

## **Child of Immigrants by Michelle Hernandez**

After “Girl” by Jamaica Kincaid

Say your name the way you want it to be said; live to please yourself, don't worry about being a stereotype or statistic; people are judgmental, and their opinions don't matter unless you let them count; you don't have to announce where you're from all the time; don't feel the need to share your family history to be validated by others; know that saving money is a luxury; go to school, get that diploma, bachelor's and master's degree (and a Ph.D. to be extra); know that the English language is not a measurement of intelligence; don't be sorry, do better; people may feel challenged by you because you're different; people may treat you differently because you're different; don't feel obligated to teach the masses; when going back home to the Dominican Republic as an American, you will be called gringa because to them, you're white; when living in the U.S. as a Dominican-American, you will be called anything but white; when abroad, you're admired; when asked where home is? You don't know which one to choose because you have multiple dwellings; keep your mouth shut, don't be a snitch; bring your pilón, greka, and sofrito for your kitchen in college; always clean your meat with lime and water; don't be afraid to say that a green plantain is called plátano at home; be cautious of fixating on happiness, it comes from within; the American Dream is not your responsibility; understand that others already have what you're working towards; understand that means you have to put in more effort than the person next to you, but it will pay off; carry your culture with pride; speaking Spanglish counts as nothing; knowing two languages can get confusing for anyone; the things that can get lost in translation are not just linguistic, they can be conceptual—values, education, memories, or even identity; embark on a new journey, but don't forget where you come from; always ask your parents for a blessing when you greet them, even in front of strangers, say bendición Mami o Papi; putting yourself first comes at a price, be ready to pay it; home is in the heart, it may shift forms from time to time, but it's always in your heart; just because something is new doesn't mean it's not meant for you; your journey will most likely be the first of many, so learn to trust yourself; don't dismiss your culture, celebrate it; let your accent be your way of speaking in cursive; navigating this world is hard, so find someone you trust or someone with experience to check in with frequently; make self-awareness a priority; true passion derives from pain; you are not a failure for not accomplishing your parents' goals; you are not a winner for achieving your parents' goals; trust yourself because, most times, you're all you will have.