

# UC Merced

## The Vernal Pool

### Title

My Father

### Permalink

<https://escholarship.org/uc/item/0688k04t>

### Journal

The Vernal Pool, 2(2)

### Author

Perales, Monica

### Publication Date

2016

### DOI

10.5070/V322029269

### Copyright Information

Copyright 2016 by the author(s). This work is made available under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives License, available at

<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>

Peer reviewed|Undergraduate

**MONICA PERALES**  
**MY FATHER**



**THE VERNAL POOL**  
**ISSUE FOUR, SPRING 2016**

## Getting juice

had never been a problem before.

My dad liked to spoil me and my mother,  
so the kitchen renovation landed us with two refrigerators.

One was inside, one was outside.

One was for food, one was for his juice.

It was easier for him to refill his cup while he was working.

It was harder for me to go outside for a cup of juice every day.

With my eyes on my ripped, stringy shoelaces covered in dirt,  
I went outside and grabbed the grimy door handle to the refrigerator.

I tried to keep my tangled hair in my face.

It was easier not to see.

I didn't see the vein bulging out of the skin on his neck  
when he screamed at my mother,

I didn't see the thick, angry shards of glass  
displayed almost artfully across the kitchen floor,

I didn't see the soft, long strands of my mother's hair  
wrapped around his arm,

or her legs thrashing wildly, desperately,  
as he dragged her to their bedroom . . .

Empty cup in hand,  
I lifted my head to find Agua de Sandia (watermelon flavored water):  
sweet, tangy, deep pink, disgusting.  
I rolled my eyes and saw something  
I shouldn't have.

A boy not that much older than me, maybe 16,  
my father standing in front of him with a grin of approval and respect  
and a gun that I had only seen in movies.

*Had it always been in the backyard --  
where I liked to watch my dad work?*

It took both hands to hold; the boy saw me and grinned.  
I almost cried for him.

My father looked up, and  
I lunged for the Agua de Sandia -- my favorite drink --  
in that moment.  
I returned to the large, gray couch in our living room,  
and pulled my knees up to my chin.

And it was on that dirty old couch a week later,  
that I was told to put shoes on and go outside by a police officer.  
My bother held our Rottweiler back by his silver choke chain.

I briefly wondered if they would find anything, but one look at my father and  
his kind, cooperative manipulation,  
And I knew -- they wouldn't find anything -- because  
I didn't see  
Anything.