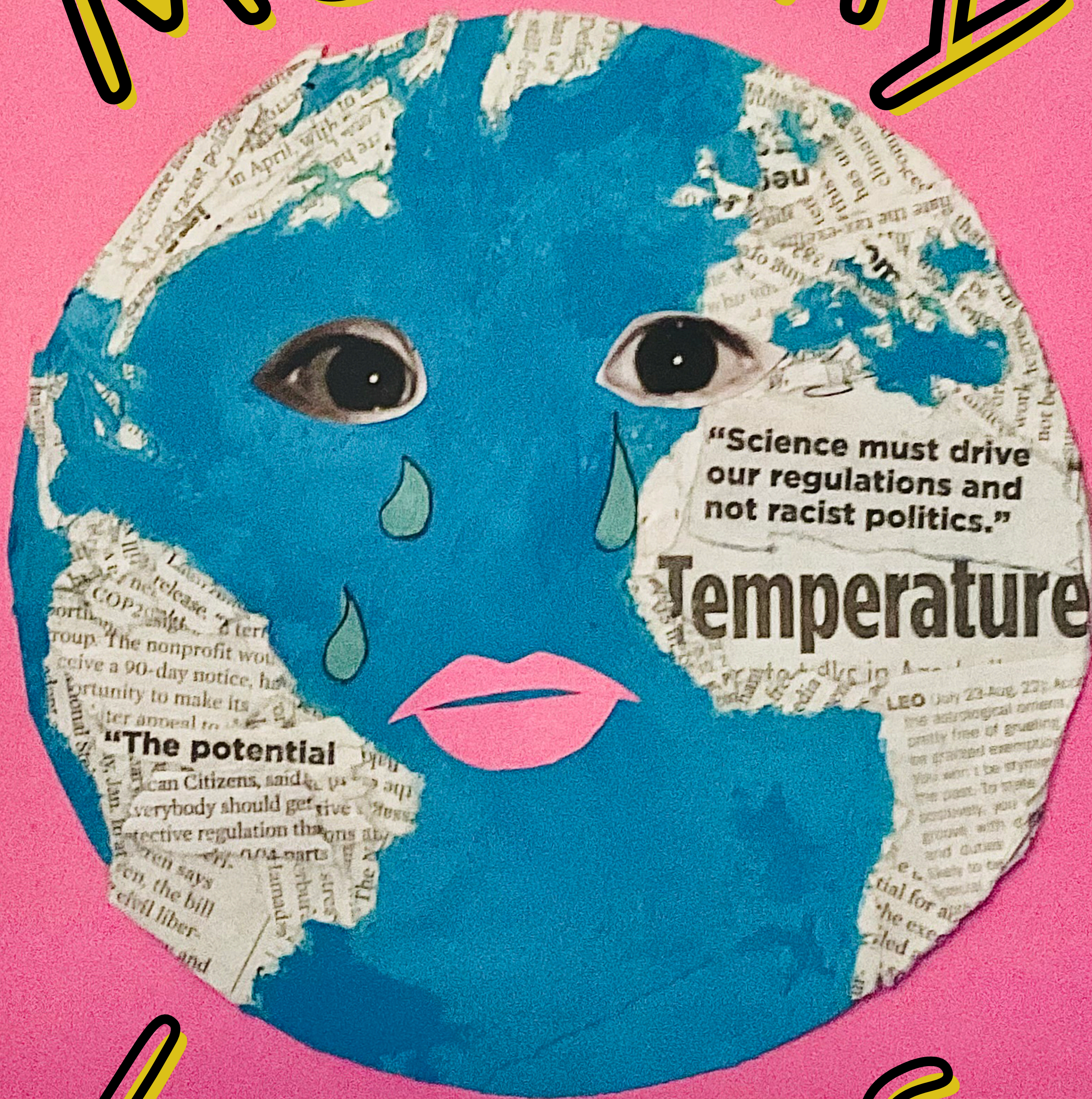


MOMMY



Issues

A zine by Chelsea Flores

*For the difficult daughters, the feminine guardian
spirits of the rivers, and the people who fight
every day for a better world.*

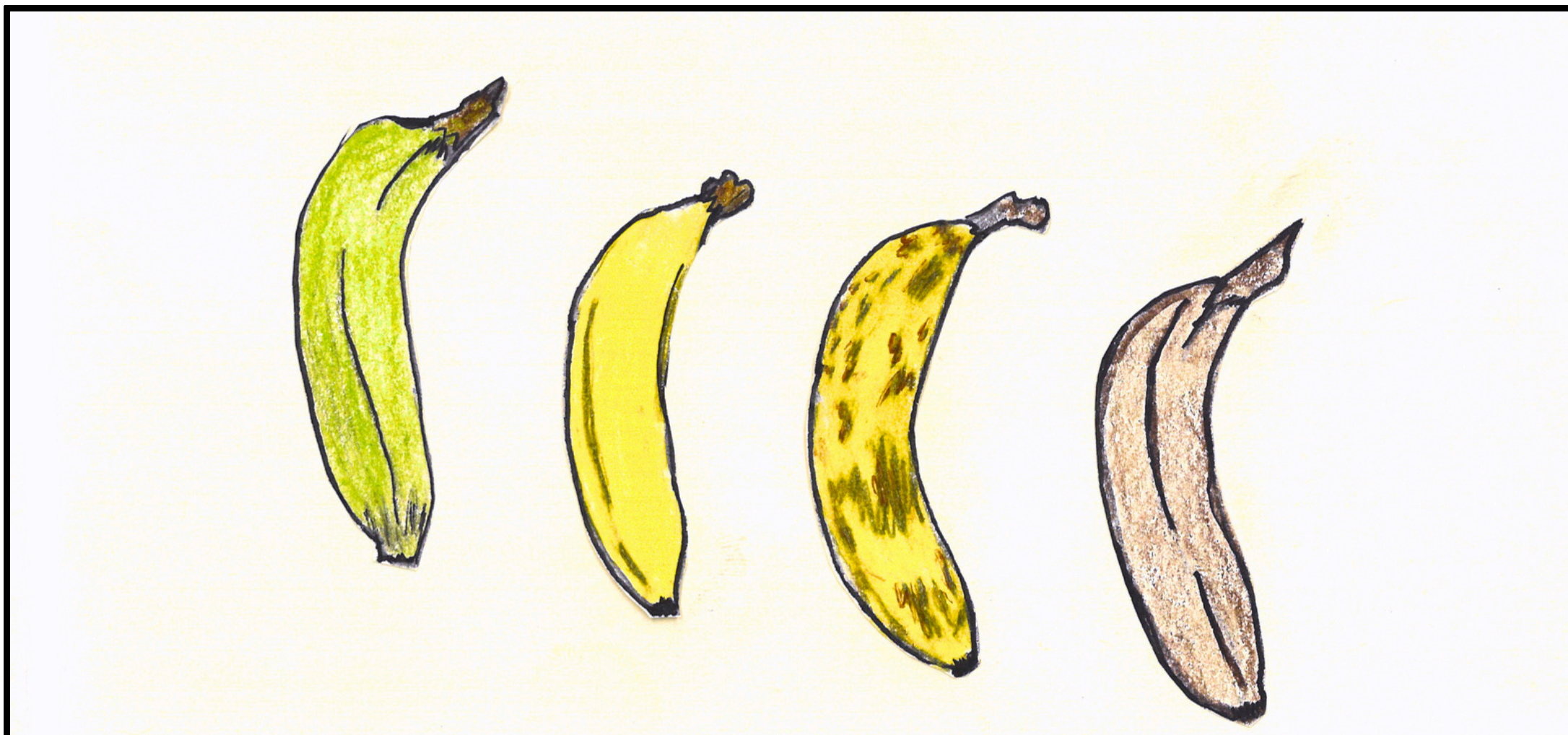
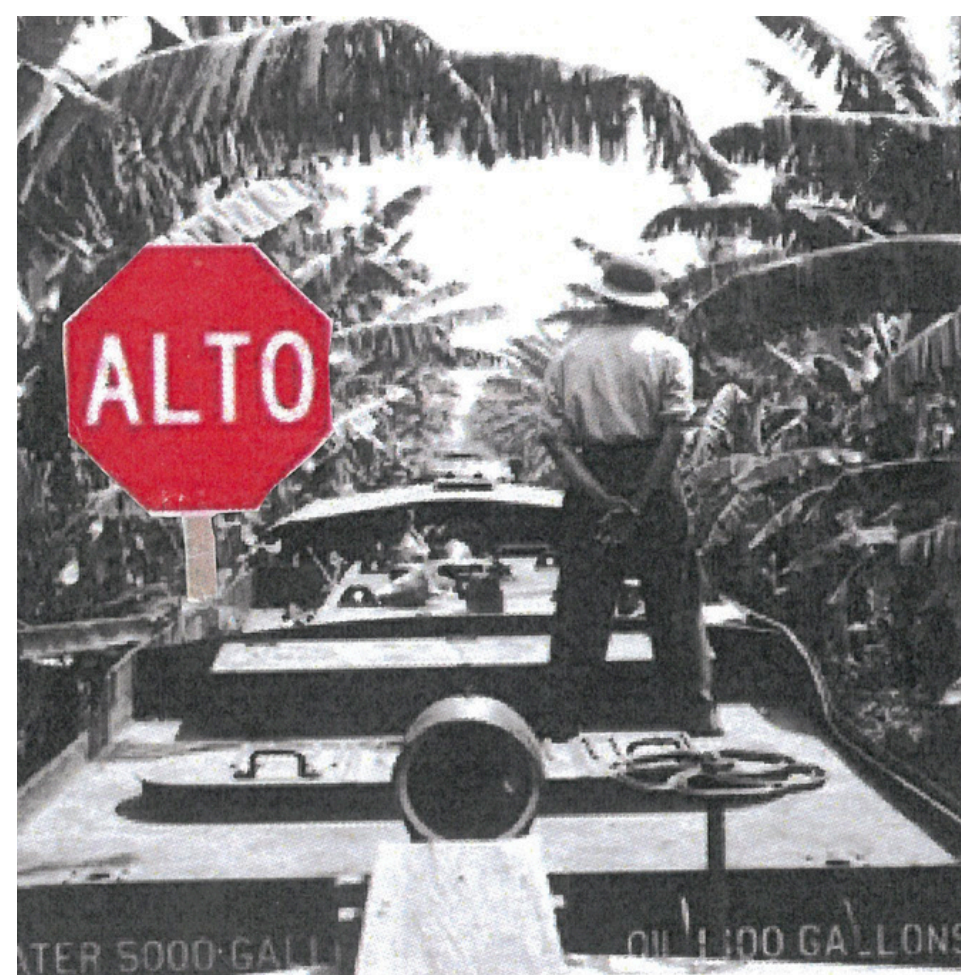


Identity is bananas.

Growing up in New York
within a bicultural
Central American
home, I came to
understand identity as
something fluid—
constantly evolving
and never fixed.

I see it as something to claim and hold on to,
something that assures us we are not alone in
the world.

For those of us whose roots stretch through lands shaped by foreign interests—so-called 'banana republics'—and two centuries of U.S. intervention in Latin America, even a piece of fruit can carry the weight of memory. It becomes a trace of empire, a vessel of resistance, and a symbol woven into one's sense of self. The banana is not merely a product, but a reminder of histories lived and inherited.



My point is that identity can be imposed upon us, but it is also something we have the power to shape. Left unattended, it decays.

From Goascorán to El Progreso



Long before we become conscious of concepts like identity, parts of it have already been shaped for us—carved out by the lives and legacies of those who came before.



Having grown up along the Goascorán River, which marks the border between Honduras and El Salvador, my grandmother's life was forever altered at the age of ten. In 1967, while bathing in the river with her father and siblings, she witnessed the murder of her father at the hands of Honduran military forces.

This moment shattered her childhood, leaving her and her siblings orphaned and vulnerable in a world increasingly defined by conflict and insecurity. It was an act of violence born from hatred—against one's own neighbors.

The roots of this conflict lie in the concentration of land ownership by wealthy elites in El Salvador, the smallest country in Central America. As Salvadoran campesinos and working-class families were displaced, many sought refuge and work in Honduras, only to face hostility and persecution.

Rather than protecting the rights of Salvadoran migrants or Honduran citizens, the Honduran government prioritized the interests of foreign corporations—most notably the United Fruit Company (UFC), which at the time owned approximately 10% of Honduras's most fertile land for banana exports. This economic imbalance, combined with rising anti-migrant sentiment, created a volatile environment.



Amid this tension, a nationalist paramilitary group known as La Mancha Brava emerged. Backed by the military dictatorship of General Oswaldo López Arellano, the group carried out violent attacks and massacres against Salvadoran immigrants during the politically charged period leading up to the 1975 FIFA World Cup qualifiers. Their actions were part of a broader campaign of xenophobia and displacement, as the Honduran government sought to appease local unrest without challenging elite landowners or foreign corporate interests.

The banana boom had made cities along Honduras's northern coast attractive to migrants like my grandmother, who arrived in search of work and the hope of upward mobility. But instead of opportunity, many Salvadorans found themselves caught in a storm of political scapegoating and violence.



The murder of Salvadoran citizens living in Honduras was later minimized in public memory, reduced to a brief episode known as the '100-Hour War' or the 'Football War' of 1969. But this short-lived conflict laid the groundwork for deeper instability. In the years that followed, El Salvador descended into a brutal civil war—fueled by military groups trained and armed by the U.S. government.

Scars Across Generations: Life in a Conflict-Ridden Homeland



*You're preparing us for war before we've even
set foot into the real world.*

Let me be (me).

At just 14 years old and awaiting the birth of her first child, my grandmother watched as Hurricane Fifi devastated the Sula Valley in northern Honduras. The storm destroyed entire neighborhoods, displaced thousands, and wiped-out livelihoods.

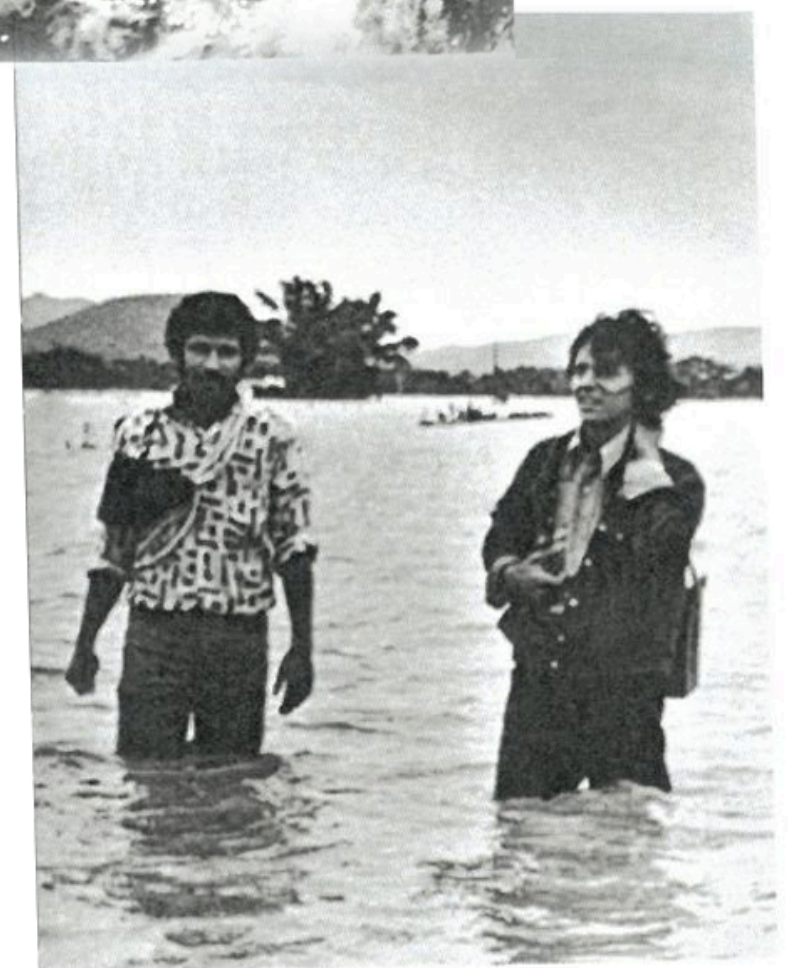
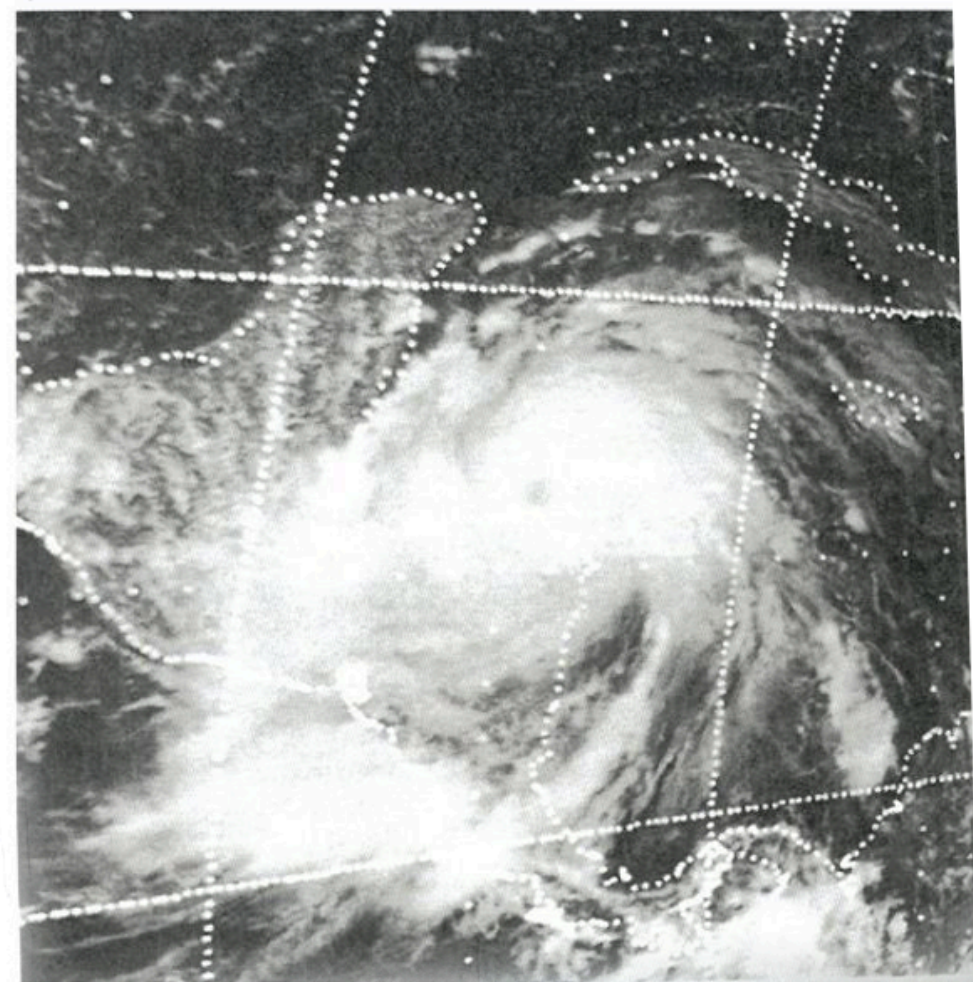


In the aftermath of the hurricane, another storm was brewing —this time political. On February 3, 1975, Eli Black, the CEO of United Brands (formerly United Fruit Company, now known as Chiquita Brands International), died by suicide after it was revealed that he had paid a \$1.25 million bribe to Honduran President Oswaldo López Arellano in exchange for reduced export taxes on bananas. The scandal would be known as 'Bananagate'.

The revelation of this corruption sparked public outrage and ultimately led to one of many military coups in Honduras's turbulent political history. While President López Arellano was ousted, the legacy of political corruption remained deeply embedded in the country's institutions.

Fall 1998. My mother, newly initiated into motherhood, returns to Honduras with her infant daughter—me—just as Hurricane Mitch begins to bear down on the region. I am two months old.

We remain sheltered in her childhood neighborhood of Los Jazmines, closely monitoring the rising waters of the nearby Pelo River. The storm rages outside, but inside, a quieter storm brews: the fear of instability, the weight of political unrest, and the haunting possibility of being thrust into precarity.



Amid the floodwaters and uncertainty, my parents thought about building a different future for me in the United States. The limited opportunities available to women in Honduras had also influenced my grandmother's difficult decision to send her three daughters to Queens, New York, during the late 1980s and early 1990s, in search of safety and opportunity far from home.

Global Climate Justice



November 2020 just two weeks apart Hurricanes Eta and Iota strike Honduras. Nearly 4 million people were affected, with at least 94 deaths reported. Entire communities were submerged, and thousands were displaced. The hurricanes intensified an already dire situation in Honduras, where poverty, violence, and environmental degradation were pushing people to migrate.

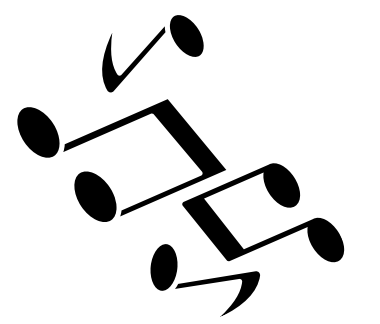
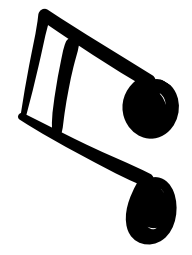
Climate change is now a significant driver of displacement in Honduras.



Some cultures offer alternative models of leadership and parenting—ones not rooted in control or domination, but in presence, patience, and compassion. These approaches teach the young to live with purpose, self-awareness, a healthy self-esteem, and respect for all life.

To truly protect Mother Earth, we must commit to sustainable adaptation, enact strong environmental protection policies, and extend meaningful support to vulnerable nations like Honduras through climate finance, technology sharing, and more urgently, humane migration policies. The future depends on our collective willingness to listen, to act, and to care.

A totally amazing mind. So understanding and so kind. You're everything to me.



Rather than responding to global crises with hatred, violence, or fear, we must now—more than ever—amplify the lived realities of those fleeing instability in regions like Central America. Mass incarceration and corporate exploitation cannot be the answers to the current migration crisis. What we need are legal frameworks and humanitarian aid that recognize and support those displaced by climate-related disasters.

We must also move away from authoritarian worldviews that enable the continued exploitation and destruction of Mother Earth. Instead, we should open ourselves to learning from cultures beyond our own—realities that challenge and expand our understanding. Across Latin America, Indigenous and working-class communities have long resisted the grip of neoliberalism imposed by corporations and governments. These communities face daily militarized repression and systemic racism, struggles that span generations.

Resource Page:

Overview of U.S. Intervention and Its Ties to the Current Migration Crisis:

[**Watch on YouTube**](#)

The Football War:

[**BBC Article**](#)

More on 'Banana-gate':

[**Blog Post**](#)

When The Mountains Tremble (1983) by Pamela Yates:

[**Documentary on Youtube**](#)

How to Spot a Dictator and/or Fascism:

[**Watch on YouTube**](#)

For Brown Girls With Sharp Edges and Tender Hearts by Prisca Dorcas Mojica Rodríguez

[**Watch Author Interview on YouTube**](#)

Honduran Archive (Instagram-based historical archive)

[**Explore their online resources**](#)



Colloquial Honduran Terms



Babosada - Nonsense / Silly thing Refers to something foolish, trivial, or not worth taking seriously

Baleada- traditional Honduran dish composed of a flour tortilla, filled with refried red beans, crema, and crumbled salty cheese.



Caite - Sandals / Makeshift shoes Refers to old, worn-out, or improvised footwear, often used in rural areas.

Chiguín - Kid Informal term for a small child, especially a boy.

Cipote/a - Kid (boy/girl) Common in Honduras and El Salvador for children or teens.

Compa / Compañero - Buddy / Comrade Friendly term for a friend, peer, or someone you share solidarity with.



Lempiras - Lempiras The official currency of Honduras.

Majes - Fools / Dudes (contextual) Can mean 'fools' or just 'guys' depending on tone and context.

Pisto - Money Informal term for cash, widely used in Honduras and El Salvador.



Tegucigalpa - Tegucigalpa Capital city of Honduras, often shortened to 'Tegus'.

Macizo - Awesome / Solid Slang for something cool, impressive, or well-done.

Púchica - Darn it / Wow Mild expletive expressing surprise, frustration, or amazement.

Chamba - Job / Gig / Work Informal term for employment, often temporary or manual labor.

