

**“Will you tell me the ways you’ve been
keeping beautiful to stay alive?”
Correspondence between Orlando and León**

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Abstract

Orlando Ochoa and León Ozuna write to each other and reflect on the details of their friendship, love, loneliness, and sex across distance. This epistolary/poetic exchange is an answer to the question of how Ochoa and Ozuna—Mexican poets and lovers from the Rio Grande Valley of South Texas—keep alive in the world.

Keywords

life, friendship, letters, beauty, distance, kisses, South Texas

dear león,

i'm writing to you having known many ends and many beginnings and sometimes i don't know how i'm still here and i cry about how hard and exhausting being alive can be but when we're watching tv in your bed or cooking eggs in the kitchen or laying down at mueller park asking questions to poetry books or singing usher's "closer" in a parked car or witnessing each other's first bites into a pastry or holding each other when we fall apart or you ask me "where are you?" to which i respond "here" i smile really big and feel a little less anxious and a little less afraid and even if it only lasts for a moment life feels like a feast and i'm reminded to call my beloveds and hold them longer and tighter and to dance and kiss and crush and to cherish the taste of olive oil and salt and pause to look at flowers and god i miss you so much and wish i could give you a big kiss on the cheek but i feel you in figs, springtime, jazz club, a little trouble, open kitchen cabinets, baking, big mordidas, sticky hands, sex, the color red, desire soundtracks, bees, cafecito, pan dulce, *Cruising Utopia*, holding hands, golden hour, god, flan, birthday cakes, and prayer and hallelu ya hallelu me that our hands and silly hearts and bellies full of stars know and love each other and there's no end to it

your princess,
Orlando

corazonsote –

There's this song I want you to listen to. It's called *Franky's Princess*.

It's a sonic boudoir.

Emilie Simon primps up her grief over her newly dead fiancée into a sparkling pop song. 135 bpm. gorgeous synths. lyrics sprawled in magic marker.

would I be wrong to say we do the same?

you

and your

hungry ghosts

patchouli oil

luxe skincare

wedding rings

on pretty fingers

noches de sexo

alma de mariachi

unrelentlessly beautiful

in every moment

embodying kissable –

crying or cumbiando

and then there's me

my Dying Boyfriend

Lash extensions

2 ML lip filler

besos mojados

Eternal Cleavage

RED Hair

long nails

always deep inside somebody

embrujada de ti,

pensando

y pensando en ti,

y pensando...

you've been away...I've been missing you...

Will you tell me the ways you've been keeping beautiful to stay alive?

Your little pet,

León