

Ofrenda : A Zine Anthology

Celia Perez



I met Celia in library school in 1999. If you know Celia, you know shes shy, so you may be surprised to know that she reached out to me. I didnt know how lucky I was at first. In person Celia can be reticent, until youre really friends. In fact, even then. Thats why its such a wonder and a joy that her zine writing is forthcoming. When you read her zines you get to know more about what shes thinking and how full her heart is. In the first issue of I Dreamed I Was Assertive Celia compares herself to bossy, ornery Lucy Van Pelt from the Peanuts, but the warm generous person she reveals in her zines--I dont think they even have a character like that in Peanuts? Im not saying she isnt a crank sometimes. She introduces herself in the same issue of IDIWA, I am moody and mean. But shes not! In a later issue of IDIWA Celia looks with sympathy on what would appear to be an out of control mother cursing at her kids on the el train. So often zines are about calling out bad behavior, and frankly zine writers can be kind of superior about such things sometimes. But here we see another mother who understands bad days and expectations that dont always come true. When you read someones zines for fifteen years, you see how they grow and change, but also the threads that run through their writing. Celia doesnt drive, so a lot of her writing takes place on or is about public transportation. (Or catching rides from fellow library school students, for the one semester we overlapped, that was me, and one of the ways we got to know each other.) She also writes about books, reading and authors, most recently, Sherman Alexie. In reading about Celias love for The Toughest Indian in the World in her minizine Sherm Sez, I see a lot of what I love about Celia--her passion for print and postal mail, her disgust for privileged and racist assholes, and her nontraditional/unaligned spirituality with a little bit of punk mixed in. Another topic she visits often is that of family, her immigrant parents, her husband, the young son of whom she is completely enamored, and her older sister Gloria, who died at the age of 41. Come to think of it, Im not sure whats so different in Celias later zines vs. her earlier ones, content-wise. Theres a visual difference, less collage and clip art-style graphics as her zine matures, but more handwriting. The later issues contain more color, too, sometimes color-copied and other times color-penciled in, one copy at a time. Im not sure if Ive ever written an introduction before, and this is starting to sound kind of academic. You could get a dissertation out of close readings of Celia zines, but that would be weird and kind of gross. I hope youll get a lot of insight and joy out of reading this collection. As I wrote of the 2010 issue of Celias zine The Shortest Day, and is surely true of Ofrenda, its ...a wonderful expression of Celias own essence. Its nostalgic, observant, brooding, creative, self-aware and a little self-mocking, smart, and makes you want to be her friend.

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