

## **“Until We Reached That Other World:” The Transnational Imaginary in Latinx Novels**

looking down at the laughing waters of the Rio Grande  
until we reached that other world, the one we missed so much  
Guadalupe Garcia McCall

The title of this paper is taken from the third line in the epigraph, the last lines in a stanza found in Guadalupe Garcia McCall’s verse novel *Under the Mesquite*. The final line of the stanza (“the one we missed so much”), establishes the focus of this paper — the ways in which contemporary Latinx novels for young adults destabilize national notions of territorial space and fixed geographic boundaries and citizenship. By examining these novels through a transnational lens, this paper signals the ways these novels construct new forms of belonging and community.

Given the current US fascination with borders and walls, works such as Garcia McCall’s *Under the Mesquite* speak to the “shared fates” experienced by peoples on the border. Her poetry evokes a transnational imaginary that attempts to describe the personal, social, cultural, and political intersections of peoples across nations and their borders. Specifically, “the one we missed so much” calls attention to the kinds of complex transnational communal belongings that are part and parcel of the Texas/Mexico borderlands: to live in one world and long for the other. Further, the poetic lines posit a transcendence of national borders by asserting new ways of imagining community that exceed prescribed versions of culture and nation.

Due to the time and space of a conference presentation, this paper will focus on Guadalupe Garcia McCall’s *Under the Mesquite*. This paper is part of a larger work on transnationalism that includes *Becoming Naomi Leon* (2004) by Pam Muñoz Ryan and *What the Moon Saw* (2006) by Laura Resau, as well as picture books illustrated by Joe Cepeda, Yuyi Morales, Rafael López, and Angela Dominguez. The goal of this work is to examine the ways these texts comment on the diasporic and transitory lived experiences of people whose lives are intertwined with that of the US and “that other world.”