CARMELA

Papí.
It smells like a sweet, blue ocean.
All of Papí’s shirts smell exactly like this.
And the scent from it
would always stay in a room
for a long time after he left it.

CARMELA smells the deodorant again.

CARMELA

Papí’s scent isn’t in our house anymore.
It’s been awhile.
Maybe Miguel is right.
Maybe Papí won’t call.

Beat as CARMELA has an idea.

CARMELA

(To Dandelion)
I know what I want to wish for. Papí’s papers to get fixed.
Yes, I’m sure. Why should I wait? Oh! Right. The bodega lady might be really mad if I blow on this in here.
But, I can still pretend.

CARMELA jingles her bracelets and PAPÍ appears.

PAPÍ

(Singing.)

CARME CAMELA
HIJA DE MIEL [My sweet daughter]

Papí?

PAPÍ

Hola, mija. [Hello, my daughter] It’s been a long time. I know. But I’m home.

CARMELA

Can I smell your shirt?

PAPÍ

Por supuesto, mija. [Of course]

CARMELA smells shirt and we hear sounds of the ocean and seagulls and wind.

CARMELA

Papí!
They hug.

CARmela
Papí! Guess what? Today is my birthday.

Papí
I know. Seven years old, right? I still remember when you were born. Hacía mucho frío. [It was very cold] I thought I was going to turn into a popsicle.

CARmela
(To Audience)
He always says that. (To Papí)
Mamí made me delicious pancakes today.

Papí
Con chocolate? [with chocolate?]

Carmela
With lots of chocolate. And I got these bracelets. Look.

Papí
Ay, qué bonita. [how pretty]

CarMela
Listen to this.

CARMela jingles the bracelets.

CarMela
Miguel doesn’t like how they sound. But I do.

Papí
Yo también. [Me too]

CARMela
I gave one to my friend Natalia because I haven’t seen her in a while and I wanted her to have one. Now that you’re back, will you teach me how to play chess? I want to be as good as you are.

Papí
Your brother hasn’t taught you?

CARMela
I ask him to but... Since you left, he hasn’t been very nice. Will you sing for me?

Papí
Which song would you like for me to sing?
CARMELA
(To AUDIENCE)
He always does this.
(To PAPÍ)
You know which one. The one you said was an old, old song
but you changed the words for me.

PAPÍ
OH! I remember now. Lista? [Ready]

CARMELA
Lista lista! [Ready ready]

PAPÍ sings to the tune of “Carmen
Carmela.”

PAPÍ
ASI CUAL NACEN EN EL ORIENTE
LOS BELLOS TINTES DE AURORA SON
ASI NACIERON ALEGRES CHISPAS
LAS SEMILLITAS DE TU CANCIÓN
CARME CARMELA
LUZ DE MIS OJOS
LINDOS DESEOS
HAS DE TENER
HERMOSA MAGIA
BRILLA EN TU PECHO
ASÍ A TUS BRAZOS
YO LLEGARÉ

A beautiful cat appears. This is
ANATOLI.

ANATOLI mews.

CARMELA
Mira! Hi. Are you Anatoli? Can I pet you?

ANATOLI mews.

CARMELA
Hey, Papí. Loo— Papí?

Beat as CARMELA returns to where
PAPÍ was standing. She closes
her eyes and sniffs the air. The
scent is gone. Sadness.

ANATOLI rubs against CARMELA.

CARMELA
Can I pet you?

ANATOLI mews.

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