

Having A Conversation with My Tia Lluya While Having Breakfast at A Denny's in Reno, Nevada

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¡Hola, tía! ¿Qué honda?

I'm fine. It's really the sky that scares me. It can turn from the brightest morning to the gloomy rain and solemn snow. I'm used to always being in danger, dark, disturbed, and with my fist balled up. Waiting for trouble to head my way. Sometimes the grass grows, shining its beautiful pine glow. And the vegetation seems to waste away. We started investing in indoor plants, but they wither away and die anyways. Maybe we're missing a green thumb in the family. You used to have garlic cloves and chilis growing outside the apartment. In Reno, we are surrounded by nature, surrounded by mountains. Waiting for a wave to wash us all away.

But don't misunderstand me, this place is best for me! I can enjoy the quiet night sky while painting the small and crooked plum tree out back. And if I'm looking for trouble and excitement, I can travel to the many casinos or dance clubs. Friends are in abundance here. We have a grocery store and restaurants at a walking distance just like back in L.A. Only here I don't see a necessity to get into fights with my homeboys for a wrong color worn. Or because a dude stared funny. I'm not saying there aren't vatos looking for trouble but so far it isn't noticeable.

From the homeless man making pieces of art in exchange for money, to the windshield washer whose eyes hang low, dry, marked with insomnia, and begging for a job, I feel at home. There are those people who aren't as lucky as us. They mark their faces with a frown and scowl at you while they charge you for your food. I shoot them a smile, a sign of hope, for reassurance and help. I sip on my coffee made with two sugars and three vanilla flavored creamers. On the way out I notice a young couple eating French fries together, ketchup sauce made into a heart around the plate.