

## ABSTRACT

### BECOMING A WOMAN: THE ANATOMY OF PORTUGUESE LOVE, WORK, AND DEATH

The story of America begins with the immigrants that braved the journey from distant lands. Without money or even the guarantee of food, immigrants fed off their dreams and hopes for a future, where their offspring would not have to suffer as they did. I cannot imagine taking the risks my Portuguese parents took over thirty years ago to build a dairy business. I cannot imagine walking the road less traveled, only to look back, and regret the journey. My mother sacrificed her entire life for the dairy business, her husband, and kids, but never earned the one wealth that all humans desire—love. My own story begins with this discovery about my mother. When she died of cancer, strangely enough, my life as a woman began. This is a story about an immigrant's child discovering the pains of love and life.

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