

“Mexidorian”

By Joanna Flores

I'm a Mexidorian.

All my cultures help create the person that I am.
I grew up in the Pico-Union area where all these immigrant groups tend to
“melt together”

Mexican, Salvadorian, y American
En la Alvarado Bulevar is MacArthur Park with its large lagoon and its three giant fountains

En cada esquina of that urban green oasis you can find every antojito
Churros, Raspados, Elotes, Pupusas, Tamales

If you need a cure for mal de ojo, or an estampita of St. Joseph, patron of the immigrants, then
you stop by *Botánica Del Pueblo*

Ni como olvidarse de *Langer's*, the seven decades old, Jewish Deli with its quintessential
pastrami sandwich

How about everyone's preferred Discount Store, El Piojito- (Tiny Lice), where you could find
every home and personal merchandise dirt cheap

“¿Dónde quedó la bolita?-¿dónde quedó la bolita?”-you would hear from a loud inquiring voice
People huddled together- loitering the sidewalks
testing their luck at a game of hide the ball

But my favorite was La Thrifty Drug Store with its creamy, savoring 25-cent ice cream cone
These were the streets que me vieron nacer

The Pico-Union barrio known for its refugees and immigrants working families con mucha cultura
and strong sense of community

Todo esto te dice quién soy yo

Joanna Flores is a first-generation American Latina born in the Pico-Union area of Los Angeles, a neighborhood just outside downtown Los Angeles. My parents are immigrants from El Salvador and Mexico. Unfortunately, Pico-Union is known more for its dangerous gangs than for its rich cultural traditions, strong sense of community, and the majority of working families who struggle to survive on a daily basis. I wrote the poem *Mexidorian* to honor my beautiful Mexican, Salvadorian and American heritage and to also celebrate the neighborhood that raised me. By recognizing the community that nurtured me helps reclaim my spiritual heritage and continues to ground me. Dr. Joanna Flores is Lecturer in Political Science and the Chicana(o) and Latina(o) Studies Department at the California State University Los Angeles.