

January 2007

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Recommended Citation

Morrison-Taylor, Kathi (2007) "Diagram of the Female Reproductive System, Translated," *Harpur Palate: a Literary Journal*: Vol. 6: Iss. 2, Article 33.

Available at: <https://orb.binghamton.edu/harpurpalate/vol6/iss2/33>

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DIAGRAM OF THE FEMALE REPRODUCTIVE SYSTEM,
TRANSLATED

Kathi Morrison-Taylor

Both parents born in El Salvador, the neighbor boy, Enrico, has trouble with his homework, knocks on our door, asking for my husband's bilingual expertise. At twelve, he must study the reproductive system in a special class called Health. He hands my husband a cross-section of a woman, a map with arrows and blanks. Shyly, he says his parents know only the Spanish words. But I worry that they know less than that—tranquil in their living room, listening to the news under a wide-eyed portrait of Jesus, while their boy in the next apartment learns to pronounce *clitoris*, *vagina*, and *uterine lining*. What would Jesus do, faced with a worksheet like this? I find I need to leave the room so men can talk as men. My husband comes to consult me only when he is unsure about *fallopian tubes*. In a half an hour, they are almost done. Anatomically correct and American, the diagram has filled with terms doctors use. I can hear Enrico thanking my husband: *Gracias, gracias, gracias, señor*. His gratitude seems too great, as if he could know that when you learn a new word in no time you find it everywhere.