

ovejita

B i a n k a B e r m u d e z

. I
When you were little
you never wanted to hang out with
boys,
but neither did I,
those totems made of mud,
cracking to dust
beneath my gaze.

It didn't mean anything then.
It didn't have to.

Fourteen years old,
five years and six hours away from me,
I was playing dress-up online
and you were playing dress-up
for your parents.

You would have rather been playing
with the girl who smiled at you,
twirled her hair,
and your stomach, in
bathroom stall confessionals. But.

We were taught to love a God
mighty, and big, and bold.

Unlike yours,
mine loved me back.

Here is the apology
he'll never give you:

You didn't come out,
you were hunted.
(I'm sorry.)
Hands all around you
(I'm sorry.)
locked in a room
(I'm sorry.)
for hours
and hours
(I'm sorry.)
with only shadows of your
mami and papi
(I'm sorry.)
trying to pray
their daughter
into their *hija*.
(I'm sorry.)

Yes, we were taught to hate
but it was far too late,
far too late,
the words that went unspoken,
festering,
cavities in our teeth,
leaving us
aching.

They'd say
resa por tu prima
she's a little bit lost.
But what is there to pray for
when there's nothing
wrong?

And would you pray for me?
Would you pray for me, too?

Ovejita,
They think you're a bible verse,
about going astray,
painted themselves as shepherds,
but they're the crooks.

So, I remember
how *mami* always says
no sabes buscar,
feel the words tumble
out my mouth like yarn
from wool,
because if they'd been looking
just a little harder
they would've found

you had never
gone away.

. II

Ovejita,

you are not unforgivable;
there is nothing to forgive.

But,
I'd still wash your feet,
I'd still bless you,
even though it doesn't mean
much to you anymore,
I'd still look at the first person
with poison on their tongue,
and let he who is without sin
cast the first stone.

Know this. Know this. Know this. And:

I hope you never regret a single thing,
I hope you hold your wife's hand every day,
I hope the weight is comfortable against
your own,
the easiest thing in the whole world,
worn with time.
with affection.
lines tracing from one palm
to the other,
without seams.

I hope you know

I love you.