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Two Poems

By René Saldaña Jr.

My Open Wound

This realization was my herida abierta.
I knew there was at least one book telling
my story, but if I hadn't stumbled across it,
I would never'a known even that.
I began wondering why we weren't being made
to read Thomas in class? If I liked it, I was sure
other of my friends would, too. It would'a made a difference
for me and them—a teacher, who I took to be
the sole authority figure in the classroom, intentionally
selecting my story as the one to assign
would'a been big: I mean, everyone reading my story
on the pages of this book, everyone reading me / us!—

of course it would'a made a difference.

My Librarian

The librarian, though,
who I'd love to name, I can't.
I know she was there.
In my mind, I can see her behind
the checkout counter,
kids lined up, her hands busy
taking the card from its pouch
at the back of the book and
stamping the due date in red.

There had to'a been someone
there. Someone had to look
the other way when I'd sneak
into the library when it wasn't
my turn and no pass to speak of:
before the morning bell,
during lunch, after school.
I wonder, did I ever skip class and
make my way there?
I don't think so. I wouldn't'a
had the guts to risk it.

Something else I don't remember:
the librarian ever sneaking a look over
my shoulder curious about
what I was reading (if you must know,
it was likely quick reads on UFOs,
long-lost treasures, or Sasquatch).
She didn't hover recommending
similar titles (If you like that book,
you'll absolutely love...), or
making conversation (a sure sign
she was assessing my comprehension
skills), or ushering me out.



René Saldaña, Jr., is a professor of Language, Diversity & Literacy Studies in the College of Education at Texas Tech University. He is the author of several books for young adults, including *The Jumping Tree*, *The Whole Sky Full of Stars*, and *A Good Long Way*. His memoir, *Eventually, Inevitably: My Writing Life in Verse*, is scheduled for publication in 2023. His poems have appeared in *English Journal*, *AMAE Journal*, and *Living Beyond Borders*, among others. Contact me at rene.saldana@ttu.edu (affiliation: Texas Tech University).