

The Caves

Columba Díaz

When I was young, my favorite place to play with my sisters was the mountain near my house—Montaña de Plata. It had beautiful trees and flowers. When it was raining, there was a waterfall. In the mountain, there were caves made of big rocks. We played house in the caves. We pretended there were different rooms and different floors. Inside the caves, there was an echo when we shouted. When it was raining, sometimes we shared the cave with animals like pigs, cows, and goats.

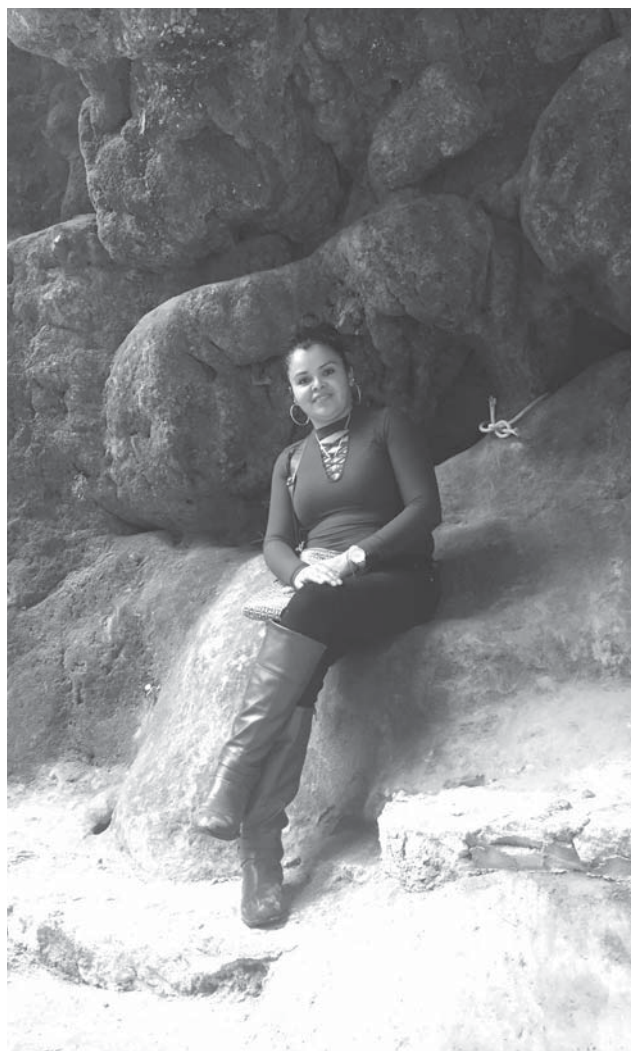
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In the caves, we played many things. We pretended to cook and sell food. I cooked cakes made of mud. I used big round leaves as tortillas and made tacos filled with chopped flowers. We used soda caps as money. I made tiny houses with sticks for my imaginary dolls. I put big leaves and branches on top for the roofs. We used plastic cups and thread to make a telephone so we could talk to each other in the caves. I collected plastic objects to use for play. I had recycling in my caves!

One time when I was playing, I heard something crying. I asked my sister, "Who is that?" My sister went to see and found a dog stuck in the cave. It was very weak. I pulled it out. When I looked into the dog's eyes, it said, "Thank you."

I was the oldest of seven children. I had a lot of responsibilities at home. But when I went to the mountain, I was very happy. It was my time. I didn't have other responsibilities. I lived in a different world when I was there.

AFTER YOU READ: What does Díaz mean when she says, 1) "I had recycling in my caves!" and 2) "I lived in a different world when I was there." Compare this story with the one on p. 22.



Columba Díaz, pictured above near the caves where she played as a child, is a student at Center for New Americans in Greenfield, MA. She is from Mexico. She is married and has three daughters.

What is a Cave?

A cave is a hole in the earth or in large rocks. It is big enough for a person to stand up in. Caves are formed by acidic rain, which eats away soft rock, gradually forming large holes. Find out more at www.nationalgeographic.com/science/earth/surface-of-the-earth/caves.