This set of papers are the testimonios of pre-service Mexicana maestras as they reflect upon their engagement with, richer understanding of, and commitment to the teaching of la literatura of Mexicanas’ experiences in el Norte. Through a reading of Guadalupe McCall’s Under the Mesquite—a Pura Belpre novel—and Luis Rodríguez’ América Is Her Name—a picture book by the former Los Angeles Poet Laureate—las maestras have las historias of dos poetas: Lupita, who lives on the Tejas y Coahuila frontera, and América Soliz, a Mixteca from Oaxaca, who resides in Chicago. These cuentos are Lupita’s and América’s historias of navigating life—physically or via memorias—both aquí, en los Estados Unidos, and allá, en Mexico. As students and future teachers of la literatura Mexicana, las maestras, via a “close reading” (Fisher & Frey, 2012) and teaching of these two texts, came to know (saber) cultural, literary, sociological, and pedagogical frames by which they can “read [and teach] the word” (Freire, 1970). But, more significantly, Lupita and América, as testimoniadoras (The Latina Feminist Group, 2001), offer a “culturally sustaining” (Paris, 2012) set of historias by which las maestras are able to “read [and teach] the world” (Freire, 1970)—their world, and that of their future students. In this sense, Lupita and América are nepantleras, those whom Anzaldúa describes, as “boundary-crossers…. activistas who…rise to their own visions and shift into acting them out, haciendo mundo Nuevo” (Anzaldúa & Keating, 2002, p. 571).

Nepantleras, Anzaldúa (2004) adds, “change the stories about who we…. They serve as agents of awakening, inspire and challenge others to deeper awareness, greater conocimiento, serve as reminders of each other’s search for wholeness of being” (p. 19). These papers document, first, through the words of las maestras, how Lupita and América are nepantleras who live into the “drama” of negotiating familia, language, gender, schooling, and cultura as Mexicanas on the frontera. Second, they document how, as the result of Lupita and América “awakening” within the text, las maestras are “inspired and challenged” to (re)member (recordar) their own historias (especially their PreK-16 educación) and, then, to (re)member (reconstruir) these historias into beliefs about what it means to ser maestra. Through this process of (re)membering, las maestras are able to heal—to “change the stories” of how they understand themselves— and (re)imagine what it means to “haciendo mundo nuevo,” especially within the public schools. The testimonios, historias of each maestra’s process of conocimiento (knowing/knowledge) of self and others—Anzaldúa’s (2002) notion of nos/otras— emerged, in part, as a series of poemas—thus mirroring Lupita’s and América’s identidades as poetas. Guadalupe McCall “work-shopped” these poemas. McCall, thus, is a nepantlera, first, giving voz to Lupita and América. Second, inspiring las maestras to (re)member, and thus give voz to their lives. And, third, via feedback on their poemas, sharpening la voz of las maestras. Accordingly, this paper closes with the words of McCall and las maestras about the power of writing, especially, poetry as a tool for (re)claiming voz.