

SCENE 4

*Suddenly drums play thunderous beat.
Lighting change and choreography signify
actors living through Hurricane Maria.*

SCATTERED LINES

El huracán! El huracán esta aqui!

What do we do? Who do we call?

My cousin works for UPS in the States! I'll call her and ask for generators!

How do we open the ports? How do we open the ports?

Donde esta abuelita? She has Alzheimers! Someone find her!

Donde esta Ricardo? He's out playing! I need to find him!

Open the ports! Open the ports!

*Ensemble enters the batey, each person
behind the initiator eagerly lining up to step in
and have their turn in front of el subidor.
Eventually everyone is dancing in the batey
together, feverishly, and with great energy.
Song? Cuando Hubo? Must signify struggle
and community.*

ENSEMBLE MEMBER

After Maria the barriers had to come down. Suddenly your neighbors weren't just people you said hi to as you unlocked your front gate. They were the people you helped carry water three miles from the closest spring. They were the people who helped you rebuild your roof. They were the people you brought food when you picked up the army rations because you knew their car was totaled after the storm so they couldn't make the trip. Everyone had to be there for each other. It was the only way. It took us back 50 years, in the best and worst ways possible.

Ensemble scatters to reveal Woman 1 sitting in the batey, which has become a makeshift baking room. Woman 1 is kneading dough.

MARIA

Después del huracán, todo cambió. The husband I ran away from needed me. The community that pretended not to hear my screams needed me. And again, everyone wanted me to give. Por fa, mi amor, ayuda me. Mi tienda esta arruinada. Mi vida esta arruinada. Por fa, ayuda me. And I did. I shouldn't have had to. But I did. It was my goodbye. Adios, mi esposo. No te necesito. Tengo una vida propia. And once I helped him —groceries, rides to the hospital, money for a new roof—I was done. And I was free.

Maria Luisa and Carolina walk up to Woman 1.

MARIA LUISA & CAROLINA

Hola, Julia! Como estas? Long time no see.

MARIA

Hola, estoy bien, y ustedes? I'm just driving to the school. They're handing out food there, and Jose is all out.

MARIA LUISA & CAROLINA

Y nosotros tambien! Ricardo y Samuel necesitan comida tambien.

MARIA

And there we were, three women with better things to do, caring for men who couldn't care for themselves. People always ask why. Why didn't you leave the first time? You're so smart. How could you get caught up in such a bad situation? I used to cry whenever someone asked me this, thinking about how weak I was. But now I laugh because those questions mean whoever's asking hasn't ever thought about the way they were raised. Everything I was taught told me to be a dutiful wife. I never questioned what that duty was, or why I had to be the one to do it.

Carla appears behind a table, handing out food to women and children (ensemble members). Bottled watered and canned food are stacked behind her and on the table.

MARIA

Carla, que haces aqui? I thought you worked Mondays.

CARLA