Karen Tei Yamashita, *Tropic of Orange*
Close Reading Paper Prompts

Pick a close reading prompt, thinking about how it relates to Gloria Anzaldúa's concept of the borderlands:

1. We have extensively discussed the symbolism of the orange in Yamashita's novel. Close read another passage that features natural imagery (such as Buzzworm's description of the palm trees) for its significance.
2. What does the highway symbolize in Yamashita's Los Angeles, and how does it transform by the novel's end? Find passage(s) to compare and contrast.
3. Close read the descriptions of Gabriel's house in Mexico. What kind of house is it, and what is Rafaela's place in it?
4. Close read a portion of Arcangel's italicized monologues.
5. There are multiple storylines in the novel, and one of the stranger ones involves the organ trafficking of baby hearts. What is Yamashita's purpose in including this thread?
6. Another storyline is Bobby's attempt to rescue a cousin he has never met. Close read portions of this story, paying careful attention to how it relates to other stories in Asian America we have encountered in our course so far.
7. Each of the seven major characters in *Tropic of Orange* are narrated in a different genre/media form. Compare and contrast two of these character-genres - what happens when their storylines intersect with one another?
8. Close read an instance of magical realism (such as Chapter 38: Nightfall, where Rafaela fights the villain, transforming into a serpent). What are the effects of this shift in genre?