

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

## Alessandra Bava: “My Son Writes His First Poem in Spanish”

Alessandra Bava · Wednesday, October 16th, 2019

*2019 Jack Grapes Poetry Prize Finalist, selected by judge Tanya Ko Hong*

Maybe I am biased, but I like this poem because it uses Spanish as well as English in the piece. Creating a multilingual experience opens a whole other part of the mind, soul, and heart. Saying and reading unfamiliar words out loud creates tangible collisions for readers. The poet uses very simple Spanish words. “*Lluvia*. It rains/ *Morena*. Rain has such dark skin.” I can experience many different metaphors with just these two lines. I want to dive deeper into this poem’s linguistic landscape. Beautiful poetic languages and emotions in this piece. This poem is moving. It inspires me to pick up my pencil and start writing multilingual poems as well!

— Tanya Ko Hong

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### My Son Writes His First Poem in Spanish

He sends me the poem he wrote yesterday  
at the university’s library while it was pouring.  
Forests of meaning crawl from the page.

I dive into the language with a machete in hand –  
most words I understand, some I barely grasp  
and lose my way. *Lluvia*. It rains.

It rains on the children and on the ancestors,  
on the agave and on dusty roads. *Morena* he  
writes. Rain has such dark skin.

Feelings rain on me, metaphors deflagrate  
while I fall silent. From a crack in the page –  
among raindrops – I watch a pale fire erupt.

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