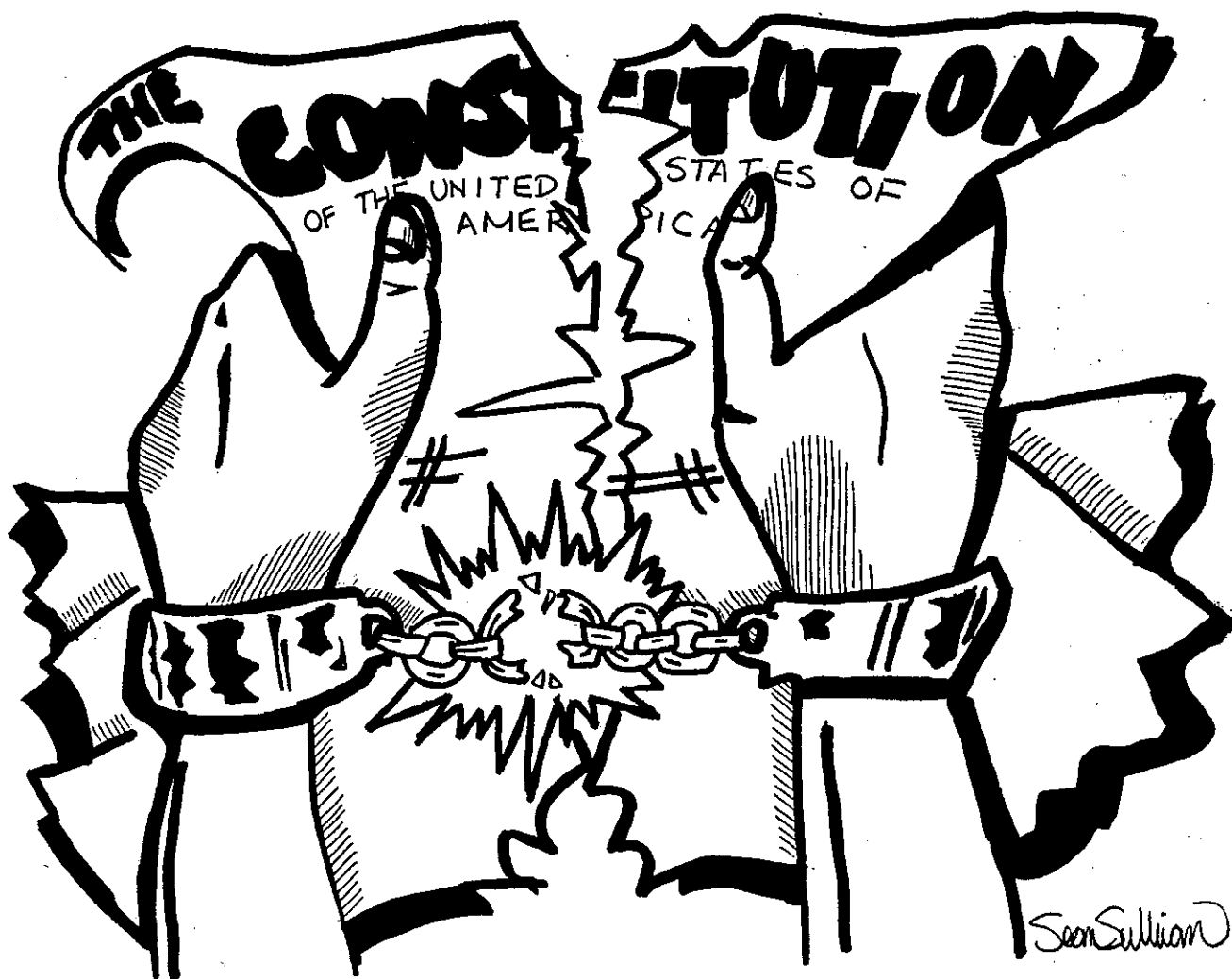


La Fuerza

The Literary Magazine of Raíces
Fall 1991



Hampshire College
Amherst, Mass.



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ON THE COVER: "WHOSE FOUNDING FATHERS, WHOSE COUNTRY" BY SEAN SULLIVAN

Queridos Compañeros:

Throughout the course of two semesters, members of Raíces, the Latino organization of Hampshire College, have anxiously anticipated the realization of an alternative, progressive, literary magazine which would eloquently and accurately depict our roles as Latinos in the United States. The end result has been *La Fuerza*, a cultural and political effort that expresses our wants, needs, and desires. This first issue, therefore, is one that should not only be celebrated by Latinos and students of color on this campus, but by the Hampshire community at large. Es nuestra voz. It is our voice.

The realization of *La Fuerza*, however, could not have been possible without the numerous and graceful contributors who donated their creativity, inspirations, and thoughts. I thank my brothers and sisters who entrusted me with their work, and thus enabled me to actively dedicate myself to this project.

I will conclude with a quote cited in Oscar Zeta Acosta's *The Revolt Of The Cockroach People*:

La vida no es la que vivimos
La vida es el honor y el recuerdo.
Por eso mas vale morir
con el pueblo vivo,
y no vivir
con el pueblo muerto.

Life is not as it seems,
Life is pride and personal history.
Thus it is better that one die
and that the people should live,
rather than one live
and the people die.

Yours in la lucha,



Claudia Milian
Editor

We dedicate *La Fuerza* to our brothers and sisters for 500 years of resistance.

We are greatly indebted for their continuous support and advice to:

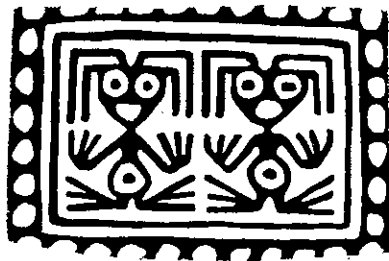
Robert Coles, Dean of Multicultural Affairs
Theresa Gordon, Director of Multicultural Affairs
Barbara Orr-Wise, Affirmative Action Officer
Ynez Wilkins, Administrative Secretary
and our brothers and sisters at Umoja.

Thanks to Geoffrey Prudencio for technical assistance.

We shall remember:

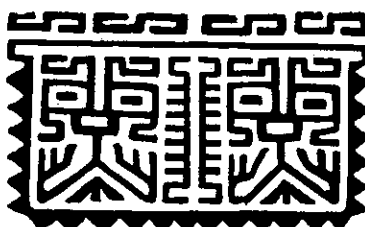
Jessamy Brown, Yogesh Chandrani, Durquia Guillen,
Robin Lewis, Sudarshan Manikkalingan,
Ricardo Miranda, Penny Premdas and Michelle Revels.

"Make The World Crazy: Give A Little Take A Little." -- Kuji



They call ours a subculture!
We call it the entire universe!
Our culture was born out of survival
and for us it will never
die.

GINA MONTOYA
Chicana Writer



Christopher Columbus

Second-rate Genoan Explorer Who Couldn't Tell
The Difference Between India and The Americas.



SEAN SULLIVAN

W A N T E D

**FOR INTRODUCING TO THE NEW WORLD:
Ethnocentrism, Xenophobia, Racism, Genocide,
Pestilence, Colonialism, Capitalism, Exploitation
of Indigenous Peoples, Ecological Rape, Gynephobia,
Heterosexist Gender Constructions,
Bad Eating Habits, and Worthless and Insulting
Parades in Major U.S. Cities.**

**Please return (the land, not the man)
to the original peoples of North, Central,
and South America.**

Brown Like Us

By Claudia Milian

Lately, multi-national corporations have discovered a significant new segment of consumers: "Hispanics" (Alonso and Koreck 52). These corporations, however, not only aim at "Hispanics" to fatten their pockets, but inform them that they are on their side. Nowhere is this more evident than in the advertisements that appear in *Hispanic* magazine, "The magazine for and about 'Hispanics'."

Hispanic, a magazine published monthly by the Hispanic Publishing Corporation in Washington, D.C., is a highly conservative, business-oriented periodical not marketed for Latinos, but for those who call themselves "Hispanic" and thus become "a more attractive commodity" (Alonso and Koreck 52).

The term "Hispanic" packages the Latino. Moreover, it "whitens" by giving voice to hypostatized Spanish essence while simultaneously erasing from the field of discourse the African and Indian heritage of peoples of Latin America (Alonso and Koreck 52).

The "whitening" and assimilationist connotations of "Hispanic" on the one hand, and the continuing construction of Spanish-speaking peoples as inferior (but useful) "brown" bodies on the other, are among the contradictory practices which mark out the terrain of contemporary cultural and political struggle (Alonso and Koreck 52). Despite the new "attractive packaging," however, Latinos continue to be exploited and discriminated against (Alonso and Koreck 53).

This is evident in the numerous ways multi-national corporations target the "Hispanic" community. McDonald's, for instance, offers positions in *Hispanic* to college graduates in "business

administration, staff supervision, financial analysis (and) marketing." Furthermore, the applicant can "Learn leadership from a world leader," and contact Francisco Montejano (not the typical John Smith) for additional career information.

In contrast, Colgate-Palmolive takes a completely different approach. On an 8.5-by-11-inch sheet of paper, the company proudly announces: "Hemos crecido juntos." ("We've grown together.") Colgate-Palmolive tells "Hispanics" that it has been "one of the first North American companies that has anticipated the importance of the growing 'Hispanic' population in this country." In turn, this vision, "permits Colgate-Palmolive to bring to its consumers in the United States and the world tomorrow's technology." The uplifting ad concludes with the message: "Colgate-Palmolive: Una compañía con visión de futuro." ("Colgate-Palmolive: A company with a vision towards the future.")

These are a few examples of major corporations ingratiating themselves with "Hispanics." American Airlines, Frito Lay, Toyota, and Kent hide their parasitic, capitalistic intents behind soft-focus photographs and inviting design elements that intone: "Finally, you are accepted...by us. Buy from us or suffer the consequences."

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English Only: Linguistic Imperialism And Its Effects On The Latino Community

By Claudia Milian

Two out of three North Americans believe that English is the official language of the United States (*Carelli Survey*). It is not. Within the last several years, however, numerous well-financed and well-planned attempts have been orchestrated to declare English the "official" language of the United States (Califa 293). The end result, a movement which cloaks itself in patriotic rhetoric, is actually a deceptive, detrimental, and disrespectful approach towards Latinos' rights.

English is clearly not the first language, nor even the first European language spoken in what is now "The United States of America" (Piatt 3), a country whose name was taken from "The United States of Netherlands" (Kennedy 12).

In fact, the first European language heard by the native population on this continent was Spanish (Piatt 5). Anglos, however, appear to be completely oblivious to historical facts such as these, which like the name of the United States, appear to honor other immigrant groups, if not embrace their existence at the time.

More than 100 years ago the interaction of disparate cultures, the vehemence of the ideals that led the immigrants here, and the opportunity offered by a new life, were perceived to be what gave America a flavor and a character (Kennedy 3). That is not the case today.

Some Anglos believe that America's culture and national identity are threatened by massive levels of legal and illegal immigration (Lamm and Imhoff 77), and Spanish-speaking Latinos are the primary target of this resentment, since their "ethnic, racial, and religious

differences... can grow, fester, and eventually splinter a society" (Lamm and Imhoff 76).

It is safe to conclude, then, that America (a name given by a German mapmaker Martin Waldseemüller, to honor an Italian explorer, Amerigo Vespucci), is no longer kind to its "...huddled masses yearning to breathe free."

Nowhere is this more evident than in the language debate that is taking place in the United States. At a time when the Latino population is rapidly increasing, an English Only movement—which promotes the enactment of legislation that limits or prohibits the use of any language other than English by governing agencies, and in certain cases, by private businesses—has been sweeping the United States in order to reaffirm the use of the English language. Thus far, 17 states [Arizona (1988), Arkansas (1987), California (1986), Colorado (1988), Georgia (1986), Florida (1988), Hawaii (1978—Hawaiian also official), Illinois (1969), Indiana (1984), Kentucky (1984), Mississippi (1987), Nebraska (1920), North Carolina (1987), North Dakota (1987), South Carolina (1987), Tennessee (1984), and Virginia (1981) (Piatt 22)] have passed English Only Laws.

Some of these states declare English as the "official" language, while others restrict bilingual education programs, multilingual ballots, or simply ban non-English services such as courtroom translations (*ACLU Briefing Paper*). Although the restrictions and the wording of English Only legislation vary, and range from the 10-word Illinois law to the 400-word amendment in Arizona, the intent remains the same: to codify as law the English language. Due to the response

English Only Laws have received, an English Language Amendment has been proposed for the first time in the nation's history.

The timing of this movement against Spanish-speaking Latinos deserves scrutiny. At present, Latinos in the United States comprise about 7 percent of the total population. Between 1980 and 1987, there was an increment in the Latino population by 700,000, or 30 percent (Center for Immigration Studies 105). The Census Bureau asserts that the number of Latinos could more than double after the year 2000. The Latino growth rate of 3 to 5 percent annually is projected to remain at that level for the next 3 decades because of relatively high fertility and immigration both legal and illegal (Center for Immigration Studies 105). Furthermore, if present trends continue, Latinos may become the largest minority within a few decades (Center for Immigration Studies 105).

Although these figures and assumptions indicate promise and confidence in the future of the Latino community at large, this may very well be what is causing many Anglos to fear that Latinos may be taking over the United States. Foreign elements seem to be threatening the loss of Anglo domination in world affairs and domestic security (Adams and Brink 2). As a result, xenophobia serves as a response to this "loss of Anglo domination." This xenophobia manifests itself in many ways: stricter immigration policies, conflict between foreign and domestic groups--especially in competition over jobs--and, most visibly, in language policy movements in (Adams and Brink 2).

This perception of linguistic instability by English Only supporters, therefore, has led to the advocacy of the establishment of legislation which will ensure the status of English as the national language of the United States by declaring it the official language of the country (Adams and Brink 3). What supporters and advocates of English Only do not acknowledge, however, is that these laws

are an attempt to control and "punish immigrants for their foreignness" (ACLU Briefing Paper 1). They perpetuate false stereotypes of immigrants and non-English speakers by forcing them with the difficult and unnecessary burden of learning a foreign language.

The leading advocate of these restrictive language laws, U.S. English (USE), manifests its views differently. With supporters paying an annual fee of \$20, USE, a Washington-based organization founded in 1983, has reached membership of 350,000. Their goals, they claim, are to make English the official language of government, and promote opportunities for all people of the United States to learn English. As such, the bond of a common language will unify "our people, facilitate cooperation with one another, and allow them to share their traditions, viewpoints and opinions."

It is self-evident that the organization fails to understand the purpose of a language for non-English speakers. As François Grosjean writes in *Life With Two Languages*, "Language is a symbol of social and group identity, an emblem of group understanding and solidarity." Language can also provide an important boundary between ethnic groups and others (Norgren and Nanda 185). It serves as an instrument of communication that is accompanied by attitudes and values held by its users (Grosjean 117). More importantly, as Paul Henle indicates in *Language, Thought + Culture*, "Language is the chief evidence for existence and character of thought." Because language is so significant, putting restrictions on it can be a powerful way of oppressing non-English speakers. It can be concluded, therefore, that USE's intent, conscious or unconscious, is to discriminate against Latinos.

In October 1988, a disturbing incident shed light on the politics of USE's leaders. Linda Chávez, president of USE in mid-1987, had learned of a disturbing memo written by her boss, Dr. John Tanton (Henry

28). (Tanton was the co-founder and then chairman of USE). According to an article written in *Hispanic* magazine, Tanton had written:

"Will Latin American migrants bring with them the tradition of the mordida (bribe), the lack of involvement in public affairs? Will the present majority peaceably hand over its political power to a group that is simply more fertile?... Perhaps those with their pants up are going to get caught by those with their pants down" (Henry 28).

With this statement, Tanton appears to have forgotten that "those with their pants down" have been in the United States longer, decades before the British had even conceived the thought of sailing west. In 1513, Juan Ponce de Leon had discovered and named Florida, and by 1565, a permanent Spanish colony had been established in that region, St. Augustine (Piatt 5). A few decades earlier, however, Spanish ships had sailed up the coast of California, and before the sixteenth century was out, Juan de Oñate had settled New Mexico (Weyr 16). Santa Fe was founded in 1609 (Piatt 6). Other settlements soon followed in what is now Colorado, Arizona and Texas (Piatt 6).

Although these factors are overlooked in history books, this pattern of discovery is knitted together into a fabric of Latino ownership and right (Weyr 16). The continuing presence of the Spanish language in this country, therefore, is the result of this Latino presence representing the oldest colonial power on this continent (Piatt 6). However, the point being stressed here is not on the basis of who migrated in to this country first.

Rather, Latinos in the United States represent an enduring heritage. Most apparent, perhaps, is the role of Mexican-Americans in the Southwest. As "Californios" or "Tejanos," families lived on and owned territory long before the Anglo settlers did. They have paid taxes, fought in wars, been an inseparable part of this region's culture (Fallows 88). By the

same token, they are citizens of this country, just like the Puerto Ricans, who are citizens of the United States and therefore cannot be considered immigrants (Kennedy 63). While Latinos differ from the rest of the Europeans who came to this country, the same things are being said today of Latinos that were once said of Irish, Italians, Germans and Jews in terms of assimilation to North American society: "They'll never adjust; they can't learn the language; they won't be absorbed" (Kennedy 63).

Contrary to what English Only supporters manifest, Latinos in the United States are adjusting. Latinos are learning English in many ways and at many levels (Weyr 218). This is confirmed by legal experts as well as by the most recent census data (1980), which reveal that despite an increase in the Latino population, English is probably as strong in the United States as it has ever been (Baron 177). English is spoken by more than 97 percent of the people in the nation, a fact often ignored by supporters of English Only (Baron 177).

The Spanish language continues--and will continue--to have wider and wider use in this country (Piatt 167). Political and economic turmoil in Latin America will continue to produce pressure on the borders and result in more native Spanish speakers arriving in this country (Piatt 167). The outcome to this is quite clear: the use of Spanish in this country will experience a phenomenal growth. It is already occurring through the virtual explosion in broadcast media in the Spanish language, and through the increase in advertising by North American industry in Spanish (Piatt 167).

Latinos in the United States are here to stay, even as they become North Americans (Weyr 219). It is vital for Anglos not only to recognize the beneficial impact of Latinos in this country, but that of multilingualism as well, since it can provide several assets that would not be present without it, in culture, in politics, and in education. In the educational front, the use of Spanish in bilingual education

encourages parents to become more involved in their children's learning (Rodriguez 1). As for the coexistence of different cultures, it is an important element which greatly contributes to creativity in North American life (Barrera 159). Yet, the proponents of English Only Laws still profess a concern for national unity; to that end, they seek to constrain the language behavior of non-English speakers. They could probably benefit from the advice of H.C. Kelman, a thoughtful student of language conflict:

"Although my bias against deliberate attempts create a national identity derives from my value position, I also believe that this is not a very effective way of promoting national unity. I would propose...that a sense of national identity is more likely to develop when it is not forced but allowed to emerge out of functional relationships within the national society" (Kelman, quoted in Ruiz 24).

There is no adequate explanation forthcoming as to why the United States should ignore this advice and disrupt a 200 year history of relatively successful linguistic tolerance. It is crucial, therefore, for supporters of this movement to recognize this. Until this important factor is acknowledged, USE supporters will continue with their one-sided campaign that will not unify this country with their attempts to declare English as the official language, but will only further divide it.

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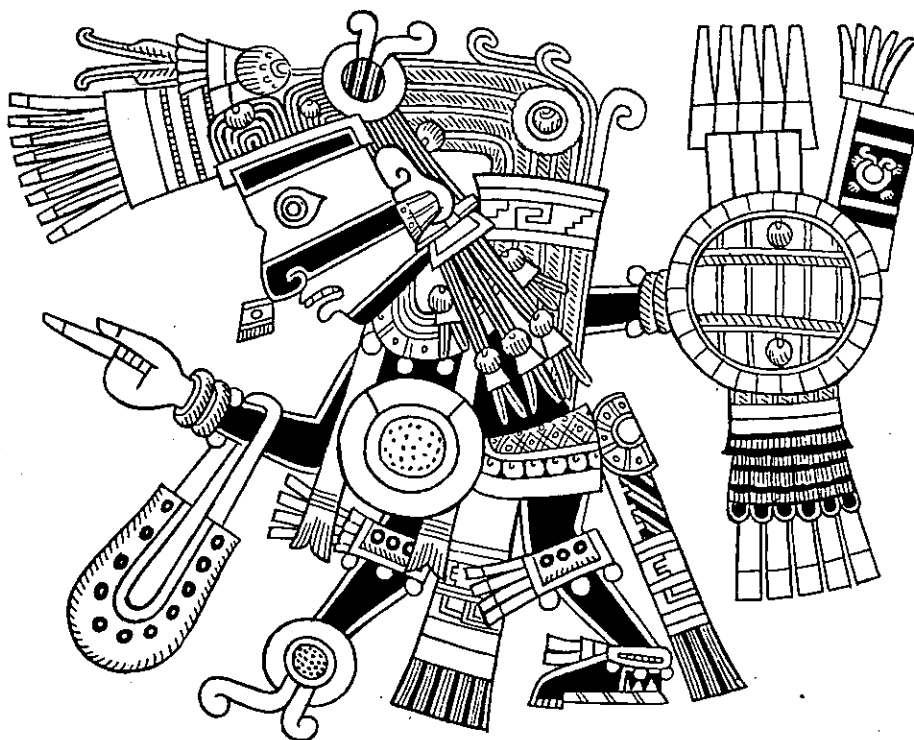
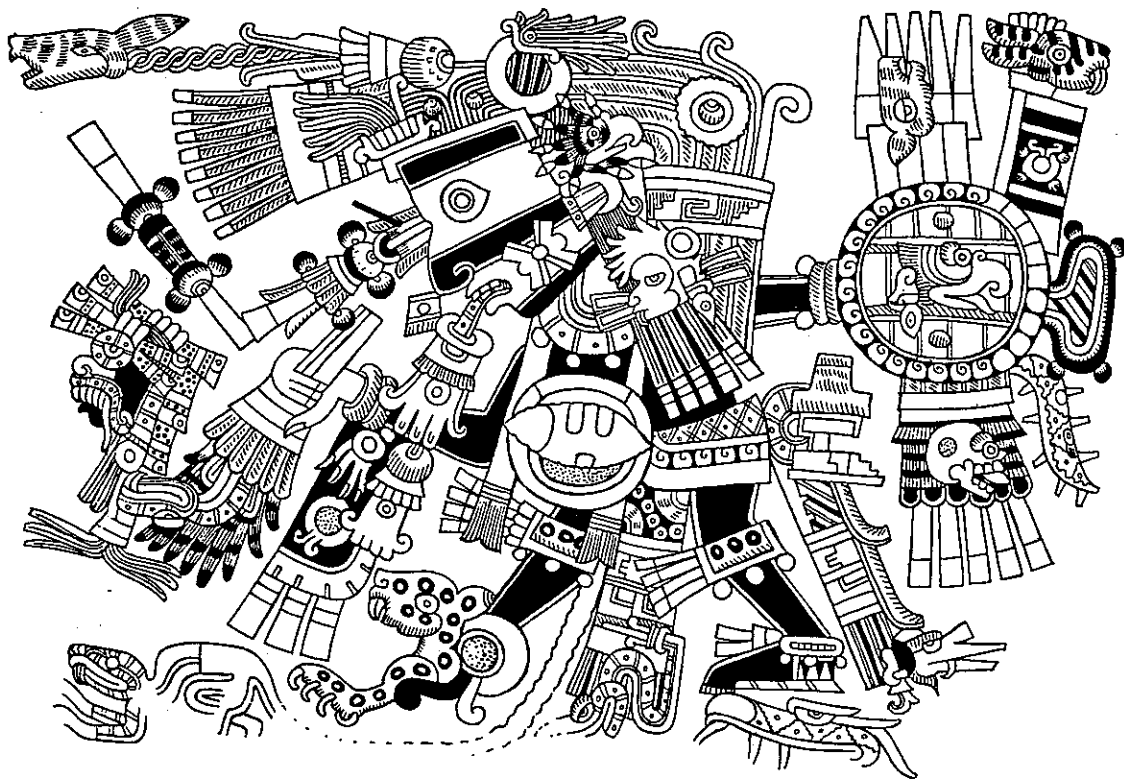
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La Invación

By Gloria Chacón

Every afternoon the cool trees swayed back and forth and everyone living in the village would rest in their colorful handmade hammocks. But one particular day the cool breeze ceased blowing the trees and the hot sun felt unbearable. Milini decided to rest outside anyway, while she drank fresh wine, which had been fermented for days underground, from an earth brown clay container. She lost herself in the burning rays of the sun, then quickly fell into a deep sleep. A thundering noise rudely awoke her from peaceful dreams and she sat up to see, in front of her face, a white coyote with huge tired blue eyes. The coyote appeared harmless; his skin was pale, and he looked sick. Milini decided to let the community know a stranger had stopped in the village. It was customary to offer hospitality to strangers in their village, the week before, three strangers had been taken in by the community for a year and then they had left. These strangers, two men who wore colorful blue and grey patterned attire and a short plump woman with a red long dress, were passing through on their way to a sacred river. In this same manner the coyote was taken in the community. The coyote's faded blue eyes and worn dirty white fur soon replenished to magnificent blue eyes and fluffy white fur after he had been washed by sacred waters and had been fed empowering herbs and fruits. He didn't speak the language at first, but after a few months he was able to understand them, although he never answered why he had come to the village. In the beginning no one felt his intrusion; everyone enjoyed sharing the food and shelter with the blue-eyed stranger.

After years of living among the villagers, however, they felt he was in the way. They found out that the blue-eyed coyote was lazy. He would watch them minutely everyday, but he never helped

the people with work. Milini would make jewelry out of the precious stones buried in the heart of mother earth and she felt the stare of the coyote on her everyday. The coyote with magnificent blue eyes just wanted to make her feel uncomfortable. One of those days she saw the sun's fury permeate along the sky which no doubt was a bad omen about this stranger with the blue eyes. She made her observation and fears known to the other villagers and they all agreed that all this stranger did was watch them build their goods and he never helped and this was probably the reason why the sun was angry. The people decided he should be thrown out of their village. The kind high priest of the village reprimanded their arguments and chastised them because in the ancestors' prophecy they described this stranger as a holy being who would protect them. The village then, agreed it was their duty to consult the holy being in every decision made because he was wise.

The communion held by the villagers soon started to deteriorate. The sly coyote would whisper in each villager's ears to be better than the other while they worked their crafts. The villagers, especially the young ones, started to quarrel among themselves about who did the best hunting traps, who was stronger and so on. Soon, everyone forgot about each other in trying to please and listen to the coyote with magnificent blue eyes. He insisted it was his duty to teach them the new way for an unknown white God had sent him and if they didn't comply they would be punished by fire and their shelters destroyed. The sparkling jewels, the carefully knitted clothing, and the food all went for his use. After they all had surrendered to him, they were invaded by packs of white blue-eyed coyotes, who took their land, raped their culture and took their souls.

Sidewalk Thoughts

By Andrew J. Rosa

In front of the two glass doors, leading into my masters' bank, I stand a pauper, for I do not possess a house to shelter me from mother nature's nasty moods, nor money to buy fancy material things. I extend my arm out to the patrons of this bank, in hopes a sympathetic heart will take pity on my poor soul, and bless this worn paper cup I hold so firmly in my thick black hand. They do not want to acknowledge my presence, for they seem afraid to come to terms with the cruelties I am subjected to from my masters, who have robbed me of my self-respect and liberties, and whose house over-shadows me as I beg for my existence.

My orange blazer, soiled from the scum of the sidewalks I make my cement bed on during the cold lonely nights, provides little protection from the cold December air. My pants I salvaged from a trash heap on Park Avenue, are tied around my slender waist with a rope, for they must of belonged to a man that sups well. The soles of my shoes reveal the heels of my feet, for the stitches that keep the soles bound to the frame of the shoes have unraveled, therefore, I will soon become a shoeless vagrant. My reflection in the glass doors brings tears to my eyes and manifest the burning anger within my soul toward my masters, for they have transformed me

*The cotton fields I speak of are not those my ancestors
labored in during visible slavery, but the factories,
shops, and industries we now labor in during visible slavery.*

The glass doors of my masters' bank display pitiful reflection. My dark brown eyes observe the abuses my masters commit on a daily basis, which shape and nurture the hate I have for the bastards within my soul. The dark circles around my eyes are from the many sleepless nights I spend praying to God, for it is only through his divine inspiration that can make my blind brothers see their enslavement. My face has given birth to a beard that hides my true identity and the shame of the lifestyle I have not freely chosen. I wear a blue wool hat on my head to cover the naps of my hair. The shirt on my back reeks from my bodily secretion, and exposes my black chest to the harsh winds of winter.

into this most undesirable human being.

I pull my lover from the depths of my coat pocket, place her to my mouth, and suck the juice from within her glass body. After my nerves become numb, I place the half empty bottle of vodka back into its resting place. I have no women to love, no child to care for, no brother to share the memories of our youth with, no sister to defend from the sexual urgencies of other men, no mother to hold me to her bosom, and no father to look up to; therefore, I have only this bottle of magic which allows me to escape from this cruel world and enter my fantasy world. A world where the slaves rise up against their masters and create a new world. In this world, all men are equal.

There's food for all to eat, and wine for all to drink. There are no governments, wars, or classes. I imagine that man has re-discovered the "Garden of Eden."

I shake my worn paper cup in front of those coming into my masters' bank, but they do not hear the sound of the coins colliding into one another. They are deaf, for they refuse to hear my cry for help coming from this cup I hold so firmly in my hand, and they are blind to reality, for they refuse to cast their eyes upon the harsh realities of my frail body. I cannot be angry at these patrons, for they do not know what they do. I, too, was a patron of my masters' bank, a slave in their cotton fields, and a mute under their rule.

The cotton fields I speak of are not those my ancestors labored in during visible slavery, but the factories, shops, and industries we now labor in during invisible slavery. This modern day slavery is invisible because our masters have become skillful in disguising it. They have learned from the mistakes of their swine ancestry that visible oppression will provoke discontent amongst the oppressed; therefore, they have superbly masked their oppression, thus continuing the traditions that the slave lords of yesteryear created. In this world of slave-lords, slavery will forever exist.

I, as these patrons do now, brought the money that I earned from my labor to my masters' house for safe keeping. My masters would take money and create additional cotton fields for slaves to labor in, and they would become fat by feeding their ever growing appetites from the sweat of their slaves' brow. The cotton field I labored in was a boat factory next to the wharf on the Lower East Side. My job entailed painting boat parts, and passing them down the assembly line to another slave, so he could contribute his labor to the part of the whole. My masters would sell this boat that their slaves assembled for a handsome profit, and then pay me, their slave, a small fraction of the profits. I was

content, for I thought I was free, unlike my ancestors who slaved in the South.

My masters closed the cotton field down, thus leaving me without a field to slave in. My masters explained to me the economy has forced them to relocate their cotton field. This is their economy. They control it. They control all the elements involved in their economy that robbed me of my job, for they are the masters of the industries, factories, and shops that bring life to their economy.

*This is their economy.
They control all the elements...
that robbed me of my job.*

I then went to my masters' house, where I kept my money for safekeeping, to borrow money, for in my masters' world one cannot live without money. The slaves working within my masters' house told me they could not give me the needed money for survival; therefore, I am no longer welcomed into my masters' house, for I no longer possessed the object that makes my masters' world revolve.

I was without a field to slave in and without money; therefore, I went to the government that rules me. I asked them for help, for I am a man in need. My masters decided to allot me a small sum of money on a monthly basis, but I would have to forfeit my self-respect, dignity, and manhood in order to receive this small sum of money. I accepted—I sold out.

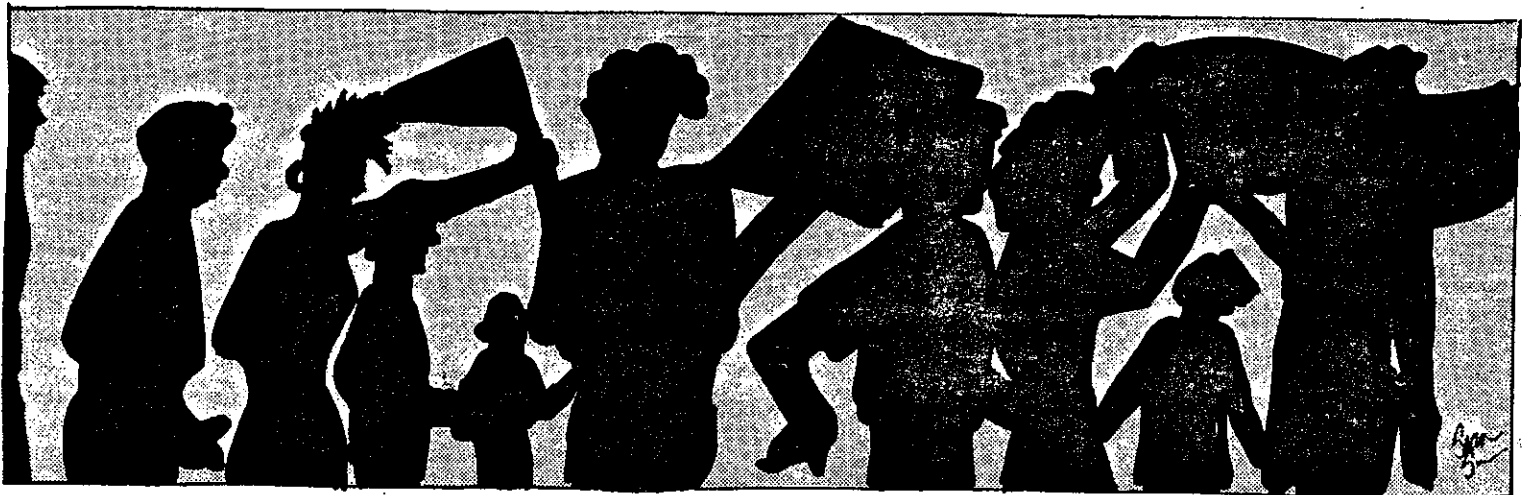
I now stand here, in front of my masters' house that closed its glass doors on me in my time of need and display my unpleasant reflection. The patrons of my masters' house are unable to see what lies ahead of them. They are unable to see that they too are slaves without a voice in the

*Our population is now increasing, but I am unable
to share my tale of misfortune and my
vision of the new world, for the slaves dressed
in blue have been manipulated by their masters
in keeping me from sharing my ordeal.*

system which enslaves them. I am filled with guilt, the guilt of knowing each of their fates. It is only a matter of time before they join me in the sea of concrete. I desire to tell them, but since I am not of any influence, for I am a vagrant, they will never listen to me. I have been crucified to the cross by the masters and their slaves, for the masters want to suppress my new found knowledge and the slaves do not take my knowledge to be credible because I am a vagrant.

Our population is increasing, but I am unable to share my tale of misfortune and my vision of the new world, for the

slaves dressed in blue have been manipulated by their masters in keeping me from sharing my ordeal. The masters are fearful of being discovered for the swine they truly are; therefore, they forbid me from uniting with my brothers who have taken the same road to vagrancy. I await the moment our population becomes too great for our masters' to control, for it will be at that moment a glorious revolution will occur and my masters' invisible slavery will be unmasked for the wickedness it is. Until then my masters will continue to elude us of their true intentions and keep the shackles of slavery bound to the feet and wrists of my brothers.



SEAN SULLIVAN

Mi Abuelita

By Gloria Chacón

Let me tell you what my abuelita used to tell me, when I was naughty and lazy. My abuelita says that when she was growing up she had no electricity and the only source of light was an oil lamp. Her parents owned acres and acres of land. She was the only daughter out of eleven siblings, therefore, she had to cook and wash for all of them. This would occasionally put her in a frantic mood. Her mother, mamita Medarda was paralyzed completely and used to always sit in a wooden handmade chair, for in those times wheelchairs did not exist. Mamita Medarda hardly spoke, unless she was praying out loud while listening to mass through her little green transit radio. I remember her fingers and toes were twisted and distorted from what my mama Tere called witchcraft.

Mamita Medarda hardly spoke, unless she was praying out loud while listening to mass through her little green transit radio.

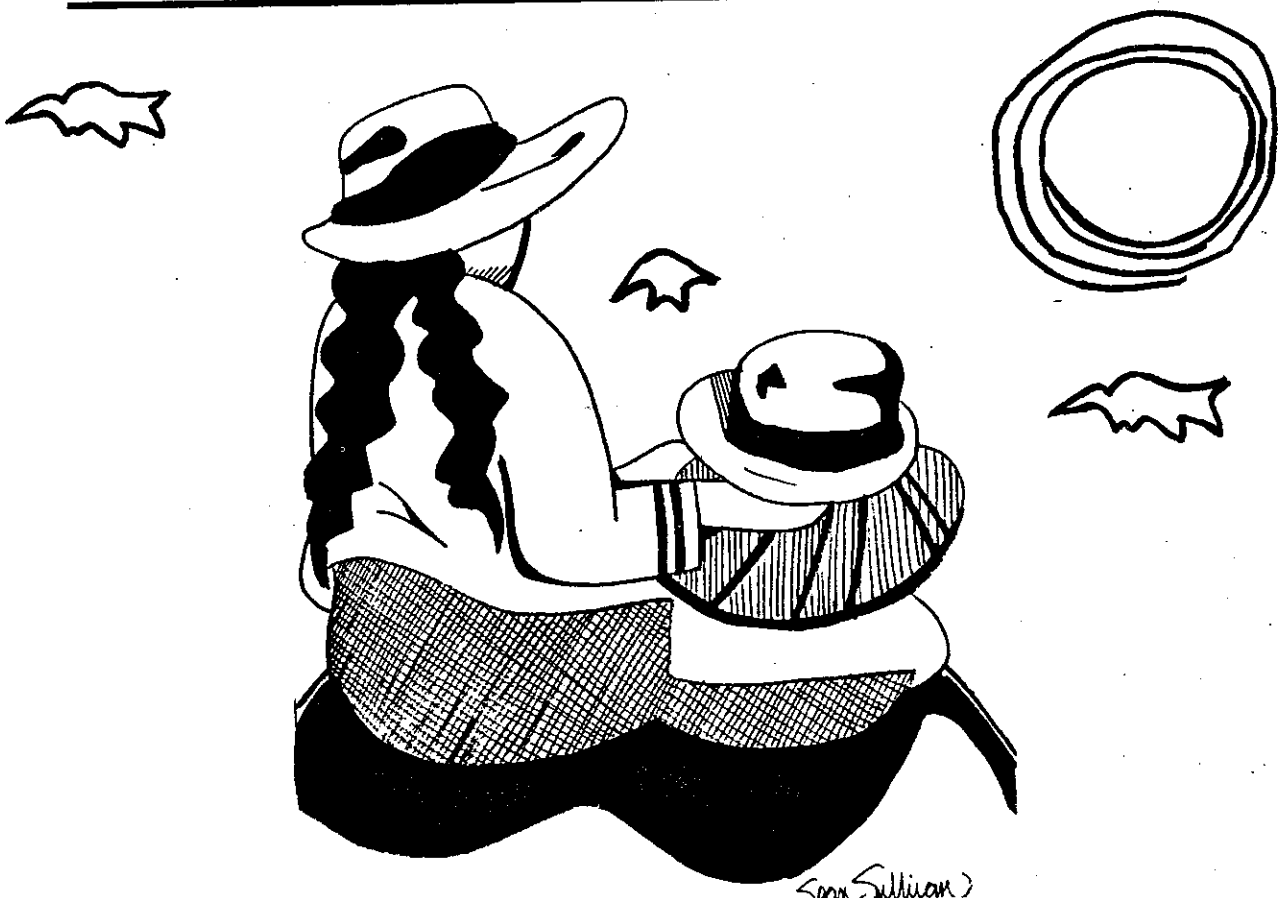
Sometimes I would be scared to look at her, but I knew she would never harm anyone. My mama Tere always advices her nietecitos to respect their elders because otherwise they will be punished, not only from the parents themselves, but from the all omnipotent eye that sees everything children do. My abuelita also says that in those days, you didn't see any kind of disrespect for your elders, or brothers for

that matter. If you showed any disobedience, you would get punished with horse whips hasta que te miraras del dolor.

One day, she was not feeling very happy with the way things worked around the house, so instead of getting up at four in the morning to wash, cook, and milk the cows, she decided to wait in the camarote for one of her brothers' to challenge her disobedience. Sure enough, the oldest one, Ramon, scolded her because she had refused to do her duties, and threatened to beat her if she didn't get going. My mama Tere couldn't take it anymore and started to attack him by saying, "Vayase mucho al diablo, que de esta cama no me muevo." Ramon unhooked his horse whips and commanded her to get on her knees. She refused to obey him and started to scream so much, everyone in the house woke-up from her yelling. This made her stern father extremely furious and she then, realized that if her father beats her he would do it without any compunctions whatsoever. Her mother could not do anything because she was paralyzed, and besides she did not have the right to say anything because he was the man of the house. My abuelita bitterly recalls her father beating her until she pissed on herself and even then he did not stop. After her father felt satisfied with his discipline he ordered her to go outside the house to chop wood for the breakfast fire and heat the comal para hechar las tortillas. My mama Tere was so angry at her predicament she screamed and reproached mamita Medarda for not intervening when her father was hitting her. All mamita Medarda could do was cry for her physical condition and warn mama Tere, God would punish her for disrespecting her elders.

My abuelita, crying with remorse, shouted she would run away. That night, mama Tere decided to sneak out of her house while everyone was sleeping. It started to pour heavily and the wind hissed angrily through the trees as she started to walk out the door. My abuelita says she was scared out of her head because everyone knows that walking during the night through the middle of vast deserted lands is not the same as walking them in mid-day; everything becomes alive and even the trees are different, their dark shadows help evil spirits. With these thoughts in her mind and her mother's curse, she ran and ran through the dark lands her father owned. My abuelita says that when she was crossing a narrow creek that ran by her father's land to the ocean, she was confronted with a 'cadejo'. She describes this being as regular white dog except it was extremely taller, had blazing eyes, and it seem to be waiting for her. She had heard of these dogs from her mother's

tales but she had never wanted to believe them. Mama Tere says that she instantly felt her legs weak and hot liquid running down her legs again. She decided to run for her life at any cost and said "patitas pa que te quiero" and sure enough her legs took up more speed than those of the cadejo's. When she turned back she saw the cadejo flowing, relentlessly after her. Aghast at this revelation she decided to return to her house as fast as her feet permitted it. Almost without any breath and perspiration all over her body, she reached her house and started pounding on the large wooden door like a mad woman until her brothers came out to see what was happening. As soon as she was able to voice what had happened her brothers gathered their machetes and went after the dog who mysteriously disappeared and then was seen no more. She asked forgiveness from mamita Medarda, then her father, and brother. At last when she was going to sleep, she asked the all seeing god to forgive her.



El Cristo

By Ana Ripol

*"Den gracias al Señor, pues el
es bueno, pues su bondad dura
para siempre."
salmo 118.29*

Sentía un cansancio en su alma terrible. Su cabello desarreglado y sucio era marrón. Hubiera volado alto si no hubiera sido por la corona de espinas y flores marchitas que adornaban su cabeza.

Sentado en un sofá, mirando un letrero que decía "Available 24 hours" y pensando en su cansancio, en su desdicha. Tomó otro sorbo de café. Hubiera querido prender un cigarrillo pero a los angeles no le gustaban esas cosas.

No le gustaba mirar por la ventana. La blancura de la tierra y la negrura de los mortales le irritaban la vista. No necesitaba otro dolor de cabeza.

"¡Al carajo los angeles!"

Se paró a buscar su cajetilla. Su cuerpo endeble, casi desnudo, denotaba la amarilléz del que hace mucho tiempo no toma sol, o está enfermo. Le colgaban del cuello, la cintura, las muñecas y los tobillos brazaletes con guindalejos en forma de fetos y miniaturas de niños muertos. Arrastraba sus pies al caminar, como si cada paso le costara un esfuerzo enorme.

Prendió su cigarrillo, muy para el disgusto de los angeles, y miró en derredor de la habitación. Blanca, vacía salvo por unas cuentas fotografías en las paredes, el sofá y una que otra silla. Se concentró en la foto de su madre, María, vuelta a la tierra y convertida en modelo de fama internacional.

"¡Putá! ¡Mira que tuviste suerte! ¡Saliste de la mierda esta a la que yo estoy condenado!"

Cerró los ojos. Su rostro se vistió de desesperación y amargura. Años y años en la misma, callando su descontento y odio por la profesión elegida desde tiempos inmemoriales.

Se miro el cuerpo, cubierto con niños muertos y el sufrimiento de miles. Miró dentro de su alma y vio que estaba mas negra que el dia anterior. Trato de pararse pero pesaba tanto su vida que no lo podia hacer con facilidad.

***"¡Busquense otro
Cristo
porque yo me voy al
carajo!"***

Entró un angel con dos niños mas: un feto y un niño que alguien había asesinado. Los ojos del Cristo se llenaron de lagrimas, pero ya no pudo soportarlo.

"¡Basta! ¡No me traigan otro mortal! ¡Yo no aguanto un dia mas! ¡Años, años y mas años de esta pesadez inmunda y agobiante! ¡Pero hasta aqui llegue yo! ¡Busquense otro Cristo porque yo me voy al carajo! ¡Se acabó! ¡No resisto otro!"

Sus palabras se perdieron en sollozos y quejidos. Se arrancó violentamente la corona, los brazaletes y collares. Miró a todos lados con ojos desorbitados, abiertos hasta mas no poder. Su cuerpo temblaba. Dió un grito espeluznante y cayó inconsciente al piso. Los angeles lo recogieron suavemente, con ternura. A donde lo llevaron, no se.

El Pacto

"I speak two languages broken into each other
but my heart speaks the language of the people
born in oppression."

Sandra María Esteves

By Gloria Chacón

After dinner, the whole family gathers around the living room to watch t.v. I always sit down on the brown carpeted floor between the dangling legs of my mother and sister. Their soft skin is always warm from sitting so close. My stepfather and younger brother also try to squeeze in around my mother. We all fight for her attention. She always seems to be touching everyone in some way or another; if not by physical touch, through words. Even after we all go through the channels and decide which one will be on, we end up changing stations back and forth anyway until I get agitated and retreat to my room to read a book.

Half an hour or so passes by and then I hear them calling my name, "Gloria ven mira esto!" I place my book down on the spacious bed and return reluctantly to the living room. After a few minutes of commercials, my mother embraces me with her strong arms and slowly starts a story. She begins with the endearment she used when I was a little girl. "Mi pollita," she says, "she's been through a lot with me-when I couldn't even afford 'frijoles' for all of you". She tells the story with a certain victorious tone. She continues, "It happened in the times when I was so poor, that selling your soul to the devil was an alternative." A melancholic feeling engulfs me as I hear the beginning of the story. She recalls how we used to live surrounded by cerros. "Around those dark hills, there lived an old woman who people said practiced la magia negra." My mom, only seventeen years old then decided she would seek her for help, the

poverty she was going through couldn't be worse than selling your soul for money. The old woman had deep creases around her earth brown face and a grayish silk color covered her entire long hair. This old woman gave my mother a 'rosario' and advised her to pray an incantation for nine consecutive days. My mother says, "I was young, my children were starving so I didn't care about what I was doing." I feel the chill in my bones as she quickly adds, "See you have to believe in it because it does exist." Her face contracts to a very grave expression as she continues, "It was the eight day and it happened to be the first of November, 'el día de los finados'. It was midnight and I was alone with you, pollita." She beckons to me. "You must have been two years old." At this point everyone in the living room is quiet and oblivious to the sound of the t.v. set. Taking a deep audible breath, she says, "We use to live in this teensy room, and I was able to see out to the streets from the cracks of the wooden walls. I heard the whispers of prayers being chanted and the cackling sound of a slow-moving chariot echoing through our dark street and so I had to look." I feel the cold chill running through my spine, leaving me with goose bumps all over my arms. She continues calmly, "I got near the open cracks and saw hundreds of people dressed in white with gleaming yellow colored candles in their hands praying and following a dilapidated cream colored chariot."

To her dismay when she turned around to face the room she saw him standing beside the ajar blue door, the guardian of evil. The black inauspicious

**... When she turned around to face the room
she saw him standing beside the ajar
blue door, the guardian of evil.**

dog heaved incessantly for breath as he stood by the door staring straight at my mother with its tongue out as if he had come from afar. In her desperation she says, "The first thing that came to my mind was that this dummy wasn't baptized yet." The urgency in her tone diminishes and she adds with a smile that I told her "Look mommy, look at that dog!" My mother recalls she snatched me towards her and started praying to God to forgive her until the dog finally left. I keep trying to analyze if what she is telling us really happened. The more I ponder about this the more I feel I don't have the right to doubt her words.

The next day in the early morning

she went to church and confessed. After that day she moved out of the small room to her brother's house. I sense the tension around everyone and notice the tone of her voice turning into that sound one makes when a knot in your throat gags your words. After a brief pause she redeems herself and turns to me and says, "If it wouldn't be for mi pollita, I wouldn't be here." I feel as if someone has punctured my insides with millions of pins and my eyes get watery, but I don't let her see. I try to smile as I put my arms around her and I feel everyone else's arms around her too. I think to myself what a wonderful madrecita I have – If only I could also tell her my side of the story.



AMANDA GARCIA



AMANDA GARCÍA

Más allá de violeta

*Al irte de mi vista,
papel de lija quema
en la esquina blanca
del cuarto.*

*Si vas de noche nueva,
te seguirán las notas
que corren desde ríos
secretos.*

*Si sales bajo la luz,
aromas de tú y yo
(en flor de nuestro dulce
encuentro)
te besarán.*

*Si ya nos despedimos,
tu vos se quedará
fluyendo en mi sangre.*

Gustavo García

Pasión es desesperación es esperanza

*Hay monumentos
de monumentos de huir y jugar fusionados
en cemento (hecho de los mismos elementos de bronce y mármol).
Mujeres y hombres pasan en sus vueltas
y admiran las obras en las plazas.
Baja luz filtrada por nubes grises
se piensa que los monumentos se ven más austeros.
Las torceduras en las figuras no tienen cara ni nombre.
De vez en cuando alguien se para a admirar una de las obras
y empieza a llorar sin reposo.
Hay fragancias, estrellas, o vacíos.*

Gustavo García

Curva

*Sin paredes, el viento cae sobre la piel
como hielo a aguja.
Al oír hablar nubes (corriendo)
no se distinguen palabras.
En las caras de vecinos
se ven preguntas para las nubes.
Si hubiera respuestas, no flotarían tan alto.*

Gustavo García

The Waves Of My Existence

*The waves rise and fall, over and over, incessantly.
I sit here, as a mere observer of life, contemplating
my limited existence,
And whether or not I will be like the sea
Forever in motion, rising and falling, living and dying
In a constant continuous cycle of life and motion,
Moving across the vastness of the land,
forever mobile, forever in time.
My spirit shall, like the ancient seas, endure man's ages.
Which by comparison seems minutely insignificant.
My spirit shall one day enter the greater sea of man's spirits,
And there live as one with all man's past existences,
Forever falling, and rising, again and again.*

Jorge A. Díaz

Untitled

*In a sleep
I sit at the table where we will later gather
At the fall of the day to feast on our Brothers and Sisters.
Next, an image of wandering souls dancing
In a frenzy of fury.
Love, Life, Courage, Fear, then Death,
All in vain, all in a different name
For God, all one and the same Sleep.
Fear not, my pretty child, Death will take us all.
Life escapes us and we drown in our own blood.
Children speak like men
Disguised behind a mask of fear.
I danced with Death in a ring of fire.
And then I awakened.*

Jorge A. Díaz

Despierta

*Morning breaks.
She awakens with undying courage.
Everyday, she undergoes a ritual
Waking her children.*

*She flies into the Living room.
Children sleep still venturing.
In the coolness of the Night.*

*Despierta, mijo, es hora
De ir a la escuela.*

Que hay de almorzar?

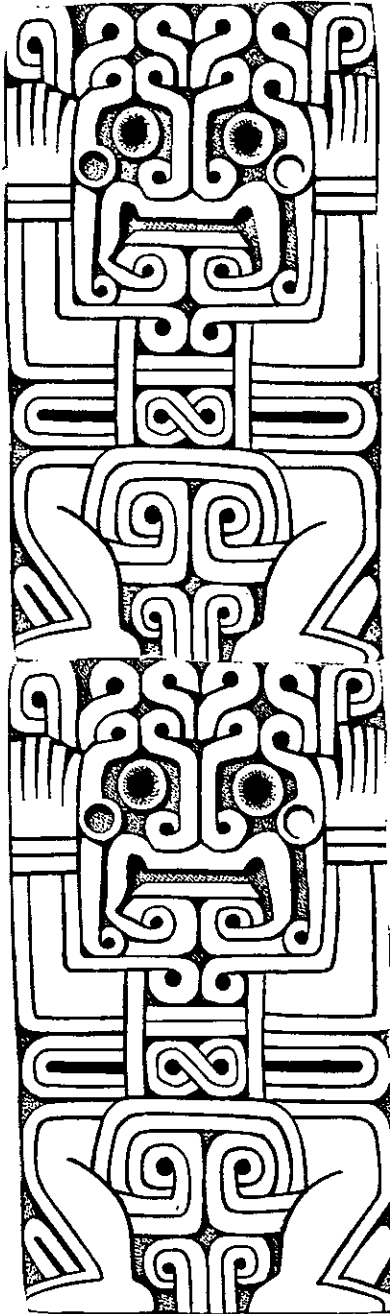
*Hay café y frijoles,
Pero mañana . . .*

*Tomorrow, Tomorrow
Tomorrow we shall feast
On the Dream of Living.
But today there is only
Coffee to make us sleep and beans to keep us hungry.
Today there is only the Night
Full of Sleep and dreaming.*

*She marches silently into the Living room,
Awakening her children.
Minds open feeding on reality,
Bleeding . . . and we awaken.*

Jorge A. Díaz

Prayer Of The Incas, Seeking God



Hear me,
from the sea up there where Thou livest,
from the sea down here where Thou art.
Creator of the world,
potter of man,
Lord of Lords,
to Thee,
with my eyes that despair to see Thee
or just for yearning to know Thee
if I see Thee,
know Thee,
ponder Thee,
understand Thee,
Thou wilt see me and know me.
The sun, the moon,
the day,
the night,
the summer,
the winter,
they don't walk idly,
but in good order,
to the appointed place
and to a good end.
Everywhere Thou carriest with Thee
Thy royal scepter.
Hear me,
listen to me.
Let me not tire out,
let me not die.

(This excerpt is quoted in Eduardo Galeano's Memory of Fire.)

Advice Of The Old Aztec Wise Men

*Now that you see with your eyes,
take notice.*

*See how it is here: there is no joy,
there is no happiness.*

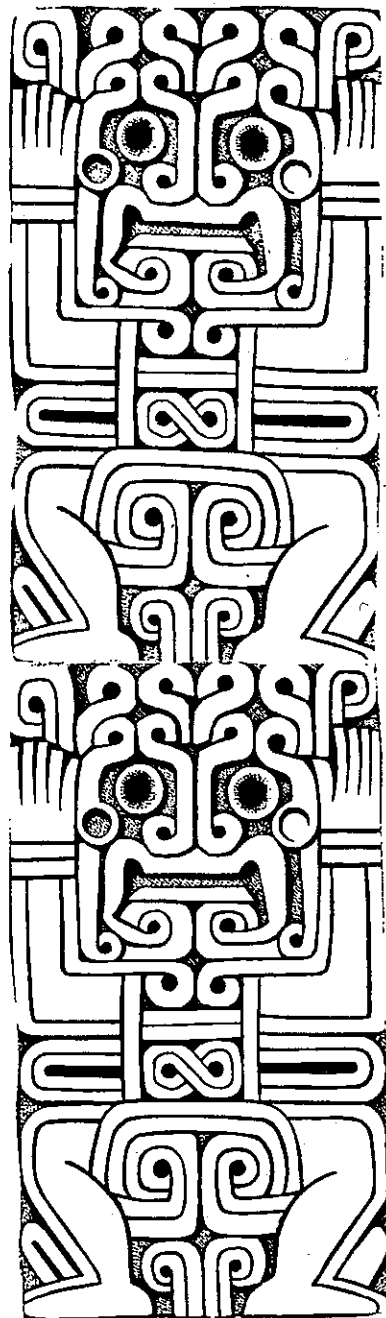
*Here on earth is the place of many tears,
the place where breath gives up
and where are known so well
depression and bitterness.*

*An obsidian wind blows and swoops
over us.*

*The earth is the place of painful joy,
of joy that pricks.*

*But even though it were thus,
though it were true that suffering is all,
even if things were thus on the earth,
must we always go with fear?
must we forever tremble?
must we live forever weeping?*

*So that we many not always go with groans,
so that sadness may not ever saturate us,
Our Father has given us
smiles, dreams, food,
our strength,
and finally
the act of love,
which sows people.*



(This excerpt is quoted in Eduardo Galeano's Memory of Fire.)

"Do You Speak the Language?"

*I thought that somehow,
Spanish
had a magical, mythological,
symbolic tone to it.
But maybe it's all because the meaning behind the words
is not really clear to me.
The language holds so much
that I can only catch a glimpse,
I can only ski the surface,
but I use the words anyway
and don't ask permission.*

*I am thirsty to dive deeper into the meaning--
I have heard the word once,
and read the description in a binded book
but have I used it? tasted it? smacked it?
Rolled it around in my mouth?
Can I bite into it
and taste it bleed the richness of my land
that speaks Spanish
freckled with a little Nahuatl
and other Indian tongues . . .
Names of fruits and birds and places
that can never be translated.*

This land was Indian once, is now and will be forever

*Bite my tongue
white woman
taste the blood that was spilled
as the Aztec nation was conquered.
Well it's conquered over every day
everytime I roll the Spanish words in my mouth.
Your 'hue' and 'hua' sound more like the birds and toads
your 'tla' and 'que' like cactus needles*

*Every time I spill Castilian words
You are conquered over.*

*White woman,
what have you done to bleach a skin
that could have been as smooth as olives?*

*Now, You speak the language of a spreading country,
deseminating into others through military, media and products.*

*But yes, it is decaying at its roots.
Its roots that were founded in newly sowed earth
watered by the blood and sweat of its ancestors
Dark skin ran away
But you keep catching up
white skin and bonnet
soft soles steping over careful footsteps
that avoided leaves that crackle
gods that watch
and felines that sniff the air.*

*O.K. I will not play the sob story that will reverse
again in history.
The white man will redeem himself
and the rest will avenge.*

*I can not soften my jaw when I speak of this
no matter how much I profess equality
and not reverse-discrimination
But you White Man
burst into me and I flew apart.
You spill into me with your fluid
You did it when I didn't even know
Until it was over
I want to not fear you
But your ignorance is strength
under stars and stripes.*

Michelle Marroquín

Untitled

*My skin is light
My English is spoken well.
I grew up in Los Angeles
and have seen Honduras only three times.
When spoken in Spanish, I must think
and answer slowly.
My grandmother says:
"Eres una gringa."
"No, Mamita, soy Hondureña."
Outside I show white,
but inside I feel Latina.
My people look at me and see white.
I look at them and see myself.*

Helen Boek



Sean Sullivan

Poem of a Mother (Salvadoran)

*I had a son
Who told me every year*

*-- Look, mama, this year I want to
continue studying*

*But this May 10
He couldn't tell me anything
He was cold and stiff,
his face bloody
When I saw him on the steps
of the cathedral
Shot in the back.*

(This poem was written on the wall of a Salvadoran refugee center in Chinandega, Nicaragua.)

Los Desaparecidos

*Bushes cover my body
As blood soaks the ground.
Mother, your eyes were the only
Ones that had seen me naked.
But as of midnight, here I lie:
Unidentified, unknown...*

*Forgive me for caring.
Forgive me for speaking my mind.*

*I should have remained silent
In this coastline Pacific O.*

*Steep is the dump
Where my body now decays.
Bodies covering my own.
Missing without a clue.
Family and friends wonder
What became of me;
Not knowing it's been years
Since I became one of the disappeared.*

Claudia Milian

In My Country

*A wetback in a foreign country
Robbed of his language and land.*

Public domain.

Fee simple.

I have a right.

Bandido! Greaser! Mestizo!

Manifest Destiny calls.

You are lazy.

Ruthless.

Backward.

Immoral.

Civilization must occur:

English Only! English First!

Menial labor: Mexican Wage.

*O, dearest Treaty, where
did the pact go?*

*To "be incorporated into the
Union...and be maintained and
protected in the free enjoyment
of...liberty...and property..."**

Meant nothing.

I am still a wetback

Decaying in the scorching sun.

I have been Americanized.

Claudia Milian

**The Treaty of Guadalupe Hidalgo,
2 February 1848, Article IX.*

Untitled

They bought us with nice stories.

*Democratic myths that bore
the banner of freedom.*

Statehood.

Commonwealth.

Independence.

Does a plebiscite really matter now?

I cannot reproduce.

You have sterilized the nation.

I cannot fish.

You have polluted the island.

I cannot work.

You have established unemployment.

I have been

Invaded.

Conquered.

Raped.

All in the name of progress.

Thief.

Violator.

Intruder.

Quiero mi identidad.

In your eyes,

*I am just a parasite claiming
independence.*

Claudia Milian

No es que nosotros
despreciamos al blanco...
Los valores que nos dan
son falsos,
son valores que nos hacen
admirar otra cultura
y otras costumbres.
Somos un pueblo
con cultura, con valores,
con costumbres, con idiomas
que ahora están pisoteados
y de los que muchos de nosotros
están avergonzados.

It's not that we despise
the white man...
The values that they
give us are false,
they are values which
make us admire
another culture and customs.
We are a people
with culture,
with values, with customs,
with languages that have
now been stepped on
and that many of
us feel ashamed of.

DOMITILIA BARRIOS DE CHUNGARA

Dirigente Indígena Boliviana

