

Border Kid

DAVID BOWLES

It's fun to be a border kid, to wake up early Saturdays
And cross the bridge to Mexico with my dad.

The town's like a mirror twin of our own,
With Spanish spoken everywhere just the same
But English mostly missing till it pops up
Like grains of sugar on a spicy pepper.

We have breakfast in our favorite restorán—
Dad sips café de olla while I drink chocolate.
Then we walk down uneven sidewalks, chatting
With strangers and friends in both languages.

Later we load our car with Mexican cokes and Joya,
Avocados and cheese, tasty reminders of our roots.

Waiting in line at the bridge, though, my smile fades.
The border fence stands tall and ugly, invading
The reeds at the river's edge. Dad sees me staring,
Puts his hand on my shoulder. "Don't worry, m'ijo:

"You're a border kid, a foot on either bank.
Your ancestors crossed this river a thousand times.
No wall, no matter how tall, can stop your heritage
From flowing forever, like the Río Grande itself."

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David Bowles is a Mexican American author and educator from the South Texas borderlands. His middle-grade novel *The Smoking Mirror* was named a 2016 Pura Belpré Honor Book by the American Library Association.