

COLLECTION 1

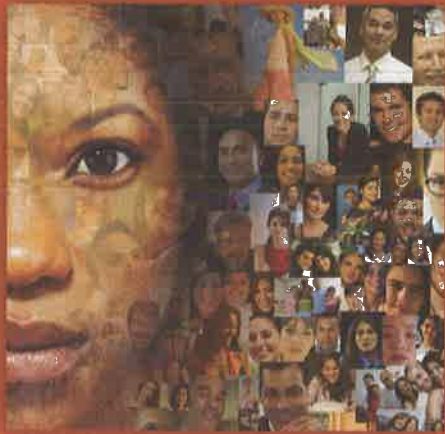


Culture and Belonging

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COLLECTION 1

Culture and Belonging



“Culture is the widening of the mind and of the spirit.”

—Jawaharlal Nehru

SHORT STORY

Golden Glass

Alma Luz Villanueva

ESSAY

What to Bring

Naisha Jackson

MEMOIR

Museum Indians

Susan Power

Background Alma Luz Villanueva was born in 1944 in Lompoc, California, and grew up in the Mission District of San Francisco. She later moved to the mountains in California. Villanueva is of both Chicano and Yaqui Indian ancestry, and she draws inspiration from both cultures. Villanueva has published numerous poetry collections as well as short stories and novels.

Golden Glass

Short Story by Alma Luz Villanueva

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–25, begin to cite text evidence.
 - Underline text that describes Ted's character.
 - In the margin, write an inference that explains what food represents to Ted.

It was his fourteenth summer. He was thinning out, becoming **angular** and clumsy, but the cautiousness, the old-man seriousness he'd had as a baby, kept him contained, ageless and safe. His humor, always dry and to the bone since a small child, let you know he was watching everything.

He seemed always to be at the center of his own universe, so it was no surprise to his mother to hear Ted say: "I'm building a fort and sleeping out in it all summer, and I won't come in for anything, not even food. Okay?"

- 10 This had been their silent **communion**, the steady presence of love that flowed regularly, daily—food. The presence of his mother preparing it, his great appetite and obvious enjoyment of it—his nose smelling everything, seeing his mother more vividly than with his eyes.

He watched her now for signs of offense, alarm, and only saw interest. "Where will you put the fort?" Vida asked.

CLOSE READ
Notes

angular:

having sharp
angles; bony
and lean

communion:

deep
understanding

Food stands
for Ted's
closeness to
his mother.

She trusted him to build well and not ruin things, but of course she had to know where. She looked at his dark, contained face and her eyes turned in and saw him when he was small, with curly golden hair, when he wrapped his arms around her neck. Their quiet times—
20 undemanding—he could be let down, and a small toy could delight him for hours. She thought of the year he began kissing her elbow in passing, the way he preferred. Vida would touch his hair, his forehead, his shoulders—the body breathing out at the touch, his stillness. Then the explosion out the door told her he needed her touch, still.

“I’ll build it by the redwoods, in the cypress trees. Okay?”

“Make sure you keep your nails together and don’t dig into the trees. I’ll be checking. If the trees get damaged, it’ll have to come down.”

30 “Jason already said he’d bring my food and stuff.”

“Where do you plan to shower and go to the bathroom?”

Vida wondered.

“With the hose when it’s hot and I’ll dig holes behind the barn,” Ted said so quietly as to seem unspoken. He knew how to slither under her, smoothly, like silk.

“Sounds interesting, but it better stay clean—this place isn’t that big. Also, on your dinner night, you can cook outdoors.”

His eyes flashed, but he said, “Okay.”

He began to gather wood from various stacks, drying it patiently
40 from the long rains. He kept in his room one of the hammers and a supply of nails that he’d bought. It was early June and the seasonal creek was still running. It was pretty dark out there and he wondered if he’d meant what he’d said.

Ted hadn’t seen his father in nearly four years, and he didn’t miss him like you should a regular father, he thought. His father’s image blurred with the memory of a football hitting him too hard, pointed (a bullet), right in the stomach, and the punishment for the penny candies—a test his father had set up for him to fail. His stomach

2. ◀ REREAD Reread lines 1–25. In the margin, write an inference about Ted’s relationship with his mother, Vida.
3. READ ▶ As you read lines 26–59, underline text that suggests that Ted may change his mind about the fort.

50 hardened at the thought of his father, and he found he didn't miss him at all.

He began to look at the shapes of the trees, where the limbs were solid, where a space was provided (he knew his mother really would make him tear down the fort if he hurt the trees). The cypress was right next to the redwoods, making it seem very remote. Redwoods do that—they suck up sound and time and smell like another place. So he counted the footsteps, when no one was looking, from the fort to the house. He couldn't believe it was so close; it seemed so separate, alone—especially in the dark, when the only safe way of travel seemed flight (invisible at best).

60 Ted had seen his mother walk out to the bridge at night with a glass of wine, looking into the water, listening to it. He knew she loved to see the moon's reflection in the water. She'd pointed it out to him once by a river where they camped, her face full of longing—too naked somehow, he thought. Then, she swam out into the water, at night, as though trying to touch the moon. He wouldn't look at her. He sat and glared at the fire and roasted another marshmallow the way he liked it: bubbly, soft and brown (maybe six if he could get away with it). Then she'd be back, chilled and bright, and he was glad she went. Maybe I like the moon too, he thought, involuntarily, as though
70 the thought weren't his own—but it was.

He built the ground floor directly on the earth, with a cover of old plywood, then scattered remnant rugs that he'd asked Vida to get for him. He **concocted** a latch and a door, with his hand ax over it, just in case. He brought his sleeping bag, some pillows, a transistor radio, some clothes, and moved in for the summer. The first week he slept with his buck knife open in his hand and his pellet gun loaded on the same side, his right. The second week Ted sheathed the knife and put it under his head, but kept the pellet gun loaded at all times. He

concocted

4. ◀ **REREAD** Reread lines 26–38. In the margin, write what you learn about Ted and Vida's relationship from the dialogue.
5. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 60–92, continue to cite textual evidence.
 - Circle text that tells something Ted and Vida might have in common.
 - In the margin, explain how the plot advances in each paragraph.

missed no one in the house but the dog, so he brought him into
80 the cramped little space, enduring dog breath and farts because he
missed *someone*.

Ted thought of when his father left, when they lived in the city,
with forty kids on one side of the block and forty on the other. He
remembered that one little kid with the funny sores on his body who
chose an apple over candy every time. He worried they would starve
or something worse. That time he woke up screaming in his room (he
forgot why), and his sister began crying at the same time, "Someone's
in here," as though they were having the same terrible dream. Vida
ran in with a chair in one hand and a kitchen knife in the other,
90 which frightened them even more. But when their mother realized it
was only their hysteria, she became angry and left. Later they all
laughed about this till they cried, including Vida, and things felt safer.

He began to build the top floor now but he had to prune some
limbs out of the way. Well, that was okay as long as he was careful. So
he stacked them to one side for kindling and began to brace things in
place. It felt weird going up into the tree, not as safe as his small,
contained place on the ground. He began to build it, thinking of light.
He could bring his comic books, new ones; sit up straight, and eat
snacks in the daytime. He would put in a side window facing the
100 house to watch them, if he wanted, and a tunnel from the bottom
floor to the top. Also, a ladder he'd found and repaired—he could pull
it up and place it on hooks, out of reach. A hatch at the top of the
ceiling for leaving or entering, tied down inside with a rope. He began
to sleep up here, without the dog, with the tunnel closed off.

Vida noticed Ted had become cheerful and would stand next to
her, to her left side, talking sometimes. But she realized she mustn't
face him or he'd become silent and wander away. So she stood

6. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Reread lines 82–92. With a small group,
discuss how Ted feels about his father leaving.

7. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 93–135, continue to cite textual
evidence.

- Underline text that shows that Ted has changed.
- In the margin, summarize how Ted has changed.
- In the margin, write something you learn about Ted when Vida
compares him to wild pheasants in lines 107–112.

listening, in the same even breath and heartbeat she kept when she spotted the wild pheasants with their long, lush tails trailing the grape arbor, picking delicately and greedily at the unpicked grapes in the early autumn light. So sharp, so perfect, so rare to see a wild thing at peace.

She knew he ate well—his brother brought out a half gallon of milk that never came back, waiting to be asked to join him, but never daring to ask. His sister made him an extra piece of ham for his four eggs; most always he ate cold cereal and fruit or got a hot chocolate on the way to summer school. They treated Ted somewhat like a stranger, because he was.

Ted was taking a makeup course and one in stained glass. There, he talked and acted relaxed, like a boy; no one expected any more or less. The colors of the stained glass were deep and beautiful, and special—you couldn't waste this glass. The sides were sharp, the cuts were slow and **meticulous** with a steady pressure. The design's plan had to be absolutely followed or the beautiful glass would go to waste, and he'd curse himself.

meticulous:

It was late August and Ted hadn't gone inside the house once. He liked waking up, hearing nothing but birds—not his mother's voice or his sister's or his brother's. He could tell the various bird calls and liked the soft brown quail call the best. He imagined their taste and wondered if their flesh was as soft as their song. Quail would've been okay to kill, as long as he ate it, his mother said. Instead, he killed jays because they irritated him so much with their shrill cries. Besides, a neighbor paid Ted per bird because he didn't want them in his garden. But that was last summer and he didn't do that anymore, and the quail were proud and plump and swift, and Ted was glad.

8. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 119–125. Explain what Ted's attitude toward working with stained glass reveals about his character.

9. **▶ READ** As you read lines 136–147, cite textual evidence.

- Underline text that describes the stained glass.
- In the margin, write an inference about why Ted "wouldn't mind at all" being inside again.

The stained glass was finished and he decided to place it in his fort facing the back fields. In fact, it looked like the back fields—trees and the sun in a dark sky. During the day the glass sun shimmered a beautiful yellow, the blue a much better color than the sky outside: deeper, like night.

He was so used to sleeping outside now he didn't wake up during the night, just like in the house. One night, toward the end when he'd have to move back with everyone (school was starting, frost was coming and the rains), Ted woke up to see the stained glass full of light. The little sun was a golden moon and the inside glass sky and the outside sky matched.

In a few days he'd be inside, and he wouldn't mind at all.

10. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Reread lines 136–147. With a small group, discuss what the stained glass means to Ted. Cite specific text evidence from the story in your discussion.

SHORT RESPONSE

Cite Text Evidence How does Ted change over the course of the summer? How does his relationship with his mother change? Review your reading notes, and be sure to cite text evidence from the story in your response.

Background The United States has always been a land of immigrants. During the 1600s and 1700s, fewer than one million people immigrated to the new country. Today, almost one million people immigrate to the United States each year, and those immigrants tend to be younger than the general population. They generally settle in areas where there are people with similar backgrounds. (This has always been true of immigrants to the United States.) Most immigrants today settle in one of seven states: California, New York, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Illinois.

What to Bring

Essay by Nisha Jackson

- 1. READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–24, begin to cite text evidence.
 - Circle the first subhead.
 - Underline the reasons people immigrate to the United States.
 - In the margin list the items that immigrants have brought with them.

Traveling Light

A hundred years ago, most immigrants to the United States arrived by ship and were allowed only one suitcase for the long voyage. They left almost all of their belongings behind. Recent immigrants have a much faster journey, but many of them still bring very few items with them.

Some modern immigrants move to the United States to find a better future, own very little in their countries of origin. One immigrant from Ghana arrived at Kennedy Airport in 2002 with twenty cents. He worked in a car wash as he earned his college degree in finance. A man who emigrated from Honduras brought a ceramic Zorro pepperpener, which is now a treasured family possession.

Other immigrants are refugees, escaping oppression in their homelands. Many are likely to have very few possessions, and are often unable to leave their countries with those belongings they do

oppression:



CLOSE READ
Notes

Immigrants do not always know a lot about United States life; a Ukrainian family of refugees had four large duffel bags with them, packed tightly with bedding, which they had heard was expensive and inferior in America.

60

Sentimental Journeys

Remembrances of old lives take up immigrant suitcase space, too. Things that have been in the family for a long time help new arrivals feel more at home, or at least less alone. Parents' or grandparents' wedding rings are seldom neglected. Other items may not seem so valuable. A man who was a doctor in Myanmar brought his diploma, even though he cannot practice medicine in the United States. A girl from China brought her bright yellow metronome, simply because it was special—none of her friends had one—and she now finds that, unlike when she was in China, she enjoys practicing the piano.

70

And of course, young children (and some not so young) can be counted on to bring a favorite teddy bear.

REREAD AND DISCUSS Reread lines 1–71. With a small group, discuss the structure of the article. How might a circle graph or a bar graph add to the information given in the article?

WRITING RESPONSE

Text Evidence What conclusions can you draw about the items immigrants chose to bring with them to the United States? **Cite text evidence** from the article in your response.

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Background A member of the Standing Rock Sioux, Susan Power was born in 1961 and grew up in Chicago. She spent her childhood listening to her mother tell stories about their American Indian heritage. These stories later served as inspiration for Power's writing. As a young girl, Power made frequent visits with her mother to local museums—trips that inspired her memoir "Museum Indians."



Museum Indians

Memoir by Susan Power

CLOSE READ
Notes

1. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 1–16, begin to cite text evidence.
 - Underline a metaphor in the first paragraph that describes the mother's braid.
 - Underline a metaphor in the second paragraph that describes the mother's braid differently.
 - In the margin, note the adjectives the narrator uses to describe the braid.

A snake coils in my mother's dresser drawer; it is thick and black, glossy as sequins. My mother cut her hair several years ago, before I was born, but she kept one heavy braid. It is the three-foot snake I lift from its nest and handle as if it were alive.

"Mom, why did you cut your hair?" I ask. I am a little girl lifting a sleek black river into the light that streams through the kitchen window. Mom turns to me.

"It gave me headaches. Now put that away and wash your hands for lunch."

10 "You won't cut *my* hair, will you?" I'm sure this is a whine.

"No, just a little trim now and then to even the ends."

I return the dark snake to its nest among my mother's slips, arranging it so that its thin tail hides beneath the wide mouth sheared

by scissors. My mother keeps her promise and lets my hair grow long, but I am only half of her; my thin brown braids will reach the middle of my back, and in maturity will look like tiny garden snakes.

My mother tells me stories every day: while she cleans, while she cooks, on our way to the library, standing in the checkout line at the supermarket. I like to share her stories with other people, and chatter
20 like a monkey when I am able to command adult attention.

“She left the reservation when she was sixteen years old,” I tell my audience. Sixteen sounds very old to me, but I always state the number because it seems integral to my recitation. “She had never been on a train before, or used a telephone. She left Standing Rock to take a job in Chicago so she could help out the family during the war. She was petrified of all the strange people and new surroundings; she stayed in her seat all the way from McLaughlin, South Dakota, to Chicago, Illinois, and didn’t move once.”

I usually laugh after saying this, because I cannot imagine my
30 mother being afraid of anything. She is so tall, a true Dakota woman; she rises against the sun like a skyscraper, and when I draw her picture in my notebook, she takes up the entire page. She talks politics and attends sit-ins,¹ wrestles with the Chicago police and says what’s on her mind.

¹ **sit-ins:** organized protest demonstrations in which participants seat themselves in appropriate places and refuse to move; the act of occupying the seats or an area of a segregated establishment to protest racial discrimination.

2. **◀ REREAD** Reread lines 12–16. Explain what the narrator means when she says “I am only half of her.” Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

3. **▶ READ** As you read lines 17–34, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline a simile about the narrator, and in the margin, explain how it helps reveal the narrator’s personality.
- Underline a simile about the mother, and in the margin, describe what it reveals about the narrator’s view of her mother.

“She is so tall, a true Dakota woman; she rises against the sun like a skyscraper. . . .”

I am her small shadow and witness. I am the timid daughter who can rage only on paper.

We don't have much money, but Mom takes me from one end of the city to the other on foot, on buses. I will grow up believing that Chicago belongs to me, because it was given to me by my mother.

40 Nearly every week we tour the Historical Society, and Mom makes a point of complaining about the statue that depicts an Indian man about to kill a white woman and her children: “This is the only monument to the history of Indians in this area that you have on exhibit. It’s a shame because it is completely one-sided. Children who see this will think this is what Indians are all about.”

My mother lectures the guides and their bosses, until eventually that statue disappears.

Some days we haunt the Art Institute, and my mother pauses before a Picasso.²

50 “He did this during his blue period,” she tells me.

I squint at the blue man holding a blue guitar. “Was he very sad?” I ask.

“Yes, I think he was.” My mother takes my hand and looks away from the painting. I can see a story developing behind her eyes, and I tug on her arm to release the words. She will tell me why Picasso was blue, what his thoughts were as he painted this canvas. She relates anecdotes I will never find in books, never see footnoted in a

² **Picasso:** Pablo Picasso (1881–1973), Spanish artist whose work is some of the most influential in modern art.

4. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 35–59, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline the text that reveals the mother’s personality.
- Circle the text that reveals how the narrator sees herself.
- Make a note in the margin to explain the difference between the narrator and her mother.

biography of the master artist. I don't even bother to check these references because I like my mother's version best.

60 When Mom is down, we go to see the mummies at the Field Museum of Natural History. The Egyptian dead sleep in the basement, most of them still shrouded in their wrappings.

"These were people like us," my mother whispers. She pulls me into her waist. "They had dreams and **intrigues** and problems with their teeth. They thought their one particular life was of the utmost significance. And now, just *look* at them." My mother never fails to brighten. "So what's the use of worrying too hard or too long? Might as well be cheerful."

70 Before we leave this place, we always visit my great-grandmother's buckskin³ dress. We mount the stairs and walk through the museum's main hall—past the dinosaur bones all strung together, and the stuffed elephants lifting their trunks in a mute trumpet.

The clothed figures are **disconcerting** because they have no heads. I think of them as dead Indians. We reach the traditional outfits of the Sioux in the Plains Indian section, and there is the dress, as magnificent as I remembered. The yoke⁴ is completely beaded—I know the garment must be heavy to wear. My great-grandmother

intrigue:

disconcerting:

³ **buckskin**: leather made from deerskin.

⁴ **yoke**: a piece that supports the gathered parts of a garment.

5. ◀ **REREAD** Reread lines 51–59. What does the narrator mean when she says "I can see a story developing behind her eyes" (line 54)? Support your answer with explicit textual evidence.

6. ▶ **READ** Read lines 60–79, and underline text that reveals the mother's outlook on life.

used blue beads as a background for the geometrical design, and I point to the azure expanse.

80 “Was this her blue period?” I ask my mother. She hushes me unexpectedly, she will not play the game. I come to understand that this is a solemn call, and we stand before the glass case as we would before a grave.

“I don’t know how this got out of the family,” Mom murmurs. I feel helpless beside her, wishing I could reach through the glass to disrobe the headless mannequin. My mother belongs in a grand buckskin dress such as this, even though her hair is now too short to braid and has been trained to curl at the edges in a saucy flip.

90 We leave our fingerprints on the glass, two sets of hands at different heights pressing against the barrier. Mom is sad to leave.

“I hope she knows we visit her dress,” my mother says.

There is a little buffalo across the hall, stuffed and staring. Mom doesn’t always have the heart to greet him. Some days we slip out of the museum without finding his stall.

“You don’t belong here,” Mom tells him on those rare occasions when she feels she must pay her respects. “We honor you,” she continues, “because you are a creature of great endurance and great generosity. You provided us with so many things that helped us to survive. It makes me angry to see you like this.”

100 Few things can make my mother cry; the buffalo is one of them.

“I am just like you,” she whispers. “I don’t belong here either. We should be in the Dakotas, somewhere a little bit east of the Missouri River. This crazy city is not a fit home for buffalo or Dakotas.”

7. **READ** ▶ As you read lines 80–110, continue to cite textual evidence.

- Underline what the mother says to the buffalo, and explain what she means in the margin.
- Circle text that reveals the narrator’s feelings about the city.

I take my mother's hand to hold her in place. I am a city child, nervous around livestock and lonely on the plains. I am afraid of a sky without light pollution—I never knew there could be so many stars. I lead my mother from the museum so she will forget the sense of loss. From the marble steps we can see Lake Shore Drive spill ahead of us, and I sweep my arm to the side as if I were responsible for this view. I introduce my mother to the city she gave me. I call her home.

8. ◀ **REREAD AND DISCUSS** Why does seeing the little buffalo make the mother cry? Discuss your thoughts with a partner.

SHORT RESPONSE

Cite Text Evidence Compare and contrast the personalities of the narrator and her mother. Review your reading notes, and be sure to **cite text evidence** in your response.
