

## Talking Points When I Was Puerto Rican

### **Oldest Sibling**

As the oldest sibling, Esmeralda, or Negi, feels that she's neglected more and more by her parents as their family grows bigger and bigger. This is a theme that is seen numerous times throughout the story, from when she first "lost her lap" until the youngest son was born. Having 7 siblings is not easy. For Negi, it brought her responsibility although in her eyes she was still a child.

### **Women in the Workforce**

During these times in Puerto Rico, and probably still today, it was highly looked down on to be a woman in the workforce. This role that women have to fulfill as housewives and caretakers was strongly encouraged, so Negi's mom was judged upon her decision to work in a factory and bring an income to the home. Negi obviously didn't like that her mother worked, for she was accustomed to and wanted her to remain home. Its as if she felt that her mother's role was just to be a mother, but its hard to tell whether as she wrote the book she had a feeling of resentment or pride.

### **Casi Seniorita**

Another theme that was strongly embraced was that of puberty. From when Negi first saw a boy's privates, until even when she was falling in love with a random kid, Negi didn't seem to want to become seniorita. It was either lack of knowledge of what actually happens or fear of no longer being a child. Her experience with her piano teacher/principal made her realized that she was developing, but she found it hard to embrace it, a lot because she was picked on, in her eyes she was not pretty, and she didn't develop early.

MIT OpenCourseWare  
<http://ocw.mit.edu>

WGS.S10 Special Topics in Women & Gender Studies Seminar: Latina Women's Voices  
Spring 2010

For information about citing these materials or our Terms of Use, visit: <http://ocw.mit.edu/terms>.