

A migrant and her two-year-old daughter in Tijuana

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Abstract

The poem responds to a photograph by Ilana Panich-Linsman that appeared in the magazine *Mother Jones*. It depicts a migrant, Arlen Cruz, holding her two year-old daughter as rain soaks the camp at a sports complex in Tijuana, Mexico, where many migrants in the caravan from Central America had been staying for two weeks.

Keywords: [Poetry](#); [photography](#); [migrants](#); [camps](#); [Central America](#); [Tijuana](#); [Mexico](#); [motherhood](#)

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You turn the page and there she is
holding an infant close to her heart,
head on her shoulder, asleep.

You've held a child of your own like this
his two-year-old body heavy, his hair tousled
as you carried him up to bed.

You see her hand gentle round the child
a fierce strength behind the numbness in her eyes:
she will guard this with her life.

You're too far away and she's just an image
arrested in her flight and photographed:
flesh and blood made spectacle.

You close the page and leave her there:
a single steadfast young woman
holding the world in her arms.



Arlen Cruz holds her two-year-old daughter as rain soaks the camp where many migrants in the caravan from Central America have been staying for two weeks now. Tijuana, Mexico. 29 November 2018. Ilana Panich-Linsman/REDUX.

The photograph appeared under the caption 'A migrant and her two-year-old daughter in Tijuana', in Echavarrí, F. (2019) 'The real border emergency', *Mother Jones*, 44 (3), pp. 9-11.