian Saul Friedlander suggests, in a conflict between administrative decrees and individual voices.28 In both cases, the struggle is one of memory against memory, where in many cases, a single narrative comes to dominate.

So how do these hegemonic narratives come to be? Jelin describes the tendency to attach oneself, fixate, or to habitually return to the past, especially the traumatic past. Unable to detach from the past, or from the lost entity (whether it be a loved one, a homeland, a state of being, etc.), Jelin comments on a tendency to

28 Franco, *The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City*, p. 233
"repeat or act out" or ritualize the same pattern, the same narrative, thereby erasing or skewing the distance from the intrusive past.²⁹ This process poses a threat to rememberers in that the presence of the past becomes excessive. At the same time, the memory become more and more manipulated and selective, cementing what is forgotten. When someone experiences this trauma differently, their autonomy over their own memory is threatened. In particular, this thesis looks at how through this repetition, the memories and narratives of children are often dominated or supplanted by those of adults. Thus, the repetition of these narratives, unchanged and over time, rather than representing the victory of the right story, represents a defeat.³⁰ To echo legendary Chilean filmmaker Patricio Guzman, memory is obstinate, insisting on its presence. The same story over and over deadens the narrative and deafens the ears that listen to it. That being the case, new modes of memory must keep up with changing circumstances, with growing and moving actors.

Before interrogating new ways of remembering, it is key to examine what is remembered in post-conflictual Chile. First, this it is key to differentiate between Chileans and those who make up, or once made up, the Chilean diaspora, as a result of exile, asylum, or other forms of forced migration. These groups were and are differently privileged in their ability to tell their stories. On the one hand, on the ground in Chile, the junta had near total control of the press, and could easily publish their account of an event. Civilians in Chile were not so lucky; high levels of repression inhibited those who didn't agree with the junta from publicizing their

³⁰ Calviero, Pílar translated by Ana Ros, "The post dictatorship generation," p. 9
opinions and accounts, especially in the early years of the dictatorship when levels of repression were at their highest. On the other hand, exiled were often unable to fully express their narratives due to linguistic discrepancies in their country of resettlement. That said, as mentioned in the previous chapter, Chileans living outside Chile during the 17 year long dictatorship were able to spread news on the abuses that had happened without (in most cases) fear of repression.

As for domestic Chile, the Concertación transition government brought forth a new account of what had happened during the dictatorship by establishing capital-T truths through the Valech and Rettig Commissions. With public recognition of victims and the inauguration of the Museum of Memory, the story of the Allende years, the coup, the dictatorship, and the democratic transition have been "folded into an upbeat narrative," through which Chile celebrates consensus and the triumph of human rights.31 This consensus, however, elicits a sense of complacency, a covenant to "deflect the hard questions," (i.e. where are they?)32 and plan a peaceful future off of a selectively remembered past.33 While the country intones the "Never Again" slogan without a coherent sense of what exactly cannot be repeated. More still, this human rights-centric response exists within what law professor Samuel Moyn calls a neoliberal ecology, which does not challenge the structural relic of the dictatorship.

Now, this is not necessarily an ill-willed act on behalf of the Concertación government: the ongoing process of developing and deepening democracy in post-

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31 Franco, p. 239
32 This slogan refers to the "disappeared" victims of the dictatorship, many of whom have still not been found.
dictatorial countries can be threatened by an unearthing of the authoritarian past. Given the backdrop of mass polarization around issues of Allende and impunity, the governments has an interest in exhuming this past carefully. 34

Collective memory, which is to say the memory of a community or nation, though healing, solidifies paradigmatic experiences of trauma, homogenizing a single story. 35 But contrary to this phenomenon, as New Zealand anthropologist Michael Jackson has stressed, the past is not one thing, but many. 36 In the post-modern tradition, a reproach of totalizing narratives becomes necessary, as "history [has] come under suspicion insofar as it sutures events into an official narrative that relies on what is deemed to constitute a fact. Thus, as much as we question the domestic narrative in Chile, we must also push back against the fringe narrative; the Exile Narrative. 37 Chilean exiles, despite their marginalization and repression, were widely able to disseminate their own anti-junta narratives. Distanced from the violence and censorship, exiles were more able to process and share their memories than those victims on the ground in Chile. While international governments initially supported Pinochet, as Chileans living abroad spread the word of the abuses happening in Chile, many governments turned on the junta in the name of human rights. Through this dynamic, the exile narrative went on to become internationally recognized; the Chilean narrative. Yet this narrative was one defined by loss, absence, and lack. This does not mean that the mainstreamed narrative is reductive or invalid, but merely that

34 Jelin, State Repression and the Labours of Memory, p. Xxvi
35 Chakavarti, Sonali in conversation. 11/06/2018.
37 Franco, The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City, p. 235
its dominance inhibits other interpretations of this period. It should also be noted that those Chileans abroad were operating from a position of privilege. The ability to leave Chile in and around the time of the coup required a relatively high financial means not available to all victims of violence. Those who were able to flee, and those who were directly exiled, were largely upper-middle class professionals. Many had familial connections in Europe, and therefore a degree of racial privilege from their European backgrounds. Though many indigenous people supported Allende's reforms (especially land reform), very, very few exiles were of indigenous origins, and importantly, with Chile's long history settler colonial violence, the violence catalyzed in 1973 ought to be seen as one instance in a pattern of repression and displacement.

Given the limited ability for resistant expression on the ground in Chile during the coup, exiles became key producers of culture. Exile literature and film played a key role in institutionalizing the tone through which we consider the displacement and violence of the dictatorship, especially the works of creatives including Roberto Bolaño, Carlos Cerda, Jose Donoso, Patricio Guzman, Diamela Eltit, Pedro Lemebel, and Ariel Dorfman. The novel and the short story, amongst other forms of personal testimony and expression, have been paramount in creating and maintaining the narrative of the displaced exile. While the varied and complex body of literature should not be reduced into mere buzzwords, the genre is characterized by themes of hopelessness, nostalgia, and disconnect; a meditation on the "land missing under [their] feet."^38 While doing research in Santiago, Chile, a friend of my grandfather's who spent much of the dictatorship in exile offered the following quip when I asked

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him to reflect on the difficulties of his time away from Chile. His response (which I've translated below) subverted the plot points of loss and lack that have defined existing exile literature. Says he:

"This story of the past era, of the poor immigrants, it wasn't like that, it didn't have to be like that. I'll tell you that the majority of the Chileans, there were few that cried… I'm saying something that is not politically correct, but I'll tell you that the Chileans in exile all in some way repaired their lives, they remade their lives…. Exile, as you call it, is instructive, it teaches, and you don't have to take it as something bad per se. They displace you from your context, they displace you from your country, but the world offers things; the world offers the possibility to create your own story."39

In a similar vein, this thesis aims to complicate existing narratives of loss and displacement, by centering the second generation to encourage a multivalent and heteroglossic approach to memory narratives. Here, multivalent refers to the possibility of these narratives having a range of applications, interpretations, and values, while heteroglossia describes the coexistence of varied voices and discourses. Given how politically polarized Chile has always been, an ongoing negotiation and contestation of Chilean collective memory has resulted in what transitional justice expert Katrien Klep has called a "thickening" of this collective memory. Drawing on the work of ethnographer Clifford Geertz," thickening" refers to "the analytical effort to make sense of the multiplicity of complex conceptual structures, many of them superimposed or knotted into one another."40 In the hopes of contributing the "thickening" of collective memory, this project does not feign to offer a better or more complete memory of Chilean displacement abroad, but rather strives to operate

within memory studies specialist Micheline Enriquez's framework of creating room for alternative "arrangements" between past and present. By focusing on a second-generation construction memory, the temporal and spatial plane unto which memory is projected changes. The past looks different, and thus, its bearing on the present shifts too. More than forty-five years after the coup d'etat in Chile, this critical rearrangement becomes necessary.

In pursuit of such a rearrangement, this thesis centres the children of Chileans in exile. Here, the terms "children" and "child" refer to the generational relation between this population and their parents rather than a juvenile stage of life. These "children" were born in the 1960s and 1970s, both inside and outside of Chile. Some, especially those born in the 1960s, may have bore witness to violence and social upheaval, but most were not the direct victims of violence themselves. This body of individuals is most neatly defined through a relationship Marianne Hirsch calls "postmemory." Postmemory refers to the relationship that a second generation has to the powerful, and often traumatic experiences that precede them, but that are nevertheless transmitted to them so intensely that they themselves constitute memories.41 This scholarship emerges from the children of Holocaust survivors, and yet it is aptly applied to the children living in any post-conflictual society. In post-memorial situations, children come to have "guardianship" over the traumatic event, becoming a "hinge generation" through which these events are "transmuted into history, or into myth."42 It is this myth-making that inspired this project, and, as will

be argued in the next section, fiction may best facilitate an exploration of the form and transmission of memory. From here on out, I will refer to the generation described above as Chile's diasporic "hinge" generation.

What are the possibilities of fiction in responding to mass violence, especially as it affects the Chilean diaspora's "hinge" generation?

Though the fictional aspect of this thesis contends with the Chilean diaspora's "hinge" generation at a variety of different moments in their lives, it largely localizes the transfer of traumatic memory in their childhood. This is to say that, since the "hinge" generation were children at the time of the 1973 coup and subsequent human rights abuses, the intergenerational dialogue that I'm interested in occurs during this generation's upbringing. Under-researched in the realm of post-conflict research, children innately offer a critical distance from the existing, dominant narratives created by their parents. On a larger scale level, children's studies are a relatively new area of research, perhaps as a result of the temporality of childhood and the historical dominance of men in the world of academic.43 In the dichotomy of children and adults, children are not historically seen as agents, such that their voices are often marginalized until they reach adulthood in a phenomenon that Owain Jones calls the "otherness of children."44 Drawing on Jacques Derrida and Edward Said, Jones contends that adults never truly know childhood. Thus, they are forced to construct it,

43 Prout and James in Ansell, Nicola & Lorraine Van Blerk. Introduction: Children and youth in developing areas, Children's Geographies, 2005, p. 17
44 Jones, Owain. "Black Rain and Fireflies: The Otherness of Childhood as a Non-colonising Adult Ideology." Geography 97, no. 3. 2012.
limiting a child's opportunity to control their "own relationship with time and space,"\textsuperscript{45} in a process that scholars like Jones have likened to colonization. While this thesis focuses on displaced Chilean children at a variety of different points of their childhood and adulthood, the establishment of the dominant Chilean exile narrative coincided with the period in which the hinge generation were othered as children. For this reason, the dominant memory narrative must be viewed as a particularly potent force in their subjugation as children. Thus, this thesis aims to give voice to those who did not have a hand in structuring their own diasporic narrative. Within Jones's framework, the hinge generation is of interest as theirs is a story of loss compounded by loss; a marginalized narrative within a marginalized narrative, that offers a distinct and forward-thinking perspective.

In an effort to deepen our understanding of the displacement of Chileans after the 1973 coup d'etat, children serve as compelling and important subjects to broaden or diversify the Chilean exile narrative in that there is a greater analytical space between them as subjects and the forces and events that shape their lives. Intellectual historian Dominick LaCapra argues that a degree of critical distance from a problem or traumatic event is needed to "distinguish between past, present, and future."\textsuperscript{46} Though LaCapra may have been referring to distance in the temporal sense, and is referring to working through one's own trauma, looking at Chile's hinge generation, this theory could be expanded to include the distance wrought by generational difference can also provide that space to distill and work through trauma. This

\textsuperscript{45} Owain Jones 'True geography [] quickly forgotten, giving away to an adult-imagined universe'. Approaching the otherness of childhood, Children's Geographies, 6:2. 2008.

generational distance also aligns in the geographical sense; not only is this generation physically distanced from the site of trauma, Chile, but if we consider Jones's work on the geography of childhood, as we age, "childhood becomes another country, a disputed territory of memory and meaning."\(^{47}\) It is through this belated and remote structure that those who experience violence and displacement through their parents can help push back against the narrative created by their parent's generation. Moreover, owing to their youth, parents and adults often attempt to shield children from full accounts of violence and conflict, partially to protect their innocence, but also as a means to meet children where they are in their developmental trajectories. Therefore, narratives of violence and conflict are further mediated, sugarcoated, or child-proofed. Because parents and grandparents seek to protect young children from the unsettling realities of the world, children are left "isolated and at the mercy of their own fantasies of loss and destruction,"\(^{48}\) a positionality that already lends itself well to the fiction medium.

At the same time however, children still find ways to garner access to more "adult" narratives; they eavesdrop, absorb information thought to be beyond their comprehension, and bear witness to events and conversations they are not supposed to be privy to. They construct their own narratives from a range of mismatched sources, and are often left alone to extract meaning from these sources. To grow up in and around sites of conflict and violence is to constantly conciliate between competing and confusing narratives, often without the power or opportunity to


\(^{48}\) Rogers, Fred. "Won't You Be My Neighbour?" 2018.
articulate one's own narrative. In her foundational article *Past Lives: Postmemory in Exile*, Hirsch's very definition of postmemory hinges on the idea of narrative erasure or incapacitation, in that postmemory distinguishes the lived experiences of those who "grow up dominated by narratives that preceded their birth, whose own belated stories are evacuated" by the narratives of their parents.\(^4^9\) As much as this thesis works within Hirsch's post-memorial framework, it also pushes back on it, challenging the idea that a hinge generations need be defined by its parents. If postmemory "evacuates" one's own story, then this thesis subtly explores the possibility of reclamation. It is thus the goal of this project to investigate how the narratives of Chile's hinge generation could be articulated, and to use fiction as the vehicle for their expression.

This brings us to the issue of story creation, specifically, to a self-reflexive look at this project. Why fiction? It would seem as though there is ample and fruitful non-fiction work to be done on this topic, and indeed there is. Why depart from the traditional format of an undergraduate thesis in the social sciences? I have toyed often with this question. During a thesis workshop session, a professor asked me rather skeptically, what I could contribute to the archive, to the social sciences, through a work of fiction, given that I could have made up everything included in my thesis. How are we to know, he questioned, if anything you're saying has any truth to it if it's all made up? He makes an excellent point. Indeed, this project takes on an unorthodox, or even eccentric form for an undergraduate thesis. In another dialogue, however, my mentor recommended I respond to the question by reframing it: in this

project, I use the archive (existing literature as well as a range of personal testimonies) in order to produce pieces of fiction as a means of exploring and working through the processes of storytelling at the core of loss. Rather than adding material to the archive, this thesis does the work of questioning the form and transmission of memory, a central theme in the fields of history, memory studies, and post-conflictual studies.\textsuperscript{50} Like a crucible, from the heat and tension of the hinge generation's interactions with their parents' traumatic past, a new, fictional substance is bred.

Given the inscrutable underbelly of the issue of violence and displacement in Pinochet's Chile, "logical" post-conflictual follow-up steps have sought to establish fact and logic. Antithetically, however, American Holocaust scholar Lawrence L. Langer has argued that the logic of law will never really help us make sense of the illogic that is mass violence. In the case of Chile, I take this quote to mean that neither the prosecution of perpetrators, nor the formal legal language used in the Rettig Report, nor any other traditionally logical responses are adequate to address mass atrocity. A growing field of scholarship focuses on this very issue in the Latin American context: Tufts's Kimberly Theidon looks at the tensions between creative projects and truth commissions in Peru, while Wesleyan's own Maria Ospina has a forthcoming book on the centrality of fiction in intervening public debates on violence in Columbia. The nonsensical nature of memory, especially memories of the traumatic past "can disrupt, penetrate, or invade the present as something that makes no sense."\textsuperscript{51} Thus, the constructed artifacts of the past merit an equally constructed

\textsuperscript{50} Ospina, Maria. In conversation. 03/29/2019.
response. This is not to say that legal responses are not needed, or valuable forms of remembrance, retribution, or healing for victims and society, but rather that these responses alone only scratch the surface of what is possible, and what is necessary in the post-conflictual process. To attempt to make sense of the illogical, the methodology employed in this thesis circumvents logic through the fictional medium. It necessarily pushes against the neat lines of a traditionally formatted thesis in pursuit of a response that is congruent with the events that inspired it. All this functions in an attempt to diversify or enrich the current rejoinders to displacement after the 1973 coup.

However illogical, fiction has long been used as a political instrument in the world of the social sciences. To re-situate this project within the language of the College of Social Studies, my research turns to the works of Hannah Arendt; political theorist, displaced person, and powerful storyteller. For Arendt, the half-baked mysticism and ambiguity of storytelling lends itself to revelatory conclusions rather than limiting and reductive truths.

“It is true that storytelling reveals meaning without committing the error of defining it, that it brings about consent and reconciliation with things as they really are, and that we may even trust it to contain eventually by implication that last word which we expect from the Day of Judgment.”\(^{52}\)

Thus, it is fiction's untrustworthiness, its ability to prod at what is most urgent, but not necessarily what is fully-formed, that gives it its reconciliatory powers. With regards to Chile and its diaspora, fettered by endemic political polarization, the

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constructed artifact that is fiction offers multiple interpretations for multiple viewpoints rather than insisting on a singular and official account of how an event transpired. The authoritative truth defined by institutional responses like the Rettig and Valech Commissions reveal a disparity in the retributive powers of judicial language for addressing pain and loss on both a societal and individual level.

Additionally, these responses still fail to secure justice for those affected. Indeed, without judicial powers, the Comisión de Verdad y Reconciliation, as it is known in Chile, aims "to contribute to the global clarification of the truth about the most serious violations of rights committed in recent years,"53 instead of leaving room for a multiplicity of individual voices, interpretations, and truths to interact in pursuit of justice and reconciliation, as legal professor Martha Minow recommends. But even more critically, in this context, fiction works beyond the neat line of resolution as a way to circumvent the majoritarian narrative of closure. More so than truth commissions or museum exhibitions, fictional projects mimic the fabular structures of oral history and memory, modes of remembrance and methods of reconciliation that have been employed in the familial sphere as opposed to the more public arenas of the truth commissions and museums. Further, according to anthropologist Michael Jackson, Arendt saw fiction as a means of negotiating the hinterlands between the private and the public sphere. In post-conflicntual societies that tend to locate trauma in the public or in the family, storytelling offers the opportunity to transcend this binary in a way that is at once therapeutic and political, helping to shift power relations, argues Jackson, and even remake reality. I'd push Jackson's read on Arendt

53 Franco, The Decline and Fall of the Lettered City, p. 239
one step further and contend that fiction can also serve as a vehicle for negotiating the falsely dichotomized borders of history and memory. Given fiction's ability to place readers in the shoes of those whose memories might differ from their own, fiction itself can actively participate in both mediating and vitalizing memory struggles, contributing not just to a "thickening" or collective memory, but to a spirit of empathy.

The subject of this thesis however, Chile's displaced post-memorial, or "hinge" generation, operate in a mobile, diasporic space. In this way, their mobility layers further nuance unto the regional or positional power of fiction, as evidenced by the below excerpt from Chilean fiction mogul Roberto Bolaño. In 2000, Bolaño was invited by the Austrian Society for Literature in Vienna to give a speech on exile and literature. Says he:

"Can one feel nostalgia for the land where one nearly died? Can one feel nostalgia for poverty, intolerance, arrogance, injustice? The refrain, intoned by Latin Americans and also by writers from other impoverished or traumatized regions, insists on nostalgia, on the return to the native land, and to me this has always sounded like a lie. Books are the only homeland of the true writer, books that may sit on shelves or in the memory."

Here, Bolaño invokes a regional specificity that tethers Latin America to the fictional tradition. But more precisely, he motions towards the reconciliatory and grounding promise of fiction in the face of mass violence and displacement as a means of circumventing the more damaging effects of nostalgia. The sentiment expressed in Bolaño's address takes on deepened meaning when applied to the realities of the Chilean diaspora's hinge generation, for the powerful yet impersonal

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nostalgia they experience is not necessarily their own. Displaced and already tasked with mediating their inbetweenness, the generation of postmemory must struggle with placelessness, belonging, and issues nationality, perhaps even more so than their parents. Moreover, dominated by an authoritative nostalgia that marginalizes them in their own lives, culture production, and specifically fiction, offers the post-memorial generation the opportunity to reassert themselves as the protagonists of their own life stories. The fictional medium affords a particular cogency for telling the stories of a hinge generation because like intergenerational trauma and postmemory, fiction does the work of conjuring that from which is not there. Hirsch's work considers the aesthetic works of postmemory created by the children of Holocaust survivors, arguing that visual art --- particularly photo projects --- aims to simultaneously mourn and rebuild as a strategy of relocation. In Hirsch's work, photos of those who perished in and survived the Holocaust "function as ghostly revenants from an irretrievably lost past world" for the second generation.\(^{55}\) In a slightly different vein, this thesis strives to transcend the grips of the past generation's narrative. Rather than inscribe inherited meaning unto a photograph, a work of fiction has the capacity to conjure a new substance from lack.

_What roles can the third generation play in these memory struggles?_

This chapter would be amiss without an effort towards self-reflexivity. More than forty years after the coup and its ensuing displacement, I, the daughter of a

\(^{55}\) Hirsch, _The Generation of Postmemory_, p. 115
member of Chile's diasporic "hinge" generation, am pursuing a project about Chile, perhaps as a work of postmemory. In a certain sense, the belatedness, or even "prosthetic" nature of this thesis is appropriate.\textsuperscript{56} Hirsch's work comments on the "temporal delay" associated with an aesthetic or literary work of postmemory, a postness wrought of an "uneasy oscillation between continuity and rupture."\textsuperscript{57} Analogously, as aforementioned, Elizabeth Jelin and Dominick LaCapra's works explore the need to distance past from present in order for a true reckoning of memory and trauma to occur. Surely, as a member of the third generation, my position implies that critical distance, while growing up in a Chilean diasporic family allows for the intimacy needed to (hopefully) carefully and ethically witness, synthesize, and articulate the phenomenon.\textsuperscript{58} Given this unique degree of critical distance, how might this thesis fit into, or even expand, Hirsch's classification of postmemory? In \textit{The Generation of Postmemory}, Hirsch explicates that postmemory exists in a “moment of looking backward rather than ahead and of defining the present in relation to a troubled past rather than initiating new paradigms.”\textsuperscript{59} While on the one hand, this thesis might be considered a work of postmemory, it is my hope that this third generation critique, as backward-facing as it may be, breaks with the practices of postmemory, and begins to initiate new paradigms of memory transmission and justice. While this thesis does very much conform to the postmemorial format of "imaginative investment, projection, and creation,"\textsuperscript{60} importantly,\textsuperscript{56} Ibid \textsuperscript{57} Ibid, p. 106 \textsuperscript{58} Jelin, p. 6 \textsuperscript{59} Ibid \textsuperscript{60} Ibid, p. 107
it diverges from Hirsch's definition of a work of postmemory, in that does not reactivate the past by reinvesting in it, but rather calls for a reframing of what, when, and who is activated. The image of a palimpsest offers a particularly helpful visual for the goals of this project; this is not an effort to reanimate the past, but to superimpose a new narrative over the established one.

While this critical distance may facilitate a fresh interrogation of this past, it implies a certain precocity. Can the grandchild of a survivor of violence and displacement do justice to the experiences of their grandparents and parents, or does such an appropriation of the traumatic past trespass an important boundary? A similar question framed by Hirsch has given this project an additional ethical burden:

"If we thus adopt the traumatic experience of others as experiences that we might ourselves have lived through, if we inscribe them into our own life story, can we do so without imitating or unduly appropriating them?"61

It is my most sincere hope that I have tread respectfully and incisively in the creation and execution of these stories, and that I have done justice to the Chilean diasporic community that inspired and facilitated them. In preparation for this project, I interviewed 16 members of the Chilean diaspora including my own family members, formerly detained Chileans and their children, and family members of disappeared people. I also interviewed a handful of Chilean academics, as well as employees at El Museo de la Memoria y Derechos Humanos. During my archival work at the museum, I also watched the audiovisual testimonies of a dozen or so Chileans whose parents were exiled, and another set of testimonies of now adult children whose

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61 Ibid, p. 114
parents were detained and disappeared during the dictatorship. Importantly, since this thesis's goal is to encourage multivalent and heteroglossic approaches to the past, this project exists as part of a dialogue, and does not claim to offer a final or holistic interpretation of its subject. On the contrary, the impossibility of closure is a key theme. Similarly, the stories, as well as the historical and theoretical sections invite pushback and discourse in the hope of continuing to diversify the Chilean post-conflictual narrative.

I hope that these stories do justice to the generation they depict, and probe at some of the most urgent, unresolved questions pertaining to this topic. I have tried to work creatively while grounding this project in the analytical and multidisciplinary pedagogy of the College of Social Studies, and know that this work is not only far from perfect, but also far from being over. There is much more work to be done on this topic, and many other hinge generations from different parts of the world that deserve to have their narratives resurrected. The choice to center the child in the story of Chilean displacement has surely privileged certain memories and histories. As a result, this thesis looks at an increasingly complex historical contingency through a straw. This said, I truly hope that this small contribution gives readers the space to contemplate whose histories are being told, and to consider who is listening to them tell those histories. As such, it would fill me with deep gratitude and fulfilment for readers stop and ponder whose memories and histories are missing from this narrative.
Chapter III: Departure

My father, David, and aunt, Paula, at a lake by the Villarrica volcano. Villarrica, Chile. 1971.
III

Seventy-Three in Silence and Sound

Engines, angry ones.

There are no birds this high in the sky. My teacher told us that birds fly North and then South again when the seasons change because they're always following food. I think maybe that's why we are flying North too. We are following the birdies following the food, except Papa said the air outside the airplane window isn't healthy for the birds because its too thin, it will hurt their insides.

"Are there birds in Berlin?"

"There will be lots of birds when we get to Berlin, tesoro,"62 says Papa,

"magnificent birds, maybe even Chilean ones just like you."

"No le hagas ilusiones, Oscar,"63 Mama whispers. It is only the second thing she has said for the whole flight. The first thing was that I had to sit in the middle, between her and Papa, because I'm the littlest but I think that's a lie. I think she just doesn't want to sit next to Papa. My blood is all tingly under my skin, like a bottle of Bilz y Pap64 that someone shook really, really hard, because I have never ever been on a plane before and we are going on a family trip, all three of us. We never do things the three of us anymore, but this is a special trip, a surprise trip like a surprise party. Papa said it's a vacation and Mama said we are going on a work trip with Papa, but either way Matilde and Julietta, my first and second best fried, will be so jealous I

62 Though the stories would originally stand without footnotes, given the chance that not all readers will be Spanish speakers, I will proceed translating all Spanish dialogue to best facilitate understanding. This first word translates to "treasure."
63 Don't get her hopes up
64 Popular Chilean soft drink
flew on an airplane, even if this airplane with is all yucky with smoke and the
stewardesses don't look like Julietta's Pan Am Barbie. The engines on the plane sound
angry, like they don't want to keep going forward. It's like if a really big mean dog
was growling at you, or if my Opi was sharpening his kitchen knives. I cover my ears
really tight to try to block out the sound, but Papa says to just try taking my hands
away because eventually the sound is not so bad. If you want to you can adjust to
anything.

Waves

Mama took me to the beach on my 8th birthday to tell me some news, woman
to woman. We needed to get out of the city to have the talk, because the city is
stressing Mami out.

"It's all politics, politics, politics, it's exhausting," she has to yell to be louder
than the wind through the car windows, "the government is not looking after the
people, Palomita, they're destroying this country. We shouldn't have to live like this."

"Like what?" I say because I can't think of anything that's destroyed. A man
even came to fix the big crack in the sidewalk near my school the other day. But
Mami just turns up the radio and tells me to eat my sanguchito.65 When she isn't
looking, I throw the bread out the window for the seagulls cuz even though they're
ugly, noisy birds, they still need to eat. There are lots of them when we get to the
beach, I count 16, and they run up to the water and then away from it, but the water
keeps coming up to kiss their feet again and again and again. The birds never figure it

65 Sandwich
out. Then, me and Mama play a game where she buries me in the sand so you couldn't see me anymore, and when I stood up, a million little pieces of sand stuck to me and stay under my fingernails, between my two littlest toes, in the curvy part of my ears. And the, even though the sand is still all stuck to me, it is time for our talk, woman to woman.

"We did try, nena, we really did," she says and I realize it is one of those kinds of talks, a talk about her and Papa, a talk about being a big girl. "I'm sorry. And it is not your fault that things didn't work out between your father and I. I'm really sorry we couldn't make things right. And I love you very much. Your father does too."

But Mama doesn't sound like mama. She sounds fake and plastic-y, like she's on the radio. I don't know why we needed to come have this talk at the beach when I already knew what she told me. I knew when Papa went to live in his apartment that I have a Mama and a Papa but not a family. The seagull all start squaking, all of them together, like they're in choir class, and poking their little beaks in the sand. I bet they're hungry, or maybe the ocean is too cold for their feet, or maybe their Papas aren't around and it makes them sad. Maybe they're yelling because they want me to yell too. I try it out.

"Why can't you and Papa getting back together?" Because Mama can put up with my Opi and he is so mean. I don't know why she can't do that with Papa.

"It's very complicated sweetheart," she starts, "but as you know, your father loves, you know, his meetings, his cooperatives, the party. Very much. Not more than

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66 Baby (term of affection for female child)
you, cariño, but more than our marriage. And I won't stand for it any longer, I don't deserve it."

_A buckle, clicking shut._

"We're not quite going on vacation," Papa explains, closing his suitcase "but a short trip, nena, an experience abroad while things settle down here, okay?" I'm not sure why we have to leave while things sort themselves out here, why Santiago can't just settle itself, like I'm supposed to do whenever I'm too hyper or tired and Mama or Papa tells me to calm myself. Take three deep breathe into my tummy. Easy. We have gone on vacations before, to the mountains, to the desert, to the ocean, and even down South, to the edge of the whole wide world, but travelling has never made Papa so nervous. He hasn't left his house all week, and he's only leaving now that we're going to the airport. I think he's confused about the toque de queda. Mama had to explain to me too: what happens is you're not allowed to be outside at night because it's not safe, but only at night. Maybe it's different for Papas. I bet the toque is why we're going away. The street outside our house is always so noisy with cars and motos and birds, but yesterday it was so quiet, like its parents just got in a big fight and it was scared to say anything. There are police officer everywhere and the grownups are all whispering about something, like, in school a few weeks ago, I heard my teacher and the kindergarten teacher talk about a guerra civil while they were on cafeteria duty,

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Notes:

67 Darling
68 Curfew
69 Curfew
and, even though we haven't had school the last few days, the shops are still open and there is music on the radio and people on the bus. I don't think that's a war, but I'm not actually sure. I think a war would be louder. And I think in a war it rains.

I tell Papa to hurry because Mama is waiting for us downstairs in a taxi, and she told me to tell Papa that since gas is so hard to buy right now, it is very expensive to wait in the taxi for him. We are going to the airport first and then to a place called Berlin, East Berlin. I'm not sure exactly when we are coming back, but I do know that East Berlin is where all the best people from the Communist Party are going. On a map, Papa shows me that Berlin is cracked in half, like the type of nut Matilde is allergic to, and the half we are going to is the better half, the half that is more like Chile. There will be beautiful buildings, older than the ones in Santiago, a river that runs through downtown just like the Mapucho, we will walk down cobblestone sidewalks and eat the yummiest, greasiest, food ever.

"It is winter in Berlin," says Papa packing my itchy woolen poncho and warm coat "because the earth is always spinning and because the sun cannot shine everywhere at once, so everybody has to take their turn in the shadows." Berlin, he says since I forgot, is where my Mama was born, so Berlin is in my blood, a special part of me. If we stay in there until December (which would be the longest vacation ever), it'll snow, not even on the mountains, but right there in the city, and he will take me to a place called Marx-Engels Platz for a Christmas market to see the all the lights and to eat chestnuts. He talks about Berlin like it's a movie, a gringo movie in technicolour. He talks about it like one of his compadres gave him too much whiskey.

"Mama knows that that's where we're going, right? To Berlin?" I ask.
"She does. It's very important that we all go together. Plus," he says closing the suitcase shut, "she is the only one who knows how to speak German."

When Mama told me to get out of the cab to get my Papa, I thought she was kidding. All the way up the elevator, I tried to imagine the three of us in the back seat of the taxi, the two of them sharing such a tiny space. I almost wished my Papa wasn't home so I wouldn't have to be with the two of them alone.

_Thumping, like a heart, but a cane._

"This is how it starts," says my Opi as we pass a long line where moms and kids are standing waiting for laundry detergent. The line doesn't move. The kids are playing marinero que se fue al mar,\(^70\) and looking really, really bored. Since my Opi is getting old, Mama says we need to spend more time with him, so me and her pick him up from his apartment, and the three of us go to the park together. Opi hear that good because a soldier kicked him in the head when he was a little boy in Germany. He always asks me to en-un-cia-te more so that he can read my lips, but he doesn't even try to read my lips, he just talks and talks and talks. I wish I could tell him to up but you're not allowed to be mean to old people. So Opi gives me lessons, but not lessons like in school, lessons about the food I need to stay strong, the exercise I need to be doing, and when Mama can't hear us, he asks me about how my putamadre\(^71\) bolshevik Papa is doing. So I ask Papa how he's doing, and also what is a bolshevik. Papa says my Opi is losing it: _Your grandfather's had a very difficult life. The world's_

\(^{70}\) A sailor went to sea (hand-clapping game)
\(^{71}\) Expletive
made him very hard it's finally catching up to him. He's very sick, don't listen to him, Palomita. So I ask Mama what he's sick with. He's not sick, Paloma, don't say that. Your father doesn't know what he's talking about. Opi is getting old, and people just, you know, grow into their fears when they age. Opi walks funny, creepy and really slow, so we have to slow down with him like he is a little kid who just learned how to walk. It's embarrassing, so I try to walk a bit ahead of him, but Mama catches me and pulls me back. When Opi can't hear, she whispers to me that Opi was nicer when he was younger, that when I was a baby and I was being cranky, he was the only one who could get me to fall asleep. I can't remember that.

"Escuchame, Paloma," he tells me looking at the line of ladies and their babies, "I've seen this all before and it doesn't end well, not for us. You know my tattoo, no?" With his droopy hand, Opi pushes his sleeve up his wrist to show me his purple tattoo. It's a line of numbers, a 6-digit number. We learned about them in arithmetic last week.

"Dad," Mama pulls his sleeve back down and switches to German so I can only understand a little bit of the conversation "she's too young for this stuff, please, let's not do this." She frowns and goes back to Spanish. "Is your radiator still making that sound? Did the electrician I called come by?"

"She should know, Sofi. You see those people waiting in line? They are waiting for food. It was shortages and inflation in Germany too, when I was your age, which means that soon we will be--"

"Ya, enough!" My Opi hears that. Mama and Opi are both quiet, like there's a secret I'm not allowed to know.
"What does Opi's tattoo mean?" I whisper to Mama.

"It's just numbers, Pali, don't worry about it."

"But Señorita Mendoza has a bird tattoo on her ankle that she hides because I don't think it's allowed for teacher's to have tattoos, but me and Julietta saw it once and asked her about it and she said it's a condor, and that tattoos are meant to mean something and that hers means free, so Opi's tattoo has to mean something too."

But Opi heard me. "Mine means the opposite of your teacher's," he says.

"Oh," I don't know what he means, but the opposite of free is bad, maybe like a time-out. "Well can you take it off if you scrubbed it really hard?"

"No, parece que no." It's permanent. We have arrived at the park.

"Oh look, it's Matilde, preciosa, go say hi," Mama says so I run over to her and the other kids and try to forget that Opi's watching. We decide to play camouflage, and Matilde will be "it" and the seesaws will be the home, and we have to hide from home and then sneak up towards it, that's the rules. I try to ignore the banging sound Opi's cane makes against the park bench but I can't block it out. It slows me down, so Matilde catches me and I lose the game. I don't reach home.

Swish, like a laundry bag, changing hands

In my Papa's car, I pretend to be asleep. We are coming back from a meeting he hosted in his apartment. The meeting was actually maybe a party. There was music on and everyone was drinking whiskey and pisco, and all my Papa's compadres were

72 It appears not, no.
73 Precious
pulling me on top of their shoes to dance. There were ladies in the room too, some really elegant ladies in orange pants and fluffy hair, and others with suits and haircuts like boys. There is one lady, one of the really pretty ones, who I recognize because I've seen her in Papa's apartment before. I can't remember her name but I can always smell her when she's in the house, because she wears too much perfume and it makes me sneeze.

Papa's compadres like to play cards. They like to bet, with money. His friend tío Ignacio gives me some coins from his pocket and tells me I can bet too, except I don't know what betting is, so Ignacio does an example.

"I bet that César will fold in the first round," he says really loud and throws some pesos into the middle of the table. I throw one of mine in too.

"Callate po huevon, just because he's still an Allende-loving debilucho doesn't mean he can't grow a pair to play cards."

"I raise, actually," César's coins jingle and everyone stops laughing at him, "it's a much better strategy, Palomita, to actually do something than wait around for a revolution," but I don't think he's talking to me.

"Well, I'm certainly glad someone else came to play, or Ignacio is going to cheat us out of all our money," says Tomás, whose mustache is so big you can't even see his lips move "maldita penny-pinchng maricon." César almost spits up his drink he laughs so hard.

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74 Shut up, moron.
75 Softy
76 Bloody (expletive)
77 Faggot
"Oye, at least I've got my own place. Tomás, remind me: at what stage of the revolution are we supposed to move back in with our mothers? I can't quite recall what Marx said."

"Cuidate po, Ignacio," this time it's Marcela who responds, one of the ladies who wears a suit like a boy, "or he'll break into that factory of yours with a couple of University students and a handgun." They laugh some more, except Tomás. He drinks his whole drink.

"Mijita," he gives me the glass, "will you go get me another one of these? And put on some real music, Oscar, por favor?"

Papa takes the cup because no-whiskey-for-you-señorita, and asks me to go put a new record on the player, lets me choose which one I want to play even though he usually doesn't let me change the records by myself because he's worried I'll scratch them. I put on my favourite one, the one with the guy with the big nose on front who has the prettiest voice.

"You like Victor Jara, Palomita?" asks Marcela, "Did you know he's a member of the same party as me and your daddy?"

I shake my head. "Can we meet him?"

"Mijita, you can meet anyone you like through your Papa," says Ignacio, "He's one of the most powerful guys there is in the Party. You need anything you just snap your fingers and boof! ---"

"Ya, huevon, that's enough, come on, let's---"
"Of course, if you're tired of things moving so slowly, and you really want to get things done," Tomás puts a sweaty arm around me, "Palomita, you come to your uncle Tomás and we'll---"

But right then my Papa says a swear (he says sorry but I still heard him say it). He doesn't realize how late it was. He turns off the record player and kicks everyone out of the apartment, even though everyone's grumpy about it and wants to finish their drinks. He grabs my sleepover bags and we get into his car and I pretend to fall asleep. I'm getting too old to fall asleep in the car and be carried to my bed, but I don't want my parents to know I'm awake when Papa drops me off because I know Mama will be mad. I don't even want to listen but I know I'll have to. Papa parks the car, grabs my laundry bag, lifts me up out of my seat and throws me over his left shoulder. He knocks. He doesn't have keys to the house anymore. I think coming home is hard for him sometimes because it isn't coming home anymore.

"It's past eleven, Oscar. She's got school tomorrow," Mama whispers, reaching her hands under my armpits, but Papa turns us away, "Coño, are you drunk? Give her to me!"

"No that's fine, I'll come in," Papa steps into the house even though he's not allowed in. He does not stop to kick off his shoes even though it's been raining. If I did that I'd get a time out for sure. He starts going up the stairs and Mama follows, loudly but she doesn't say anything. Papa puts me on the bed and Mama takes off my shoes and pulls the blanket over me.

"I can't believe you."

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80 Expletive
"I'm fine, Sofi, I'm fine. I don't really need your judgement right now, I---"

"You know what her teacher said to me the other day?" Mama pulls Papa outside of my room into the hallway, but I can still hear them whispering. "She told me that Lieutenant Sanchez's daughter Beatrice wanted to play with Paloma and Matilde, and Pali told her she couldn't play with them because "she's a crook like her papi." Now, I wonder where our eight year old got that one from, Oscar?" That's not true though. Beatrice wanted to play cops and robbers and told Matilde and me that we had to be the robbers because her Papa is in the army and then we just said we didn't want to, but we still got in really big trouble even though it wasn't our fault.

"Oye, I don't know where she got that, alright? And I'll talk to her about it, but if our daughter is learning to be judgmental and passive aggressive, I don't think that's coming from my home."

"Ya, adious, get out of my house."

"Con placer.81 You know I came here to show my daughter we can still a family for her, but you clearly don't want that. Here's the damn laundry."

"I'm sorry, does your putilla not know how to do the wash?" I really don't like when Mama says curses. My throat gets all stingy like I'm going to cry but I can't because then they'll know I'm awake so I hold them in really tight.

"Wow," Papa's yell is smiley, "la Santa Sofia,82 leaving all of this laundry for Laura," Papa doesn't like my niñera,83 Laura, or doesn't think we need her around, I can't really tell, "it's good to know that someone's is mothering our child--"
"It's time for you to go, Oscar," my Papa doesn't speak, I just hear his feet bounce down the stairs, "and sign the damn papers!"

The door opens, then shuts. Maybe he doesn't know what papers Mama is talking about either.

The doorbell

I am spending time at Opi's while Mama and Papa have a talk. I asked if I could have a playdate instead, or if we could call Laura to come look after me but it's Sunday, and everything shuts down on Sunday, so Opi and I are having an afternoon together. Opi is grouchier than usual because he can't get his cigarettes right now, and not smoking makes grownups upset. No one in Santiago can get their cigarettes. Maybe that's why everyone is so stressed. The birds are singing so pretty, singing back and forth to each other, but Opi doesn't like the noise so he shuts the window. Opi has almost no food in the house and is terrible at making snacks but the grocery stores in his neighborhood aren't open today because this maldito country only cares about Catholics, Paloma, so we have to look out for ourselves because Chile will go on harbouring Nazis, you know how people love to forget, they love it, but forgetting is not so easy to do for you and I is it, nena?

"Right." I say because I think he wants me to agree.

"Right? Right? You will never get anywhere by being complicit, Palomita. Think of a better response, go on." I try except I don't know what that words means,

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84 Bloody (expletive)
and that gives Opi an idea, and so he decides today's lesson will be a vocabulary lesson, and before I can tell him I don't want to: "Boicot, boicotear.\(^{85}\) Do you know what that means?" He explains it but his accent is so heavy that I don't think he should be teaching me how to speak Spanish. Papa and I do an imitation of him sometimes where we try to say words with r's in them, except the r's get stuck in our throats and we have to cough it out like Opi does. Opi keeps ready definitions for another six big words but all I can do is just think about Papa's impression of Opi, or Julietta's impression of el conejo de la suerte.\(^{86}\)

But then something smacks down hard on my knee cap except the pain feels like it's spreading all hot through my whole body and I scream. It's Opi's cane, he hit me with it, and it makes my whole leg shake and sting so I cry because it's ringing all through my leg, and the skin on my knee is all thin and broken and tiny lines of blood grow out of my knee like loose threads on a sweater.

"Paloma you have to learn this," his cane smacks me again on the arm this time and my head gets so hot I think it might explode, "you have to learn, you have to be able to save yourself!"

"Stop!" I cover my face with my hands, the only part of me that doesn't hur, "I hate you, I hate you!" I can taste my snots and my knee is beating like a heart, it hurts so much I can't unbend it, can't stand up to run into the other room. My body doesn't know how to cry and breathe at the same time because I'm so mad. Opi drops the cane and the sound of the wood hitting the floor only makes me hurt more. I try to

\(^{85}\) Boycott, to boycott

\(^{86}\) Bugs Bunny
control myself but I can't, so I just cry and I yell cuz I'm crying and because I'm still hurting.

"Ay, Paloma…" he sees my knee and watches the little lines of blood get thicker, "I'm sorry, Palomita, I'm so sorry, perdóname," he whispers. Opi presses his handkerchief to my knee and I try to swat him away but I still can't get my lungs to breath right. He rubs his thumb over his arm, over his tattoo, hard like he's trying to wash away pen but the numbers stay put. I cry and hide my face in my hands until I can breathe again, and then I breathe out and in and out and in until I can speak.

"When," I breathe, "is my Mama…coming to get me?" But Opi can't hear what I said, he just wants me to choose another word to learn, another stupid word. And because he's sorry, this time I get to pick the word, but that's a dumb apology and I don't want to talk to him, I don't want to learn his lessons anymore. I wish I had an abuelo like all my friends do and I wish I could just go home.

"Please, Paloma. I'm sorry. Please. Let's forget about this, okay? Let's learn more words, ya? What about nacionalización? Do you know that one? N-A-T-I----"

But there is a word I want to know, one that I can't ask Mama or Papa. My throat is still lumpy and I'm worried I won't say the word right but I tell him anyways and he hears me and doesn't have to look in the dictionary to know what it means.

"Annulment, annulment," says Opi, looking hard at my knee, and I want him to stop, "means to make something go away. To make it disappear and forget it. To make it like it was never there in the first place."

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87 Forgive me
88 Nationalization
"What sort of thing?" My knee is stinging like there's lemon juice in it and Opi won't stop staring at it, his eyes make it sting even more. I hold my hand over it to keep all the blood in.

"Pues, decisions. Elections. It's the Catholic thing to do when a marriage doesn't---" he stops, "where did you learn this word?"

But the doorbell pings. We both hear it. I cover up my cortadita with my dress. It's Mama and she is very smiley but her makeup is all smudgey and black under her eyes.

"Vente Pali, dale un besito a tu Opi." I am waiting for Opi to tell Mama what happened, what he did, or I'll do it. I look at him hard in his eyes but he doesn't budge. He just leans over and waits for me to kiss the droopy skin on his cheek. I do it and we leave.

_A loud whisper_

Mama and I are waiting in one of those lines for laundry detergent when Opi decides to finally look at the radiator. We see our neighbours and my friends from dance class, and there is a little breeze to cool us down all day long. I realize when I get home that it was a really fun day because I didn't even stop to look for the birds. The next day is different though. When I get home from school, Mama tells me to sit down next to her on the couch to talk about something serious. Yesterday, Opi had

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89 Well
90 Graze
91 Come here, Paloma, give your Opi a kiss.
bent down to try to listen to his radiator and he fell and he hit his head. Secretly I'm a little happy that Opi got hurt too, since my knee is still all bloody and sticky and my arm has a big blue bruise on it, and at least now we're even. But then Mama starts crying and I stop being glad.

"The fall was um," Mama presses her lips together, "very hard and your Opi is not a young man, and… he joined my mama in heaven," and then all of a sudden Mama is crying, like a temper-tantrum kinda cry, "Opi died yesterday. I'm so so--" I give her a hug and I try to cry too but I can't do it. Nothing comes out of my eyes. I let Mama get her tears and snots on my school uniform and stare at the bandaid on my knee, and make my eyes really wide so that maybe then they'll get teary, but they don't. "I just can't believe he just…" she lets out a little cry, "I have to, I have to make some calls. Laura, can you…?"

Laura grabs my backpack and we walk to Papa's even though it's a drive, but gas is so expensive that we're gonna walk today.

"Your mama needs some space right now," Laura watches me the whole time we walk like I'm about to forget how to put one foot in front of the other but I don't and I don't cry either. Laura says maybe we should say a prayer while we walk, and starts to say one but I don't feel like joining in.

Papi gets on his knees to hug me when we arrive. I think he must already know.

"Pali, will you go out on to the patio for a moment? Laura and I need to discuss something." So I go even though Papa's patio is not so nice. He doesn't have any pretty flowers or windchimes like we do at home. The only thing out there is a
few chairs and an ashtray, all yucky and grey. Except today there is a cigarette in there and the end you burn is still on fire, so I pick it up between my pointer finger and my middle finger like Mama does. It's way lighter than I thought it would be. I know that Papa can't see me out here, and I've always wanted to know if the paper tastes good, if that's why everyone likes to smoke, so put it between my lips and wait for something magic to happen. But nothing really happens except for I get a gross taste in my mouth, a taste like Opi's apartment, all dark and stinky. I wonder if he brought his pipe with him to heaven, or if they gave him a new, prettier one there, and maybe if God his tattoo he can take it away for him. I kinda hope so. I want to ask Papa, so I put the cigarette back in its little house and sneak back into the living room but Laura and Papa are still whispering, except Papa is a really, really bad whispered and I hear him.

"So she thinks he fell, no? She doesn't know about the note?"

"What note?"

"Just a second, querida,"[^note] he says but after a second passes he doesn't tell me about the note.

I ask him again after dinner and he says that not to worry about any notes.

"But you said there's a note. What note?"

"You're remembering wrong, Pali. You've had a very long, emotional day. Your mind needs some rest. Let's go brush our teeth, okay linda?"

"I'm not, I'm not! You said there's a note and that I don't know about it, but I wanna know!"

[^note]: Loved one
"Paloma, I'm the adult. I don't know what you think you heard, but I'm telling you now there's no note, entiendes? Go brush your teeth."

*A familiar voice on the radio.*

I don't go to school the day the President dies. No one told me I wasn't supposed to go to school though so I put clips in my hair and put on my uniform and I ask for scrambled eggs but Mama shushes me and holds the radio closer to her ear. I know the voice on the radio but the words are too big and go too fast to really understand.

"Habla el Presidente de la República desde el Palacio de La Moneda. Informaciones confirmadas señalan que un sector de la marinería habría aislado Valparaíso y que la ciudad estaría ocupada, lo que significa un levantamiento contra--"

Mama turns the volume dial all the way off.

"You're taking the morning off school today. Let's go finish up that puzzle in the living room? I'll make us some breakfast."

"Why don't I have to go to school?"

"Everyone has the day off, preciosa." But my teachers didn't say that yesterday. I have a spelling test today.

"Because of what they were saying on the radio?" I ask but Mama doesn't hear. "Okay, I'll ask Papa, then." And that works, easy. Mama asks do I remember in

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*93 Understand?*

*94 This is the President of the Republic from the Presidential Palace. Intelligence indicates that an sect of the navy has isolated Valparaiso and that the city is occupied, signifying an insurgency against--*
June, on a Friday, when I had to stay late at school? And I do, my teacher had been trying to teach us cursive handwriting (letters "L" through "Q"), but we ended up going all the way to U and staying at school all afternoon. Laura came to get me and she hugged me very hard when she saw me, and we walk very quickly, and we don't take our usual route and she pulled my arm the whole time. *Why are we walking so weird?* I had asked her, but she was just praying and praying and praying, and it isn't until we got home that she told me: there was a tank, a big army truck, right in the middle of downtown.

"Today's the same sort of thing, nena," Mama says, "nothing much will come of this time either, and even if it did, well, it might actually be a good thing. No te preocupes."\(^{95}\)

Mama heads back to the kitchen and turns the radio back on, too low for me to hear from the living room, and starts cracking eggs for breakfast. I always hate the sound the whisk makes when it hits the metal bowl, like I hate the sound of knives being sharpened, but today it sounds extra loud. We sit for breakfast and Mama talks too much, about my dance recital, about what time Papa is coming round to pick me up tonight, about what I wanted to have for dinner. I'm worried the whole time she's going to start thinking of Opi and cry, but before she does, Laura arrives. She says she's late because of traffic. The roads downtown are all closed off. I focus on my scrambled eggs and all I hear is *Si, Señora, terrible,* and *tiene razon,*\(^{96}\) *Señora, it was bound to happen.*

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\(^{95}\) Don't worry
\(^{96}\) Yes, ma'am, terrible, you're right.
The phone rings. I run to go pick it up because Mama and Laura are talking about the navy and the Christian Democrats, boring stuff.

"Alo," I say just like I practiced, "Rozner-Castillo residence, habla Paloma," I realize though that it's only a Rozner house now.

"Nena, it's me," Papa sounds like he has just been running, "are you okay? How long have you been at home?" My mother hears me on the phone, and walks towards me reaches for the phone and mouths: quien es?97

"Listen to me carefully, Pali, something has happened, okay, I am downtown right now and the army has---"

My mother snatches the phone from me.

"Oscar? What did you tell her?" My mother yells into the phone. On the phone, Papa is doing the talking but I can't hear what he's saying, but I have that feeling in my tummy like I do before a sleepover, or before I get sick, like I'm nervous. Mama's eyes just get big and she doesn't say anything, and then the cry starts to sting my throat.

"Are you insane...well where's Ignacio? Oh my god, oh my god...Where'd they take---? Oscar listen to me, you need to.....Why do Paloma and I... What do you mean, do I have my German passport? Estas loco?"98

Three stamps, one after the other; bam bam bam.

The plane starts to go down because we're landing, but I still don't see any birds. It is very early in the morning here because it's four hours ahead in Germany,

97 Who is it?
98 Are you insane?
and very, very dark. The plane lands so smooth I don't even realize we touched the ground, but then we have to make a long line down the middle and walk off the airplane like it's a dance routine with no music. Mama tells me to hold the passports while she concentrates fixing her clothes and hair. She looks even more nervous than everyone else, except maybe Papa, who is still figuring out how close to stand to Mama. He keeps getting it wrong. Mama's passport is a different color than mine. It has words with lots of letters in them on the front. Papa explains to me that what happens next is we will go through something called customs, Mama will do the talking, and I won't speak unless spoken to, claro? I look at Mama for a clue about how to respond, but it's like she's not even in her body anymore. Claro.

We wait behind the yellow line to see a man in uniform. There are four officers and they're sitting very high up behind two desks, and they all look the same and no one says more than one word. I try to find the nicest looking one but I can't figure out who it is because they all look like meanies. The one on the end calls us over and Papa gives him the passports. He asks Papa if he speaks German. Mama says she does, but her voice sounds too high. I have never heard her speak German to anyone other than Opi. The officer points to me and says something I don't understand, and it makes me want to cry but I don't think you're supposed to cry here. Mama puts her arm around me and says my name like she is choking on vinegar. She gives her other hand to Papa and he holds it like they're friends again when I know they aren't. The scary guy lifts up this big metal machine and makes it kiss each of our passports and it sounds like a gun.

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99 Clear?
100 Got it.
"Welcome home."

Nobody talks. I think I should be sleepy but I'm wide awake and cold and I don't know why Mama and Papa are still holding hands. We just stand and wait for our suitcases on the carousel, which starts spinning around and around and around, but the bags still haven't come. And then I spot them. Up, up in the corner of the ceiling, with round brown heads and puffy tummies, tiny enough to hold between my thumb and my pointer finger. I count one, two, three up in the ceiling, tiny little birds, flying to a different corners of the roof. There's another two on the ground, the same colour as the carpet, and some more, four of them, around a garbage can, following their food, all moving their faces so quick I feel dizzy. Sparrows, I think, a little different from the ones at home because their heads aren't as trianglely. I saw them in a picture book once. Maybe they come in here to warm up when it's cold, and maybe the mamas bring the babies here to warm up and to find crumbs. I think they probably make their beds out of the bag tags and maybe for fun they ride the baggage carousel and watch the planes fly in and out, and I decide that Berlin is the best place ever if there are birdies inside all the buildings. Maybe we'll even have them in the place we stay here.

"Sad isn't it?" Papa says, pulling his pack of cigarettes out of his pocket, and lighting one. I don't understand what's sad though.

"They're trapped in here, nena," Mama tells me, but that can't be true, "they get stuck in here and they can't get out."

"But Mama, isn't the airport their home?" Mama shrugs and takes one of Papa's cigarettes. She puts it in her mouth and Papa lights it for her, but then the bags
come and it's time to leave the airport birdies. I wonder, if I find a little piece of bread, then maybe I can help them get out and they can come with us, but Mama says no, we can't take them with us. Then we go out the door.
Chapter IV: Exile

My Nana, Aunt Paula and friends visiting the Space Needle
Seattle, USA. 1980.
IV

¿Where is Raúl Ortega?

"Yes, hi, for Senator Austin, this is Mrs. Farría Ortega calling. Again! I demand that you take action to locate Raúl Ortega, a constituent from your district, who has been missing since June 14th, 1974. Where is Raúl Ortega? Call me, please, at this number, it's 604...."

It's 5:30 in the morning, and the wall that separates the kitchen, where my mother makes all her phone calls, and my bedroom, is very, very thin. Every cluck of her tongue, the sound of a cigarette being crushed into her favourite ashtray, it bleeds in. The first year we lived in the house, I used to wake up in the middle of the night to the sound of the washing machine or the fridge clicking open and shut through the wall, thinking it was somebody who had come to rob the house and grab me from behind so I couldn't move or breath. I'd wet the bed I was so scared, so I'd have to wake up my dad and he would tell me that no one was going to hurt me, he'd make sure of it. Just tune it out, Ximena, he would say. There's no tuning out my mother's voice, though. Singer's lungs is what my dad would say, but I think he meant smoker's lungs. It's this voice like someone ran over a crow, a very territorial crow, except that imagine that crow had learned English, or tried to learn English, from watching Johnny Carson. And there's something about talking on the phone (maybe it's that one ear is covered?) that makes her feel the need to crank up the volume an extra couple of decibels until her squak becomes a full-fledged screech, and at that volume she forgets, like, basic English grammar. She used to be a real looker, and she still catches people's eyes, but more like they're trying to figure out how her tiny body
sustains it all: the voice and that filthy accent, her enormous, I mean truly enormous breasts, so big that she's got neck problems and other women say they're fake behind her back or that there's like, a small child curled up in there. Her hair is not naturally blonde (there are old albums filled with photos of her as a child with dark brown hair, but we didn't think to take them when we left Chile), but I've never seen it anything other than platinum, and she's permed herself for years, and permed it badly. People say we look nothing alike, and I'm not sure if that's a compliment or an insult.

"Yes, the name is Raúl, R-A-U-L, Ortega, O-R-T….. Yes. Yes, he is my husband."

If it's 5:30 in the morning this time of year, it means the sun won't be up for another two hours. And even if it's light out, you don't really see the sun this time of year, there's just kind of this grey stretch of sky, like a massive blanket, the same grey as concrete, that gives off just enough glow to signal that it's time to start your day, just enough so you can see that all the brown is covered in green and that all the green is covered in yesterday's rain. My dad couldn't stand the rain, the grey, I used to think that's why he went back. He said he missed his hills, but I've always thought the Andes had nothing on the North Shore Mountains, even if the rainclouds eat them up entirely. I used to get really, really upset in the winter, when we hadn't seen the sun in over a week. Like right around when my dad left, when I was 11 and I was all hormonal and stuff, I'd wake up crying and refuse to go to school because I missed the sunshine and because my teacher thought I was an idiot since I still couldn't spell properly in English, and my brother Pablo would have to be the parent and pull the covers off my bed and yell at me and whap me with a pillow until I made moves like
"Simone, Sim, come on it's almost 8:00… we're going to be late, get up. Por favor, let's move, Simone … Ximena!" and I would kick him and scream and complain that would usually wake me up, so touché, Pablito; well-played.

"He was seen for the last time in Santiago… no not San Diego, San-ti-ago, de Chile. Chilli. Mhm, yes. Are you familiar with the political situation in Chile? No? Well do you have an hour?"

5:30 am here, that means that it's 8:30 in the morning in Ottawa, and 9:30 in the morning in Santiago, so all the secretaries are at their desks. Their coffee has kicked in but their days haven't really picked up yet, which means even though any sane person in this time zone would want to be asleep, it makes it the perfect time for my mother to make her calls. And because she wakes up at 5 on weekdays, she gets up at basically the same time on weekends, but since none of the bureaucrats are at work on Saturdays or Sundays, she's gotten into this whole jazzercise thing, and she does it at like 5 in the morning, with a cigarette in her mouth. She's got the whole outfit and goes to the classes with girls from my school and everything, it's insane. Like, last month, Marcia and I were over at Linda's because Linda had just gotten the new Talking Heads record, and because Robby Peterson had just asked me out and I needed to borrow Linda's straight legged Levi's to wear on the date, and my mother comes to pick me up from Linda's and Mrs. Beatty, her mom, who's like super Christian, answers the door and my mother is standing there in her blue fucking unitard and leg warmers, reeking of tobacco, no bra, all like Hi, I am here to find Ximena. And Marcia and Lind run down the stairs to say hi (Sim, your mom's such a badass, she's honestly so funny, we love her). Kiss-ups. Anyway, she'd just come
from jazzercise and was sweating through her lycra, and tells us that she ran into
Annette Crosby, who's a year older than me at school at jazzercise, and that she's
invited her to come to the peña we're hosting next week, and do Marcia and Linda
want to come too? They can help make empanadas beforehand, and if you girls like these Talking Head, I will introduce you to a fantastic guitar player, but fantastic. The lead guitar of Quilapayún will be there, bery impressive, no? My mother knows me well, knows where all my seams are, and knows how to rip at them.

"The Chilean military kidnaps anyone they think is a threat… yes… usually it's people who are politically affiliated, although--- Yes, he is part of a guerilla group, but--- Well sir, I'm not sure I see your point, either way somebody kidnap my husband, it's a matter of human rights."

I've been trying to get Pabs to switch rooms with me because his is farther away from the kitchen and he can sleep through like, basically anything, but his room is the bigger room and he says he needs the extra space for a desk to study for his MCAT (which he does out loud like he's the Rain Man or something since he's an auditory learner, whatever the hell that means). Meanwhile, I've had big black bags under my eyes since I was little, la coloración de tu papi, my mother says when she tells me to wear less eyeliner and more rouge. The complexion of a ghost. And that can't happen today. I need to look good because Robby asked me to hang out after school, and Linda said Andrew Tomick told her that he is going to ask me to be his girlfriend today. It's been a steady flirtationship since we sat together in Social Studies last term. He'd bob his knee up and down all class, shake the table, and mess

101 Your father's colouration
up my concentration, and it would have been annoying, but then oh god, he'd smile that stupid little crooked smile, and scribble an apology in my notebook in his messy boy handwriting, and then, as we would leave the classroom, he'd turn to Linda and say: *Simone wouldn't stop shaking her leg the whole class, can you tell her it's really annoying?* It should have made me so mad, but it's like he's got this magic, and all of a sudden I'm admiring the splash of freckles on his nose, wondering if he's over 6 feet tall, trying to get up close to him to smell his Old Spice, wearing my Bauhaus t-shirt on days we have class together because I know he like them.

"Well, the thing that interests me is information about where he is… Oh, no, you don't have to say sorry, I know that is a possibility, but we haven't given up on finding him alive yet… Yes, certainly I can give you some background. Okay, all of us lived in Chile, my kids were born there and then…"

"¡Mama!" I slap the wall that separates us and pull the blanket over my ears, "Callate po, por favor!"102

"Hold on just one second, miss…" her tiny feet shuffle down the corridor and then a "Ximena, por favor," she's holding the phone close to her heart, "esa señora from the Embassy de Belgica103 maybe can connect us to el ministerio de housing105, this is a very good lead, and levantate huevona, it's time for school," then back to the phone, "Hello there, hi, yes sorry, sorry. So as I was saying, we, like a family, lived in Santiago, and then left Chile in October of 1973, and we moved to

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102 Shut up, please!
103 This woman
104 Of Belgium
105 Ministry of Housing
106 Get up, silly
Vancouver, Canada, and during May of the year after, my husband returned to Chile to be part of the resistance on the ground against Pinochet.

It rains on the walk to school so that everything is shiny and slick and unsettled. I'm soaking wet when I get to there: my hair is completely flat and my makeup is ruined, so Marcia and I sneak out of Art class to go fix it in the bathroom.

"What if you wore it down, and like, fluffed up the front?" Marsh knows it's unsalvageable but I've gotta give her credit for trying.

"No, no, then I'd look too much like my mother, you know?" I hike up my bra straps and try flattening my bangs, but it's worse.

"Mmmm, yeah, I get what you mean, okay. Oh hey, what do I wear to that party thing your mom's hosting? Is it like dress kind of event or no?"

Like I said: kiss-up. "Marsh, you really, really do not have to come, it's gonna be so boring. It's not even a party-party, it'll just be my mom and Alberto Sanchez's mom and their friends tearing up over pan flute music and looking at pictures of dead Chile dudes, for hours. If we go we'll never leave, honestly, don't come."

"Oh, but it could be fun, Sim! I bet we could get your brother to boot for us and---" the bell rings, and Marcia checks her watch, "oh shoot, we should probably get to Math." Marcia hates being late. We all do. And that right there is why me and Marsh and Linda will never actually hang out with the smokers and the real punk chicks.

I shoulder my backpack and try to make peace with my ponytail, and walk to Ms. Silber's classroom on the other side of the building, but we see Linda by her
locker. She's going on about how her English teacher is such a hardass when all of a sudden it happens. Two hands reach around from behind my head and cover my eyes and it all goes black.

"Guess who?"

And then I can't breathe, like I always imagined it would be when I finally got grabbed, my lungs forget how to push air in and out and I have this dream all the time where I'm walking, sometimes in downtown Santiago, sometimes on my route to school, so real that it's almost like it happened, where two men come up from behind me, one grabs my shoulders the other covers my mouth and it all goes black, and they drag me, into a car, into a ditch, into a a secret door through the floor. They say my dad is there but he never is. They tell me they won't let me go until I find him and so I search and search around this abandoned cellar until I eventually wake up. Sometimes I see it happening like I'm outside my body, like it's not happening to me and I can't do anything but watch it happen, but it's always crazy vivid, like I remember their hands, remember my lungs collapsing, remember struggling and screaming and struggling and screaming.

"¡Dejame!" And I jab with my elbow back and drop all my weight so it'll take my kidnapper by surprise, and the hands release and I launch myself forward towards Marcia, and if she didn't grab my shoulders and say "Sim, what the--" I would've kept running.

"Ow! Holy shit, Simone, ow, my god." Hand over nose, wincing and blinking hard, Robby's got blood running through his fingers, all down his arms, dripping in

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107 Let go of me
little round drops on the linoleum. Linda's already running to the bathroom for paper
towels and Marsh is just standing there slack-jawed, looking at me like I just---Oh my
god. I just did. The flow of people in the hall slows as everyone pauses to see what
happened, to look at the blood, then look at me.

I apologize and apologize and he says it's okay, but he's lying. He curses and
tilts his head back. The bleeding doesn't stop. Ms. Silber intercedes. She wants to
know what happened and if I'm alright and I open my mouth to answer but ----I'm
trying to remember how it started: me and Marcia, headed to Math, talking to Linda,
and then what?

Horror. That's the look that washes over the faces of people when they see my
name written on an attendance sheet. Nothing will ever be as bad as my ballet
teacher thinking my name was "eczema," but without fail, every single teacher,
coach, and dental hygienist has absolutely skewered it. Mrs. Bartlett, our school
secretary, is no exception.

"Ex-ee-meena? Exy-menah? Am I saying that right? I have your mother on
the phone."

"It's Simone." From behind her desk, she passes me the worn receiver, and I
realize I have to talk to la bruja\textsuperscript{108} in front of her, our vice principal Mr. Cowlin, and
Robby. I hold my breath.

"Ximena Beatrice Farría Ortega, no te puede creer po.\textsuperscript{109} I'm in the middle of a
call with ese Congressman de California, y la secretaria de tu escuela me llamó

\textsuperscript{108} The witch
\textsuperscript{109} I can't believe you
diciendo que golpeaste a alguien?110 She's yelling. Yelling so loud nobody can stand to look at me. Great. They all know my mother's a spic.

"Mom," I try to tame her tone, "it wasn't a fight, it was an accident, I just--"

"¿Estás loca? No, no te crié de esa forma. Tu padre estaría tan, pero tan, decepcionado contigo. Necesitas ayuda po huevona, ayuda."111

It goes on like this until my mother decides she's kept the Congressman on hold long enough. I say goodbye. She gives no indication that she heard. The powers that be have established that there was no foul play, so Mr. Cowlin says we're excused to our next class, but that I should be more careful or I'll land myself a detention. I apologize again, to everyone.

"So," Robby says tossing his bloody tissue in the trash on our way to the science wing, "do you want to meet by the cafeteria after school?"

"You still wanna hang out with me? After all of that?"

"Yeah, I was thinking we could take a long walk to the pharmacy and get some bandaids, some gauze, and then maybe you could show me some of your karate moves. I mean," his face cracks into the most magnificent smile and my whole heart slides like butter down hot toast, "it's the least you could do, after, you know. All of that."

I zone out all through Chem and Study Hall. People are staring at me and whispering to their lab partners and I keep flashing back to the hallway, everything

110 Your school secretary calls me and saying that you hit someone?

111 Are you insane? No, no I didn't raise you like this. Your father would be so, but so disappointed in you. You need help, moron, help.
going black and then the blood and the look on Marcia's face when she figured out I was unstable and my guts drop like I'm in an elevator. It feels like when we first moved here and I knew all the kids were talking about me but my English was still pretty iffy so that I couldn't make out much of what they were saying. One girl, Karen O'Connor, told Marcia I was a commie. I had to ask Pablo what that was. I remember I was so confused because back home, well, back in Chile, communist was one of those words like accountant or contractor, some title that belongs to people's parents, that just washes over your little ears. Pablo told me that dad's a commie, but not to tell anyone. All afternoon, I go down these crazy rabbit holes wondering if Robby's just being polite and he actually thinks I'm off my rocker, and he's going to stand me up or tell me we shouldn't hang out anymore. Maybe someone found out about my dad and told him, and it's too weird or too sad or too political for him. What if he knows and this is a pity date, because he feels sorry for me, like I'm some poor defenseless foreigner with no dad. But I have to relax and get in a good headspace, Linda reminds me, I'm being irrational and I've got a date in an hour.

We meet by the caf, and he's smiling and bobbing his knee like always, and if it weren't for the little bloodstain on his shirt, it was almost like debacle never happened, to him at least. We walk West, and the banter is easy: Mr. Cowlin's combover, that Grade 9 girl who is allegedly related to Bryan Adams (we're both convinced she's full of it), whether or not we're too old for Halloween, and if so, how lame would it be to just got to Safeway and buy ourselves candy? At one point, I'm sure he's about to ask me why I socked him but instead he asks me if I want a cigarette, which I decline, because if your parents are smokers, it kinda loses its
appeal, you know? And he gets it, or at least pretends to, and puts them away. We walk for like two hours, all the way down to the water. The mountains are the same colour as the ocean, stormy like dull metal. He shows me how to skip stones, and we go to McDonalds and share fries (the cashier asks for a name and he says to put it under "Ex-ee-meena" and I tell him to watch it or I'll make his nose bleed again), and then somehow we're already back by my house talking about what we're doing after graduation. He says he's moving to Calgary to spend time with his dad, and I'm secretly disappointed he won't be here, even though we don't graduate for another 8 months.

"What about you, what's your old man like?"

"Oh," I've gotten real good at answering this one, "my dad's not really in the picture."

"When did your parents split up?"

"Mine aren't really… like..." we're nearing my house so I lower my voice, just in case, "my dad kinda just walked out on us, went back to Chile for work, apparently. They're technically still married, though, my parents, even though none of us have seen him in like seven years."

"Jeez, what a bastard," I try to stop him and explain that it's not quite like that, or that maybe it used to be, but Robby doesn't quite pick up on it, "well, he's out of his mind if he doesn't want to be a part of your life." He slows down right before my house and looks at me hard. Shit. It's not that I don't want to kiss him, I just don't want to do it here because I'll be all nervous if there's a chance she'll see me, sense me, or that I'll see her, it's like I can feel her watching me, telling me I'm doing it
wrong, and all the worrying will make me sloppy and then he'll get weirded out and go tell everybody I'm a bad kisser. He's doing that thing though, where he's touching my arm and trying to hold my gaze and I'm all wrapped up in the way he's looking at me and--- you know what, I'm being insane. Right then I decide to just stop freaking and go for it. So I just kinda stare at his lips, all pink and pillowy, and he's looking at me and so we both just lean in and---

I overshoot the angle. We bump noses. He pulls back, and touches his nose: blood. Again. Great job, Sim, just great. But somehow he's laughing. Laughing a lot, and then I'm laughing too.

He needs a tissue or something though, and my house is right there, and I can't not give him a tissue right? My mother should still be at jazzercise, so if we go in through the back door and use the powder room and get out quickly then it should be doable, but we have to be really, really quiet.

It almost works too, but like I said, the walls are thin.

"Ximena," without knocking, she pulls door open while Robby is splashing water on his face, "¿Todo bien?"112 She smiles sweet. She knows she's got me trapped. "¿Your friend is staying for dinner?"

You ever wonder what your house looks like to other people? Like what they think when they walk in, or what it smells like because you can never smell the smell of your own house? Except for Marsh and Linda (and trust me, that's only because we've been friends since elementary school and I didn't know any better when I was

112 All good?
little), I've never invited any of my friends to come over. It's like, imagine a piece of amber, okay? We're the little bugs stuck in the resin, except the resin is 1973.

Walking into the living, the first thing anyone would notice is the butterflies, an infestation of thirty or so horsehair butterflies, on every orange wall, shelf, coffee table, and lamp. My mother loves artesania de crin de caballo\textsuperscript{113} so much that it looks like the Magic Kingdom in here, even though "we" hate "Disney y su imperialismo cultural"\textsuperscript{114} and whatever. Then, amongst all the little mariposas,\textsuperscript{115} you'd notice the massive painting on the South facing wall, a hideous thing all done in blue, white, and red, depicting a man with really droopy cheeks and thick black glasses and a sash behind a big starry flag, and in big block letters: "VENCEREMOS."	extsuperscript{116} A massive blue and white Allende ---a really shoddy interpretation by the way, he looks more like a fat Buddy Holly--looks right at you, like skewers you alive. There's a cabinet lined with jazzercise tapes and Violeta Parra records and a fleet of tiny wooden boats that all say "Valparaiso" on the sides, and five framed pictures of my father, three of Pablo, one of me. The couch is covered in the ugliest, scratchiest red and orange throws you've ever seen, with little llamas stitched into it and a big brown stain from when Pablo got the stomach flu and didn't quite make it to the washroom. And oh yes, you might also be so lucky as to hear my brother reciting his MCAT study cards from his bedroom, perhaps a lively rendition of the Citric Acid Cycle for your listening pleasure. The living flows right into the kitchen (which is covered in, shocker, more butterflies), where you'll see a breakfast table covered in papers, and

\textsuperscript{113} Chilean horse hair handicraft
\textsuperscript{114} ...and their cultural imperialism
\textsuperscript{115} Butterflies
\textsuperscript{116} We will overcome! (Unidad Popular slogan)
on the wall by the phone, there's a list of the names and numbers of members of parliament, judges, congressmen, senators, and embassy employees. And of course, the centrepiece, the main attraction: a stack of homemade picket signs leaned up against the wall, all featuring the same picture of my father in a collared shirt and a shiny mustache accompanied by everyone's favourite refrain: WHERE IS RAÚL ORTEGA?

"Wow, Mrs. Ortega, you have a really lovely home," Robby lies looking the Allende painting right in its dead eyes and I almost implode right there on the spot.

"Ay, Roberto, please," Oh no, he's got an apodito\textsuperscript{117} now, "call me Maria Elena. Mrs. Ortega is the name of my husband's mother. Please, take a chair."

And so, as one would, Robby pulls out the chair closest to him, except it happens to be the chair.

"Oops, this one no, not this one," my mother stops Robby, and ushers him toward another seat, "that's the chair of Ximena's father, we don't sit there. Pablito," she calls to my brother, "vente paca, vamos a cenar con el pololo de la Xime.\textsuperscript{118}

We learn very quickly that Robby loves empanadas. Robby learns very quickly that it's not just ground beef in there and almost chokes on an olive pit. He takes down three in a matter of minutes and my mother is loving it. I try to catch his eye, to make sure he's doing okay, but much to my mother's delight, he just can't get enough of the food. Pabs must know I'm panicking, because he takes the reigns of the conversation, and keeps it focused on school, sports, the world exhibition they're

\textsuperscript{117} \textbf{Nickname}

\textsuperscript{118} \textbf{Come here, we're going to have dinner with Xime's boyfriend.}
gonna start building in False Creek. And chair thing aside, it's actually going pretty okay. I let my shoulders soften. And then the phone rings.

"Ah, you know, that's probably the Friends of the Disappeared group in Australia," she wipes her mouth and scurries to the kitchen phone in the corner behind Pablo. Robby helps himself to a fourth empanada. "Time difference, you know? Un minutito chicos... Alo? Hi Maureen, yes hi, how are you? You know, same old, all good. So, was your contact at the Vicaría de la Solidaridad able to see any of the bodies? Oh, what a shame, well, I can't say I'm surprised---"

"So, Robby," I try to divert his attention away from my mother, "you know Pablo used to be on the swim team too, actually," he's looking down at his plate though, his face stiffening, "Pabs, what's that prank you guys played on Coach Terry, again? The one with the Kool-Aid packs?"

"...So I've been talking with this guard from Isla Dawson, Ruiz, and another man, a doctor, former Mirista, and both of them claim, okay, claim, that they know Raúl, and that they have information about his whereabouts in 1976."

"Oh yeah," Pabs can tell I need reinforcement, "do we wanna bring our plates into the living room, and give mom some space?" I start collecting my silverware, but Robby's still staring at his empty plate.

"But when I asked this guy the colour of Raúl's hair, you know what this bastard says? He says blonde. Blonde!" And suddenly, her screech cracks into a whimper, "can you believe? Blonde, the father of my children...Why would he lie to me?" Pablo and look at each other, look at Robby.

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119 One minute kids...Hello?
120 Vicar of Solidarity (Human Rights Organization)
"You know what, I should go," Robby stands up from the table without looking up, "the buses are going to stop running soon, and I've gotta get all the way back to the East Side so I might just take off um…” he starts towards the front door.

"Oh, wait are you sure? Pablo can give you a ride if you like," I follow him, my ears turning all pink and hot, "you don't need to bus."

"No, you know, my mom doesn't even know I'm here, uh, and I have a bus pass so it's… I just gotta go, I'm sorry," he slides on his Chucks, and starts lacing. He won't look me in the eyes. "Well, thank you! And thank your mom, for having me," he opens up his mouth to say something but stops, like he's forgotten how to speak English. Instead, he extends his left arm around my shoulders in an elbow-y side hug, like how you'd pose in a photo with someone you barely knew. "Bye."

And then he steps out the door, closes it behind him and walks out into the night. Gone.

Are mothers, like normal mothers, supposed to teach their daughters how to cry? I mean obviously, every little baby is born knowing how to cry but what if you forget how to do it properly, like how to snuffle and cry dainty little gotas121 in public or into someone's shirt, instead of hiding in some graffitied bathroom stall and soundlessly heaving into the meat of your palms? Or is it a father's job to show you how to cry stoic, cowboy tears? Beats me. I taught myself to cry real quiet. Alone, in my room, letting the tears roll all sticky down my neck, smearing dregs of mascara down my cheek, pooling in my ears, bleeding into my pillow. It's not cute but it gets

121 Drops
the job done. If I really need to drown out my mother or burry my father, sometimes I'll play something really depressing, Joy Division or Lou Reed or something, you know, just for effect. But even with my record player on full blast, she somehow still manages to be louder.

"Apagate ese ruido, pero, por favor," she strides into my bedroom without knocking. Her voice has been restored to its trademark volume, like the phone incident never happened. I don't look at her. I tell her to keep her hands off my records and to leave me alone.

"Nena, you're being dramatic, no te preocupes," she sits at the edge of my bed and pats my foot in a crappy attempt at affection before launching into her sermon. "Ximena," she sighs, "the thing you need to know about men is they always come back."

"Oh, do they?" I roll over to glare at her. "You know, maybe if I make some phone calls then in seven, ten, twenty years Robby will come running back here. And I bet he'll bring Papi, too. And John Lennon, and Allende, and--"

"Bueno, con esa actitud tan fea," I can see why Roberto didn't want to stay for dessert." She stands up to leave but she's not getting the final say.

"He left because your little house of horrors scared him shitless, okay? It's been seven years since Dad left, seven years! You should know better than anyone that he's never coming back because he's dead, in the ground, and because he left us," the first tear from the new batch escape, and the rest follow in an unbroken flow,

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122 Please, turn off that noise
123 Don't worry, sweetheart
124 Well, with that bad attitude
"okay? He cared more about fighting the fight than he care about being a suburban stay-at-home-dad, so he left you. He left us." I say it to get a rise out of her more than I mean it, but the knife doesn't turn. My mother is quiet. Not like she's trying to cobble up the right words to respond, not like she's giving me the silent treatment. She's just looking at me, hard eyes, soft face. It's freaking eerie. I kinda wish she'd stop because she's never this comfortable in silence, and neither am I. Then calmly, quietly, she says to me:

"He has not left. Not yet."

The final notes of the B-side of the record play. The turntable slows, and the arm lifts off. And my mother is just sitting there waiting, not for him, but for me: waiting on me to begin.

From the other side of the wall, the phone rings. My mother and I turn towards the sound, and then towards each other.

"I'll get it."
Chapter V: Return

My uncle Danny and cousin Eddie on Danny's first trip back to Chile since his departure in 1973
Tongoy, Chile. 1982.
V

Retornado

On the day his mother was taken, Amos lost his first tooth. The tooth had been wiggling for some time now, and unlike most children, intent on ridding themselves of the trappings of childhood, Amos liked to bully the dangling tooth with the tip of his tongue. Because he was bored and because he was older, his brother decided it was time: comportarse como hombre,\textsuperscript{125} yank it out. But Amos wouldn't do it himself, so his brother held him down, pushed his fingers inside his mouth, and extracted it. Their father, a just man, was hard-headed and hard-handed when it came to punishment. And when he saw his eldest with a bloody tooth and Amos with a bloody mouth, he calculated the cost of the wrongdoing: a single punch to the face, to be administered by the victim. Before Amos was able to hit his brother, the boys realized their mother hadn't come back from the store, and the retribution was delayed. Their mother wouldn't come back for another three weeks, and Amos's adult tooth, the top left incisor, would never grow in.

Seventeen years later, 35,000 feet above the Andes, the man sitting next to Amos on the flight from Heathrow notices his gummy smile.

"That must've been some fight," says the man. Amos stops softening the edges of the slip of paper in his hands.

"Still is," he slides his tongue into the gap in his teeth, "that's why I'm headed back home to Chile."

\textsuperscript{125} Be a man
"Now I know British dentists haven't got the best reputation," the man laughs and reveals his own rabbity teeth, "but, bugger, South America? Seems like an awfully long way to travel for dental work."

"Oh, I'm not here for the dentist," Amos thumbs the piece of paper once more. He smiles his half-smile. "I've come back for the tooth."

Amos has been planning this trip, quietly, unknowingly since the day his family first left Chile for London in 1975. He returns alone: his father died of heart complications, his brother tied down to his wife and children, his mother, basking in the repose of her senility, refused to set foot in Chile ever again. She has forgotten why. But she knows she is upset that her youngest son has quit his job and packed his bags to return to that hopeless backwater where she grew up. Amos's ex-lover is just as disenchanted when he tells him the news.

"I forget, sometimes," the ex-lover had said, "qué joven y que imbécil eres."

Sure, the ex-lover missed Argentina. But the years of Buenos Aires's sunshine and clamor had penned thick creases into this forehead, and holding tightly to the square jaw and green eyes that kept him attractive at 55, he did not care to leave his East London flat.

"You don't understand," Amos explained, "I've been talking to this guy, a private eye and human rights organizer in Santiago, and he found ese coño¹²⁷ who oversaw all the interrogations at Londres 38 in 1974. This is the guy who tortured her."

So Amos showed him the slip of paper bearing ese coño's name and address:

¹²⁶ How young and stupid you are
¹²⁷ That bastard
He did not mention to his Argentine ex-lover that Apartment #3A in La Gloria 110 is available for rent, or that he's already called the landlord.

The Argentine ex-lover read the scrap, and laughed.

"You like very much to suffer, don't you, Amos? The people who are born into violence will spend our whole lives trying to run from it. And we learn pretty quickly it can never be outrun. But you, jovencito? You don't really know it, so you go running right back in."

When the rabbit-toothed man next to him isn't looking, Amos sneaks another glance at the scrap of paper. Sebastian Navarro Morales. The name tastes sour in his mouth, but he tries not to let spoil the reunion. He waits restlessly for his Chile, his happy copy of Eden, to materialize below him, for the plane's wheels to kiss the tarmac, to feel the weight of his body the ground that he left behind. The landing is harsh. He returns the slip of paper to his pocket. He collects his bags, queues up for a cab, and waits to feel at home.

When his taxi driver asks where to take him, Amos is too busy admiring the hills, the barren hills. The taxista tries again, louder, and in English.

"Soy chileno, caballero," he insists before giving the driver the address, but a substance has grown, like a layer of dust, coating his words beyond recognition.

"Mister, where you going? Please, the street."

128 Little one
129 I'm Chilean, mate.
But still, his words do not cut through the early morning air. He shows the driver the address on the macerated slip of paper, and it is only then, in writing that the taxista understands. The hills roll. Clusters of hills, plump and dusty, joined as if by veins. The only shadow in sight is the one cast by the taxi, gliding hypnotically down the side of the highway. Completely exposed to the sun, the hills rise and fall like they were breathing, like the belly and chest and hips of his mother. Amos wills the hills to be his. He consumes them so intensely that he does not notice the car turning off the highway and stopping or the driver digging for something in the glove compartment. It is only when he feels is the heat of the barrel on his lips the gun metal and the silver fillings in his molars resisting each other that he realizes he's being robbed. Until now, he had only seen the back of the cabby's head, thick black hair and a tanned neck, nondescript, but now confronting him head on, Amos notices the face behind the gun: big pores, waxy nose, the whisper of a mustache, the overconfident glare of a teenager.

"Muévete maricón," the boy commands, so Amos moves with the gun, out of the car and onto the dusty ground, stomach down so he tastes the earth. The child-driver spits on him. With the suitcase in the trunk and the passport in hand, he orders Amos to start counting. He speeds away.

Once the sun on his neck has become unbearable, Amos rises. There are no street signs, no sign of being close to any shops or houses, no money and no ID; just the hills and the layer of grime caked into his only pair of pants. Sitting up and dusting himself off, he tries hopelessly to orient himself, trying to locate himself

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130 Move it, faggot
amongst the hills. This is what it must have felt like, he thinks, rising from the earth, feeling for his missing tooth, this is what she must have felt like once they were finished with her, when they dumped her by Los Dominicos. But he stops himself, thinking of his aging mother, and ramming his tongue into the tooth that isn't there, until he could feel the guilt freezing every nerve ending. No, no, no, he scorns himself, it did not happen to you, it didn't. With nothing on his person but the slip of paper in his pocket, he heads down the gravel road in the direction he hopes is home.

An hour later, the morning heat has thickened, and after following the road to the freeway, Amos spots a purple Volkswagen Cabriolet. The car slows for him. The woman reclined behind the steering wheel is tiny with the whitest smile Amos has ever seen. Her hair, raised like a candied dome over her head, her eyes, quartered and hardened by black liner, barely take him in. Instead, the woman brushes a crumb from her blouse, cracks her right knuckle and says:

"Mira,\textsuperscript{131} I don't usually take clients on Sundays, or in my car, so it'll be extra, claro?"\textsuperscript{132}

Amos felt his insides burning, his skin sloughing off with disgust. His voice resorts to its deepest timbre.

"I was mugged, okay? The guy took my wallet and my suitcase. I don't want to solicit any of your services, entiendes?\textsuperscript{133} I just need a ride to the city." But his Spanish has grown wiggly around its edges, and the adrenaline in his veins make his voice shake.
"Okay, but none of this looking down on me, okay? And no ogling me like I'm roadkill. You're the one on the side of the highway without money, alright: yo siento penas por ti." Amos opens his mouth the tell her off, then remembering he has no other option, surrenders. They drive in silence, the hills morphing into the hinterlands, until the tops of buildings, regal and important, materialize before them. He had long anticipated this very moment, of Santiago surfacing in real time instead of in the marrows of his memory. But as the car pushes further and further into the city Amos finds himself increasingly distracted by his driver's teeth, impossibly white, perfectly serrated.

"Oh stop staring, come on. They're fake, alright? At least I don't have no pirate smile like you huevon. You ever think about getting that fixed?"

He hasn't. She asks how it happened in the first place. He looks the woman and down, measuring her, and reasoning how delicate her features must be under that attitude and that hair and those teeth. And then he testifies.

"My mother wrote a cookbook back in the 70's: Secretos de la Cocina Chilena. Classic recipes, you know: empanadas de queso, cazuela, mote con huesillos. It was a hit, really popular, there was even a rumour that Hortensia made Salvador Allende my mother's sopaipilla, and then everyone wanted a copy. But you know, then the coup happened, and all the arrests. And in all the houses of every Allendista, what did those bastards find? A copy of Secretos de la Cocina Chilena. So

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134 I pity you
135 Fool
136 Secrets of the Chilean Kitchen
137 Cheese empanada, stew, peach beverage (all traditional Chilean dishes)
they thought it had to mean something, right, the recipe for pastel de choclo\textsuperscript{138} had to be a secret Soviet code, or instructions for a bomb or something. They find her, arrest her, take her in for questioning, y pues este coño, Lieutenant Sebastián Navarro Morales electrocutes her, waterboards her, rapes her, and the whole time asks her: ¿Cuáles son los secretos de la cocina chilena?\textsuperscript{139} She has no idea what he wants. After three weeks, they decide the cookbook's just a cookbook, and they dump her with no shoes or pants by Los Dominicos. We leave Chile the following week."

"Chucha po, absolutamente espeluznante este país,"\textsuperscript{140} a gust of wind rustles the crucifix hanging from the rearview mirror. Jesus looks especially uncomfortabale that day. "Pero coño, where's your tooth?"

Amos swallows, puzzled; he thought he had explained it. "Well, I lost the tooth, the baby tooth, the day my mother was taken, but the adult one never grew in. So, I figure the putamadre\textsuperscript{141} who did this to my mother has teeth, y pues,\textsuperscript{142} I've come to reclaim my tooth."

"Did your mother ask you to do it?"

"Well, no, not exactly. She's quite a bit older now. They diagnosed her with Alzheimer's a couple years back, so her memory's almost completely shot. But the tooth is for her, and for me."

The woman's eyebrows rise a notch, waiting for Amos to reveal the punchline. But he doesn't. The car slows to a stop at a traffic light. A couple of buskers jog into

\textsuperscript{138} Chilean corn casserole
\textsuperscript{139} What are the secrets of the Chilean kitchen?
\textsuperscript{140} God, absolutely horrifying, this country....
\textsuperscript{141} Motherfucker
\textsuperscript{142} And so
the middle of the intersection; one juggles bowling pins, propelling them high, high into the air while the others begs for change.

She exhales, grinding her thumbs into the wheel, "I don't mean to pass judgement," she cocks her head to the side, "but I will, and I'll tell you that you've gotta stop licking your stitches, okay? Your mother's stitches. Si al fin y al cabo, if all your life is-- tu me pegas, yo te pego, supply and demand, whatever --- if that's still the case, pues lo que le pasó, qué te pasó, la dictadura, todo eso, it'll never be over," she watches the juggler snatch his final whirling pin, "not for you at least." The juggler comes round to the passenger's side of the Cabriolet. Amos closes his window. "Bueno tarado, where am I dropping you?"

Jammed gracelessly between the relics of a single-family home and a notary public, La Gloria 110 extends skyward like exposed bone. Wide, cascading patios and beige blackout curtains line the front face of the complex, hiding the residents from onlookers below. Behind a spired gate, a garden, immaculately trimmed and watered, thrives under the protection of the building's shadow. Eyes upturned to the 6th story, Amos approaches the gate and presses the buzzer.

"¿Diga?"

"Hola, em... My name is Amos, I'm renting apartment #3A."

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143 If at the end of the day
144 You hit me, I hit you back
145 What happened to you, the dictatorship, all of that
146 Alright, nutcase
147 Hello
"Ah, yes, the Englishman. Entre nomás." The lock on the gate releases, and Amos steps on to the property.

The man that greets him with a hand outstretched moves across the lobby in precise strides. With his shoulders pulled back, he strikes Amos as clear-cut and compact all but his unkempt hair. He smiles with his cheeks, without bearing his teeth, and Amos quickly convinces himself that he does not look like anything special, not at all. His name is Rafael. Rafa. His uncle owns the building.

"Do you have a car parked out front? Can I help you with your bags?"

Amos explains about the mugging.

"Por Dios, this city breeds bandits," he shakes his head, "you'd think we got that out of our system. Viva Chile mierda."

The apartment is small but sunlit, furnished with a yellow and orange living room set that could only have been designed in the 1970s. The walls are bare; the bookshelves and cupboards empty. Just within sight, the military school looms. Rafa leaves to grab the leaser's contract, while Amos steps out onto the patio to see if he can locate Apartment #6C. He decides that he'll spend the afternoon calling the bank, grocery shopping, and then if time permits, he'll go buy the pliers. Pliers, he'd decided, will make for the cleanest, most efficient extraction.

But before he can entertain the ploy any further, Rafa reappears with the contract and a paper bag.

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148 Come on in
149 Jeez
150 Long live Chile, goddamnit
"I thought you might need a change of clothes," he pulls a pair of jeans and a collared shirt from the bag, "and I figured we're around the same size," Rafa smiles intently. Amos thanks him curtly without returning the grin, and cuts quickly to the chase before Rafa can smile again.

"Oye, where's a good place to buy pliers?" His landlord recommends a hardware store off Apoquindo.

"What do you need pliers for?"

"Oh, you know, just a project I have planned."

Rafa nods, smiles, and leaves him to settle into the apartment.

Before the mirror, Amos removes his shirt and slacks, dusty and limp with the weight of the day, still reeking of that empty plane smell. He examines his naked body, pausing not on his emerging gut or unruly chest hair, but on the gap, the flaw in the architecture of his enamel which has so mangled his mother-tongue, that fracture in his mouth from which all things, and nothing emerge. He pushes his tongue through it, caressing the ridges of the bordering teeth, and presses his lips shut so no one but him will know. Sick of looking at the huevon-caliado-maricon-Chileno-falso, he seizes the paper bag and dresses in Rafa's clothing. They smell like the warm wind of a lavanderia and of wood chips. Rafa was right. They are the same size.

The next few days are spent calibrating: he stocks the fridge, reacquaints himself with his childhood neighborhood, buys a phone and answering machine, and

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151Shithead-fag-fake-Chilean
rides the elevators up and down and up and down, hoping to catch a glimpse of a man ancient and evil enough to be Sebastian Navarro Morales. He figures the target must have been at least 45, probably older, to have worked his way up to the high-ranking position he had in 1974, which would make him at least 65 today. He's seen a young woman take her terrier out for a pee at least a dozen times, watched a disheveled father herd his school-bound children out the door every weekday, and even chatted up Señorita Mercedes, the doddering Santa Patrona of La Gloria 110, who Rafa confirms is a spinster. None of his neighbors match the description. Hoping to discover an ornament on the door or catch an aroma of Navarro Morales's dinner seeping through the jambs of the door, he walks by Apartment #6C approximately seventeen times. Nothing. He puts off visiting his cousins in the suburbs, applying for a job, and going to the beach until the deed is done, until he is whole again. He goes to church for the first time since he was a boy. In search of the pliers and a ski mask, he spends three hours looping the aisles of a grocery store so sterile and colossal it could only be American, watching the white lights glide off the linoleum. Rows and rows of fruit with their own private climates, 6-pack upon 6-pack of Coca Lite loudly boasting their artificiality, thick slabs of chocolate, individually wrapped, stacked like bars of gold, seventeen different brands of pebre. And someone will pay for all of it.

"The American investment in Chile," he complains when Rafa corners him into small talk, "my god, have you been to Jumbo? Qué monstruosidad." 

152 Chilean hot sauce
153 What a monstrosity.
"The one on Kennedy, or on Los Dominicos? Or did you go to the one in Maipú? Y es una marca chilena po huevón, creo que se han extendido también a Argentina y Colombia." ①

Much to Amos's irritation, his machinations have kept him close to the apartment, which has meant he's seen a lot of his landlord. Rafa needs a haircut; he keeps pushing the mop of black curls off his forehead, and smiling in embarrassment. Amos can't stand it. But in order to keep an eye on the lobby for a potential spotting of Navarro Morales, he ends up leaning against the doorway of the landlord's office, refusing to step fully inside, watching Rafa watch La U versus Catolica② on a tiny office TV. His landlord's lips bow into a concentrated pout as he listens intently to the sportscasters. Amos's father had gone for La U,③ though Amos didn't care much for fútbol, and Rafa's father had been a Colo-Colo④ man, but he hated the bastard, and pledged allegiance to Catolica. The game makes for easy repartee. The only speedbump is the national anthem. Under his breath, Amos sings along, stopping short after the first chorus; he does not recognize the second verse. Rafa picks up where he left off.

"Vuestros nombres, valientes soldados,

que habéis sido de Chile el sostén,

nuestros pechos los llevan grabados;

los sabrán nuestros hijos también."⑤

① And it's a Chilean brand, silly, I think they've expanded to Argentina and Columbia too
② University of Chile and Catholic University (popular soccer teams)
③ University of Chile (popular soccer team)
④ Popular soccer team
⑤ Your names, brave soldiers, who have been Chile's mainstay, they are engraved in our chests;
"I don't remember there being a second verse."

"Yeah," Rafa remarks, "I think they added it when I was in grade school. Must've been after you left."

Amos allows the campy melody to wash over him, the crisp drumline and the tinny male voices. He has only heard the anthem sang in his mother's soprano. He hasn't called her since he arrived. Perhaps, he thinks, his tongue feeling for the chasm, her Alzheimer's has merged her two sons into a single person, his brother, and she hasn't even noticed his absence. Perhaps she has forgotten him altogether. Perhaps it's better she doesn't know.

La U decimates Catolica. Rafa decides he owes Amos a beer, given that his team proved so superior. Amos declines.

"¡Ven po, retornado! My friend is bartending at this place not far from here. "Amos does not go out on the town with other men, never has, but before he can assert that he's ningún maricón, Rafa adds, "a bunch of my buddies from school will be there. It'll be fun."

And only then does it registers: Amos's bones are signing for liquor.

The friends are boisterous, back-clappers, and ask good questions. The long, narrow-shouldered one wants to talk only of English fútbol players. Another, the only woman in the group, asks why his Spanish got so good, and follows up with a question about when his family left Chile. Amos pretends not to hear and diverts the conversation back to the fútbol match. But the past catches up. The stocky friend with our children will know them as well. (Lyrics from the Chilean National Anthem, added in 1973)

159 No faggot
a goatee, asks what everyone thinks of this Alywin character, and whether any of the
guys responsible for the mass grave at Pisagua going to get thrown in the slammer.

"Pfft, no of course they're not," Rafa shakes his head, "we voted, Pinochet se fue,\textsuperscript{160} end of story. I don't know why everyone's so eager to draw this shit out any
longer."

"I dunno, Raf," the woman responds, "they keep finding all these bodies, it's
not just gonna end because we can all vote again."

"And it's not just the bodies," Amos adds, "they've got to pay for all the
detentions too."

"Ay, escuchaste el gringo?\textsuperscript{161} The narrow one claps him on the back. "You
weren't even here, man. It's all talk, it wasn't so bad."

"Callate po huevón," the woman smacks the narrow one's arm, "Amos tiene
razón.\textsuperscript{162} There's a lot of unearthing left to do. The government's gotta up their ante,
we all do."

"Ay por favor," Rafa puts his arm around the woman, "look they're putting
that report thing together for the victims, aren't they? And then what, are we supposed
to wallow in how depressed we are about it for another 17 years? ¡No! That's the
point of it all being over," he finish the last swig of beer, "come on, enough of this
sad shit, let's go dance."

Amos downs his whiskey sour, a double, then another, and then washes down
a couple Cristals to quench his thirst. His cheeks pucker, his insides thaw. Rafa

\textsuperscript{160} Went away
\textsuperscript{161} Did you hear the gringo?
\textsuperscript{162} Shut up, idiot... Amos is right.
orders a round of shooters: Amos takes his own, and Rafa's too, tells him to add the
difference to his rent next month. His landlord giggles into his beer glass, and pulls
Amos into the crowd of dancers. The music is good, loud, and Amos moves, all hips
and elbows, in spastic little movements like the second hand of a clock. The alcohol
makes the walls bend around him, makes Rafa's hand on the back of his neck warm
and charged.

"You're all smiley when you're drunk," his landlord teases, teetering so close
to Amos's face that he can smell him everywhere: wood chips and beer and warm
laundry, "I'd almost forgotten about that pirate smile." Even with all the bodies and
noise and liquor throbbing around him, Amos can tell what is brewing, and wants it.
He closes his eyes, and tries to steady himself, and waits to feel Rafa's gaze, his face
stretching towards him, softening. But a tremor unsettles his stomach, bending his
vision with the room. Like a confession, the night's libations rise from his gut to his
throat so that he can taste them, harsh and sour. He vomits. Except for Rafa, who
strokes his back as he heaves a second time, the people around him scatter.

"Let's get you home."

Amos's skull thickens under his skin. Sobering as the episode had been, it had
also emptied him, so that stepping back into La Gloria 110, a new queasiness sets in.
He swivels into the elevator, leans back against its wall, braces for the machine to
swell under him. Rafa laughs and presses the button. The elevator rises.

"Oye, Raf, I think we passed my floor."

"We did," Rafa puts a hand on his shoulder to steady him, "I thought we'd go
up to mine, I just wanna make sure you're alright." Under other circumstances, Amos
would object to being babied like this, but the higher the elevator creeps, the more his
nausea flares.

"Fine. I didn't even know you lived in the building. " Rafa shepherds him
down the hall to his apartment and pats around for his keys. Amos wishes he'd hurry
up, he needs to sit down. Leaning against the wall for support, he fixates on the vinyl
sticker on the door: #6C.

"Raf, what apartment --- why are we here?"

"Because this is my place," he turns on the lights, "well kinda my place, my
huevon culiado\textsuperscript{163} father gave it to me when he died. Mira," he reaches over to pick
up a newspaper from the console table, "Lieutenant Sebastian Navarro Morales," he
reads the name off the address on the newspaper, "he's been dead nine months and
I'm still getting all his weekly copy of \textit{El Mercurio}.

The alcohol in Amos's veins turns to ice. He blinks, and Rafa's body starts
contorting; the hair greys and recedes, the gait widens, the nose sharpens, the eyes
flicker with insanity. Trying to thaw himself, he shuts his eyes and inhales, but the
stink of cigarettes overwhelms his nostrils.

"Oh yeah, sorry about the smell, the cabrón used to smoke like a chimney. I've
tried candles and air fresheners, pero, chuta, there's just some things just linger, you
know?" Rafa's cheeks rise into a smile, his lips parting like the bursting skin of rotten
fruit, revealing a set of cream white teeth.

\textsuperscript{163}Sonofabitch
And that's all his empty needed. He pulls his fist back, and swings' swiftly, proportionately. The punch lands. Gleaming like an ember, Amos sees a tiny white kernel fall to the ground.

"Ow, joder --ahhhh," Rafa releases a strained exhale, "what the hell was that?" Amos gapes as the teeth turn from white to red, the blood leaking down Rafa's bottom lip, then his chin, then his neck. Blood seizes the cotton of his white t-shirt, dissolving into the fabric like a communion wafer on the tongue. "Amos, my god, ow, what was that for? Jésuscristo, ow!"

But Amos can no longer hear him. He drops to his knees, his palms patting frantically on the carpet, his eyes flickering wildly, but nothing materializes under his fingers. So he looks for the loss. From the floor, he examines Rafa's mouth, scanning the enamel for gaps, but all he sees is the bleeding, thick and crimson; it stains every tooth, not a single one missing.

"What the hell are you doing on the floor? Amos? Amos, what is going on?"

"Your father…" he starts, but looking at the face behind the teeth, the face, tense and teary-eyed and daubed in blood, well what was there to say? He feels for the constancy of his own missing tooth, but something is off. Under his tongue, the gap extends wider and deeper, expanding like a yawn. It bleeds. Amos rises from the floor and flees. Downstairs, in his bathroom, he takes the pliers from the medicine cabinet, clamps them down onto his right incisor, and tries to remember if he's supposed to pull.

\[^{164}\text{Expletive}\]
The phone call that comes the next day is not the one Amos expects. It wakes him up, and bring with it the weight of last night's memories: the bar, the booze, the blood, the tooth. Rafa's face. Rafa's father. And now, probably Rafa on the other end of the phone, with questions, and maybe even an eviction notice. Could he say he doesn't remember a thing, or maybe invent a drinking problem, and chalk the whole thing up baseless drunken aggression? Or could the two of them, on opposite sides of the phone lines, sit and listen, apologize and mourn. He doesn't have to answer, he realizes, but he does. The voice that answers speaks English.

"Amos," says his brother, "I'm just here at the Maudsley Hospital with Mum. Things are, uh, not looking great at the moment, she's been experiencing some complications."

"Is she alright?"

"Um, to tell you the truth, no, not really. The Alzheimer's has progressed to the point where it's affecting her brain's ability to tell her body to cough properly, swallow, that sort of thing, which they're worried will lead to pneumonia. I think you need to come back, as soon as you can."

With a Jumbo bag slung over his shoulder, he leaves 110 La Gloria late in that night in the hopes that no one will see him slip out. The dark sky blots out the barren hills, like ink, like blood. From the airplane, the white headlights and windows of Santiago, sprawling and twinkling could have been London. He wishes he could extend the plane ride, delay the return, the reckoning that he no longer fits there either. Half-way into the flight, he realizes that he was dressed in Rafa's shirt and
cried softly into his tray table. He does not want to smell it, convinced that the laundry and wood chips have soured. His mother, he is sure, will smell it on him too, and there will be no chance at return, not really.

On the other side, his brother comes to fetch him.

"So," he asks, "how was it?"

"Oh. Um, it was…weird. I felt like I was waiting the whole time for it to feel like it did when we were growing up, like I remembered it. But it was never quite that, like it was never quite mine."

"Hmm," my brother nods in silence, "kinda reminds of me of Mum. She's this completely different person right now, she's lost all her own mannerisms, you know? But she seems, well, content. Kind of light, and affectionate. You'll see what I mean."

Deep in the body of the building, in a white, white room that's walls bare no marks, his mother smiles to see him. She cannot recall why. Physically, she looks about the same as she did when Amos left: the dandelion hair, the pink lip, the face still firm enough to conserve its dimples. But all her edges had softened. Her arms which used to hold tightly in front of her waist lie slackly by her sides. When she was diagnosed, the worst symptom, he thought, was the game of exchange his mother would play. Why couldn't she trade in the lyrics of the Canción Nacional¹⁶⁵ for the names of her grandchildren? Why couldn't she exchange the memories of detention for the memories of her husband? Why couldn't she have switched this disease for cancer? But that wanting, that mourning, he realizes, had ended. In her bed, smiling

¹⁶⁵ National Anthem
all doe-eyed, his mother had relinquished herself. With her memory snuffed out, she returned to an endless, infant present.

"Hola Mami, it's me, Amos," he starts, waiting for her face to brighten with recognition, but it doesn't. She stares at him, perplexed.

"Qué te pasó en los dientes?"166 his mother asks. Amos's mouth dries up. He searches for the right thing to say but all he can muster is the image of himself, on hands and knees, searching for a tooth which wasn't there. All there had been was bleeding, and still, still, a gap. He's bereft of responses. His brother tells him to get some air.

Outside in the parking lot, he feels it. There's weight over his chest, something solid in the breast pocket of Rafa's shirt. He reaches in to find a lighter and flattened cigarette have travelled with him from Santiago. He lights one, wondering if a cigarette can go stale. Inhaling, he watches the embers redden and dim, and holds the smoke inside of himself, feeling the fullness in his lungs. Then, oaky and warm, the smoke bellows out in front of him, hanging in the air like a ghost for a moment, before tapering into nothing. He goes on like this: filling himself full, witnessing the fade. He thinks of his landlord, his ex-landlord, inheriting that ghostly apartment, unable to rid himself of the stench that fills his home and makes a victim of his body. That substance, that smokes which breeds decay, it’s not a gap, but shame. And that he wonders, might make his ex-landlord a victim, too. Under his foot, Amos grinds the half-smoked cigarette into the earth, and heads back up.

166 What happened to your tooth?
Before he steps into the room once more, his brother stops him, and pulls him back out into the hall.

"Oye," his brother whispers, "someone rang the hospital for you when you were gone. Here," his brother hands him a scribbled-on receipt, "this is the guy. Chileno. Wants you to call him back."

On the scrap of paper, scribbled in his brother's hand, there is a name and a number:

Rafa Navarro Flores. +56 2 2780 5464.

Amos folds the paper, and slips it in his pocket. He'll return to it later.
Epilogue

My father and I visiting El Museo de Memoria y Derechos Humanos.
Santiago, Chile. 2019.
I've only been to Chile three times: the first time as an infant, the second as a tourist, and the third to conduct research for this project. And when I was in Santiago in January, my cousins generously commended me on my accent; a complement, of course, but one reserved para la sobrina gringa. And yet, for as long as I can remember, I've identified with the slender strip of land called Chile, filled the empty stretch of map with stories and memories which are not mine, and yet mine to conserve. Paradoxically, I feel a potent attachment to that which is not mine. Perhaps a strange voyeuristic magnetism towards the traumatic past is at play, or maybe it is the need to explore the people I love that draws me in. Either way, this attachment is textured and tension-producing.

At the outset of this project, I underestimated the active and disruptive role that I and this thesis could play in ongoing Chilean memory struggles. This is not to exaggerate the impact or meaning of this undergraduate thesis, but rather, a meditation on the continuity and breadth of memory struggles. In writing this thesis, I subconsciously assumed that memorial friction was something that happened in Chile or in exile. The players involved, or so I thought, were Chileans on either side of the aisle, as well as my parents' and grandparents' generations. Beyond my contribution to the "thickening" of Chilean collective memory (my plea for the inclusion of second-generation voices), I did not consider my own role or stake in the struggle. An earlier draft of this thesis featured a picture of my Nana in her 20s, smoking a cigarette. I have long adored this picture; elegant, provoking, and a perfect visual for the central metaphor of this thesis. My Nana, on the other hand, found the image

\footnote{167 The Canadian niece}
upsetting, too personal, and reminiscent of a hairstyle and lifestyle she did not want dredged up. Excited as she is about this project, she found the use of that particular photo appropriative. This project, I realized anew, emerged from a place of my own desires, not my family's. Throughout this work, memory struggles pertaining to questions of truth, history, and justice, have dominated the familial sphere. What real life disputes reveal though, is that memory struggles can be pedestrian, unspectacular, even awkward moments of friction. For me personally, one manifested through an uncomfortable phone conversation with my Nana, half at 1:00 AM two nights before my thesis was due: half English, and half Spanish, we discussed the photo, and I agreed to remove it from the project.

Like a lattice structure, my own understanding of Chile and memory depends the memories of those who came before me. This dependency, this inheritance, however, is not the same inheritance that gives way to eye colour. My brown eyes are my Nana's brown eyes, but her stories are not mine. At a certain point, in some dell between the second and third generation, ownership becomes fractured. And so, this epilogue serves as both my love letter and my apology. I have lent my words to the stories compiled in this thesis, ever-grappling with the question of my position as a writer: if members of the hinge generation are witnesses of these memories, then what does that make me? Beyond just the vulnerability and joy of sharing a creative work with others, the thought of sharing this project with my family members induces a strange privilege and anxiety. Did I get it right? Who did I get it right for? And what would it mean to get it wrong?
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