

Richard Reitsma, Canisius University, United States

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We Carry the Border with Us: Queer Immigration, Border Crossings, and Culinary Identity in *I Carry You with Me*

ABSTRACT

This article examines the complexities of borders and migrations shaped by queer desire in the film *I Carry You with Me* which tells the true story of a Mexican gay male couple from their youths in Mexico to their precarious success in the NYC restaurant industry. Using the frame of food and foodways which defines the courtship and relationship, the film delves into homophobia, sexile, and precarious migratory status. Food is the language of love, longing, and desire for each other, their homeland, and their families. Carrying their memories of fear and longing with them shows that borders are portable, no matter how they are crossed.

KEYWORDS

immigration; borders; sexile; queer desire; food/foodways

1. Introduction

Heidi Ewing's 2021 film *I Carry You with Me* (*Te llevo conmigo*) is a drama with elements of documentary¹. The film is based on the real-life story of Mexican gay couple Iván García and Gerardo Zabaleta, two men who meet in the 1990s in Puebla, migrate separately to the US, and establish themselves in NYC. Their love relationship, as explored in the film, is built around food and borders, the narrative hanging on the very real precarity and unseen family violence of US immigration policies.

The two men's love story is framed around cooking, as is their story of migration and living in the US where they own restaurants. Iván's personal story is further infused with food and foodways through his father. The men's courtship is also framed around food. In the immigrant experience, as many critics have

¹ Ewing is known as a documentary filmmaker. As she has stated in numerous interviews, she decided that this film about her friends was best presented as a drama, though it retains occasional elements of documentary, particularly the ending scene which was filmed long before Ewing reimagined the narrative as a drama. In this scene, Iván and Gerardo lament their legal limbo, and Iván's inability to see his now grown child and grandchildren.

Richard Reitsma, Department of Modern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, Canisius University, 2001 Main Street, Buffalo, NY 14208, reitsmar@canisius.edu, <https://orcid.org/0009-0005-7792-6690>

articulated, and as is demonstrated in numerous works of fiction, memoir, and film, food and foodways can be emotionally charged performances of cultural identity, communal and family belonging; a political marker of class, gender, and race; an echo of oftentimes fraught histories; and a memory preserved and passed on (Delgado, 2001; del Pino, 2013; Dusselier, 2009; Kalčík, 1997; Raspa, 1984). Food marks time, place, and geography, and has the ability to function as a time machine overlaying the past in the present and carrying the homeland into a new space and time in an effort to repair diasporic identity fragmentation (Holtzman, 2006). Culinary practices are a sort of ethnic or cultural shibboleth of belonging or exclusion². This film explores how food and people cross multiple borders, with food acting as a sensory machine to transport people across time and space.

2. Food and sexile

For Iván and Gerardo, food is the language of courtship. When desire, particularly queer desire, is added to the ingredients “the language of food, nostalgia, and desire” become entangled in complicated ways (Mannur, 2007, p. 13)³. For some, a nostalgic longing for home and the pang of migratory separation can be addressed in comforting ways through food, but for others, such as queer sexiles⁴, home is precisely the space of violence they desire to escape and for which they have different pangs of separation. Food can be bitter reminders of discontinuity, of pain and rejection from the family table. Sexile, by force or by choice, from one’s family is often symbolized by ejection from communal/familial dining, echoing Gloria Anzaldúa’s reframing of homophobia as a “fear of going home and not being taken in” (Anzaldúa, 2007, p. 42). This dual understanding of homophobia as both queer violence/rejection and queer fear of going home frames *I Carry You with Me*, where the desire for home(s), and the impossibilities of return, is the vinegar in their narrative.

The two young men migrate separately to Puebla as internal sexiles in Mexico, having moved to avoid their respective lives back home. For Iván (a *chilango* i.e. a native of CDMX/Mexico City), “home” is a straight-passing closet where he

² The word shibboleth is a linguistic password from the Bible, meaning ear of corn or ford, which was pronounced differently in tribal dialects, leading to slaughter. Similar food pronunciation shibboleths throughout history include the Vesper Uprising in Sicily against the French using the word *ciciri* (garbanzos) to distinguish French occupiers from Sicilians, and the infamous massacre of Haitians on the border with the Dominican Republic of the pronunciation of the word *perejil* (parsley).

³ See also M. C. Ferreira de Almeida (2011).

⁴ “Sexiles” refers to people who have (im)migrated due to homophobic oppression as well as those exiled from their communities because of their sexual orientation or gender identity. While exile is understood as a legal/political category, sexile may be detached from official categories, implying an individual’s undesired uprooting from their home. See M. Guzmán (1997) and R. C. Mizzi (2013).

can pretend to be straight with his ex-girlfriend Paola and their son Ricky. Though his father catches him in makeup and wearing a *quinceañera* dress when he is young, no punishment results and it was likely an open secret that his generally supportive parents knew (00:44:47). The scene of being discovered in makeup and a *quinceañera* dress is visually repeated in fragments throughout the film, filtered through mirrors and barred windows. By contrast, Gerardo's home in Chiapas is dominated by an abusive, homophobic father. Iván passes and remains closeted in order to see his son and maintain family ties, while Gerardo flees his abusive father.

While Iván initially passes as straight, as Ricky's father, while maintaining a strained, complicated relationship Paola, Gerardo refuses to pass, sometimes paying the consequences of being harassed and gay-bashed, particularly when walking the streets with his drag-performing friend Cucusa (1:09:33). In the gay bar in an abandoned religious building where they first meet, the drag queen Cucusa Minelli performs with a backdrop of an image of Saint Sebastian, a patron of sorts for gay men due to his portrayal as a suffering epebe. Cucusa sings Amanda Miguel's *Él me mintió / He lied to me* (00:26:14), an apt metaphor of Iván's life as a straight-passing gay man. This metaphor of Sebastian-like suffering and deception continues into his life in the US, where he continues to lie to his family about his sexual orientation (he only came out just prior to the film's premiere in Mexico). He also lies to Gerardo about his culinary successes in the US. It is worth noting the ambient contrasts between Gerardo and Iván, particularly around the theme of deception. Iván lies about his child and the mother which is only revealed when Gerard spies the purportedly happy family one night (00:24:42). When his mother, Paola, and Ricky show up at his apartment and the truth of his relationship with Gerardo is revealed while simultaneously denied, it is at night, raining heavily (00:41:14). And again, when Iván calls Gerardo from a phone booth in New York, spinning lies about his successes, it is night, and we see him through a urine-yellowed, dark, scratched, blurry phone booth (1:05:29). Gerardo, by contrast, is almost always portrayed in light. Only once they are together in NYC do we see the clouds lift from Iván's life and they are portrayed in brighter light, more clarity, and crisp coloration, even when filmed at night or in interiors. The light returns to Iván's life quite literally when Gerardo, defying his partner's admonition to forget about him, crosses the border and ends up in snowy New York. This return of light, of "going home" to a new home, is reflected most visually initially when they are learning English together in front of a big bright window where they put up a Post-It note spelling window in Spanish phonetics as *guindo* (1:17:35). They also practice culinary vocabulary such as learning the words for mushroom and grill. The return of light continues as we see the young men celebrating pride, openly living parts of their truths for the first time.

Gerardo is from a land-owning family in Chiapas. When he is 8 years old, his father, responding to town gossip about his effeminate boy being a *mampo*

(Chiapan slang for faggot), abandons the confused child at night in the *milpa* (corn fields), telling him to find his way home, if he is man enough (0:36:24). Despite evolution in gender and sexuality perspectives in Mexico and the diaspora, there are still deeply entrenched understandings of gender as exclusively binary often expressed in extremes of *machismo* /*marianismo* leaving the queer subject at “the margins of society occupy[ing] an ambiguous space outside the gender binary” (Cervantes, 2014, p. 131). As occurs in this film, when a Latino male comes out as gay, the community often imposes a feminizing identity⁵. This is demonstrated when the couple visits Gerardo’s family’s estate in Chiapas for his birthday and Iván is mocked for doing “women’s work” in the kitchen such as washing dishes (0:35:01). Curiously, immigration often restructures understandings and performances of such strict gender identities particularly in contexts of food and foodways as men often work in kitchens and prepare their own meals (Alfonso, 2012; Gabaccia, 1998; Williams, 1984). It is precisely after this tense family meal that Gerardo sees both through the window and in the mirror, the brutal experience of his abandonment in the *milpa*.

Gerardo denies his birthright as eldest son, rejecting the rough “masculine” labor of the ranch, and wearing unsuitable clothing (including a long house robe his mother made for him). During his last visit home, he tells his mother he is leaving to be with the man he loves, permanently rejecting his birthright and the hetero patriarchal masculinities implicit in that world as reinforced in the TV image of traditional Mexican masculinity a la Vicente Fernández on the TV in the background (1:11:20). Gerardo viscerally knows the fear of going home, while Iván’s fears keep him closeted. The shadow of death, from homophobia to border crossings, flavors the film. Gerardo is fully aware that one can die crossing the border. He himself has crossed various other treacherous borders between life and death, beginning in his childhood crossing the threshold of masculinity and familial belonging when his father abandons him in a remote *milpa*. Gerardo’s peregrinations are multiple, and his border crossings are frequent brushes with death. When he first meets Iván, he says “Let’s just say I got out alive” to describe the reason for his internal exile from Chiapas. Having barely escaped Chiapas with his life, he risks his life again when he crosses into the US to be with Iván.

Iván’s motivation to migrate is entwined with his sense of destiny and professional opportunities for himself, his lover, and his son. Gerardo’s motivations first to leave Chiapas are to live an honest life and escape violence, fleeing the repressive atmosphere of his father’s *ranchito* to Puebla where he lives openly as a gay man. Nevertheless, they both carry the borders with them. While in the film Gerardo claims not to see himself in Mexico (1:29:50), having abandoned his

⁵ For more on the gay male as feminine, active/passive definitions of sexual identity, and the gay implications of immigration to the US see A. R. del Castillo and G. Güido (2014).

past, in an interview in 2025 at BAAD! (Bronx Academy of Arts and Dance), he expressed his desire to go back. But as Gerardo says in the film, there's nothing else to do but *seguir*, keep going on (1:38:30). Both men carry with them their loves, their memories, and their dreams. Iván cannot separate dreams and memories, as displayed from the opening scenes of the film that intersperse him riding the NYC subway while dreaming of his past and an imagined present in Mexico, centered around food and foodways. This visual conflation of time and geography is repeated again near the end of the film, when he narrates in voiceover "Have you ever had that dream where you're back in Mexico? I have it all the time . . . The colors of the market. I can see them. It's so real. There are days when the feeling doesn't leave me. I carry it with me, wherever I go. Sometimes I confuse my dreams with memories. Because a part of me is still there" (1:40:26).

3. The dual border

Despite Gerardo's initial affirmation that he cannot see himself in Mexico, both men continue to exist on both sides of the border. Part of each of them remains in Mexico, and they have brought Mexico with them across the border. This duality of the border having been crossed yet existing perpetually in the present in New York City is reflected in numerous ways in the film. One of the ways is how the film is structured, narratively switching from the present to the past, visually coexisting the time frames in one shot, erasing the artificial border of time. The fragmented pieces of their broken pasts in Mexico visually erupt in the film through memories viewed through windows, mirrors, bars, rippled water, and a sometimes-blurry camera focus, grounding the past in the present, and Mexico in New York. This overlay of past and present is perhaps most evident in a scene where Gerardo is in a car, leaving his family home for the last time, and looks in the side mirror at himself as a young boy (1:30:35). This moment reveals that he is bidding goodbye to his past, but, also, that he is carrying that past, including the love (for his mother, for the land) and the trauma (of the *milpa*) with him. His motivation to leave a life he built as an openly gay man in Puebla, with a career, is his love for Iván. Love motivates their respective border crossings, and love also both erases the border by carrying it with them.

The frequent mirror images, as well as blurry images of the protagonists through dirty or barred windows reflect the splintered selves: of child/adult, gay/straight-passing, immigrant/Mexican (hated as immigrants in the US, hated in Mexico as gay men). These contrasting identities cry out to be healed, to integrate into a whole, but the film argues that in many ways, these identities can never be fully healed and integrated, because of US immigration policy separating fathers from sons, children from parents, and Mexicans from Mexico, with no resolution.

4. Carrying Mexico with them

They carry Mexico with them in various ways, such as through their attendance at Spanish language church services honoring the *Virgen de Guadalupe*, the patron saint of Mexico, Queen of Latin America, and protectress of immigrants (1:35:31). She herself is representative of border erasures, crossing the boundaries between the divine and the human, between the indigenous and the Spanish⁶. Another example of Mexico in Brooklyn occurs visually in their apartment. When Iván is speaking to his mother, his dying father, or his son Ricky via video calls, he is usually seen on a couch with a reproduction behind him of a Diego Rivera painting (1:33:40), echoing, like *La Virgen de Guadalupe*, multiple border crossings. Painted in 1931 while he was on commission for murals in the US, Rivera's painting *Flower Festival: Feast of Santa Anita* is a visual echo to a pre-Colombian statue *Kneeling Female Figure* (Mexico, 1325–1521). The artwork, produced in the new nation-building fervor after the Mexican Revolution, valorizes the indigenous past, formerly shunned and denigrated, particularly under the preceding Porfiriato dictatorship which focused on Europeanizing Mexico. Rivera's work crosses temporal boundaries and cultural borders in an artistic creation of a new national identity from the violent wreckage of the past. That it is in the background as Iván, through the wonders of technology, crosses the borders of time and space to communicate with his family, represents an historical and cross-border continuity similarly inflected with violence.

Another way in which the film demonstrates that they carry Mexico with them, effectively erasing the border, is the numerous scenes where they have recreated Mexico in their restaurant, from the cuisine (we are shown Iván plating a dish of *chiles en nogada* 1:23:59), to hosting *quinceañeras* and similar celebrations replete with piñatas (1:24:02). Their restaurant is also decorated seasonally, including *Día de Muertos ofrendas* or altars (1:24:02) which include food for the departed such as Iván's father who ignited his love of foods. In this way they recreate the space and taste of their homeland and keep alive a sort of time machine of the past ever present⁷. Iván and Gerardo break bread with their New York community as well as with the dead during *Día de Muertos* celebrations, where we see the *ofrenda* to Iván's father, replete with all the elements necessary for the deceased to cross the border, from his favorite foods and drinks, to the vibrant yellow-orange *cempasúchil* flower guiding his spirit all the way from Mexico City to Brooklyn New York, from the land of the dead to the land of the living (1:35:19). The dead return to us across the borderland of death through the act of love. Again, and

⁶ It is said that she appeared to Juan Diego Cuauhtlatotzin on the *Tepeyac* (hilltop) where indigenous people worshipped the Aztec mother earth goddess Tonantzin.

⁷ See Alfonso (2012), and Vázquez-Medina (2017) on food in the construction of diasporic space via restaurants.

again the film reminds us that borders exist to be transcended through love. The only border of love that cannot be crossed so successfully is the love of father to son, as Ricky has tried for many years to legally enter the US to visit his father, who cannot leave the US to visit his son as he would never be allowed re-entry (1:27:05). For decades, the love of Iván for his son has not been enough to cross the border, and near the end of the film we see how this tension of what Iván carries with him (the legal impossibilities of family reunification) threatens to destroy him and his relationship with Gerardo (1:39:00). The legal impediments also prevent Iván from bidding his father farewell on his deathbed (1:33:00). The *ofrenda* to Iván's father, erected with love, and adorned with foodstuffs associated with the deceased, triggers Iván's memories of his father a *tamalero* (street vendor of tamales). He recalls both how his father discovered him without judgement in *quinceañera* drag, and how together they would make and sell tamales on the street. Iván's self-perceived destiny to become a successful chef is directly correlated to his father. That paternal/filial love for each other, and their shared love of food, is what motivates Iván's internal migration to Puebla, and then to NYC, and then motivates his father's spirit's journey to New York after his death.

5. The Food of Love: Chiles en Nogada

The intertwining of love, food, and borders in the film is particularly significant in one particular dish, *chiles en nogada* which threads its way throughout the film. Iván initially courts Gerardo through the intricate preparation of the dish, which the film highlights repeatedly, demonstrating the cultural importance of the meal, which begins in their intimate domestic setting and then, later, in the US becomes part of the key to success, one of the signature dishes at their restaurant in Williamsburg, NY. Much like the aforementioned cultural elements that carry Mexican identity across time and space, *chiles en nogada* function the same way, though with the added contexts as the food of love between Iván and Gerardo, as well as demonstrating the culinary memories of the foodways that Iván carries with him. His memories involve the markets, the ingredients, the aromas, his father's voice calling out to people to eat his food. For Iván, food is love for Gerardo, his father, his son, and his community.

Iván's culinarily motivated internal migration specifically to Puebla was to learn how to make *chiles en nogada*, a regional specialty with fiercely defended variations by region and family. At their first meeting, Iván tells Gerardo that he bribed the nuns of the convent where it originated to get the authentic recipe⁸. This

⁸ There is a *vexata quaestio* as to the origin of this dish, whether it was invented by the Claretian Nuns or the Nuns of the Contemplative Augustinians in the convent of Santa Mónica, both in Puebla. We don't know which convent Iván bribed. There is also debate as to the original ingredients and if the dish was planned or invented based on the scant foodstuffs available.

is the dish Iván later creates to woo Gerardo. The hybrid dish “speaks” in space/geography and time/history. The fruits of the dish (which often include panochera apple, sweet-milk pear, creole peach, and pomegranates) grow on the skirts of Puebla’s Popocatepetl volcano; these are mixed with *picadillo* (mincemeat), stuffed inside a poblano chili, then covered in a walnut nougat sauce (*nogada*) and sprinkled with pomegranate seeds and parsley. It is tied to Mexican national identity and Independence (September 16) because the ingredients become available in August/September, and the colors coincide with the Mexican flag (red pomegranate, white nougat, and green chili and parsley)⁹. Some of the key ingredients of the dish, the pomegranate and walnuts, are also migratory foods, having been brought to Mexico from Spain (and to Spain from Western Asia) and thus the dish, like Mexico itself, is emblematic of *mestizaje*, migrations, and transformations.

The intimacy of the elaborate and laborious first creation of this dish over a single burner rickety stove in a shabby apartment in Puebla is an act of love by Iván for Gerardo, as well as an expression of his attachment to his country (0:19:09). The dish becomes symbolic of how Iván, through food, creates a home for Gerardo in NYC. The *chiles en nogada* that symbolize Mexican independence and national identity indicate Iván is a talented chef.

6. The American Dream realized?

Iván’s talent, plus the support of Gerardo are essential to their success in the US. In his home country he is excluded from loving Gerardo and is unable to get work as a chef. We see Iván from early scenes preparing and selling tamales in the street with his dad. After he migrates to Puebla, he is seen cleaning kitchens and restaurant bathrooms, relegated to non-culinary labor due to systems of patronage, despite his culinary degree. He is surrounded by male cooks creating dishes that he knows how to make better, having learned from his father, and having studied in culinary school.

After being discovered with Gerardo by his mom and Paola, Iván loses access to seeing Ricky. His dead-end jobs can’t afford to support Ricky, let alone pay his own rent, so he decides to immigrate. As gay men, and as immigrants (for whom “they hate us” – is a constant echo in the film) they lead fragmented lives, rejected in the US as “illegal Mexicans” and in Mexico of their memories, hated for being gay. When Iván proposes immigrating to the US, Gerardo suggests it’s because his closet door has burst open. Iván, however, considers it his culinary destiny. Gerardo tells Iván that if he crosses, he could die. He also warns him that the US kills one with loneliness, a fact borne out by Iván’s friend Sandra

⁹ It was purportedly first prepared for the visit of the independence leader and future emperor Agustín de Iturbide after the Treaty of Córdoba ending the War of Independence.

who immigrates with him and nearly dies in the desert crossing, only to end up returning to Mexico, broken down by the loneliness and humiliations she suffers as a consequence of her status. Iván survives in NYC only once Gerardo arrives.

Gerardo reminds him that Mexicans are hated in the US, and asks him what he would do, harvest grapes or *aguacates* (avocados). Food becomes a linguistic identifier, a rhetorical reminder of both their sexuality and their Mexican identity. Right after suggesting Iván could harvest avocados, he says “*Iván somos gays, no cosechamos aguacates*” / “Iván we’re gay, we don’t harvest avocados” (0:47:35). The food joke is linguistic as the Spanish word *aguacates* (from the Nahuatl word *ahuacatl*) can euphemistically mean testicles. Food is Iván’s language, and Gerardo speaks to him in food using a culinary joke to remind him that he is Mexican and gay. Their relationship, begun with a discourse on *chiles en nogada*, continues to operate through the rhetorical language of food, even after Iván leaves for NYC.

Gerardo is not interested in immigrating to the US; he has a job as a teacher and has managed to navigate life as a gay man. When Iván calls Gerardo and lies to him about how well things are going in New York, he navigates this conversation using food, telling Gerardo all the dishes he is allowed to make (when in reality he is a food delivery person), and how Americans are strange, using too much parsley (the bitter herb of Iván’s solitary sexile), and almost never using cilantro, to which Gerardo replies that Americans are uncivilized (1:46:20). At the end of the phone call, Iván tells Gerardo to forget about him, to live his life, understanding that his American Dream is at a dead end, and he has failed (1:07:22). Gerardo, however, decides to abandon his career and his family, and to immigrate, first attempting to get a legal visa, and then crossing the border without appropriate papers. This turns out to be Iván’s salvation as he is no longer alone, Gerardo’s love sustains him and he finds success, unlike Sandra.

The two men, who have been together for three decades, of which at least 25 have been in the US, are strongly considering going back to Mexico¹⁰. They have not seen their son, nor their 2 grandchildren, nor Iván’s mother since leaving Mexico. As they said in a recent interview for BAAD!, they are exhausted, done with the much-vaunted American Dream, and view the migratory policies of this country in the last 25 years as a farce¹¹. They contribute taxes, own restaurants, employ many people, and contribute much to the US but get nothing in return. It is clear from the film and their public conversations since, that Iván would just pack a backpack and go, but Gerardo reminds him of all the obligations they have in the US to resolve before than can go back to Mexico, a place now relatively

¹⁰ Mexico has changed: as of 2022 same sex marriage is legal throughout Mexico.

¹¹ Due to the irregular circumstances under which they entered, once they leave the US, there is no legal possibility of return.

safer for them as gay men while the US no longer feels safe for them as Mexican immigrants.

Iván carries with him stronger memory connections to Mexico than Gerardo, because of his son, his mother, and the gastro-nostalgia he inherits from his father, which involves “the transfer of nostalgic culinary knowledge from the private sphere of families . . . to the public in . . . restaurants” (Vázquez-Medina, 2017, p. 65). Gerardo, however, rejected his birthright and everything of his life in Mexico due to the horrific abuse he experienced from his father for being gay. This explains why Gerardo has few if any flashbacks or nostalgic feelings for Mexico in the film, while Iván has flashbacks and actually sees himself in Mexico. Iván’s recreation of *chiles en nogada* is political and personal because he resignifies the national dish as a queer and immigrant narrative, a cross-cultural language of belonging. The dish, like their lives, blends disparate ingredients into one, blending seemingly incompatible parts into a unified, delicious whole. These formerly rejected men have created for themselves and others a home away from home, a community of inclusion. As Vázquez-Medina (2017) notes, “the regional, personal, and private tastes of home become the flavors of the Mexican nation upon crossing the geopolitical border” (p. 65). It is, then, particularly noteworthy that Iván, a gay man, rejected from the national home, creates the space, taste, and culinary language that symbolize the homeland he and Gerardo fled¹².

7. Conclusion

The film concludes with Iván’s phone conversation with his mother, and subsequent heart wrenching conversations with Gerardo over his frustration at not being able to return to Mexico, as he tearily asks the unresolvable question of how a nation can inflict emotional violence, keeping families separated, lamenting that US immigration policies separate a father from his son, motivating his complicated desire to return. The fact that Iván and Gerardo, the rejected queer bodies of the Mexican diaspora, carry Mexico with them (from the *chiles en nogada*, to *quinceañeras*, to *Día de Muertos ofrendas* to *Virgen de Guadalupe* to Diego Rivera art with Aztec echoes), serves as a visual call for Mexican inclusion of the sexile and US incorporation of the Mexican diaspora. These queer Mexican bodies, like Mexican art and Mexican food, transcend borders. The couple’s food of love, their queer, binational, intergenerational love, transcends borders and reminds us that the border is carried within.

¹² The movie prompted Iván to finally come out to his mother and his son, who had assumed up until two weeks before the movie premier in CDMX that Gerardo was just his good friend. After the premiere, his mother called him to say how proud she was of him, and his son Ricky posed for pictures with audience members. As Heidi Ewing the director said in the BAAD! talkback, it was the most expensive coming out ever.

In conclusion, this film shows us how foodways, queer and ethnic identities, and violence are deeply intertwined, but also how foodways can lead to communal reconciliation. This journey of love is framed around *chiles en nogada*, an homage to Iván's love for Mexico, for his father, and most importantly, for Gerardo. The dish is emblematic of their migrations, as internal immigrants, as Mexicans in the diaspora, from the private gay and immigrant closet to the public big screen. The film is also a border crosser, moving from documentary to drama, from personal to public, reaching out across borders in an act of love and reconciliation.

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