

**Desde la Lejanía** – Caroline Ochoa's comments.

During 2020, I began sharing videos of traditional Salvadoran recipes on social media. What surprised me most was how many people, especially in the United States, didn't realise there were Salvadorans living in Australia at all. I often found myself explaining, yes, we exist, and no, our pupusas are not made with kangaroo. That experience showed me how easily an entire community can go unheard or unseen. Australia is home to the third-largest Salvadoran diaspora outside of El Salvador, yet our stories are rarely told or formally recorded. That is why this book feels so important.

The migration stories in this book are powerful because of their detail. One moment that stayed with me described someone being shown a map of Australia and told this was where they were going, without really knowing where it was in the world. Small details like this helped me imagine what my own family may have experienced. In my family these memories are shared briefly or without much detail. Reading these accounts felt like learning parts of our history for the first time. Details that even many Australian-born Salvadorans may never hear directly from their parents or grandparents.

The book also captures how families adapted once they arrived. One example that stood out to me was swapping banana leaves for aluminium foil when making tamales. This is a perfect example of tradition bending, but not breaking. My own family still makes tamales this way. These adaptations have become normal over time, and future generations may never question why our tamales are wrapped in foil. This book records those changes and preserves the reasons behind them, showing how culture evolves under the pressure of distance. For me, this book is more than a collection of stories, it feels like a link between generations. Reading these accounts helped me understand things my parents might never say directly, or may not yet be ready to talk about. My husband is from El Salvador and only arrived in Australia recently. Even he does not fully realise what the earlier generations of refugees went through to build a community that now allows him to experience a sense of home and connection here such as Salvadorean food trucks. This book shows what those families left behind and what they had to rebuild. I am grateful for this work and for the people who entrusted their stories to it. Thank you for helping us understand where we come from and how our culture continues across oceans and generations.