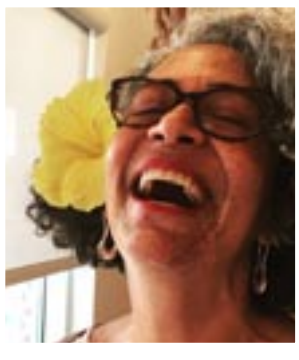
The Power of a Prefix

I am not bilingual
Because I can insert Spanish words into long English verses
I am bilingual
Because in my dreams the Ñs and Rs roll sweet & slippery like candy

I am not bicultural
For being Venezuelan-American
I'm bicultural
Because I can find the silences between the lines of our shared history books

I don't have bipolar
Because I swing from extreme sadness to exhilarating joy
I am bipolar
Because I can see racism from the Patagonia to the Arctic Circle



Lisbeth Coiman

Lisbeth Coiman is a bilingual writer and educator from Venezuela, a cultural worker and conversation stirrer. Her work has appeared in La Bloga, Entropy Acentos Review, Lady/Liberty/Lit, Nailed, Hip Mama Magazine, Rabid Oaks, Cultural Weekly, Resonancias and in print in Spectrum, The Altadena Literary Review, and Accolades: A Women Who Submit Anthology. Her self-published debut book, I Asked the Blue Heron: A Memoir, (2017) explores the intersection between immigration and mental health. Coiman teaches adult ESL (English as a Second Language). Before the pandemic, Lisbeth danced salsa to beat depression, but in the last few months she just drinks wine by the gallon. Please, don't tell her shrink that's how she keeps smiling on Zoom.

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