

# Comfort Amidst the Unfamiliar

Category: Across Borders and Cultures

written by Anna Delamerced | March 3, 2017

In the waiting room, I hear melodious Spanish words and think of my own family.

I think of my abuela (my grandmother) and of my parents—immigrants to a foreign land. They left behind the familiar to come to America. Childhood memories swirl in my mind, of my brothers and me eating empanadas in the evening, of my mother speaking her native tongue. Whenever I crossed the threshold to my school, or back to my house, I remember switching from one language to another.

A pregnant woman enters the waiting room, her daughter beside her as they cross the threshold into the clinic. Where have they come from? I do not know yet. On first glance, all I know is that they have left behind the familiar and entered a new land—a land of sterile halls, with pale blue paper on the walls, where English is the main language.

In the clinic, I have learned, the highest barriers are often the ones that are unseen. The young girl is clutching her mother's hand tightly, hiding her face behind the refuge of familiarity.

How can I be a source of comfort in this unfamiliar place?

I come down to the girl's height and offer her my hand. She loosens her fingers from her mother's grip and smiles.

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