

Nothing

Belinda Castiblanco

The order of the factors does not alter the product, however, finding the answer to the equation of life is easier when you have lived following the rule of one plus one. Sometimes I feel that, although I am where I have always wanted to be, it has taken me so long because I've done everything from end to beginning.

Jeremy was six months old. The Teletubbies played on television. On the sofa, in a small white room full of infant toys, I had made a chair with my legs to hold my baby boy. He was looking at a giant sun on the screen, I was looking at him. His head, round and hairless, his cheeks pink and fat, his mouth red and full of drool, could not distract me from his big black eyes that shone more than any star. Eyes with which mine spoke.

What will become of you my love? What will become of we both when I do not know how to do anything? Soon you will go to school, you will need help with your homework, with your life. One day, my high school diploma will not be enough. Will you realize then that your mom does not know anything? Will you be ashamed of me when your schoolmates ask you, "What does your mother do?" And you have to answer, "She does nothing..."? Will that answer turn you into nothing, too?

Forgive me, forgive me for having you when I was not ready; but since you're here, please know that you are welcome. Believe in me, you will grow, one day you will be someone; I will grow up with you and I will be someone, too. It is the truth that "nothing" is right now our starting point. But you are the light that will guide our paths.

Jeremy was seven months old when I got a job at a factory and started attending English classes in my town library. I have not stopped studying since then. It's been more than twenty years since that day when I decided to follow the light my first son gave me. Still, those big black eyes shine bright and loud, reminding me of the promise I made to him (and later to my other children), same promise I made to myself—a promise to be someone to somebody else.

---