

I want you to take me to the D.R., pull me around in a blue car, and buy me houses on the beach. Kiss me! Kiss me on the lips! (She makes the pillow kiss her.) Like that! Yeah! That feels good! I'd do anything for you! You feel me?! This is crazy! I'm all over you! You make me crazy! Let's kill ourselves and take pictures! LOVE IS THE GREATEST THING THERE IS! I'M READY! TAKE ME! TAKE ME!

The door opens. It's her father HECTOR. He's composed.

START

HECTOR

What are you doing?

ESPERANZA

Nothing.

HECTOR

I could hear you over the dishes. I shouldn't have let you eat all that cake. You're crazy with sugar.

ESPERANZA

It's my birthday.

HECTOR

Even so.

ESPERANZA

I'm ten now.

HECTOR

You had a nice party. Now you need your sleep.

ESPERANZA

Daddy?

HECTOR

Yeah?

ESPERANZA

I feel like I'm gonna explode. I feel like I'm gonna grow a second head or something.

He comes in, sits on the bed.

HECTOR

Come on. Get in.

She gets in the bed.

ESPERANZA

I can't sleep. Tell me a story.

HECTOR

You're too old for that.

ESPERANZA

I need a story. I'm afraid to go to sleep with nothing.

HECTOR

Me too. (Pause) You know what I do to go to sleep at night?

ESPERANZA

What?

HECTOR

I think about you. I think 'Esperanza'.

ESPERANZA

Just that?

HECTOR

That's where I start. Sometimes I stay there. Sometimes more comes.
Sometimes I see the whole future of the world and you walking through it.

ESPERANZA

Are you there?

HECTOR

For a while.

ESPERANZA

Is the world okay?

HECTOR

No. But you are. So everything's alright because you are my only worry, and you're alright.

ESPERANZA

Is Canada UP?

HECTOR

What do you mean?

ESPERANZA

I saw Canada on a map and it looks UP from here. Like you have to climb up like a ladder to get to it.

HECTOR

You don't need a ladder. Why you so into Canada?

ESPERANZA

Because I've never been.

HECTOR

There's lots of places you've never been.

ESPERANZA

But Canada is the nearest place that's far. I can almost smell it. It smells like when you crush roses under your nose. Can I have some peanuts?

HECTOR

No.

Just a few.

ESPERANZA

No.

HECTOR

Just one.

ESPERANZA

I said no.

HECTOR

Comon! Just one peanut!

ESPERANZA

No. I know what you've been doing. You've been feeding that squirrel.

HECTOR

He's so cute.

ESPERANZA

He's a wild animal. Don't tempt him into the house. He could bite you.

HECTOR

He wouldn't. He's my friend.

ESPERANZA

They have diseases.

HECTOR

ESPERANZA

Don't you think that Nature is like God? The animals and trees and everything?

HECTOR

I don't think that squirrel is like God. I think he's like a rat. And if you keep feeding him, he's going to come in here and bite you on the nose or something.

ESPERANZA

I don't know. I think that squirrel loves me. I miss sleeping on the pull out.

HECTOR

I like it.

ESPERANZA

This room's too big for me.

HECTOR

I've tried to make it nice.

ESPERANZA

It's great, but it's your room.

HECTOR

Not anymore.

ESPERANZA

I don't need all this. Daddy, are you having a nervous breakdown?

HECTOR

What kind of question is that? No!

ESPERANZA

Sometimes your eyes get like zeros.

HECTOR

Sometimes I get sad.

ESPERANZA

Tell me a story.

HECTOR

Fine. Once upon a time, there was a kangaroo named Hernando...

ESPERANZA

No, no kangaroos! Tell me a story like Mama used to. Tell me a magie story.

'Magie' has a French pronunciation.

HECTOR

I don't know French things.

ESPERANZA

Doesn't have to be in French.

HECTOR

That was your mother.

ESPERANZA

That doesn't matter. Some stories are like the grace of God coming into me.
The magie stories are like that. They take over everything and make it work.

HECTOR

None of the magic stories are happening tonight, baby. I'm tired. Listen. I'm going to turn out the light, and you're going to go to sleep.

ESPERANZA

Why'd you paint the room white?

HECTOR

I thought you'd like it. Cheerful.

ESPERANZA

It's the same room either way. And the bed.

HECTOR

Painted the bed to match the walls.

ESPERANZA

And why'd you give me so many pillows?

HECTOR

I don't know. So everything around you would be soft.

ESPERANZA

Don't drink.

HECTOR

Just get some sleep. You've had a big day.

He switches off the lamp.

HECTOR

Goodnight.

END